

Report No.4

Report to Town Hall and Facilities Committee 9th March 2016

Use of Gallery for private viewings

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To invite the committee to consider conditions to be attached to the use of the John Bowen Gallery for private viewings.

2. Background

- 2.1. Exhibitors in the Gallery often request use of the space in order to hold a private viewing of their work, with or without refreshments.
- 2.2. Historically the exhibitors have been allowed to do so free of charge if the event takes place at the same time as other events within the Town Hall.
- 2.3. During a recent visit of the Fire Safety Officer concern was expressed about any obstruction to what is in effect a main fire exit route from the Town Hall when private viewings are taking place.

3. Proposal

- 3.1. One of the main problems with a private viewing is that the exhibitors tend to invite a large number of people and have no control over final numbers attending.
- 3.2. When there are only a few in attendance no obstruction is caused but the difficulty is highlighted in para 3.1
- 3.3. When the only events within the Town Hall are taking place in either, but not both, of the main first floor function rooms obstruction through the Gallery is unlikely to cause a major problem as the primary exit routes are either the main staircase or the routes leading direct into the car park and Market Lane.
- 3.4. However, when the Old School Room is in use the Gallery is classed as a main exit route and a private viewing could give rise to an unacceptable level of obstruction.
- 3.5. It is therefore proposed that no private viewings are permitted in the Gallery when the Old School Room is in use or if both functions rooms on the first floor are in use at the same time.
- 3.6. In order to reduce any potential financial impact on income it is also proposed that in future there is a fee levied for all private viewings held in the Gallery

4. Financial implications and risks

- 4.1. It is essential for the safe operation of the Town Hall that fire escape routes are kept free of obstruction or that any possible obstructions are properly managed.
- 4.2. If a private viewing is held then only one of the first floor function rooms may be used and this could impact upon the potential for income generation unless a fee is levied for the viewing.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The committee is requested to consider and adopt the proposal contained within the report and agree the level of charge for holding a private viewing within the John Bowen Gallery.

J Penfold
Town Clerk
2nd March 2016