



**NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL
CAPITAL PROJECTS REPORT – DECEMBER 2022**

COMMUNITY HALL, SPORTS PAVILION AND NURSERY PROJECT

Following a Project Re-Set Meeting with Synergy and Hollaway Architects, it was advised that a single building new-build would be more cost effective than endeavouring to refurbish the old community hall for use as a sports pavilion due to the need, in particular for extensive drainage and insulation works. The architect was, therefore, tasked with coming up with a design based on the Council's approved brief and the Project Steering Group then met again with the Synergy and Hollaway teams. The initial design was estimated to be significantly over budget, thus, the Council approved detailed design work up to the stage whereby a robust cost estimate could be produced.

The Architect met with the proprietor of the nursery and it was ascertained that design provision for the nursery aspect of the project could be significantly reduced. The architect also scaled back other areas of the design so that the resulting detailed design came within 5 square metres of that which was deemed to be affordable within the budget set by the Council.

Regrettably, the resulting detailed cost plan did not reflect the down-scaled design and, in fact, instead of the expected project cost reduction, a significant cost increase was identified, the result of which was that it was indicated that the project was currently approximately £500,000.00 over budget.

Compounding financial issues for the Council was the fact that, some NINE months after submitting an application for a £1 million Public Works Loan, Parish Borrowing had still not completed its review and determined the outcome of the application. Thus, at the current time, the Council was not in a position to place a contract (highlighting the position the Council would have now found itself in had it proceeded to place a contract relating to the project in its original format back in January 2022). A further appeal to Parish Borrowing to conclude its deliberations with some expediency had been submitted and copied to our Member of Parliament, since, had the application been dealt with within the 6-8

week timeframe that had been expected, the Council would very likely have avoided many if not all of this year's interest rate rises.

It was the view of the Project Steering Group that, whilst awaiting the outcome of the Public Works Loan application, the PSG should meet with the Synergy and Hollaway representatives to (i) seek to understand why Synergy and Hollaway Architects appeared to be at odds with each other in regard to design scale and design cost, (ii) seek clarification as to why, with a significantly scaled-back design, project costings have increased, resulting in the project being significantly over budget and (iii) to instruct the architect further regarding the need to strip out any 'dead space' from the current design and to remove any expensive but non-essential design features such as curved walls.

It remained the PSG view that if the afore-mentioned issues could be clarified and resolved, then a high quality purpose-built building could be achieved.

A meeting with the Design Team was, therefore, arranged so that a final decision about progressing the budget-led project could be made.

Town Clerk
15th December 2022