

MINUTES OF THE FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

5 October 2011 7.30pm
The Harlington

Councillors

Robert Schofield, (Chair), Richard Appleton, Chris Axam, George Woods, Chris Butler, Grahame Chenery, Paul Einchcomb, Sue Fisher, Steve Forster, Denis Gotel, Alan Hope, Arthur Hurley, Andrew Macallan.

Also Present

Shar Roselman – Clerk

Two members of the public who were present for part of the meeting.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Holt, Cllr Pierce, Cllr Tilley, Cllr Robinson and a block apology from Cllr Perthen.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were received from Cllr Butler, who declared a prejudicial interest in item 5 and from Cllrs Axam and Appleton who declared a personal interest in item 5.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 3: PUBLIC SESSION

A statement was made from a member of the public that a lot of people had tried to fill in the Core Strategy Consultation forms, but had found these difficult to complete, and impossible when attempting to fill them on-line as they either timed out, or refused to send. The member of the public noted that she would agree to developing the Kings Road/Fleet Rd Junction office site, but was concerned that the parking near All Saints church was retained. She believed that the trees in this area were covered by Tree Protection Orders. She would like to see a central hub of council offices and a point of contact for all council business instead of them being in different parts of the town. She would like to keep the library, and felt that it was important to lower business rates and provide free car parks in the town centre.

The chairman thanked the member of the public for her comments and explained that the Town Council had not been responsible for the Core Strategy consultation, but that any comments the public wished to make could be reported to the Clerk of the Town Council, who would ensure these were passed onto Hart District Council.

One member of the public went on to state that she felt that Town Talk and the Fleet Town Council consultation had not been received by her neighbours, although she had received it. The other member of the public stated she had not received Town Talk.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 4: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved to approve the minutes and the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2011 with alterations to Cllr Butler's declaration of interests from personal to prejudicial and a note that he left the room for this item.

Prop: A. Hope Sec: PE

The following minutes of committees and partnership meetings were received by Council:

The Planning, Development and Control Committee 2011 12 September 2011

The Planning, Development and Control Committee 26 September 2011

The Confidential minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee 19 September 2011

The Confidential minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee 21 September 2011

The Highways and Transport Committee 28 September 2011

The Police Liaison Committee 6 September 2011

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 5: RESPONSE TO THE CORE STRATEGY

Cllr Butler left the room. The chairman introduced the paper submitted by the working party stating that it was intended to include an introduction to the consultation, a structured response based on the questions asked in the Core Strategy, a summary of the results from the survey undertaken by Fleet Town Council on the Core Strategy, and a list of specific comments made by residents in the survey. The previous letter, sent to Hart District Council in response to their earlier call for consultation in February 2011, would also be included in the response. It was noted that there was no major deviation in the working party's response from the earlier letter.

In summary the Town Council had established through the survey undertaken that the public did not support the major items of infrastructure outlined in the Core Strategy, but instead saw roads as the major issue, with strong support also being shown for education.

The paper presented stated that Fleet Town Council does not support major development in the West of Fleet, and feels that the method of distribution related to existing settlement size is deeply flawed. Development in the area north of the M3 is extremely limited because of the influence of the SPA. This means that other areas, notably Fleet, have to take disproportionate levels of development.

It was considered highly likely that the proposed National Planning Policy Framework, would considerably drive up housing numbers. If higher levels of housing were required by the NPPF, Hart District Council would have to look to a new strategy. This is highlighted in the Town Council response in paragraph 163.

The Fleet Town Council's solution is to start thinking ahead to a new settlement in Hart. This would allow Hart District Council to be ahead of the planning requirements. Because of the restraints imposed by the SPA and Flood Plain areas, the land below the A287 main road seemed most suitable for such a new settlement. It was also noted that the further west such a settlement was sited it fell outside the 5 kilometre zone of the SPA and therefore provision of compensation land (SANGs) would not be required.

There was also concern from the Town Council about the proposed changes to the affordable housing strategy. The current policy only requires contributions towards affordable housing on developments of 15 or more houses. By imposing the requirement for funding affordable homes on any development, including a single dwelling, it was felt that this may have a negative effect on small building proposals in rural areas.

It was also noted that HDC did not have the 5 year housing supply in place and this could pose a possible threat from developers exploiting the situation. This is already occurring on Hitches Lane with developments highlighted in the Core Strategy coming forward for planning permission now.

Cllr Axam congratulated the Chairman and the working group on the paper presented for consideration.

Cllr Appleton suggested that there had been some misunderstanding of the drivers for the Core Strategy, as one of the key issues was education. It was believed that Hampshire County Council supported the development of Calthorpe Park secondary school over any other in Hart; this limited areas for development. It was also felt that HCC Education Authority would not support Calthorpe Park School in developing their playing fields in the area across the road from the school. It was noted that the school can currently cope with the intake from the QEB development, but that further development would require a larger school. The problem of lack of school places would need addressing within the Core Strategy response, as education had rated a high priority within the survey.

Council commented that there was concern about Calthorpe Park School becoming a super school, as these were believed to be less effective. The issue of Free Schools was raised as an option for school places, and Council felt that the response could include the 6th Form at Frimley Park within the section on schools.

On medical issues, it was noted that the next issue of Town Talk would include a request for responses from the public on any items related to medical concerns. This would allow the Town Council to build a body of evidence on this important area.

