

Supplementary Committee Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Cabinet Monday 2nd September 2024

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.00 pm

Democratic Services: V Messenger (Democratic Services)
Tel: (01992) 564243

18. THE BROADWAY REFURBISHMENT PROJECT (Pages 2 - 4)

(c) Q & A - The Broadway Major Works

A series of questions were proposed ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 2nd September for which responses are attached.

Agenda Item 18

Supplementary Q & A – The Broadway Major Works

A series of questions were proposed ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 2nd September for which responses are as below. The questions broadly relate to topics including scrutiny, charges to occupants, completion of works and communications.

Note – the questions have been re-framed for the purpose of this summary.

1. Question as to why the tender report from Bailey Gardener was not presented to the Communities Select Committee.

- Tender reports are not items that are taken to Communities Scrutiny. Tender award decisions are presented via the Cabinet agenda

A Cabinet report outlining the proposals for the major works at the Broadway was presented on 13th March 2023.

2. Question regarding the consideration of risk of tenants and business not being able to meet their recharges obligations.

- The project risk register does include risks and mitigation in relation to costs and recovery of charges for commercial and residential leaseholders.

We are taking care to calculate the recharges in accordance with individual leases. We are also considering payment arrangements to reduce the impact of the charges and to minimise hardship.

3. A query was raised regarding the approach to be taken by the contractor and, efforts being made to minimise disruption for residents and businesses.

- The contract approach is being refined ; the full details will be agreed following a contract award. The decision on the contract award is to be made at Cabinet on 2nd Sept.

The approach however formed part of the tender commitments and a summary is as follows:

Work is to be carried out to the blocks in 'thirds'. This enables the contractor to minimise the amount of scaffolding required at any one time. Working in thirds effectively divides the site into three sections or "blocks" and each block is scaffolded individually. This approach has several benefits.

1. Minimizes Scaffolding: By working on one block at a time, the amount of scaffolding needed is reduced compared to scaffolding the entire building at once.
2. Achieves Value for Money: Using less scaffolding can save money on rental costs and labour.
3. Reduces Need for Multiple Scaffold Lorries: Fewer scaffolding materials mean fewer deliveries, which reduces disruption to the site and surrounding area.
4. Minimizes Disruption to Residents: By focusing on one section at a time, noise and other disturbances from scaffolding activities are limited, making it less disruptive for nearby residents.

Overall, this method is designed to be more efficient, cost-effective, and less intrusive to the community.

Accompanying this approach is a joint communications approach between EFDC, Qualis and the contractor. This will also include a series of on-going meetings with residents and leaseholders, with the support of a dedicated Project Management team.

4. Question regarding the possibility of the contractor working in a staged manner to minimise disruption.

- The work is to be delivered to an agreed project plan to ensure delivery and completion of works. The response as in Q3 above should answer the question raised here.

The aim is to deliver works with a minimal level of disruption. EFDC recognise the importance of these works and the level of attention this will attract. We will work closely with all stakeholders to keep people apprised of progress.

We are currently developing a website-page on the EFDC website dedicated to the Broadway major works. This will provide people with easy access and quick reference to key information and updates.

5. Assurance was being sought for the works not to span two Christmas trading periods.

- The contract period is 12-months and should only extend across one Christmas period (2024). It is important however to commence works as soon as practicably possible to minimise risk in this regard.

In addition, the staging of the work programme will reduce impact on individuals.

6. Question asked as to whether a report on proposed recharges will be made available to residents and commercial leaseholders

- In accordance with section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act, residents will receive a letter of estimated costs following contract award at Cabinet. This will provide the estimated contribution they will need to make towards the works based on the tender price and the terms of their lease.

Commercial leaseholders will receive notification of costs. This will provide the estimated contribution they will need to make towards the works based on the tender price and the terms of their lease. Again, this can only take place following a contract award decision at Cabinet.

7. Question raised as to whether a copy of the advice from the service charge specialist would be made available to Members, residential and commercial leaseholders

- This is commercially sensitive report for EFDC and will not be available for circulation.

8. Question asking if the Quantity Surveyor's report will be made available to those being recharged

- This is commercially sensitive information and will not be shared. The elements being replaced are at the end of their serviceable lives. Our aim is to make the most cost-effective use of scaffolding in combining the works due.

9. Question raised as to how disputes regarding recharges will be considered

- Residential – There will be an opportunity for residents to make observations on the Notice of Estimate for 30 days following the issue of the notice.
- Commercial – Leaseholders are able to challenge the recharge amount. There is a prescribed process to follow and in brief, this must be made in writing, either directly or through their appointed surveyor.

10. Question in relation to assessment of risk should commercial units become vacant resulting from lease renewal rent levels and recharges.

- This is a risk and one that is being taken seriously. It is our aim to retain all our commercial leaseholders and not to have vacant units. We will work with leaseholders where challenge is presented and explore payment options.

11. Question regarding re-charge calculations and whether any consideration was being made in relation to potential loss of business

- The response to Q2 and Q3 is relevant here. We aim to reasonably and practicably reduce and mitigate impact. We will endeavour to keep disruption to a minimum.

So, in short, no, there is no discount or scale being applied to charges.

12. Question in relation to re-charge periods.

- We are considering options and approaches to minimise the impact as much as possible, and for some the repayment period will be over several years. It is our intention to ensure the Council recovers the charges due. We will work with all concerned to discuss time periods.

13. Question as to how elected representatives can route queries and concerns and, how these will be dealt with.

- We will provide regular updates to councillors, and they will be able to meet us to discuss any concerns.

We have a dedicated project manager for the works along with a resident liaison officer. The contractor will also have resource allocated to ensure the smooth running of the works.

We are happy to adapt our approach as we move through the works to ensure communication and enquiries are responded to in an efficient and timely manner.