

WATFORD COLOSSEUM TASK GROUP

18 September 2019

Present: Councillor Richard Smith (Chair)
Councillor Keith Crout, Councillor Amanda Grimston and
Councillor Rabi Martins

Officers: Head of Leisure and Environmental Services
Democratic Services Officer (AG)

1 Apologies

No apologies were received from Councillor Parker.

2 Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

3 Background to and purpose of the scrutiny

The Head of Leisure and Environmental Services made reference to the documents accompanying the agenda. He advised that the Watford Colosseum contract was now in year eight of a ten-year duration.

He discussed details of the present management company 'HQ Theatres and Hospitality' and its parent company. He briefly explained how the venue currently operated and went on to describe the preplanning arrangements for the retendering of the contract - and how the scrutiny formed part of this process. The findings of the scrutiny would help shape the service specification that would subsequently be included in the tender process.

In response to a question from members, the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services explained that the council currently paid an annual management fee to HQ Theatres and Hospitality of circa £175K, and in the last year a profit share with the company had returned £5k.

He advised the task group that a consultant had recently been appointed to assist with the procurement process.

Members discussed the functionality of the theatre both in terms of a community and commercial asset and agreed on the importance of financial viability. The Head of Leisure and Environmental Services advised on the use of the theatre for community hires.

He concluded by discussing the council's aspirations for the new contract as outlined in the Watford Colosseum Management Contract document and referred to item four contained therein as a key element. In this regard, he discussed the value of engaging a community outreach manager and, although new to the revised contract, similar positions existed within the current leisure and waste contracts.

4 **Exclusion of press and public**

The Chair moved: that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item 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) of the Act for the reasons stated below in terms of Schedule 12A.

RESOLVED - press and public to be excluded.

5 **Feedback from theatre operators**

The task group discussed the feedback from the theatre operators in question numbers one to seven outlined in the agenda documentation and the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services responded to member's inquiries and comments. The task group made a number of recommendations.

Chair
Watford Colosseum Task Group

The meeting started at 6.35 p.m.
and ended at 7.55 p.m.

