



## **MEMBERS INFORMATION NOTE**

### **Hitchin Town Hall: Museum & Community Facilities Proposals**

This information note outlines the current position in respect of Hitchin Town Hall and work being undertaken to assist Hitchin Initiative and local Community Groups develop a proposal for consideration by Council as requested at the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010. The note updates information provided in an MIS Briefing notes on 15<sup>th</sup> April and 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010 and provides brief details of further work undertaken, scheduled tasks and an assessment of the likely reporting date back to Council.

#### **Hitchin Initiative Proposal**

Following the meeting of Council on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010 officers continue to work with Hitchin Initiative and their appointed advisor together with the Council's architectural consultant from Buttress, Fuller, Allsop & Williams and specialist consultants Strategic Leisure. This work was primarily concerned with developing the outline proposal submitted by Hitchin Initiative into a more detailed and costed plan, a pre requisite to the development of a full business plan for the Hitchin Initiative proposal. A detailed financial appraisal of the proposal is now being carried out.

#### **Existing NHDC Conversion Proposal**

In order to address requests for a consolidated 'business plan' officers have continued to develop a single plan for the common elements of each proposal with additional sections highlighting those areas of design or operation which are different, for example, income assumptions that could safely be made if either the Mountford Hall or Gymnasium were to be retained.

The production of these business plans, which are now complete, in a common format should assist Members in drawing a direct comparison between the merits or otherwise of the two schemes.

#### **Application for Listing**

A further update has been received from English Heritage that it was their intention to finalise their assessment for the Town Hall by the end of June. This would then be forwarded for decision to the Secretary of State so the earliest time for decision would be mid July although this has not yet been received. The decision, and any implications arising from it may well have a significant impact on both proposals and this may necessitate reconsideration of fundamental or minor part of either proposal. This may have an adverse effect on officers ability to report to Council as outlined in the summary project plan below. An update will be provided on this as soon as a decision has been made.

## Consultation Arrangements

It has been agreed with Hitchin Initiative that two joint consultation exercises will be carried on both proposals. This allows views to be gathered on both proposals and will, again, allow for a more meaningful direct comparison of reaction to each scheme.

The first of these meetings, outlining the concept of both schemes was a well attended event at the Sun Hotel on 28<sup>th</sup> April which approximately 80 members of the public attended and notes are available on NHDC's website [http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/leisure\\_and\\_culture/art\\_museums\\_and\\_heritage/art\\_museums\\_and\\_heritage\\_forum/art\\_museums\\_and\\_heritage\\_forum\\_documents.htm](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/leisure_and_culture/art_museums_and_heritage/art_museums_and_heritage_forum/art_museums_and_heritage_forum_documents.htm)

A further consultation meeting on final proposals including the respective business plans was scheduled for June but this will need to be re-scheduled once the decision on listing is known.

## Project Plan

The Chairman of Scrutiny has indicated that he feels it likely Scrutiny Committee will wish to examine the matter before consideration by Council to ensure the adequacy of information being presented is sufficient for Members to take an informed decision.

In consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, representatives from Hitchin Initiative and the Community organisations involved, together with the Council's architectural advisor, a detailed project plan has been developed. Whilst Council's original aspiration was for the matter to be reported back to it by June 2010 the complexity and scale of tasks Hitchin Initiative need to address to produce the necessary level of detail means that the estimated timescale envisaged the report being ready for consideration by Council in September 2010 although this looks increasingly unlikely because of the continuing delay in receiving decision on listing.

	Start	Org End Date	New End Date	Progress
<b>Council Decision</b>	<b>Dec-09</b>	<b>Feb 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
<b>Cost Allocation</b>				
Develop Model		<b>Apr 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
Agree Arrangements		<b>May 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
<b>Listed Building</b>				
Decision	<b>Apr-10</b>	<b>Apr-10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>In Progress</b>
Consider Implications	<b>May-10</b>	<b>May 10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>In Progress</b>
<b>Liaison Meetings</b>		<b>Apr 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
		<b>May 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
		<b>Jun 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
<b>Community Proposal</b>				
Agree Business Plan Format	<b>Feb-10</b>	<b>Mar 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
Develop Business Plan	<b>Mar-10</b>	<b>Jun 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
Agree Plans	<b>Mar-10</b>	<b>Jun 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
- Draft Plan		<b>May 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
- Final Plan (2)		<b>Jun 10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>In progress</b>

Appoint BFWA	<b>Feb-10</b>	<b>Mar 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
Appt Specialist Cater./Inc Consultants	<b>Feb-10</b>	<b>Mar 10</b>	<b>Apr 10</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Submit Comm Builders Fund App (1)		<b>May 10</b>	<b>Aug 10</b>	<b>In Progress</b>
<b>NHDC Proposal</b>				
Agree Business Plan Format		<b>Mar 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
Develop Business Plan	<b>Mar-10</b>	<b>Jun 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
Agree Final Plan (2)		<b>Jun 10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>In progress</b>
Appt Specialist Cater./Inc Consultants	<b>Feb 10</b>	<b>Mar 10</b>	<b>Apr 10</b>	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Public Consultation</b>				
- Concept 28th April 2010	<b>Apr-10</b>	<b>Apr-10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
- Business Plan TBA (2)	<b>Jun-10</b>	<b>Jun 10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	
<b>Analysis</b>				
Technical Appraisal Museum (2)	<b>Jul 10</b>	<b>Aug 10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	
Technical Appraisal Community (2)	<b>Jul 10</b>	<b>Aug 10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	
Prepare Report for Council (2)	<b>Aug 10</b>	<b>Sept 10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	
<b>Town Hall Trust Administrators</b>				
Briefing on Proposals	<b>May-10</b>	<b>May 10</b>		<b>Complete</b>
Confirm Charity Commission Registration	<b>Mar-10</b>	<b>Jun 10</b>	<b>Sept 10</b>	<b>In Progress</b>
Agree Accounts & Management Arrangements	<b>Mar-10</b>	<b>Jun 10</b>	<b>July 10</b>	<b>In Progress</b>
Consider Formal Proposal Following Council decision (2)	<b>Sep-10</b>	<b>Sept 10</b>		
<b>Stage 2 Plan</b>				
Develop Project Mandate (2)		<b>Sept 10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	
Agree Mandate & Project Parameters (2)		<b>Sept 10</b>	<b>TBC</b>	

(1) Letter of intent submitted, anticipated full application will be submitted following feedback on 5<sup>th</sup> August when Hitchin Initiative/NHDC Officers review income projections.

(2) All dates subject to outcome of listing application

### Further Information

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact Ros Allwood, Project Manager on 01462 435197 [ros.allwood@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:ros.allwood@north-herts.gov.uk) or myself.

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**23.07.10**