

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2008 AT 7.30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Councillors present: B Collier (Chairman)

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| Mrs S Bundock | Mrs A Clarey |
| A Cooper | Mrs M Cooper |
| Mrs D Haslett-Saunders | S Hayes |
| Mrs J Hyde | B Saunders |
| M Smith | L Stoter |
| Mrs C Turner | L Wilding |

Also present: District Councillors Street and Saunders, one member of the public and the Clerk

8032. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of Members interests.

8033. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs Lewin and Savill.

8034. TO DISCUSS AND DEBATE STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL'S PROPOSALS AND THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' PROPOSALS FOR THE COMMUNITY BUILDING ON THE LAND SOUTH OF STOTFOLD DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE PURPOSE OF COMING TO A MUTUAL AGREEMENT ON THE FINAL CONTENT AND USAGE OF THE BUILDING

The Chairman briefly outlined the content of the Section 106 agreement regarding the Community Building and pointed out that there was no mention of finances involved and is defined purely on what the building will contain. The Bond referred to in the document would be used in the situation where the developers don't construct the building, and the District Council has to do the work. The sum involved is index linked.

The building is listed as being 865sqm, on one floor. After the list of contents in the document have been provided, there will be 296sqm unallocated, although the list doesn't include measurements for toilets, changing rooms, storage, kitchen, boiler room, plant rooms and corridors.

Members were also reminded of a letter from Leigh Johnson of Wimpey to Andrew Goodchild at the District Council whereby she indicated that they would only build what was listed in the Section 106 agreement, or may consider offering a commuted sum for the building, thereby allowing this Council to design and construct the building.

District and Town Councillor Mrs Turner advised of a meeting at the District Council between Andrew Davie and Hannah Pattinson of the Planning Department regarding amending the Section 106 agreement which will give time until February to find the £1.1million bond. They are estimating that the developers will build 30 houses per year if things stay as they are in the financial market.

The Chairman has carried out an analysis on the sizes of rooms suggested in a previous Buildings Committee meeting, compared to the sizes of rooms in Schedule 4 of the Section 106 document. It was noted that if the same size rooms were kept and the function of each room was changed, it would

almost be the same as the Section 106 basic building. There would therefore be no cost to the Council.

The contents of the Section 106 document have now been superseded by the Community Leisure Centre project. We have held Committee meetings, Special Council meetings, a public consultation event (which had a disappointing turn out) and meetings with developers. As we were originally advised that a quick decision on the content of the building needed to be made, the Buildings Management Committee have come up with suggested plans for our minimum requirements and layout designs.

The proposals were shown to Andrew Goodchild who said that these changes to the Section 106 agreement plans would cost the Town Council £146,000 to implement. This figure was produced using the tender price index which is a guide to costs for building works. There was some disagreement over how the cost figure was reached and he was asked for clarification and to re-check his figures, however no response was received. It was felt at the time that if the costings were corrected we could gain extra facilities at no extra cost to the Town Council or the town.

This was followed by a proposal from the three District Councillors to modify the building to become two storey to include a new, bigger library; however the footprint allowed for the building is very small, with limited parking space available for office staff and users of the community sections of the building, and there wouldn't be sufficient space to accommodate parking for library users. The library service originally expressed an interest in expanding more into the Simpson Centre building.

At the public consultation, residents questioned the funding for a bigger building, and whether if the Town Council had to fund it, would we have to sell the current buildings. If not, where else would the funding come from. The general feeling was that we shouldn't sell our current buildings to fund the new one.

Apparently the planners have suggested demolishing the current Co-op and rebuilding a bigger Co-op nearby in the Land South of Stotfold site, with a pedestrian walkthrough flanked by shops/commercial buildings leading through to the Land South of Stotfold. The new building would be at least 25% larger than the existing building and would have a large car park.

It was suggested that a project board is set up involving Council members and residents with an interest, which would be instructed to investigate all options, but would have no decision making powers. It was also suggested that the commuted sum as mentioned in Leigh Johnson's letter be negotiated, and that we find out ourselves how much it would cost to build the original building.

The feeling of the meeting was that we should continue pursuing the provision of the building with the content as suggested by the Council, as a minimum, meanwhile investigating the possibility of increasing the content as suggested by the District Councillors.

After a lengthy discussion it was:

Resolved that further information is obtained on the following, which is to be presented to a future Special Council meeting:

- The Government wants to be advised of public work schemes – advise them as there may be some funding available.

- Find out what the commuted sum would be – a decision would need to be made whether to accept the sum and bank it until we want to carry out any work to provide the building.
- Check funding available from the library service towards including a new library in the community building.
- Investigate the possible funding sources – details provided by Councillor Mrs Turner.
- Obtain updated information on the ethnic mix of Stotfold today – links with funding.
- Pursue sponsorship for buildings – find out how this is done.
- Check with the District Council whether there is any mileage in varying the Section 106 agreement. If they are thinking of moving the Co-op then this would automatically involve changes to the Section 106.
- Check the parking provision if the option of relocating the Co-op is pursued.
- Make sure Leigh Johnson at Wimpey and the Planners will do our Council suggestion if all else fails – as a minimum.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 9.37pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED