

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY LEISURE TASK GROUP**

### **Executive Summary**

At its meeting on 14 September 2017, the Executive set up the Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group to look at possible replacement facilities for HG Wells Conference and Events Centre (HG Wells), The Big Apple, Gala Bingo and Quake and report back to the Executive. This was in response to the current lease on HG Wells expiring in March 2020.

The Task Group undertook work to assess the current facilities provided, the need for Town Centre community leisure facilities and consideration of how best to meet the identified need.

At its meeting on 20 September 2018, the Task Group considered the community groups who are current, regular users of HG Wells and The Fiery Bird (formerly known as Quake) and their future plans and requirements after the current lease ended in March 2020.

The Task Group agreed to make the following recommendations to the Executive:

### **RECOMMENDATIONS to the Executive**

- That (i) the Executive be asked to consider the groups, as identified in the report to the Task Group, during the development of Woking;**
- (ii) the Executive asks Officers to work with those groups, as set out in the report to the Task Group, to try and identify alternative venues before the closure of HG Wells in March 2020; and**
- (iii) to communicate with those groups no later than 12 months before the closure of HG Wells to confirm if any alternatives have been identified.**

The Executive is requested to take account of the Task Group's recommendations.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:

#### **RESOLVE That**

- (i) the groups identified in the report to the Task Group be considered during the development of Woking;
- (ii) Officers be asked to work with those groups, as set out in the report to the Task Group, to try and identify alternative venues before the closure of HG Wells in March 2020; and
- (iii) those groups be communicated with no later than 12 months before the closure of HG Wells to confirm if any alternatives have been identified.

## Recommendations from Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group

### Reasons for Decision

Reason: To consider the recommendations from the Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group.

|   |
|---|
| The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above. |
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**Background Papers:** None.

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**Date Published:** 16 November 2018

## **Recommendations from Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Executive, at its meeting on 14 September 2017, agreed to set up a cross-party Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group to look at possible replacement facilities for HG Wells Conference and Events Centre (HG Wells), The Big Apple, Gala Bingo and Quake and report back to the Executive.
- 1.2 The current lease on HG Wells will expire in March 2020.
- 1.3 The Task Group is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Cultural and Community Development.
- 1.4 The functions of the Task Group are as follows:-
  - to assess the current facilities provided at HG Wells, The Big Apple, Gala Bingo and Quake;
  - to assess the need for Town Centre community leisure facilities; and
  - to consider how best to meet the identified need.
- 1.5 The Task Group was expected to complete its work by Autumn 2018.

### **2.0 Discussions with Community/Leisure Users of HG Wells and The Fiery Bird (formerly known as nightclub, Quake)**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 20 September 2018, the Task Group received a report on discussions with community/leisure users of HG Wells and The Fiery Bird (formerly known as Quake). The Group discussed the work undertaken by Officers on users, their current and projected needs, and what if any particular venues might be feasible for the various groups to use in the future.
- 2.2 The current, regular users of HG Wells and The Fiery Bird identified by Officers are:
  - Woking Music Festival (WMF)
  - Woking Borough Council (WBC)
  - Woking Choral Society (WCS)
  - Woking Symphony Orchestra (WSO)
  - Dance Woking
  - LinkAble
  - Woking Young Musicians Trust (WYMT)
  - Welcome Church (formerly known as Coign Church)
  - The Phoenix Cultural Centre

## Recommendations from Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group

### 3.0 Recommendations of the Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group

3.1 The Group was supportive of communication with groups and establishing working relationships going forward. A copy of the minutes of the Task Group is attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 The Group noted:

- That (i) American Amusements was in conversation with the Council over future locations and needs;
- (ii) Welcome Church should be in its new home before the closure of HG Wells; and
- (iii) LinkAble was of particular concern for the Group and the Group asks Officers to work with LinkAble to try and find a new location.

3.3 The Group agreed the following recommendations to the Executive:

#### **RECOMMENDED to the Executive**

- That (i) the Executive be asked to consider the groups, as identified in the report to the Task Group, during the development of Woking;**
- (ii) the Executive asks Officers to work with those groups, as set out in the report to the Task Group, to try and identify alternative venues before the closure of HG Wells in March 2020; and**
- (iii) to communicate with those groups no later than 12 months before the closure of HG Wells to confirm if any alternatives have been identified.**

### 4.0 Implications

#### Financial

4.1 There are no financial implications.

#### Human Resource/Training and Development

4.2 There are no specific human resources or training and development implications raised by this report.

#### Community Safety

4.3 There are no specific community safety issues raised by this report.

#### Risk Management

4.4 In order to address uncertainties caused by the closure of HG Wells in March 2020, the Task Group recommends that Officers work with the groups identified to try and identify alternative venues.

