

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – EXTERNAL COMMITTEE

CINEMA FOCUS GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING ON 30TH OCTOBER 2018

Present: Cllr. Mike Carter, Cllr. Sue Ferguson, Claire Gilbert (Deputy Town Clerk), Tom Evans (Chair), Alan Bates, Colin Campbell, Paul Hale, Chris Head, Elaine Mahoney, Carol Parkin, Bob Somerscales, Gill Topley.

1. Apologies for Absence. Nic Phillips, Lindsay Phillips, Fran Sharp, Kimberley Trow and Seren Welch.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2018 were agreed.

3. Matters Arising. None.

5. Working Groups' Progress/Updates.

5.1 Operators Working Group. Mike reported that there was significant interest from four operators. It was agreed to go with the previous Operators report already provided with the addition of Silverscreen who are very keen. The current list of interested operators is: Kino, Uckfield Picture House, Silverscreen and East Anglia Group. The group were currently putting together a list of questions to ask operators to ensure consistency.

5.2 Finance & Structuring Working Group. An updated report was provided by the Group. Tom asked whether it could be made a bit clearer on certain elements, namely spelling out what sources of community funding; the possibility of a loan from the PWLB via ABC; and the legal structures. Tom highlighted that one of the clearest anxieties of the Council was being left with a financial loss or loss of an asset. Chris reported that the Town Council need to know that they would be protected against loss. Colin commented that the legal structure would not be included at this stage as it was unknown until an operator was in place. Colin suggested adding a paragraph on structure that allows fundraising or borrowing by the company, not the Council. The Group would be looking primarily for community funding.

Tom reported that he had spoken to a local Trust who were looking for applications for grants or donations and they would welcome an application from a Tenterden Cinema. Proposals are submitted in either March or September.

Tom reiterated that the Group would be looking to raise 1.5 million from community investment and not more than £500,000 would be required from the Town Council.

5.3 Route Map Working Group. Tom reported that the route map has been extended as heavy ground work would not take place during the winter months. This was a living document and would be constantly updated. There was a query regarding White Stuff's lease and Claire informed the Group that Head Office at White Stuff had indicated they would be willing

to move before the end of the lease subject to another High Street premises becoming available.

6. Recommendations to Town Council's External Committee on 12th November 2018.

Tom envisaged that the proposal document would start with highlighting the demand for a cinema and culture facility; the viability reinforced analysis; examples of other boutique style community cinemas, demographic examples, i.e. not just older generation; belief that it is viable, and it will help rejuvenate the High Street and night time economy. Updates from the three working groups would be included, particularly highlighting confidence in obtaining operators and updated information from the financial and legal side. It would state that the group cannot proceed further without the full building feasibility study and maintain a very strong argument for funding consultants the same as other focus groups. It could also mention that the Council would need to conduct the study themselves if the building was to be turned into flats/or other conversion.

Tom agreed to conduct a 10-minute presentation to the Council with a bullet point presentation on the screen. It was agreed that a lead member of each working group should be available to field any questions and Colin agreed to cover finance and legal, Paul the operators, and Tom the route map.

Tom will confirm that the Focus Group are willing to help the Council with inviting and evaluating tenders, however, the Council would procure.

Tom suggested that half of the two-sided proposal would be background information with half a page from each of the working groups. A draft of the proposal would be circulated to members on Sunday night (4th November) in order to receive comments/revisions before sending to Claire first thing on Tuesday morning for inclusion with the agenda papers.

7. Any Other Business.

(a) Elaine asked if the group had a back-up plan if the result is not positive at the External meeting. It was agreed to cross that bridge when we get to it. The External Committee can only 'refuse' or 'agree' to the proposal on 12th November – it would need to go to full Council for ratification. This could potentially be at Special Town Council meeting on 10th December.

(b) It was suggested that the Group's plans for the cinema could be presented to the public at the Town Council's coffee morning on 20th April 2019.

8. Date of Next Meeting. No meeting date was set; however, a meeting may take place in January where marketing could be discussed. Any new information will be circulated to Group members via email.