

UPDATE ON REDEVELOPMENT OF CHURCHGATE AND ITS SURROUNDING AREA: INFORMATION NOTE

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of key dates relating to the Churchgate Project to the end of January 2013.

2. OVERVIEW

- 2.1 Members will be aware of the Churchgate Project Executive's report to Cabinet on 1 November 2012 which referred to the request by Simons asking for a six month extension to the Development Agreement. The purpose of the report to Cabinet was to provide time for all potential options on the way forward to be investigated and considered in full.
- 2.2 At the meeting of Cabinet, Members expressed concerns that they did not consider all the necessary facts were available to them in the report, and that there appeared to be no compelling reason for extending the DA for six months. Instead they agreed that officers should report to Council as quickly as possible on all available options. The Cabinet resolutions were reported to the meeting of Hitchin Committee on 13 November 2012.
- 2.3 It was also suggested that both the Members and the public should be given the opportunity to view the emerging options that have been the subject of discussion at the Project Board meetings.
- 2.4 Having considered the issues, Cabinet decided that officers should be asked to undertake more work and report directly to a special meeting of Full Council in January on all potential options to allow Members to consider the future of the Churchgate area. It was also requested that officers contact Simons and request their permission to place the emerging options into the public domain.
- 2.5 The Project Board has since had discussions with Simons who will hold a series of Churchgate Information Days on 3, 4 and 5 January 2013, (albeit prior to the meeting of Hitchin Committee). The event will provide an update on Simons' ideas for the redevelopment of the Churchgate area and will also give local people an opportunity to give feedback to the Simons Project Team who will be on hand to answer questions. Simons will also hold a Churchgate Liaison Meeting (CLF) on Wednesday 9 January (Church House, Churchyard) which will afford representatives of the CLF the opportunity to discuss the Simons presentation. This will be a public meeting.

2.6 Officers will present a detailed report on all potential options regarding the Churchgate development project and the future of the Churchgate area to a special meeting of Full Council on 31 January 2013. These options will include financial and legal implications as well as potential timescales.

2.7 Below is a timetable setting out key dates for the Churchgate Project up until 31 January 2013.

Date:	Activity:	Time:	Venue:
Thurs 3 rd January 2013	Simons Information Day	10:00am to 5:00pm	Community Shop – 27 Hermitage Road, Hitchin
Fri 4 th January 2013	Simons Information Day	10:00am to 8:00pm	Community Shop – 27 Hermitage Road, Hitchin
Sat 5 th January 2013	Simons Information Day	10:00am to 5:00pm	Community Shop – 27 Hermitage Road, Hitchin
Wed 9 th January 2013	CLF Meeting	7:30pm	Church House, Churchyard, Hitchin
Thurs 31 st January 2013	Full Council Meeting	7:30pm	Council Chamber – Council Offices

2.8 The dates regarding the Churchgate Information Days will be published in the Comet and will be on the Council’s website with a link to Simons website for consultation feedback. Outcomes from the consultation along with the rationale for Simons request to extend the first cut off date to the Development Agreement will be included, alongside other potential options, in the Officer report to full Council on 31 January 2013. Simons are carrying out the exhibition and the CLF meeting in early January to afford the time to analyse the responses to the consultation and to be included in the officer report.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 That the Hitchin Committee note the content of this Information Note.

4. CONTACT OFFICERS

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