

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

GUILDHALL COMPLEX AND CREATIVE HUB TASK GROUP

Minutes from the Meeting of the Guildhall Complex and Creative Hub Task Group held on Wednesday, 22nd June, 2022 at 3.00 pm in the Card Room - Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors E Nockolds, C J Crofts, M de Whalley and C Morley.

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillors Ryves, Moriarty (remotely) and Hudson (remotely)

OFFICERS:

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE TASK GROUP**

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RESOLVED: Councillor Nockolds was appointed Chair of the Task Group and Councillor Morley was appointed Vice Chair of the Task Group.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors Hudson and Bower.

Councillor Hudson was present at the meeting remotely under Standing Order 34.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

4 **URGENT BUSINESS**

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The Chair explained that she did have a matter of Urgent Business to bring to the Task Group, which was about the formation and membership of the CIO.

RESOLVED: The Task Group agreed that this item be considered as urgent business, in exempt session, at the end of the meeting.

5 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillors Hudson, Moriarty and Ryves.

6 **TERMS OF REFERENCE (TO NOTE)**

The Task Group noted the Terms of Reference.

7 **CABINET REPORT - KING'S LYNN TOWN DEAL GUILDHALL
AND CREATIVE HUB BUSINESS CASE**

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The Task Group considered the Cabinet report and additional documents that had been circulated in relation to the Business Case for the St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub project and made the following comments.

Councillor Crofts broadly supported the project and felt that it was important that it was well marketed and needed to be cost effective. He made reference to commercial elements and that lessons should be learned from the previous failed HLF bid. King's Lynn as a Heritage Centre needed to be promoted as a whole. Councillor Crofts explained that he was keen on promoting coach trips into the town centre and this project could be a catalyst for this. Information was provided from officers on the CIO business plan and marketing support.

Councillor Morley commented that the Guildhall was a huge attraction and needed to be refurbished and operating as a performing arts complex based on Shakespeare's connections and its history. He stated that experts had judged that the figures presented were the best estimates and we had to support these. However, the benefits of a creative hub did not appear to be evidenced in the case and it was difficult to envisage what will be happening in the hub to add value to the whole complex and the symbiotic or holistic relationship is not clear or explained.

The Chair, Councillor Nockolds made reference to the rental opportunities and how they related to creativity and activities relating to the development of skills.

Officers provided information on the attendance estimates and explained that these included school visits and school performances. The Portfolio Holder reminded Members that this plan had been through the Town Board and a lot of work had been carried out to forecast attendances and income. An Independent Appraisal report had also been conducted and found the Business Case to be satisfactory.

The Task Group discussed the Creative Hub and it was acknowledged, that going forward, more promotion within the business case would be of benefit to highlight how the Hub would achieve the outputs required.

Councillor Hudson, who was attending the meeting remotely, under Standing Order 34 commented that the attraction should be based on William Shakespeare. It was explained that Shakespeare would be a feature, but the venue needed to be flexible so that a range of performances and activities could take place.

It was explained to the Task Group that co-ordination with the MUCH would take place.

In response to questions from Councillor de Whalley, it was explained that the Business Case and Business Plan were two separate documents and the Business Plan had already been approved. It was also noted that the HLF was a separate application process and was not related to the Business Case. With regard to the footfall estimates and information on volunteers within the Business Case it was explained that these were modelled with information provided by relevant organisations such as NMS.

Councillor Ryves addressed the Task Group under Standing Order 34 and commented that the project was expensive, and he would like to see an alternative plan that had respect for the public purse. He felt that the project was a risk and had concerns about the underwriting, should the HLF bid be unsuccessful.

In response to a question from Councillor Ryves, it was explained that consultation with stakeholders had taken place and regular update meetings had occurred. Councillor Ryves commented that he felt the process had been rushed and that the alternative proposal put forward by the SGT should have been considered.

The Task Group discussed the proposals for catering and doing it in house verses a commercial provision.

Councillor Morley referred to the Economic Case and felt that the key benefits did not include outputs of the hub. He felt that the Creative Hub would result in only a small return and therefore not good value for money. Officers explained that the project needed to be looked at as a whole, but acknowledged that the benefits of the Hub were perhaps not promoted as much as they should be in the Business Case, and this was something that officers could look at including going forward.

Councillor de Whalley referred to the White Barn and the Task Group discussed the benefits of the use of this space over and above the financial benefits.

A representative from the Task Group would present a summary of the discussion to the Regeneration and Development Panel at their meeting on 23rd June 2022.

8 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

To be agreed.

9 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

10 **EXEMPT - URGENT BUSINESS - FORMATION AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE CIO**

The Task Group discussed the formation and membership of the CIO and how the Task Group would be involved in processes.

RESOLVED: At 6.00pm the Task Group resolved to continue to sit for an additional ten minutes.

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm