

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: **1 JULY 2021**

TITLE OF REPORT: **CIVIC CAMPUS REGENERATION GOVERNANCE**

Report of: **Joint Chief Executive, Patricia Hughes**

Cabinet member: **Cllr Richard Quarterman, Portfolio Holder for Commercialisation**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets revised Terms of Reference as a framework for the development of regeneration opportunities for the civic campus, to take the project forward. A key element of the process will be meaningful and on-going effective engagement with the Civic Centre Regeneration Working Group and this paper seeks to ensure the appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise remain within this group as the project moves onto the next stages.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees to refreshed Terms of Reference for the Civic Centre Regeneration Working Group (as set out in Appendix 1) to enable the consideration, evaluation and delivery of the regeneration of the civic campus.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Hart District Corporate Plan 2017-2022, which was subject to public consultation ahead of adoption in January 2018 includes a requirement for the Council to become a more efficient and effective Council. Within this it specifically identifies
- Maximising income opportunities, and identifying new opportunities for income generation
 - Maximising Council income through effective asset management and collection services

Specifically in relation to the Civic Campus, it also includes a priority to

- Work with Fleet Town Council to deliver a new or refurbished Harlington

- 3.2 On this latter priority, Members will be aware of the very considerable efforts made by Fleet Town Council to take forward an approach for a new Harlington. However, in August 2019, with no solution in sight, Cabinet approved the creation of a Civic Campus Regeneration Working Group to enable the strategic consideration of the opportunities available, for one of the assets of highest value in the ownership of the Council

- 3.3 This cross party working group was established with the objectives of investigating the opportunities of
- Regeneration of the civic centre, a key part of the town of Fleet

- Effective and efficient use of Council assets within the civic campus, including commercialisation and other income generation
- Ensuring effective use of existing facilities (including but not exclusive to consideration of short or long term lease arrangements on the Harlington)
- The underpinning philosophy for any future use of these facilities

3.4 Meetings have been held regularly and in keeping with the governance adopted by Cabinet in August 2019, have included such key stakeholders as Hampshire County Council and Fleet Town Council. These meetings have been reported to Cabinet at the next available opportunity with all such minutes being placed in the public domain.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Working Group has regularly reported outcomes to Cabinet; this has included discussions relating to:
- The changes and challenges in the economic position and the use of Public Works Loan Board funding with regards to driving a commercial opportunity
 - Constraints and opportunities and critical success factors for redevelopment of the site
 - The different mechanisms, such as joint ventures which could be used to bring together requisite knowledge, skills, expertise and funding to deliver a civic centre regeneration
 - Commissioned consultants who have helped us consider how the existing buildings work in context with each other and engaging with the key stakeholders on the ambitions for the future
 - Opportunities to refresh/update unoccupied council office space for the purposes of letting in the future
 - Ensuring any future design is developed in tandem with sustainability objectives
 - Public consultation and engagement and how to capture the requirements post Covid-19
 - Sketching out high level financial outcomes and viability based on those ambitions
- 4.2 Having established a firm foundation of knowledge regarding the ambitions and aims for a civic centre regeneration, as set out above, key to delivery will be the financial and economic environment which has changed since the Working Group was established in 2019.
- 4.3 As part of this changed context, Cabinet is considering a review of its commercialisation strategy and adoption of a more focussed Draft Commercial Property Investment Strategy which emphasises
- Investment within the district, whilst still enabling investment in with wider Local Enterprise Partnerships area
 - Broader and more explicitly detailed range of objectives including community value
 - Greater clarity on the evaluation of investment opportunities based on a range of performance indicators and

- The change in Public Work Loan Board borrowing rules that prevent the Local Authority borrowing for yield and how investments will continue.
- 4.4 Moving into the next phase of the work of the Civic Centre Regeneration Working Group, it is timely to reconsider leadership and membership of the group, with a view to continuing the enthusiasm, dedication and drive to see a successful conclusion.
- 4.5 In recognition of the high level evaluation which has been carried out, the opportunity to provide a commercial benefit to the Council (which would then be used to pay for vital services for our residents) appears within the current context to be limited.
- With this in mind the proposed updated Terms of Reference for the Civic Centre Regeneration Working Group sees the leadership of that group moving from the Portfolio Holder for Commercialisation, to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services, as the Portfolio which includes leadership on asset management.
- 4.6 Viability will however, remain a key factor in the opportunity to deliver regeneration within the Civic Centre, as such the Portfolio Holder for Commercialisation will remain a vital representative on that group.
- 4.7 Moving forward, there is a clear desire to ensure the local democratic voice is heard, with greater engagement from those within the Fleet area as representing the views of the local electorate will become increasingly important. Based on this, the anticipation under the newly revised terms of reference is to move from one representative from the local ward members (from Fleet Centre, the electoral ward within which the Civic Centre is based) to up to three representatives, subject to the criteria in 4.9.
- 4.8 Other Membership will remain the same, providing consistency and continuity to the project, and recognising the strategic importance of the project, this will include the continued inclusion of the three Political Group Leaders.
- 4.9 More broadly, as adopted by the Civic Centre Regeneration Working Group when it considered its terms of reference in October 2019, the revised terms of reference makes clear that there should be a maximum of two representatives from each political party. In order to prevent any conflict of interest, Councillors who also sit on stakeholder bodies (such as Hampshire County Council and Fleet Town Council) would not be eligible to attend in their own right, or as substitutes.

5 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The project may require the use of consultants, for instance to identify a range of options for the future of the civic campus. The Council will continue to seek opportunities for external funding sources to fund this work, however if specific funding is required it may be established via separate report with business case to Cabinet

6 ACTION

- 6.1 Subject to approval of this report future meetings will be established based on the refreshed Terms of Reference.

Contact Details: **Patricia Hughes, Joint Chief Executive Ext: 4450**
Patricia.Hughes@hart.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Civic Centre Regeneration Working Group Updated Terms of Reference

Appendix 1 – Draft proposed updated Terms of Reference



Civic Centre Regeneration Working Group Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Civic Centre Regeneration Working Group is a forum for Members to discuss and explore a range of strategic matters that might provide opportunities

- for the civic centre regeneration
- for the effective and efficient use of Council assets associated with the civic campus, including commercialisation and other income generation.
- Ensuring effective use of the existing facilities (including but not exclusive to consideration of short or long term lease agreements on the Harlington)
- The underpinning philosophy for any future use of these facilities.

2. Membership

The Group is not required to be democratically representative of the current electoral membership of the Council but attendees will be:

- Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services (Chairman)
- Portfolio Holder for Commercialisation (Deputy Chairman)
- Political Group Leaders
- Up to three Ward Members from the Fleet Wards (Fleet East, Fleet West, Fleet Central)
- Representation from Hampshire County Council
- Representation from Fleet Town Council

The group is considered quorate if five of the representatives are available, in that one of the representatives is the Chairman or Deputy Chairman.

The membership structure does not permit the presence of more than two representatives from any Political party.

In order to prevent any conflict of interest, Councillors who also sit on stakeholder bodies (such as Hampshire County Council and Fleet Town Council) are not eligible to be members, nor would they be eligible to attend as substitutes. These meetings are operated in accordance with standard practice for Working Groups at Hart District Council and are not open to visiting Members.

In addition to the above, Officers of Hart District Council will be present, as appropriate to help support the group in its considerations, bringing the most appropriate officers for the discussion.

3. Meetings

Meeting will be held broadly every six weeks to two months or ahead of key project deadlines/reporting timelines.

Any documents for consideration should be circulated to all participants **5 working days** in advance of the meeting.

4. Reporting

Minutes of the meetings will be reported to Cabinet and recommendations of the Working Group made to Cabinet for consideration and approval as appropriate.

5. Governance and Confidentiality

A RAG status approach will be used in the sharing of information within the Working Group, Council, consultants and the public based on the adopted process outlined to Cabinet in November 2019