



REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC24/081

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	23 rd April 2025
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Market Management
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval to acquire a vehicle and trailer and take on the tenancy of the Market store from NNC, to support the management of the market.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that approval be given to

- a) Take a tenancy at will for the NNC owned Market Store, off Market Place, and ultimately to negotiate a community asset transfer for the building
- b) Assume ownership of the existing trailer used to move market stalls, as an asset transfer from NNC free of charge
- c) The acquisition, by whatever means is most cost effective, of a vehicle to transport market stalls and the trailer

3. Information

- 3.1. The Town Council has a “grace and favour” arrangement with NNC whereby its market stalls are stored in the NNC store, which is just off Market Place, and whereby the market stalls are transported each market and events day using an NNC owned vehicle and trailer. This arrangement was possible because the person who puts our stalls up is employed by NNC’s grounds maintenance team and this was the vehicle he used for his main role and the store he used for NNC purposes. That person will no longer be employed by the grounds maintenance team from 3rd May and NNC have given notice that the vehicle will not be available to the Town Council from that date.
- 3.2. When the market was handed over to the Town Council in April 2022, it was agreed that NNC would maintain the storage and transportation arrangements that had applied

hitherto, and this helpful arrangement has continued for the last three years. It consists of three elements:-

STORAGE – the market store holds non market items used by NNC, and some events equipment owned by KTC, as well as the market stalls, weights, tables and covers. It seems likely that NNC will be removing all their items from the store in the near future. In light of that, it has been verbally agreed that KTC would be granted a tenancy at will of the store as it could become the only occupier. The Town Council could also seek a community asset transfer of the building in due course.

TRAILER – the trailer is only used for market purposes and the Town Council has paid for maintenance costs in the last three years. NNC has verbally agreed to transfer the trailer to KTC from 2nd May. It is also agreed that the trailer can continue to be stored overnight at the Robinson Way depot as now.

VEHICLE – the vehicle used to tow the trailer and transport market stalls is a Ford transit drop-side flat bed 3.5 tonne truck. This will need to be replaced at the Town Council's expense, from 3rd May 2025.

3.3. The clerk has been in discussion with SFS, who supply and maintain NNC's vehicles, about them supplying us a vehicle. Discussions are ongoing at the time of writing, and a verbal update will be given at the meeting. Trucks of this kind are not readily available, and with the very low mileage that our vehicle will do – 2500 miles a year – a diesel vehicle might not be cost effective. The possibility of acquiring an electric vehicle has been discussed as well, but it would need to be capable of towing a full trailer.

3.4. The alternative forms of acquisition are:-

- Purchase – costs appear to range from £5,000 to £35,000 for a vehicle depending on age, condition, mileage and specification
- Lease – whereby the vehicle is serviced, insured and taxed by a company such as SFS as part of the arrangement and the vehicle can be replaced over time.
- Rental – where the vehicle is rented from a supplier but all operating costs fall on the Council separately as owner.

3.5. The aspects of running and/or owning a vehicle are:-

- Overnight storage of the vehicle and between market days – this can be stored on the driveway of the market operative although it would only be fair to recognise that inconvenience in some way
- Fuel costs – whether electricity or diesel, the Council would need to pay for this – assuming 2500 miles a year, would be £500 per annum approx.
- Insurance and MOT costs – assume £1000 in total per year.
- Servicing costs – assume £400 a year

4. Consultation and Engagement

4.1. NNC have been helpful in arranging for transfer of the store and the trailer and storage of the trailer, but cannot assist with a new vehicle. Discussions have taken place with the staff employed to erect stalls about overnight storage of a vehicle and operating practices once a new vehicle has been acquired, as well as the specification for a new vehicle.

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1. It is impossible to provide a market without the use of a vehicle.
- 5.2. There is no provision in the budget for operating a vehicle. A £10,000 sum is proposed for the lease and operating costs in the absence of any firm figures at the time of writing. This would be an ongoing cost for future years. It would mean that the market deficit would more than double from the current estimate. Having a vehicle would however potentially reduce some other costs associated with events, where a vehicle is hired from NNC for the day to transport equipment and fencing- this would save £200-£300 a year.
- 5.3. Taking on the market store under a tenancy at will would be inexpensive but lack certainty. It might allow us to relocate into it some of our events equipment being stored elsewhere, once NNC removed their material; that would save £2500 a year if half of our external storage needs could be re-located this way, which would cover the likely costs of a tenancy.
- 5.4. Taking on the ownership of the building is another matter and would depend on condition surveys, building maintenance liabilities, and costs such as rates and utilities, all of which are currently unknown. Transferring the building might only make sense in the context of any wider transfer of NNC functions and assets.

6. Climate change implications

An electric vehicle would be a positive contribution to climate change mitigation,

7. Policy Implications

The Council's policy is to support the town centre, and an important aspect of this has been the provision of the market and town centre events, both of which rely on the availability to erect market stalls.

Background Papers

Email correspondence with NNC and SFS