

**Falkirk Council
Community Services**

**Minute of Meeting
Grangemouth Development Group
2.00 pm Thursday 15 January 2009
Training Room - Municipal Chambers, Grangemouth**

Present: Douglas Duff, Head of Economic Development
Pete Reid, Strategic Projects Manager, Falkirk Council
Councillor Alistair McNeill, Chair - Grangemouth Development Group
Councillor Angus McDonald
Councillor Allyson Black
Councillor Joe Lemetti, Vice Convenor - Economic Development Committee
Walter Inglis, Grangemouth Community Council & Grangemouth
Community Reference Group
Allan McCallum, Grangemouth Community Council
Julie Reid, Grangemouth Local Community Planning
Lynne Rennie, Grangemouth Retailers Core Group
Jim Waugh, Grangemouth Retailers Core Group
Les Burkey, Grangemouth Retailers Core Group
PC Jim Bell, Central Scotland Police
Alastair Mitchell, Town Centre Management Ltd
Mary Jane Armstrong, Town Centre Management Ltd
Frank McChord, Local Community Planning Officer

Apologies: Councillor Robert Spears
Councillor Craig Martin
Lorraine Waugh, Grangemouth Retailers Core Group
Malcolm Richards, Grangemouth Community Council
Drew Lambert, Reith Lambert, Surveyors
Robin McClory, ADF Architects

1.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.2 The Minutes were accepted as being accurate. Proposed by Councillor Alastair McNeil and seconded by Alastair Mitchell.

2.0. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 No matters arising.

3.0 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE

3.1 Pete Reid advised that matters remained with external solicitors to agree and secure the Development Agreement. This was a critical step of the regeneration process requiring the Council's legal position to be fully protected and ensure appropriate legal protection is in place to secure the regeneration of the town centre by the developer in exchange for the disposal of public assets. This included cost validation clauses to ensure best value was achieved for the Council and in turn the community.

3.2 Councillor McDonald wanted to know when we would see the legal documents.

Douglas Duff advised that such agreements can be commercially sensitive but respects the public interest that does exist and recognises that there is a requirement to make such documents available. There was not a requirement to report back to Committee as approval had already been given. If there was any fundamental change in terms agreed with the developer then this would require to be reported back to Committee.

3.3 Councillor McDonald asked when a planning application would be made.

Pete Reid confirmed the developer remained positive however, prior to releasing funds on the expenditure required for submitting a planning application, the Development Agreement required to be concluded thus giving comfort to the developer to progress matters. Again due diligence would be required with regard to checking the council's titles prior to any disposal. The developer and Council are keen to progress matters and were still planning to see an application being lodged this year.

3.4 Julie Reid enquired about what the community could be told.

Pete Reid responded that the scheme was progressing on legal matters at present and this was to ensure best value prior to disposal of Council assets, an auditing requirement for the Council. Meantime the developer remained positive as borne out by expenditure on solicitors at present as well as expenditure to date.

3.5 Walter Inglis suggested a comment or press release was issued by the group.

Pete Reid agreed he would look into this and also suggested the Minutes of the group meetings were displayed in the Library.

- 3.6 Jim Waugh enquired about protection of retailers in terms of break options which could be exercised by the landlord and would this be contained in the Development Agreement.

Pete Reid confirmed that there was no reason for break clauses to be reflected in the Development Agreement. The correct place for them was within the lease document, a legally binding Scots Law document that both the tenant and landlord were required to abide by. He confirmed that where leases were to be extended then the Council was happy to do this however, not to detriment of the scheme.

Les Burkey confirmed that there were still concerns that retailers would not be protected.

Pete Reid confirmed that where a lease was extended for a period of time, an option to break clause would be inserted whereby the developer could require a retailer to move, giving not less than 1 year notice and subject to reasonable relocation terms being agreed. This made it incumbent on the Landlord to negotiate and agree to the right package for relocation prior to securing the option to break.

Pete Reid referred the retailers to the briefing note that was previously prepared for them and appended to the Minute of Meeting 21 April 2008. He also confirmed that he would be happy to attend the Core Retailers Group Meeting to discuss in greater detail, but assured the retailer representatives that where a lease was extended with a break clause, then the retailer would have security so long as the developer was able to agree relocation terms. He advised there required to be "reasonable" negotiation of terms otherwise the matter would eventually be referred to a CPO.

4.0 TOWN CENTRE PROMOTION

4.1 Alastair Mitchell updated the group:-

- Switch on of the Christmas lights had been successful with good public turnout. Same event and investment as Falkirk.
- Aviemore reindeer - largest crowd experience at such an event.
- Continuing with promotions on Central FM, shop local leaflet, Advertiser and the Falkirk Herald.
- Post event showed there had been excellent PR coverage.
- Continuing with the Cheque it Out initiative although recognised there were some issues with this that had been raised by the Core Retailer Group.
- Advert had been placed in the newspapers congratulating long service within the town by retailers who had been trading for 50 years
- Farmer's Markets were not making a financial return in the District Centres so these would be stopped. They were a pilot initiative and whilst well supported at the beginning they have failed to be supported by the community.

Concern was noted at this but there was discussion about cost of some of their produce. Alastair confirmed he would still proceed with one-off markets throughout the year as an event.

- 4.2 Pete Reid suggested that the Core Retailer Group and TCM Ltd work closely about ad hoc market opportunities as well as review budget spend in the town on promotion by TCM Ltd.
- 4.3 Alastair confirmed that the promotions budget for Grangemouth was approximately £15K but the town also benefited from other collective initiatives.
- 4.4 Walter Inglis suggested a themed market or some attempt was sought to identify a trading gap.
- 4.5 Jim Waugh sought confirmation whether the farmer's market banner could be used on an ad-hoc basis. Alastair confirmed they could.
- 4.6 Educating people about the Shop Local initiative and to support their local businesses was the next critical step. The group felt that the Community Council should be involved in liaising with the Core Retailer Group. Pete Reid drew the Group's attention to the previous Minutes para 5.1 where this was proposed.
- 4.7 Douglas Duff updated the Group about the Economic Action Plan and how this would seek to have the Council and business community working more closely together. Traders were encouraged to attend the TCM Ltd AGM.
- 4.8 Julie Reid complimented the Christmas lights that were installed in the town.
- 4.9 Walter Inglis enquired about generic promotional products – such as Shop Local as there was a need to create smarter business promotion initiatives.
- 4.10 Les Burkey felt that retailers were always having to fight for information and assistance available.
- 4.11 Pete Reid advised that the retailer workshops proposed were specifically to address that concern, being in a common format for each of the retailing centres. He confirmed that FEAT would be involved and they regularly communicated with him seeking information for prospective tenants.
- 4.12 Pete Reid updated the Group on Homecoming Scotland 2009 and advised all community organisations had been written to advising of a free website on which they could advertise events. Allan McCallum suggested there may be opportunities to film a DVD with children singing Auld Lang Syne, filmed in Grangemouth town centre.

5.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1 Les Burkey wished to congratulate Carolyn Raeside, Property Technician in respect of the assistance she had given in helping to communicate with the Police and support retailers. He confirmed he had had positive feedback and support from the police.

6.0 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 12 March 2009 at 2.00 pm, Training Room, Grangemouth Municipal Chambers.