

CABINET

8 October 2018

Present: Mayor (Chair)

Councillors K Collett, S Johnson, I Sharpe, M Watkin and T Williams

Also present: Councillor N Bell
Juliet Quintero, Founder, Dallas–Pierce–Quintero

Officers: Managing Director
Deputy Managing Director and Director of Place Shaping and Corporate Performance
Shared Director of Finance
Head of Democracy and Governance
Head of Community and Environmental Services
Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Regeneration and Property Section Head
Section Head – Culture and Events
Democratic Services Manager

25 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Bolton.

26 Disclosure of interests (if any)

There were no disclosures of interest.

27 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 were submitted and signed.

28 Conduct of meeting

No changes were made to the agenda. Councillor Bell spoke on behalf of the Labour Group.

Cultural Strategy 2018 -2025

Cabinet received a presentation from Section Head – Culture and Events and Ms Quintero from Dallas–Pierce–Quintero on the Cultural Strategy.

The Section Head – Culture and Events explained that the aim was to integrate the Cultural Strategy into other council policies and plans e.g., The Destination Management Plan, Town Centre vision and redevelopments in the town etc. Through the Cultural Plan the council hoped to attract new creative enterprise and provide the foundation and opportunity for emerging talent to flourish.

Ms Quintero thanked the Managing Director and Section Head – Culture and Events for facilitating meetings to capture feedback into the Cultural Strategy. Ms Quintero outlined the priority areas for the Cultural Strategy and the short, medium and long term plans for each area. Also the creation of a Cultural Delivery Group led by the Elected Mayor to deliver the first priority areas identified, for example ‘way finding’, Watford Film Festival and putting culture at the heart of the Destination Management Plan.

Councillor Collett commented that there was much to celebrate in Watford and many talented young people. This was demonstrated through the recent Watford Film Festival which received a large number of entries. Councillor Collett thought that the council was a strong leader in this area but also needed to get stakeholders to support to the same extent.

Cabinet discussed how the Cultural Strategy had been warmly received at the Cultural Leaders Group and asked questions regarding financial commitment and the availability of government or Arts Council funding.

In response the Section Head – Culture and Events explained that individual projects from the Cultural Strategy would be developed into proposals for the council’s annual budget setting cycle. External funding opportunities would be explored and officers were already speaking to the Arts Council. Support from partners would be needed and would also strengthen any proposals to go to the Arts Council. There were capital projects such as the developments at Watford Museum where officers would be submitting a lottery application.

The Managing Director commented that it was important that members of the Cultural Leaders Group also played a part in delivery funding. He envisaged the Cultural Delivery Group making contributions over a three year term. Some of the proposed initiatives were around the place shaping agenda, for example, public art, ‘way finding’, spaces to dwell and performance spaces. These were

also legitimate considerations for using developer contributions under section 106. There were other demands on Section 106 funds and the council would have to consider how to balance needs.

In response to a question from the Mayor about criticism from residents on a town centre focussed approach, Ms Quintero responded that there would be a neighbourhood project as part of the Cultural Strategy and they were also considering North and West Watford. This would be developed in the next section of work.

Following questions from Councillor Bell the Managing Director explained that the Cultural Leaders group was an informal group which was not part of the constitution but was made up from a number of stakeholders including: Watford Colosseum, BBC Orchestra, Watford Museum, Warner Brothers Leavesden, West Herts College, Watford Palace Theatre and the Pump House. The diversity of Watford was represented through the activities of the groups in their content and audience engagement. Part of the Cultural Strategy was to reach out further and engage with residents across the town.

The Mayor thanked the Section Head – Culture and Events and Ms Quintero.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agrees:

1. To endorse the Cultural Strategy 2018-2025 which provides the strategic direction to enhance and improve Watford's cultural offer.
2. To proceed to implementation and develop a more detailed programme of actions and associated costs and, where appropriate, these to be taken through the council's annual budget setting and approval process.
3. To establish a delivery group, led by the Elected Mayor of Watford, supported by the Managing Director, to oversee progress against the Cultural Strategy and Action Plan. Regular reports will be provided to the delivery group, Portfolio Holder and Head of Service.

Car Parking Improvements, Cassiobury Park

Councillor Williams introduced the report and explained that the proposed works were intended to improve the existing car park and extension. More parking spaces would be created due to the popularity of the park. There had been two consultation meetings and meetings with Residents Associations and ward councillors. No negative feedback had been received about the proposals.

There would be charging introduced in the car park and the report contained two options. The income from the car park would offset the costs of running the park. The recommendation was for option two as the charging structure would protect local residents.

“OPTION TWO

Assumptions:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| • Pricing 0-2 hours | Free (no impact on dog walkers, joggers, short term visitors) |
| • Pricing 2-3 hours | £2 |
| • Pricing 3-4 hours | £3 |
| • Pricing 4-5 hours | £4 |
| • Pricing 5-6 hours | £5 |

Maximum stay 6 hours. Charges apply 7 days per week.”

Councillor Williams noted the comments in the report regarding members of sports clubs and whether they should be issued with parking permits. Councillor Williams thought that charges should apply to sports club members but this could be reviewed if necessary. Therefore, Councillor Williams proposed removing recommendation 3.4 in the report. Commuter charging during winter periods would be looked at further.

Cabinet noted there had been an Equality Impact Assessment included in the report. It was welcomed that the improved car park could reduce pressure on the streets around the park.

Councillor Bell asked whether the car park charges would be reviewed after a period of time.

In response Councillor Sharpe explained that most visitor attractions charged for parking, e.g., Verulamium Park in St Albans. There needed to be decent car parking at Cassiobury Park and the charging regime would generate income. It could be revisited in the future if there was a change in circumstances. The Mayor commented that the car park charges would be part of the Fees and Charges report which would go to Budget Panel.

On putting the recommendations to Cabinet it was agreed to accept charging option two and to remove recommendation 3.4 (permits for club members).

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agrees:

1. To agree the final design shown in appendices A1 and A2 of the Cabinet report.
2. To approve the recommendation to introduce car parking charges based on option two.
3. To further investigate the feasibility of whether the charging for commuter parking between October and March is achievable.

31

Cycle Hire Scheme and Demand Responsive Transport System

The Mayor introduced the report and explained it had been a key manifesto commitment to introduce a bike hire scheme and new bus service. The report was for the business case to be developed to bring forward next year.

Councillor Sharpe commented that the council was facing increased housing targets and it was important to provide practical alternatives to a private car. Nationally there was a contradiction in government planning policy which encouraged development but was less supportive on public transport initiatives. The bus scheme could develop a system to be more like London where buses were a practical alternative which could be relied upon.

The Deputy Managing Director commented that network changes would be needed and both schemes could be flexible and be expanded into adjacent areas e.g., to the edge of Watford and beyond in response to demand.

Cabinet discussed conversations which had started with Hertfordshire County Council, the LEP and also neighbouring councils regarding strategic development. It was commented that close consideration should be given as to where to place the bike hubs, particularly around areas of large developments such as the Meriden and in West Watford.

The Mayor commented that these schemes would be part of a series of transport improvements also including a transport app and car sharing.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees to:

1. A sustainable transport project to produce a business case for both a Cycle Hire (Share) scheme and on Demand Responsive Transport system (DRT)

2. Delegate to the Elected Mayor to sign off the business cases and approval of undertaking of any necessary procurement.

Recommends to Council

3. That £27,000 is allocated from the Programme Management Board budget and £68,000 is allocated from the Economic Impact Reserve for project management and business case development costs for the provision of Cycle Hire Scheme and the Demand Responsive Transport System, and
4. Agree that the Community Infrastructure Levy receipts that had previously been committed towards funding the Metropolitan Line Extension are made available to fund the Cycle Hire Scheme and the Demand Responsive Transport Schemes, including any supporting infrastructure allowed by the appropriate legislation.

32

Exclusion of press & public

During discussion of minute number 31 it was agreed to move into Part B where the financial information in the appendix was discussed and officers responded to questions.

RESOLVED –

that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during consideration of the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(1) Schedule 12A of the Act for the reasons stated in the reports.

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.45 pm