

CONFIDENTIAL

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

North Hertfordshire Museum/Community Facility



Special Design Team Meeting

Held on: Wednesday 16th April at 10.00 am
Location: John Robinson's Office, Council Offices

Present:

Name	Organisation	Initials
John Robinson	North Hertfordshire District Council	JR
Steve Crowley	North Hertfordshire District Council	SC
Cllr Tony Hunter	North Hertfordshire District Council	TH
Jack Hughes	North Hertfordshire District Council	JH
David Leal-Bennett	Hitchin Town Hall Ltd	DLB
David Parsley	Hitchin Town Hall Ltd	DP
Neal Charlton	Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams	NC

At the commencement of the meeting, it was drawn to JR's attention that DLB had begun to record the meeting on his mobile phone, without making the attendees of the meeting aware of this, or asking for their consent. When JR raised this with DLB, DLB confirmed that he was recording this meeting as he had no confidence that the minutes would accurately portray proceedings. It was noted that this was related to a complaint lodged by HTH Limited to the Council's Chief Executive. JR requested that DLB cease recording but DLB declined to do so.

At this stage JR adjourned the meeting and asked DLB and DP to leave the room whilst JR took advice.

[The meeting was adjourned at 10.05 am and DLB and DP left the room. After seeking advice, JR invited DLB and DP back into the room at 10.20 am.]

On reconvening the meeting JR asked DLB to confirm whether he was continuing to record proceedings without NHDC's consent and DLB confirmed this was the case. In view of this, JR advised that he would limit his remarks to outlining why recording was unacceptable. JR stated that he was not prepared to have the meeting recorded on these terms and gave the following explanation:

- Recording of NHDC meetings is not normal practice.
- Matters discussed at this meeting could be confidential and NHDC would not be in control of this information if DLB recorded
- The complaint referred to earlier related to the recording of meetings between NHDC, BFAW and HTH Limited was still under investigation by the Chief Executive.

DLB commented by saying that JR was welcome to record the meeting using his own phone. JR responded by saying that if the meeting was to be recorded it would be on terms which would need to be acceptable to NHDC and could involve different technologies.

DLB stated that he would not be prepared to hold the meeting without it being recorded in full. Before leaving the room, DLB stated that the recording of meetings was normal practice elsewhere and that JR's failure to comply with the request to record would risk NHDC incurring unnecessary costs or risks.

[DLB and DP left the room at this point.]

The meeting was then adjourned and reconvened at 10.50 am and TH expressed the view that he was happy for the meeting to go ahead and satisfied that in his absence his views would be fed in to the meeting by JR as they had discussed these prior to this meeting.

[TH left the room at this point and the meeting continued.]

- **Agenda Item 2 – The Mechanical and Electrical meeting held on 21st March**

The comments and actions for this agenda item are addressed in Annex 1 of these minutes

- **Agenda Item 3 – Correspondence via letters between Hitchin Town Hall Limited and NHDC on 18th and 21st March (excluding matters related to the Negotiation Team)**

JR stated that this agenda item (requested by Hitchin Town Hall Ltd) was to review the letter received from Hitchin Town Hall Limited on 18th March along with the response sent on 21st March, which provided detailed feedback on the 12 areas raised in the initial letter. JR commented that these 12 areas appear to be a combination of improvements to the agreed specification, measures already being considered or actively pursued and a request for further financial assistance.

The subsequent comments and actions for this agenda item are addressed in Annex 1 of these minutes.

- **Agenda Item 4 – Kitchen/Café layout**

Prior to the meeting, SC had spoke with Mather and asked them for comments on the initial layout of the Café area. Mather responded with comments and offered two different options for the layout. Mather's key concerns with the existing illustrative layout are centred around access, utilisation of space, queuing at the café and turning circles for wheelchair users. Mather & Co have provide the Council with 2 options that should address these issues but would result in a reduction to the size of the servery and to the provision of some 'bar' style seating in the café.

Action: Keith Gayner to send HTH a copy of the options provided by Mather & Co. and to arrange a meeting with HTH to discuss these.

With regards to the Extractor fan in the kitchen area, NC commented that Silcock had queried the size of the fan outlined in the initial drawing. Silcock suggested that a smaller fan would be sufficient for the kitchen.

Action: HTH to confirm that the drawing for the kitchen sent to NHDC is final and to confirm dimensions for the extractor fan. NC to get feedback from Silcock on recommended dimensions for a smaller fan.

- **Agenda Item 5 – Site visits**

It was noted that HTH Limited had requested to visit the Town Hall site on 17th April. Following this, a response letter was received from Borrás which explained why this visit would not be possible. An extract from this letter reads:

“Unfortunately due to site conditions with ground beams/drainage being open right up to front of site adjacent to cabins a site visit is not going to be possible at this time. At present the earliest would be towards the end of next week subject to reviewing at the end of this week”.

The letter also requested that 2 working days notice be given to Borrás prior to any visits to site by HTH or NHDC. JR stated that this request from Borrás would be noted but that NHDC reserve the absolute right of entry at any time. JR also commented that fortnightly site visits would be arranged and that any visitors to site would have to comply with reasonable conditions imposed by Borrás.

Action: Fortnightly site visits to be arranged and Keith Gayner to notify Borrás of decision.

- **Agenda Item 6 – Hitchin Town Hall Limited Board meeting**

In the absence of representatives from HTH Limited, this item was not discussed.

- **Agenda Item 7 – Programme of meetings and agenda items**

Programme of meetings and agenda items were confirmed by those present.

Action: HTH Limited to offer their view on the programme of meetings and agenda items.

- **Not on Agenda – Freedom of Information Response.**

It was noted that an FOI request had been received regarding the North Herts Museums/Hitchin Town Hall project. This FOI request required HTH to respond in respect of redacted information by Friday 11th April. This deadline had now officially passed.

Action: JR to write to HTH Limited.