

25th April 2017

Minutes of the proceedings of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held this day in the **MAIN HALL, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM**, from 7.30pm to 8.00pm.

PRESENT:

Chairman: Cllr Mrs G S Hewetson (Mayor)

Cllrs: M Ashwell, M Bishop, N Campbell-White, D O H Davies, C George, S C Gurney, T Lack, D G Lee, K G Morgan, Mrs UK Clark, L Forbes, P M Lucey, J P Mirfin, J P McGhee-Sumner, M Monk, C D Moore, S Steatham, S Odedra, I L Shepherd-Dubey, A N Waters, R J Wyatt.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jan Nowecki – Town Clerk

Nicky Harmsworth – Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs C J Bowring, Mrs A N Drake and M L Richards. The Mayor thanked Cllrs Ashwell and McGhee-Sumner for leaving the recently scheduled additional WBC Executive Meeting to attend this meeting.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

No questions had been received.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr D Lee and seconded by Cllr P Lucey and it was

**RESOLVED
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that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted i.e. commercial, financial and personnel it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and instructed to withdraw.

MARKET PLACE (Agenda Item 5)

Cllr Lucey presented the Project Manager's report which had been previously presented to the Market Place working party by Richard Brommell, the Project Manager. Cllr Lucey advised that the working party felt that the report was very comprehensive and had enabled them to discuss the 'value engineering' options in detail.

Cllr Davies then presented the Town Clerk's report 06/2017 and thanked the Clerk for once again providing a comprehensive report.

The Mayor then asked each individual Councillor present for their view on the project. Comments included:

- Positive support for the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for a project which has been a long term ambition of the Town Council.
- The desire not to reduce the specification of the design by accepting any further 'value engineering' options.
- Project management will be key to keep a tight rein on the project costs and timescales. Costs should be kept to below £4m.

- Communication will be very important for the local retailers and businesses to ensure kept informed of the project and helped in any way possible.
- Important project for the town and whilst significant investment, vital that quality outcome is achieved and future Councils do not consider that a poor job was undertaken.
- Reiterated that projected CIL funding will cover the substantive cost. Very fortunate that WTC is benefitting from this. The town is accepting high levels of development and therefore positive improvements should be made for existing and future residents. Without this funding the project would not be possible.
- Very positive that able to work in partnership with WBC to achieve the refurbishment.
- Point made that this is a once in a generation opportunity to improve the very heart of the town and vital given the other regeneration that is taking place.

Further discussions confirmed that it is the view of Council that the additional 'value engineering' options should not be taken up as they would have a direct impact on the final aesthetics and performance of the finished space.

It was proposed by Cllr Lucey and seconded by Cllr Davies and it was

**RESOLVED
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to proceed with the £3.8m project on a 50/50 joint financial arrangement with Wokingham Borough Council and to also contribute to an agreed amount of contingency on the same basis.

The Chairman asked for a vote on this recommendation, with 21 Councillors in favour with 1 Councillor against.

CHAIRMAN