



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 17 January 2018

at The Harlington at 7.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillors Bob Schofield (Chairman), Grahame Chenery, Paul Einchcomb, Denis Gotel, Alex Gray, Richard Hunt, Kathy Jasper, Alan Oliver, Dai Pierce, Richard Robinson, Jeff Smith, Neil Walton, Sharyn Wheale, George Woods

Also Present

Janet Stanton- Town Clerk

Sheila Rayner -Committee Clerk

Cllr Bennison-HCC

Cllr Forster-HCC (entered the meeting at 7.45pm)

Bill Fraser-Local resident

Michael Jebson-Local Resident

Christine Strudwick-Local resident

Sue Tilley-Local resident/member of the Harlington Working Group

EFC/Jan 2018/ ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Holt, Hope and Wright

EFC/Jan 2018 ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

EFC/Jan 2018 ITEM 3 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr Jebson raised a range of questions and made a number of comments in relation to item 4 -The Harlington Development, regarding:

- A range of access issues including those for the mobility impaired, the library, during construction and access to the main entrance to the building.
- A range of technical issues
- Access to the library

Mr Jebson passed a copy of his questions to the Committee Clerk

Cllr Schofield replied, confirming that the working group and design team were aware of all the issues and believed that they had been adequately addressed, but would pass a copy of Mr Jebson's comments to the lead architects for their consideration. It was confirmed that the planning application was for Outline Planning Permission which concentrated on mass, access, traffic and environmental issues, all other matters reserved.

Cllr Oliver confirmed that Mr Jebson's email of 26 November 2017 had been discussed with the Harlington Working Group. He confirmed that the design had addressed disabled access, but there was no wheelchair access to the proposed control room.

Cllr Schofield thanked Mr Jebson for his comments and confirmed that these would be brought to the attention of the design team.

EFC/Jan 2018 ITEM 4 HARLINGTON DEVELOPMENT

The members received and considered a full and detailed report from the Harlington Working Group covering the history, background and development of the scheme together with a description of the proposed scheme and its cost implications

In presenting the report Cllr Schofield commented on:

- The range of professional disciplines who had worked on the scheme
- The search for a cost-efficient solution
- The standard of mechanical and electrical works
- The energy economic air conditioning system with a small capital premium but operational benefits
- The good relationship between the stage and the audience
- Achievement of a 350 seat auditorium and a studio space that matched the skeletal business plan
- The 3m wide thoroughfare between the new building and Mr Baker's property
- Reduced terrace width facing Gurkha Square to maintain the number of retained car parking spaces
- Productive discussions with Mr Baker
- Achievement of level egress/access arrangements
- Retractable seating capable of being operated by a single person
- The single large storage space with a platform lift with the potential for the lift to be used during performances
- The final total cost (including a 5% contingency and a 7.5% inflationary element) of £11.02m
- A ring fenced sum of £600,000 already available from the precept, to pay for design services and offset borrowing.
- PWLB rates still allow the scheme to be paid off in 45 years if no grants are achieved
- There is no requirement to raise further funds through an increased precept
- The ability to seek out grants once outline planning permission has been obtained which could lead to a decrease in the loan repayment period.
- HDC's Cabinet is very supportive of the scheme and commended FTC's efforts in progressing the scheme.

There followed a full debate covering the following issues

- The future of the existing Harlington building and HDCs indication that they would accept responsibility in respect of the existing sub-tenancies
- HDC Cabinet minutes dated 11 January 2018 with their initial views on the future of the existing building
- The opportunity for HDC to consider holistic regeneration opportunities for the area
- The adequacy of the bar/servery area and the benefits of a second bar area and the possibility of a “pop-up” bar
- The absence of a full kitchen and the proposal to offer only prepared food
- Retractable glass façade onto the terrace attracting more customers
- The HDC view on the possibility of FTC redeveloping the existing building and the inevitable closure of the existing Harlington for at least 2 years with a severe impact on existing users
- The possibility of developing the proposed scheme on the existing site leaving Gurkha Square and the car park intact
- Historically only Gurkha Square, not Victoria Road car park could be considered in any Harlington redevelopment proposals
- The Neighbourhood Plan proposal for a mixed town centre development
- The continuing diminution of the retail sector and the need for a greater range of services/activities to sustain the town centre
- The possible land swap between FTC and HDC including part of the Views and the access to Victoria Road car park to compensate for the loss of part of Gurkha Square. The principle of development on part of the Views was already the subject of a Council resolution (6 September 2017)
- A request from Cllr Gotel to be supplied with details of the existing draft lease including the extent of land ownership.
- The HDC commitment in the original lease to “provide suitable alternative accommodation in the absence of the Harlington”
- The proposed short term lease of 2 years plus a 1 year rolling renewal up to 5 years based on the FTC intention to develop on Gurkha Square
- Concerns about use of part of the Views to replace loss of car parking spaces at Gurkha Square which did not form part of the current recommendations of the Harlington Working Group
- Possibility of a new public space to replace any loss of land at the Views
- Possible reconfiguration of the War Memorial
- Clarification that HDC either had to establish a land transfer value for Gurkha Square or accept a land swap
- Retention of the Harlington in its present location would potentially frustrate the overall redevelopment of the HDC owned land.
- Concerns about the possible loss of green space within the Views
- The basis of any valuation of land in Gurkha Square

In considering Recommendations 1 – 4 in the Harlington Working Group Report, Recommendation 5 was added as an amendment which was carried following a vote.

Following detailed discussion on the amended Recommendations, a recorded vote was taken as follows :

Cllr Chenery	Against	
Cllr Einchcomb		For
Cllr Gotel	Against	
Cllr Gray	Against	
Cllr Hunt	Against	
Cllr Jasper	Against	
Cllr Oliver		For
Cllr Pierce	Against	
Cllr Robinson		For
Cllr Schofield		For
Cllr Smith		For
Cllr Walton		For
Cllr Wheale	Against	
Cllr Woods		For

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Upon the casting of the Chairman's vote the following **RESOLUTION** was **CARRIED** by 8 votes to 7

RESOLVED

- 1 The current proposals are submitted for outline planning approval.
- 2 On securing outline planning that representations are made to third party bodies to seek capital grants for the project delivery.
- 3 That members of the Council work with the Harlington Manager to develop the business plan for the presented scheme.
- 4 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 the report.
- 5 To quantify the options of the purchase of part of Gurkha Square and/or a land swap of part of the Views and the value of the FTC owned land including access to Victoria Road Car Park

EFC/Jan 2018 ITEM 5 ANNUAL RESIDENTS' MEETING DATE

Members were advised that in order to comply with HDC and HALC advice on the requirements of purdah (the treatment of business in the period of time leading up to an Election), it was necessary to change the date of the Annual Residents' meeting.

Although guidance suggested a start time after 6pm, based on room availability and taking the opportunity to attract a greater number of week day commuters, it was suggested that the Annual Residents' meeting be held on Sunday 25th March 2018 at 3pm

RESOLVED

To approve the change of date of the Annual Residents' meeting to Sunday to 25 March 2018 at 3pm

EFC/ Jan 2018 ITEM 6 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 7 February 2018 at the Harlington at 7pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chairman.....Date.....