



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Monday 27 March 2017

at The Harlington at 7.30 pm

PRESENT

Councillors Bob Schofield (Chairman), Grahame Chenery, Paul Einchcomb, Denis Gotel Alex Gray, Leslie Holt, Alan Hope ,Richard Hunt, Kathy Jasper, Alan Oliver, Dai Pierce, Richard Robinson, Jeff Smith Neil Walton, Jonathan Wright

Also Present

Janet Stanton- Town Clerk
Alex Robins-Harlington General Manager
Sheila Rayner-Committee Clerk

Cllr Forster-HDC
Cllr Wheale-HCC/HDC
Cllr Mike Morris- HDC
Sue Tilley
Chris Tilley
Robin Cork

Ex FC/March 2017/ ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence

Ex FC/March 2017/ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest

Ex FC/March 2017/ITEM 3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Cllr Forster (HDC) made a statement in his capacity as a local resident
Cllr Forster circulated an open letter to all Fleet Town councillors which had also been addressed to local social media and press.(copy with record minutes)

Cllr Forster suggested that the consultation had been biased and that some local residents had mentioned the possibility of a judicial review. However it was recognised that this would be costly and create delay when the aim was for the scheme to be carried out successfully.

The open letter referred to a suggested way forward including:

- The formation of a working group of stakeholders
- The production of a financial plan with the help of others
- Engagement with local retailers
- Work jointly with HDC and HCC to secure funding
- Seeking a public vote on the financial and planning details before deciding to proceed on the chosen scheme

Ex FC/March 2017/ITEM 4 THE HARLINGTON

a) Harlington Development Consultation

The Chairman opened the meeting with the presentation of the analysis which had been produced by Fenton Market Research on behalf of FTC- copy attached to record minutes.

A 5% sample verification had been carried out

A total of 1481 residents had responded with 53% of these being on-line

14% of respondents lived outside the Fleet parish boundary with 86% (1267 residents) living within the parish.

30 respondents (2%) had selected no option

Of the votes cast,

20% had voted for option 1 (repair)
27% had voted for option 2 (refurbish)
53% had voted for option 3 (replace)

The analysis importantly indicated that Fleet residents had supported option 3 . This was significant because Fleet residents will meet the cost through the council tax precept

Of the many verbatim comments made Fentons had produced 'word clouds' which provide a quick aid to appreciate words that featured heavily in the comments.

Heavily featured words were:

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
cost	space	new
youth	Gurkha Square	facilities
money	parking	better
Fleet	Fleet	

The result was consistent across the 86% Fleet residents/users

Fentons had advised that the sample level could be regarded as a high degree of statistical evidence

Specifically, the loss of youth facilities, unfairness that Fleet residents alone should meet the cost and that HDC should play a role had also emerged as a thread through the verbatim comments

The Chairman was able to report that Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath Parish Councils had requested meetings with FTC to discuss the Harlington project.

Members discussed the outcome of the public consultation exercise and raised the following matters:

- Concerns that 1267 respondents from the Fleet area was a small percentage of the voting population of approx. 17,000 (9986 households)
- An acknowledgement that every possible means had been used to engage local residents including a brochure with a survey form delivered to every dwelling
- Satisfaction that Fleet residents who are users form the strength of the response
- Reluctance to be bound by an 'opinion poll'
- Recognition that the exercise had been a consultation and not a referendum
- Many residents who are non-users will meet the cost through the precept
- Unfortunate that the amount of social media traffic had not materialised into votes
- Examples of how the precept had been successfully used by Hook Parish Council were cited with a precept of £99.25
- The importance of seeking funding

Specifically , the following questions were put:

- At what stage would a detailed business case be presented?
- How will members be kept informed about progress on the scheme?
- Will all members have access to the 'drilling down' of the preferred option?

In response to these questions the Chairman reassured the Council that once an option had been selected the Harlington Working Group would regularly report to Council with recommendations allowing all members the opportunity to drill down into the comments made.

Furthermore a detailed scheme would be subjected to the planning process and a detailed cost estimate would be brought to the Council for approval.

If other outside influences had any effect (for example Brexit) making the scheme more expensive , then the matter would be brought to Council.

In short, all decisions will be made with the approval of Full Council, including the progress on agreeing the terms of the lease from HDC

The following **recommendation** of the Harlington Working Group was then put to the Council:

1. To progress the design of Option 3 to secure Planning Approval, but with the following conditions:
 - a) Taking due account of all comments returned with the consultation
 - b) Working with HDC and HCC to resolve all outstanding issues including the resolution of the long term lease conditions and all related land matters.
 - c) Continue discussions with adjoining parishes

2. A long term loan will not and cannot be entered into until:
 - a) Planning Approval has been secured
 - b) Lease Agreement resolved
 - c) FTC has resolved to progress to construction

The vote was:

11 for
3 against
1 abstention

It was therefore

RESOLVED

That the **recommendation** of the Harlington Working Group be adopted in its entirety

It was noted that this outcome would be reported to the Annual Residents' Meeting on 28 March 2017

b) Harlington Project Interim Business Plan

The members received the Harlington project interim Business Plan (copy with record minutes)

It was explained that this had been based on a detailed analysis of the acts and performances that had been promoted at the Harlington with the acknowledgment that there would be potential for a sizeable increase in revenue.

Option 3 had the benefit of allowing the existing Harlington programme to continue throughout the new build period and it was expected that the existing £180,000 subsidy could reduce to £120,000pa

An example of the revised pantomime arrangements allowing space for other performances/events had led to a significant increase in income. This type of programming would help to limit risk

Members were reminded that the new Harlington would remain essentially a community building first, rather than a professional theatre

The assurance was given that a detailed Business Plan would be developed now that an option had been selected.

Members raised issues regarding:

- Hall hire and lettings
- Risk of possible loss of client revenue though option 3 was thought to minimise this
- The planning stage allowing another opportunity for public involvement

Following debate it was put that the Harlington Project Interim Business Plan be adopted

The vote was:

13 for
2 abstentions

RESOLVED

That the Harlington Project Interim Business Plan be adopted

FC/March 2017 ITEM 13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 5 April 2017 at the Harlington at 7pm

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.40pm

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