

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEMBER SIGNING MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12TH APRIL, 2023, 10.00 - 10.15 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Ruth Gordon, Cabinet Member for Council Housebuilding, Placemaking, and Development.

In attendance: Rebecca Begej, Head of Business Development; Peter De-Bique, Senior Project Manager; James Missenden, Senior Programme Manager; and Fiona Rae, Principal Committee Co-ordinator.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. TANGMERE DEMOLITION CONTRACT EXTENSION

The Cabinet Member for Council Housebuilding, Placemaking, and Development considered the report which sought approval to extend the Tangmere demolition contract in the sum of £900,000.00. The contract extension was required following the Grade II Listing of the Mosaic Mural, and the need to reprogramme the works to comply with the Listed Building Consent to carefully remove and relocate the Mural.

The Cabinet Member RESOLVED

1. Pursuant to Contract Standing Order (CSO) 10.02.1 (b) and 16.02, to approve the extension of the original contract in the sum of £2,043,115.00 due to complete end of March 2023, and to approve an additional sum of £900,000.00 to be added to the contract for a period up to the end of September 2023.
2. To agree the total cost contained within the exempt report.

Reasons for decision

The extension of the contract will enable the demolition contractor to reprogramme the works to Tangmere for the careful removal and storage of the Grade II Listed Mural.

Upon removal of the Mural, the demolition programme will continue, with a view of completing the works by September 2023 to make the site ready for the Council's New Homes Programme.

Alternative options considered

Do nothing – unless the Grade II Listed Mural is removed, the demolition of Tangmere cannot proceed. Therefore, the site will not be cleared to make way for the Council's New Homes Programme.

The only option available is to extend the current demolition contract to enable the existing contractor to continue to reprogramme and continue with the works.

4. UPDATE TO NOEL PARK LEASEHOLDER BUYBACK OFFER

The Cabinet Member for Council Housebuilding, Placemaking, and Development considered the report which sought approval to revise the discretionary option for all affected Noel Park leaseholders to request an offer from the Council to purchase their property. From April 2023, the Council would only make offers to purchase Noel Park leaseholder properties from resident leaseholders only, prior to the service of the notice of a commencement date for the major works on their property and who are also facing substantial hardship if they cannot sell immediately.

On 13 July 2021, Cabinet approved the revised leaseholder repayments options for the major works programme and this included the Noel Park estate. Whilst not part of the options approved by Cabinet, there was also an option for leaseholders to offer their properties for purchase by the Council. Such properties are acquired as part of the buyback programme. This discretionary option was open to all 76 Noel Park Leaseholders, both resident and non- resident, who were part of the Noel Park major works programme.

The Council's discretionary option to consider a buyback at the request of a Noel Park leaseholder was reflective of the fact that the leaseholders were facing substantial major works estimates and were likely to face challenges selling on the open market ahead of the works being completed. The Council wanted to ensure that leaseholders would not be "trapped" in their property prior to the commencement of the major works programme.

Following that Cabinet report, a programme of direct engagement, including 121 meetings, door knocking and direct mailing took place with those affected leaseholders on Noel Park. During this programme the various re-payment and cost capping options were discussed. The Council also spoke directly with any leaseholder who enquired about the possibility of selling their property back to the Council. All affected leaseholders have now had over 18 months to request a buyback offer from the Council for their property. To date the Council has made 12 buyback offers in writing to Noel Park leaseholders, of which 9 were accepted.

Work has now started on the Noel Park major works programme and is scheduled to complete by the end of Q1 2024/25. Once works have been completed, leaseholders should not face any challenge selling on the open market, specifically as a result of the Council's major works programme. Therefore the report sought authority to revise the policy.

The Cabinet Member RESOLVED

To agree to an updated and revised discretionary option of a buyback offer to Noel Park Leaseholders who wish to sell their property to the Council after 1 April 2023 onwards by only making and agreeing offers to those that satisfy the following conditions:

- the request is received within 12 months from 1 April 2023;
- the seller is a resident leaseholder only; and
- who have not yet been served notice of a commencement date for the major works on their property; and
- who are also facing a case of genuine financial hardship that requires them to sell immediately

Reasons for decision

On 13 July 2021 Cabinet approved the revised leaseholder repayments options for the major works programme and this included the Noel Park estate. Whilst not part of the options approved by Cabinet, there is also an option for leaseholders to offer their properties for purchase by the Council. Such properties are acquired as part of the buyback programme. This discretionary option was open to all 76 Noel Park Leaseholders, both resident and non- resident, who were part of the Noel Park major works programme.

Leaseholders have now had over 18 months to request a buyback offer from the Council for their property.

Work has now started on the Noel Park major works programme and is scheduled to complete by the end of Q1 2024/25. Once works have been completed, leaseholders should not face any challenge selling on the open market, specifically as a result of the Council's major works programme.

Therefore, from 1 April 2023, the Council no longer needs to continue to make offers to buyback Noel Park leaseholder properties except in very limited circumstances. Specifically, the request must be received within 12 months of 1 April 2023, the seller is a resident leaseholders only, before works have been scheduled to start on their property and who also face genuine financial hardship if they cannot sell immediately,

Alternative options considered

The major works programme on Noel Park has now started and the current discretionary option to leaseholders to request a buyback has been open for 18 months to all affected leaseholders. The option to keep the current, opened ended, discretionary option of a buyback on request to all 76 Noel Park leaseholders would preferentially prioritise resources for all affected Noel Park leaseholders ahead of other Council housing priorities.

The option to extend the limited buyback option for the next 12 months for non-resident leasehold properties as well as resident leaseholder properties would potentially prioritise leaseholders' investment risk over the primary housing needs of resident leaseholders.

Therefore, the need to prioritise resources in the next 12 month starting on 1 April 2023 for resident leaseholders only, who may face substantial financial hardship in their primary housing situation if they cannot sell immediately, was deemed most critical.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded for the consideration of agenda item 6 as it contained 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.

6. EXEMPT - TANGMERE DEMOLITION CONTRACT EXTENSION

The Cabinet Member considered the exempt information.

The Cabinet Member RESOLVED

To approve the recommendations set out in the exempt report.

CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Ruth Gordon

Signed by Cabinet Member

Date ...13 April 2023.....