

MINUTES

CABINET

22 SEPTEMBER 2020

Councillors:	Williams (Leader) Griffiths (Deputy Leader) Elliot Anderson Banks	
Officers:	David Barrett Mark Brookes James Deane Mark Gaynor Nigel Howcutt Sally Marshall Katie Mogan	Group Manager - Housing Development Assistant Director - Corporate and Contracted Services Corporate Director - Finance and Operations Corporate Director - Housing & Regeneration Assistant Director - Finance and Resources Chief Executive Corporate and Democratic Support Lead Officer

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

CA/70/20 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2020 were agreed by Members present and signed by the Chair.

CA/71/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Sutton.

CA/72/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CA/73/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation

CA/74/20 REFERRALS TO CABINET

There were no referrals to Cabinet

CA/75/20 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was noted with the following change:

- Add Equality and Diversity Strategy to December

CA/76/20 Q1 FINANCIAL REPORT

Decision

That Cabinet consider the budget monitoring position for each of the above accounts and:

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

1. Recommend to Council approval of the revised capital programme to move £7.3m slippage identified at Quarter 1 into financial year 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix C.

2. Recommend to Council approval of supplementary revenue budgets as follows:
 - Supplementary budget of £140k in The Forum premises budget to fund the costs of ensuring the building is safe for staff to return under Coronavirus.

 - Supplementary budget of £60k in the Premises Insurance budget to fund additional costs of Uninsured Losses, to be funded from the Uninsured Losses reserve.

 - Supplementary budget of £253k in the Building Control service to fund the final settlement of Work in Progress following the transfer of the service to Hertfordshire Building Control. This is to be funded from the Management of Change reserve.

 - Supplementary budget of £33k in the Garage service, funded from the Invest to Save reserve, to fund a specialist project manager to lead on improvements to the garage letting process.

3. Recommend to Council approval of supplementary capital budgets as follows:

- **A capital budget of £90k in the Waste and Recycling Capital budgets for new Wheeled Bins.**
- **Additional budget of £400k in the Fleet Replacement Budget, to fund additional vehicles.**
- **Capital budgets of £24k and £19k to fund electrical upgrade works at Berkhamsted Civic Centre and Victoria Hall Tring respectively.**
- **Capital budget of £15k for essential roofing improvements at The Denes.**

Corporate objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Deputy Section 151 Officer:

This is a Deputy S.151 Officer report.

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

Advice

Councillor Elliot introduced the report to members. He stated that since the report was written, significant data has been made available which has updated the forecast pressure and is superseded by the Covid-19 update report next on the agenda. The report has been taken to Finance and Resources OSC for information.

Recommendations agreed.

CA/77/20 COVID-19 UPDATE

Decision

1. That Cabinet note:
 - (a) The projected financial impact of Covid-19 for 2020/21 as set out in section 1 of the report.
 - (b) The service updates provided in section 2 of the report.

Corporate objectives

The financial impact and the Council's response to Covid-19 will impact all of the Council's Corporate Objectives.

Monitoring Officer comments

The Monitoring Officer continues to monitor the key issues raised by legislative changes and relevant government guidance and ensure that effective policies and procedures are in place to assist services to continue to deliver during the pandemic and subsequent recovery phase.

S151 Officer comments

The Financial Implications section of the report have been written by the S151 officer and will continue to be monitored as actual costs become clearer. Members will be regularly updated on the financial implications of Covid-19 as they develop.

Advice

S Marshall ran through the main highlights of the report. In light of the announcement on restrictions announced by the Prime Minister today, the implications of this will be explored at the Incident Management Team this week. There was a clear message today about continuing to work from home but there is still a need to still provide local services. S Marshall paid tribute to teams who have worked hard throughout the crisis and adapted to new ways of working particularly the Environmental Health team who have assisted with the Track and Trace programme over the summer and the demand will increase on this service over the winter months.

Councillor Williams provided an update on the Old Town Hall. He said he attended the Housing & Community OSC meeting where the committee discussed the possibility of reopening the hall. The configuration of the hall and its financial viability make it a huge challenge to try and reopen safely with a meaningful programme and therefore, a decision has been taken to not reopen the Old Town Hall before the end of the calendar year. This decision will be review in January 2021. There will be an opportunity to redeploy the staff to other departments.

S Marshall added that there are various roles across the council that are critical to the covid-19 response that the staff can be redeployed in to. This will take into account the staff's existing skills such as health and safety, admin work and communications.

Councillor Tindall referred to page 38, paragraph 2.25 about the LEP and was concerned that there was no mention of small businesses. He asked for further information on how the LEP was helping businesses.

S Marshall said they had a comprehensive programme and the LEP is working closely with businesses and the Economic Development Team at Dacorum. There are packages on the LEP website and they are engaging with businesses and have access to various forms of funding such as self-funding and crowd funding. The LEP is leading on the economic recovery cell on behalf of the Hertfordshire public sector and the key aspects are updated weekly with all the council Chief Executives.

Councillor Tindall said he would make local businesses aware of this

J Deane updated the committee on the financial implications. In June, there was a forecast pressure of £5m which has now been refined based on year to date figures and government information and this pressure is now forecast at £2.5m. In the general fund, this pressure is largely based on the income side. There has been further information from the government on the Sales, Fees and Charges scheme, the local authority must absorb the first 5% of losses for eligible income streams, but central government will underwrite 75% of the remaining 95%. This scheme does not apply to rental income streams and so any losses from garage rentals of commercial income will not be eligible. For the remainder of the year, we have assumed the same shortfall on income over the next seven months and will depend on if there is a recession and how bad it affects residents.

In relation to expenditure, the council is currently living within its £1.8m grant from the government but this will come under increasing pressure, particularly in Waste Services, after today's announcement that the covid-19 response level has raised to level 4. Council tax collection will again depend on how a recession plays out and whether unemployment increases. It is currently down 1.7% year-on-year, but this is to be expected as a result of re-profiling. Some residents took the two free months at the start of the year and pushed payment to the end of the year. The Medium Term Financial Strategy is coming to Cabinet next month which will report on the long term impact. On the Housing Revenue Account, there is much less of a concern and forecasting a surplus as there is currently the inability to do less urgent works in our housing stock.

Councillor Griffiths assured members that they were not cutting back on the work but the team cannot catch up in time on the work that was already programmed.

Councillor Williams suggested there was a risk to the HRA if rent is not recovered as this will have an impact in future years.

J Deane said there would be risk if arrears do not catch up.

M Gaynor said that there is a reduction in the number of replacement works to balance off the number of workers available.

Councillor Williams said there were no new bathrooms or kitchens to be fitted this financial year.

S Marshall updated Cabinet that the council were notified by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care that there would be a lot more emphasis on track and trace and asked local authorities to play their part in encouraging and educating people to comply. There is a new requirement to investigate and fine those who are not self-isolating. There is a self-isolation relief scheme in place which is a grant from government for those who cannot work from home if they need to self-isolate and the allocation of this grant will lie with unitary and district councils. The scheme will need to be in place by 12th October to make these £500 payments.

interest on the loan at 2%. The recommendations delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Finance and Resources and the Portfolio Holder to finalise the legal documents after the outcome of the planning application.

N Howcutt said the first recommendation referred to the lease of the land and we have worked in partnership with the four other members of the West Herts Joint Crematorium Committee on this project.

Councillor Williams noted the financial aspects of the report and said this would be a good social facility for residents of Dacorum especially with severe capacity issues at Garston.

Recommendations agreed.

