

CABINET

1 SEPTEMBER 2014

Present: Mayor (Chair)
Councillors D Scudder, K Crout, S Johnson, I Sharpe and M Watkin

Also present: Councillors N Bell

Officers: Head of Democracy and Governance
Managing Director
Democratic Services Manager
Economic Development and Infrastructure Planner
Programme Manager
Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services
Section Head - Parks and Open Spaces
Town Centre Manager

19 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies had been received.

20 **DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST (IF ANY)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

21 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2014 were submitted and signed.

22 **CONDUCT OF MEETING**

Councillor Bell spoke on behalf of the Labour Group at this meeting. Cabinet agreed some changes to the agenda order.

23 **WATFORD BUSINESS PARK - STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN AND REGENERATION INITIATIVE**

Cabinet received a report on the Strategic Master Plan and Regeneration Initiative of Watford Business Park. Following a previous report to Cabinet in November 2013 the first part of the Master Plan and Initiative was now complete and work was needed to develop this and address the outcomes and potential deliverable projects identified. It also outlined the proposed next steps in taking forward the proposed phased redevelopment of Watford Business Park.

Councillor Sharpe commented that this was an important initiative which was key to the regeneration of the town. Watford Business Park had much greater potential and investment from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had been key in unlocking what the Council wanted to do.

The Managing Director commended officers for taking the project forward quickly and for delivering a route with the potential to secure returns. He outlined that the drivers for the initiative were jobs growth as currently the business park had a low level of employment for the scale of the site. Secondly, to improve the commercial stock as new companies were interested in moving to Watford and the town needed flexible stock in order to be able to accommodate their needs. The Managing Director informed Cabinet that the scheme would take place over an extended period of time, 5-15 years.

An important element highlighted by the Managing Director was the business engagement and consultation which would be taking place. This would be to ensure the park was meeting the needs of current businesses and attracting new businesses.

It was outlined that there were several options for procuring future enhancements and that the report also sought to extend the Greenhill Asset Management role into the next stage of delivery by contract exemption. Substantive future opportunities would go out to procurement and different procurement options were available depending on the needs of the site or specific zones within the site.

The Managing Director drew Cabinet's attention to the plan contained in the report. Zone A would be most appropriate for potential office development, zone C for trade counters and car show rooms, in order to concentrate the car show rooms in one area on the site. Zone B could be a combination of relocation zones, light industrial and new start-up businesses. The remainder of the site was an opportunity for better estate or lease management.

The Mayor commented that the Council would like Watford Business Park to complement not compete with Croxley Business Park and to secure ongoing improved revenue for the Council.

Councillor Bell welcomed the report and asked whether officers had identified all the businesses on the site and commented that he felt enough had been done regarding the parking on the business park.

The Regeneration and Property Section Head responded that the car parking could be managed better by incorporating the appropriate number of car parking spaces into the redevelopment. He had also been contacted by businesses who wanted to consolidate their properties. The Mayor and Managing Director commented on the complex nature of the leases on the site and that there may be several layers of leases before getting to the business which occupied the location.

RESOLVED

that Cabinet:

1. notes the completion of the Stage 1 review of Watford Business Park (WBP) by Greenhill Asset Management (GAM) on behalf of Watford Borough Council.
2. endorses the production and subsequent implementation of an overall strategy to oversee the phased redevelopment of Watford Business Park with the aim of delivering: more fit for purpose commercial stock, better suited to meeting the needs of business; increasing the overall number of jobs delivered within the estate; and increased revenue generation for Watford Borough Council to support future service delivery
3. endorses commissioning GAM by exception to undertake further development and master plan strategy work over the next twelve months to September 2015 or sooner if possible, with the remaining LEP funding allocated for strategic development which totals £150,000.
4. notes and endorses Greenhill's role going forward would additionally include, where appropriate, negotiating various property related activities that complement the emerging strategy and that the fees for these activities would be performance related and considered on their own merits before being committed to.
5. approves that, once GAM further work was substantially complete, to undertake to go to the market and tender for the estate management of the site of WBP which would include the development of detailed zone by zone business plans/cases.
6. notes that, when satisfactory business cases are concluded, to tender for a partner to undertake all zone redevelopment or alternatively a zone by zone redevelopment allowing for variant bids.

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A DRAFT 10 YEAR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY FOR WATFORD

The Environmental Services Client Manager (Parks and Streets) presented a report to Cabinet with the first draft of a Sports Facilities Strategy for Watford which identified a range of strategic goals for the future of sports facilities within the borough as well as an action plan for delivery. Officers had worked across departments and with key stakeholders to produce the strategy.

