

Rother District Council

COUNCIL MEETING

20 February 2023

PUBLIC QUESTION 1



Name of person submitting the question: Mr Bernard Brown

Member to whom the question is to be put: Councillor Oliver

Question

In a statement made by the Director - Place and Climate Change at the 23 January 2023 Overview and Scrutiny Committee it was reported that the estimated total costs of the Blackfriars Spine Road were always in the region of £8m - and that the information presented in the response to a recent Freedom of Information request responded to a strict interpretation of the question.

For clarity the Freedom of Information question asked was: "What was the budget for the construction of the Blackfriars Spine Road, what is the revised budget".

A simple, clear, straightforward question. No interpretation was required. The answer provided was: "Original contract budget was £4,107,526.44 while the forecast as per Bailey Garner's cost report dated 28-11-2022 is £8,679,341.53."

This appears to be an increase of £4,571,815.09.

In view of the statement made by the Director, will the appropriate Cabinet Member advise the tender and contract ESPH reference numbers for any and all tenders and contracts signed between Breheny and Rother District Council for the construction of the Blackfriars Development Spine Road in its entirety.

Will the appropriate Cabinet Member advise the current spend charged to the Contract by 31 December 2022 and the total forecast of the Road completion in its entirety.

Answer

The original contract awarded to Breheny was £4.1m, and it has been noted by the questioner that this figure has increased and is currently projected to be in the region of £8.7m.

There have been a number of instructed changes in relation to this contract which, while they were not included in the original Breheny scope, were budgeted for as part of the wider infrastructure works. This includes £1m worth of utilities works as well as a retaining wall structure that was originally due to be delivered by the housing contractor.

Therefore, it is more appropriate to view the infrastructure enablement works as a whole rather than isolating the Breheny contract or the spine road. The original budget for the Land acquisition, site enablement works, spine road, and associated

professional fees was £12.2m. These costs, due to a number of changes related to design requirements for embankment works and drainage, as well as greater than anticipated land acquisition and professional fees is now £15.8m. This represents a cost change of £3.6m and a full review of the housing development options is being undertaken by the company to ensure the overarching scheme remains viable and cost neutral to the Council.

There is only one contract that ESPH were involved in between Breheney and Rother, ESPH386. The contract signing was handled by Bailey Garner.