

Review of the loss making Burgh Halls in Linlithgow delayed

A review of the loss making Burgh Halls in Linlithgow will not come back to councillors before the Autumn.

A report had been expected before councillors at this week's meeting of the Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building PDSP.

But depute chief executive Dr Elaine Cook confirmed to a meeting on Tuesday that a report on the building which lost £77,000 in the last financial year was still in preparation would come later in the year.

It will go to the council's Corporate Policy and Resources PDSP.

SNP councillor Andrew Miller sought assurances that findings of the report would also be brought back the Economy PDSP.

He told the meeting: "It was first raised in this committee."

It was agreed that the report would also be brought back to the Economy PDSP.

Councillor Miller had backed proposals from Linlithgow's Lib Dem councillor Sally Pattle earlier this year for the report on the future of the Burgh Halls be discussed after the losses were first revealed in February.

The building, which is owned by the council, is marketed as a wedding and events venue. There is separate space which can be used as gallery space and also a cafe.

Councillor Pattle asked the Economy PDSP if staff working in

the Burgh Halls had been, or would be, included in looking at ways of improving usage and income at the Burgh Halls.

Fellow Linlithgow Councillor, Labour's Tom Conn, also suggested in February that council officials carry out a "holistic" review of the building.

That call came after officials agreed that what had been planned was simply a streamlining of pricing for 2024.

Speaking to the February meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources PDSP Councillor Conn said the review: "seems to mention wedding packages and whatever but I would like clarification on actual opening hours for community activities or community access. It [the report] seems to be quiet as far as that's concerned.

"It seems that the standard opening hours are not on the weekends or on a Monday. Will that be ongoing as part of this review?."

Officials acknowledged that there were no planned changes, in this review, to opening hours.

"So it's a continuation of opening hours being restricted, and the reduced hours of the café will continue?", asked Councillor Conn.

Greg Welsh, one of the senior service officers said: "In terms of the position outlined in this paper that would be a separate review in terms of community usage of the facility."

Speaking to the Economy PDSP this week Dr Cook said the review and the report potential future uses of the halls would be made available to both committees latter this year for discussion before any decision is made by the Executive.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter