

MINUTES OF CABINET MEMBER SIGNING MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2024, 4:30PM – 4:45PM.

PRESENT: Councillor Sarah Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning
(Deputy Leader)

In attendance: Mamta Toohey, Housing Delivery Project Manager, Jack Goulde, Head of Housing Development, Serena Shani, Principal Committee Co-Ordinator and Nazyer Choudhury, Principal Committee Co-Ordinator

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the notice of filming at meetings and this information was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

5. HALE WHARF DEVELOPMENT

On 22 July 2021 and 9 November 2021, Cabinet gave authority to acquire homes across six blocks to be built at Hale Wharf that would deliver 191 new Council homes for the package price set out in the exempt part of this report. The Development Agreement for the acquisition was entered into on 29 December 2021.

It had been necessary to make a number of variations to the Development Agreement to make three of the six blocks compliant with recent changes in building regulations and safety legislation, including by converting one of the existing two passenger lifts to be full evacuation lifts for disabled residents. Furthermore, the addition of window jacklocks to all six blocks is required ensuring maximum safety for our residents. This report sought retrospective authority to extend the purchase price to incorporate these changes.

The report sought authority to increase the Agreed Limit previously agreed by Cabinet as a result of the installation of dedicated disabled evacuation lifts within the high rise buildings and other relevant health and safety and maintenance requirements for the six blocks.

The Cabinet Member RESOLVED

1. To approve the additional sum to the agreed limit to the acquisition costs set out in the exempt part of this report.
2. To approve an increase to the Total Scheme Costs as set out in the exempt part of this report

Reasons for decision

Following recommendations from the London Fire Brigade for the scheme to include dedicated disabled evacuation lifts in the 3 high rise blocks, D, E and F, that the Council had acquired a change variation under the Development Agreement was required.

At the time the scheme was approved and the Development Agreement entered into, there was no regulatory obligation to incorporate dedicated disabled lifts. As new regulations and legislation emerged regarding fire safety and High Rise Buildings in 2023, to mitigate risks and facilitate safe access in the event of a fire for the 17 wheelchair homes, pepper potted throughout blocks D, E and F, it was considered that one of the two passenger lifts in each of these three blocks be converted to full evacuation lifts. Therefore, a change variation was instructed at the appropriate time in the programme to allow for the technical installation work to commence without delay.

Similar health and safety principles apply to the installation of jacklocs across the scheme.

The remaining change variations focus on changes to enable better management and maintenance across the scheme. 4.5 Due to the above reasons, the Total Scheme Costs have increased and the overall purchase price of the acquisition has also increased. More details could be found in the exempt part of the report.

Alternative options considered

Not to install dedicated disabled evacuation lifts.

This option was rejected because it would represent a missed opportunity for the Council to:

Ensure compliance with new building legislation and regulations despite the scheme being approved under previous regulations and provides for greater resident safety in the event of a fire, or other event that might require evacuation.

Provide an approach to building safety that goes beyond the Personal Emergency Evacuation Process (PEEP) approach.

Any delays in the programme resulting from a late instruction could have resulted in additional costs and potentially significant extension of time costs or a missed opportunity to install evacuation lifts.

Not to install jacklocs.

This option was rejected in consideration of recent incidences reported in the media regarding child fatalities by falling from a window at height in London. 5.6 Not to incorporate Caretakers facility and relevant management and maintenance changes would result in the council unable to manage the 6 blocks effectively.

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6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Item 7 was subject to a motion to exclude the press and public be from the meeting as it contains exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985); paras 3 and 5, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

7. EXEMPT - HALE WHARF DEVELOPMENT

The Cabinet Member considered the exempt information.

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Sarah Williams

Signed by Cabinet Member

Date2 September 2024.....