

To receive a report on the appointment of a Town Council Solicitor and consider any actions and associated expenditure

Information:

47/22/23 To consider reviewing the Town Council Solicitor services and consider any actions and associated expenditure.

Minutes – 12th July 2023:

It was proposed by Councillor Miller, seconded by Councillor Dent and **RESOLVED** to delegate to the Town Clerk to obtain quotes reporting back to a future P&F meeting.

Further to the instructions of the Policy and Finance Committee, please see below an overview of the process together with costings:

It proved difficult ascertaining costs for solicitors as no one cost is applied.

Fees are dependent on the work entailed for each individual request, which can vary on a case by case basis.

In the past, the Town Council has used solicitors services for a variety of reasons including but are not limited to:

- Contractual Reviews;
- Commercial and Residential Sales or Purchases.

Solicitors work on fixed fees for certain projects as well as an hourly rate for others. Again, this is changeable dependent on the type of request from the client and the work undertaken.

Therefore, neighbouring Parish and Town Councils were approached for recommendations. Any associated costs provided by Solicitors are **not quotes** but for the purpose of a benchmarking exercise only.

Financial Regulations – Section 12 Contracts:

Solicitor work/contracts falls under 'specialist services' meaning the tender process differs due to the type of service considered.

Costings:

Current Provider – Nicholls and Sainsbury

Response received:

'Many apologies for the delay in responding to you. I confirm that we do offer conveyancing services and Mr. Nicholls now deceased of this firm previously acted for the Council on a number of matters.

Jennifer Bennett has undertaken work for the Council as well.

So far as our fees are concerned, this would be on a case by case basis, depending on the nature of the transaction. Our minimum fee would be £750.00 plus vat for the sale of a piece of land plus expenditure on Office Copy Entries i.e. copies of the Title and ID checks for the Officers. There may be additional expenditure but until the transaction is commenced we would not necessarily know.'

Tavistock Town Council – [Foot Anstey](#)

Foot Anstey were approached and responded:

'We are exceptionally busy at the moment and unlikely to be able to take on additional work at this time. If you would like me to suggest some alternative law firms who may be able to help you I'd be very happy to help with that.'

The offer of alternative law firms was not taken up because there were already other firms that had provided costings.

Liskeard Town Council – [Coodes Solicitors](#)

Coodes were extremely helpful and offered the following bench marked costs associated with the sale of Residential Land:

Transfer of Land	£800.00+vat
Transfer of Part of Land	£650.00+vat

The solicitor spoken too advised that fees may be abated dependant on the work entailed and actions requiring to be taken.

Response received:

‘We are not able to give a ballpark figure of fees as it will depend on the documentation that is required on each transaction.

I thought it would be helpful though to provide you with the details of our charging rates and I set these out below:-

Solicitor and Supervisor	£255.00
Solicitor and Supervisor	£255.00
Legal Executive and Supervisor	£255.00
Solicitor	£255.00
Solicitor	£255.00
Solicitor	£255.00
Legal Executive	£255.00
Paralegal	£177.00
Paralegal	£177.00
Conveyancing & Probate Executive	£177.00
Trainee Legal Executive	£177.00
Assistant	£126.00
Assistant	£126.00
Assistant	£126.00
Assistant	£126.00
Assistant	£126.00
Assistant	£126.00
Solicitor Apprentice	£126.00

All rates are subject to VAT.

If you instruct us on certain project and we are unable to provide you with a fixed estimate then the hourly rates above will apply.

In relation to the sales of land, have you considered asking each of the purchasers to pay your legal fees in each of those transactions?

Our firm has been established for more than a hundred years and has offices in Bodmin, Camelford and Wadebridge. We have a large conveyancing team and so someone will always be available to speak to you or deal with any queries you may have. Our approach is to provide a high quality bespoke service which is very different to the “pile it high sell it cheap” service that you may receive from some other solicitors or conveyancers, especially from large online conveyancing factories. Having been established in North Cornwall for so long, we have dealt with many properties before and we also have good relations with other local solicitors and estate agents.

If you favour us with your instructions, then you can be sure that we will:-

- *Act quickly – there will be no delays on our part.*
- *Deal with emails, telephone calls and correspondence swiftly.*
- *Make sure that you are kept informed as to what is happening.*
- *Do whatever we can to overcome any hiccups there may be.*
- *Offer you guidance based on our knowledge and experience as to the right steps to take at the right time.*

Do our best to make sure that your move goes as smoothly as possible, bearing in mind the number of other people that will be involved and the somewhat antiquated conveyancing process.'

Callington Town Council - [Earl and Crocker](#)

Earl and Crocker have a local office in Liskeard. They have previously worked with Town and Parish Councils. They provided benchmarking costs based on information provided:

Sale of land valued up to £200,000 inclusive of sale disbursements	£702.00+vat
Provisions of up-to-date land registry deeds	£7.20
Referred to on deed	£3.60
Electronic money transfers	£34.00

Earl and Crocker confirmed they would be able to assist with works relating to contractual reviews / writing and disputes in relation to conveyancing works.

Recommendation:

Due to the costs varying dependent on the type of work instructed to undertake, it has proved difficult to offer comparable prices for consideration.

Therefore, based on the research and contact made with various Solicitors it was found that Coodes in Liskeard have been the most professional and helpful for all enquiries posed to them.

End of report
Administration Officer