

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**21 January 2015**Attendance:Councillors:

Hutchison (Chairman) (P)

E Berry

J Berry (P)

Gosling (P)

Green (P)

Hiscock (P)

Mather (P)

Maynard (P)

Nelmes (P)

Osborne

Pines (P)

Prowse (P)

Sanders (P)

Scott (P)

Tait (P)

Thompson (P)

Tod (P)

Weir (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Southgate (Portfolio Holder for Community and Transport)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Miller (Portfolio Holder for Business Services)

1. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

Councillors Mather and Tod declared disclosable pecuniary interests due to their roles as Hampshire County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

Various Councillors declared interests in respect of CAB2646 and these are detailed under the relevant minute below.

2. MINUTES

The Chairman made reference to the Walking Strategy for Winchester (Minute 6, Report WTF209 refers). He outlined that the Walking Strategy Group (together with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Transport) had subsequently supported the draft Strategy. It was also suggested that the Forum may wish to consider leading an evening workshop with members and officers and limited invitation to other interested parties, to establish the next steps in the implementation process of the Walking Strategy for Winchester.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 19 November 2014, be approved and adopted.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr D Jones (Winchester Bus Travellers Club) addressed the Forum in relation to the recent changes and the withdrawal of evening bus services in the Winchester Town area.

In summary, Mr Jones outlined the evening bus services that had been withdrawn in January, previously funded by Hampshire County Council. He circulated a briefing paper which outlined proposals to improve bus services to Members.

In summary, it was outlined that a two hour gap for mid evening bus services during Mondays to Saturdays, caused problems for many travellers and reducing links to other public transport connections. The current Thursday to Saturday late evening services, funded by Town Forum, no longer provided a continuation of the mid evening service. Mr Jones suggested that negotiation with Stagecoach be considered to look at alternatives to provide an increase in services to fill the gap during these frequently used mid evening hours, together with consultation with neighbouring Parish Council's to seek support for bus services to the Town area.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Southgate addressed the Forum with an update on the withdrawal of the bus services by Hampshire County Council and answered Members' questions thereon.

In summary, Councillor Southgate thanked Mr Jones for his comments and the suggestions raised and reported that negotiations with Stagecoach were in progress with the potential for empty buses to be used to facilitate a service for fare paying customers where there was a demand. Consideration was also being given as to whether late evening services may be better directed to fill any of the withdrawn mid evening services.

Councillor Southgate advised that the potential use of two late evening Park and Ride buses could help facilitate the proposals. A more effective use of bus services operating in the Romsey Road area could also be investigated following the introduction of the Route 66 service to this area.

Members suggested that subsidy for bus services by Parish Councils should be sought due to the local continued demand within parish areas. The Forum also acknowledged the success of the Park and Ride Service and suggested that there was potential for it to encompass areas where there was increased demand following the withdrawal of some bus services.

At the conclusion of the debate, Councillor Southgate reported that he would feedback to the Town Forum with proposals when further information became available.

The Chairman thanked Mr Jones for his comments and informative briefing paper. He reported that evening bus services would be given further consideration at the next meeting of the Town Forum.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Southgate updated the Forum with regard to the one way system, advising that this matter was being progressed by Hampshire County Council. He also advised that various pinch-points such as traffic light phasing, the 20mph speed zone, had resulted in enforcement action being taken against a number of motorists in recent weeks.

4. **PRESENTATION RE: STATION APPROACH FROM DAVID ASHE**
(Oral Report)

The Chairman welcomed David Ashe to the meeting (speaking on behalf of 2020 group, representing WinACC and City of Winchester Trust). Mr Ashe addressed the Forum regarding the next steps for the Station Approach Area, in response to the Tibbalds report.

Mr Ashe referred to the previous presentation to the Forum in November 2012. He considered that the initial report produced by Tibbalds during Autumn 2013 was not sufficiently robust. Following further consultation, a revised version of the report was submitted and this was then followed by a second report (part two) which was published in September 2014. The presentation outlined positives and negative factors from the Tibbalds work, highlighting concerns surrounding sufficient feasibility studies, a lack of consultation and the need for a development framework.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ashe for his informative presentation. The Forum then gave consideration to a briefing note prepared by the Corporate Director which provided an outline of the next steps in project development, circulated at the meeting and attached as an addendum to the minutes.

The Forum discussed how best to progress forward the proposed next steps in engagement with local residents, existing occupiers and the business community, as set out in the briefing note paper.

Particular reference was made to sustaining the Vision for Winchester Town as part of the design process, the preparation of a consultation draft and the formation of a design charrette prior to the next meeting of the Forum, as a prelude to the consultation and engagement process.

RESOLVED:

1. That the presentation be noted;
2. That the briefing note entitled: Station Approach – Next stages in Project Development be received and noted and attached as an Addendum to the minutes; and
3. That further progress on this matter be taken to the next meeting of the Town Forum.

