



**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING
REGARDING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE HARLINGTON ON GURKHA SQUARE**

Monday 17 September 2018

at 7pm

at

The Harlington, Fleet

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Cllr Wildsmith welcomed approx. 160 residents to the public consultation meeting on the proposed development of The Harlington

2 PRESENTATIONS

There were presentations by

- Cllr Schofield Chairman of Fleet Town Council
- Mr T Smart, local resident-**against** the development on Gurkha Square
- Ms Tracy Grimshaw, local resident- **for** the development

Copies of presentations attached

3 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION (Chaired by Cllr Wildsmith)

1

Q How is the scheme going to be managed?

A Cllr Schofield explained that after working in construction for 40 years, he had never engaged consultants. The Harlington Scheme would be designed and managed by a team comprising architects, quantity surveyors etc and fees for these professionals had been included in the project costs

2

Q Why did FTC reject the earlier location options

A It was explained that a scheme prepared by Macallum Penfold showed an outline building could be accommodated on Victoria Road car park. However

Hart District Council had confirmed that development on Victoria Road car park was not acceptable.

3

Q Who will pay for the new Harlington? Will it include residents of Elvetham Heath, Zebon Copse, Church Crookham?

A Cllr Schofield explained the background to the shadow council arrangements back in 2009 with a joint management committee including details of the special expenses arrangement which dated back to 1973 and was only paid, by residents of Fleet and at the time, Church Crookham

He confirmed that a differential rating formula was agreed and only residents of Fleet, Church Crookham and latterly Elvetham Heath paid for Fleet facilities.

All the surrounding parishes have been asked to contribute to the Harlington scheme but have refused

4

Q I am a sound engineer and also hold an HGV licence. Why is there only provision for 7 ton box vans and refuse vehicles accessing the site? Parking and stage access for HGV vehicles will add to the noise and disturbance that would be suffered by nearby residents. The route into Gurkha Square (GS) was narrow and HGVs would have difficulty gaining access. How would ticket sales be increased with no HGV access to bring bigger shows to the venue.

How are FTC going to amend the plans to accommodate these issues

A Confirmed that access plans had been seen, without comment, by HCC highways

A whole range of events in a 350 seater tiered hall would not need to be serviced by large HGVs. The programme last year included only 80 shows, rarely more than two a week. The new theatres would hopefully allow two events simultaneously and attract mid week events/audiences including beaming in of major events (ballet, opera etc) . Current ticket prices would not be required to be increased

5

Q Who is going to scrutinise the votes on the latest consultation by FTC? Is FTC bound by the outcome?

A An independent company will carry out the scrutiny. We hope that the silent majority will vote. Just 5.4% of the local electorate voted at the recent Parish Poll . The earlier FTC consultation was answered by 8.5%

If there is strong lack of support then the project will fail

6

Q I am only 17 years old so I was unable to vote in the parish poll . I will be 56 when any scheme is paid for-why doesn't my opinion count?

A The parish poll and FTC consultation can only be controlled by checking voters against the electoral register

7

Q Has FTC prepared a marketing plan?

A FTC has no developed marketing plan but there is a business plan based on data gathered from the ticketing system. The current events can continue and be developed.

8

Q Is there a Views recompense package?

A The Views will not be used.

9

Q Will people who live outside Fleet pay more or be banned?

A The Harlington will be available to all, with pubs, clubs and restaurants benefitting from improved takings

10

Q What will HDC do with the existing Harlington and the remaining civic campus area?

A HDC has not informed us if plans have been formulated for the civic area but historically they have indicated that it could take 10 years. If the existing Harlington was demolished then HDC would be able to assemble the whole civic quarter site

Q So what happens next?

A If the consultation supports the project FTC will continue with the scheme firstly by obtaining detailed planning permission. A comprehensive tender will then be sought.

The current limit has been set at £39.37 per band D property and this will not be increased without reference back to the residents

If the consultation does not support the scheme, then FTC will return to the consideration of option 1 –repair and option 2 –renovate

11

Q The voting card is transparent and not compliant with DP Act or GDPR? Is the consultation vote secure and confidential? Has it been signed off by the Compliant Officer

A A written response will be sent

12

Q FTC is in an impossible situation. HDC should show proper leadership and produce a strategic plan

13

Q A new centre is desirable but not sure GS is the right place. Cant HDC/FTC work together?

A We do have a dialogue but it is not straightforward

14

Q This is an exciting project. If we don't do this , then what?

A T Smart replied that he agreed with the development but in a different place?

15

Q If the scheme is not supported what will happen to funds from precept already collected? Would repair/refurb options be put to the public

A Funds are ringfenced solely for Harlington development/refurbishment

16

Q Loss of area in GS for events?

A The site is more efficient but can be further extended by extending the raised table near the Prince Arthur pub across the front of the new Harlington providing a level surface.

17

Q HDC built a new leisure centre for £23m without consultants but with the right partner. HDC can't afford to build/run a theatre. Any comprehensive scheme will not include a theatre. Only FTC can do that

The earlier Sainsbury scheme failed because the financial situation changed.

We must try and engage people of Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath Parish Councils

18

Q On what grounds can FTC expect Fleet residents to pay? The members of FTC are largely unelected

A Earlier consultation supported the redevelopment option but FTC would like a greater level of response to the current consultation

19

Q How have you raised awareness of the consultation to get better public engagement.

What opportunities are there to get Church Crookham /Elvetham Heath Parish Councils to reconsider their response?

A Exhibitions/Q& A sessions/website/distribution of 11,000 brochures and Town Talk newsletter to every household

At a meeting with Church Crookham Parish Council to request reconsideration of assistance with funding , it was established that the majority of Church Crookham Councillors knew nothing of the history and background to funding. The Parish Council is now concentrating on the residents and needs of QEB.

20

Q Not against the scheme but not in Gurkha Square. We could extend the existing Harlington above the single storey areas. Disabled access is inadequate

A If there is no support, other options will be considered. The disabled access arrangements were reviewed by experts.

21

Q Who will own the new building?

A FTC would like to secure the freehold or a 125 year lease

22

Q Why is FTC proposing to remove the steps to the Grade 11 Listed War Memorial?

A Bringing the surrounding area up to the level of the paved area makes the memorial fully disabled accessible. FTC does not intend to lower the paved area of the war memorial but provide a sloped plane from the war memorial to Fleet Road. Use of the new Harlington terrace will make the memorial area more visible.

23

Q Will the Harlington make a profit or a loss?

A Conservatively there will be the same level of subsidy as the existing Harlington

24

Q The costs keep going up -£6.5m/£7.5m/£9.9m/£11.2m.. How can you assure us that £11.2m is accurate?

A Early figures were estimates based on unit costs but are now based on a Quantity Surveyor's assessment of the actual building

Band D £39.37 is the benchmark level against which costs will be judged. Current loans are based on interest rates of 2.8%. If these rise substantially the project would not be affordable

25

Q. Would it be possible to see an updated Business Plan

A Not at the moment

26

Q Has there been an assessment of the impact of the construction work

A In outline, yes. Wilmot Dixon foresaw no problem with the site access. Buildings are constructed in even more restricted sites in London

26

Q Has a risk analysis been carried out?

A A risk register will be developed in the next stages and then kept up to date through good project management

27

Q Is there an Arboriculture Plan ?

A There will be a compensation planting programme

Cllr Woods then reported on the pre-submitted questions all of which had been dealt with during the Q&A session

Cllr Wildsmith closed the meeting at 10.05pm