

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: 4 FEBRUARY 2021

TITLE OF REPORT: CIVIC QUARTER REGENERATION - UPDATE

Report of: JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Cabinet member: Councillor Quarterman

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 Following the Working Group (WG) update report of 20 October 2020 (Paper E), this report provides an update regarding progress of the Civic Quarter regeneration project. This report of the WG outlines progress made to date (with reference to previous updates), work undertaken, findings and recommendation for next steps.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Cabinet is asked to note the advice provided by Create Streets, attached at Appendix 1, regarding the proposed public engagement strategy. Officers are working to refine the potential questions and to provide context for the public as to the reasons why the WG wish to engage.

2.2 The WG have discussed the public engagement stage at the recent meeting on 5 January 2021, and members approved the continuation of the public engagement work as soon as possible. This is subject to agreement of engagement questions by the WG members. As set out in the Civic Campus Regeneration Terms of Reference, the site is defined as the land currently owned by the Council, ownership map attached at Appendix 2. However, the WG note any potential redevelopment will be considered alongside its position with the town and any potential impact on Fleet town as a whole.

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 The Civic campus represents the largest opportunity to the Council to maximise income through effective asset management.

3.3 In August 2019, Cabinet approved the setting up of a cross party Cabinet WG to investigate potential redevelopment options of the Civic Campus site. The Fleet Neighbourhood Plan (adopted Nov 2019) was stated as a key reference document and a draft list of stakeholders was approved also.

4 PROGRESS TO DATE

4.1 As a Cabinet Working Group, all Agendas and Minutes are reported to Cabinet at the meeting following the WG meeting. The Commercialisation manager provided a verbal update at the 20 October 2020 O&S meeting (Paper E). Following that update, the WG have made the following progress post 20 October 2020.

Date	Comment
20 October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CM provided update to Overview & Scrutiny panel
November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WG to consider advisory team ideas of opportunities the site may offer • Draft engagement strategy was presented by Create Streets and reviewed by WG
December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WG discussed updated draft engagement strategy
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WG meeting on 5th January 2020 discussed the draft engagement options. The WG members voted in favour of progressing the public engagement as soon as possible. • The real estate advisors have produced draft financial feasibility study (currently being reviewed by WG members). An executive summary will also be produced and circulated to WG members. • The findings conclude there are potential viable options but subject to numerous assumptions. The viability is conditional upon successful negotiation of the HCC library and Harlington elements of the project.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

5.1 Engaging with the Community is a key element to the successful delivery of a regeneration scheme for a core Council owned site in Fleet. Community engagement is a process which will likely incorporate numerous opportunities for residents to engage with surveys, Q&A sessions and feedback on potential designs.

- 5.2 As part of the tender process carried out from March – July 2020, the WG received proposals on community engagement advice / strategies, which form a key part of the regeneration process. After review of the tender responses, the WG decided to include community engagement advice from the outset and appointed Create Streets Ltd (CS) to join the WG meetings and act as advisor.
- 5.3 The advice provided by Create Streets dated December 2020 is attached at Appendix 1. The advice is to engage with Hart residents with a two-stage approach as follows:
- 1) Stage 1 – an early listening exercise to provide context and inform the public on the project
 - 2) Stage 2 – A preference survey to select between a number of design options.
- 5.4 The WG are not in a position to commence Stage 2 yet. During the WG meeting on 5th Jan 2020, Members and stakeholders discussed the numerous options available regarding public engagement. WG Members agreed that public engagement should commence as soon as possible, employing Option 2 as advised by Create Streets. The WG will finalise the content and the approach of the engagement at the next WG meeting (Tues 2nd Feb 2021).
- 5.5 The WG also wish to note that Create Streets have advised the best platform to employ the engagement strategies is via digital technology. The chosen survey method will be hosted by Create Streets on their own designed platform. The WG intend to send this link on social media outlets such as: Hart District Council website; social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn; utilising strong networks from the local Parish Council(s) and the wider business community via the Councils' Communications and Economic Development service lines.

6 FINANCE & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The WG carried out a tender process for Surveying & Architectural services from March – July 2020 which culminated in virtual interviews of the shortlisted providers.
- 6.2 The WG appointed Montagu Evans and HLM Architects with detailed specific targets being a feasibility report; outline business cases and site use design options. The WG decided to appoint Create Streets on a monthly consultancy basis with their ongoing remit being a critical friend of any surveying or architectural advice and providing their own independent advice on pathways to community engagement.

6.3 Costs incurred to date up to the end of December 2020:

Service	Company	Amount (£)
Architecture & Surveying advice	HLM Architects Montagu Evans	£47,000
Community engagement advice	Create Streets	£7,500
Total		£54,500

6.4 At this stage, the WG have not taken into account any resource costs for hard copy 'postal' engagement of the listening exercise. However, a guide cost for the production of a letter and postal via Royal Mail district wide is £6,500. The WG recognise that some residents will not have access to digital services. The WG have agreed that the proposed engagement project will be District wide.

7 TIMING

7.1 The table below details the WG expected next steps. The workstreams below can be run in tandem and the WG anticipate the next phase of work, post public engagement, to last in the region of 4 – 8 months in total.

Item	Proposed Workstream	Resourcing	Timescales
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace review of HDC offices. • Assess Council office requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In house • Property Consultant • Architect • Quantity Surveyor 	2 months
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft market test public / private sector interest • Test public partnerships including Library • Soft market test residential option for PD scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In house • Property Consultant 	3 months
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost review of HDC office options and appraisals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Consultant • Quantity Surveyor 	3 months
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test Harlington business case inc social value and economic impact outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architect • Theatre specialist • Focus on future proofing & affordability 	3 months
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HDC to engage officially with HCC to establish basis and future of Library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HDC team lead • Property Consultant 	3 months

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold off developing masterplan designs until items 1-5 completed 		
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultation Stage 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External consultant 	3-6 months
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review options • Rescore following public feedback 		

7.2 At this stage the WG have not requested fee quotations for the next steps above. The WG note the excellent work to date of the project team.

8 SUMMARY

8.1 This report of the WG concludes the initial stage 1 of this exciting project. The WG have remained focussed on the key themes of creating a vibrant, engaging place for all to use.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Create Streets - Community engagement options December 2020

Appendix 2 – Civic Quarter Ownership Map