

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	17 July 2014
Subject:	Lowlands Recreation Ground
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Caroline Bruce, Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Keith Ferry, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business, Planning and Regeneration
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	Greenhill Ward
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

In 2012 Harrow Council secured funding from the GLA for Harrow Town Centre. This included capital funds for the creation of a town park & performance space / café at Lowlands Recreation Ground. The tender process to secure a contractor to redevelop the site has now been completed.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Environment and Enterprise to enter into contract with the contractor selected through the procurement process to redevelop Lowlands Recreation Ground.

Reason: (For recommendation) By providing authority to proceed the Council will be able to enter into contract with the successful contractor and complete the capital works in accordance with Grant Agreement, Cabinet decision March 2012, and the Council's capital programme allocation.

Section 2 – Report

In March 2012 Harrow Council agreed to enter into a Grant Agreement with the GLA to secure funds from the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund (OLF). The Corporate Director for the then Place Shaping Directorate was delegated to enter into contract with the GLA. The Council's capital programme and budget approved spending the GLA funds as part of the town centre capital programme.

The OLF Grant included funds to create a town park and a performance Space providing new cultural facilities to serve local communities in the Town Centre.

The design for Lowlands was chosen following public consultation and the agreement of the Town centre public realm board which included Ward Councillors, the Portfolio Holder, Senior Officers and the GLA.

The new park and performance space and café will support the following council's priorities

Making a difference for communities through the provision of a space where community events can be held, and dance and music groups can perform.

Making a difference for local businesses, by attracting people to visit town centre businesses, before or after they attend an event in the Park.

Making a difference for families, who can enjoy performances in the park, refreshments at the café, and new play space.

The procurement process has now been completed to secure a contractor to landscape Lowlands and build the Performance Space and Café. The value of the contract is £991,979 of which £741,419.57 capital will be provided by the GLA. In addition the GLA will provide £15,000 towards an opening event at Lowlands.

The tender activity is described in the enclosed Evaluation and Award Report.

Authority is required to enable the Corporate Director for Environment and Enterprise to enter into an agreement with the successful contractor to build the performance space / café and landscape the park.

Options considered

Option A – Delegate authority to the Corporate Director to enter into a contract with the selected provider that has demonstrated through their tender submission the ability to deliver the service tendered.

Option B – Do nothing, do not build the performance space and café and create a town park and advise the GLA that funding is no longer required.

Legal Implications

The funding agreement provides for the monies to be paid to the Council by the GLA on the basis of a grant rather than a loan. The monies are only repayable to the GLA in the event of a breach of the terms of the grant agreement by the Council.

The value of the works contract falls below the threshold requiring compliance with the full EU tendering rules.

Financial Implications

The Lowlands project (part of Town Centre Regeneration) is in the Council's agreed capital programme. This project is slipped from 13/14 and has a carry forward budget of £1.42M, of which £741K is provided by the GLA. Apart from capital funding, the GLA has also agreed to provide £15K revenue funding towards the costs of an opening event.

The cost of the proposed work by the preferred bidder is £992K. Apart from the proposed work, other financial commitments against the capital budget include existing orders for civil works and professional fees including project management. These are estimated at £270K and £139K respectively. All these costs (£1,401K in total) can be met from within the budget available. It should however be noted that, for construction work of this type, it is prudent to have a contingency budget to fund any unforeseen additional costs during the build phase. This is currently not available for Lowlands project. Should additional costs be incurred, this would need to be contained from within the overall existing budgets for Town Centre Regeneration programme.

An agreement has been obtained from the GLA to carry forward unspent OLF funding to 14/15, however this will be the final extension of spend deadline. Any grant monies not spent before 31st March 2015 will need to be returned to the GLA.

Performance Issues

1. The recommendation will support the council's priority to make a difference for local businesses, performance measures can include footfall counts in the town centre, and town centre vacancy rates.
2. The performance space and café will provide young people with work experience and training opportunities in catering, customer care, marketing, business administration and events management. This in turn will help young people gain sustainable employment as a result of the experience and skills gained whilst working at the performance space and café.
3. Total vacancy rate based on frontage was 9.37% in June 2014. The ambition is to reduce the rate to less than 8%. A low figure represents good performance.

Environmental Impact

Improved public realm.

Create Harrow as a destination for performance.

Demonstrate Harrow Council's commitment to the implementation of the Area Action Plan.

Unlock the development potential through the creation of the infrastructure for cultural life in the Metropolitan Town Centre.

As part of the development of the park 10 large Pin Oak trees have already been planted with a further 3 Oaks and 49 other new trees to be being planted before the development is completed. New grass areas are to be created sown with wild flowers with paths created through the planted areas.

The building structure is to be formed with the "Tradis" timber panel system including "Warmcell" insulation and a breathable membrane

The environmental implications of each activity associated with the progress of the scheme will be assessed at each stage as appropriate.

Risk Management Implications

The project is being let to tight timescales and budget constraints. The project must be completed by the first week in February 2015 and therefore require the selected supplier to start engaging with sub contractors as soon as possible in order to secure lead-times on critical items.

A JCT Standard form of Contract without Quantities has been selected as most appropriate. A Contract Administrator appointed along with an external QS. Harrow has appointed a dedicated Project Manager to oversee the project to completion.

Equalities implications

An initial equality impact assessment was produced and found no negative impacts. The provision of accessible performance space to all will add to the

enjoyment of the public realm. Evaluation of Under One Sky shows that events and performances can be used to promote community cohesion.

Council Priorities

Supporting our Town Centre, our local shopping centres and businesses.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jessie Mann	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 7 July 2014		
Name: Matthew Adams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 7 July 2014		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Alex Dewsnap	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional Director Strategic Commissioning
Date: 7 July 2014		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Hanif Islam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Corporate Director (Environment & Enterprise)
Date: 7 July 2014		

Ward Councillors notified:	YES
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Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: John Greenfield, Major Projects Manager, 020 8424 1416

Background Papers: None

Call-in Waived by the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	NOT APPLICABLE <i>[Call-in applies]</i>
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