On paragraph 26 there was concern that developments that took place in a piece-meal manner would be overlooked as part of the Strategic Housing Plan, and that at present Hart District Council only held a 3 ½ years supply of the current 5 year housing requirement. There was also a problem with projects coming to planning before the Core Strategy had been agreed on. It was felt that commercial properties could be brought forward to offer a medium term supply of housing, and the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders could be used on sites such as Ancells Farm Offices.

The draft National Planning Framework legislation makes it imperative to put more emphasis on design of housing, particularly in relation to size of room. This could be introduced in paragraph 7 of the response.

Paragraphs 31 and 32 could be developed regarding the need for a bye pass, but the two paragraphs were felt to be slightly contradictory.

The two tier system of District and County Councils was felt to be causing considerable problems in relation to planning strategy, as the District has control of the planning agenda,

but the County Council controls Education and Highways. There was felt to be a need for the two Councils to engage in joined up thinking in these area.

Resolved to approve the Core Strategy response subject to the above amendments being introduced.

Prop: CA Sec: S Fisher

There was one abstention from voting by Cllr Appleton.

F.C. FLEET TOWN CENTRE VISION

Council received a proposed response to this consultation from the working group. It was noted that the text and the drawings did not match up within the consultation documents. The drawing was seen as being unacceptable to Fleet Town Council because of the lack of a direct link between the Views and Gurkha Square and the appropriate development of a community building. It was also noted that a whole car park had disappeared within the latest consultation. The Town Council had supported the original Fleet Town Centre Vision, but could not support this consultation document.

The possibility of placing a large food store on the Church Road parking site was discussed. Although the Church Road site is bigger, there could be problems related to access, which might make it unsuitable for commercial development.

Resolved to approve the response on the Fleet Town Vision consultation, subject to removal of the last paragraph on Question I, and replacement with the following wording:

“If the proposed development of the Gurkha Square site cannot achieve all the benefits delivered by the earlier proposal, Fleet Town Council suggest the relocation of the new store to Church Road car park and redevelopment of the Civic Offices site for housing. This will allow the retention of the key elements of the earlier proposal; a large public square flanked by a new civic building containing the library and the New Harlington with a strong link from the High Street into the Views, creating a focal point for community activity..”

Prop AM Sec: DG

Votes on this resolution: 5 for, 4 against, and 3 abstentions.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 7. BOUNDARY COMMISSION PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARIES

Council reviewed the parliamentary boundaries proposed by the Boundaries Commission, and considered these unsuitable.

Resolved to write to the Boundaries Commission, stating that Fleet Town Council believe it was better to leave Fleet Town as a whole, in line with the Boundaries Commission’s own proposed Ward Boundaries, and to move the

area of East Yately into Aldershot, where it been allocated during previous years.

Prop: RA Sec: SFisher

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 8. BUDGET PROCESS

The Chairman invited all councillors to urgently bring to the clerk any ideas for the Capital or Revenue Budgets as these would be needed for discussion at the coming Policy and Finance Committee.

Cllr Appleton proposed budgeting for two activities:

Leaf Clearance in areas that belonged to the District or County
Activities to promote Free Schools.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 9. NALC LOCALISM CONFERENCE

Cllr Chenery gave a brief outline of the conference he attended, noting that some 132 delegates had attended. One figure of interest was that over the last year 200,000 new voters had been added to those voting on parish councils. He had attended a session on housing development, and had noted the tension between development in rural and urban areas. A workshop session on good employment practice had highlighted the need to be non-discriminatory. The new power of competence would appear to bring benefits to parishes over the power of well being. On the Localism Bill Central Government was keen to see more individual citizens making up their own minds about neighbourhood controls.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 10. MICROSOFT HOSTED ENVIORNMENT

An issue was raised with regard to the need to change passwords every 90 days under the current Microsoft Hosted system. The clerk reported that she had instructed the computer consultant to investigate how the need for this could be avoided, and had discovered that the consultant had taken it upon himself to alter the system. It was believed that the system would no longer automatically require members to alter their passwords.

It was recommended that all members changed passwords every 90 days, following these rules:

Never use a dictionary work

Never use personal information

Always use a mixture of upper and lower case letters and unusual characters.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 11. ACTION DAY

The date of the 16th October 2011 was noted for the next Action Day. Members suggested that forthcoming Action Days should not take place on Sundays.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 12. LENGTHSMAN PILOT SCHEME

Hampshire County Council had introduced a trial Lengthsman scheme in a few rural areas, and had been considering introducing the scheme into an Urban environment. This would essentially mean devolution of various county functions such as cleaning up flower beds, verges and chicane reserves, with commensurate funding being given to a Town Council willing to undertake such activities.

Resolved to approve indicating to HCC a willingness to engage in deeper examination in the scheme with a view to becoming a pilot parish.

Prop: RA Sec: AM

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 13: CLERK’S REPORT

The clerk presented a report to Council. It was noted that Hart District Council had not only declined to assist in providing numbers for proposed Ward Boundary Changes, but had actively hindered the Town Council proposal by introducing an alternative proposal.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 14: CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Council resolved that, in terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the public Section 1(2), by reason of the item referring to an individual/s and to confidential information, the Public and Press would be excluded from the following item on the agenda.

F.C. OCT 2011 ITEM 15: YOUTH SERVICES

A letter had been received from Hampshire County Council pointing out that funding for Youth Services would continue until the end of the financial year, albeit in a slightly different format.

This item would appear on the agenda for discussion at the November 2011 Full Council Meeting.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 10.30 pm.

The next meeting will be on the 2nd November 2011, at the Harlington, at 7.30 pm.

Signed.....

Date:.....