



*Alison Stuart
Head of Legal and
Democratic Services*

MEETING : OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : TUESDAY 19 JUNE 2018
TIME : 7.00 PM

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE (ONE VACANCY)

Councillor M Allen (Chairman)
Councillors, D Abbott, S Bull, M Casey, G Cutting, B Deering,
I Devonshire, H Drake, Mrs D Hollebon, J Jones, P Moore, M Stevenson
and N Symonds

Substitutes

Conservative Group: Councillors D Andrews, P Kenealy,
C Snowdon and K Warnell

*(Note: Substitution arrangements must be notified by the absent Member
to Democratic Services 24 hours before the meeting)*

**CONTACT OFFICER: LORRAINE
BLACKBURN**
lorraine.blackburn@eastherts.gov.uk
01279 502172

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

1. A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:
 - must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
 - must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
 - must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
 - if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
 - must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.
2. A DPI is an interest of a Member or their partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom they are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were civil partners) within the descriptions as defined in the Localism Act 2011.
3. The Authority may grant a Member dispensation, but only in limited circumstances, to enable him/her to participate and vote on a matter in which they have a DPI.
4. It is a criminal offence to:
 - fail to disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting if it is not on the register;
 - fail to notify the Monitoring Officer, within 28 days, of a DPI that is not on the register that a Member disclosed to a meeting;
 - participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which a Member has a DPI;
 - knowingly or recklessly provide information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a DPI or in disclosing such interest to a meeting.

(Note: The criminal penalties available to a court are to impose a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale and disqualification from being a councillor for up to 5 years.)

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AGENDA

1. Update from Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

3. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

4. Minutes (Pages 7 - 22)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2018

5. Chairman's Announcements

6. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' Declarations of Interest and Party Whip arrangements.

7. Proposed Capital Development of Hertford Theatre and surrounding areas (Pages 23 - 80)

Note – Essential Reference Papers B1 and B2 are enclosed for Members only as they contain exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. In considering these matters, the meeting may exclude the press and public as detailed at item 12.

8. Contract Options for Grounds Maintenance Contract - Findings of the Task and Finish Group (Pages 81 - 108)

9. Work Programme Update (Pages 109 - 124)

10. Old River Lane - Bishop's Stortford - Update (Pages 125 - 230)

Note – Essential Reference Papers C, D and E are enclosed for Members only as they contain exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. In considering these matters, the meeting may exclude the press and public as detailed at item 12.

11. Urgent Items

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

12. Exclusion of the press and public

To move that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of item 13 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act of the following description:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

13. Potential Kingsmead Scheme (Pages 231 - 244)

Note – The report is enclosed for Members only as it contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. In considering these matters, the meeting may exclude the press and public as detailed at item 12.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 17
APRIL 2018, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Allen (Chairman)
Councillors D Abbott, M Casey, G Cutting,
B Deering, I Devonshire, H Drake,
J Goodeve, Mrs D Hollebon, P Moore,
M Stevenson and N Symonds

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors A Alder, L Haysey, T Page and
P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Fiona Corcoran	- Scrutiny Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Su Tarran	- Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service
Helen Standen	- Director
David Thorogood	- Environmental Co-Ordinator
John Williams	- Electoral

Services
Officer

426 MINUTES

It was moved by the Committee Chairman and seconded by Councillor M Casey, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

427 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman said that in the interests of greater visibility and transparency of decision making, recommendations needed to be formally moved and seconded, before voting by a show of hands in relation to items such as the Minutes, the Work Programme and any changes to report recommendations other than those for information (such as presentations and updates).

428 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Although not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI), Councillor Mrs D Hollebon commented that she wished to speak as a Ward Member in relation to the agenda item on Community Governance Review for Bishop's Stortford. She stated that she represented Bishop's Stortford South which included a part of the Parish of Thorley.

429 UPDATE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council provided Members with a summary of her role and functions. She said that as Leader, it was she who was publically answerable should anything go wrong.

The Leader explained that she met monthly with Portfolio Holders, who in turn liaised closely with Heads of Service. The Leader explained the important role of working with partners in the development of Master Planning initiatives and the District Plan to ensure a co-ordinated approach to meet future housing provision targets and infrastructure needs.

The Leader explained that Gilston was part of a growing town, (Gilston Harlow Garden Town Board) and referred to the funding the Council had received to set up appropriate structures. It was noted that 16,000 homes would be built in the wider area, as part of the first tranche.

The Leader provided a summary of the organisations she was involved with. She stressed the need for a co-ordinated approach to influence future opportunities for East Herts. This would help support an over-arching structure for the area moving forward into 2023 to achieve a target of 100,000 new homes in Hertfordshire.

The Leader said that she was continually surprised at how much paper she needed to read and understand. She added that the Council needed to make sure that it continued with forward momentum in order to ensure that homes were built of good quality and design.

Members received the presentation and thanked the

Leader for her summary.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

430 PRESENTATION ON COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT 2019-20

The Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service gave a presentation on a proposed scheme for Council Tax Support for 2019-20. She explained that following changes in regulations in 2013, it was for individual Local Authorities to arrange their own Council Tax Support arrangements for working age customers. Council Tax support schemes for pensions continued to be determined by Central Government.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service explained that the cost of Council Tax Support was borne by the tax base and that the precepts for 2018/19 were:

- HCC 76.98%
- Police 9.56%
- EHC 9.57%
- Parish 3.89%

It was noted that the administrative costs to process applications was borne 100% by the Council but that it received a grant of £109,576 from Central Government towards these administration costs.

The new Universal Credit (UC) scheme was explained and would be introduced in this area from October 2018. The Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service explained why this would increase administrative costs and the problems this would cause in terms of uncertainty in relation to customers' council tax obligations and the

Council's ability to collect the liability. She explained a possible approach to address this issue in order to protect the vulnerable and to give people certainty about what they had to pay. It was noted that data modelling was programmed to start shortly and in advance of the introduction of UC in October 2018. The Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service stressed the need to protect the vulnerable during this change of process.

It was noted that consultation would be carried out on the scheme with council taxpayers.

The Committee Chairman sought and was provided with assurances that the scheme would have adequate safeguards.

Councillor M Casey asked why there was not a national scheme if there were so many challenges with having local schemes. The Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service acknowledged this and explained that the deregulation for working age customers was a Central Government decision.

In response to a query by Councillor H Drake, the Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service explained "non-dependant disregards" in relation to 18 year olds living at home.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members, thanked the Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service for her detailed presentation and the proactive steps proposed to support vulnerable people at risk.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

431 NIGHT TIME ECONOMY AND PUBLIC HEALTH: IMPACT OF ALCOHOL USE

The Head of Housing and Health submitted a report on alcohol use and the impact on the night time economy and public health. The Head of Housing and Health provided a summary of the report.

In response to a query by the Committee Chairman, the Head of Housing and Health explained how the consultation process had been extended and to whom, adding that it had gone beyond statutory partners. Councillor B Deering hoped that this would also include local Parish Clerks.

The Head of Housing and Health referred to a recent gathering of door staff which had been arranged by the Police to raise the issue of child exploitation issues and stated that there was scope to raise issues of public concern via Licensing Committee. He referred to new measures to alert Members and Parish Clerks about applications affecting their Wards and the positive feedback from the Police.

The Committee Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked the Head of Housing and Health for his presentation. The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the views of Hertfordshire County Council’s Public Health team on the impact of alcohol misuse on public health be noted;

(B) Members’ view on how the Council and Public Health colleagues can work together to mitigate these impacts be passed to the Head of Housing and

Health for consideration; and

(C) Members' views on key aspects of the draft Position Statement on "Licensing Decision Making relating to the Nigh Time Economy" set out in Essential Reference Paper "B" of the report submitted, be provided to the Head of Housing and Health for consideration.

432 CLIMATE CHANGE - UPDATE FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Councillor B Deering, the Chairman of the Climate Change Task and Finish group submitted an update on the work undertaken so far and proposed potential key strategy areas. Councillor B Deering commented that it had been an interesting exercise, covering a wide range of themes and which had had excellent input from both Members and Officers. He referred to a number of outstanding issues and further discussions which the Group wished to undertake particularly in relation to renewable energy investment opportunities including battery storage. Councillor B Deering also referred to the need for the Council to be seen to be leading the climate change agenda locally and to get the message out to the business community and residents, aided by some form of hosted gathering.

The Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator referred to Government imposed targets to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency. It was noted that in 2009, the Council's established target was a 25% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 and this currently stood at 17%. Councillor N Symonds raised the issue of trying to get

Housing Associations to install solar panels. It was noted that solar panel installations had been funded in the past through national schemes and that now such funding was less readily available. The current priorities for energy efficient development relate to a hierarchy of energy reduction, building fabric improvements and use of alternative energy.

The Committee Chairman sought and was provided with clarification on energy reduction targets and whether this was an issue across the EU platform or globally. The Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator referred to the number of private rented properties which had an energy efficiency rating of "F" or below and the targets to bring as many homes to the level of code "C". It was noted that a significant minority of homes in East Hertfordshire required significant energy efficiency improvements. The Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator explained why. He also explained how CO2 emissions at a District level were calculated.

Councillor G Cutting sought and was provided with clarification in relation to an application by Wickham Hall to house a battery bank and questioned why insulating (thermal) glass rather than solar panels, was not being promoted on new homes. This was explained by Officers.

It was moved by Councillor M Deering and seconded by Councillor Mrs D Hollebon, that the recommendations, as detailed, be supported. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the recommendations were CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) further meetings of the Task and Finish Group continue in order to complete its review of climate change activity within the District;

(B) the Group prepare a draft strategy for discussion at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2018;

(C) Officers facilitate the establishment of a forum that meets periodically to enable local environmental groups and other interested organisations to co-ordinate climate change activities and undertake joint working with the Council;

(D) Officers ensure opportunities continue to be explored for carbon reduction and energy efficiency measures to be reflected within relevant policy areas such as planning policy; and

(E) Officers develop a draft communication strategy to effectively promote climate change resilience activities, energy efficiency and carbon reduction, demonstrating the community leadership role of the authority.

433 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW : BISHOP'S STORTFORD

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer submitted a report on the responses received during the initial consultation for a Community Governance Review of Bishop's Stortford Town Council, including the town boundary. The Electoral Services Officer provided a summary of the report.

Councillor I Devonshire read out a summary of parishioners' concerns to the proposal in the Rural Ward of

Thorley Parish. The summary challenged the legality of the proposal, the need for cohesive community governance, the proposed development in Bishop's Stortford South and the impact this would have on Thorley Parish Council.

Councillor Devonshire said that 114 respondents opposed the boundary change and 8 were in favour. A petition signed by 960 people calling for "no change" to the current boundary between Thorley Village and Bishop's Stortford had also been submitted. He challenged the need for change.

The Electoral Services Officer referred to the viability of Thorley Parish Council if change was made and outlined the statutory provisions, including the need to make a determination within 12 months of the review starting. He referred Members to the options as detailed in the report, adding that the Council could decide to take no action at this stage, adding that in that case, any changes would not be made in time for the May 2019 elections.

In response to a query by Councillor M Stevenson about the dissemination of information to residents, the Electoral Services Officer referred Members to the extensive leafletting of affected homes and community groups. Councillor M Casey commented that most of the objections referred to the development at Bishop's Stortford South rather than a change from a Category 3 village to a town. He made the point that regardless of residence, people would use the facilities of Bishop's Stortford.

The consultation process and those consulted were debated.

Councillor Mrs Hollebon commented that as an elected

Member, she represented all residents. She said that it appeared that a large number of responses submitted may have been instigated by a small number of residents and that many responses were not about the proposal, but other things they feared. Councillor Mrs Hollebon stated that while she appreciated what Thorley villagers were saying, she felt that they had missed the point that they used Bishop's Stortford facilities and Southern Country Park and it made sense to tidy up actual borders. Councillor M Stevenson referred to the strong feeling objectors had to keeping their own identity.

Councillor H Drake commented that from the responses received, very few lived in the area and that a large number were opposed to a boundary change. She suggested that there should be a budget for the publication of leaflets for the right residents on the right issues.

Councillor M Casey stated that as a resident, he was consulted on the issue and also received other information opposing a change and relating to planning issues. He stated that people should not be ignored.

On the issue of re-consultation, the Electoral Services Officer said that there would be a second round of consultation after Council had considered the proposal. Councillor B Deering had concerns about this approach, and said it might suggest that an initial decision had been taken.

The Committee Chairman queried the precepts of Bishop's Stortford Town Council (£67.69) and Thorley Parish Council (£8.97) and how this might affect the Bishop's Stortford precept. He reminded Members that Bishop's Stortford

Town Council had made this request because it felt that it was bringing benefit to the people. He acknowledged the fact that changes to Thorley Parish could mean the demise of the Parish Council.

Councillor G Cutting said that he struggled with the concept and had not yet reached a conclusion. He referred to decisions which the Planning Inspectorate might make in relation to Bishop's Stortford South on Green Belt countryside and residents' perceptions about the development of Whittington Way. Councillor Cutting said that there appeared to be confusion between the Parish boundary and its link with Whittington Way.

The Committee Chairman drew Members' attention to the options, as detailed. He stated that from the comments submitted it appeared that Members felt that the Parish needed to retain its own identity, whichever option was pursued.

The Committee supported the submission of Members' comments to the Executive as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be advised that (A) the responses received to the initial consultation on the Community Governance Review of Bishop's Stortford Town Council be received; and

(B) Members' comments as now detailed, be forwarded to the Executive for its consideration as part of the Community Governance Review.

434 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW : BUNTINGFORD

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring

Officer submitted a report on the responses received during the initial consultation for a Community Governance Review (CGR) of Buntingford Town Council, including the town boundary. The Electoral Services Officer provided a summary of the report.

Councillor M Casey referred to the “natural barrier” of a ring road around Area “B” and asked Officers to ensure a level of consistency during the CGR process. He sought and was provided with clarification about Area “A”.

Councillor M Stevenson commented that Cottered was a deprived area and queried the use by Buntingford of Section 106 monies and the potential windfall this brings to Buntingford Town Council in relation to Area “A” development.

The Committee supported the submission of Members’ comments to the Executive as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be advised that (A) the responses received to the initial consultation on the Community Governance Review of Buntingford Town Council be received; and

(B) Members’ comments as now detailed, be forwarded to the Executive for its consideration as part of the Community Governance Review.

435 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW : EASTWICK AND GILSTON

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer submitted a report on the responses received during the initial consultation for a Community

Governance review of Eastwick and Gilston Parish Council. The Electoral Services Officer provided a summary of the report.

The Committee received the responses and supported forwarding them to the Executive .

RESOLVED – that the Executive be advised that the responses received to the initial consultation on the Community Governance Review of Eastwick and Gilston Parish Council be received.

436 WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Chairman of Scrutiny Committee submitted a report setting out the Committee's future work programme. The Scrutiny Officer provided a summary of the programme and referred to the positive feedback she had received in relation to presentations by Executive Members. She asked Members to contact her with any future suggestions.

It was moved by Councillor M Allen and seconded by Councillor Mrs D Hollebon that the draft work programme, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the recommendation was CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the draft Work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as now detailed, be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.24 pm

Chairman

Date

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 JUNE 2018

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELL BEING

PROPOSED CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT OF HERTFORD THEATRE AND SURROUNDING AREAS

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To provide an overview of a proposed Capital Development of Hertford Theatre which will improve the vibrancy of the town by enhancing access and opportunity for all by delivering first-release film, increasing capacity, creating access to Castle Gardens via the Motte and improving the public realm surrounding the Hertford Theatre site.
- To outline the options for both 'Cinema Only' and 'Growth and Legacy'.
- To highlight the key areas of risk for the Council

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW and SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:</u>	
(A)	The Committee considers and offers its views to Executive on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. investment and development of 'Cinema Only' option.b. investment and development of 'Growth and Legacy' option.c. Its preferred option

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Hertford Theatre is central to the cultural and economic life of Hertford, the district of East Hertfordshire and the people who live there.
- 1.2 The theatre currently comprises of a main auditorium with a maximum capacity of 408, a studio with a capacity of 60, a meeting room with a capacity of 40, open plan gallery, café and box office area. The building hosts a variety of events throughout the year in all spaces, with a balanced mix of professional live programme, cinema, live broadcast, and community/non-professional activity.
- 1.3 In 2016, an Independent Cinema Organisation (ICO) report was commissioned by East Herts Council to test the commercial viability of a first-release cinema (screening on general release) in Hertford.
- 1.4 There are no other cinemas in Hertford, Ware and the immediate surrounds. The nearest dedicated multiplex facilities are in Hatfield (9 miles) and Harlow (11 miles). The nearest independent cinema is in Welwyn Garden City (8 miles).
- 1.5 The report concluded that Hertford could sustain a 3-4 screen, full-time cinema. "Hertford has the potential to generate 138-145K admissions. This is sufficient to sustain a 3-4 screen cinema." (ICO Report June 2106)
- 1.6 The report advises against a multiplex model: "Hertford does not represent a clear opportunity for a commercial multiplex operator but is more suited to a successful business model based on a smaller number of screens." (ICO report June 2016)
- 1.7 In order to assess how 3-4 new, full-time screens could be facilitated by Hertford Theatre, consultants were commissioned

to assess all aspects the theatre's current provision, test the viability of an enhanced cinema offer and develop an Outline Business Case for the development of the Hertford Theatre site and its cultural offer focusing on the following parts of business operation:

- 1.7.1 **Cinema:** Hertford Theatre cinema screen with its capacity of 408 seats is one of the largest single screen independent cinemas in the UK. The screenings take place in the same auditorium that houses the live event offer and can only screen films on 'second release', approximately 6-8 weeks after initial release to the public. Developing this aspect of the offer will increase the number and range of our cinema audiences, increasing revenue and encouraging an enhanced level of arts engagement across the entire offer; particularly amongst those currently hard-to-reach audience groups of 12-24yrs olds. Similarly, the theatre can enhance its current film programme and broadcast live screenings from eg National Theatre (NT), Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), Globe, Royal Ballet and Royal Opera House (ROH) to further increase the high levels of engagement with the 55+yr demographic.
- 1.7.2 **Main Auditorium:** Currently there is no wheelchair access to the stage, backstage and dressing room areas. Improvements to enable full access for all, an increase in capacity from 408 to 500-550 alongside the easing of programming commitments for films screened in the main auditorium will enable Hertford Theatre to programme a broader range of live work including drama, comedy, music, dance and to increase its programme of broadcast live and encore events.
- 1.7.3 **The Studio:** Hertford Theatre currently deliver a curated programme of small-scale work in the Dance Studio (60 capacity) and frequently sell out work for children and their families in this setting. It is also utilised by a range of local arts businesses as a hired space. An improved studio offer would enable Hertford Theatre to build on its small-scale

programme, continue to support local arts businesses, enhance its artist development programme as well as enabling access to professional facilities for those who cannot meet the scale and costs of delivering work into the main auditorium.

- 1.7.4 **Café/bar:** Hertford Theatre currently enjoys a modest in-house café/bar offer which scales up and down according to business/programming need. The River Room represents an area of the building that could be more effectively utilised as the location for an enhanced Food and Beverage offer to support an increased number of attendees for events and create access to some of the most appealing vistas in Hertford along the River Lea for all. Access to such an offer would not be dependent on entering the theatre itself but rather via an independent entrance.
- 1.7.5 **Motte and the Castle Gardens Connection:** A covered 12th Century Motte stands adjacent to the theatre and it is anticipated that the heritage potential of this site will be released as part of the capital development. There is scope for a synergy of service between the theatre and the park offering a café facility that serves customers to the theatre and the park with the Motte acting as a gateway to the park and vice versa.
- 1.7.6 Pre-app planning discussions have been held and the proposals are supported in principle, given the positive cultural and economic impact they would have in the town. Given its central and highly visible location and relationship with the setting of the historic Grade 1 listed Castle (scheduled ancient monument) and the wider Conservation Area, planning officers have stressed the need for high quality architectural additions to the building and sensitivity with regard to signage. There will also be a need to ensure that issues relating to flood risk (adjacent to the river) and the specific adjacent historic feature (the Motte – involving

Historic England) are dealt with carefully. Planners have suggested the use of independent critique of the proposals and full consultation in the town to gauge public support.

1.7.7 Planners have been encouraging around the proposed improvements to the public realm surrounding the theatre.

2.0 Report

The Council engaged a consortium of consultants comprising Barker Langham (Business consultants), Carmody Grooke (Architects), Charcoal Blue (Theatre consultants), Turpin Smale (Food and Beverage consultants), Core 5 (Cost consultants) and Buro Four (Project Managers). The brief included providing an Outline Business Case that seeks to:

- Improve access and opportunity to engage with the arts offer at Hertford Theatre. Further increasing audience and participation numbers by enabling access for untapped audience groups including under-represented and hard to reach groups and adding to the vibrancy and offer of the Town Centre.
- Contribute meaningfully to the Council's Health and Well-being strategy.
- Contribute to the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan to "Enhance the quality of people's lives and improve the Health and Well-being of our communities."
- Reduce where possible, the operational subsidy provided by the Council, with the ambition that, over time, the theatre could function with nil subsidy to the council.

2.1 Situations Analysis

The initial step in creating the Outline Business Case was the compilation of a Situations Analysis. This document articulates the current position of the theatre. The following categories were addressed:

2.1.1 Strategic Context - key findings and summary recommendations:

- The UK cinema and theatre landscape is changing due to reduced availability of public funds, encouraging organisations to diversify their income sources creatively.
- Cinema and Live Broadcast are a key component in a mixed economy for cultural venues.
- To avoid becoming obsolete, UK cinemas and theatres need to constantly strive to provide an appealing offer for younger audiences.
- Hertford Town is undergoing an urban transformation. This will benefit the towns' cultural assets including Hertford Theatre, which should build on this developing momentum to redefine itself and its offer.

2.1.2 Physical Context – key findings and summary recommendations:

- Hertford Theatre has a key, central position in Hertford Town, which is recognised in the 2016 Hertford Town Centre Urban Design Framework.
- The theatre can play a vital role in connecting the town to the River Lea and Castle Gardens and benefit the townscape if the public realm around the building is improved.
- In conjunction with emerging plans for Tate Plus gallery in the Old McMullens Building and the expansion plans at Courtyard Arts, the development proposals at Hertford Theatre give weight to the developing concept of a cultural quarter in the town.
- Interior spaces could be improved to increase capacity and functionality and take full advantage of the attractive setting.

2.1.3 Market Assessment – key findings and summary recommendations:

- East Herts is within the recognised 20% of least deprived districts in England.
- Hertford has a distinct demographic profile within East Herts with a younger, more affluent and better-qualified population.
- 15-24 year olds (traditionally the largest market share of UK cinema goers at 30%) currently represent 10% of Hertford Theatre's audiences drawn from within a four mile catchment area. This represents an area of growth for Hertford Theatre.
- 45-54 year olds and 55+ year olds (the smallest cinema segment of UK cinema going audiences) represent 44% of Hertford Theatre's audiences drawn from within a four mile catchment area. These audiences need to be nurtured and further developed.
- Cinemas in towns and city centres are benefitting from above average growth.
- Cinemas in town and city centres have an average of just above 4 screens.
- An increase in ticket price does not necessarily mean a drop in attendance figures.

