

**Falkirk Council
Community Services**

**Minute of Meeting - Bo'ness Development Group
10.00 am, Monday 20 April 2009
Bo'ness Library**

Present: Pete Reid - Strategic Projects Manager, Falkirk Council
Colin Frame - Principal Surveyor, Falkirk Council
Jacquie McArthur - Economic Development Officer, Falkirk Council
Cllr Adrian Mahoney - Falkirk Council
Cllr Joe Lemetti - Falkirk Council
Hamish Calder - ING Real Estates Ltd
Madelene Hunt - Bo'ness Community Council
Gail Fairholm - Bonnie Bo'ness
Val Trotter - Bo'ness Means Business
Alex King - Scottish Railway Preservation Society
Kate Kane - Local Planning Officer, Falkirk Council
Stephen Rodger - Bo'ness Residents Harbour Group

Apologies: Cllr John Constable - Falkirk Council
Cllr Harry Constable - Falkirk Council
Douglas Duff - Head of Economic Development, Falkirk Council
Alastair Mitchell - Town Centre Management Ltd
Mary Jane Armstrong - Town Centre Management Ltd
George Paterson - THI Project Officer, Falkirk Council
Paul Shave - Upper Forth Boat Club
John Mayes - Scottish Railway Preservation Society
Tom Gardiner - Central Scotland Police

1.0 Minutes of Last Meeting

There were two changes proposed to the previous minutes. One being a spelling correction to a name and the other confirming that Councillor Mahoney is working on bringing investment to Bo'ness only and not in other town centres (5.1).

2.0 Town Centre Regeneration Update

Colin Frame distributed the minutes and a presentation made to the Harbour Sub Group meeting held on 16 April in relation to findings and recommendations in respect of the harbour (attached for information). It was noted that the Sub Group were in agreement to the current position, proposed works and timescales.

Development Agreement

Colin Frame referred the group to the minutes of the Sub Group which gave an overview of the current situation. Since the Council's decision to proceed with the regeneration proposals, the Council and developer have been working on the Development Agreement which will cover the agreement over blocks 14, 15 & 16 and partnership arrangements with ING covering the balance of the site in accordance with the report to Policy & Resources Committee in March of last year. It is hoped that the agreement will be concluded over the next two months as the main points of the agreement have been approved by both parties. The solicitors are in the process of converting the agreed principles into a comprehensive legal agreement and therefore timing for completion of this document is difficult to predict.

Coffer Dam

Colin Frame talked through the presentation - see attached.

Alex King commented that there were some stones missing around this area creating a Health & Safety issue. Pete Reid confirmed that Development Services, as account holder, are presently reviewing Health & Safety requirements around the harbour and this will include any potential slip hazards. Pete also mentioned that all potential hazards within the outer harbour were addressed through discussions with Paul Shave prior to formally opening up the outer harbour for boat use.

There was discussion on the size of boat that would be able to access the harbour and Colin Frame confirmed that the proposed design of the coffer dam had taken into account Paul Shave's comments on the initial design proposals to increase the depth to the concrete base from -1.55 AoD to -2.55 AoD to increase the potential depth of water, accommodating larger boats in the inner harbour as and when further refurbishment work is initiated. It was also agreed that the aspirations for the marina was to attract traffic coming up the Forth. The Sub Groups' involvement in this was noted.

Townscape Heritage Initiative

Pete Reid provided an update to the group which included the following:-

- Official opening of the Hippodrome received outstanding media coverage.
- 15-17 South Street - progressing well due to complete May 09.
- 50-52 North Street - tender currently being assessed by independent surveyors. No start date as yet but will keep group informed of progress.
- 37 Stewart Avenue - no further progress because of current difficulties with Historic Scotland unwilling to offer a grant.
- Anderson Trust Properties - contract let and work has commenced.
- Anchor Tavern - contract let and work commenced.
- Sneddon Solicitors, 12 North Street - contract let, programmed awaited.

- 31 South Street - Tenders checked and reported.
- 25 South Street - As above.
- 41 South Street - Tender documents being prepared.
- Girsey Nicols - Out to re-tender.
- 97-107 North Street - Architect appointed by FC and proposals being progressed with traders.
- Minor shop front upgrades and building repairs - Architects progressing proposals.

Val Trotter said that many independent traders had applied for grants and had not heard anything. She said that it was important to see progress with the town centre shops. Pete Reid said that the architects Pollock Hammond had experienced some resource issues which seem to have been resolved and he was confident that there would not be any further delays.

Pete Reid advised all contracts let under the THI were tendered and independently assessed by QS for the HLF to ensure best value for the public purse. A grant award could not be made to any organization without rigorous tendering exercise and independent HLF approval.

Alex King reported a request by Arts and Crafts businesses to take up temporary residence in the vacant Woolworths building. Pete Reid confirmed that the building was privately owned by a London company and that although the Council could not intervene, would be happy to approach the agents with this suggestion.

Streetscape

Pete Reid reminded the group about the streetscape proposals had been issued to all members of the Group and that the wider community had the opportunity to view the proposals in the Library and online. Next stage would be issue of tenders during May.

Town Centres' Funding

Pete Reid made the Group aware of new money that is being made available to town centres from Scottish Executive. The available £60m has to be applied for and spent this financial year which Pete Reid explained would make it very difficult to identify projects that applications can be submitted, approved, project developed, tendered and delivered and funding spent all within the very restrictive timescale however the Council will be making various bid.

Promotion

Gayle Fairholm provided details about the forthcoming Victorian Street Fair which is scheduled for Sunday 24 May. There followed extensive discussion on the content of the Fair, funding and the need to hire a stage for the day. It was suggested that

the Group contact Ian White from the Council to promote the day on the Council's Homecoming page.

Councillor Adrian Mahoney informed the Group that he had attended a meeting with town centre businesses, George Paterson and Alastair Mitchell to discuss opportunities that exist now that the Hippodrome is open. Discussion had taken place on Wednesday and Saturday afternoon opening as well as a forthcoming event in the Hippodrome for traders. It is hoped the group will meet again.

Val Trotter requested more information such as posters for shops and outside the Hippodrome to alert people to what is on. Traders were being asked for information by visitors and were happy to promote the development.

3.0 Any Other Business

There was discussion on vacant shops and Pete Reid informed the group that the shop previously known as Country Fayre has been re-let as a coffee shop and is currently undergoing a fit out.

The premises at 13 North Street were following legal action by the Council back in Council ownership for marketing. Pete Reid would obtain a marketing update from Property Management Team.

Pete Reid made a special thanks to Hamish Calder from ING Real Estates Ltd who had flown in from Southampton especially to attend the meeting. Hamish informed the group that Peter McNay had recently left ING to return to a role with his previous employer.

4.0 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is to take place at 10.00 am, Tuesday 23 June in Bo'ness Library.