

Oakham Town Council
Roi House
Long Row
Oakham
Rutland,

1st September 21

Victoria Hall
Rutland Kino application for change of use

Sir,

Rutland Kino has been marketed as a type of PFI (Private Finance Initiative) enterprise with the aim of bringing a no up-front cost resource to the people of Rutland. In this narrative, the Victoria Hall has been depicted as a failing building that only conversion can save and the many hundreds of current users, including several whose livelihood depends on the building, have been airbrushed out of the picture. In fact, the hall is not failing but as it has for over a hundred years, continues to provide a vital unique amenity resource to the people of Rutland.

Rutland Kino are a business enterprise, not a charity, their public aims and aspirations have been widely publicised and taken on face value appear to be laudable. However, they are not at no cost and the following should be considered:

Between 60 and 75% of SME (Small Medium Enterprises) fail with the first three years, the most common failure is over estimation of the available market. Rutland Kino's ambitious prospectus should be reviewed by all interested parties, its growth plan and acquisition of market share in my and the view of other informed reviewers is unrealistic, particularly given the 6 screen cinema located in Grantham and 10 screen cinema under construction in Queensgate Peterborough that are not included in their competition assessment. The EIS funding scheme they are using to finance the project reflects the risk, giving tax breaks to wealthy investors in risky ventures. The poor take-up by investors in the venture, given their limited liability, indicates investor sentiment in the viability of the scheme.

The Rutland Kino planning application pays lip service to minimising the amount of damage building the cinema structure into the hall will cause but there is no credible plan for how the hall would be returned to its current state, or what state it would be left in on the failure of Rutland Kino and where the funds would come from to finance any remedial work.

It is not widely appreciated that the ground floor of the Hall will be run as a substantial Café-Bar operation and that Rutland Kino intend this to be a significant revenue stream, competing for passing trade during the day and evening with established businesses. There is a significant likelihood that Rutland Kino will use their cinema business to unfairly compete on food and drink with the existing businesses to acquire and dominate market share.

The Rutland Kino daytime schedule will inevitably cause a significant increase in the already difficult daytime parking situation in Oakham town centre.

It is difficult therefore to see what the real motivation for the Victoria Hall trustees to consider the Rutland Kino plan is. It is clear from their prospectus why the Rutland Kino want the Victoria Hall, their plan is for an upmarket enterprise and a purpose built unit with access and parking located on the bypass does not fit their market image.

I would respectfully suggest that before this proposal is discussed the Council members take some time to check the information presented here and consider what is being lost against the possible gains that having the Rutland Kino established in the Victoria Hall could bring.

Robert Miller.