Councillor Scudder commented that the strategy looked at the circumstances locally and nationally and recognised the complexity of the situation. He highlighted that there were three strategic goals contained in the document and that the strategy came with an action plan and details on how the consultation would be managed.

In response to a question from the Mayor the Environmental Services Client Manager (Parks and Streets) stated that all the clubs on the strategic sites identified had been contacted and invited to be involved, most had come and there had been some good feedback about the Council's approach. They would now be looking at wider consultation. He went on to outline the consultation plan

over the forthcoming months concluding with a report to Cabinet in December 2014. Following this, the delivery of the strategy would take place over the next ten years. A longer term delivery and funding plan would be developed to start at the beginning of the next financial year.

Councillor Crout praised the draft strategy for recognising inclusivity at an affordable price. He commented that it was right to look at the use of the pitches and provide what was needed at the right cost.

Following a question by Councillor Crout about the role of the Council's two leisure centres, the Environmental Services Client Manager (Parks and Streets) responded that the operator, SLM's, contract would be reviewed in 2018 and it would then be an opportunity to incorporate some delivery aspects of the strategy within the future contract tendering process. However, the strategy was mainly focussed on outdoor sports facilities.

In response to a question from Councillor Bell the Environmental Services Client Manager (Parks and Streets) commented that the four strategic sites had been chosen as they were mostly owned by the Council and were the sites with which the Council can make the greatest achievements. Over the ten year strategy it would be necessary to speak to potential partners e.g., schools, who were significant land owners.

RESOLVED

that Cabinet endorses the draft Sports Facilities Strategy and approves it for wider consultation with the local community as detailed in section 3.7 of the report.

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RELOCATION OF GLEN ROVERS GAELIC FOOTBALL CLUB TO RADLETT ROAD - EXEMPTION TO CONTRACT PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO THE PITCH WORKS

The relocation of Glen Rovers GAA Club to Radlett Road had been an ongoing project linked to the Watford Health Campus initiative. The relocation of the club was a planning condition of the proposed new link road, commencing in November 2014.

The original tender process did not lead to a successful procurement and therefore an application for exemption to the Council's procedure rules was made to the Managing Director and Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services and approved on 4th August 2014. This sought to award the contract to Agripower Ltd based on their previous competitive work at Watford Rugby Football Club at Knutsford Playing Fields and their expertise in this field of work as well as capacity to deliver on time.

The Environmental Services Client Manager (Parks and Streets) commented that timescales were critical to the work as the grass would need to be seeded by the end of the season.

Responding to a question from Councillor Bell, the Environmental Services Client Manager (Parks and Streets) outlined that the process to find a contractor had started in March which would have been plenty of time if the response to the original tender process had been better. He reported that the Procurement Manager was happy with the path that had been followed.

The Managing Director reminded Cabinet that at the last Council meeting it had been agreed to take reports regarding the site to the Major Projects Board meeting on 2nd September 2014.

RESOLVED

that Cabinet notes the approved exemption to the Council's procurement procedures in relation to the relocation of Glen Rovers Gaelic Football Club to Radlett Road in relation to the pitch works only.

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BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - APPLICATION FOR LOAN

Cabinet received a report from the Town Centre Manager. The Town Centre Partnership had agreed to progress with the project to establish a Business Improvement District for Watford town centre. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had created a loan fund for the BID process to which partnerships can apply.

Applications for the loan fund required the support of the local authority and for the local authority to act as the accountable body should the partnership be successful in its application. If the application was successful and secured a 'yes' ballot the new BID company would need to repay the loan within 12 months. If the ballot was unsuccessful the loan would not need to be repaid.

The Town Centre Manager commented that businesses within a defined area would pay a levy, the businesses have to vote to agree to set up the BID in order to be able to charge a levy, it needed 50% of votes cast to vote in favour of the BID and for more than 50% of the rateable value of votes cast. If the ballot was successful the BID would raise £500,000 per year on a 1% levy. The businesses would determine how the money was spent. Other town centres who have BIDs have used the funds for activities such as marketing, improving crime levels and safety and environmental enhancements.

RESOLVED

that Cabinet:

supports the Town Centre Partnership's application for a loan to the DCLG Business Improvement District Loan fund for £49,822

agrees for the Council to act as the accountable body for the administration of the loan. Subject to a successful ballot the loan, and any interest, would be

repaid in full within 12 months of the creation of the Business Improvement District company and no later than April 2017.

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.40 pm