CA/79/20 APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR FOR CONISTON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, KINGS LANGLEY

Decision

1. That the main contract to construct 10 x social rented Houses at Land Adjacent to the corner of Coniston Road and Barnes Lane, Kings Langley be awarded to Bugler Developments Ltd.
2. That delegated authority be approved to the Council's Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services) to execute and complete all legal agreements ancillary to the JCT Design & Build Contract and/or reasonably required to complete the Project, including (but not limited to):
 - a. all professional appointments;
 - b. collateral warranties; and
 - c. Agreements under
 - S.38, & S.278, of the Highways Act 1980;
 - S.247, Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
 - S.104 of the Water Industry Act 1991, and
 - S.50 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.

Corporate objectives

Delivering Affordable Housing

Monitoring Officer:

The proposed contract award follows a competitive and compliant tender process which demonstrates that the Council is receiving value for money for the contract.

Deputy S.151 Officer

The Coniston Road development is part of the approved HRA capital programme and the costs of this contract are in line with the approved budget for this project.

Advice

Councillor Williams said any questions relating to the financial information would need to be asked within part 2. He said the recommendations of this report assumed that the financial information had been noted by the Cabinet.

D Barrett said this report was to seek approval to appoint a contractor for the site at Coniston Road which would consist of 10 new homes. The tender process had 18 bids and once scores had been moderated, three were taken forward for interview. Bugler Developments Ltd were the successful contractor who provided a strong, quality bid who could deliver the project in budget.

Councillor Anderson said he felt this was a wonderful project and would be the first council houses in Kings Langley for 40 years. He asked about the provision of solar panels and whether these could extend across all units.

D Barrett said that was the intention. They are currently checking the performance of solar panels in different locations. The scheme also has electric vehicle charging points at each property so they are future proof. We are taking a fabric first approach to ensure external walls are insulated to reduce heating bills.

Recommendations agreed.

CA/80/20 APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR FOR EASTWICK ROW DEVELOPMENT, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

Decision

1. That the main contract to construct 36 x social rented units at Eastwick Row, Hemel Hempstead be awarded to Jarvis Contracting Limited.

2. That delegated authority be approved to the Council's Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services) to execute and complete all legal agreements ancillary to the JCT Design & Build Contract and/or reasonably required to complete the Project, including (but not limited to):
 - a. all professional appointments;
 - b. collateral warranties; and
 - c. Agreements under
S.38, & S.278, of the Highways Act 1980;

S.247, Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
S.104 of the Water Industry Act 1991, and
S.50 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.

Corporate objectives

Delivering affordable housing

Monitoring Officer:

The proposed contract award follows a competitive and compliant tender process which demonstrates that the Council is receiving value for money for the contract.

Deputy S.151 Officer

The Eastwick Row development is part of the approved HRA capital programme and the costs of this contract can be met from within approved New Build Housing budget.

Advice

Councillor Griffiths introduced the report to members.

D Barrett added that this scheme was to provide 36 units; 34 1 and 2 bed flats and two 3 bed houses. This was a two stage tender process and 11 companies came forward with 4 submitting legitimate tenders. The proposed contractor, Jarvis, submitted a strong bid. This scheme is different to other projects as the location sits right under existing tenants and there has been a strong emphasis on site logistics and engagement with the local community.

Councillor Tindall declared that he was the ward councillor for this scheme. He said the residents of Eastwick Row are pleased to see the new build scheme but are concerned about the one access road in and out. He said he would be grateful if the council and the project officer could take particular care with construction traffic.

D Barrett said the team were aware of it and was a strong feature of submissions from contractors. The team are planning a communication strategy with residents and will work with the ward councillors.

Councillor Griffiths said great care and attention would be needed when the team start issuing communications to residents. The communication plan would be delivered in partnership with Jarvis.

Councillor Williams said there was huge scrutiny currently on fire safety in tower blocks and asked for reassurance that the new tower block would be built with non-combustible cladding and would include a sprinkler system.

D Barrett said the materials are non-combustible and there are sprinklers in the building alongside a fire management plan.

Recommendations agreed.

The Meeting ended at 8.10 pm