

## **Fleet Town Council**

### **Full Council Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> December 2108**

#### **Report from Harlington Working Group**

1. Gurkha Square Development
  - a. The Working Group fully recognise the outcome of the Parish Poll, the Public Consultation and the response to Fleet Town Council's question to Hart District Council on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and recommend discontinuation of the development on Gurkha Square.
  - b. The Working Group suggests that Full Council weigh up any residual benefit in completing the Outline Planning Application which includes endorsement of the broader access issues and the potential to approach grant funding agencies, which could assist other future opportunities against any adverse public reaction. There is no cost to the Town Council in completing this exercise.
  
2. Development on Victoria Road Car Park
  - a. Hart District Council at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November opened the opportunity to Fleet Town Council to investigate the development of a New Harlington on Victoria Road car park or other alternative site.
  - b. At a very cursory level the Working Group explored locating a building of similar scale to the development proposed on Gurkha Square on any part of Victoria Road car park. The assessment criteria were functionality of the location, possible planning issues and allowing the District Council to achieve the maximum regeneration area of the civic quarter.
  - c. There are no obvious practical locations.
  - d. The investigation yielded one Victoria Road car park related solution.
  
3. Skateboard Park Development
  - a. Fleet Town Council owns the skate park area, the five on-road parking spaces outside the skate park and the section of Harlington Way immediately adjacent to the skate park. Again using the footprint of the proposed Harlington the development could be predominantly on Fleet Town Council owned land (freehold). See Fig.1
  - b. Additionally, the site is flat, significantly reduces any land requirement from HDC, thus reducing the number of lost parking spaces and therefore should be affordable within the defined financial restraints – the ring-fenced Harlington precept.
  - c. The building could be interfaced with the adjoining green space to the benefit of the building and the park.
  - d. An improved skatepark could be relocated within the park and the play area modified or relocated within the park as part of an overall upgrade to the park facility.
  - e. There would be minimal loss of green space.

- f. If considered further this option would require a feasibility study by a competent firm of architects. The contract would be secured by an open tender.
- g. Council Members should weigh up the benefits of this proposal and the potential enhancement of the Views green space against any adverse public comment on the use of the skatepark area.
- h. If members elect not to pursue this opportunity, then Repair or Refurbishment of the existing Harlington become the only options.
- i. This statement is made on the basis that any other potential sites would be outside the ownership of Hart District Council and therefore subject to market prices and make the overall cost of the scheme unaffordable.

4. Repair or refurbishment of the existing Harlington

- a. In the spirit of collaboration that was engendered by the Motion passed at the District Council Meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 working within the existing site significantly reduces the development potential for the area designated as the civic quarter, but equally Hart District Council have not precluded this option.
- b. The Working Group recommend the Council to adopt two conditions:
  - i. That no significant investment should be made by the Town Council without first having the security of at least a 99 year lease with no interim break clause.
  - ii. That the Town Council should not enter into a long term lease agreement without having conducted a detailed audit of the existing building, to ensure there are no inherent liabilities that would incur significant currently unforeseen costs or significantly impair the life of the building.
- c. This work to be carried out by an appropriately qualified firm of architects or a building survey company supported by the full range of technical expertise secured through an open competitive tender.
- d. Should repair of the existing building be the final choice of the Council it will have to hand a detailed listing of all necessary work and the associated cost such that work could be prioritised and programmed to minimise the disruption to the existing operations.
- e. A significant concern of the Working Group is the affordability of either a major refurbishment (previously defined as Option 2) or the increased cost of demolition and rebuilding on the existing site which would make the project unaffordable against the current financial limits.