



FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 17 January 2018

DATE: 11 January 2018
SUBJECT: Harlington Development
FROM: The Harlington Working Group

1. Introduction

- a. Timeline from Public Consultation
 - i. Following the majority public support for Option 3, the redevelopment of a new Harlington on Gurkha Square, an Extraordinary Council Meeting on 27th March 2017 moved to progress the design of Option 3 to secure planning permission, but taking due account of all the comments returned with the consultation, to work with HDC and HCC to resolve all outstanding issues including the resolution of long term lease conditions and all related land matters and to continue discussions with the adjoining parishes. The results of the public consultation were presented at the ARM on 28th March 2017
- b. Progressing the peoples' choice
 - i. To overcome what was foreseen as a resourcing issue, a non-committal Framework Agreement was signed in June 2017.– The prime benefit was a third-party organisation took over control of delivery of the project under a design and build agreement. It was a no risk option to all parties, but, as it turned out, at an unacceptable cost. The Contractor developed a modified Option 3 layout which primarily rotated the main auditorium through 90° which did not increase the footprint of the building but increased its functionality.
 - ii. Following the Council Meeting of 28th September, the Framework Contractor was notified that it resolved not to continue with the Framework Agreement because of their unacceptable cost estimate. BFF who had previously tendered for the RIBA Stage 2 Design Work, along with the other selected architects for the consultation design work, were instructed to progress the design sufficient to submit the scheme for outline planning approval. This followed advice from the Council's professional advisors that the scheme could be delivered within the budget cost estimate by following a traditional design/tender/construct form of contract.
 - iii. Outline Planning discussions have taken place with HDC's Planning Officers and the primary issues raised concerning access, traffic and parking impacts and bulk and mass of the building have been addressed as far as practically possible.

- iv. The building configuration has been very fluid as designs developed particularly responding to cost considerations. The building layout and details were frozen finally on December 24th 2017.

2. Building specification

- a. Organised over four floors the building provides at ground level a foyer with access to an outside terrace, bar/coffee shop, main auditorium, second multi/functional performance space, back stage facilities including a scene dock and centre/public toilets. *See Appendix A.*
- b. The first floor provides a second foyer, public area suitable for public exhibitions such as photography or art work and access to the balcony seating to the main auditorium. Theatre toilets, dressing and technical rooms. *See Appendix B.*
 - i. There is provision for later addition of a balcony to the second performance space.
- c. The second floor provides primary dressing rooms, green room for performers, control room and lighting bridges to the main auditorium and Fleet Town Council offices. *See Appendix C.*
- d. The third floor (part only) provides the main plant room and plant area. *See Appendix D.*
- e. Isometric views of the proposed building from different perspectives have been developed to support the planning application. *See Appendix E.*
- f. Much time has been given to ensuring the maximum flexibility to each public area and that the various forms of performance/use can be accommodated and provide sufficient capacity to maximise income. *See Appendix F.*
- g. The utility of the main auditorium space is increased by providing a “pit” immediately in front of the stage area that can have the seating removed and plates inserted to provide a complete flat floor to the auditorium.
- h. The main seating to the auditorium is fully retractable.
- i. Storage has been a significant debate. An elegant solution has been achieved by providing a basement area under the stage complete with platform lift which can be effectively used as a performance prop.

3. Public Space and Accessibility

- a. The ground floor of the building is designed as a single flat platform throughout the building to greatly improve accessibility to all the facilities both in front of house and back stage. The reference level has been taken as existing ground level in the North West corner of the site. This means that adjacent to the pavement on Fleet Road the ground floor level is approximately one metre above pavement level. *See Appendix G.*
- b. For a number of technical reasons the building was moved three metres off the boundary with the adjoining property – Mr Baker’s.

- c. This space improves egress from north side of the building and provides public access from Victoria Road Car Park onto Fleet Road. There will be a short flight of steps down from the path level to Fleet Road.
- d. The impact on the remaining Gurkha Square is mitigated by reducing the width of the terrace on the south side of the building, so the building encroaches onto Gurkha Square no more than shown in the original public consultation drawings.
- e. Access to the building from Fleet Road will be via a very gently sloping ramp suitable for disabled access, leading onto the terrace on the south side of the building.
- f. The terrace can equally be accessed via a short flight of steps from Gurkha Square.
- g. Residual parking; the retained area of Gurkha Square, will continue to provide 30+ parking spaces.
- h. War memorial, the memorial can remain intact, or there is the opportunity to reconfigure the elements of the memorial to better reflect the new geometry of Gurkha Square. This will be a matter for future discussion with the local Branch of the British Legion
- i. Improvement to public space: in collaboration with HDC (the landowner), the public space between the New Harlington and the Prince Arthur will be enhanced and developed as a multi-functional public space. Although the proposed landscaping and finishes will allow continued parking in the square, it is proposed that the environment will not be dominated by its parking function.
- j. Access to the library will be maintained at all times, both during construction and in the longer development of the public space. Close liaison will be maintained with HCC Library Services so that we can minimise the impact of the construction phase of the works on the operation of the library. The green margin immediately outside the library will be maintained.

4. Cost.

- a. Synergy latest estimate (Friday 11th January 2018) is £11,024,206 inclusive of all works, 5% contingency and 7.5% inflationary cost, under stage storage and lighting gantries.
- b. We can legitimately reduce the fee figure in Synergy's estimate by £600,000 to compensate for fees paid and precept monies held in reserve.
- c. Our borrowing figure therefore reduces to £10,424,206 This can be accommodated within the current precept allocation for the Harlington Project (based on current PWLB rates)
- d. Cost transfer from HDC can only be finalised after the January 11th Cabinet Meeting relating to (although we have included conservative estimates based on latest discussions)
 - i. Land costs
 - ii. Loss of parking short term and long term
 - iii. Costs associated with closure of the Harlington
- e. Cost Coverage – BFF and their support design team have gone beyond the RIBA Stage 2 Design to ensure that the scheme cost is as robust as possible.

- i. The building structure and accommodation arrangements have gone through several iterations to provide the most cost effective solution to providing the level of functionality specified by FTC.
- ii. The local services have been mapped and surveyed to ensure all service related costs have been incorporated into the estimates, including sewer and drain diversion and making appropriate provision for attenuation of surface water flows off the site.
- iii. There is a 5% contingency sum built into the cost for unforeseen elements of work and a further 7.5% inflation cost for building works not starting until 2019 amounting to over £1 million. This is a prudent figure as current market forecasts for the construction industry are stable.

5. Discussion

- a. The Council now has a well-developed scheme that meets the criteria originally established for the project; two performance facilities with the main auditorium having a capacity of over 350 seats. A very flexible configuration for both spaces to accommodate a variety of events and performances. The facility will be a modern well-equipped community and entertainment centre that will meet the needs of an expanding population.
- b. A new Harlington will be a major contributor to the long-term sustainability, viability and kick start the regeneration of the Fleet Town Centre.
- c. The original resolution of the Council was to proceed to RIBA Stage 2 design and submit a planning application. The design has been developed beyond stage 2 to ensure the capacity and flexibility of the building has been optimised and achieves the most economic configuration. The Working Group commend Council to proceed to Outline Planning Permission to secure the scale, massing and design of the main building together with location, access and landscaping; all other matters to be reserved.
- d. Securing Planning approval and having significant financial support for the project will allow major third-party funders such as the Arts Council to be approached for financial support. Securing Planning permission makes the project a reality that can be promoted to grant funding bodies.
- e. It is not unrealistic to consider approaching the Arts council for a 20% support grant, say £2m which would reduce borrowing to £8.5m and reduce the payment period to 30 years based upon the current Town Council tax levels.
- f. The ultimate aim is to provide a facility that meets the criteria set out in the public consultation, at no greater cost than the increase related to the Harlington Development in Parish level Council Tax established in 2015.

6. Ancillary Matters

- a. Participation by adjoining Parishes and HDC
 - i. Representations were made to the adjoining parishes and HDC and meetings arranged with both Elvetham Heath and Church Crookham Parish Councils.
 - ii. Crookham Village and Elvetham Heath Parish Councils both declined the opportunity to contribute to the development of a new Harlington.
 - iii. Church Crookham Parish Council expressed an initial interest in supporting the scheme, but declined to take any further part in the development once it was realised that the operation of the Harlington would still need to be supported. They would have considered a long-term investment if there was a profit to be shared from the operations.
- b. Lease Arrangements
 - i. Discussions have continued with HDC concerning a short-term lease for the existing occupation of the Harlington and a long term (99 year) lease for a new Harlington.
 - ii. A draft lease has been produced for a two year term plus a rolling one year extension up to a maximum of five years for the existing building, based on the concept that this should tide the Town Council over while a new Harlington is developed.
 - iii. Comments on the draft lease have been returned to HDC and a revised/final version of the lease is awaited.
 - iv. There has been no progress on a lease for the Gurkha Square site, but a 99-year lease has been referred to.
 - v. Many of the outstanding matters are the subject of a District Council Cabinet meeting on 11th January.
- c. Business Plan.
 - i. Now that the building accommodation has been settled and venue capacities resolved the outline business plan prepared for comparison with the other development Options needs to be progressed and finalised.
- d. Project Delivery Support
 - i. The Town Council has developed a good working relationship with Rushmoor Borough Council's Procurement Department and they have indicated their willingness to support the Town Council in the letting and securing of future stages of the project under OJEU regulations. The cost of this service has been built into the cost estimate.
 - ii. By following a traditional contract route the Council will need to decide what professional support it requires. There is an on-going responsibility by the lead architect through the construction period. The services of the architect can be enhanced to provide additional support for the Town Council, or the services of a third party individual or a professional firm can be employed to independently support the Council.

7. Recommendations

- a. The Harlington Working Group recommends that:
 - i. The current proposals are submitted for outline planning approval.
 - ii. On securing outline planning that representations are made to third party bodies to seek capital grants for the project delivery.
 - iii. That members of the Council work with the Harlington Manager to develop the business plan for the presented scheme.
 - iv. That members of the council continue with discussions with HDC to confirm short and/or long term lease arrangements, in addition to quantifying the costs associated with section 4d of this report.