2.1.4 Current Performance –key findings and summary recommendations:

Admissions

- Hertford Theatre has successfully attracted more visitors for events of all types each year for the last four years.
- In 2016/17 footfall exceeded 180,000 visits
- Take up for the Christmas show and live events is 80% (well above the Arts Council England threshold of success of 50%)
- Take up for the cinema is 23% (a consequence of second release programme and being one of the largest single screen independent cinemas in the UK.) The national average is 25%

- Ticket prices for live event and cinema are below regional average and could be increased to meet an improved live and first-release cinema programme.
- To fulfil distributor obligations for first release film the cinema will need to function 7 days per week, 364 days per annum.
- The current operating subsidy is approximately £250k

Catering and MICE (Meetings, Conferences and Events)

- 40% of all customers buy food and beverages.
- the average catering spend per head is £3.29 (of the 40%).
- Current occupancy for MICE events in the Main auditorium 80-100%
- Current occupancy for MICE events in the Studio 62%
- Current occupancy for MICE events River Room 41%
- MICE generated 25% of total revenue on 2016/17 excluding event catering.
- Current pricing structures are aligned with the market
- Move to a 7 day operation
- Target of 60-75 covers offering a strong café/bar Food and Beverage offer (not a restaurant)
- Scope to separate bar from café and opening up the riverside aspect to café and/or bar use.
- A shared market potential between visitors to Castle Gardens, park users and theatre-goers.

2.1.5 Benchmarking/Comparators – key findings and summary recommendations:

- Access to first release cinema offer is currently an issue for Hertford residents.
- Potential audiences of c.120,000 based on Hertford Theatre's catchment analysis and comparator market penetration.

- An improved first/current release film offer will support this increase in attendance; targeting the 15-24 year old age group.
- Strong, dynamic branding of aspirational comparator venues encourage social and political engagement for their audiences which draws in a younger demographic.
- Create an offer for the local community to provide participation in affordable cultural events and celebrate local heritage.

3.0 Market Summary

- 3.1 There are nine cinemas operating within a half hour drive of Hertford Theatre. None of which are readily accessible to Hertford residents. There nearest arts centre offer is Campus West in Welwyn Garden City; a 20 minute journey by car or 35 minutes by public transport. The nearest multiplex offer is Edinburgh Way, Harlow; a 25 minute journey by car or 45 minutes by public transport.
- 3.2 The local average cinema ticket is priced at £9.09 for adults and £7.22 for children, which is £0.86 higher than the national average and £2.86 higher than the current average at Hertford Theatre. This price difference is due to Hertford Theatre's current restrictions on only being able to screen second release films.
- 3.3 There are seventeen theatres operating within an hour drive of Hertford Theatre. The average theatre ticket among comparators is priced at £16.66 for adults and £11.74 for children, which is £1.24 higher than the average ticket price at Hertford Theatre.
- 3.4 An analysis of Hertford Theatre ticket sales over the past three years shows that c.50% of the tickets were purchased by residents neighbouring Hertford Theatre; highlighting that a high-quality offer attracts a strong local audience despite the high number of local theatre comparators.

3.5 Studios in comparator theatres tend to accommodate between 75 and 125 people. Based on comparator analysis as well as an assessment of Hertford Theatre's current capacity levels, it is suggested that the studio should not exceed 150 seats. The specific benefits of smaller studio space are:

- Improved cost-effective programming of small-scale work to target new and hard to reach audiences.
- Smaller, hireable space for organisations unable to hire the Main Auditorium.
- Improved physical capacity to support a programme of Outreach and Education.
- Improved physical capacity to build on the programme of new artist development and support.

3.6 It is estimated that Hertford Theatre could reach an annual audience of c.120,000 cinema visitors with an improved offer including 1st release film screenings and better catering facilities. The initial audience number projections have been validated using two methods (Catchment area analysis and Market Penetration Rate Analysis)

3.7 **Catchment area analysis**

Business consultants, Barker Langham used geographical population data and drive-time data to establish a potential catchment area for Hertford Theatre. The four potential catchment areas are listed below:

- Hertford population (Census 2011)
- Eight-minute drive time catchment area
- Four-mile driving distance catchment area
- East Hertfordshire population

3.7.1 **Hertford population**

The population of Hertford is 26,783 according to the 2011 UK Census. Multiplying Hertford's population with the average cinema visits per person across the UK and East of England in 2016 (2.75) produces an estimated annual admission of 73,653 for Hertford Theatre.

3.7.2 Eight-minute drive time catchment area

The catchment population based on an eight-minute drive time from Hertford Theatre is 48,211. Multiplying this catchment population with the average cinema visits per person across the UK and East of England in 2016 (2.75) produces an estimated annual admission of 132,580.

3.7.3 Four-mile driving distance catchment area

The catchment population based on a four-mile driving distance from Hertford Theatre is 58,480. Multiplying this catchment population with the average cinema visits per person across the UK and East of England in 2016 (2.75) produces an estimated annual admission of 160,820.

3.7.4 Population of East Hertfordshire

The population of East Hertfordshire is 146,300 (mid-2016 estimate). Multiplying the population of East Hertfordshire with the average cinema visits per person across the UK and East of England in 2016 (2.75) produces an estimated annual admission of 402,325.

3.7.5 Conclusion of Catchment Area Analysis

The average of the above methodologies to estimate a potential cinema audience for Hertford Theatre generates c.190,000 admissions per year as outlined in the table below.

Methodology	Catchment population	Estimated cinema going population
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Hertford population	26,783	73,653
Eight minutes' drive time	48,211	132,580
Four miles drive time	58,480	160,820
East Herts population	146,300	402,325

3.7.6 A geographical analysis of cinema tickets sold at Hertford Theatre over the last three years shows that 76% of all cinema tickets was purchased by local residents. This trend is recognised when averaging the Hertford population, eight minutes and four minutes drive time to give a moderated result of c.122,000 cinema visits.

3.7.7 A 2016 study by the Independent Cinema Organisation suggested ticket sales of 140,000 based on their market assessment.

3.8 Market Penetration Rate Analysis

3.8.1 The Broadway Cinema and Theatre is located in Letchworth, Hertfordshire. As an independently run cinema/theatre with four screens ranging from 47 to 413 seats and attracting c. 140,000 visitors per year, it is a comparator for Hertford Theatre. Applying its market penetration rate to the eight-minute drive time catchment population of Hertford Theatre produces an annual visitation of around 116,000 people.

3.8.2 The estimate of potential cinema audience numbers using a catchment area methodology provides the high-end benchmark of c. 122,000 cinema visits. The estimate of potential cinema audience using market penetration rate methodology provides the low-end benchmark of c. 116,000 cinema visits.

3.8.3 A robust average of catchment area and market penetration analysis generates 119,000 cinema visits in Year 1. However, if the offer is improved with more first release film screenings and better catering facilities, Hertford Theatre will be able to attract more visits from 15-24 year olds so it is estimated that

the new Hertford Theatre cinema could reach an annual audience of c.120,000 visitors.

3.9 **Opening Hours**

Hertford Theatre is currently open to public from 9am to 11pm, Tuesday to Sunday. The project will increase visitation throughout the year, and a more diverse offer with new cinema screens will turn the Theatre into a destination all year round. In order to fulfil distributor commitments for first release film, it is necessary that the opening hours of Hertford Theatre be extended to the following:

- Hours from 9am to 11pm
- Open 7 days a week (5 days a week for classes)
- Operating 52 weeks of the year except Christmas Day

4.0 **Business Options**

4.1 In response to the Situations Analysis a number of Options were considered and scored in a participatory workshop with the Hertford Theatre team, senior staff and stakeholders from the Council. This process tested five key options:

- Option 1: Baseline 2016/17 Do Nothing
- Option 2: Cinema Only
- Option 3: Cinema Plus
- Option 4: Enhancing the Core
- Option 5: Growth and Legacy

These options were scored against the following criteria:

	Viability of the Business Plan	Promotes Wider Social & Economic Development	Contributes to all 3 Council Priorities	Increase in Footfall & Participation	Develops a Cultural Hub / Adds to the Cultural Quarter of Hertford	Community Space & Meaning of Hertford Town and its Assets
	30%	20%	15%	15%	10%	10%
	Reduction in subsidy from the Council /generate surplus Capital investment including interest can be paid back by x number of years.	Opens up Theatre to attract external funding to promote activities for "hard to reach" groups including the delivery of community, education and outreach programmes Positions the Council in developing wider Partnership working in relation arts, culture and Theatre.	Improving health and well being Enhancing the quality of people's lives Enabling a flourishing local economy	Future proofs the asset for increased demand from population/housing growth /meets the needs of the evolving market Delivers first release cinema Enhanced quality of service	Promotes the heritage/ conservation of the area Connects park/leisure, theatre and the town Promotes a contemporary image for the theatre which attracts visitors Adds vibrancy to the area and contributes to the night time economy	Offers something for all sectors of the community Meaningful space for the community to congregate together or individually whilst respecting the landscape, nature and sensitivity to the wider context of what Hertford Town means to its community.
Option1	0	1	1	1	0	1.5
Option2	1.5	1	1	3	1	2
Option3	3	2	2	3	1	1.5
Option4	4	4	4	4	3.5	3.5
Option5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5

Based on the criteria set out the favourable option is option 5. The below table demonstrates:

- An overview of works
- the impact on Hertford Theatre's visitor numbers
- bottom line
- resulting score multiplied by the weighting for each option.

Option	Implication	% Score
Option 1: Baseline 2016/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No improvement to the offer, building or surroundings Visitor numbers will plateau and eventually start dropping Existing audience will prefer traveling to other cinemas and theatres for a more attractive commercial offer and better entertainment The building will start looking tired and need major refurbishment and investment 	13.0%

Option 2: Cinema Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light touch improvements to the auditorium entrance including new lobbies to improve sound break-out and addition of new welcome / ticket desk • No improvement to catering and private hire offer or surroundings • Rooftop extension to accommodate 3 x new cinema screens equalling to 124 seats in total • Further acoustic improvements to the main auditorium where required • New fixed seating layout to the main auditorium • Audiences might still prefer traveling to other cinemas and theatres for a more attractive commercial offer and better entertainment • The building will start looking tired and need major refurbishment and investment • The building won't comply with the Equality Act 	31.0%
Option 3: Cinema Plus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light touch improvements to the auditorium entrance including new lobbies to improve sound break-out and addition of new welcome / ticket desk • Reconfigured office and backstage spaces • Improved accessibility in-line with the Equality Act including new back-stage door with accessible ramps leading to changing and rehearsal spaces – possibly allowing larger shows • Limited opportunity to increase the attractiveness of MICE [meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions] and catering offer through commercialisation and cosmetic improvement • The improvements will bolster the place of Hertford Theatre within the Hertford community but won't be sufficient to support the creation of a strong identity and brand – therefore won't attract a critical mass to the Theatre 	46.0%
Option 4: Enhancing the Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved landscaping on approach / to the north to offer a more intuitive wayfinding route • Creation of a new entrance canopy (or similar) to form a new and clear identity for the Theatre • Reconfigured entrance foyer to ensure better connectivity between spaces • New riverside cafe / bar to provide an enhanced catering and MICE offer for specific events • Flexible Studio space with 150 people capacity as a dedicated venue for private hire, hosting various classes and community events • Acoustic improvements to the main Auditorium and increased capacity with a total of 500 seats • Enlarged performance and backstage area will allow larger shows • Rooftop extension to accommodate 3 x new cinema screens equalling to 200 seats in total • Reconfigured backstage and office spaces • Improved accessibility in-line with the Equality Act including new back-stage door with accessible ramps leading to changing and rehearsal spaces 	78.0%
Option 5: Growth and Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Enhancing the Core plus: • New and improved landscaping with the addition of boardwalk link to the Motte / Castle – promoting better connectivity within Hertford Town and placing Hertford Theatre at the heart of it • Improved connections to the main town, resulting in additional footfall to Hertford Theatre and increased use of its catering and MICE offer • Enhanced Main Auditorium to accommodate 550 seats with an additional high-level balcony – taking Hertford Theatre to the next level in terms of scale of programming and appeal to bigger production companies • Step change for Hertford Theatre as the proposed internal and external improvements will help re-brand it to create a fresh new identity that complements the proposed quality of offer 	90.0%

* excl. café and bar customers

4.2 **Costings:**

The headline capital costs for each of these costs are (costs do not include the cost of borrowing):

Option	Capital Cost	Net operational (subsidy) surplus Yr1	Net operational (subsidy) surplus Yr 5
1	n/a	(£250k)	(£260k)
2	£4.3m	(£26k)	(£27k)
3	£9.5m	£12k	£15k
4	£12.8	£189k	£205k
5	£13.5	£238k	£239k

4.2.1 All expenditure included central establishment costs of approx. £150k. At the options appraisal workshop it was agreed that option 2 (Cinema Only) and option 5 (Growth and Legacy) should be explored further to outline business stage. It was felt that the Cinema Only option was the new benchmark for the Growth and Legacy option and that these two options could provide the return on investment appropriate to the level in capital investment i.e. the facility mix difference in option 2 and 3 are not vastly dissimilar, however the cost difference is significant. Similarly, the broader benefits of having all aspects of the public realm revitalised and re-envisioned in Option 5 and the impact that this would have in book-ending the current developments in Bircherley Green for the emerging vision for Hertford's urban realm represented good value when set against the capital expenditure. Overall, the two options provided us with two possible ends of the spectrum.

4.2.2 It would be possible to work up all the options in detail. However, following the Options workshop and its outcome; it was felt that this would not be practical without guidance from members. As a baseline the "Do nothing Model" proposes that the operating subsidy in year 5 increase to £260k from £250k in year 1.

5.0 OPTION 2 Cinema Only

5.1 The Cinema Only Option represents the impact of introducing first-release film delivery into Hertford Theatre. The recommended alterations to the site in option 2 are summarised below, figure 1 and 2 illustrate the floor plans to reflect these alterations:

- Roof-top extension to accommodate 3 x new cinema screens equalling to 124 seats in total
- Light touch improvements to the Main Auditorium entrance including new lobbies to improve sound-proofing between main Auditorium and Foyer to enable the simultaneous delivery of events in both areas.
- The addition of a new composite bar and box office area.
- Acoustic improvements to Main Auditorium.
- Improved seating to Main Auditorium to ensure consistency of experience across all auditoria.
- No improvement to MICE offer or public realm.

Figure 1: Cinema Only Proposed Ground Floor Plan

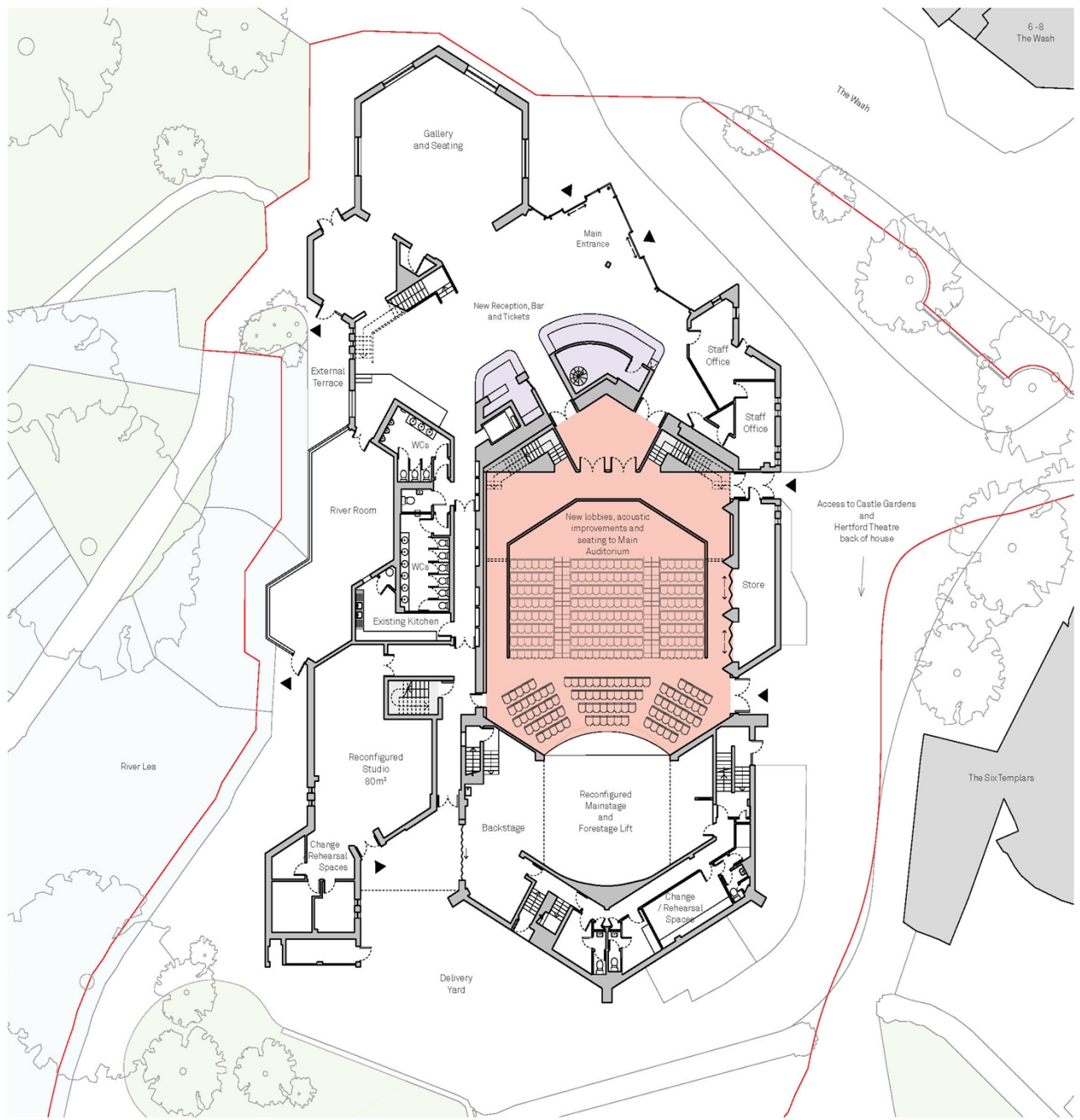
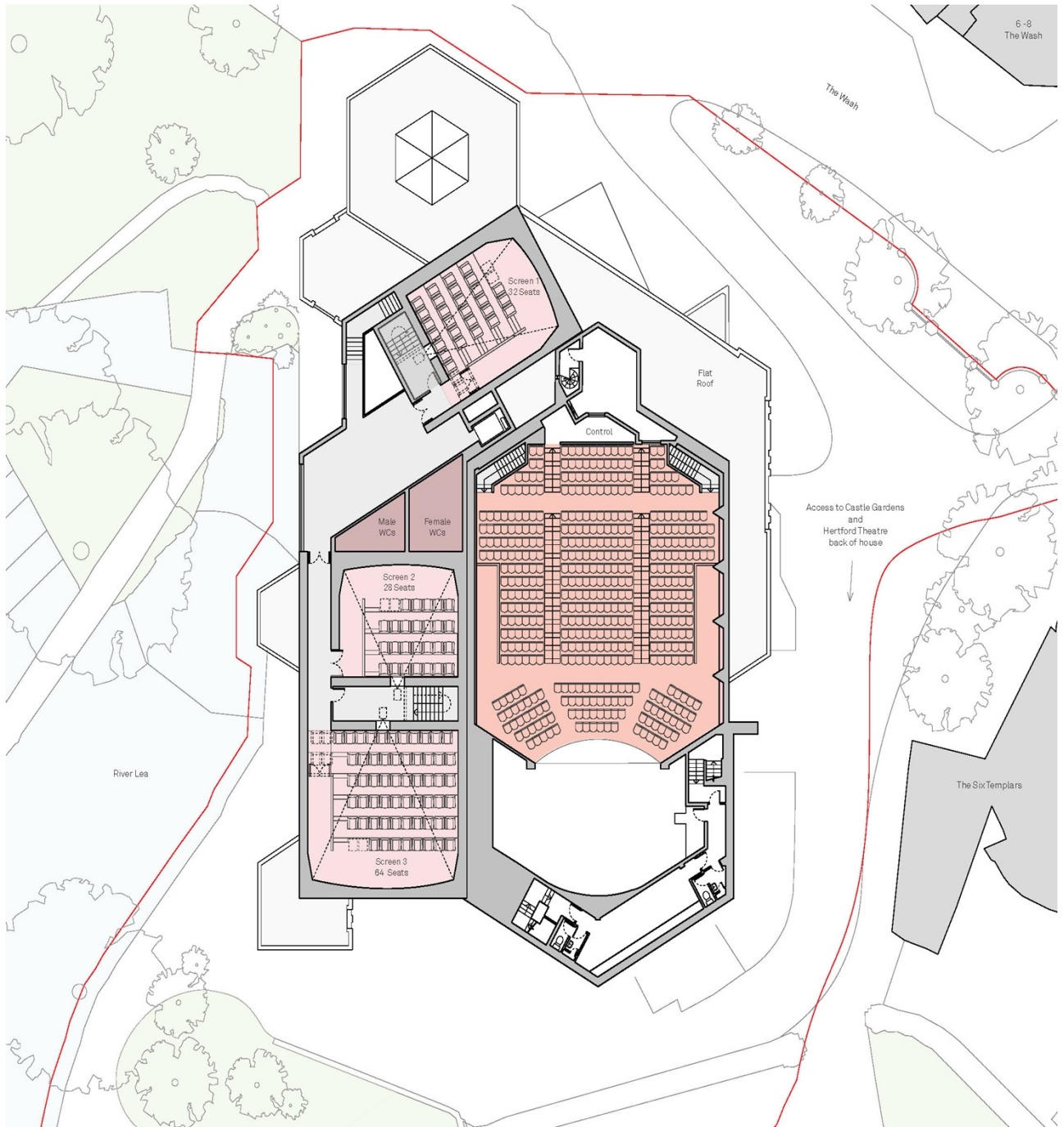


Figure 2: Cinema Only Proposed First Floor Plan



5.2 Income and Expenditure analysis for Cinema Only Option

Essential Reference Paper B1 demonstrates the income and expenditure for the cinema only option. The final capital costs for this option were £5m. The operational income in year 1 for this option is £1.58m with operational expenditure of approx. £1.66m. In this option a loan of £5m at a rate of borrowing of 2.7% is paid back over a period of 30yrs. It is proposed that in this option the operational subsidy from the Council in year 1 is £320k, reducing to £140k once the loan is paid back.

The income models can be divided into two broad areas, which will be detailed in the following sections:

- Activity-based income, including live shows, pantomime, cinema and booking fees
- Commercial income, such as café and private hire.

5.2.1 Live Shows

- The number of live shows remains unchanged at 47 per year at 79% capacity with an increased average ticket price of £15.00. Production cost remains unchanged at c.77%

5.5.2 Pantomime

- The number of pantomime performances in the 408-seat Auditorium remains unchanged at c. 45 per year at 77% take up with an increased average ticket price of £13.00. Production cost also remains unchanged at c. 62%

5.2.3 Cinema

- New 3 screens with capacity of 124.
- Theatre operates with a 23% capacity for cinema screenings in the main Auditorium. After reopening, the Theatre will offer 63 screenings per week (a seven-day operation with on average three screenings per day per screen) for 52 weeks per year, operating on a 48% occupancy rate.
- Popular live and encore performances by the Royal

Shakespeare Company and National Theatre Live will also continue to be screened in the main Auditorium.

- Assuming first release screenings, purpose-built screens and an opportunity to vary ticket price between peak and off-peak screenings, the yield from cinema tickets will improve from £5.18 to £8.16. The total number of annual cinema ticket sales will increase from 25,210 to c. 65,416. The outline business case assumes that distributor commissions remain unchanged at 45% as a fixed cost for programming services.

5.2.4 Booking Fees

- It is assumed that following the re-opening of Hertford Theatre, booking fees will rise to £1.50.

