

## **Report to Council – 26 January 2021**

## **Report of Cabinet – 18 January 2021**

Cabinet met on 18 January 2021. The minutes are published on the council's website.

The following members and officers were present at the meeting.

Present: Mayor Taylor (Chair)  
Councillor Collett (Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Community)  
Councillor S Johnson (Portfolio Holder for Property and Housing)  
Councillor Sharpe (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development)  
Councillor Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Service)  
Councillor Williams (Portfolio Holder for Client Services)

Also present: Councillor Bell, Labour Group Leader  
Councillor Matt Turmaine, Chair of Finance Scrutiny Committee  
Councillors Dychton and Ezeifedi

Officers: Managing Director  
Interim Director of Finance  
Group Head of Democracy and Governance  
Group Head of Transformation  
Group Head of Place Shaping  
Executive Head of Strategy and Communications  
Head of Housing  
Head of Planning and Development  
Head of Enterprise Programme Management Office  
Housing Solutions Manager  
Change Manager  
Interim Senior Regeneration Manager  
Mayor's Political Assistant  
Democratic Services Manager

Minute 68 included a recommendation to Council

## 68. **Town Hall Quarter**

Cabinet received a report of the Managing Director setting out the transformation programme for the Town Hall Quarter. It was noted that if members were minded to discuss any of the exempt documents it would be necessary to agree to exclude any press and public and to stop the live stream.

The Mayor stated that it was important for the rejuvenation of the Town Hall and Colosseum; enabling them to better serve the town. It was proposed to rejuvenate the Museum and deliver the council's cultural strategy. It included an incubator space for new businesses. It would provide value for money for residents. The area would become a vibrant environment. There were various strands and they had all been brought together under one overall project. Clear governance was essential and a member steering group had been proposed.

The Managing Director advised that this was a complex but exciting programme for Watford. The council was proposing to revitalise this part of the town. It had built on the work carried out during 2019. Significant work had been carried out on the viability of the scheme to ensure the council could be confident the programme was achievable. Development partners were keen to work with the council on the project. She added that there was still a lot of work to be done. If agreed at this meeting and budget approved at Council the Member Steering Group would receive regular updates and at key points reports would be presented to Cabinet for approval.

Members welcomed the proposal. It would provide more cultural opportunities to the community. The Museum would be able to broaden its offer; currently it was too small to accommodate and share the town's diverse history. The programme was located in a conservation area including listed buildings and locally significant buildings. The area also included the modern building of the leisure centre and West Herts College. The space between the Town Hall and Library was not usable; this provided an opportunity to shape the area. It was an opportunity to provide an area that people wanted to visit. It was an ambitious, bold and exciting project.

Councillor Bell noted the changes from the original scheme. He welcomed the preservation of the Colosseum with its good acoustics. He hoped that the building could be used by more diverse groups.

The Mayor thanked members for their comments and noted that this was the start of the process.

RESOLVED –

1. that Cabinet agrees the overall vision for the THQ (section 9 of the report).
2. that Cabinet agrees the terms of reference for the Members Steering Group to oversee the THQ programme as set out in appendix A to the report.
3. that Cabinet confirms that the preferred commercial delivery structure for the Town Hall Quarter regeneration project would be to enter into a joint venture limited liability partnership with a private sector development partner (section 11.2 of the report).
4. that Cabinet authorises officers to proceed with the procurement for the appointment of a development partner for the Regeneration project via a procurement process under the Public Contract Regulations using the competitive dialogue procedure delegating authority to the Mayor in consultation with the Member Steering Group and the Group Head of Place Shaping to approve the following elements of the procurement process namely: the project objectives, the selection criteria, the evaluation criteria and the short-list of tenderers selected to proceed to invitation to participate in the dialogue and following the procurement to seek Cabinet approval of the appointment of a joint venture partner (section 11.2 of the report).
5. that Cabinet agrees to the Head of Property and Regeneration undertaking commercial negotiations with the landowners across the site to acquire their land interests and integrate those buildings and land into the proposals to undertake comprehensive development of the Town Hall Quarter site, and if terms are agreed to either enter option agreements or subject to Council approving expenditure of the necessary funding undertake those acquisitions (section 11.3 of the report).
6. that Cabinet authorises officers to proceed with the development of an Outline Business case and supporting design work for the redevelopment of the Town Hall and bring this back to Cabinet in Autumn 2021 or earlier if possible (section 12 of the report).
7. that Cabinet authorises officers to proceed with the development of an Outline Business case and supporting design work for the comprehensive refurbishment of the Colosseum and bring this back to Cabinet Autumn 2021 (section 13 of the report).

8. that Cabinet authorises officers to proceed with the development of a Strategic Business case for the development of an Innovation and Incubation Hub project and bring this back to Cabinet in Summer 2021 (section 14 of the report).
9. that Cabinet notes the appointment of the Museum and Heritage Service Review Consultants and authorises officers to proceed with the development of an Outline Service Plan for the redevelopment of the Museum and Heritage service and bring this back to a future Cabinet (section 15 of the report).
10. that Cabinet authorises officers to work with Watford cultural organisations' to understand their requirements to inform the future redevelopment of the Colosseum (section 16 of the report).
11. that Cabinet authorises officers to proceed on developing Transformational Change organisation strategy for how the Council staff operate and develop Communications plans to integrate with and complement the other projects in the THQ programme (section 17 of the report).
12. that Cabinet recommends to Council a budget of £2.1m for officers to progress the programme (section 18 of the report).