

Call-in Request

I am writing on behalf of Cllr Fitch-Tillett, Cllr Vickers and myself to request the decision taken by the Cabinet on 15th April 2024, to authorise works of a value of some £870,000 to the Rocket House, Cromer be called into the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their review.

1) The Resolution

The Cabinet took the following decision at its meeting of 15th April 2024:-

Agenda item 10 - Rocket House, Cromer as recorded in the Decision List Monday, 15 April 2024

RESOLVED

- 1.1 To delegate to the Asset Strategy Manager (Estates), in consultation with the s.151 officer, the existing allocated capital budget to action remedial works as soon feasibly possible to the property, as outlined in the Intrusive Inspection and Damp Investigation Report, subject to the vacation of the tenant (RNLI).
- 1.2 Delegate to the Asset Strategy Manager (Estates), in consultation with the s.151 officer, to utilise any remaining capital budget to undertake energy improvement works to the property in order to increase the energy performance rating to the required standard for leasing.
- 1.3 Delegate authority to the Asset Strategy Manager to commence negotiation of terms for a new lease, with the existing RNLI tenant, with a further report back to Cabinet in accordance with governance procedures.

Reason for the decision:

To address the ongoing issues with damp in the building and increase the energy performance of the building.

2) Reasons for the Call-In to Overview & Scrutiny

The Call-In request is made because of concerns over the decision taken by Cabinet to undertake significant works to the Rocket House Building, Cromer without sufficient supporting evidence being made available in public in respect of the following:-

- A developed options appraisal showing the costs, advantages, disadvantages, and risks associated with each option;
- A detailed business case showing the historical income and revenue and capital costs for the building to date; and the future projected income and revenue and capital costs together with the forecast payback period and full risk assessment arising from a decision to proceed.

Background to Call-In request:-

The issues relating to Rocket House were discussed at the 4th September 2023 Cabinet. This was done in private session and the agenda item was a restricted report, otherwise known as 'purple papers', which were not made public. Though the report detailed various options, they had no cost estimates. The 8th January 2024 Cabinet approved funding for investigative work on the building. The 15th April 2024 Cabinet decided to renovate the Rocket House but the agenda report did not detail any options, their associated costs or business case.

In addition, no information about the options for Rocket House have been made public, nor easily accessible to all members.

3) Alternative Course of Action

We request that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee acknowledge that the decision of Cabinet to authorise spend against the capital budget of £1million to renovate Rocket House cannot be justified without an options analysis and business case. Overview & Scrutiny will be asked to refer this back to Cabinet to address these points.

Cllr Christopher Cushing,
Leader of the Conservative Group

Monday 22nd April 2024