5.2.5 Food and Beverage (F+B)

- Currently Hertford Theatre operates a Café/Bar in-house in the foyer area.
- Nearly 41% of all visitors buy food or drink at the Café/Bar and the penetration has been stable over the last years.
- The existing offer currently generates an average spend per visitor of £1.52 (excluding VAT).
- The Cinema Only option assumes the cinema audience grows 2.6 times with an unchanged catering offer.

5.2.6 Venue hire (MICE)

- MICE generated c.25% of the total revenue excluding event catering in 2016/2017.
- There are currently three venues available for hire at the Theatre; Main Auditorium, Studio and River Room.
- The Cinema Only option only involves the implementation of a roof extension for three new cinema screens and therefore the Outline Business Plan assumes the same number of venue hire hours/days and event attendees as there are currently.

5.2.7 Additional commercial income

- This includes items such as box office commissions, gallery sales, vending sales, technical hire income, pantomime merchandise income, miscellaneous income, postage, rechargeable income, advertising income and bank charges income.
- The assumption for pantomime merchandise income is an unchanged spend per visitor of £0.33. Other additional commercial income is assumed to be c. 5.2% of the sum of other activity-based and commercial income in line with the 2016/17 actuals.
- Additional commercial expenditure consists of retail costs for pantomime and commissions to booking websites. It is assumed that commercial expenditure remains on level with the 2016/17 actuals at c £15,000.

5.3 Expenditure for Cinema Only Option

The operation of the site has a range of indirect costs, including human resources, non-domestic rates, upkeep and maintenance of the building, marketing and programming costs. These costs are based on the site operating as an active and vibrant place and are required to ensure the day-to-day operation of Hertford Theatre.

5.3.1. Staff Costs

- These costs cover the staff for Hertford Theatre, which support the management structure, the public programmes delivery, the operation of the commercial activities and the delivery of the site-wide experience.
- The quality of the programming offer after project completion will be high and the staffing reflects this ambition.
- The proposed salaries including on-costs, which corresponds to employer national insurance, holiday and pension contributions, are based on the current staffing

structure with 2.5 additional FTEs to allow the site to be open to the public all year around for seven days per week with the help of volunteers.

- The exact nature of the new roles to be created would be identified as part of a Full Business Plan and the cost of the added salaries is calculated based on the average cost of a staff member according to Hertford Theatre's current HR structure.
- These costs would add an additional £103,806 on the core staffing figure, creating a total HR expenditure of £519,299

5.3.2 Other Indirect Costs

Other indirect costs include non-domestic rates, building costs, marketing expenditure and other office and administrative costs. These costs equate to c. £288K in Year 1 and increase with inflation throughout the forecast.

5.3.3 Building Costs

This Outline Business Plan includes an allowance for building-related costs – cleaning, maintenance, utilities, insurance, etc. These costs, excluding insurance, have been calculated based on actual costs from the 2016/17 financial year accounts and have been adjusted proportionately to the proposed increase in the new gross external area.

Following discussions with Finance colleagues, a prudent estimate for insurance costs would be £20,000 in the first year of re-opening compared to the current insurance cost of £11,870.

5.3.4 Marketing Spend

Marketing and promotional costs will equate to c. £35,000 in the first year of operations post development. This budget is essential to ensure that Hertford Theatre is adequately promoted during the first few years post-opening, and that

there is a robust promotional strategy in the long term. This cost represents c. 20% increase over the marketing spend levels in the 2016/17 baseline.

5.3.5 Other Office and Administrative Costs

The Outline Business Plan includes an allowance for Other Office and Administrative Costs including expenditure related to stationary, postage, printing, IT cost, credit card charges, hired and contracted services, etc. These costs have been calculated based on actual costs from the 2016/17 financial year accounts and have been adjusted proportionately to the proposed increase in the new gross external area.

6.0 Growth and Legacy Option

6.1 The Growth and Legacy option represents a longer-term vision for the building and its cultural offer. It engages with all aspects of the operation and presents a view of Hertford Theatre as a 21st century beacon of art and heritage activity for all. The building aims to become the hub of the evening offer to younger audiences, supporting the local night time economy. The recommended alterations to the site in option 5 are summarised below, figure 3 and 4 illustrate the floor plans to reflect these alterations:

- Rooftop extension to accommodate 3 x cinema screens with a total of 200 seats.
- Enhanced Main Auditorium accommodating 550 seats with an additional high-level balcony and new fixed seating layout to improve customer 'theatre' experience and ensure consistency across all auditoria.
- Flexible Studio space with 150 seats
- Reconfigured entrance foyer with more 'break-out' space
- Relocated and enhanced food and beverage offer alongside and over-looking the River Lea
- Acoustic improvements to the main Auditorium
- Reconfigured office and backstage spaces

Improved accessibility in-line with the Equality Act including new back-stage door with accessible ramps leading to changing and rehearsal spaces enabling disabled performers and participants to engage fully with the theatre and its output.

- Improved access and sightlines of Castle Gates by addressing access and parking concerns creating a greatly improved public realm around the entire theatre site.
- Provides an opportunity to improve the connectivity between the town, theatre and park. A key element to this is ensuring we create a vibrant and welcome surround area. It is proposed that the development work at the Theatre initiates works to tackle the ASB in and around these areas. Working in partnership with Hertford Town Council and building on their programme of events, opening up sightlines along the River Lea and encouraging more people to engage with these currently under-used areas it is anticipated that the level of ASB will ease.
- Develops scope for partnering with Town Council, schools and other centres of education to release the heritage story of the Motte, Castle Gardens and Hertford.
- Creates a safe environment in all areas surrounding Hertford Theatre.

Figure 3: Ground plan for Growth and Legacy Option

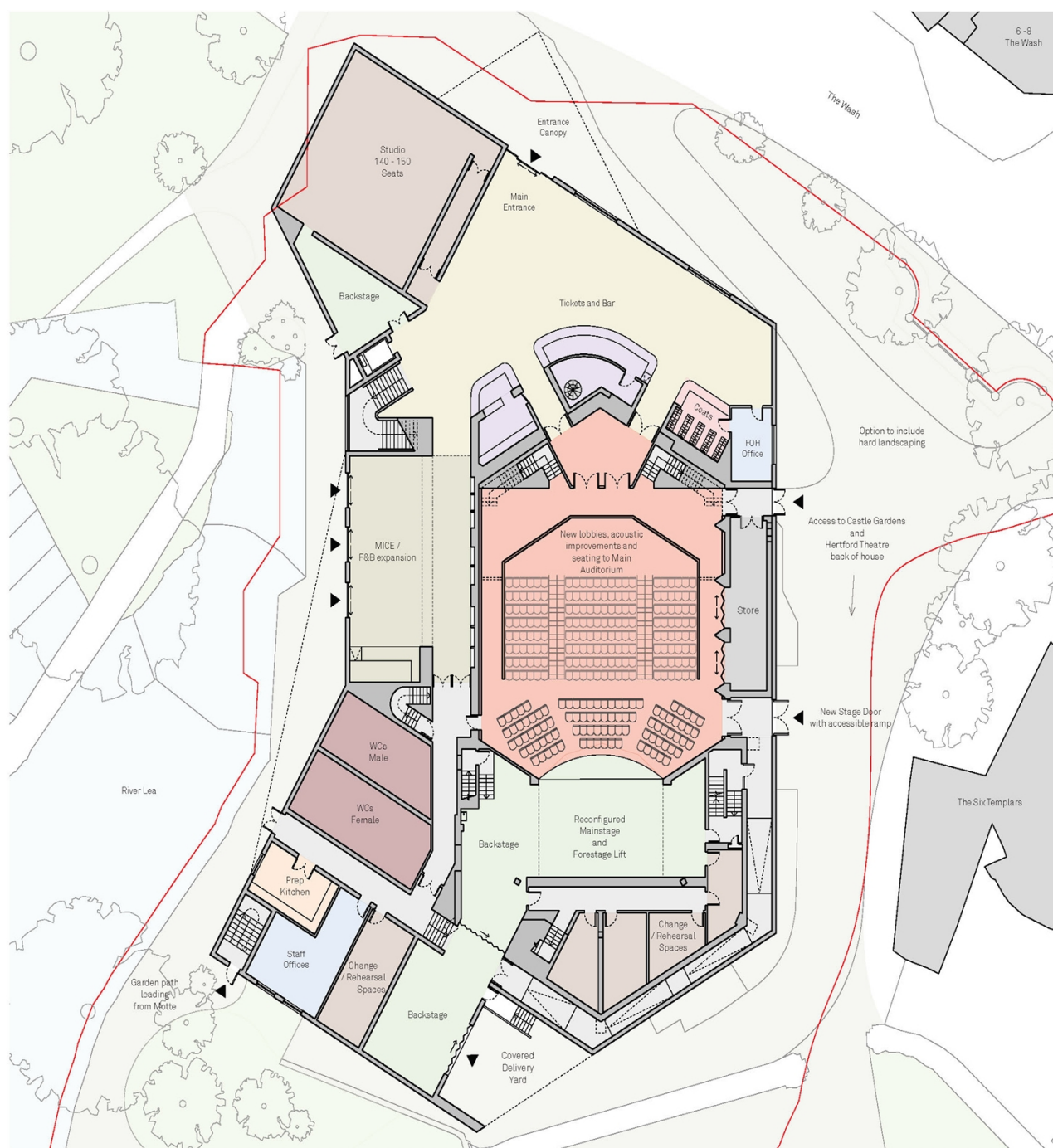
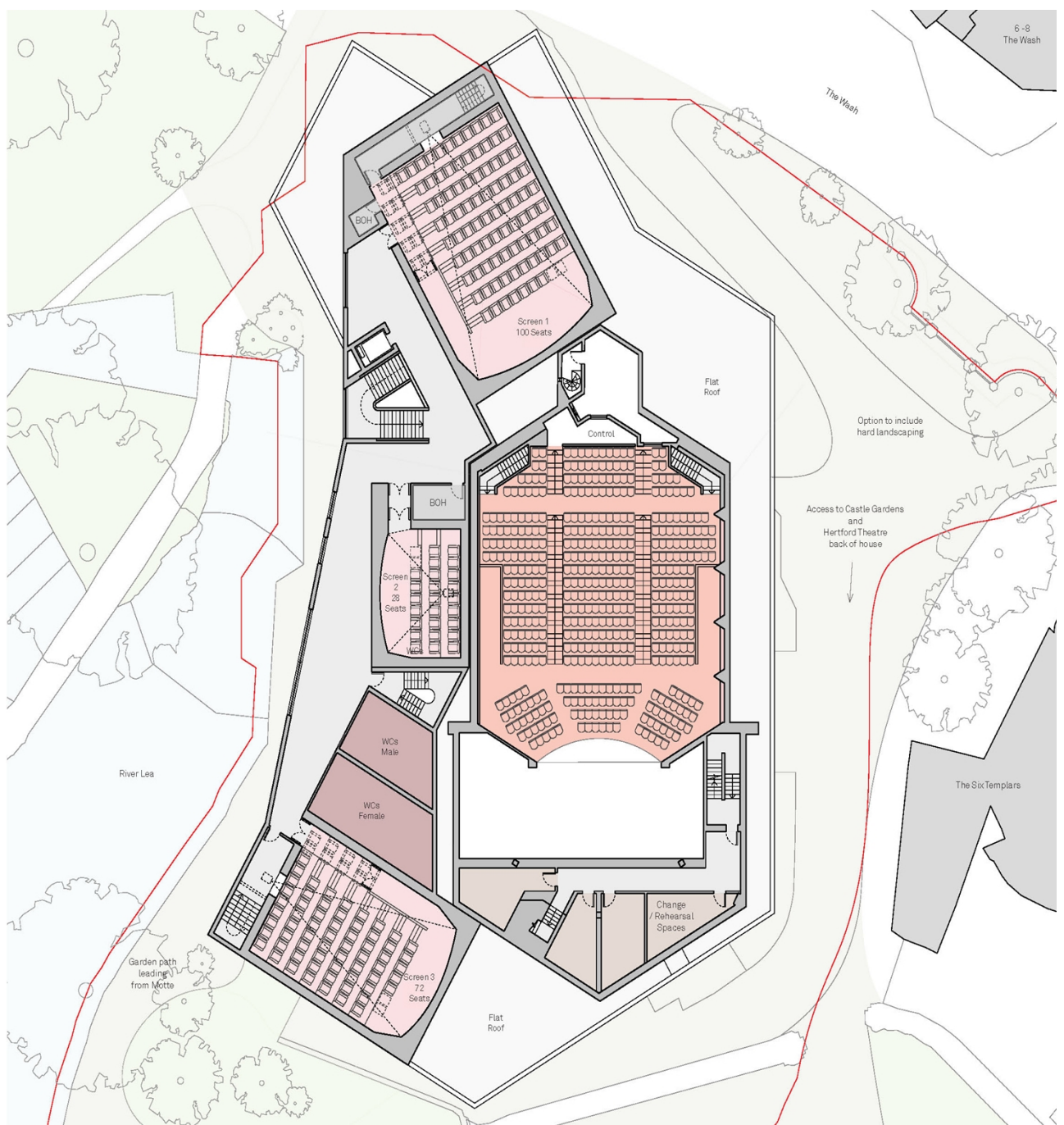


Figure 4: First floor plan for Growth and Legacy Option



Growth and Legacy Architects impressions



Growth and Legacy: view from The Wash



Growth and Legacy: view from St Andrews St Car Park

6.2 Income analysis for Growth and Legacy Option

Essential Reference Paper B2 demonstrates the income and expenditure for the growth and legacy option. The final costs for this option is £13.5m. The total operational income for this option in year 1 is £2.69m, with operational expenditure of £2.43m. In this option the payback period is 30years for a loan of £13.5m at a rate of interest of 2.7%, with an operational surplus of £475k being achieved once the loan is paid back.

6.2.1 Live Shows

- Increased capacity in Main Auditorium to 550
- Increased capacity in Studio to 150
- Main Auditorium live events up from 62 to 81 annually at a capacity of 65% and an average ticket price of £15.28
- 36 Studio events per annum at a capacity of 67% and an

average ticket price of £13.13

6.2.2 Pantomime

- The number of pantomime performances in the 550-seat Auditorium remains unchanged at c. 45 per year at 80% capacity with an increased average ticket price of £13.00. Production costs remain unchanged at 62%.

6.2.3 Cinema

- New 3 screens with a capacity of 200
- Increased capacity in Main Auditorium to 550
- After re-opening, the Theatre will offer 63 screenings per week (a seven-day operation with on average three screenings per day per screen) for 52 weeks per year, operating on a 48% occupancy rate.
- Popular live and encore performances by the Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre Live will continue to be screened in the main Auditorium.
- Assuming first release screenings, purpose-built screens and an opportunity to vary ticket price between peak and off-peak screenings, the yield from cinema tickets will improve from £5.18 to £8.16. The total number of annual cinema ticket sales will increase from 25,210 to c. 65,416. The outline business case assumes that distributor commissions remain unchanged at 45% as a fixed cost for programming services.

6.2.4 Booking Fees

- It is assumed that following the re-opening of Hertford Theatre, booking fees will rise to £1.50.

6.2.5 Food and Beverage (F+B)

- Currently Hertford Theatre operates a Café/Bar in-house in the foyer area.
- Nearly 41% of all visitors buy food or drink at the Café/Bar and

the penetration has been stable over the last years.

- The existing offer currently generates an average spend per visitor of £1.52 (excluding VAT) with a link into the park, shared castle garden audience and increased event capacity this would rise to £1.98
- The Growth and Legacy option assumes the cinema audience grows 4 fold and the audience for live events doubles.
- The figure below also includes 10% potential franchise fee on gross catering income from MICE events and a walk-up customers (c 15,000pa) catering spend of £70,10

6.2.4 Venue hire (MICE)

- MICE generated c.25% of the total revenue excluding event catering in 2016/2017.
- There are currently three venues available for hire at the Theatre; Main Auditorium, Studio and River Room.
- The hire of the Main Auditorium would remain as currently at c.110 days pa.
- In this option the River Room would be converted to a riverside café/bar and would be available to hire for private parties and entire building functions.
- The newly positioned studio would remain available for hire.

6.2.5 Additional commercial income

- This includes items such as box office commissions, gallery sales, vending sales, technical hire income, pantomime merchandise income, miscellaneous income, postage, rechargeable income, advertising income and bank charges income.
- The assumption for pantomime merchandise income is an unchanged spend per visitor of £0.33. Other additional commercial income is assumed to be c. 5.2% of the sum of other activity-based and commercial income in line with the 2016/17 actuals.
- Additional commercial expenditure consists of retail costs for pantomime and commissions to booking websites. It is

assumed that commercial expenditure remains on level with the 2016/17 actuals at c £15,000.

6.3 Expenditure For Growth and Legacy Option

The operation of the site has a range of indirect costs, including human resources, non-domestic rates, upkeep and maintenance of the building, marketing and programming costs. These costs are based on the site operating as an active and vibrant place and are required to ensure the day-to-day operation of Hertford Theatre.

6.3.1. Staff Costs

- These costs cover the staff for Hertford Theatre, which support the management structure, the public programmes delivery, the operation of the commercial activities and the delivery of the site-wide experience.
- The quality of the programming offer after project completion will be high and the staffing reflects this ambition.
- The proposed salaries including on-costs, which corresponds to employer national insurance, holiday and pension contributions, are based on the current staffing structure with 5 additional FTEs to allow the site to be open to the public all year around for seven days per week with the help of volunteers.
- The exact nature of the new roles to be created would be identified as part of a Full Business Plan and the cost of the added salaries is calculated based on the average cost of a staff member according to Hertford Theatre's current HR structure.
- These costs would add an additional £207,720 on the core staffing figure, creating a total HR expenditure of £623,159 in year 1

6.3.2 Other Indirect Costs

Other indirect costs include non-domestic rates, building costs, marketing expenditure and other office and administrative

costs as detailed below. These costs equate to c. £376K in Year 1 and increase with inflation throughout the forecast.

6.3.3 Building Costs

These are the same as the cinema only option.

6.3.4 Marketing Spend

Marketing and promotional costs will equate to c. £60,000 in the first year of operations post development. This budget is essential to ensure that Hertford Theatre is adequately promoted during the first few years post-opening, and that there is a robust promotional strategy in the long term. This cost represents c. 100% increase over the marketing spend levels in the 2016/17 baseline.

6.3.5 Other Office and Administrative Costs

These are the same as the cinema only option.

7.0 Cost calculations

- Costs have been based upon RIBA Stage 0+ sketch proposals. The methodology for estimating costs consists of identifying all work to areas shown as being refurbished, altered, or refurbished in the architectural drawings. This would leave a further circa 2,000 m² of the building, for the Cinema Only option, and potentially 100 m², for the Growth and Legacy option, requiring to be redecorated or upgraded.
- Rates, drawn up by cost consultants (Core 5) have been applied to arrive at all-inclusive costs for each project.
- The Cinema Only option allows for simple acoustic improvements and redecoration works, together with new seating and upgrades to technical equipment.
- The Growth and Legacy option includes a more substantial refurbishment of the Auditorium that covers both new and additional seats, acoustic improvements, redecoration, and

upgrades to technical equipment.

7.1 Basis of Costs

- The total forecasted cost of the Cinema Only option is c. £5m
- The total forecasted cost of the Growth and Legacy option is c £13.5m

These costs include:

- Construction works (including external works)
- Fit-out works
- Professional fees on works
- Statutory and sundry fees and expenses
- Client direct costs
- 10% contingency allowance.

All costs assume that some form of competitive procurement model will be adopted with a healthy level of price competition.

Notable exclusions are:

- Asbestos removal
- Inflation allowance
- Catering fit out
- VAT.
- Future capital works

7.2 Return on Investment (ROI) for both Options

ROI is calculated through dividing the incremental result generated by each preferred option over Hertford Theatre's 2016/17 bottom line excluding support service and divisional costs and capital finance costs.

This generates a ROI rate of 4.8% for the Cinema Only option and 4.7% for the Growth and Legacy option.

8.0 Revenue Business Plans and whole life costs

- 8.1 Indicative revenue business plans have been developed for each of the two preferred Options. The business plans set out total income and expenditure projected for both options.
- 8.2 Based on the proposed business plans, a capital finance model had been drawn up borrowing a maximum of £13.5m at 2.7% over 30 years.
- 8.4 There will be a potential loss of revenue during any development works and this will need to be fully assessed and managed during the procurement process to minimise impact.
- 8.5 Long-term full closure is not anticipated. Any proposed works can be staggered to ensure the continuous delivery of some or part of the current offer and would be tailored according to the seasonal peaks and troughs of the business.
- 8.6 Any period of closure would be limited, where possible, to the quieter summer months.
- 8.7 Opportunities are also being explored in association with partner organisations to mitigate any periods of closure to deliver a programme of work in the surrounding rural communities to generate a greater level of engagement upon completion of any works.
- 8.8 The theatre works closely in partnership with Courtyard Arts, the library and museum and opportunities could be explored to programme work into those buildings.
- 8.9 It is important to note that the business plan currently does not take into account future capital works over the 30yr period.

9.0 Sensitivity Analysis

This asks the 'what if' questions based on the idea that various

assumptions might differ from the base scenario i.e an increase or decrease in net income of 25%.

9.0.1 -25% / +25% Net Income across entire CINEMA ONLY business

	YEAR 1	YEAR 5	YEAR 10
Projected Income	£930K	£1M	£1.1M
- 25%	(£232K)	(£250K)	(£275K)
+ 25%	£232K	£250K	£275K

The movement from the base model is £232k in year 1

9.0. -25% / + Net Income across entire GROWTH AND LEGACY business

	YEAR 1	YEAR 5	YEAR 10
Projected Income	£1.5M	£1.6M	£1.8M
- 25%	(£375K)	(£400K)	(£450K)
+ 25%	£375K	£400K	£450K

The movement from the base model is 375k in year 1

9.0.3 5% Increase in Film Distributor Commissions

- 5% increase in distributor commissions to 50% would result in a reduction of c. £45,000 in the bottom line of the Theatre in Year 1 following the implementation of the Growth and Legacy project and this would reach c £53,600 in Year 10.

10.0 RISKS

There are a number of risks associated to this work which are highlighted in the table below:

	Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation
1.1	Failure to reach the projected number of cinema ticket sales	Reduced profit, decrease in ROI	Low	Robust management of variable costs including staff and administrative expenses, putting aside sinking funds to manage cashflow, solid promotion plan for the cinema
1.2	Failure to reach the projected number of live show ticket sales	Reduced profit, decrease in ROI	Low	Spatial planning to ensure a better ambiance in the Auditorium and the new Studio space, solid promotion plan for live shows and improved catering operations to increase appeal to the wider public
1.5	Failure to retain key staff	Risk to implementation of project and future sustainability	Low-Medium	Ensure continuation of solid leadership and management structure, industry pay scales, focus on retention and training of the core staff members
1.7	Closure of the site for long time periods during the design process	Regular users can be put off by long closure and Hertford Theatre loses touch with its immediate environment	Low-Medium	Ensure a minimum level of activity on site at all times during the project delivery to ensure business continuity and continue to serve the key audiences

11.0 Next steps

The next steps would include a procurement process to commission a team to support the development of a full planning application for the preferred option. If successful a tender process will take place for the construction of the works.

Parking

- The planned capital refurbishment for Hertford Theatre will require an assessment of the existing parking provision near the Theatre and the future transport needs.
- Evening users will be better catered for with the opportunity for on-street parking after 6.30pm.
- In addition, St Andrews Street car park which is situated within 2 minute walking distance of Hertford Theatre offers good levels of disabled parking but the Theatre itself currently has very limited capacity for disabled parking on site.
- Despite being unlikely to offer this facility in the future, it is planning to continue to offer a front of building 'drop-off' area for those with mobility issues.

- Further study and long-term scoping would be needed to identify the parking requirements for Hertford Theatre following refurbishment.

