


<b>Mayoral Decision – Front Cover</b>	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Ford Square and Cavell Street Gardens Contract Variation: Blakedown Landscapes</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Place Directorate	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted

<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Iqbal Hossain
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Jaskaren Mahil, Capital Delivery Team
<b>Wards affected</b>	Whitechapel
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria.
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt information</b>	N/A
<b>Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome</b>	Priority 4: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure

### **Executive Summary**

A Mayoral decision is sought to vary the contract for the contractor Blakedown Landscapes, who were appointed to undertake landscape improvements at Ford Square and Cavell Street Gardens in Whitechapel, in March 2022.

The contract value needs to be increased from £440,936.90 to £728,189 (variation of 287,252.10).

The cost of the contract has risen primarily due to an error that was discovered in the topographic survey for the site once the construction works had started, it was discovered that the survey only covered half the scale of the site.

Although some uplift in costs has also occurred due to the increase in construction costs and materials nationally, which is included in the revised costs.

Full details are set out in the accompanying report for individual Mayoral decisions.

## **Recommendations:**

The Mayor is recommended to:

1. Approve the contract variation for Blakedown Landscapes by £287,252.10.
2. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2.

## **1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 A Mayoral decision is needed to vary the construction contract for Blakedown Landscapes by £287,252.10, taking the contract price up to £728,189. This is required to conclude the landscape works at Ford Square and Cavell Street Gardens. The price of the contract has risen due to an error discovered in the topographic survey, as well as due to rises in construction costs.

## **2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 As the works are near completion on site, no alternative feasible options are available. The works could not be paused or stopped on site as this would cause additional delays to the programme and additional costs to the council.

## **3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 Ford Square and Cavell Street Gardens are two open spaces in the Whitechapel Ward, landscaping improvements are being undertaken at the sites to improve the quality of the public squares.
- 3.1 As mentioned, a Mayoral decision is needed to vary the contract for the contractor Blakedown Landscapes who were appointed to undertake the landscape improvements, the variation will take the contract price from £440,936.90 to £728,189 (variation of 287,252.10). This is following an error that was discovered in the topographic survey, which only covered half the scale of the site, as well as to meet the increase in construction costs.
- 3.2 Additional Section 106 funding of £369,163.68 was approved by AMCD Delivery Board on 31 March 2023, to complete the works on site, this takes the total project budget to £1,068,463.68. The construction costs will be covered through the above funding, the additional funding will also cover other project costs, such as costs for the contract administrator, project management resources and highways consents.

- 3.3 As these works are concluding on site imminently (June 2023), an urgent decision is needed on the contract variation. Full details are attached in the accompanying report for individual Mayoral decisions.

#### **4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The landscape improvements at Ford Square and Cavell Street Gardens will not cause any negative equality implications. The improvement to the squares will benefit the whole community by increasing access to good quality public spaces and good quality play facilities that are accessible and fit for purpose. They will support good mental health and wellbeing. The proposed improvements will contribute towards the measures of increased use and satisfaction with green spaces and increased quality and function of open space.
- 4.2 The two squares have been designed to be step free so that they can be accessible as possible. The play equipment at Ford Square has also been designed with accessibility in mind.

#### **5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 It is worth noting that the Ford Square and Cavell Street Gardens Project has been subject to two rounds of public consultations and extensive community engagement and has gained planning permission.
- 5.2 The community have been kept updated on the works at the sites by displaying public notices at the squares. Additional comments from members of the community have also been taken into consideration to finalise the proposals, such as retention of a tree at Ford Square. The multi-use games proposal at Cavell Street Gardens was also removed from the proposal's pre-construction, following concerns from the community.
- 5.3 Therefore, given the high local support and input into the project, it would not be acceptable for the works to be left uncomplete, although given the project is near completion, this does not apply as much now.

#### **6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 Funding for this variation of £287,252.10 will come from S106 funding that was approved by the Asset Management Capital Delivery Board on 31 March 2023.

#### **7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 The variation of the contract with the existing Landscape contractor would appear to make commercial sense and would be permitted under the Public Procurement Regulations 2015.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- Individual Mayor Decision - Ford Square & Cavell Street Gardens Contract Variation - Blakedown Landscapes – Updated 080623

### **Appendices**

- None

### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

- Ford Square planning application reference number: PA/19/02672/NC
- Cavell Street Gardens planning application reference number: PA/19/02669/NC

### **Officer contact details for documents:**

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