5. **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH UPDATE**
(Oral Report)

The Forum received an update of the current position regarding Community Speedwatch from Councillor Green. He addressed Members in his role as Co-ordinator, introducing the Community Speedwatch scheme within the town with Hampshire Constabulary.

Councillor Green reported that all forms had been submitted for the scheme but had unfortunately been lost in the Christmas post so would need to be resubmitted in due course.

Funding totalling £2,500 had been secured from the Town Forum, Hampshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for the scheme. It was noted that approximately 10 volunteer applications had been received to date but, in order to achieve maximum results and promote the scheme efficiently, further volunteers were sought.

Councillor Green informed the Forum that he would provide a further progress update to a future meeting of the Town Forum.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chairman thanked Councillor Green for his input into the Community Speedwatch scheme and encouraged other members of the Forum to contribute by becoming a volunteer.

RESOLVED:

That the Community Speedwatch scheme progress update be received and noted.

6. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNTS BUDGET 2015/16**
(Report WTF213 refers)

The Forum gave consideration to the Winchester Town Account Budget for 2015/16 which summarised the current financial projections for the Town Account for the period 2014/15 to 2019/20, together with financial sensitivities.

It was noted that the Winchester Town Account Informal Budget Group had met on several occasions to examine the budget in detail.

Members made particular reference to the likely need for an increase in Council Tax in future years, and noted that this was mostly due to forecast annual reductions in government funding, resulting in greater reliance on the Winchester Town Precept to support baseline annual expenditure.

Concern was expressed regarding street lighting in the town area and it was noted that the use of LED lighting had been omitted in some areas, including North Walls Park. It was suggested that the quality of lighting should be improved and upgraded in certain areas, especially as this would have a positive impact on the Council's energy efficiency savings. General improvements and maintenance to playground areas were also of concern and particular reference was made to the playground in North Walls that had fallen into a state of disrepair.

It was agreed to provide a five year rolling work programme of repairs and renewals to the next meeting of the Forum to address the issues raised.

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet:

- 1. That the detailed budget for 2015/16 and the indicative projections for the strategy period be noted;**
- 2. That a freeze in Council Tax for the Town area be agreed, should it be eligible for the 2015/16 freeze funding (unless Council resolves to increase the Winchester City Council Tax in which case a one percent increase is recommended for the Town area in order to maintain its funding position); and**
- 3. That the budget for the Winchester Town Forum area, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report WTF213 be approved.**

**7. PROPOSAL FOR CYCLE CAFÉ ON VIADUCT WAY
(Report WTF214 refers)**

The Forum gave consideration to the report which detailed a proposal for further development of the concept of a Cycle Café on Viaduct Way, following a presentation received from the Space, Place-making and Urban Design Group (SPUD) in September 2014, which had followed a SPUD youth project.

Members were reminded that, should they be minded to progress further with the Cycle Café project, confirmation would be sought from the Town Forum for the sum of £1,000, as proposed at the November meeting of the Town Forum, as a one-off revenue budget growth in 2015/16 to support the

development of the initiative through the costs of the planned workshops in April 2015

The Forum had previously considered and favoured a concept based on the re-use of a railway carriage, situated on one of the bridges overlooking Viaduct Way. A recent visit to the site by SPUD's Mark Drury had revealed that the path was well used by cyclists and pedestrians during a regular weekday.

Officers reported that land ownership was being established, but that it was thought that the land in the area of railway carriage proposal was largely owned by Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council. Work was currently being undertaken with the Estates and Land Registry team to confirm this. A business plan for the operation of the café could include approaching Sparsholt College. The designs would be drawn up in consultation with practising architects and design students.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposal for a further week of design workshops, as set out in the report, as part of the continued investigation of the feasibility of a cycle café be supported; and
2. That, subject to the final approval of the Town Account budget for 2015/16 at Council in February 2015, a one-off revenue budget growth of £1,000 from the 2015/16 budget to support the costs of the workshops in April 2015 be confirmed.

8. **PROPOSED GRANT ALLOCATIONS 2015/16**
(Report CAB2646 refers)

The Forum gave consideration to the proposed grant allocations report for 2015/16. It was noted that the Council had for many years provided funds to support the work of voluntary and community organisations in the Winchester District, recognising the wide and valued range of services provided across the outcomes of the Winchester District Community Strategy. The proposed total budget for grant programmes in 2015/16 remained unchanged from last year, 2014/15.

Councillor J Berry declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as an employee of Winnall Community Association. She left the room during consideration of the Report and took no part in the debate or vote thereon. Councillor Berry also declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as a Member of Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC).

Councillor Gosling declared a personal and prejudicial interest (Trustee of Winnall Community Centre, site of the Winnall Junior Youth Group) and left the room during consideration of the Report and took no part in the debate or vote thereon.

Councillor Hiscock declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a Director of Keystone Housing and left the room during consideration of the Report and took no part in the debate or vote thereon.