- A thorough review of the transport promotion strategy with a transport consultant through the design stages would be advisable - to promote greener modes of travel to the Theatre such as cycling and using public transport - as part of a wider integrated transport plan.

12.0 Economic Impact of both Options

12.1 The project will have a positive economic impact - not just for the Theatre, but also in the local community of Hertford and the wider district of East Hertfordshire. The proposed improvements to Hertford Theatre will foster economic growth through an expected increase in visitor numbers to the Theatre and corresponding boost in visitor spend, jobs created and salaries paid.

12.2 Located at the very heart of Hertford, the growth in visitor numbers to the theatre will lead to a growth in visitor numbers to Hertford.

12.3 Both options would increase visitor traffic to Hertford. The following shows the economic impact for the two preferred options:

Hertford Theatre Preferred Options	YEAR 5	YEAR 5
	Cinema Only	Growth and Legacy
Number of users	156,000	236,000
Spend on salaries, payroll + other staff	£565,000	£714,000
Direct Economic Impacts		
Jobs created	2.5	7
Salaries paid	£565,000	£714,000
Estimated induced spending	£904,000	£1,143,000
Estimated employment supported by induced spending	15	19
TOTAL	£1,469,000	£1,857,000
Indirect Economic Impacts	YEAR 5	YEAR 5

Additional day visitors	16,000	24,000
Additional staying visitors	3,200	4,750
Spend by day visitors	£312,000	£473,000
Spend by staying visitors	£188,000	£284,000
Total spending by new day / staying users	£500,000	£756,000
Full time equivalent staff supported by that spending	8	13
TOTAL	£1,000,000	£1,513,000
TOTAL (Direct + Indirect)	£2,469,000	£3,370,000
Incremental Surplus vs. Do Nothing	£243,000	£638,000

13. Summary /Conclusion

The Hertford Theatre currently operates with a subsidy of approximately £250k, this subsidy is likely to increase without any major enhancements to the offer or vitality to the town centre. Two models have been explored, the “cinema only” option with a cost of £5m. This option largely seeks to provide additional cinema screens to with a continued subsidy one the loan has been repaid. The “growth and legacy” option provides additional cinema screens, a café open to park and theatre users, additional studio space to diversify the offer and integrates the park via the Motte and the town by providing a walk way along the theatre to encourage connectivity through the town and develop the theatre at a hub of activity for Hertford. This option requires funding of £13.5m and proposes to generate a surplus once the loan is repaid.

14.0 Implications/Consultations

14.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper ‘A’**.

Background Papers

Equalities Impact Assessment

Contact Member: Cllr Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for
Health and Well-being
Eric.Buckmaster@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Jess Khanom, Head of Operations ext 1693
Jess.Khanom@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Rhys Thomas, Theatre Director and Arts Advisor
rhys.thomas@hertfordtheatre.com

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	<p>Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities</p> <p>Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives</p> <p>Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy</p>
Consultation:	None
Legal:	N/A
Financial:	<p>The capital costs for these options are: Option 1: £5m Option 2: £13.5m Funding for the project would need to be a combination of internal and external borrowing.</p> <p>The cost of funding this project has been calculated in ERP B1 and B2</p> <p>The modelling performed is based on a number of assumptions including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the current PWLB rates,• the return on current investment <p>This modelling was based on the capital costs of development being charged over the lifetime of the final assets.</p> <p>Both models will require an increase from the current subsidy of £250k to approx. 320k – 400k</p> <p>As with most financial modelling the assumptions may change over time and the impact of the development on the revenue budget may cause additional pressure or generate additional receipts.</p> <p>Sensitivity analysis has been carried out for both options for a 25% increase and deduction in net income.</p>

Human Resource:	<p>The main HR implications of the proposals include working hours, restructuring of the existing team, recruitment of additional staff and possible full closures.</p> <p>Employees at the theatre are already on annualised hours contracts working Monday - Sunday including evening working so existing terms and conditions do not need to be changed to enable the theatre to be open 7 days a week 9.00am – 11.00pm. However, any changes to working patterns in terms of custom and practice would require sufficient consultation with staff. Working hours will need to be monitored carefully to ensure that working time regulations are adhered to. Employees currently receive weekend and bank holiday pay enhancements so consultation would be required should any change to these arrangements be proposed.</p> <p>The restructuring of the existing team and creation of new roles will be done in accordance with the council's Redundancy policy which provides a framework for organisational change, ensuring that appropriate consultation with employees and Unison is carried out, redundancies are avoided and employees are developed and retained wherever possible. Recruitment to new roles will be carried out in a fair and consistent manner in accordance with the council's Recruitment policy.</p> <p>If full closures are required and staff are unable to work, HR will need to advise on the implications for staff. Possible solutions will depend on the duration of the closure and could include temporary redeployment of staff elsewhere in the council, compulsory annual leave or a lay-off (with pay).</p>
Risk Management:	Initial operating and development risks have been considered.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	Under the National Health Service Act 2006, each local authority has a duty to 'take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area'. Further subsections set out the wide-ranging steps which may be taken to fulfil this duty, including providing information and advice, and making available the services of any person or any facilities.

Equality Impact Assessment required:	Yes – to follow
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Equality Impact Analysis Form

1. Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) Form

Title of EqIA (policy/change it relates to)	Proposed Capital Development of Hertford Theatre and surrounding areas.	Date	6.6.18
Team/Department	Operations – Hertford Theatre		
Focus of EqIA What are the aims of the new initiative? Who implements it? Define the user group impacted? How will they be impacted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access and opportunity to engage with the arts offer at Hertford Theatre. Further increasing audience and participation numbers by enabling access for untapped audience groups including under-represented and hard to reach groups and adding to the vibrancy and offer of the Town Centre. • Contribute meaningfully to the Council's Health and Well-being strategy. • Contribute to the Councils Corporate Strategic Plan to "Enhance the quality of people's lives and improve the Health and Well-being of our communities." • Reduce where possible, the operational subsidy provided by the Council, with the ambition that, over time, the theatre could function with nil deficit to the council. <p>User Groups include residents across the district and outside the district In the cinema only option all resident will have access to first release cinema, however the wheelchair access in this model in relation to access to the backstage remains as it.</p> <p>In the growth and legacy model all resident will have access to all areas of the building.</p>		

2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Please fill in when appropriate to the change. If it does not, please put N/A

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Age	Our market analysis suggests that currently approx. 44% of our customer are 45-55+yrs with only approx. 10% 15-24yrs olds	<i>No consultation conducted as yet</i>	This information allows us to explore options to cater for a wider range of ages.	Enhance the offer through a capital development as described in our report at 1.7.1.
Disability	Current access to the backstage in not accessible for wheelchair users. Performances with signers encourage access to shows from a range disabled groups	<i>No consultation conducted as yet</i>	We will explore better access for disabled customers and performers	Enhance the offer through a capital development as described in our report at 1.7.2
Gender reassignment	N/A	N/A	N/A	See final box
Pregnancy and maternity	N/A	N/A	N/A	See final box

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Race	N/A	N/A	N/A	See final box
Religion or belief	N/A	N/A	N/A	See final box
Sex/Gender	N/A	N/A	N/A	See final box
Sexual orientation	N/A	N/A	N/A	See final box
Marriage and civil partnership	N/A	N/A	N/A	See final box
Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations				

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
<p>If approved consultation will take place with specific groups prior to construction.</p> <p>On top of the specific impacts on Age and Disability, it should be noted that the overall impact on an enhanced theatre offer for all groups. Cinema, theatre and the arts have and do provide an outlet to explore ideas and experiences of different groups including protected groups. Giving people from different backgrounds a route into the life experiences of different people. As such the enhancement of the theatre can be seen as a positive impact on all the protected characteristics and an improvement in terms of fostering good relations. As such the improved theatre offer is a major positive equality impact in and of itself and this positive contribution should be</p>				

3. List detailed data and/or community feedback which informed your EqIA (If applicable)

Title (of data, research or engagement)	Date	Gaps in data	Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with? (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
N/A – currently exploring options			

4. Prioritised Action Plan (If applicable)

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.				
Disability: the preferred option will determine operational requirements to achieve wheelchair access	Consultation with Disability groups	Service users satisfied	User satisfaction	On –going from implementation.
Age: require marketing tools to draw in new audiences of all ages including the 15-24yr market	As above	As above	As above	As above

EqIA sign-off: (for the EQIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer: Nathan Bookbinder

Date: 06/06/2018

Directorate Management Team rep or Head of Service:

Date: 6.6.18

Author of Equality Impact Analysis: Rhys Thomas

Date: 6.6.18

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 JUNE 2018

REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

CONTRACT OPTIONS FOR GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To report the findings of the Grounds Maintenance (GM) Contract Task & Finish Group including soft market testing and the implications of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) verge maintenance.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY:</u> The Committee is invited to recommend to the Executive, that the council:	
(A)	Offers the contract for a term of 8 years with the potential for a 5 year extension
(B)	Designs and tenders a contract which delivers the same quality standards (described in Essential Reference Paper 'B') across the district continuing with a performance/output approach as opposed to a scheduled delivery of works
(C)	Makes savings to offset the increase in costs of a new contract by no longer funding a "top up" to cut Hertfordshire County Council grass to the East Hertfordshire Council standard (saving approximately £800,000 over the contract term).

1.0 Background

1.1 The Group reported some initial recommendations to Overview and Scrutiny in February 2018, which was followed by further meetings to arrive at this final set of recommendations.

Two key issues came out of the initial exploration:

- the contract has been performing well and has been meeting resident's expectations and;
- if the contract is specified using standards which would deliver the same level of performance, the price may increase by 11%. This equates to approximately £150,000 per annum.

The group have explored a number of areas where savings may be found. These included:

- to withdraw from the "top up" arrangement with HCC where the district council currently maintain their highway verges to a higher standard than would otherwise be delivered, but at additional cost to East Herts council and;
- to rationalise the way East Herts Council provides and empties litter and dog waste bins to explore efficiencies.

1.2 The group confirmed in the previous report to Overview and Scrutiny that the council will use the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation method of procurement which enables procuring authorities to engage with suppliers before finally awarding a contract and is less resource intensive than Competitive Dialogue.

1.3 It was noted by Members at the Task & Finish meeting of 7 February 2018 that it may not be possible to establish the full potential impact that the removal of the Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) verge cutting may have on other rates within the contract until the re-tendering process starts.

1.4 Members discussed potential prices in the tendered contract, particularly highlighting some details such as the cost of locking and unlocking the gates at Hertford Castle. It was noted that any operational needs would be considered separately by officers to inform later decisions and that the

work of this group was focused on standards, contract procurement and consideration of the main elements to include in the contract.

- 1.5 Overview and Scrutiny resolved in February 2018 that the HCC “top up” arrangements continue to ensure consistency of verge cuts district wide. However, it should be noted that it will not be possible to achieve a standard of grass cutting on HCC grass equivalent to that achieved on East Herts Council (EHC) open spaces at the same price as the current contract.

The Task and Finish Group have explored in more detail how a general increase in contract prices will result in a more expensive contract if the service is delivered in the same way. It has been necessary to calculate potential costs and review market effects in some detail whilst also exploring how the impact of following the HCC approach of setting standards according to safety might impact public satisfaction. It is therefore necessary to consider a two tier approach to the provision of grounds maintenance across the district; a reduced standard on HCC land by HCC to achieve highway safety requirements, and maintain the current East Herts council open space cutting standards, to achieve the leisure needs of the community.

2.0 Report

2.1 *Soft market testing*

Officers hosted a soft market testing day on 17 April 2018 meeting with key providers to gauge potential interest in the contract in the early stages of the procurement process. This provided an opportunity to advertise the contract to grounds maintenance companies; to understand their views of the contract and to meet with the market to understand the factors that will ensure the contract remains attractive throughout the procurement. Each company was allocated an hour to explore areas such as optimum contract length, funding provision, specific contract clauses e.g. remedy and

default, security, terms and conditions, plant and equipment and services.

All the contractors were comfortable with Competitive Procedure with Negotiation as the chosen procurement procedure for this tender and welcomed the decision not to undertake an onerous Competitive Dialogue Procedure.

The Task & Finish Group have explored the results of the soft market testing and the issues raised during the meetings. The following specific findings have helped to inform their recommendations.

2.1.1 Length of Contract

All the contractors welcomed a contract period that is as long as possible. This is considered to be more interesting to contractors and provides an opportunity to develop a relationship with the council, with longer contracts attracting better prices. They were clear that the contract could include extension periods, but that extensions should be sensible in terms of buying equipment and vehicles. Multiples of 5 years was popular as was a longer initial term (7 or 8 years) followed by a 5-year extension.

It is recommended therefore that the council offers the contract for a term of 8 years with the potential for a 5 year extension.

2.1.2 Grass Cutting

The concept of taking the HCC grass top-up arrangement out of the contract was explored. Most bidders confirmed that the volume of grass being cut will not impact the rate (per m) which will be tendered. So cutting 2 million m² will attract the same unit rate as 3 million m². (Discussed further in 2.3 HCC Grass). It can be assumed therefore that any omission of verge maintenance resulting from withdrawal from the agency agreement would not have a negative impact on the overall tendered rates for grass cutting per square meter; therefore

savings can be provided by reducing the volume of grass cutting.

2.1.3 Prudential Borrowing, Risk and Securities

The option for prudential borrowing from the council was discussed. The responses varied from interested to no interest at all, with the contractor's responses influenced by their access to cash / funding; and also, how they will be financing vehicles and equipment. The overall conclusion is that offering financial support for equipment purchases would not make the contract significantly more attractive and should not therefore be included.

All the contractors stated that they have worked with various indexation mechanisms and are happy to work with whatever the council finds to be most viable. The current contract is inflated each year in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The same flexibility is possible in relation to providing either a Bond or a Parent Company Guarantee.

2.1.4 Chemicals

The issue of the potential banning of Glyphosate (a chemical used extensively to control weeds) was explored. The feeling from contractors was that a ban is unlikely. They also felt that regulatory shifts should be dealt with by change of law clauses in the Conditions of Contract. The group concluded however that the new contract should not expose the council to any required negotiation in such a scenario. As some of the contractors pointed out, there are a number of alternatives currently being developed. The successful contractor will need to price the work to allow for any potential need to change weed control methods. A change of law clause will be included in the contract to account for any unforeseen changes in the law. The council does not accept that the withdrawal of a chemical from the market constitutes a change in law.

2.1.5 Arboriculture and remedial play repairs

All contractors welcomed the inclusion of arboricultural services in the contract. Most would undertake the work themselves, with some likely to outsource the work to trusted sub-contractors. They are all also able to undertake inspection and remedial work in playgrounds. This is referred to further in 2.5 Additional function of the new contract.

2.1.6 *Dog Bins / Litter Bins*

Most contractors recognised that dog waste and general litter could be co-collected, and the use of single-use vehicles would make sense. The current contract method is to bulk the materials separately at a collection point, then pay for it to be disposed. This is discussed further in 2.4 Dog and litter bin rationalisation.

2.2 *Design of contract*

As reported previously; to assess the quality of grounds maintenance currently being delivered, observations across a selection of parks and open spaces were made independently by the consultant, providing an accurate snapshot of the current standards and overall contract performance.

The group found that grounds maintenance in East Hertfordshire is on the most part to a high standard resulting in a well maintained environment fit for the purpose of providing for leisure activities. Section 2.3.5 describes the scope of the areas of land which are maintained as part of the grounds contract.

Members who had attended the tour of East Herts parks and open spaces commented how well maintained and well used they were. Further discussion concluded that it is important to retain the level of standards set in the current contract in order to achieve the council's corporate objectives to enhance the quality of people's lives with attractive places.

It is recommended therefore that the council designs and tenders a contract which delivers the same quality standards

(as described in Essential Reference Paper 'B') on East Herts council land and uses performance standards as opposed to a scheduled delivery of works as the most efficient means of enforcing the specification.

It is accepted that some elements of work such as hedge pruning may require the specification of scheduled works.

2.3 *HCC Grass*

Financial Position

2.3.1 Officers discussed the council's financial position with Members and the need to drive for potential savings wherever possible and appropriate. The group noted that as outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), there was a funding gap of over half a million pounds each year to be met and that the forthcoming 2% rise in staff salaries has increased this figure further.

2.3.2 Reference was made to a low cost per metre of grass cutting at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2018. When considering the price per metre, the rate is relatively small (urban highway verge £0.26/ m², rural highway verge £0.21/ m² and swathe cut £0.05/ m²). However the volume is high (HCC grass amounts to 1.5 million m²). It equates therefore to a significant annual cost which is difficult to sustain going forward. The Task and Finish Group found that although such expenditure to "top up" HCC verge maintenance may not appear to be a large sum, the cost year-on-year would be significant; and that a potential saving of £800,000 over the course of the new contract prior to any extension must be considered carefully. It is important to note however that any savings arising from the cessation of HCC grass cutting would help towards off-setting the anticipated increase in contract costs, and would therefore mean that a growth in revenue budgets may not be required. For context, if the HCC "top up" were to continue, Council Tax would need to increase by 1% to cover the costs.

2.3.3 At the meeting of the Task and Finish Group on 30 January 2018, Members expressed that they prefer to see longer grass in rural areas but questioned whether residents would be accepting of this in urban areas. The Group agreed that a balanced approach is needed to ensure a good level of maintenance that ensured residents would be confident that the council was looking after its assets but also promoting understanding of the appreciation of nature. The County's swathe cut across the district which includes all the country lanes is cut to a minimal standard of two cuts within the current agency agreement, which would be the continued safety standard for HCC should the council hand back maintenance. Many of the council's open spaces are maintained with ecology as a prime consideration allowing for meadowland and perimeter margins to be cut to a conservation standard of one or two cuts timed to allow flowers to seed.

2.3.4 The group noted that other district councils have needed to make changes due to financial pressures. Hertsmere and St. Albans handed grass verge cutting on HCC verges back to HCC despite having a similar top-up arrangement for many years (St Albans in 2015 and Hertsmere in 2018). Both authorities have advised that a key element to delivering this change was to provide HCC with sufficient time to negotiate and absorb the works and for a comprehensive process of educating residents about the change. Both authorities agreed to continue with some areas of grass cutting where it was operationally sensible to do so to avoid duplication. Three Rivers District Council also advised that they ceased the grass cutting arrangement in 2009. Prior to the cessation of the arrangement, HCC were paying them the value of a basic grass cutting regime and the district funded an enhanced service. They requested HCC increase the payment for the basic grass cutting and when they declined, the whole of the grass cutting went back to HCC.

HCC officers have been made aware of the issues being considered by the group and have emphasised that they are

keen to discuss all options with a desire to work collaboratively with district councils in the best interest of the public.

A brief survey of local authority approaches to grass cutting across the country reveals that it is not uncommon for district councils to fund an enhanced service to County highway authorities. County councils in Lincolnshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Devon, Essex and Suffolk for example, all have arrangements with district, borough, city or parish councils to cut urban grass on their behalf. Some of these arrangements mention a financial contribution by the districts.

Lancashire County Council note that where a district or parish wishes to carry out these works to a higher standard i.e. more frequent grass cutting, they may do so at their own expense. Hampshire County Council reported a change of policy to renegotiate all agency agreements based upon a lower standard of grass cutting (from 4 cuts to 1 or 2) whilst still inviting district councils to consider cutting on their behalf. Nottinghamshire County Council advise that many grassed areas in and around housing estates are not part of the highway and cutting these is not their responsibility. They go on to say that many residents and businesses prefer a lawn-like finish to the grass outside their properties, recognising the important work that residents and businesses do in cutting the grass outside their properties. They provide a list of points to consider when residents are working in a public space and near to traffic.

2.3.5 Extent of cutting across district

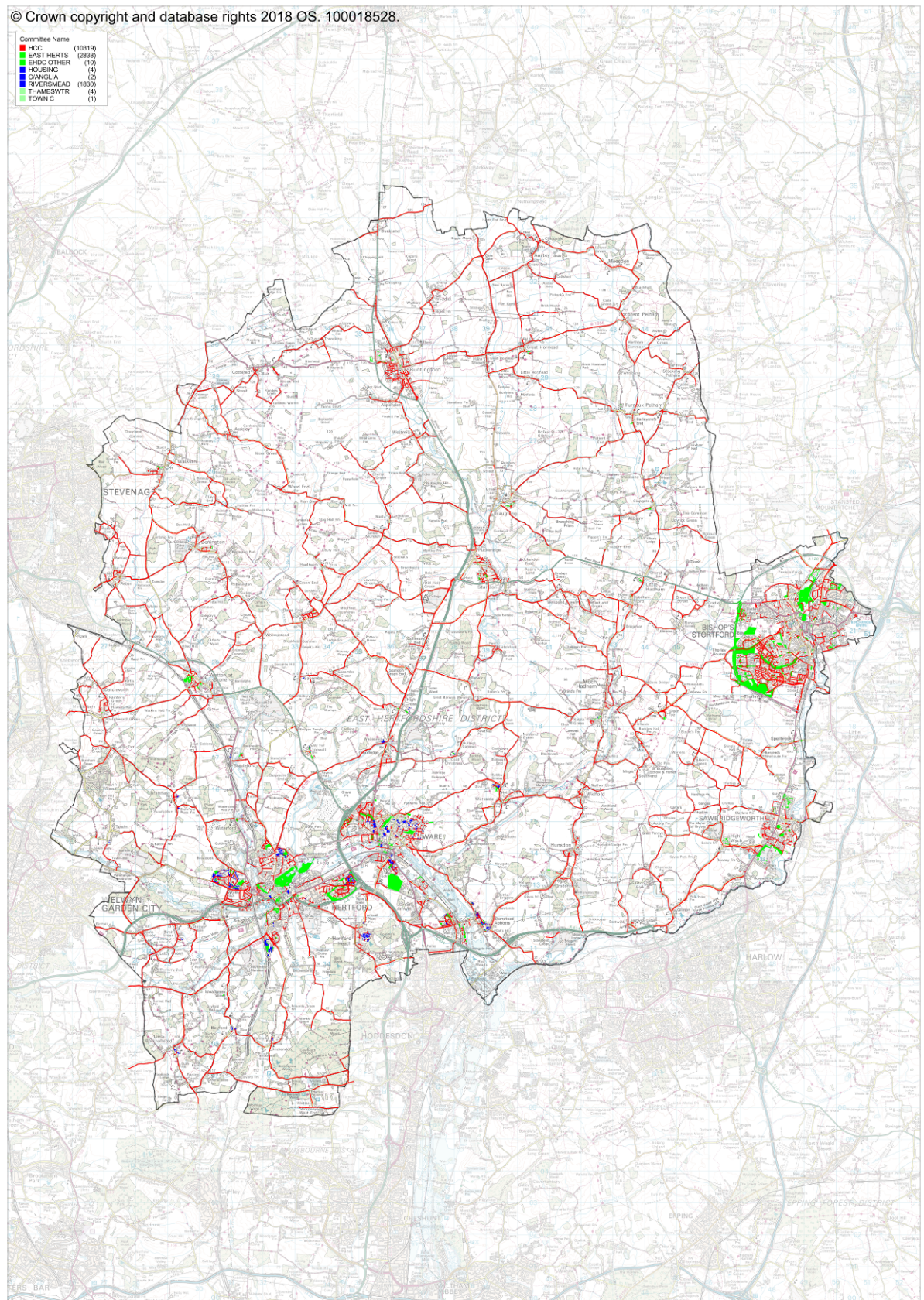
Members explored a range of maps to understand some comparisons between HCC and East Herts grass. The map that follows shows the current mix of responsibilities and how there is a distinct difference between highway verge and open space.

