

Policy and Resources Committee 1st September 2025

Proposal: Recommendation from Strategic Working Group

Securing a Suitable Depot or Work Area for the Facilities Team

1. Introduction

The Facilities Team plays a vital role in maintaining the town's infrastructure and public realm. However, they currently lack a dedicated depot or work area to carry out essential tasks such as repairs to benches, planter maintenance, and general operations. This proposal outlines the need for such a space and recommends next steps to secure a suitable location.

2. Current Challenges

- **Lack of Workshop Space:** The team has no fixed location to carry out repairs. Ad hoc arrangements are inefficient and compromise productivity. Some work is being carried out in the exhibition space, which is not sustainable. Tools are being stored in the lift machinery cupboard, larger items are being stored in a container on the outskirts of the town at a cost of £1,400pa.
- **Health and Safety Issues at Perry Court:** Recent use of the container unit for repairing benches at Perry Court has raised concerns due to fumes and inadequate ventilation. It is not a suitable or sustainable workspace.
- **Temporary Use of Millfield Allotment:** While a small area is being used at Millfield Allotments, this lacks proper shelter, utilities, or facilities needed for effective propagation of plants or equipment maintenance.
- **Increased Expectations:** If the Town Council wishes the team to grow more plants for planters and take on more open space work, they will require appropriate facilities.

3. Recommended Action

The Council initiates a search for suitable land or premises for a permanent depot or workshop, with the following actions:

a) Engage a Land Agent

Recommendation to engage a land agent, such as BtF Partnership, who successfully acted on our behalf in the acquisition of 12 Market Place. Their expertise in land acquisition and negotiation would be valuable in identifying appropriate sites and handling any discussions or approaches on behalf of the Council. From experience it has proven beneficial for an agent to act on our behalf so the council remains anonymous at the initial contact.

4. Conclusion

A permanent, safe and functional depot or work area is essential to supporting the Facilities Team's ongoing operations and enabling their role to expand. Without this, service levels will be constrained, and health and safety risks will continue. By working with a land agent and exploring viable local options, the Council can take practical steps to resolve this issue and support the team's valuable work.

Louise Bareham

Town Clerk

23.08.25