

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 29 June 2006

Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Knapman

Item: 5

1. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Recommending:

- (1) That a DDF supplementary estimate of £5,000 be approved to meet the cost of a consultant's fees in relation to the development potential of Council-owned car park sites;
 - (2) That a DDF supplementary estimate of £1,500 be approved to meet the cost of replacing the Atrium ventilators in the Civic Offices; and
 - (3) That a CSB supplementary estimate of £4,340 be approved to finance the shortfall between the lowest tender price and the budget allocation for 2006/07 for the cleaning and window cleaning contract for the Civic Offices.
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Council Owned Car Parks

1. The Cabinet is considering the possible development of car parks owned by the Council and wishes to appoint a consultant to report on the development potential of those sites.
- 1.2 Consultation with member authorities of the Association of Chief Estates Surveyors and Property Managers in Local Government (ACES) has recommended Bidwells, CB Richard Ellis and Gerald Eve as having had current or recent appointments on comparable development projects. Three quotations have been received from those firms and a supplementary DDF estimate of £5,000 is sought in order to cover the cost of the lowest quotation of Bidwells which was in the sum of £3,950 plus VAT and disbursements.
- 1.3 It is emphasised that the consultants will only be conducting feasibility studies and there will be no decisions made on the actual development of the selected car parks at this time. The Town Centre and Car Parks Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel will consider the consultant's development appraisal prior to the matter being considered again by the Cabinet.
- 1.4 The car parks to be the subject of the appraisal are:
 - (a) Bakers Lane - Long and Short Stay Car Parks, Epping;
 - (b) Church Hill, Loughton;
 - (c) Cornmill, Waltham Abbey;
 - (d) Burton Road, The Broadway, Loughton; and
 - (e) Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill

Civic Offices – Atrium Ventilation

- 1.5 An integral part of the fire management strategy for the Atrium area of the Civic Offices complex is, in the event of a fire, having the ability to ventilate automatically the products of combustion via the opening of pneumatic ventilators located at the head of the Atrium.
- 1.6 Following the failure of a number of the ventilators and the subsequent inspection by a specialist contractor, it has been established that due to the age of the ventilators it is no longer possible to procure replacement parts.
- 1.7 To address the defect, it is proposed to install louvred ventilators complete with pneumatic cylinders at a cost of £1,500. A supplementary DDF estimate is sought for this purpose.

Civic Offices – Cleaning and Window Cleaning Contract

- 1.8 Tender documents were issued to six companies for the renewal of the Civic Offices cleaning and window-cleaning contract.
- 1.9 Since the contract was last tendered a number of factors have changed that affect price including the introduction of the working time directive, increases to the minimum wage rate and minimum levels for paid holiday leave.
- 1.10 Whilst every effort was made to allow for these increases at the time of preparing and agreeing the budget for 2006/07, the tender process has resulted in the lowest tender bid submitted by Lewis and Graves Partnership being £6,501 per annum more than the budget allocation for 2006/07. In order to let this contract from 1 August 2006, a supplementary revenue estimate of £4,340 is required for 2006/07.
- 1.11 In approving the letting of this contract the Council will also be committing itself to growth of £6,501 in 2007/08.

2. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN

Recommending:

That the draft Best Value Performance Plan for 2006/07 be adopted.

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 1999 and the Best Value regime require all local authorities to publish an annual performance plan by no later than the end of June each year.
- 2.2 The draft Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) reflects the portfolio structure of the authority that was in operation until the recent Annual Council meeting. Members are reminded that the BVPP is statutorily required to be formally adopted by the full Council. The adoption of the BVPP is also a matter reserved to the Council by its Constitution.
- 2.3 The requirement to prepare an annual performance plan provides an opportunity for authorities to articulate proposals for improvement in the coming year, including how weaknesses will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered for local people. BVPP's are required to:

- (a) summarise the Council's successes in meeting its key priorities, objectives and targets for the last year;
 - (b) show where these priorities, objectives and targets were not met; and
 - (c) detail key priorities, objectives and targets for the forthcoming year.
- 2.4 The BVPP is produced in two versions each year. The detailed version, which is the subject of this report, is primarily prepared for the Council itself, the Government, the Audit Commission, and other bodies involved in the evaluation and assessment of performance. It is intended that the audience for performance plans should be primarily the authority itself, as members and officers with responsibility for delivering local services need to be aware of priorities in order to influence improvement measures. However the detailed BVPP is also available to those who require a comprehensive explanation of how well the Council is performing and its future plans. In addition and in accordance with the recommendation of the Audit Commission, a summary of the BVPP is distributed to all households in the District within the explanatory leaflet issued with the annual Council Tax demands in March each year. The summary version of the BVPP issued in March 2006 also reflected the previous portfolio structure of the authority, and was agreed by the Cabinet on 6 February 2006.
- 2.5 In accordance with Government guidance, BVPP's are required to concentrate on improvement planning and how weaknesses will be addressed, and to demonstrate improvement proposals for the coming year. In accordance with the Government's approach to deregulation, it is no longer necessary to publish information in performance plans that can be obtained from other sources.
- 2.6 In order to reduce the overall length of the BVPP, the majority of the detail not now statutorily required has been removed, and the corporate and strategic information previously included in the BVPP has been transferred to the revised Council Plan currently in preparation. However, areas such as the Council's CPA score and improvement proposals, and local performance indicator data will continue to be detailed in the BVPP. Although not required to be included, it is considered appropriate to continue to incorporate these matters and historic, quartile and other comparative data on Best Value performance indicators within the BVPP, as these details are an essential part of the Council's performance monitoring arrangements.
- 2.7 The Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel considered and agreed the proposed format and content of the draft BVPP for 2006/07 at its meeting on 25 April 2006.
- 2.8 The Council is recommended to adopt the BVPP for 2006/07 (circulated separately). Revisions made to the draft plan to reflect issues raised at the Cabinet meeting are highlighted throughout the document in capitalised text.