The red marking shows the wide and extensive county verges including the network of “swathe cut” along rural lanes. That

element alone is quite extensive and reflects the considerable areas of verge which are already restricted to a low cutting frequency of 2 visits per year (conducive to wild flowers). It also shows clearly that the agency agreement with East Herts does not include the A roads which are already cut by Ringway under direct contract with HCC. A key point is that many HCC verges are in residential areas where there is currently an expectation from residents of a tidy standard.

The map also shows EHC grass (in green) and the Network Homes' verges (in blue). It shows that, were the council to withdraw from providing an enhanced grass cut for HCC, the remaining grass which it owns is all parks or open spaces and not grass verge.

It also shows also that the residential estates now owned by housing associations (Network and Circle) have some areas which the council retained after stock transfer. Again though, these are larger areas of open space and not verges. In the new grounds contract all grass verges in these areas will be cut by the housing associations.



A version of this map which can be expanded to zoom into the detail is available on the hosted desktop at <X:\Environmental Services\Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces\HCC Overview ALL.tif>

2.3.6 *Verge Maintenance conclusions*

The group highlighted the need to consider the value that residents placed on the current standards of verge maintenance and noted that if the HCC “top up” fee was removed, it would offset much of the predicted growth in contract price.

In light of this, the group gave consideration to the question of whether the council should aim to spend the same and maintain current standards; or reduce standards to avoid increasing the grounds maintenance budget. This included the premise that HCC would cut the verges 3 or 4 times per year (to meet their standard of 150mm in urban areas), compared to the 12-14 times per year currently undertaken by EHC to meet our standard of 80mm. The group reflected upon photographs used by officers to indicate what grass verges should look like if maintained to our standard and what they look like if the contractor falls behind. These photographs illustrate how verges would look at the safety standard adopted by HCC. See **Essential Reference Paper ‘B’**

Consideration was also given to the potential for reducing the standards of the council’s maintenance across the board to match HCC’s safety led standard. It was concluded that, as the majority of maintenance carried out through the grounds contract is in the council’s parks and open spaces, this would be undesirable. Residents visiting parks to kick a ball around, have picnics or use the grass areas for the wide range of activities currently enjoyed would then often be unable to. The grass would reach a length which would prevent ball games and make it difficult to access with wheelchairs or children’s buggies. Resident’s confidence that the council is investing in health and wellbeing and managing its assets well could be brought into question.

The risk to EHC of no longer enhancing HCC verge maintenance in terms of expected complaints has been considered. It was concluded that whilst a change to the

appearance of verges in urban areas would be likely to attract some complaints, although these were likely to subside after a few months. Communicating information to residents about who to contact and explaining the rationale of standards for HCC grass would help to minimise the impact of a change. This would also provide an opportunity to promote the ecological benefits alongside the cost saving for EHC.

The group therefore recommends that the council makes savings to offset the potential increase in costs of a new contract by no longer funding a “top up” to cut HCC grass to the council’s standard. The group advises that this in practice would mean ceasing the HCC verge maintenance programme and handing back the responsibility for verge maintenance on highway owned land to HCC.

HCC would have the option to pay the tendered price for grass cutting to EHC standards and to pay for operationally advantageous areas such as verges adjacent to our grass to be cut by EHC to our standards at our tendered rates. The principal is that the council would no longer choose to enhance the service or to take on maintenance to a lower standard.

The final tendered price per metre rate of grass cutting will not be available until the tender stage. Early negotiations with HCC will reveal whether they might be prepared to pay the full cost of grass cutting to the EHC standard. If the successful tenderer’s grass cutting rates are competitive, the cost of cutting may not be significantly more than HCC would have to pay to their own contractor to cut to their lower safety standard. If they are interested in considering this the council will tender an option in the new contract to cut HCC grass at a consistent standard with EHC’s. If the price meets with HCC approval then a new agency agreement would be needed to maintain HCC verges to the EHC standard. If HCC determine that the cost is too high, the council will not include this option in the final contract with the new provider.

2.3.7 The group agrees in relation to this that the council negotiate the continuation of weed control of hard surfaces on behalf of HCC at full tendered costs. The current agency agreement includes this provision at full cost and the work supports our duty in relation to street cleansing. If weeds are not controlled on footpaths they begin to look untidy and can then attract litter dropping. The group noted that street cleansing is a district responsibility whereas the upkeep of the footpaths including weed control is HCC's. The council would offer this provision regardless of whether verge maintenance is retained.

2.4 *Dog and litter bin rationalisation*

The consultants advised the group at the meeting of 7 February 2018 that it would be cheaper to have dog waste and litter bins collected at the same time by the same vehicle, which would be a change to the current arrangements. All prospective tenderers have stated that they are already operating similar contractors with combined collections in place and that they have experienced no issues with the disposal of the waste.

The group explored the potential for this new approach to the provision of dog waste and litter bins in our open spaces. The proposal to combine collection operations does not however include the removal of any existing dog waste or litter bins other than where they require replacement due to their condition as part of the ongoing replacement regime.

Some authorities have also replaced litter and dog waste bins with a single dual use bin. Given the complexity of a scheme to change bin types, locations / numbers and the scope of public consultation required, the group agrees that changes should be restricted to the collection process only during this process to re-tender the contract.

The council will therefore seek savings by combining dog waste and litter collection into one operation.

It has been noted that many authorities now require the contractor to schedule works to ensure bins are never more than 75% full. This is a different approach to the scheduled one the council currently requires, shifting the specification to a performance / output approach. This will be considered for incorporation into the new contract.

2.5 *Additional function of the new contract*

Further to the findings from the soft market testing, the group agree that the council adds the delivery of tree maintenance and play area remedial works to the contract in a schedule of rates format.

The current arrangements relating to arboriculture were discussed at the meeting of 24 April 2018 when it was noted that all the contractors could deliver this service (maintenance, not inspections) and would welcome its inclusion in the contract. It was noted that the inclusion of arboriculture maintenance within the contract could create a financial saving in terms of officer resource as the current arrangements of commissioning separate works each year requires significant officer time. Likewise, the expansion of the contract to include play maintenance would make it more attractive and is a service already offered by most contractors. The new contract would require sufficient evidence from tenderers that they have the required skills and experience to deliver these services.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Details of the current council maintenance specification standards and photographs of enforcement standards can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

Contact Member: Grounds Maintenance Task and Finish Group
 Chair: Cllr Jan Goodeve
 Jan.Goodeve@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Jess Khanom, Head of Operations ext 1693
 Jess.Khanom@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Ian Sharratt, Leisure and Parks Development
 Manager
 Ian.Sharratt@eastherts.gov.uk

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives <i>(delete as appropriate):</i>	<p>Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities</p> <p>Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives</p> <p>Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy</p>
Consultation:	<i>None.</i>
Legal:	<i>It is presumed that this contract will come within the definition of a Works contract under European Procurement Regulations in which case the threshold for EU procurement aggregated over the year life of this expanded contract will be roughly £4.5 million based on 2018/19 threshold figures. Depending on the value this will affect how the contract is procured.</i>
Financial:	<p><i>The Council's budget for the grounds maintenance contract is limited and must be considered carefully as part of any redesign of the specification.</i></p> <p><i>There is a funding gap of over half a million pounds each year to be met. The forthcoming 2% rise in staff salaries has increased this figure.</i></p> <p><i>Any savings arising from modifying the contract would help towards off-setting the anticipated increase in contract costs but would not provide a budgetary saving towards the MTFP.</i></p>
Human Resource:	<i>No immediate HR issues related to this report. At the contract award stage there will be TUPE implications with various outcomes according to the split of services. Network Homes will have some TUPE responsibility prior</i>

	<i>to re-tender of this contract when they withdraw in October 2018. HCC would have some responsibilities if elements of the service return to their direct provision.</i>
Risk Management:	<i>The contract provides a high profile service to the public which can result in a high level of complaint if not delivered effectively and to standard. Comparisons of contract performance are considered by customers across district borders. The level of quality standards therefore need to be considered in this context.</i>
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	<i>An effective grounds maintenance contract contributes directly to the delivery of high quality parks and open spaces which provide opportunity for health and wellbeing initiatives and activities.</i>
Equality Impact Assessment required:	<i>An EIA has been undertaken. The contract is a re-procurement and will deliver the same quality standards as the current contract. It has been assessed that equal service access will be maintained. Please see attached ERP C for the full EIA.</i>

Current Council maintenance specification standards

EHC Grass

TYPE	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	PERIOD	STANDARD
C	Park Grassland	Usually large open spaces. Usually cut with gang mowers in the main. Includes football pitches.	1 st Apr - 31 st Oct 1 st Nov - 31 st Mar	Minimum height – 25mm Maximum height – 75mm Minimum height – 50mm Maximum height – 75mm
E	General Amenity Grass	Generally amenity land and open spaces, and small parks, mainly in urban areas. Usually cut with ride on rotary or cylinder mowers.	All Year	Minimum height – 25mm Maximum height – 80mm
B	Box Mowing High Amenity Grass	High Amenity Parks at Hertford Castle and Bishop's Stortford Castle Grounds. Usually cut with a rotary or cylinder mower with collection box.	1 st Apr - 31 st Oct 1 st Nov - 31 st Mar	Minimum height – 12mm Maximum height – 25mm Minimum height – 20mm Maximum height – 35mm

TYPE	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	PERIOD	STANDARD
I	Conservation Cut (Meadow Grass)	Cut and collect and dispose of arisings on certain park areas with aim of keeping nutrient levels low and help disperse seeds to encourage wild flowers.	Twice per year March and August or July and September as instructed	Height after cutting –75mm
J	Rough Grass	Cut only on certain park areas to maintain a 'naturalised' appearance.	Twice per year March and August	Height after cutting – 75mm
F	Rural Grass Cut	Grass cutting of land owned by East Hertfordshire District Council . Mainly cut with ride-on cylinder or rotary mowers but may require tractor and side arm or strimming in some locations.	All Year	Min – 50mm Max – 150mm

EHC Shrubs

All shrub beds are pruned at least once per year.
Growth that obstructs car parks, footpaths, roads, road nameplates, signs, windows, gutters shall be carefully trimmed back to a regular line and shape by cutting during the early summer. Site lines, signs and nameplates must be kept clear of vegetation at all times.
Litter is collected during all visits.
Site Manuals – pruning at the correct time.
Dead shrubs are reported and removed.
Replacement shrubs must be guaranteed for 18 months.
Beds must be 95% weed free.

EHC Enforcement standards equating to cutting frequency

Satisfactory condition achieved with 12 to 14 cuts per year



Marginal concern in between standards



Unsatisfactory condition equating to 2 to 4 cuts



Equality Impact Analysis Form

1. Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) Form

Title of EqIA (policy/change it relates to)	Contract options for retender of grounds maintenance report to Overview and Scrutiny	Date	06/06/2018
Team/Department	Operations		
Focus of EqIA What are the aims of the new initiative? Who implements it? Define the user group impacted? How will they be impacted?	To guide an effective retender process resulting in a contract that delivers a grounds maintenance service to an acceptable quality and within an affordable price. Implemented by Operations staff with guidance and approval from Members. The user group is potentially all residents in the District. The quality of service delivered by the retendered contract will impact upon the appearance and functionality of the Council's parks and open spaces. There may also be an impact relating specifically to the visual amenity offered by highway verges throughout East Herts.		

2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Please fill in when appropriate to the change. If it does not, please put N/A

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Age	<i>Our parks and open spaces are used by all age groups. A priority analysis in the 2015 Residents Survey ranked Parks and Open Spaces as a key strength seen as more important and least needing improvement against other Council services. Health & Wellbeing initiatives across our parks are aimed at both young and old.</i>	<i>In 2015 77%; (76% in 2013) residents were very or fairly satisfied with their parks and open spaces. Records of complaints show that the standard of grounds maintenance is sensitive to change.</i>	<i>The proposal to maintain standards at their current level should retain user satisfaction and not impact negatively on their enjoyment of facilities. The potential lowering of standards on highway verges however may result in lower satisfaction, however we have no evidence of there being an age dimension to this. There would be no negative impact on health and safety.</i>	<i>Retain standards of maintenance for open spaces as recommended in report. Provide customers with information in advance of any change to highway maintenance to minimise concern.</i>
Disability	<i>All residents have good access to our parks and open spaces. Some research indicates that visiting the outdoors</i>	<i>Anecdotally we are aware that disabled people enjoy using our parks and open spaces.</i>	<i>The outcomes of this report would not have an adverse effect on individuals in this category.</i>	<i>Implement as recommended.</i>

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
	<i>can have a positive impact upon mental health.</i>			
Gender reassignment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Race	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Religion or belief	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sex/Gender	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sexual orientation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Marriage and civil partnership	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations				
The quality of parks and open spaces is important to the potential health and wellbeing of all residents and should be maintained at current standards to avoid any negative impact upon this as recommended in the report.				

3. List detailed data and/or community feedback which informed your EqIA (If applicable)

Title (of data, research or engagement)	Date	Gaps in data	Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with? (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
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4. Prioritised Action Plan (If applicable)

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.				
In 2015 77%; (76% in 2013) residents were very or fairly satisfied with their parks and open spaces. Records of complaints show that the standard of grounds maintenance is sensitive to change.	Retain standards of maintenance for open spaces as recommended in report. Provide customers with information in advance of any change to highway maintenance to minimise concern.	Service users satisfied.	Level of complaints.	Report decision to be made by Exec in July 2018. New contract to go live Jan 2020.

EqIA sign-off: (for the EQIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer:

Ian Sharratt

Date: 06/06/2018

Directorate Management Team rep or Head of Service:

Jess Khanom

Date: 06/06/2018

Author of Equality Impact Analysis:

Ian Sharratt

Date: 06/06/2018

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY: 19 JUNE 2018

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: *none*

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To review and determine Overview and Scrutiny (OS) Committee's future work programme

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION:</u>	
(A)	the work programme shown in this report (Essential Reference Paper B attached) be agreed.

1.0 Background

1.1 Items previously required, identified or suggested for the OS work programme are set out in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

1.2 Scrutiny committees have the power of influence and are entitled to review and scrutinise the functions of the Council and the decisions of the Executive. The Committee serves as a 'critical friend' and is not a decision-making body but can make recommendations to the Executive.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The draft agenda for 2018/19 meetings of OS Committee is shown in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**. The timing of some items shown may have to change depending on availability of essential data (eg. from central government) and officers.
- 2.2 The Committee will be invited to contribute suggestions and select new topics for consideration at a work programme planning workshop to be held on 14th June 2018. Once a topic has been proposed and selected by the Committee, the Scrutiny Officer will liaise with the lead officer (in consultation with the Scrutiny Chairman) to establish the best way to address the subject and scope the scrutiny.
- 2.3 Members are welcome to submit a scrutiny proposal at any time by completing a Scrutiny Proposal Form (**Essential Reference Paper 'C'**) providing officers with sufficient information to ensure their specific questions are addressed. The Scrutiny Officer will then liaise with officers and the Scrutiny Chairman to consider the best way to address the subject and complete a scoping document.
- 2.4 Members agreed to extend an invitation to an Executive Member to provide an overview on their portfolio, followed by questions from the Committee at each meeting. The Committee is asked to consider which Executive Members to invite to each meeting for 2018/19.
- 2.5 Members are asked whether there is any training relevant to scrutiny or to the function and remit of the OS Committee that they wish to suggest.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers: none

Contact Member: OS Scrutiny Committee Chairman: Cllr Mike Allen
mike.allen@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Alison Stuart, Head of Legal and Democratic
Services
alison.stuart@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Fiona Corcoran, Scrutiny Officer
fiona.corcoran@eastherts.gov.uk

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IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives <i>(delete as appropriate):</i>	<p>Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities</p> <p>Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives</p> <p>Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy</p> <p>Effective use of the scrutiny process contributes to the Council's ability to meet one or more of its corporate objectives.</p>
Consultation:	<p>Potential topics for scrutiny are always invited from the Executive and all Members and the public are asked through an annual item in the 'council tax' edition of LINK magazine which is delivered to every household. Members of each scrutiny committee are consulted at every meeting as their work programme is a standing item on the agenda.</p>
Legal:	<p>According to the Council's constitution, the scrutiny committees are responsible for the setting of their own work programme in consultation with the Executive and in doing so they shall take into account wishes of members on that committee who are not members of the largest political group on the Council.</p>
Financial:	<p>There are no financial implications arising from this report.</p>
Human Resource:	<p>Any additional meetings and every task and finish group has resource needs linked to officer support activity and time for officers from the services to make the required input.</p>
Risk Management:	<p>Matters which may benefit from scrutiny may be overlooked. The selection of inappropriate topics for</p>

	review would risk inefficient use of resources. Where this involved partners, it could risk damaging the reputation of the council and relations with partners.
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	The broad remit of scrutiny is to review topics which are of concern to the public, many of which have an indirect impact on the general wellbeing of residents of East Herts.
Equality Impact Assessment required:	Not required.

Overview & Scrutiny (OS) Committee Work Programme 2018/19 – DRAFT

[Please note: This is a working document and will be subject to regular amendment]

Meeting Date	Topic	Lead Officer	Notes
10th July (Deadline for reports 27 June)	Shared Services	Helen Standen (and Isabel Brittain, Su Tarran, Stevenage officers)	Date TBC for a single item meetings to look at shared services. From Member proposals from Cllr Allen and Cllr Pope.

Meeting Date	Topic	Lead Officer	Notes
18 September 2018 (Deadline for reports 5 September)	Exec Member Update	TBC	
	Climate Change Strategy	David Thorogood, Environmental Strategy and Development Manager	To consider draft Climate Change Strategy Doc (arising from work of the Climate Change T&F Group)
	Update on Economic	Ben Wood, Head of	Previous Economic Development

2018)	Development Vision and assessment of Launchpad Pilot.	Communications, Strategy and Policy	updates have gone to OS in the past as the topic was requested by Members in 2017/18 and updates requested.
	Community Transport Strategy	Claire Carter, Service Manager, Community Wellbeing Partnerships	
	Work Programme	Scrutiny Officer	

Meeting Date	Topic	Lead Officer	Notes
6 November 2018 (Deadline for reports 24 October)	Exec Member Update	TBC	
	Work Programme	Scrutiny Officer	

Meeting Date	Topic	Lead Officer	Notes
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18 December 2018 Fiona Corcoran (Deadline for reports 5 December)	Exec Member Update	TBC	
	Work Programme	Scrutiny Officer	

Meeting Date	Topic	Lead Officer	Notes
22 January 2019 (Deadline for reports 9 January 2019) NB: THIS IS A JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Update from Portfolio Holder for Finance & Support Services	Cllr Geoff Williamson; Isabel Brittain, Head of Strategic Finance	<i>to link in with budget report and as joint scrutiny meeting gives opportunity for OS members to have Q&A on this portfolio</i>
	Budget report & Medium Term Financial Plan	Isabel Brittain, Head of Strategic Finance	
	2019/20 Corporate Service Plans	Ben Wood, Head of Communications,	<u>All heads of service to be present</u>

MEETING (Both OS and PAG Members to attend to scrutinise Budget and service plans)		Strategy and Policy; Nathan Bookbinder, Policy Officer	
	Annual Audit Letter and External Audit Grants Certification Summary	Natalie Clark, Ernst & Young	Email Natalie Clark EY with report deadline details
	Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) Update on Audit Plan	Alan Cooper SIAC, HCC	
	Treasury Management Strategy 2018-19	Isabel Brittain, Head of Strategic Finance; External Auditor from Ernst & Young	
	Work Programme	Scrutiny Officer	

Meeting Date	Topic	Lead Officer	Notes
5 February 2019	Update from Executive Member Update	TBC	

(Deadline for reports 23 January 2019)	Work Programme	Scrutiny officer	
<p><u>Task and Finish Groups</u></p> <p>Climate Change Lead Officer: David Thorogood, Environmental Strategy and Development Manager Cllrs: Deering (Chair), Freeman, Woodward, Stevenson, Radford, Reed, Pope Due to meet June/July 2018 – date TBC</p> <p>Grounds Maintenance Lead Officer: Ian Sharratt, Environment Manager – Open Spaces Cllrs: Goodeve (Chair), Cutting, Reed, Alder, Freeman Work of the task and finish group concluded at its last meeting on 10 May 2018. Final report to be presented to OS Committee on 19 June.</p>			
<p><u>Member Scrutiny Proposals - updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Manchester Airports Group (MAG) parking policies on parking in Bishop's Stortford As a result of this scrutiny proposal, the Stansted Airport Parking Complaints telephone number is now listed on the East Herts Council website; officers (Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy 			

and Parking Manager) are now included in all circulation of papers for the Stansted Airport Highways Working Group; two Members of the Committee have been invited to attend the Stansted Area Transport Forum on 8th March 2018. Officers are engaged with the CEO of MAG in relation to the airport's growth plans and a MAG gave a presentation and Q&A session for Members on 19th March 2018.

- **Housing and Vulnerability**

This topic has been considered by officers, who are meeting with the relevant Member Champion on a regular basis to ensure she is updated and to allow discussion of any individual issues arising.

Other items for 2018/19:

Shared Services – a single item meeting of the committee to be added to the OS work programme to enable the committee to consider this item thoroughly, with officers from Stevenage Borough Council to attend.

Council Tax support Scheme– date to be confirmed by S Tarran

Extra Care Housing – date to be confirmed by J Geall (as agreed at OS Committee 20 February 2018, Corporate Service Plans item)

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER C

Scrutiny Proposal form

Name of proposer:

What would you like to suggest for investigation / review by scrutiny?

Why would you like this to be reviewed? (Include the main issues / concerns to be considered)

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

What would be the likely benefits and outcomes of carrying out this investigation / review?

