

Finance Committee

Meeting held 10 July 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Zahira Naz (Chair), Mike Levery (Deputy Chair), Mike Chaplin, Glynis Chapman, Marieanne Elliot, Mary Lea, Shaffaq Mohammed, Ibbly Ullah and Martin Phipps (Substitute Member)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Toby Mallinson. Councillor Martin Phipps attended as a substitute member.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 It was noted that Appendix C to the report at item 9 on the agenda was not available to the public or press because it contained exempt information. If Members wished to discuss the exempt information, the Committee would ask the members of the public and press to kindly leave for that part of the meeting and the webcast would be paused.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 June 2023 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no public questions or petitions.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

6.1 The Committee received a report containing the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and discussion. The aim of the Work Programme was to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this Committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.

6.2 The Principal Democratic Services Officer reported that, since the agenda had been published, the following additional items had been put forward for inclusion on the work programme: Local Authority Housing Fund, Youth Investment Fund Grants, Economic Recovery Fund Grants and Lease of Land in Millhouses Park.

6.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Finance Committee:-

1. approves the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix, with the inclusion of the additional items reported at the meeting;
2. gives consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme; and 3.
3. notes the referrals from Council (petition and resolutions) detailed in Section 2 of the report be noted and agrees the proposed responses set out in the report.

7. CAPITAL APPROVALS MONTH 2 2023/24

7.1 The Finance Manager submitted a report that provided details of proposed changes to the existing Capital Programme as brought forward in Month 02 2023/24.

7.2 Officers agreed to provide Members with further information on whether more sustainable heating options for schools were explored.

7.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Finance Committee:-

- (i) approves the proposed additions and variations to the Capital Programme listed in Appendix 1; and
- (ii) approves the acceptance of grant funding as identified in Appendix 2.

7.4 Reasons for Decision

7.4.1 The proposed changes to the Capital Programme will improve the services to the people of Sheffield.

7.4.2 To formally record changes to the Capital Programme and gain Member approval for changes in line with Financial Regulations and to reset the Capital Programme in line with latest information.

7.5 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

7.5.1 A number of alternative courses of action are considered as part of the process undertaken by Officers before decisions are recommended to Members. The recommendations made to Members represent what Officers believe to be the best options available to the Council, in line with Council priorities, given the constraints on funding and the use to which funding is put within the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

8. SOCIAL HOUSING DECARBONISATION FUND (SHDF) 2

8.1 The Housing Decarbonisation Manager submitted a report seeking approval for

the Council to become the accountable body for £4.07m of grant funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) 2 scheme. The funding would contribute toward the delivery of energy improvement measures to approximately 370 Council homes.

8.2 The project would directly support Sheffield's strategies and ambitions centred on net zero carbon by 2030, tackling fuel poverty and providing affordable warmth. The associated Government funding is time limited. To not access the funding would be a missed opportunity. The £4.07m would offset some of the project cost, reducing the pressure on the council housing capital programme and indeed the wider Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

8.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Finance Committee approves the Council becoming the accountable body for £4.07m of grant funding from Tees Valley Combined Authority for the SHDF 2 scheme, subject to the grant terms not being materially different to those set out in this report.

8.4 **Reasons for Decision**

8.4.1 The SHDF2 grant provides an excellent opportunity to help fund the retrofitting of some of the least efficient council housing stock across the city.

8.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

8.5.1 The alternative is not to accept the funding. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the capital programme budget would not benefit from the £4.07m funding in contribution toward this major improvement project.

9. **FARGATE AND HIGH STREET, FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND - FRONT DOOR SCHEME UPDATE**

9.1 The Head of Regeneration and Property Services and the Principal Development Officer submitted a report updating Members on the delivery of the Future High Streets Fund 'Front Door Scheme' and seeking approval to award capital grants of:

(1) £250,000 to The Sheffield Church Burgesses Trust, towards the costs of shop front improvements on Chapel Walk and internal access works and reconfiguration of vacant upper floors for new workspace;

(2) £650,000 to The Foundry Sheffield towards the costs of shop front improvements, internal ground floor access and reconfiguration works to vacant upper floors at Victoria Hall, Chapel Walk;

(3) £250,000 for the Council to commission works of Public Art in Chapel Walk;
and

(4) £90,000 dedicated small grants for Chapel Walk that would be made

available through Renew Sheffield to assist new and small businesses with capital fit-out costs on occupying vacant property.

9.2 An evaluation report would be produced at the end of the financial year to monitor the return on investment, Officers agreed to share the report with the Committee.

9.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Finance Committee:-

(a) approves the grant of £250,000 to Sheffield Church Burgesses Trust and £650,000 to The Foundry Sheffield;

(b) allocates £250,000 to the Council for its commissioning of works of public art in Chapel Walk as set out in this report; and

(c) grants £90,000 to Renew Sheffield to assist new and small businesses with capital fit-out costs on occupying vacant property in Chapel Walk.

9.4 **Reasons for Decision**

9.4.1 Approval of the grant funding to the landowners will secure additional private and public sector investment in the buildings. It will contribute to delivering a fully accessible concert/performance space and new and enhanced commercial floorspace.

9.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.5.1 Do nothing - Without grant assistance the buildings are likely to remain vacant and/or underused and issues arising from anti-social behaviour will not be addressed. The enhancement of Chapel Walk was an integral element of the vision for Fargate and High Street approved by Government. The vision highlights the importance of this pedestrian route but also the opportunities to introduce new uses into vacant property.