

Agenda Item No:	9	
Committee:	CABINET	
Date:	13 June 2022	
Report Title:	24 High Street Wisbech Project Update and Contract Award	

1 Purpose / Summary

To provide Cabinet with an update on progress related to the 24 High Street Project and to seek authorisation to enter into a construction contract following the conclusion of the current procurement process.

2 Programme Summary

- 2.1 There has been continued positive progress with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Programme for Wisbech High Street. Through the months of December to April 2021/2022 the programme has seen continued progress regarding ongoing property projects, new property improvements starting on site and some larger projects completing.
- 2.2 Following regular contact with the NLHF regarding progress on the projects, the NLHF have confirmed in writing that they are willing to extend the project deadline into 2023 to ensure project completion.
- 2.3 Following an ongoing communications plan, the programme has also seen further property owners come forward to enquire regarding the final year of the grant being available for property improvements. Two further properties within Wisbech High Street have now come forward and are at early-stage development of their projects.
- 2.4 The project to redevelop 24 High Street continues, with important pre-contract work being undertaken whilst the Council is out to tender for a construction contractor.
- 2.5 The Council has extended the construction tender deadline to 10 June 2022. At the time of writing, no update is available regarding the outcome of the tender process as the conclusion of that process falls after the report deadline. It is anticipated that additional information will be published and circulated to Cabinet Members prior to the meeting on 13 June 2022.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the current position in relation to the 24 High Street project; and
- 3.2 Subject to the availability of additional information relating to the concluded procurement process:

- Notes the outcome of the tender evaluation process;
- Authorises the spend associated with the award of a construction contract to the preferred bidder; and
- Approves officers to undertake all actions associated with the legal and financial requirements necessary to finalise the contractual arrangements.

Wards Affected	Medworth Ward
Forward Plan Reference	KEY21APR22/01
Portfolio Holders	Cllr Ian Benney – Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth Cllr Chris Seaton – Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage Cllr Chris Boden – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originator	Matt Wright High Streets Project Manager
Contact Officers	Paul Medd Chief Executive Phil Hughes Acting Assistant Director Matt Wright High Streets Project manager
Background Papers	20 February 2020 Cabinet Report 1 July 2021 Cabinet Reports Planning documentation- application reference F/YR21/0680/FDC

4 Capital Programme Project Update – 24 Wisbech Highstreet

- 4.1 Following the previous Cabinet update regarding the Wisbech High Street Programme, there has been positive progress relating to 24 Wisbech Highstreet.
- 4.2 Following the previous unsuccessful procurement, officers have utilised a framework of contractors to better ensure bids for the project. The Invite to Tender is currently out with a revised deadline of 10 June 2022. Following this date, officers and the project team will rapidly review the tenders received with a view to having a preferred supplier selected as soon as possible. Following the tender evaluation process having been completed, it is anticipated that additional information will then be published enabling consideration of the recommendations set out at paragraph 3.2 of this Report.
- 4.3 Party wall investigations continue through our private sector partners. Currently we are not aware of any risk to the project programme as a result of this work.
- 4.4 Once a preferred supplier is selected and approved by Cabinet, officers will engage with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to align the funding agreement. This will allow the funds to be allocated from the external funding body in readiness for delivery of the project.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The procurement has been carried out in accordance with Fenland District Council's Code of Procurement. In view of the anticipated value of the construction contract, Cabinet member approval is required in order to award.
- 5.2 In view of the deadline for publishing the Agenda for the Cabinet meeting on 13 June 2022, it has not been possible to include information about the tender/valuation process within this report. It is essential both to the progress of the project and the accuracy of the financial information and timetabling proposed by the bidders to conclude the process as soon as possible. Regulation 7 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 permit an exception to the requirement for reports to be published 5 clear days in advance of a meeting in circumstances where the information is not available at the time of publication.
- 5.3 Additional information will therefore be published and circulated to Cabinet Members as soon as possible after those processes have concluded in order to facilitate a timely decision in relation to an award.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The Council has allocated a capital budget of £1.35M to this project which includes a £238k contribution from the NLHF. Members will recognise that in the current economic climate this budgetary provision is unlikely to be sufficient. If the outcome of the tendering process identifies a viable bid, authorisation will be sought to increase the amount set aside in the capital programme based on a comprehensive appraisal of the financial implications of the proposed investment, including updated financing costs. As is noted above, officers are continuing to negotiate with representatives from the NLHF to obtain the optimal amount of grant money to support delivery of the project. However, at this stage there is no guarantee that the NLHF contribution will exceed £238k.