

CABINET

4 March 2019

Present: Mayor (Chair)

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

Also present: Councillor N Bell

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 Service Transformation
Watford 2020 Programme Manager
Interim Communications and Engagement Manager
Mayor's Political Assistant
Democratic Services Manager

70 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Stephen Johnson.

71 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

72 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2019 were submitted and signed.

73 **Conduct of meeting**

Councillor Bell spoke on behalf of the Labour group.

There were no changes to the order of the agenda.

Agreement to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the 6 local authorities forming the South West Hertfordshire Partnership

The Mayor introduced the report and explained that he and the Deputy Managing Director had attended meetings with the four other local authority Leaders since September. The other authorities were Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Dacorum Borough Council. The Mayor highlighted the five strategic priorities for the Partnership.

The Deputy Managing Director commented that the Memorandum of Understanding set out seven principles for common aims between the Partnership and would ensure that each authority had a voice. There would be work towards a joint plan which would help to deal with growth in this part of Hertfordshire. The Memorandum of Understanding before Cabinet was the start of the journey and any subsequent decisions on details would be brought back to Cabinet.

Following a question from Councillor Watkin, the Mayor and Deputy Managing Director confirmed that the Partnership would be a good platform in order to put together a combined bid to the LEP to fund infrastructure projects.

Councillor Sharpe stressed the importance of working together in order to achieve investment into infrastructure and to achieve a vision for future change in the area.

Councillor Bell commented that North West Hertfordshire was going to set up a similar body and that the County Council had established a company called Herts for Living to try to build more sustainable housing across the County. Councillor Bell welcomed councils working together and commented that the County Council should ensure that all districts try to stick to their affordable housing targets where possible.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet endorses the Memorandum of Understanding, in order to provide place leadership for South West Herts and to develop and deliver a vision for the SWHP area up to 2050, promoting healthy and sustainable growth for our communities.

Destination Management Plan

Councillor Collett introduced the report and explained that Watford needed to have a strong brand and identity. There would be a new brand: 'Watford: We

Will Surprise You' in order to raise the town's profile and attract businesses. As well as the town centre with the new intu centre and Warner Brothers attraction, Watford needed to be a greater part of the tourist offer with award winning parks and free events. The new brand and website would be owned by the council and the day to day management of the service would be managed by a commissioned service from the Watford BID. The Council would be part of the Destination Management Board.

The Managing Director commented that partnership funding would be sought and there was good dialogue with West Herts College, Warner Brothers and the BID. There had also been discussions with the Watford Observer about collaborating to promote the brand and to get feedback and input from residents.

Councillor Bell asked questions regarding footfall at the top of town and how to revitalise Queens Road. The Mayor responded that he wanted to ensure there was growth across the town. Following the opening of the new cinema and bowling, there had been a 27% increase in footfall in the town centre. Warner Brothers were looking at ways to increase visitors' dwell time in the town. The Big Events at the top of the town were being reviewed but there had been no decision yet on a permanent new attraction. There was still vibrancy in Queens Road and the council was always working closely with the businesses.

Cabinet discussed that whilst high streets nationally were in crisis Watford was experiencing growth. The new destination management plan would encourage new ideas in areas which were less vibrant presently to create a whole town effect and change perceptions of Watford. Work was being carried out on Clarendon Road to look at the journey for visitors from Watford Junction in order to get the signage right. The new branding would integrate with other brands within the town such as the large 'W' brand and the consultants would provide guidelines on this. The Mayor was part of a Town Centre Taskforce to ensure that the top of town was a welcoming area.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees:

1. To approve the overall destination management strategy.
2. To endorse the new brand development and approve the proposal from the Watford BID attached to the report as the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) service provider.

76

Ombudsman Decision

The Deputy Managing Director commented that an Ombudsman decision letter had been received by the council following a complaint. On this occasion the Ombudsman had found that the council was at fault. The Ombudsman found that the council did not take into account the up to date medical position of the applicant and asked the council to review the position. The council was apologetic to the complainant and was moving forward with supporting the applicant to resolve the situation. Up to date medical information had been received and had been referred to the council's advisers and it was hoped that the matter would be resolved soon. The council had responded quickly to the Ombudsman's findings.

Following comment from the Mayor, the Deputy Managing Director continued that procedures in housing had been reviewed and there was now a two-step process so a more senior officer would conduct a second review if an applicant was not happy with the first decision.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the Ombudsman's decision.

77

Notification of exemption to contract procedure rules re: Watford BIG Beach 2019

Councillor Collett explained that a letter of resignation had been received from the company who had provided the beach. It had been necessary to have a procurement exemption in order to secure a contractor.

Following a question from Councillor Bell, Councillor Collett explained that a separate beach and big screen had not been as successful last year and the council wanted to put them back together again and explore other possibilities. The Mayor commented that the council was still committed to the events which were very popular and the business chosen to provide the beach was of a high quality.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the exemption has been given.

78

External wall insulation contract - procurement exemption note

Councillor Collett introduced the report and commented that there was a programme for privately owned homes in Watford to be provided with solid wall

insulation. Warmzones had contracted Hamiltons Building Contractors to carry out the work. However, Warmzones had gone into administration leaving works unfinished. The Council would now directly employ Hamiltons to complete the work and would fund this from the existing allocated capital budget instead of paying it to the Warmzones administrators.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the approved exemption to the Council's procurement procedures in relation to external wall insulation contract.

79 **Notification of exemption to contract procedure rules re: lighting and electrical works at Watford Market**

Councillor Williams explained that the procurement exemption related to matters carried forward from the previous market contractor. SSE had carried out a compliance assessment of the site and found that repair and maintenance works were required to the lighting and electrical systems. Two quotes had been obtained and the works started. The downlights were an issue which had been raised by the traders, they would be on a timer and also provided emergency exit lighting for the buffet restaurant.

Following a question from Councillor Bell, Councillor Williams explained that whilst the market generated income it also had maintenance costs. The Mayor commented that the market was well managed presently and had a clearer collection regime.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet notes the exemption has been given.

80 **Resolution to promote a CPO at Watford Business Park 'Gateway Zone'**

The Deputy Managing Director introduced the report and explained that at the end of 2018 Cabinet had approved to move forward in principle with a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). The item was coming back to Cabinet as the area for the order had changed.

The Deputy Managing Director continued that the Watford Business Park was an important employment area in Watford, however, many sites on the park were run down and the council was looking at making it fit for purpose. There had been significant capital investment and support from the LEP. The plan attached to the report showed the affected area and the report explained how the

intention was to create further jobs, safeguard existing jobs and provide new training and development opportunities.

Councillor Sharpe commented that Watford Business Park was very important and it was vital to move forward with the regeneration to provide a better environment to attract employment and the CPO would enable this to happen.

Following a question from Councillor Bell, the Managing Director explained that as part of the CPO process a full referencing exercise had been undertaken where all the interests had received letters. The council's property advisers, Lambert Smith Hampton, had undertaken conversations with all the occupiers regarding their current occupation and future interest. The majority of interests had been acquired by agreement and it was hoped that this would be the case for the rest but the CPO would provide the council with a 'safety net'.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- a) Agrees that the council makes a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) under section 226(1)(a) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for the acquisition of the land and rights within the area and edged red on the plan at Appendix 1 entitled "WBC001" for the purpose of delivering a modern, fit for purpose industrial scheme in order to achieve the objectives outlined for the Business Park in Special Policy Area 6 'Western Gateway' of the Local Plan Part 1.
- b) Authorises the Property and Regeneration Section Head to:
 - i. take all necessary steps to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the CPO including the publication and service of all notices and the presentation of the council's case at Public Inquiry should one be called;
 - ii. acquire all interests in land within the CPO boundary either by agreement or compulsorily;
 - iii. approve agreements with land owners including the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the CPO, including where appropriate seeking exclusion from the CPO;
 - iv. exercise the compulsory purchase powers authorised by the CPO by way of general vesting declaration and/or notice to treat;

- v. to approve the acquisition of all interests, where possible, by negotiation pursuant to the CPO, approving payments to interest holders in line with the statutory compensation provisions within the budget allocation set out in Part B Appendix 3.
- c) Gives authority under Section 6(4) of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 to dispense with individual service of notices in respect of areas of land where the Council is satisfied that it has not been possible following proper enquiry to establish the ownership of the land in question and for the service of notices in the manner set out in Section 6(4) of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981.
- d) Considers the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 contained in section 5.3. of this report so far as they might be applicable in deciding whether or not to make the Compulsory Purchase Order(s) and all other statutory powers that the Council seeks to exercise and resolves the following:
 - i. With regard to Article 8 it is considered that in balancing the rights of the individuals who are affected by the Order(s) against the benefit to the community of proceeding with the Order(s), the making of the Order resulting in the interference with the individuals rights is justified in the interests of improving the economic and social well-being of Watford as detailed in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.6.
 - ii. With regard to Article 1 Protocol 1, it is considered that the interference with the individual's property is justified by the advantages accruing to the public by proceeding with the Scheme particularly taking into account the fact that there is a legal right to compensation for the property taken and any rights extinguished under the Order(s).
- e) In addition the Council has had due regard to the Equalities Act 2010 as set out in this report at section 5.3.
- f) Notes the progress made with regard to acquisitions and the application for £5,000,000 of Local Enterprise Partnership grant funding to support the delivery of the project.

81

Exclusion of press & public

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 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.

82

Watford 2020 - Tranche 2: Corporate Asset Management Detailed Design Approval

The Head of Service Transformation introduced the report and responded to questions.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet approves the design for the Corporate Asset Management and Property Investment functions and the implementation of the proposed design as set out in the report.

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.45 pm