



**MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MEETING HELD ON 12TH SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7:45 PM AT THE RUFUS CENTRE**

Present:

Cllr Blazeby (Chairman)
Cllr Hodges
Cllr Snape
Cllr Parsons
Cllr Harald

Stacie Lockey - Town Clerk
Mathew Earles - Business & Facilities Manager
Helen Glover - Senior Finance Officer

1470. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Roberts (work commitments).

1471. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- (a) No Disclosable pecuniary interests were declared by member – none.
- (b) No Non-Pecuniary interests were declared by members – none.

1472. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

1473. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no questions.

1474. INVITED SPEAKER

Richard Howarth from Influx Technology EV gave a presentation on the options of installing EV Charger stations for Flitwick Town Council.
Please find attached copy of the presentation for initial proposal, benefits and further detail.

Richard confirmed the following options are available:

Option 1: Outright purchase and installation of 1 x 2 socket rapid charger with 160k/w charge. Costs and finance options available on request.

Option 2: 50/50% partnership with Influx Technology over a period of 20 years. This would

help reduce costs and initial outlay with the purchase and installation of 1 x 2 socket rapid charger with 160k/w charge at £86,229. This would include and ongoing management and forecast income accumulating over time. Finance options are available on request.

Influx Technology confirmed the next steps would be to complete an application for power supply to the local distribution network operator (DNO), believed to be UK Power Networks. This is free of charge and results of initial application would be expected 8 weeks after submission.

Influx confirmed calculations were based on a 35p k/w p/h charge on the electricity with a customer charge of 69p. These figures would depend on current market rates. For the average car to full charge, the rapid charger would cost the customer approximately 70-90p.

Members questioned options available for a lower wattage (therefore) slower charging 3 socket installation, with a charge time of approximately 8 hours (at 240 k/w). This would reduce initial outlay by £15k and be a benefit to staff and Council tenants who spend longer on site. However, it is not a cost-effective option as returns and demand for charge is reduced.

Members questioned whether there are grant schemes available to support costs of installation. Richard Howarth stated further investigation on this would be required.

1475. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

1476. MINUTES

For the members to receive and adopt the Minuted of the Business I&D Board held on **Tuesday 25th July 2023.**

1477. MATTERS ARISING

None.

1478. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. EV Charging

Members considered the options and benefits presented by Influx Technology. Members raised concern on the financial impact of the initial outlays of installation of an EV charger, particularly when considered in conjunction with existing Council priorities and pressures on capital spend.

Members also raised concern that the proposal stretched to 20 years and highlighted that technology and public demand is likely to change significantly in this emerging business area.

It was **RESOLVED** for Influx Technology to proceed with the application for power supply to UK Power Network for The Rufus Centre and 3 Station Road. No charges would be incurred for these applications.

Following request from Influx Technology the Town Clerk would provide site maps to Richard Howarth.

b. 3 Station Road

- i) Members received a verbal update from the Chairman following a site visit to 3 Station Road. Photographs of the interior of the building were available on SharePoint for review.
- ii) Members discussed the rapid deterioration of the building and agreed significant investment would be required in the future. Members confirmed that Barclays Bank remain in lease until April 2024. However, negotiations for Barclays to 'buy out' of this lease were ongoing and include dilapidation charges. Members noted it was not possible for FTC to complete any works at the site until Barclays surrender the lease.

Members requested the Town Clerk send the structural survey completed in 2021 to Cllr Parsons to review for the existence of RAAC within the structure.

Action: Town Clerk

Members discussed potential use of the building and noted that following the visit they identified significantly more space available than initially thought.

Members discussed initial options for use including, multiple retail units, community space and a restaurant. It was confirmed that FTC intend to retain ownership of the building for the foreseeable future and had no plans to replace or convert the existing building to residential use. FTC intends to use the space to the benefit of the town and its residents. Members confirmed that they had significant responses from residents via the 2023 residents survey on the preferred uses for the building, including a post office, bank, restaurant/cafe and community use.

Members confirmed that a Banking Hub was due open in Amptill in spring 2024, and that it was highly unlikely a second location would be recommended in Flitwick. Resident's need for Post Office services was recognised. However, members confirmed that a previous Council investigation (instigated following the announced closure of Flitwick Post Office in 2022), into moving the post office services to the Rufus Centre wasn't a commercially viable option and would need to be heavily subsidised via the council precept, if taken on.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to allocate up to £10k from general reserves to work with a property developer and subsequently an architect to review options for the commercial development of 3 Station Road.

- ii) Members discussed options of installing vinyl over the existing front facing windows to restrict views into the building, temporarily improve the frontage of the building and provide a method of communication with members of the public. It was noted these cannot be installed until Barclays surrender the lease of the building.

It was **RESOLVED** to investigate options and costs for the supply and fit of window vinyl for the frontage of 3 Station Road building.

c. Proud AF Event

FTC was working in partnership with Amptill Town Council to deliver Proud AF initiatives within the towns. Proud AF would be hosting a Piano Bar evening at the Rufus Centre in January 2024. Members discussed options of donating a proportion of the bar

profits from the event to Proud AF activities.

Cllr Snape highlighted the success of the Drag Night recently held at the Rufus Centre on behalf of Proud AF. It was noted that Proud AF is not a registered charity and FTC are taking on the commercial risks and additional costs associated with hosting these events. Members agreed the Piano Bar would be funded as an FTC commercial event with FTC retaining the bar profits to balance costs incurred.

It is suggested Proud AF activities are included within the 2024/25 budget to better manage costs. The Town Clerk confirmed £500 remains from the Community Cohesion grant which could be used to support the funding of this event. The Mayor and Town Clerk would discuss this further.

Action: Town Clerk

1479. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

No items.

1480. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A resident raised concerns that additional power supply for installation of EV Charging stations may cause additional roadworks around each site causing further disruption to traffic flow.

A resident questioned whether there had been any investigation into the potential for the construction of a reservoir within Flitwick for the production of hydroelectric power. Members confirmed Flitwick Town Council do not have control of any waterways within Flitwick.

A resident suggested that 3 Station Road is converted to a theatre or concert hall. Cllr Blazeby confirmed investigations were ongoing for further investment into the Rufus Centre to accommodate the provisions of these types of productions.

1481. EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

13a) Finance Reports – noted

13b) Officer Update – noted

12c) Occupancy Figures – noted

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Meeting ended: 21:54hrs

Business 12/09/2023