

<b>Terms of Reference</b>	<b>Whitchurch Civic Centre working group</b>
<b>Frequency</b>	The working group shall meet every month for a duration of one hour throughout calendar year 2024 and beyond should this be necessary.
<b>Membership</b>	<p>Representation will include:</p> <p><b>Shropshire Council Elected Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Peggy Mullock</li> <li>• Cllr Tom Biggins</li> <li>• Cllr Gerald Dakin</li> <li>• Cllr Paul Wynn</li> </ul> <p><b>Whitchurch Town Council Elected Member/s</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Andy Hall</li> </ul> <p><b>Shropshire Council Officers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tim Smith; Assistant Director Commercial Services</li> <li>• Steve Law; Head of Property and Development</li> </ul> <p><b>Whitchurch Town Council officers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mike McDonald; Proper Officer/ RFO</li> </ul>
<b>In attendance</b>	Gareth Proffitt – Shropshire Council; Senior communications officer

## 1.0 Main Objectives of the working group

- 1.1 To ensure that the resolutions agreed by Shropshire Council (page 6-7, Appendix 1) and those involving the working group are considered and dealt with and reported back to Shropshire Council and Whitchurch Town Council

- 1.2 To finalise the options appraisal for the future of the site and bring forward business cases for the options to include appropriate surveys, appraisals, assessments and designs, subject to further approval by Shropshire Council's Cabinet and Council.
- 1.3 To consider interim solutions for library and community service provision in the town and receive updates from Shropshire Council regarding business cases to progress future library and customer transformation in Whitchurch.
- 1.4 To consider and work collaboratively on plans and approaches to funding bodies to identify opportunities for grants and funds that can assist with the financing of the respective options for the Civic Centre.
- 1.5 To work collaboratively to review, approve and update communication and consultation plans which ensure that all key stakeholders are consulted before any decision is taken regarding the future of the Civic Centre and associated site.
- 1.6 To provide updates regarding the work being undertaken by the working group to Shropshire Council, Whitchurch Town Council and the Member of Parliament for North Shropshire.

## **2.0 Duties**

The working group will;

- Work collaboratively and regularly to consider and deal with the agreed objectives of the working group.
- Ensure that the working group is effectively represented by Elected Members of Shropshire Council and Whitchurch Town Council, and that every working group meeting is quorate.
- Consider, review and comment on business cases regarding options for the future of the Whitchurch Civic Centre and associated site.
- Ensure that the views of key stakeholders including residents are considered and reported back to Shropshire Council's Cabinet and full council in respect of the Civic Centre and associated site.
- Agree internal and external communications and ensure that Whitchurch Town Council and the local community are consulted ahead of any final decisions on the future of the Civic Centre and associated site are taken by Shropshire Council.
- Provide input, advice, challenge and guidance from their own areas of expertise / specialism which may benefit the work being undertaken by the group.

- Oversee the management and work being undertaken by officers on behalf of the working group.
- Ensure that the objectives, duties and work being undertaken by the working group are understood, well-managed and reported internally and externally.
- Ensure that the appropriate resources and organisational support is made available to facilitate the duties and undertakings of the working group.
- Ensure a robust framework is maintained for governance and accountability of the working group.
- Ensure appropriate documents go through the relevant internal approval processes in line with each organisation's governance structure and requirements.

### **3.0 Membership**

The group will consist of Elected Members of Shropshire Council and Whitchurch Town Council along with officers of both councils.

The Chair of the Group will be an Elected Member of Shropshire Council. The Deputy Chair will be an Elected Member of Whitchurch Town Council. If the Chair and Vice Chair are absent from any meeting the Assistant Director for Commercial Services at Shropshire Council, or nominated officer, will chair in their absence.

Group members may wish to nominate named deputies to attend on their behalf when the substantive member is unable to attend. Members of the working group or their nominated deputies should attend regularly. Membership is detailed in section 1 of these terms of reference

### **4.0 In attendance**

Other appropriate officers from the respective councils/ organisations will be requested to attend as required along with any other parties who can advise on matters involving the business cases for the Civic Centre, library and community services provision in Whitchurch.

### **5.0 Quoracy**

The group will be deemed quorate providing at least one Elected member from both Shropshire Council and Whitchurch Town Council are represented. The Chair has the right to cancel any meeting where it is known that the working group is not quorate.