Estimated resource implications on staff and councillors (e.g. research group, one-off report, dedicated meeting etc) to achieve the likely outcome. The outcome must be proportionate to the cost of carrying out the review.	
Suggested witnesses, documentation and consultation required	
Will this investigation / review contribute to one or more of the Council's Strategic Priorities? If so, which (please tick)?	
Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities	
Enhance the quality of people's lives	
Enable a flourishing local economy	

Will this investigation / review meet one of the criteria below? If so, which (please tick)?	
Public Interest: The issue has been identified as a concern by local people	
Impact (Value): The issue will make a significant difference to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of residents, and has the potential for outcomes that could lead to real improvements	
Relevance: The issue is relevant and does not duplicate existing work being undertaken elsewhere	
Partnership working or external scrutiny: The issue involves moving towards collective action and community leadership	

Would you like to be involved in the investigation / review?	
Yes	No
Date of request:	Signed:

Please return this form to: Scrutiny Officer, East Herts Council,
Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8EQ Email:
fiona.corcoran@eastherts.gov.uk

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 JUNE 2018

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

OLD RIVER LANE, BISHOP'S STORTFORD

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To provide a detailed update on the progress of the Old River Lane site in Bishop's Stortford and ask members to steer the next phase of the development.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

COMMITTEE: That Committee Members scrutinise the pack of evidence attached to this report and:

(A)	refer any comments or suggestions to the Executive, with respect to the Old River Lane Delivery Board's preferred options for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the suggested delivery model set out in Exempt Essential Reference Paper D (Business Case) and summarised in this report at 2.2 below;• the procurement phasing, set out in Exempt Essential Reference Paper E (Procurement Strategy) and summarised in this report at 2.4 below; and
(B)	Review the Risk Register set out in Essential Reference Paper F and refer any issues/additions/changes to the Executive.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In December 2017 Members resolved at full council that: the land at Old River Lane and adjoining Northgate End should be used to develop a mixed town centre scheme, to include:
- a significant new Arts/Cultural Centre that includes a 500 seat theatre, 3-4 cinema screens, shared reception space, *potentially* the Bishop's Stortford library, a one-stop-shop for Council services, hot-desking work space, cafe/bar
 - up to 180 homes (including a range of tenures)
 - retail (shops and restaurants), and
 - parking provision for the whole site.
- 1.2 Since then, work has progressed and a number of key milestones have been achieved, as set out in 2.0 below.
- 1.3 This work has been led by the Old River Lane Delivery Board, comprising of Cllrs Haysey, Jones, Williamson, Buckmaster and Warnell. A number of relevant documents and FAQs are set out on the council's Old River Lane website page here:
<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/oldriverlane>
- 1.4 The council is now at a stage where it needs to confirm its intent to go out to the market with a preferred delivery model and procurement route.
- 1.5 Members should note that any progress is subject to the planning outcome on the application for the Multi Storey Car Park, and that no assumptions have been made in this regard.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 Work has progressed at pace since the Council's land use decision on 13 December 2017, report details link here:
<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/documents/s42341/Old%20River%20Lane%20Land%20Use.pdf?j=3>) . The following is a summary of key milestones:

- (a) The **Arts Centre Heads of Terms** document (attached at **Essential Reference Paper B**) has been signed by all three parties – East Herts Council, Bishop’s Stortford Town Council and Rhodes Birthplace Trust, committing all parties to work together to:
- deliver the arts and entertainment centre
 - commit revenue funding of up to £250k annually, from both Bishop’s Stortford Town Council (providing the Rhodes Trust becomes self-sufficient) and East Herts Council
 - commit capital funding in proportion to the eventual asset ownership
 - establish an interim steering group/trust shadow board in advance of the establishment of a new trust to govern the arts centre;
- (b) A **planning application** has been submitted for a multi-storey car park (MSCP) at the north end of the site, to accommodate 581 vehicles; a block of 15 residential apartments and approximately 400m² commercial space is proposed adjacent to the MSCP, on the corner of Rye Street and Link Road (the application is due to be considered at Development Management Committee on 20th June);
- (c) **Soft market testing** has been carried out by the council’s property consultants, Montagu Evans, to assess the likely interest from developers for the whole of the Old River Lane site. The exempt report is attached (**Essential Reference Paper C**), but in summary significant interest was expressed by a wide range of developers;
- (d) A **bid has been submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnership** to fund the gap between the development value and the development cost. The result of this bid is expected by the end of June;

- (e) Extensive research has been carried out on the **design brief for the arts centre**, which has included:
- a three day tour of eight arts centres/theatres by the Arts Centre Working Group (two representatives from each of Bishop's Stortford Town Council, East Herts Council and Rhodes Birthplace Trust)
 - an open invitation workshop attended by 30 arts groups from Bishop's Stortford to gather feedback on what facilities they would like to see in the arts centre
 - two workshops with Rhodes staff and volunteers to ascertain information on what works really well and what are the current constraints at the Rhodes
 - the first in a series of public engagement events summarising the views ascertained from the above activities and asking for feedback; further engagement events are planned;
- (f) A report on the latest financial viability and proposed delivery models prepared by Montagu Evans has been considered by the Old River Lane Delivery Board and the latest version of the **business case**, with preferred delivery models for each part of the site as recommended by the ORL Delivery Board, is attached at **exempt Essential Reference Paper D**;
- (g) A report on the proposed **procurement** strategy is attached at **exempt Essential Reference Paper E**.

2.2 Delivery Models

2.2.1 There is a range of delivery models that could be used to support and facilitate change at ORL. These are set out in detail at **exempt Essential Reference Paper D** (the Business Case) and members are strongly advised to read this

document carefully. Five broad delivery models were considered and have been discussed and evaluated with the ORL officer group and the ORL Delivery Board:

- A. Direct Development / Delivery by Council
- B. Development Agreement
- C. Wholly Owned Development Company
- D. Joint Venture
- E. Overarching Delivery Vehicle

2.2.2 Each of these delivery models has strengths and weaknesses. Further detail can be found in **Essential Reference Paper D**. Based on emerging Council objectives for ORL, those models which were viewed and evaluated more favourably are:

- Development Agreement
- Joint Venture
- Direct Delivery

2.2.3 The key difference between a Development Agreement and a Joint Venture relates to the financial risk profile; in a Development Agreement the Council's return is more likely to be fixed and therefore risk is reduced, whilst in a Joint Venture the return is more likely to not be fixed, and indeed a risk of losses occurring (as well as enhanced profits). Another key difference is the view that Joint Venture arrangements may provide for greater levels of control over scheme development and decision making. Ultimately, this would depend on the detail of any legal drafting of an agreement – both for a Development or Joint Venture agreement.

2.2.4 The case studies set out in the **Essential Reference Paper D** – and Montagu Evans' experience in large scale town centre regeneration elsewhere – point heavily toward a Development Agreement structure with a private developer being by far the most common way of councils delivering major town centre schemes. Ultimately, this may be a reflection of councils seeking to find a suitable balance between the degree of control desired and the level of financial risk a council is

prepared to take on. This does not though preclude other approaches being used, if there are good reasons to do so.

2.2.5 There is also a strong case to consider the development of ORL as a number of development packages – with the potential to adopt different delivery models for them. These development packages could comprise:

- Northgate End -
(MSCP and adjoining residential/commercial block)
- Core ORL residential site
- Arts and Entertainment Centre

2.2.6 Direct Delivery could be favoured for some parts of the scheme – the Arts Centre and MSCP / Northgate area. This reflects the specific circumstances for these parts of the site and what will be delivered there as well as financial considerations.

2.2.7 While it is acknowledged that the shape of the projects at ORL will continue to evolve – not least as the detailed masterplan and land uses are shaped further - **the review undertaken on delivery models in this report and in the context of potential ORL site packages has resulted in the Old River Lane Delivery Board proposing the following approaches:**

Project	Comment
Northgate End	<p>Suggested Delivery Model: Direct Delivery</p> <p>Rationale: the Council has already submitted a planning application for the Northgate area of ORL, including for the car park. East Herts have already undertaken much of the background and design and specification work. As it will already be doing much of the role of a developer it could look to take on full development responsibility through Direct Delivery.</p> <p>Direct Delivery will also be expected to secure some cost savings, through negating the requirement for a</p>

	<p>full developer's profit. This assumes that the Council will be able to forward fund the development costs for the MSCP.</p>
<p>Core ORL Residential Site</p>	<p>Suggested Delivery Model: Development Agreement</p> <p>Rationale: Could be delivered as a single package, or potentially as part an integrated wider development (via a Development Agreement / development management agreement) alongside the Arts Centre. The development of substantial residential uses will require some form of public private partnership arrangement. The scale of the scheme will still be substantial and it will be in a prominent location in the remodelled town centre and EHDC is likely to wish to influence development strongly here. Both the Development Agreement and Joint Venture model would allow EHDC to achieve that.</p> <p>There is the prospect that some modest increased return to EHDC could come from a Joint Venture proposition, though this would need the Council to inject substantial investment / equity. Alternatively, a Development Agreement would place far less financial risk on the Council, provide much greater certainty on returns at an early stage of the process and still allow for a reasonable degree of control.</p>
<p>Arts Centre</p>	<p>Suggested Delivery Model: Direct delivery, with developer taking overarching project management role for all of core ORL site.</p> <p>Rationale: the specification for the Arts Centre will be driven by the Council. Cost savings could be secured through Direct Delivery. However, there is a need to ensure integration of the Arts Centre with the wider development, and this might be better achieved</p>

	<p>within the context of an overarching Development Agreement for the site, within which the developer takes on a development management role for the Arts Centre (essentially still a form of Direct Delivery for the Council).</p> <p>Direct Delivery has the potential to realise some savings for the Council, accepting that the Arts Centre would then need to be fully funded by East Herts and a much greater degree of responsibility would lie with them too.</p>
--	---

2.3 Procurement Route

2.3.1 Assuming the delivery models above are agreed, the procurement route and timelines are set out in detail in **exempt Essential Reference Paper E**.

2.3.2 This is a complex project, and members are asked to consider the potential phasing of the procurement as set out in 2.4 below.

2.4 Options and Procurement Phasing

The options for the Council are now as follows:

2.4.1 Option 1: Do Nothing

Council agreed a land use decision at their meeting on 13 December 2017 and has already invested significantly in developing the Old River Lane project this far. This is one of the Council's most significant projects, and plays a major part in protecting the vitality of Bishop's Stortford town centre. There is increasing evidence that as consumers move to purchase online, the gaps left by high street retailers are best replaced by leisure and other alternative uses. If the Council were to choose not to proceed at this stage, the site would be likely to remain undeveloped for some time, given its recent

planning history (the Henderson's scheme) which demonstrated that without significant public financial support, the site is very unlikely to be financially viable for anything other than housing. Since the Council has already excluded housing alone as an option, the 'Do Nothing' option for the Council effectively means that the site is likely to remain undeveloped. The Council would look to offer long lease tenancies for Charringtons and continue to hold the site as an investment.

2.4.2 Option 2 – proceed with procurement, but splitting the whole scheme into two parts, with two parallel procurement processes

Launch the Old River Lane (core site) scheme to the market. *Simultaneously*, continue with Stage 3 of the MSCP design, and then tender a contract for the MSCP and adjoining housing/commercial unit, with a view to starting on site as soon as procurement is complete and a contract is signed for the core site (likely to be Feb/March 2019).

2.4.3 Option 3 – proceed with procurement, but maintain the whole scheme as a single part

Launch the Old River Lane (core site) scheme to the market. Delay the MSCP and adjoining housing/commercial unit procurement until a contract for the main scheme is signed. This would delay overall delivery by approximately 12 months, as in this option, development would start on the MSCP in the Autumn of 2019.

2.4.4 The key differences between Option 2 and Option 3 are:

- **Option 2 presents an increase in financial risk;** the Council would be proceeding without a partner for the main site in place, and if for any reason a contract could not be signed, the costs of further design stages and procurement of the MSCP and housing/commercial unit

could be abortive. The potential range of costs is set out in **exempt Essential Reference Paper E** in section 7. (Note, the Council would only start on site with the MSCP and housing/commercial unit once a contract is in place for the main site). Given the soft market testing (**exempt Essential Reference Paper C**) this is thought unlikely to be a significant risk.

- **Option 3 causes a delay to delivery;** no work would start on Northgate End until approximately Autumn 2019, and no work would start on Old River Lane until the MSCP is operational (approximately one year after start on site, so Autumn 2020). This would delay completion of the whole site until 2023.

2.4.5 The Old River Lane Delivery Board's preferred option is Option 2.

2.5 Risk

2.5.1 There are a number of risks associated with the project, and these are set out in the Old River Lane Risk Register, which is set out at **Essential Reference Paper F**.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within Essential Reference Paper 'A'.

Background Papers - None

Contact Member: Cllr Linda Haysey, Leader
01992531650
linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Liz Watts, Chief Executive
01992 531650
liz.watts@eastherts.gov.uk

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

IMPLICATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):	Priority 1 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people's lives Priority 3 – Enable a flourishing local economy
Consultation:	Consultation on the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework was completed in March 2017 (attached for reference at Essential Reference Paper G). Further consultation has been undertaken specifically with respect to the Arts and Entertainment Centre as set out in 2.1e of the report.
Legal:	Legal advice has been provided by our in house team to date. Should agreement be given at Council in July to proceed to market, external legal advice will be sought as required.
Financial:	Capital and Revenue financial implications of the Old River Lane project are set out in the Arts Centre Heads of Terms (ERP B) and Business Case (Exempt ERP D).
Human Resource:	n/a
Risk Management:	The Risk Register is attached at ERP F
Health and wellbeing – issues and impacts:	Bringing a new arts and entertainment centre to Bishop's Stortford will increase the opportunity to improve people's health and wellbeing through a range of cultural and community activities.
Equality Impact Assessment required:	No

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OLD RIVER LANE ARTS CENTRE PROJECT

HEADS OF TERMS for PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

These Heads of Terms (“HOTs”) set out the principal terms and conditions on and subject to which East Hertfordshire District Council is willing to enter into a Partnership Agreement for the relocation of the Rhodes Art Centre (“the Project”) with Bishop’s Stortford Town Council and Rhodes Birthplace Trust.

These HOTs are not exhaustive and are not legally binding between the parties. Instead, they will reflect the intentions of the parties and set out the key terms of the transaction in order to deliver the Project. The agreed principles of these HOTs will be formalised in a legally binding Partnership Agreement signed by the parties.

1. PARTIES

The parties to the Agreement will be:

- East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) of Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ
- Bishop’s Stortford Town Council (BSTC) of The Old Monastery, Windhill, Bishop’s Stortford CM23 2ND
- Rhodes Birthplace Trust (RBT) of 1-3 South Street, Bishop’s Stortford, CM23 3JG

2. KEY COMMERCIAL TERMS

The following key commercial terms are agreed between the parties:

(a) Business Case

- Option 1A of the Business Case is the preferred option with the relocation of the artistic business and activities of the Rhodes to a new facility in Bishop’s Stortford Town Centre at Old River Lane. Plans for the new Arts/Civic Centre (Option 1A) are expected to include:
 - 500 seat auditorium capable of delivering a wide variety of theatre, music, spoken word, dance etc (both professional and community), with sufficient provision for backstage facilities
 - a fly tower unless a convincing case can be made that the equivalent functionality can be provided another way
 - a studio space in which audience of 80-100 people can be accommodated
 - Meeting rooms /rehearsal space/dance studio.
 - 3-4 screen cinema
 - a new home for the library
 - a one stop shop for public services including East Herts
 - hot desking space
 - a cafe/bar
- The Business Case contains outline projections only and a detailed Business Plan will be required once a formal land use decision for the whole site is agreed by EHDC.

(b) Time Limits/Termination

- To agree and sign these Heads of Terms by 12 February 2018
- To negotiate in good faith with a view to executing a Partnership Agreement for the implementation of the Old River Lane Arts Centre on or before the date on which EHDC decides to proceed with the whole scheme (see attached programme), for a term of no less than 10 years notwithstanding the 4 year political cycle of both Councils' administrations and the 10 year commitment therefore being an in principle commitment which would require a reconfirmation of this commitment by each council every four years.

(c) Capital Funding and ownership of the asset

- Contributions are required from the BSTC and EHDC to the capital cost of the Arts Centre. It is estimated that the cost of the Arts Centre is in the region of £20m and the value of the land is in the region of £5m. Any contributor could receive a proportionate share in the asset itself, calculated on the basis of those parties wishing to own part of the asset rather than those parties contributing and not wishing to own part of the asset.
- The equation for calculating the ownership percentage is $X/(X+Y)$ where X and Y are contributors who wish to retain ownership in the asset (whereas Z is a contributor which does not want to retain any ownership in the asset).
- The project will not proceed until the overall funding package for the entire Old River Lane site is in place and it will be the responsibility of EHDC to secure this package, working in partnership with BSTC and RBT on the Arts Centre element of the scheme; funding will be sought from a variety of sources.

(d) Revenue Funding

Provided that the Bishop's Stortford Museum becomes self-sufficient, the parties agree that the running costs will be in the region of £550,000 per annum (subject to a final business case). Best endeavours will be made to reduce this sum to no more than £0.5m per annum.

- EHDC agrees to contribute 50% towards running costs;
- BSTC agrees to contribute 50% towards running costs.

Should the revenue funding be higher than £0.5m, further funding will be sought from EHDC, or a third party. The Project will not proceed until the overall revenue funding package for the Arts Centre is in place.

In concluding this agreement the parties recognise that the Rhodes Birthplace Trust has stated that it is not possible for the current operations at the Rhodes to become self-sufficient and the Rhodes Trust cannot voluntarily surrender the grant from the Town Council. However the Trust recognises that the Town Council may make the decision to

withdraw all or part of the grant currently received as part of the package and the Trustees will explore other funding options as a contingency provision in case this occurs. The parties commit to working together to seek a satisfactory resolution to these challenges. Having regard to this the future of the museum, which is the principal responsibility of the Rhodes Trust, will be an integral part of the planning during the implementation of this partnership agreement.

(e) Governance Arrangements

The parties agree to a governance arrangement in the form of an interim Steering Group/Trust made up as follows:

EHDC - 2 appointees

BSTC - 2 appointees (who are not also Rhodes trustees)

RBT - 2 appointees

Independent - up to 3 appointees (to be appointed by the other six appointees).

In the interim period, and once the new entity is up and running, governance shall be put in place that ensures decisions shall be taken by a simple majority with at least 1 of each category of representative voting in favour (i.e. at least 1 representative from EHDC, BSTC, RBT and Independent).

The interim group shall consider and make recommendations to any funding party on the following issues:

- Physical brief for the new Arts Centre
- Management arrangements for the new Arts Centre
- Vision for the operational development of the arts centre, marketing, fundraising and other key elements of the new Arts Centre's operations
- Make proposals for the governance to take effect before the centre become operational

(f) TUPE/Staffing

The parties agree the following staffing arrangements:

We envisage a TUPE transfer of staff from RBT to the new Arts Centre entity for all staff who comply with TUPE requirements.

(g) Costs

EHDC and BSTC to bear their own costs in connection with the Partnership Agreement. RBT to contribute £500 to their own costs, with the remainder to be subsidised by EHDC.

We confirm our agreement to the non-binding provisions above.
Signed by LIZ WATTS on behalf of
EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

.....

Signed by JAMES PARKER on behalf of
BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

.....

Signed by DEIDRE GLASGOW on behalf of
RHODES BIRTHPLACE TRUST

...

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Updated on:		16/05/2018						
Risk register - Old River Lane			Inherent Score			Residual Score		
Code	Title	Description	Impact	Likelihood	Controls introduced / planned	Impact	Likelihood	Owner
1	Potential low community engagement	Local community does not buy into the vision and does not back the mixed-use scheme development.	4	2	A consultation strategy is in the process of being prepared which will identify some key groups and demographics to target. This will ensure a wider range of voices are heard within the process and make use of the stickyworld platform on social media. It will also aim to quantify the responses in a way which provides us with statistically significant results.	4	1	Ben Wood
2	Lack of economic vision for site within the town	The Council's economic vision for the area is not clear enough to support a mid-long term strategy on the development of BSTC.	4	4	In the process of reviewing evidence about economic imperatives for Bishop's Stortford and presenting these to the portfolio holder for ED. This will then form the basis for a wider economic vision for the town.	4	3	Ben Wood
3	Lack of artistic/cultural vision for site within the town	Securing trustees timely agreement regarding location, funding and management arrangements of museum and/or arts centre(s). Conflicting priorities / interdependencies. Potential shared use of facility with another organisation.	3	3	Use expertise of Property/Arts consultants to develop long term vision for the site with members. Engage with arts organisations/artistic groups to agree on a vision for the New Arts Centre	2	2	Jess Khanom

Updated on:		16/05/2018						
Risk register - Old River Lane			Inherent Score			Residual Score		
Code	Title	Description	Impact	Likelihood	Controls introduced / planned	Impact	Likelihood	Owner
4	Not making a decision on the future of Charringtons House RISK CLOSED AS LAND USE DECISION TAKEN AT FULL COUNCIL ON 13 TH DECEMBER 2017	Develop long term view on Charringtons House. Voids when leases end if unable to offer a term of lease and then alternative accommodation that are attractive to prospective tenants.	4	1	Get expert advice to develop long term vision for the site with members. Good communication of timing in order that any new opportunities for generating income can be appropriately managed.	-	-	Isabel Brittain
5	Future provision of adequate car parking for the town	Potential displacement of 241 spaces at Old River Lane, and issues around Waitrose surface car park	4	4	Work with Shaping Stortford, Property Consultants and car parks service to develop appropriate parking facilities. Review of short and long stay mix car parks in BS in parallel to a parking strategy for the scheme.	4	3	Jess Khanom
6	Inconsistent political engagement	Political engagement not consistent and strong enough to fully back the redevelopment of the site. Conflicting priorities.	3	2	Regular updates on the redevelopment plan and immediate action when issues are raised. ORL Member Reference Group established and providing regular updates and detailed insight to members.	1	2	Liz Watts
7	Contracting the right developer	Not being able to attract good mixed-use scheme developers. Not guaranteeing viability.	4	2	Good master planning, strong vision and innovative approaches. Early soft market testing has been positive.	4	1	Isabel Brittain

Updated on:		16/05/2018						
Risk register - Old River Lane			Inherent Score			Residual Score		
Code	Title	Description	Impact	Likelihood	Controls introduced / planned	Impact	Likelihood	Owner
8	Physical Site constraints	Site contains physical and other kind of constraints (geographic position, land characteristics)	4	3	Good quality information of ground conditions, topographical history, EHC proposals with regard to water course diversions, and contamination to be available at procurement.	4	3	Isabel Brittain
9	Legal Site constraints	Unable to agree land uses with adjoining landowners and proceed with sale/partnerships	3	2	One Public Estate work (funded with £40k) will enable early work in this area. Engage with stakeholders (HCC, BSTC, etc.)	2	2	Alison Stuart
10	Construction overload	Disruption on the town and delivery delayed because of construction works carried out on multiple sites at one time.	3	3	Liaising with the planning authority to make development programming decisions based on information the planning authority can provide about other development schemes.	3	3	Annie Saliaj
11	Competing priorities	Competing and conflicting priorities between the different local authorities involved.	3	3	Regular updates/meetings and immediate action when issues are raised.	3	3	Annie Saliaj
12	External dependencies	Elements / tasks of the project dependant on other activities / involvement of other players.	2	3	Detailed project planning and careful identification of dependencies.	2	2	Annie Saliaj

Updated on:		16/05/2018						
Risk register - Old River Lane			Inherent Score			Residual Score		
Code	Title	Description	Impact	Likelihood	Controls introduced / planned	Impact	Likelihood	Owner
13	Retail replacement	Current retail fearing competition and relocating	2	2	Efficient communications strategy and stakeholder consultation on key stages. Any retail development must be based on evidenced need. Plan interventions that may be required. BID company being formed will represent the interests of its members and will be a strong vehicle in improving the vibrancy of the town overall. The company may also assist thinking in the retail space elements of the project.	1	2	Ben Wood
14	Interdependencies with Stansted Airport RISK CLOSED AS THIS IS PART OF A WIDER RISK AROUND MANAGING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE ORL DEVELOPMENT	BS not able to benefit from Stansted expansion / limit chain reaction effect in case of negative outlook for Stansted growth. Not being able to readapt the development strategies to face the changing trends.	3	3	The relationship between the town and the airport is well understood in terms of the impact of employment, transport and accommodation. However the relationship between the town and wider airport MRO (maintenance, repair and operations) and business supply chain is less direct as it affects the entire sub-regional economy. The relationship between the airport and the ORL development is therefore just one of several economic factors and therefore not a specific risk.	-	-	Ben Wood

Updated on:		16/05/2018						
Risk register - Old River Lane			Inherent Score			Residual Score		
Code	Title	Description	Impact	Likelihood	Controls introduced / planned	Impact	Likelihood	Owner
15	Risk of not making a decision	Missing out on the opportunity to redevelop the Town Centre.	4	3	Land use decision taking by EH council in December 2017. Comprehensive report will be provided to O&S/Exec/Council in June/July 2018 including impact of not making a decision.	4	2	Liz Watts
16	Risk of Highways raising an objection to the planning application for the MSCP	Lack of a BS transport strategy or a different timing between the strategy and the planning application will have an impact on their position.	3	4	Coordinate timing between the two different work-streams. Early feedback on planning application used to propose a new traffic solution, in response to some concerns raised. In response to this Highways have withdrawn their initial objection.	3	2	Annie Saliaj
17	Risk of the planning application for the MSCP being refused	The MSCP unlocks the whole ORL scheme. If the planning application for the MSCP is refused the project will be heavily compromised.	4	3	Good work programming and involvement of qualified professionals for a strong planning application.	2	2	Annie Saliaj
18	Risk of not meeting Section 123 criteria	Land costs have to be consistent with Section 123 criteria in the scheme selling process.	4	3	Land evaluation and evidence of options appraised.	3	2	Isabel Brittain

Updated on:		16/05/2018						
Risk register - Old River Lane			Inherent Score			Residual Score		
Code	Title	Description	Impact	Likelihood	Controls introduced / planned	Impact	Likelihood	Owner
19	Risk of not being able to come up with a funding package	A comprehensive list of the funding sources and the assessment of their capability to fill the funding gap have to be in place.	4	3	Reach an agreement on the funding strategy. Involve core partners and potential ones at early stages. Refine viability assessment. A bid to LEP has been submitted. Capital funding is required by BSTC.	4	3	Isabel Brittain
20	Project slippage	Unforeseen issues / events that delay activities and/or construction works	3	4	Reasonable tolerance times set for project stages.	3	3	Annie Saliag
21	Risk of not being able to achieve the expected outputs	Project doesn't achieve the expected number of new homes and/or new jobs	4	3	Good master-planning. Clear conditions about outputs to any form of agreement with a developer/contractor. Delivery monitoring.	4	2	Liz Watts



BISHOP'S STORTFORD DRAFT CONSULTATION REPORT

**Allies and Morrison
Urban Practitioners**

March 2017





Photos taken during the pop-up consultation events in Jackson Square

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APPENDIX



1. INTRODUCTION

Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners was commissioned in March 2016 to prepare the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework on behalf of East Herts Council. The team for the project includes Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, providing specialist retail and commercial property and delivery advice, and Phil Jones Associates, specialists in movement and transport.

The purpose of the planning framework is to help set a vision and strategy for the development of Bishop's Stortford. The study will take account of the town's current and future economic role, and set out proposals for movement and design projects that will improve the town centre. It will support the preparation of the emerging East Herts District Plan and co-ordinate with the Neighbourhood Plans.

This report provides a summary of the responses which were submitted during the consultation period which took place for six weeks commencing on 26 October 2016. Members of the consultant and council team regularly staffed the pop-up exhibition which was on display in Jackson Square, the Rhodes Centre and the Council offices throughout the consultation period. The document was also formally launched at an event for key local stakeholders and residents who had contributed at consultation events during the preparation of the plan. The document and questionnaire were available online to view and respond to on the Council's website. Hundreds of people viewed and engaged with the exhibition while it was on display in Jackson Square and around 70 people submitted detailed comments on the plans. Officers also visited local schools to speak to young people about their ideas for the town centre.

The following section provides a detailed report of the responses received.




Photos taken during the launch of the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Framework at the Rhodes Arts Centre

2. CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The following section provides a detailed report of the responses received to each of the questions in the consultation questionnaire, together with recommendations for updates to the document to respond to the issues raised.


BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK



East Herts Council has been working with Allies and Morrison, an urban design and planning practice, to help set a vision and strategy for the development of Bishop's Stortford. The study takes account of the town's current and future economic role, and sets out proposals for movement and design projects that will improve the town centre. It will support the preparation of the emerging East Herts District Plan and co-ordinate with the Neighbourhood Plans to shape the direction of travel for the town centre.

Thank you very much for taking the time to tell us what you think about the proposals in the document. The following questions follow the structure of the planning framework document which can be viewed online.

To have your say please complete this feedback form by hand and send it to Lauren Knight, Corporate Support, East Herts Council, Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8EQ or fill in the form online at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/ORLAutumnConsultation>



The study area

THEME 1 - REVEALING AND CELEBRATING THE RIVER STORT

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the River Stort?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Which new or improved bridge should be the priority? Do you have any other ideas?

THEME 2 - ESTABLISHING A CLEAR PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE NETWORK IN THE TOWN CENTRE

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving pedestrian connections?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Which new or improved routes are the most important? Do you have any other ideas?

THEME 3 - RATIONALISING VEHICULAR MOVEMENT IN THE TOWN CENTRE

a) Do you agree with the timed closure of South Street/Potter Street? Yes / No

b) Do you agree with a new road for all vehicles through the Goods Yards? Yes / No

c) Do you agree with the removal of some one way streets? Yes / No

Do you have any other ideas?

THEME 4 - PROTECTING AND ENHANCING BISHOP'S STORTFORD HISTORIC CHARACTER

What is your star rating for the ideas for enhancing historic character?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other important views or landmarks? Do you have any other ideas?

THEME 5 - A NETWORK OF GREEN AND URBAN SPACES

What is your star rating for the ideas for new or improved public spaces?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other places where a new public space could be created? Do you have any other ideas?

THEME 6 - A DISTINCTIVE AND QUALITY RETAIL OFFER

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the retail offer in the town centre?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Do you have any other ideas?

THEME 7 - A NEW CULTURE AND LEISURE OFFER

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the culture and leisure offer?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Do you think the Rhodes centre should stay in its existing location? Which of the alternative locations do you think is best?

THEME 8 - THE TOWN CENTRE AS A PLACE FOR BUSINESS

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the town centre as a place for business?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent


Do you have any other ideas?

MILL AND CENTRAL RIVERSIDE

What is your star rating for the ideas for the Mill area and the central riverside?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?





STATION AND SOUTHERN RIVERSIDE

What is your star rating for the ideas for the Station and southern riverside area?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?






OLD RIVER LANE AREA

What is your star rating for the ideas for the Old River Lane area?

Poor ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent

Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?

IMPROVING THE RIVER STORT

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the River Stort?

Around 70% of respondees rated the ideas for the improving the River Stort as excellent or good.

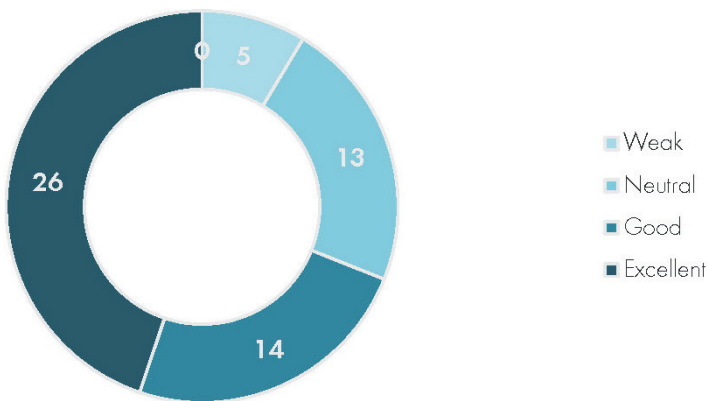
Which new or improved bridge should be the priority? Do you have any other ideas?

There was strong support for improvements to the existing bridge or a new bridge at Station Road with 25 people commenting that this bridge should be the priority given that it is currently considered to be dangerous for pedestrians given the very narrow pavements. Another six respondents added support for a new bridge at Adderley Road connecting to Dane Street given that the bridge would open up 'a difficult area of the town' and provide a new connection to the train station.

Other ideas included widening the towpath along the riverside wherever possible and increasing reference within the document to kiosks and other non-retail uses providing activity along the riverside.

Key changes to the document:

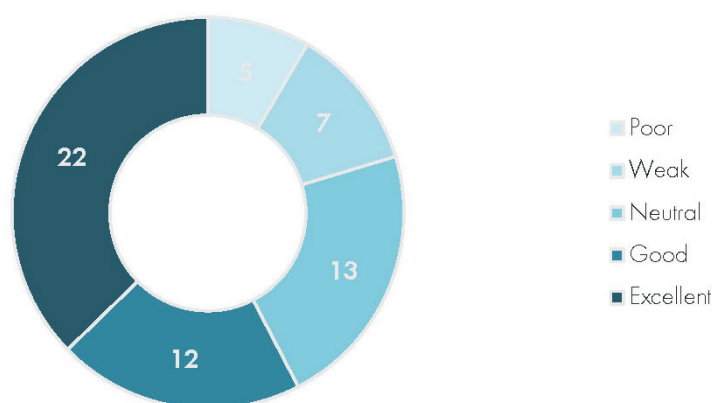
- Strengthen the reference to a widened towpath along the length of the Stort within commuting distance of the town centre.
- Add reference to kiosks/pop-up activity along the riverside. Add reference that other uses beyond retail would be supported.
- Strengthen the reference to connecting the towpath into Sworder's Field.



"Station Road is the first priority. Widen the bridge to provide a better walking and cycling link between the station and town."

"It would be great to have an easier route onto the towpath for cyclists."

IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS



"There is a need to improve the whole towpath from Bishop's Stortford to Sawbridgeworth in order that it can be used all year round for cycles and walkers. Ideally it would be a hard path as opposed to the current grass and mud"

"Pedestrian bridges are needed across the railway by Aldi and at the junction of Hallingbury Road and London Road"

"Anyone arriving in the town by train is greeted with a confusing and unattractive layout which is not presenting the town at its best"

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving pedestrian connections?

Around 60% of respondees rated the ideas for the improving pedestrian connections as excellent or good.

Which new or improved routes are the most important? Do you have any other ideas?

Many respondents supported the ideas for the timed pedestrianisation of South Street and Potters Street. Most comments related to improving the bridge crossings over the railway line for pedestrians and comments in support of improved cycle infrastructure in the town centre.

A number of comments referenced the need to bring the riverside into the structure of walking routes in the town centre and making this more usable for cyclists, particularly travelling beyond the town centre. The transport modelling now underway in the town centre will allow the testing of many of these ideas.

Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen the reference to an improved towpath connection to Sawbridgeworth and Standsted.
- Review the wording about cycle lanes in order to reference narrow roads.
- Add new east/west cycle connections to p51. This should take into consideration the Town Council's recent work with Sustrans.
- Add reference to new locations for bike parking in the town centre including at the station.
- Strengthen the reference to safe pedestrian routes across the rail line at London Road and Station Road.
- Add the riverside as part of the key routes in the town centre to the plan on p49.
- Add reference to improved walking and cycling routes from existing and new residential neighbourhoods including reference to travel plans and Smarter Choices.
- Add clarification to explain how contra-flow cycling might work on South Street.
- Amend the document to be more explicit about improved walking and cycling routes to schools.

RATIONALISING VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

Do you agree with the timed closure of South Street/Potter Street?

78% of responses agreed with the timed closure of South Street/Potter Street.

- Yes
- No

Do you agree with a new road for all vehicles through the Goods Yard?

88% of responses agreed with the idea for a new road for all vehicles through the Goods Yards.

- Yes
- No

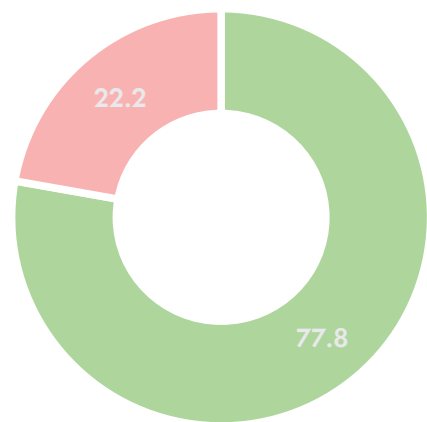
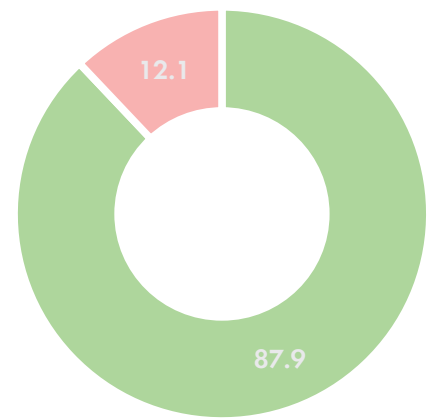
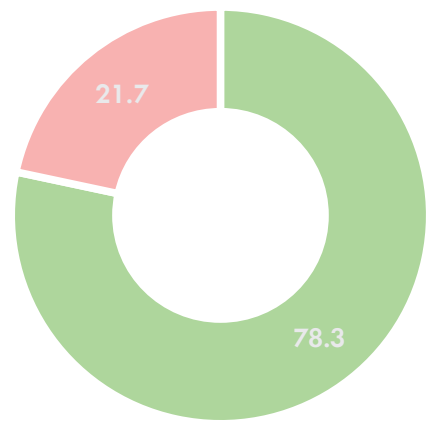
Do you agree with the removal of some one way streets?

78% of responses agreed with the removal of some one way streets in the town centre.

- Yes
- No

Key changes to the document:

- No change - this data provides strong support for the key transport proposals set out in the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework.



Do you have any other ideas relating to movement and transport?

There were a significant number of comments made about the need for additional car parking in the town centre. More detail will be added to the document about the location of proposed car parks and the current short fall.

Other comments reiterated the concerns about traffic congestion in the town centre. A number of respondents suggested a better bus service from new and existing residential areas would have a positive impact on traffic in the town centre.

A number of junctions including the Hockerill junction were highlighted as problem areas which will be explored through the traffic modelling that is now underway.

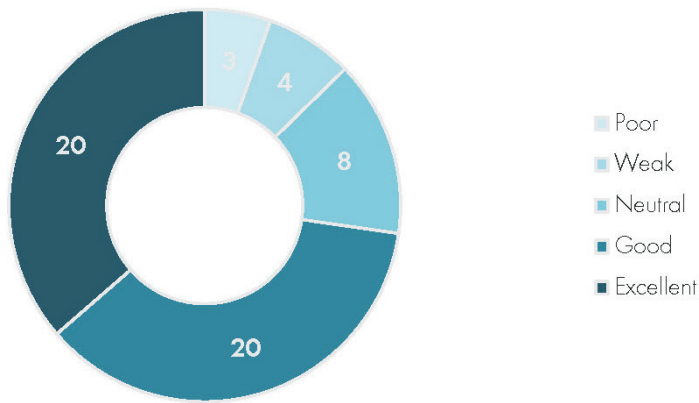
Other detailed comments were made in support of improvements to the station area including a better arrival experience and redevelopment of key sites surrounding the area. A number of respondents highlighted the need for any new link road through the Goods Yard to be carefully designed so that traffic would not have a negative impact on the station forecourt.

"I'm not opposed to growing the town (i.e. more houses) but the town centre is already at gridlock at peak periods due to the volume of traffic"

Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen the reference to improvements to the Hockerill junction on p52.
- Add further detail on additional town centre car parking requirements on p52.
- Add reference to the design of any proposed link road at the station to be carefully planned to mitigate the effect of any traffic on a new station forecourt.
- Add reference to an improved bus service from new and existing residential areas, including new services from Bishop's Stortford North.
- Strengthen the reference in the text on p48 in relation to better connections between the station and Rhodes centre.
- Amend the document to be more explicit about the location of car parks at the Goods Yard.
- Add references into the document about new technologies contributing to easing congestion and managing parking issues including car clubs, pay-on-exit car parking and driverless vehicles.
- Amend the document to be explicit that transport modelling is now underway to test proposals put forward in the framework and by consultees in more detail.

"The foot/cycle path from Grange Paddocks is great but its really poorly lit and suddenly stops - this should extend through Sworder's Field towards the station"



HISTORIC CHARACTER

What is your star rating for the ideas for enhancing historic character?

Over 70% of respondents rated the ideas for enhancing the historic character of Bishop's Stortford as excellent or good.

Are there other important views or landmarks? Do you have any other ideas?

The most cited views to maintain were towards St Michaels Church from Castle Gardens, the Station and Hockerill junction. Many people also referenced the views from the town centre to the Castle mound and gardens. Other important views included the long views of the town from the Meads, the view down Windhill and the views along the riverside. A number of respondents referenced the negative effect of the flour mill on the riverside.

Many of the comments were in support of new development coming forward that is in keeping with the market town character. Concern was raised about the impact of new development at Jackson Square and recent development on the riverside in the town centre. A small number of respondents were concerned about the impact of a new multi-storey car park on the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre.

Key changes to the document:

- Review the plan and add wording to be explicit that the relationship between the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre and any new multi-storey car park must be carefully designed so any impact is mitigated. Amend the plans and text to describe two options for where a Multi-storey car park could be accommodated - north of the site where it is currently shown, and within the Old River Lane area.
- Strengthen the reference to preserving and enhancing the setting of the listed buildings on Dane Street
- Add 'key views to enhance' on the plan on p55. For example along Dane Street and from Castle Gardens.
- Add to p48 reference to improving the public realm quality of existing lanes in the town centre.
- Add reference to the historic buildings at Hockerill junction which should be protected and enhanced

"There is a need to ensure that all new buildings (or those renovated) are in line with the architectural values of a market town"

"The views approaching the town from across the Meads and from the leisure centre are important. The improved towpath has made this an attractive approach to the town "

"I completely agree with the principle of protecting and enhancing views across the town to focal points such as the church"

IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACES



"I would hope that the development of the Goods Yard does include public space and makes use of the river frontage and is not just an assembly of the densest possible hideous identikit blocks and car parks"

"There is a little copse near Waitrose that could be enhanced."

"Opening up the river is a key requirement. It is potentially a huge asset"

What is your star rating for the ideas for new or improved public spaces?

62% of consultees rated the ideas for new or improved public spaces as excellent or good.

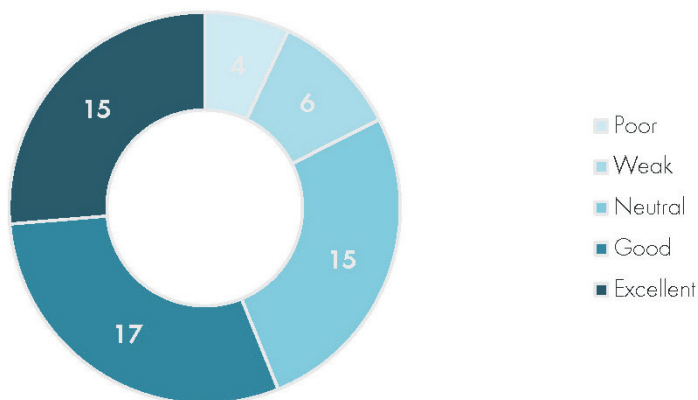
Are there other places where a new public space could be created? Do you have any other ideas?

The most regularly made comment related to enhancing a variety of spaces along the riverside - preserving the natural environment leading to the leisure centre and creating new spaces in the town centre, particularly focused on improving the area around Wetherspoons and the road environment.

An almost equal number of comments related to the importance of a new space at the station and other spaces within the Goods Yard. There was also support for improvements to Castle Gardens and spaces created within development at Old River Lane. Two respondents suggested that improvements to North Street were required, with the potential to pedestrianise this street.

Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen the reference to the importance of the redesign of Riverside/Adderley Road to improve the connection to the riverside.
- Expand the description of a new public space at the Poundland site connecting to the riverside (p56).
- Strengthen references to the importance of landscaping and greening in public realm proposals.



"Bishop's Stortford is a prosperous town and could attract more retail business. "

"There are many empty units in the town at present. I would prefer to see specialist independent shops encouraged to the town rather than large multiples"

"I agree that there may be a case for some more larger retail units but I do not think this should be in the form of a new mall style development in Old River Lane and therefore I welcome the more mixed proposal in this Framework"

IMPROVING THE RETAIL OFFER

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the retail offer?

56% of consultees rated the ideas for improving the retail offer as excellent or good, compared to 17% who felt they were poor or weak.

Do you have any other ideas?

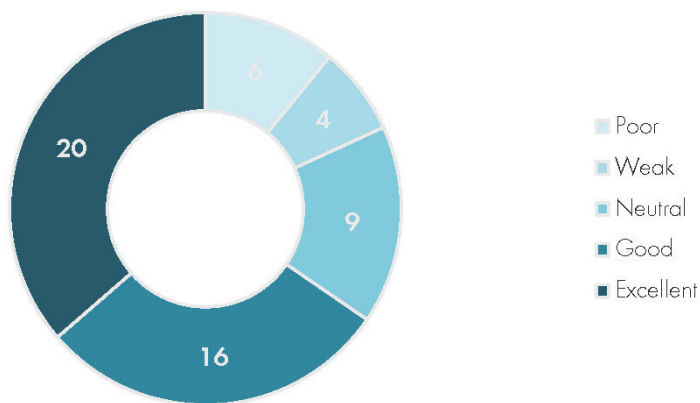
There was support for more retail development in the town centre, however as many respondents were not sure that more detail development was needed. A significant number of comments requested a department store in the town centre or a higher quality range of shops. Equally, many respondents were concerned that there were already empty shops in the town centre and that Bishop's Stortford had significant competition from both London and Cambridge in retail terms and could not support such a significant scale of development on Old River Lane.

Many people were keen to see a greater range of independent businesses to help build a unique attraction for the town and make it a different experience from other local towns. This could include a better street market. Others were concerned about the effect of business rates on independent businesses and felt a higher quality town centre environment was an important part of experiencing the town centre.

Key changes to the document:

- Emphasise the importance of defining the independent offer/what makes Stortford different, and its niche including the market
- Strengthen the explanation of the retail capacity assessment - how has the figure been calculated and what is considered in order to help justify this.
- Add reference that the size and configuration of the retail units is important for modern retailers

IMPROVING THE CULTURE AND LEISURE OFFER



What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the culture and leisure offer?

65% of responses rated the ideas for improving the culture and leisure offer as excellent or good.

Do you think the Rhodes Arts Centre should stay in its existing location?

Around 65% of respondents felt that the Rhodes arts centre should stay in its existing location but with better car parking and further investment to accommodate larger audiences. Many comments highlighted the importance of the centre as a community facility. A number of respondents suggested that this should be the centre of a new cultural quarter in the town centre with a new focus of activity in the current location.

However, others felt that the location was too far out of town and that there was insufficient parking to support the facility. It was suggested that a new purpose built facility near the restaurants in the centre of town would support activity and vitality in Bishop's Stortford. A number of respondents suggested that the town lacks a good music venue.

Which of the alternative locations do you think is best?

One third of respondents felt that none of the alternative options constituted a suitable location and they did not want to see any change. One third of respondents liked the site adjacent to the cinema as a location to form a cluster of evening uses. The final third were equally split between Old River Lane as an alternative adjacent to the existing restaurants in the town centre and Link Road car park. A number of respondents were excited by the potential of the Old River Lane site to encourage people to use the gardens and a development that also created an outdoor venue.

Key changes to the document:

- Rhodes Arts Centre: The document should explain that facilities at the Rhodes Arts Centre need improving and that there is a desire for a more flexible theatre space in the town centre. The existing site should be improved in the context of improvements to the wider area but further work on Old River Lane will continue to test if a new arts centre could be accommodated within this site.
- Review wording and be more explicit about the Rhodes museum staying in the existing location, where he was born.
- Strengthen the requirement for car parking to serve the existing facility and the Maltings. This will be delivered by an improved connection to the station.

A PLACE FOR BUSINESS

What is your star rating for the ideas for improving the town centre as a place for business?

48% of respondents rated the ideas for improving business as excellent or good with a further 33% responding that they felt neutral about the ideas.

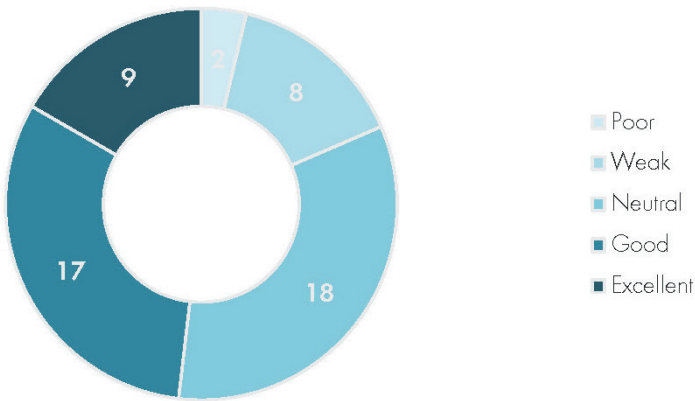
Do you have any other ideas?

