

## **8.7 CA/078/15 THE FORUM: Category B fit out, internal layout and strategies for Information Technology, Audio Visual technology, Facilities Management and Customer services**

### **Decision**

- 1 That the Category A elements as set out in the report to Cabinet are noted.
- 2 That the Category B elements as set out in the report to the Cabinet are agreed, with the decision on the final colour schemes for laminates and glazing delegated to the Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Leader of the Council
- 3 **That Council be recommended to approve an additional budget of £400,000, to be drawn down from The Forum Reserve, in order to fund the final Category B elements identified in the Cabinet report**
- 4 That the proposed strategies for Information Communication Technology (ICT), Audio/Visual equipment and capability, Facilities Management and Customer services be noted.

### **Reason for Decision**

This report is to seek approval for the Category B fit out of the Forum, to note the internal layouts and to consider the strategies for those elements which will be crucial to the operation of the building, specifically Information Technology, Audio Visual technology, Facilities Management and Customer services

### **Implications**

Financial

The running costs of the Forum are estimated to be at least £300,000 per annum less than they were for the Civic Centre. These arise from the energy efficiency of the building, its smaller scale and economies of scale through sharing costs with partners.

The development agreement was tendered through the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) process and the build price for the Forum is now largely fixed. The outstanding elements are utilities and Category B. The Category B assumptions were based on a formula of £35 per square foot which could only be fully tested once the operation and requirements of the building were better developed. Following a process of challenge, value engineering and ensuring that the building will work in the way desired the final costs are £400,000 above this position. The contractor has tendered for the prices in Category B to ensure good value for money.

### Value for Money

As indicated above

### **Risk Implications**

A risk register has been developed as an integral part of the project management arrangements.

## Equalities Implications

None identified.

## Health And Safety Implications

Health and Safety requirements are built into the construction process of the Forum and the design and fit out will ensure a safe working environment.

## **Corporate Objectives**

### **Regeneration.**

The overall Gade Zone Regeneration project is aimed primarily to deliver significant regeneration in the town centre. The Forum element facilitates the creation of a new community focused building housing public sector and voluntary sector partners. A new commercial leisure facility will develop more family friendly and evening attractions into the town centre. Much needed new homes will be delivered on the former Health Centre, Magistrates Court and Police Stations sites. Subsequent development of the Civic Centre and college sites will bring further new investment into the town centre, most likely for new housing. The new college campus has planning permission and construction will start soon.

**Affordable Housing.** New housing created will include affordable housing at 35%.

## **Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments**

**Deputy Monitoring Officer:** No further comments to add to this report.

**S.151 Officer:** There are sufficient funds available within The Forum Reserve to meet this recommended budget increase, and the proposed usage is consistent with the approved rationale behind the reserve.

This draw down will reduce the amount of approved budget available within the reserve for the Category C fit out and other costs associated with the move to The Forum. Although yet to be finalised, early indications are that the remaining balance will be sufficient to fund all further costs. It should be noted that any costs over and above the remaining balance would need to be funded through borrowing and would therefore place additional strain on the Council's revenue budgets.

## **Advice**

The Corporate Director for Housing and Regeneration explained that the report was seeking approval for the Category B fit out of the Forum, to note the internal layouts and to consider the strategies for those elements which would be crucial to the operation of the building, specifically Information Technology, Audio Visual technology, Facilities Management and Customer services.

He added that there had been quite a degree of consultation with those involved and therefore there should not be anything unexpected in the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning & Regeneration said they had been through an interesting process recently. He felt that the finished forum will be something to be proud of and he was glad to have been part of the process.

## **Consultation**

Consultation took place with:

- Monitoring Officer
- S 151 Officer
- James Doe, Assistant Director Planning and Regeneration
- James Deane, Corporate Director (Finance & Operations)
- Nick Brown, Group Manager Commercial Assets and Property Development
- Mark Brookes, Group Manager, Legal Governance

## **Voting**

None.