### **6.0 Conflict of Interest**

It is the responsibility of all Members and all individuals in attendance to declare any conflicts of interest pertaining to the agenda. Conflicts of interest are recorded at the beginning of each meeting. The nature of the conflict of interest and the Chairs decision based on consideration of this information will be formally minuted. If a conflict of interest

arises, then the Chair may request members or those in attendance to withdraw at the appropriate point in the agenda.

## **7.0 Frequency of Meetings**

The working group shall meet monthly until such time no further work is required and the working group decide to conclude their work. The working group may also hold additional meetings should there be a stage in the process that requires more frequent dialogue to move things forward within the programme timescales.

## **8.0 Governance**

The Members of the Project Board will report back through their individual organisation's governance arrangements.

## **9.0 Reporting**

The working meetings will be formally minuted and action notes will be taken.

The working group will report to back through the individual partner organisations governance.

## **10.0 Administration**

Administration for the working will be co-ordinated by Shropshire Council and overseen by the Assistant Director for Commercial Services liaising with the Proper Officer/ RFO at Whitchurch Town Council. Papers will be issued 3 working days in advance of the meeting.

The standard working group agenda will include;

- Introductions and apologies
- Declaration/conflicts of interest
- Review of actions from previous meeting
- Elected Member items
- Whitchurch Town Council update
- Shropshire Council Civic Centre options update
- Shropshire Council Library and Community services update
- Communications plan
- Any other business

## **11.0 Confidentiality and Communications**

It is the responsibility and requirement of the partner organisations of the working group to communicate/brief Members of their respective organisations. They should bring appropriate issues and risks from their own organisation and from the local community

they represent to ensure that communication channels are two way and messages are reaching the working group from all stakeholders.

External messages / updates, communications are to be agreed by the working group to ensure consistency of messages are presented internally within the two organisations, and also externally to stakeholders, members of the community and to the media.

In order to manage public expectation and interest, the Working Group does not meet in public, but will publish its scheduled dates of meetings and ensure that a suitable "Position Statement" is agreed by the group at the end of each meeting and released within 10 days by a member of the group acting as the 'named' point of contact for public communication and enquiries.

**Approved by:        The Members of Whitchurch Civic Centre working group**

**Date:**

## APPENDIX 1

### **Whitchurch Civic Centre and Library – RAAC Shropshire Council Cabinet meeting – Wednesday 17 January 2024 RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet noted the key surveys, investigations and report relating to the condition of the Civic Centre and the presence of RAAC, confirming that the building is beyond economic repair and delegated authority to the Assistant Director Commercial Services to

- i) Arrange for the building to be decommissioned and to remain permanently closed due to its critical condition.
- ii) Set up a working group to include Shropshire Council officers, local Shropshire Councillors and Whitchurch Town Council to finalise the options appraisal for the future of the site and bring forward business cases for the options 1 to 6 listed in paragraph 7.12 to include appropriate surveys, appraisals, assessments and designs, subject to further approval by Cabinet/Council.
- iii) Provide and deliver an interim solution to library and community service provision. Continue to develop the options appraisal and business cases to progress next steps library and customer transformation in Whitchurch.
- iv) Work with Whitchurch Town Council in their identification of new civic accommodation.
- v) Consult with Whitchurch Town Council and the local community ahead of any final decisions on the future of the site.

### **Minutes:**

It was agreed to bring forward item 12 to this point in the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets introduced the report which provided an update on the actions taken to deal with the identified Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) at Whitchurch Civic Centre and Library, and cease the use of the building on the grounds of safety and recommended further work on the potential redevelopment of the site. It also recommended interim measures for the library service and community use provision.

With permission of the Leader, local members were invited to speak. They expressed the importance of the facility in the town, which was run for the benefit of the community.

Members were reassured that no further action would be taken without public consultation, however the priority was to minimise the risk to users of the building.

It was suggested that the Council worked with the local MP on submitting a bid for Levelling Up 3; however Members were advised that Levelling Up 3 was for existing applications only. The Portfolio Holder welcomed the role that the MP was playing in meeting the Permanent Secretary of State, supported this action and advised the outcome of that would inform their next steps in lobbying government.

Members were informed that without securing external funding, the building was beyond economic repair.

**RESOLVED:**

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