#### Sustainability

4.5 There are no specific sustainability implications raised by this report.

## Recommendations from Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group

### Equalities

4.6 There are no specific equality implications raised by this report.

### Safeguarding

4.7 There are no specific safeguarding implications raised by this report.

### **5.0 Consultations**

5.1 Consultations conducted locally by questionnaire, one-to-one meetings with community groups, meetings with HG Wells staff and one-to-one meetings with the Welcome Church and Fiery Bird.

REPORT ENDS

## **Recommendations from Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group**

**WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY LEISURE TASK GROUP**

**HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2018 IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2 - CIVIC OFFICES**

Present: Councillor Colin Kemp (Chairman)  
Councillor M Ilyas Raja  
Rose Blackley, Arts Development Officer  
Sylvie Marshall, Community Development Manager

Absent: Councillor Hilary Addison  
Councillor Ann-Marie Barker

**Actions**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Barker.

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 19 July 2018 were agreed.

**3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Following a query at the last meeting, the following information had been obtained regarding the current space which American Amusements occupied in the Big Apple:

| <b>Accommodation</b>          | <b>Sq M</b>  | <b>Sq Ft</b>  |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Bowling Area                  | 892          | 9,604         |
| Chameleon Bar                 | 560          | 6,030         |
| Amusement Areas incl Pool Bar | 1,590        | 17,113        |
| Laser Quest                   | 462          | 4,975         |
| Metro Hotel                   | 821          | 8,836         |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>4,325</b> | <b>46,558</b> |

**4. Report on Discussions with Community/Leisure Users of HG Wells Conference and Events Centre and The Fiery Bird (formerly known as nightclub, Quake)**

The Group received the report on discussions with community/leisure users of HG Wells Conference and Events Centre and The Fiery Bird (formerly known as Quake). It was noted that the report included users future plans and requirements after the current lease came to an end in March 2020.

## **Recommendations from Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group**

Councillor Raja asked for an update on the Toys R Us building. The Chairman explained that Toys R Us would be demolished along with the Red Car Park, and would be rebuilt and joined up with the Victoria Square scheme. The Group was advised that the use of the space was still in discussion and that conversations were ongoing with American Amusements and other providers. Proposals would come forward as part of a wider discussion. The Chairman highlighted that civic functions would be held within the Victoria Square hotel space.

The Group discussed the report and noted the many groups which used HG Wells. Regarding the Welcome Church (formerly known as the Coign Church), the Group noted that the Church should be in its new home before the closure of HG Wells. Councillor Raja commented that the timeline for the new church buildings could go beyond the planned completion date of December 2019 and the closure of HG Wells in March 2020. Councillor Raja highlighted St Dunstan's Church, on the corner of Shaftesbury Road and Pembroke Road, as a possible short-term venue. St Paul's Church in Oriental Road was also raised.

Sylvie Marshall advised the Group that the Community Centre in Old Woking had a stage and could be approached. It was also highlighted that Parkview Centre for the Community in Sheerwater would be replaced as part of the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme. Rose Blackley added that many groups had indicated a preference for a Town Centre location due to its restaurants, facilities and transport links.

The Group commented that LinkAble was of particular concern to the Group and asked Officers to work with LinkAble to try and find a new suitable location.

The Chairman had received some points from Councillor Barker prior to the meeting, including a clear need for a music facility that was not met by any existing venue in Woking and a dance facility with a sprung floor was required, particularly for Dance Woking.

The Chairman thanked Rose Blackley for all her hard work on researching and compiling the report on the requirements of community/leisure users of HG Wells. The Group welcomed the report and commented that it was a very useful and easy to read document.

### **5. Discussion on Recommendations to the Executive**

Following the Group's work to assess the current facilities provided at HG Wells, The Big Apple, Gala Bingo and Quake, and the need for Town Centre community leisure facilities, the Group considered its recommendations to the Executive. The Group was supportive of communication with groups and establishing working relationships going forward.

The Group noted:

- That (i) American Amusements was in conversation with the Council over future locations and needs;



## **Recommendations from Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group**

- (ii) Welcome Church should be in its new home before the closure of HG Wells; and
- (iii) LinkAble was of particular concern for the Group and the Group asks Officers to work with LinkAble to try and find a new location.

The Group agreed the following recommendations to the Executive:

### **RECOMMENDED to the Executive**

- That (i) the Executive be asked to consider the groups, as identified in the report to the Task Group, during the development of Woking;**
- (ii) the Executive asks Officers to work with those groups, as set out in the report to the Task Group, to try and identify alternative venues before the closure of HG Wells in March 2020; and**
  - (iii) to communicate with those groups no later than 12 months before the closure of HG Wells to confirm if any alternatives have been identified.**

## **6. Any Other Business**

No matters were raised.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

The Group agreed that no future meetings were required.