

Watford Colosseum Management Contract

Background

Watford Colosseum is a high profile front facing public service which helps to deliver the council corporate objectives and delivers important services linked to the authorities' wider social and cultural policies.

In 2009 Watford Council awarded a 10 year (2011 - 2021) management contract to HQ Theatres and Hospitality.

In 2011 the Colosseum underwent a £5.5 million refurbishment to bring it up to the standard of a world class venue it once was and comprises the following:

- Main auditorium which has a 1,280 seat capacity
- Café bar and Forum Restaurant
- The Grand Lobby and a number of smaller bars
- Office accommodation and staff meeting and changing rooms

The current contract expires in 14 March 2021, and the council has started the preplanning for the retendering process. Experience of contract management shows that early planning for retendering is critical to successful delivery and that time allowed 'up front' in terms of planning, soft market testing, engagement with relevant stakeholders etc to ensure optimum outcomes are achieved.

Subsequent to the capital investment in 2010 – 2011, the council has recently undertaken a full stock condition survey of the venue and has identified a number of areas that now require further attention. The plan is to undertake the upgrading and refurbishment to the facility, this will include works to roof, windows and plant and equipment across the venue during March to November 2021.

Running parallel to the building works the council will conduct a tender exercise to select a new partner to operate the venue from November 2021.

Current contractual arrangements

1. Under the arrangements the council pays the operator a management fee contractor to operate the facilities
2. At present the council has a landlord and tenant split for maintenance and capital replacement of key plant and equipment under a lease arrangement with the operator, WBC also has responsibility for the structure of the buildings
3. The contractor is responsible for energy and water consumption

Project Objectives

The overall aim of the project is to successfully retender the Watford Colosseum management contract achieving the following criteria:

1. To deliver the procurement of the new second generation contract using the council's adopted project management, monitoring and evaluation methodology
2. To manage and mitigate the risks identified in the project risk log
3. The new contract actively contributes to Watford Borough Council's stated vision and corporate objectives (policy through procurement ethos)
4. To deliver the procurement of the contract project on time and within the budget allocation

Council aspirations for the new Watford Colosseum contract

1. To reduce or eliminate any need for a subsidy for the facility and if possible to move towards a positive management fee payment to the council
2. Transfer of risk on asset management – (repair, maintenance and lifecycle replacement) to be achieved through a full repairing lease arrangement with the new contractor
3. The contractor will be responsible for all utility costs and any other charges linked to the operation of the venue for the whole contract period
4. To provide a venue that delivers a balanced and varied programme and cultural activity opportunities to encourage greater participation, alongside developing a greater outreach programme with key partners in the borough

Phasing plan

Phase	Workstream	Subject Area	Timeframe
Phase 1	Workstreams 1 - 4	Pre procurement planning and document preparation	August 2019 – January 2020
Phase 2	Workstream 5	Procurement stage	February – April
Phase 3	Workstream 6	Evaluation and selection process	May – June
Phase 4	Workstream 6	Award contract	July 2020
Phase 5	Workstream 6	Mobilisation period and Year 1 implementation	TBC November 2021 – October 22