

**TITLE OF REPORT: THOMAS BELLAMY HOUSE AND HITCHIN MUSEUM**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To consult with Hitchin Committee on proposals for Thomas Bellamy House and Hitchin Museum.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Hitchin Committee gives its comments on the proposals for Thomas Bellamy House and Hitchin Museum as detailed in the attached report to Cabinet of 16 December 2014.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To consult with Hitchin Committee about proposals for the use of Council owned property.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 As set out in Section 9 of the attached Cabinet report.

**5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

- 5.1 The local Ward Members Cllrs D. Leal-Bennett, P. Clark and S. Harwood were contacted on 18 November 2014.

**6 BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 The District Council owns both Thomas Bellamy House and Hitchin Museum. Further information is contained within the Cabinet report attached at Appendix A.
- 6.2 The Museum Service is due to vacate Hitchin Museum when the service moves to the new North Hertfordshire Museum later on this year.
- 6.3 A two part report was considered by Cabinet on 16 December 2014 that looked at options for Hitchin Museum and Thomas Bellamy House. The preferred option will be progressed in detail after the Museum Service has vacated Hitchin Museum. The Part 1 public report is attached at Appendix A.

- 6.4 After considering the Part 1 public report Cabinet resolved (Minute 93 refers):
- (1) That the report be noted, and an in principle decision on which option to progress be deferred to in order to consider the issues raised within the Part 2 exempt report included later in the agenda (see Minute 96 below);
  - (2) That, subject to the decision on the Part 2 report, it be noted that a further report will be presented to Cabinet in due course; and
  - (3) That it be confirmed that Hitchin Museum has not yet been declared surplus, and that access to the building by third parties to carry out surveys and condition reports may only be offered after the Museum Service has vacated the building and after a further report on the preferred option has been presented back to Cabinet.
- 6.5 The Part 2 exempt report included Appendix A, a Spreadsheet showing estimated costings of options and Appendix B Legal Counsel's advice. After considering the Part report Cabinet further resolved (Minute 96 refers):
- (1) That, having considering the contents of the previous Part 1 public report and the Part 2 report, Option F be agreed as the preferred option for the future of Thomas Bellamy House and Hitchin Museum, and that a further report on this preferred option be presented to Cabinet in late summer/early autumn 2015; and
  - (2) That discussions take place with the two existing occupiers of Thomas Bellamy House and all other parties interested in occupying/managing the two properties.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To carry out an options appraisal of Council property that will become vacant.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no legal restrictions preventing the District Council from disposing Thomas Bellamy House.
- 7.2 There are no legal restrictions preventing the District Council leasing the Hitchin Museum building to community groups

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 As detailed under Section 11 of the attached Cabinet report.

## **9. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 As set out under Section 12 of the Cabinet report.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 As referred to under section 13 of the Cabinet report.

## **11. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 As detailed under Section 14 of the Cabinet report.

## **12. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

## **13. APPENDIX**

- 13.1 Appendix A - Part One public report to Cabinet 16 December 2014

## **14. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 15.1 Land Registry freehold Title Number HD294663.