There was significant support among respondents for a cluster of office space near the station in the Goods Yard site. Comments included suggestions for space for smaller businesses in the town centre and cited local precedents including The Maltings in Sawbridgeworth or Pardon Mill in Harlow. The market was also felt to be an important visitor attraction and platform for small businesses.

A number of respondents suggested that there needed to be better parking for local workers in the town centre or on the edge of the centre to prevent parking in residential areas and congestion in the town centre.

Key changes to the document:

- Add precedents for workspaces for smaller businesses.
- Consider TC workers' travel and parking needs in parking and transport planning studies
- Strengthen the reference to support for the street market within the document.



"Think bigger. Create a state of the art shopping precinct at the centre and you will create a demand situation across a range of businesses."

"What we need is support for smaller creative businesses run by local people, see The Maltings in Sawbridgeworth which supports a variety of small business, or Pardon Mill in Harlow used by architects, media firms and artists."

OLD RIVER LANE

What is your star rating for the ideas for the Old River Lane area?

52% of respondents rated the ideas for Old River Lane as excellent or good compared to 31% who felt they were poor or weak.

Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?

The three most regular comments related to;

- Ensuring a better connection from the Old River Lane area to the Castle Gardens and the river;
- Concerns about car parking - not sufficient quantity, the loss of surface car parking or concern about the location of the proposed multi-storey;
- A suggestion that there is a need for more community facilities within the scheme - a GP surgery, a community hall, youth facilities, adult education and a suggestion that the library could be accommodated within this central location.

Other regularly made comments focused on;

- A concern that there were too many flats affecting the scale of the proposals;
- Support for a bigger Waitrose and more shops;
- Support for new public spaces within the scheme;
- That the design of the scheme must be in keeping with the market character of the town and be of the highest quality

Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen references within the document and on the plan to connections to Castle Gardens and the creation of new public spaces through lottery funding.
- More detail on car parking to be included on p52.
- Include more explicit suggestions about community uses.
- Review the plan and add wording to be explicit that the relationship between the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre and any new Multi-storey car park must be carefully designed so any impact is mitigated. Amend the plans and text to describe two options for the location of a Multi-storey car park: north of the site where it is currently shown, and within the Old River Lane area.
- Strengthen references to design, massing and key views.



"What is important is to keep a good small town character in this area - so I support the proposed mixed use of the site"

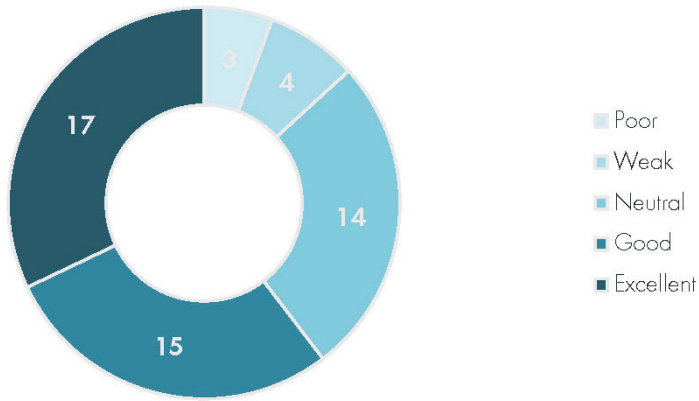
"The library needs to connect to the town better than at present. Moving it to Old River Lane would help this"

"Adequate car parking, adequate car parking!"

"Bishop's Stortford has a distinct lack of entertainment for teenagers. I'd like to see something to that end rather than housing."

"The highest architectural quality will be essential if this is to succeed and the views to/from Castle Gardens and St Michaels Church should be maintained from key points."

THE MILL AREA



"Stortford must make more of a key asset - the river. When the old Sainsbury's car park was built over we lost an opportunity to exploit the river asset. I hope the same mistakes are not made again."

"The Mill should stay! Otherwise Bishop's Stortford becomes another dull commuter town unconnected from any real work. The ideas for opening up the site and improving Dane Street are much needed."

"Encourage new/innovative businesses to move into the area through a revised business offering. It would be good to secure a micro-brewery, gin-distillery or similar, as this would promote the town on a regional/national scale and encourage tourism."

What is your star rating for the ideas for the Mill area and the central riverside?

60% of respondents rated the ideas for the Mill area as excellent or good compared to 13% who felt they were poor or weak.

Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?

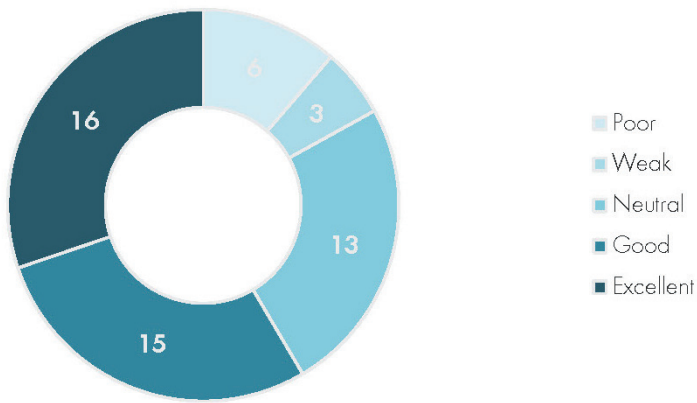
Many consultees were in support of the proposals, particularly the ideas to open up the river with a new bridge, better towpath and more activity. A number of respondents were in support of the Mill staying in the town centre as an important local employer and were keen to see the area as a hub for interesting food related businesses. Others noted that the Mill had a negative impact on the riverside and were keen to see it relocated out of the town centre.

A number of comments related to the need for a detailed review of traffic movements in this area, the impact of two-way street proposals on the Hockerill junction and the undervalued heritage assets in the area.

Key changes to the document:

- Strengthen wording about heritage assets on Dane Street.
- Review wording about Hockerill junction and the impact of two-way traffic movements.
- Include support for innovative business/tourism opportunities as suggested

THE STATION AND SOUTHERN RIVERSIDE



"Need to ensure that there is adequate parking for commuters at the station. This includes additional spaces for bikes. "

"The legibility between the station and high street areas needs to improve"

"I fully support a through-route here to take pressure off Hockerill. It is essential this road is included."

"Development here must be sensitive to the town's heritage"

What is your star rating for the ideas for the Station and southern riverside area?

58% of respondents rated the ideas for the Station and southern riverside as excellent or good compared to 17% who felt they were poor or weak.

Are there other uses you would like to see here? Do you have any other ideas?

The most regularly made comments included concern that there needed to be enough car parking for commuters, new office workers and to serve the town centre. Other commonly made comments expressed concern that there were too many flats being developed and that development should be in keeping with the prevailing height and character in the town centre.

Another regularly made comment was about the importance of a new public space and rationalised layout at the station to improve the arrival experience in the town centre. Many respondents highlighted the need for a clear pedestrian route into the town centre, areas for pick/up and drop/off and a clear bus and taxi area.

Key changes to the document:

- Add labels to be explicit about the location of commuter car parking and short stay parking to the plan on p103.
- Add further explanation about taxi, bus and drop-off locations.
- Expand the explanation within the document about proposals on South Street, including public realm ideas and redevelopment of other sites including the Post Office site. Add reference that the post office use should be retained in the town centre.

3. SCHOOLS RESPONSE

East Herts planning officers visited local schools to discuss the Draft Local Plan and Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework with local children and teenagers. Officers had very useful discussions which can be summarised as follows:

Item Of Change	Number of comments
A better leisure centre/ more leisure facilities (gym, cinema, bowling alley)	218
Additional shops in Jackson Square/ the town centre	170
More restaurants	167
Wider and improved footpaths	24
Improvement to public transport	17
A better night life	16
Additional housing	14
Additional or improved open space/ greenery	14
Better parks	14
Additional elements to existing leisure facilities (e.g. slides in Grange Paddock)	8
Healthcare	6
Toilets	6
Jobs	3

Key changes to the document:

- Support for leisure and retail space in the town centre - strengthen references to leisure activities for younger people in the town centre referencing youth markets, music events, etc

4. FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS AND EMAILS

Allinsons Flour Mill

- The emerging District Plan states that the Framework will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. Allinsons consider that the purpose of the Framework should be made clearer, that this is a non-statutory supplementary planning document.
- Allinsons aspiration is to ensure ongoing operation of the Mill and contributions to the local economy and therefore support the phased approach to the site. However, the existing operational areas and future operational needs of the business which might arise, must not be undermined by redevelopment around the operational areas.
- In addition to the site numbered 2, the southern end of the upper section of site 1 containing a car park/storage building to immediately to the north of site 2 is used by Allinsons for its operation.
- Allinsons consider that placing residential use adjacent to the operational factory is not appropriate as it is not compatible with Class B2 operations and would have prejudicial impacts on Allinsons operation.
- Widening of the towpath and new bridge from Adderley Road are supported as aspirations but need to be considered in feasibility and deliverability terms.
- Allinsons are supportive of a two-way street proposals - these would be safer, more efficient and more attractive streets

Waitrose Ltd

- Waitrose is broadly supportive of the Council's plans outlined in the Framework to regenerate this site.
- They have a concern about the redevelopment of the adjacent Council owned surface car park being replaced with a multi-storey car park north of Link Road.
- Waitrose would prefer to see a multi-storey car park developed within the Old River Lane area - adjacent to their store.
- Waitrose would also like to see more detail included about the exact level of replacement parking. It is important to their trading levels that the number of spaces is equivalent or greater.
- Waitrose is not clear how their existing surface car

park is accessed and are concerned about the loss of surface level car parking spaces to allow for a junction to the north of their store.

Liberal Democrats

- Strong support for the creation of a new foot/cycle bridge on Station Bridge, the creation of a new through road at the goods yard, the creation of a new entrance into Waitrose and the Causeway and slowing traffic here, the building of a new short stay car park at the goods yard and a new multi-storey car park at Northgate end.
- They were interested in the concept, but could see disadvantages as well as benefits to the restoration of two-way traffic in Dane Street. They suggested this should be tested through traffic modelling.
- They were interested in the concept, but could see disadvantages as well as benefits of closing the eastern end of Station Road (as it crosses the railway bridge) to traffic. Again, this should be tested through traffic modelling.

Bishop's Stortford Civic Federation

- Supportive of the commissioning of the study, new bridges over the river and a focus on the riverside.
- Concern that proposals rely on private land holdings such as the flour mill.
- Concern that the examples of comparator towns used on p33 are not helpful (larger or tourist destinations).
- Concern that there is too much retail space proposed given online shopping behaviour. It was suggested that retail space should instead be provided within new residential development on the edge of the centre.
- Support for timed-entry of South Street but careful consideration is needed for residential access in the Newton area, Portland Road and Church Street and a better diversion of traffic through to Riverside.
- Concern that it would not be possible to implement two way working on Dane Street given the turning space needed for HGVs.
- The Civic Federation would be pleased to see modelling of the Goods Yard Link and wider town centre and believe that a southern access point into the site is vital.

- Concern that the proposal for a roundel junction at Dane Street/Hockerill Street and two way working on Dane Street would be incompatible given the increase in traffic that could be expected at this junction.
- Suggestions to re-evaluate how the Jackson Square car park functions and to reverse the entry and exit points to help reduce congestion.
- Old River Lane: Concern about extra development and more pedestrian crossings having a negative impact on traffic; support for the redevelopment of Charrington House and 1 The Causeway but not the redevelopment of the surface car parking; concern about cost of development; concern about the impact of proposed multi-storey car park on the former Northgate End primary school and green space; concern about too much retail development and the heart of the town being dragged north.
- Support for the proposals within the planning framework for the station area and are keen to see EHDC work with the developer on a scheme in line with these ideas.
- Do not support the relocation of the Rhodes Centre - improve it's existing location instead.

Other emails

A number of emails were sent directly to the client team. The key messages from these can be summarised as;

- Support for a large scale concert venue in the town centre.
- Concern about the location of the proposed multi-storey car park for town centre users adjacent to existing residential buildings at the Goods Yard.
- Support for new green spaces along the riverside within the Goods Yard application.
- Support for car clubs within town centre residential development sites.
- Review the Town Council's work with Sustrans for a cycleway network in Bishop's Stortford.
- Retain views from the station entrance to St Michaels Church.
- Concern about the air quality at Hockerill
- Concern that the design for access to the riverside should be wheelchair friendly - amend visualisation of Cinema area to show a ramp
- Concern about the hills in the town centre preventing cycling becoming popular. Contra-flow cycling should only be permitted where they are properly segregated.
- Suggestion of greater explanation as to how Potter Street could be closed part of the time.
- The cost of buses is too expensive which does not incentivise their use compared to the cost of car parking
- Further thought required about how car parking at Jackson Square would function in a two-way system.
- Traffic calming and better pedestrian crossing facilities are required on London Road and concern about the closure of the part of Dane Street that crosses the railway.
- Support for new GP facilities in the town centre.

Key changes to the document:

- Update the introduction to the document to be explicit and in line with the description of the planning framework included in the Draft Local Plan. It is intended that the Framework will be amended and adopted by East Herts Council as a Supplementary Planning Document in due course.
- Allinsons have requested that the 'operational' land which is currently used for storage and car parking is removed from phase 1 proposals. Not developing this part of the site would mean that the pedestrian footbridge and connection to the train station could not be delivered. Given these strategic priorities, this part of the site should be retained in phase 1 of the proposals as an aspiration. No change should be made to the drawing but new text will be added to explain that alternative staff car parking and storage would need to be identified for Allinsons in order to release this part of the site while maintaining operational efficiency for the business.
- Review the plan and add wording to be explicit that the relationship between the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre and any new Multi-storey car park must be carefully designed so any impact is mitigated. Amend the plans and text to describe two options for where a Multi-storey car park could be accommodated - north of the site where it is currently

shown, and within the Old River Lane area.

- Review drawings and show more explicitly the new access road into the Waitrose surface car park from Link Road.
- Expand the detail included within the document on the existing and future provision of car parking in the town centre.
- Add reference within the document that a concert venue is an aspiration for the town and could be provided within the existing Rhodes theatre or at a new location in the town centre, or within one of the new schools.
- Review the location of the Multi-storey car park within the Goods Yard area and distances to existing homes
- Review the transport section of the planning framework and add reference to car clubs and the proposed Sustrans cycleway.
- Review viewing corridors across the town centre to St Michaels Church - consider the addition of a view from the train station.
- Be explicit that transport testing has now taken place to test proposals put forward by the framework in more detail.
- Add clarification as to how the retail comparitors were chosen and how they are being used
- Add reference to online shopping habits and explain the impact this is having on the high street. Strengthen the explanation on p58 as to why further retail floor space is required.
- Amend the visualisation of the Cinema area to show a ramp for disabled access.

5. CONCLUSION

The consultation provided useful feedback on the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Framework and the document has been amended to reflect the views and comments received. The above report sets out the detailed changes to each section of the framework.

A summary of the more significant amendments are as follows:

- **The status of the document**

Update the introduction to the document to be explicit and in line with the description of the planning framework included in the Draft Local Plan. It is intended that the Framework will be amended and adopted by East Herts Council as a Supplementary Planning Document in due course.

- **Old River Lane**

Review the plans for the Old River Lane area and add wording to be explicit that the relationship between the locally listed Northgate Youth Centre and any new multi-storey car park must be carefully designed so any impact is mitigated.

Amend the plans and text to describe two options for where a multi-storey car park could be accommodated - north of the site where it is currently shown, and within the Old River Lane area. The drawings should also show more explicitly the new access road into the Waitrose surface car park from Link Road.

- **Transport, car parking and cycling**

Expand the detail included within the document on the existing and future provision of car parking required in the town centre. Add the location of short and long term car parking at the station and show options for the location of car parking at Old River Lane. Be explicit that transport testing has now taken place to test proposals put forward by the framework in more detail.

Add more detail to the section on cycling with a strengthened reference to an improved towpath connection to Sawbridgeworth and a new east/west

cycle connection across the town centre. This should take into consideration the Town Council's recent work with Sustrans.

- **Heritage and character**

Add a set of 'key views to enhance' to strengthen the support for improving areas of the town centre and enhancing heritage assets such as the view along Dane Street and the view from Castle Gardens towards Old River Lane. Add further views to be protected to the plan on page 55 including to St Michaels Church from both Castle Gardens and the train station.

- **Retail and town centre uses**

There was support for new retail space in the town centre but more detail is needed on defining the 'USP' or niche. More detail should be added to be explicit about support for independent shops and the desire for a variety of new shops that serve younger and older people. Strengthen the explanation within the document as to why further retail floor space is required and add a reference to online shopping habits and explain the impact this is having on the high street.

- **Rhodes arts centre**

The document should explain that facilities at the Rhodes Arts centre need improving, including access to car parking, and that there is a desire for a more flexible theatre space in the town centre. The existing site should be improved but further work on Old River Lane will continue to test if a new arts centre could be accommodated within this site. The wording in the document should be amended to be more explicit about Rhodes museum staying in the existing location.

APPENDIX

Consultation banners

Flyer

BISHOP'S STORTFORD

TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Working with East Herts Council and the local community, Allies and Morrison has taken a fresh look at Bishop's Stortford town centre and has produced a draft vision and planning framework for the town centre. The framework provides a plan and ideas for improving the town for the next 20 years.

The study takes account of the town's current and future economic role and sets out proposals for movement and design projects. It supports the preparation of the emerging East Herts District Plan and coordinates with the Neighbourhood Plans for the town centre.

1884 1996 1960 2016 2036

Bishop's Stortford historic evolution

FIND OUT MORE AND SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

View the document and leave comments online:
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/ORLAutumnConsultation>

BISHOP'S STORTFORD

TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

THEMES

We have identified eight themes for the Bishop's Stortford Planning Framework to help deliver the vision for the town centre. Under each theme sits a series of key projects which relate to ideas suggested during the public consultation. These are numbered on each plan. Please refer to the draft document for more detail about each project.

Revealing And Celebrating The River Stort



1. A new pedestrian bridge from Adderley Road to the Mill site
2. A widened bridge for pedestrians at Station Road
3. Opportunities for new links to enhance the connection between the main shopping streets and riverside
4. New uses that bring activity to the riverside at the cinema, the Allison Mill site and Southmill Road
5. Widen the tow-path on the eastern bank as a shared route for pedestrians and cycles
6. Explore opportunities to create connections to the riverside on the western bank

Rationalising vehicular movement in the town centre



1. Remove the one way system on Dane Street, Station Road and Riverside to reduce circulating traffic
2. Test the benefits of a new link road for all vehicles through the Goods Yard to relieve pressure on the town centre road network
3. Consider a new multi-storey car park at the station to serve the town centre
4. A new multi-storey car park to serve Old River Lane
5. Explore the potential for timed closure of South Street/Potter Street to improve the pedestrian environment

Establishing a clear pedestrian network in the town centre



1. A new structure of pedestrian routes at Old River Lane connecting North Street and Castle Gardens
2. A new station square and improved pedestrian routes into the town centre and to the riverside
3. Potential timed-closure of South Street/Potter Street
4. Strengthen connections from South Street to the riverside and through the Mill site to Dane Street

Protecting and enhancing Bishop's Stortford's historic character



1. Maintain local and townwide views to key landmarks including St Michael's Church
2. Enhance the setting of Water Lane United Reformed Church and the Corn Exchange
3. Define a riverside/industrial heritage townscape guidance area to protect and enhance this distinct character
- 3b. Define a historic market town townscape guidance area to further protect key historic streets

BISHOP'S STORTFORD

TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

A network of green and urban spaces



1. A formal landscape space at United Reformed Church
2. Enhance the Market Square and South Street through the potential timed closure of the road
3. A new public space on the riverside between Adderley Road and Dane Street
4. New and enhanced public spaces on the riverside at the cinema, improving access to the towpath
5. Redevelopment of the Goods Yard providing clear links to the town centre and a new station square
6. Improved riverside green spaces at the Goods Yard
7. A new public space by the riverside at the Wharf buildings on Southmill Road
8. Investment in the towpath to include a shared cycle route
9. Ongoing investment in Castle Gardens

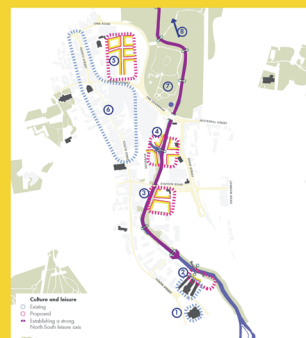
A distinctive and quality retail offer



The town centre is an attractive place to shop but there is the potential to diversify and improve the retail offer given its affluent catchment area and demand from retailers for medium to large retail units. Studies have found that there is demand for 6,500 sq.m of new retail space by 2026 – and possibly up to 20,000 sq.m by 2036.

1. New high quality retail space at Old River Lane
2. New development connecting South Street to the riverside with new shops and cafe space
3. Enhanced restaurant and some retail space at the cinema and train station
4. An enhanced cluster of activity on the riverside at Southmill wharfs
5. Investment in the existing high street including public realm and shop front improvements

A new culture and leisure offer for Bishop's Stortford



1. Testing of possible alternative locations for a redeveloped Rhodes Arts Centre with a larger auditorium
2. A new evening quarter of Southmill Wharf with new bars and restaurants by the river
3. Remodel the Cinema to address the riverside
4. Enhance the existing cluster of evening activity at the riverside at Adderley Road
5. Redevelopment of Old River Lane for new leisure space
6. Continued curation of events in the town centre including street markets and festivals
7. Investment in Castle Gardens to enhance facilities
8. Planned redevelopment of Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre

The town centre as a place for business



The focus of the town's existing employment is small to medium sized local businesses operating from older buildings. A demand for modern premises in Bishop's Stortford has been identified with 5,000 to 10,000 sq.m of new space required.

1. A new cluster of Grade A1 modern office buildings at the train station with proximity to transport links and town centre services
2. New small business space along Southmill Road
3. Public realm enhancements to the main shopping streets to support existing businesses



BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK



An exciting opportunity to help shape your town centre

East Herts Council's purchase of Old River Lane, a key site in the heart of town, has opened up lots of new opportunities. The planning framework sets out proposals for movement and design projects to improve the whole of the town centre as well as its key development sites.

The document focuses on three key areas in the town centre including proposals for Old River Lane, the Allinson Mill and the train station and river corridor.

The document identifies eight themes to help improve the town centre:

- Revealing and celebrating the River Stort,
- Establishing a clear pedestrian network in the town centre,
- Rationalising vehicular movement in the town centre,
- Protecting and enhancing Bishop's Stortford's historic character,
- Improving the network of green and urban spaces,
- Creating a distinctive and quality retail offer,
- Delivering a new culture and leisure offer for Bishop's Stortford, and
- Promoting the town centre as a place for business.



BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK



FIND OUT MORE AND SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

Visit us and meet the team:

10am - 3pm on Saturday 12th November 2016
in Jackson Square Shopping Centre

View the exhibition:

31st October - 13th November in Jackson Square Shopping Centre
14th November - 18th November in Charringtons House
21st November - 23rd November in Charringtons House
24th November - 4th December in the Rhodes Arts Centre
5th December - 8th December in Jackson Square Shopping Centre

Or view the document and leave comments online:

Website: <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/ORLAutumnConsultation>



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Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners accepts no responsibility for comments made by members of the community which have been reflected in this report.



Allies and Morrison

85 Southwark Street
London SE1 0HX

telephone +44 20 7921 0100
web alliesandmorrison.com
email info@alliesandmorrison.com

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
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