

Corporate Policy & Resources Committee 09 December 2024

Responses from Officers to Questions Raised at the Meeting

Item 5 – Knowle Green Estates Annual Report 2023/24

Question: How many tenants are currently housed by Knowle Green Estates and what is their mark-up eg families, single people?

Response: Knowle Green Estates currently has

- 174 properties
- 23 single occupancy, 151 tenancies to families, or households of more than 1 person.
- Total number of people living in our accommodation is 535.

Item 6 - Q2 Revenue Monitoring Report

Question: Why was the agreement to demolish Thameside House never actioned?

Response: The decision to not progress the demolition of Thameside House, was due to an approach early in 2023 from Travelodge wanting to convert the existing building into a budget hotel. An update report was taken to the Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee (BIG) in June about marketing the site, based on this interest. Marketing was only concluded recently and reported to BIG in December.

Item 7 – Q2 Capital Monitoring Report

Question: What is the process for dealing with Virements and who is responsible for doing so?

Response: The Financial Regulations for Councillor ([Part4dFinancialRegulations 240718.pdf](#)) outlines how virements should be dealt with as well as the Financial Regulations A16 that states “The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee or the Council about whether a decision is likely to be considered contrary or not wholly in accordance with the budget. Actions that may be ‘contrary to the budget’ include:

- a) initiating new policies and financial commitments
- b) committing expenditure in future years above budget
- c) budget or spending transfers above virement limits “

“MANAGING EXPENDITURE: SCHEME OF VIREMENT (BUDGET TRANSFERS)

A25 The Scheme of Virement is intended to enable the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads and their staff to manage budgets with a degree of flexibility within the overall policy framework determined by the Council and therefore, to optimise the use of resources.

A26 The Council is responsible for agreeing procedures for virement of expenditure between budget headings.

A27 Virements are the temporary transfer of surplus budget provisions between ‘estimate’ headings. These do not affect the base budgets for future years.

A28 Group Heads are responsible for agreeing in-year virements within delegated limits, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer where required.

A29 Key controls for the Scheme of Virement are: a) It is administered by the Chief Finance Officer within guidelines set by the Council. Any variation from this scheme requires the approval of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. b) The overall budget is agreed by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and approved by the Council. The Deputy Chief Executives, Group Heads and budget managers are therefore authorised to incur expenditure in accordance with the estimates that make up the budget. The rules below cover virement. For this purpose, a service comprises a separate page or column in the published budget. c) Virement does not create additional overall budget liability. Virements are not permitted on the following revenue expenditure heads unless the Chief Finance Officer has approved their use: a) Business rates resulting from revaluation b) Insurance c) Capital financing charges d) Members’ allowances e) Government grants f) And any others identified by the Chief Finance Officer

A30 The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads are expected to exercise their overall discretion in managing their budgets Updated 18 July 2024 Financial Regulations reasonably and prudently. For example they should aim to avoid supporting recurring expenditure from on-off sources of savings or additional income of creating future commitments, including full-year effects of decisions made partway through a year for which they have not identified future resources.

A31 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives may transfer or "vire" funds between budget heads (both revenue and capital) within their services, subject to the following general parameters: (a) All corporate guidelines and policies will be followed; (b) Conditions of Service will be complied with; (c) A single 'one-off' budget may not be transferred to fund a new ongoing item of expenditure; and (d) Budgets not under effective control of the budget holder may not be vired eg rates and insurance.

A32 Any such transfer will be agreed with the Group Head and discussed with the service accountant before implementation and agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.

A33 Any proposal to transfer funds between services requires the approval of the Management Team (MAT) and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

A34 Any virement (revenue or capital) with a value greater than £100,000 must be approved by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee."

Item 8 –Eclipse Leisure Centre Financing

Question: Where is the Minium Revenue Provision for the Internal Financing Reflected?

Response: A response is to follow

Item 9 – Corporate Policy & Resources Committee – Budget, Fees & Chares, Capital Bids, Revenue Growth and Savings for 2025/26

Question: Could more information be provided on an item in the Fees & Charges entitled 'Window Replacement (non-Competent persons scheme)

Response: If a homeowner uses a FENSA accredited company/installer then they do not require to submit a Building Regulations application to ourselves but if they don't use an accredited company then they MUST submit an application to ourselves or other Building Control Authority ("Approved Inspector") that incurs a fee.

Question: Could the Council consider giving a bigger discount for HMO Landlords to Encourage a Better Calibre of Landlords?

Response: The risk based HMO licencing regime we operate is based on cost recovery for the staff resources to deliver the service. If we were to reduce this and give a discount, there would need to be a consequential increase in the other fees for those who are given one- or three-year licences. It is suggested that we retain the current fee structure (due to extremely limited resources to look at the matter

now) but that we monitor during 2025/26 so we can ascertain the actual time taken to deal with the licences with a view to a more detailed overhaul based on evidence for 2026/27 (if justified).

Question: Why is the figure for the replacement of I.T. equipment significantly higher in 2026/27 compared to 2027/28 and 2028-29?

Response: In 2026/27, when there is an election, all the members will receive a new tablet hence the figure of £51K quoted for that year.

£11K is a year on year figure for all the tablets that have been approved by senior management for staff use, as we have a rolling refresh requirement for them

Item 14 – Council Land and Property Disposals

Question: Can a list be provided of the site allocations that were removed from the draft Local Plan and how much will this affect the total housing list?

Response:

Ref	Address	Number of dwellings	Notes
ST4/002	Bridge Street Car Park, Hanover House & Sea Cadet Building, Bridge Street, Staines	158	
ST1/029	Surrey County Council Buildings, Burges Way, Staines, TW18 1YA	30	Proposed to remove from the Local Plan prior to start of Examination (May 2023) due to flood risk and confirmed by E&S 29 Feb 2024
ST1/030	Fairways Day Centre, Knowle Green, Staines, TW18 1AJ	30	Proposed to remove from the Local Plan prior to start of Examination (May 2023) due to flood risk and confirmed by E&S 29 Feb 2024
ST4/010	Riverside Car Park, Thames Street, Staines, TW18 4UD	35	

ST4/011	Thames Lodge Hotel, Thames Street, Staines, TW18 4SJ	40	
		293	

Item 22 – Solar Canopies Over the ‘Eclipse’ Leisure Centre Car Park

Question: What Social Value is Linked to this Project

Response from Preferred Bidder:

Dear Spelthorne Borough Council,

Thank you for your message relating to the Councillors decision to comply with a Social Value request.

We are delighted to contribute to these important initiatives and welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the Council’s Climate Change and Sustainability team. As part of this commitment, we will plant 30 trees in Spelthorne Borough Parks, consulting with our supply chain to select the most appropriate species for the environment.

Furthermore, we would also commit to supporting the Council’s Climate Change and Sustainability team in other areas, such as:

- Promoting local skills and employment opportunities.*
- Encouraging the growth of responsible regional businesses.*
- Social engagement with local schools and universities.*