

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**23 November 2005**Attendance:Councillors:

Rees (Chairman) (P)

Bennetts (P)
Berry (P)
Beveridge (P)
Davies (P)
de Peyer (P)
Higgins (P)
Hiscock (P)
Love (P)
Mather (P)

Maynard (P)
Mitchell (P)
Nelmes (P)
Nunn (P)
Pearce (P)
Pines (P)
Saunders (P)
Tait (P)

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 October 2005, be approved and adopted.

2. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS PUBLIC MEETING: "IS WINCHESTER GOOD FOR BUSINESS?" HELD 3 NOVEMBER 2005
(Report WTF61 refers)

Members discussed some of the issues raised during the previous public meeting. They agreed that the Council should collect and regularly update data related to businesses in the town, as some Members were particularly concerned at the alleged loss of office space to residential development. The Winchester 4 Business Officer explained that some of this information could be drawn from work already underway, such as the Business Survey. Further data was due to be collected by the Council's Research Officer and Members noted that this would be centrally available to Councillors and would feed into the Local Plan process.

The Forum also considered the need to achieve a balance between different types of car parking in the town; the need to consult with as wide a range of businesses as possible; and the scarcity of modern office accommodation for expanding businesses in the town. The Chief Executive added that office rents were on average lower in Winchester than Southampton and that the Silver Hill development would include employment uses.

In response to a question, the Winchester 4 Business Officer explained that a memorandum of understanding on the proposed Business Improvement District (BIDs) initiative would be completed early in 2006 with a view to holding a possible referendum in spring 2007.

In conclusion, Members agreed that whilst the low attendance at the public meeting had been disappointing, the debate had been useful and had highlighted the need for the Council to improve its communication with local businesses.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

3. **RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED AT THE "IS WINCHESTER GOOD FOR BUSINESS?" PUBLIC MEETING, 3 NOVEMBER 2005**
(Report WTF60 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

4. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT 2006/07 BUDGET**
(Oral Report)

The Director of Finance distributed to Members a paper which set out a suggested draft Council Tax for the Winchester Town area for discussion. The draft paper assumed a continuation of spending patterns from previous years and the Director explained that, within this, the budget for Recreation Grounds had increased to reflect a change in the charging for dog bins. The paper also included provision for an increase in the support to Community Wardens as requested when the budget was set in 2005, a continuation of funding for tree maintenance and a roll forward of the unspent funding for Neighbourhood Design Statements.

Members noted that a review of the first year of the Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme would be considered at the next meeting and at Cabinet. Whilst the Forum considered that the introduction of the Scheme had been a success, they agreed that a discussion on an increase in the services provided by the Wardens (which was sought by the majority of Members) should be held at the next meeting. This discussion would form part of the 2006/07 Town Account Report and be informed by the review of the Scheme.

The Director of Communities recommended that any increase in the number of Wardens should be from the current 3 F.T.Es (full time equivalent) to five F.T.Es. This would allow for two patrols of two Wardens with a fifth Warden to provide cover for any absence. However, Members noted that because of budget constraints, it was unlikely that any addition to the Scheme from the Town Account could be met with matching thirds funding from the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. During this debate, Members also considered possible extensions of the Scheme to other town wards and surrounding Parishes, which might attract funding from Parish Councils. It was therefore agreed that the Director of Finance should include within the Town Account Budget report an option for increased funding to the Scheme up to £60,000 per year

The Forum also noted its three year spending commitment to the St Faiths Meadow restoration and requested a follow-up report on this at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the detailed Town Account Budget 2006/07 report to be considered at the next meeting should include options for increasing the establishment of the Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme.

2. That a report be presented to the next meeting on progress on the St Faiths Meadow Restoration.

5. **REQUEST FROM WINCHESTER CREDIT UNION FOR FUNDING FROM THE TOWN FORUM**
(Oral Report)

This item had been requested by Councillor Rees under Council Procedure Rule 36 and later withdrawn as the funding request would be considered through the normal grants process at the next meeting of the Forum.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

6. **PROPOSED DOG WASTE BIN AT HAMPTON LANE, WINCHESTER**
(Report WTF62 refers)

This item had been requested by Councillor Pearce under Council Procedure Rule 36. The report set out the case for funding a dog waste bin Hampton Lane, Winchester following a request from a member of the public.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that under the Director of Communities delegated powers, a dog waste bin be installed in Hampton Lane, Winchester.

7. **VISION FOR WINCHESTER**
(Oral Report)

The Forum agreed that, prior to its publication, the Vision for Winchester document should be considered by the Chief Executive in consultation with a small group of Forum Members. Councillors Rees, Nelmes and Saunders were therefore appointed to advise the Chief Executive on behalf of the Forum.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Rees, Nelmes and Saunders be appointed as an informal group to advise the Chief Executive on behalf of the Forum on the Vision for Winchester Document.

8. **UPDATE ON TRIP TO LUDLOW TO FURTHER CONSIDER CITTASLOW**
(Oral Report)

Following debate, the Forum agreed on the proposed date of 5 January 2005 for the Forum's visit to Ludlow to further consider the Cittaslow proposal. The Forum agreed that a report on visit would be considered at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Forum visit Ludlow on 5 January 2006 and should consider the findings of the visit at its next meeting, to be held 18 January 2006.

9. **TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**
(Oral Report)

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Winchester Town Forum (Councillors' Meeting) be held at 6.30pm on Wednesday 18 January 2006.

10. **NEXT PUBLIC MEETING DATES**
(Oral Report)

Members discussed the schedule of public meeting dates and subjects as set out on the agenda. In addition to a suggested further meeting on the effects of the new Licensing Act in the town, Members agreed that the Environmental Issues meeting should be more focused on tree maintenance and open space issues.

RESOLVED:

That the meeting dates of forthcoming public meetings be noted as 7.00pm 10 January 2006 to discuss Tourism in Winchester and at 7.00pm on 9 March 2006 to discuss Environmental Issues.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.30pm.

Chairman