

Rother District Council**COUNCIL MEETING**

20 February 2023

MEMBER QUESTION 3

(Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 11.2)



Question to Councillor Oliver from Councillor Ganly

Question**Town Hall Redevelopment Scheme**

At the Meeting of 8 February 2021 RDC Cabinet agreed a budget of £460,000 to develop plans to redevelop the Bexhill Town Hall site through to obtaining Planning Permission. In due course this was approved by Full Council. However, the Planning Committee refused planning consent on 13 October 2022.

In a letter to a resident on 17 November 2022 the Leader of the Council confirmed that a total of £666,000 had actually been spent. This was £206,000 more than approved by Full Council. At the Full Council Meeting on 13 December the Leader of the Council was asked by a Member to reconfirm the amount which had spent on the project. The Leader replied the total was £730,117.

The Leader was asked through a supplementary question if officers, on Cabinet instructions, were working up a further planning application for the project. The leader replied no.

Can the Leader explain:

1. Who authorised the extra £270,117 expenditure?
2. Why was this overspend not reported to any Council body?
3. Can the leader confirm the figure of £730,117 is the absolute, total and final figure to be spent on the current Town Hall project?

Answer

- 1) The original budget approved by Council and added to the Council's capital programme was £460,000. At the time this budget was approved, it was a reasonable expectation of the costs for the anticipated works. There have been some key additional costs that have been incurred which were not included in the original scope but had been identified as necessary by the design team or driven by other resourcing issues. The necessary additional spend was authorised in line with the Council's financial procedure rules and the Chief Finance Officer was notified.
- 2) In accordance with financial procedure rule G.40 the CFO reported the projected overspend at the first appropriate opportunity, which was the 18 July 2022 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in the Quarter 1 update report which was then reported to Cabinet on 25 July 2022. Supplementary to this, additional updates were reported in the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for

Quarter 2 on 21 November 2022 and the quarters 3 report to Cabinet on 6 February 2023.

- 3) The project has now been put on hold until after the election and will be a matter of consideration for the new Council. All substantive spend has now been processed and subject to a couple of small outstanding invoices there will be no significant change to the final figure as presented.

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