

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	9	
<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet	
<b>Date:</b>	15 November 2024	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Wisbech High Street Update	

## 1 Purpose / Summary

1.1 To provide Cabinet with a monthly update regarding:

- Ongoing construction work at 24 High Street, Wisbech.
- Progress regarding the options for 11-12 High Street, Wisbech.

## 2 Key Issues

### 2.1 24 High Street Construction Progress

2.2 Etec, FDC's main contractor, continues with the construction work on 24 High Street, Wisbech. Significant progress as at the time of writing (23 October) is as follows;

2.3 Second floor brick and blockwork are complete with front portion and façade complete to third floor level.

2.4 Floor joist installation to third floor complete and approx. 50% of third floor boarding complete.

2.5 First and second floor shell complete except timber partitions which are still to be started.

2.6 Brick pier repair to rear of number 23 level with blockwork walls however will need to all be replaced with reclaimed bricks and lime mortar, as signed off by the Conservation Officer.

Description of ongoing works being carried out:

- Blockwork and brickwork being laid.
- DPM ongoing.
- Scaffolding installed.
- Steel installation complete
- Further props removed as progression upwards continues – currently at third floor.
- Insulation installation ongoing.
- Cavity barrier installation ongoing
- Lintel installation ongoing.
- Brick repair to corner of number 23 ongoing.
- Windows delivered to site compound ready for installation

2.7 The expected completion date is currently March 2025 and that remains subject to negotiation with the contractor. The contractor has asked for an extension of time due to the laying of the slab and an additional slab

extension being required. This issue remains subject to discussion between the client and contractor, with no resolution expected in the short term.

2.8 The contractor also submitted a variation in cost due to the volume of bricks required for the build compared with those detailed in the original bill of quantities for the building. The issue of materials is now resolved with the cost to FDC less than half of the contractor's original claim.

2.9 As highlighted last month we anticipate a contractor claim for time incurred due to the differing frontages either side of 24 High Street. No claim has been received as yet to assess and respond to.

2.10 Images highlighting progress:



Front of site



Rear of site



Third floor blockwork progressing



First floor rear flat bedroom, looking back towards flat entrance door

## **2.11 11-12 High Street**

2.12 The cost of developing a meaningful building in the space where 11-12 High Street formally stood remains considerable. Various options have been considered following the private developer pulling out due to affordability issues some 2 ½ years ago. It should be remembered that the private developer was buying the plot for £1 and would have received £1m in National Lottery Heritage Funding – and still could not make the project viable. Following discussions with Members, another option is being assessed for the space in terms of its cost.

2.13 Once a design has been settled on, the project will take several years to complete. Steps will include;

- Affordability; The cost of FDC's far smaller project at 24 High Street is around £3m. 11-12 is a space that is far larger – if this were built out the cost will exceed 24 High Street's significantly. Even a building on part of the plot will match – or exceed (given inflation in the past 18 months) the cost of 24 High Street. Potential funding partners such as the Wisbech Town Board, CPCA and National Lottery Heritage Fund will require an application process, associated governance and the time such processes take – with no guarantee of funding success.
- Designing the building.

- Planning permission – and the building is in a conservation area.
- Development of the specification for the building and the procurement pack for tender
- Tender, appointment of contractor, pre-contract period and the build itself. 24 High Street will take 2 years to construct due to the site difficulties and complexities, as well as the location of a compound away from the site and the High Street, meaning no road closures (unless very brief) are allowed.

Wards Affected	Medworth ward	
Forward Plan Reference	KEY21APR22/01	
Portfolio Holders	Cllr Chris Seaton Cllr Ian Benney Cllr Chris Boden	Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originators	Phil Hughes Mark Greenwood	Head of Service Head of Property, Assets and Major Projects
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Background Papers		

## 1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with a monthly update regarding:
- Ongoing building work at 24 High Street, Wisbech.
  - Progress regarding the viable options for 11-12 High Street, Wisbech

## 2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 This paper is for regular information regarding 2 key Council projects and does not require a Cabinet decision.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

3.1 N/A

### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 Several options have been considered for 11-12 High Street. Revisions have taken place to try and deliver a project that is affordable, works with necessary consideration of the historic nature of the High Street in Wisbech and delivers a building that provides value to the town centre in terms of a shop and residential accommodation.

### **5 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **5.1 Legal Implications**

None at this time.

#### **5.2 Financial Implications**

5.3 24 High Street; As highlighted in the report above, there will be a cost implication to the Council regarding original estimates of construction materials, their deployment and the associated prelim's and management costs for an extended period of work.

5.4 In addition, the issues regarding the building slab has caused a delay. This remains a key point of discussion between the contractor and FDC's project team. This will be resolved this month with a firm cost available at that time.

#### **5.5 Equality Implications**

N/A

### **6 SCHEDULES**

N/A