Councillor Mather declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as an advisory committee member on the Trinity Centre and spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Pines declared a personal and prejudicial interest as the secretary and trustee of the Winnall Rock School and he left the room during the consideration of the Report and took no part in the debate or vote thereon. Councillor Pines also declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests as a member of a group using the Carroll Centre and Youth Options and as the charity trustee, holding of Activ8 and of Winnall Junior Youth Club site at the Winnall Community Centre.

Councillor Tait declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in relation to the Trinity Centre, Relate and the Carroll Centre as the Council's nominated observer and advisor to the management committee and spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Thompson declared a personal and prejudicial interest as trustee and member of the Carroll Centre and she left the room during the consideration of that item and took no part in the debate or vote thereon. Councillor Thompson also declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as her husband was a trustee of Keystone Housing.

Councillor Tod declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in relation to the Trinity Centre (as he was a regular donor), Winchester Churches Nightshelter (as a volunteer), WinACC (as a member) and Blue Apple Theatre, Live at Home, Home Start Winchester and Districts, Street Reach and Friends of the Family (Grants given in 2014/15 in his role as a County Councillor).

Councillor Weir declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a trustee of Blue Apple Theatre and left the room during consideration of that item and took no part in the debate or vote thereon.

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet:

That, as part of the approval of the total City Council Grants, the proposed grant allocations shown in Appendix 1 of the Report be made to organisations in the Town area (funded by a release from the Winchester Town Reserve), and subject to the Council's approval of the Budget & Council Tax for 2015/16, be endorsed.

9. **CHANGES TO GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE ON PLANNING OBLIGATIONS
– IMPACT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION**
(Report CAB2644 refers)

The Forum considered a report which highlighted the impact of the recent changes to national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In summary, this removed the obligation to make provision for affordable housing in developments of 10 dwellings or less, and which have a maximum combined floor area 1000 square metres. Members considered options to address the impact on future provision of affordable housing in the District.

Officers reported that the recent changes to the PPG in effect introduced a 10 unit threshold for the purposes of the application of Local Plan Part 1, Policy CP3. Authorities could opt to require financial contributions on developments of 5 or more units in rural areas designated under the Housing Act 1985, but there were no such areas designated in the Winchester District. This did not include the area within the South Downs National Park, where the City Council was not the local planning authority. It was noted that a Judicial Review had already been lodged.

It was noted that the City Council, along with many other authorities, had previously responded to the Government's consultation on this Policy, in objection to the proposed changes, due to the fact that this would have a detrimental impact on the future provision of affordable housing.

Members expressed strong concern that recent changes proposed to national PPG would further exacerbate the existing issues related to housing need in the District.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members considered that they would review the situation further following the outcome of the Judicial Review to take forward through the Local Plan Part 2 process.

RESOLVED:

That the potential impact of the changes to Government Planning Guidance be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.10pm

Chairman

Town Forum Briefing Note: Station Approach – Next Stages in Project Development

Where are we now?

The Council has an agreed vision for developing Winchester's economy and for making the best use of key sites for sustainable development. This is set out in the **Winchester District Economic Strategy 2010 – 2020, Local Plan Part 1** policy WT1, and in **The Vision for Winchester Town 2012 – 2017**.

These documents were widely consulted upon and have had cross-party support.

They identify the aim (amongst other things) of promoting a larger number of private sector jobs in Winchester, particularly in higher earning sectors. This will help to offset job losses in the public sector, reduce the impacts of commuting on sustainability and quality of life, and secure Winchester's position as a vibrant county town.

In order to achieve this new business premises are required. Winchester has good accommodation for start ups and small employers but has few larger office premises with the floor plates, technical infrastructure and access required for larger employers.

The area around the railway station and along the bottom of Andover Road (collectively known as 'Station Approach') has some capacity to achieve this as identified in the Vision document in the section 'Encouraging people to create economic prosperity'. The Station Approach area was also highlighted as having the potential to provide a focus for business and commercial activity in the work done by those coming together under the "24 Hours to Save Winchester" banner.

Local Plan Part 1 promotes the town centre as the preferred location for office development (policy WT1) and refers to the potential of the area around the Station (paragraph 4.15). This is also the closest part of the town centre to Barton Farm, which will be a predominately residential development with limited employment provision.

The capacity for new development exists primarily in public sector land – the Cattlemarket/Worthy Lane car park, and the combined site known as the 'Carfax' site, opposite the station. The existing Winchester Club (still known to some as the 'Conservative Club') has publicly stated redevelopment ambitions which could combine easily with development of the Cattlemarket car park. Other private sector development at the bottom of Andover Road could be energised by major investment in the area.

The Council commissioned Tibbalds, a well known multi disciplinary consultancy to test ideas and the capacity for development in the area. Their study (undertaken in two parts and published in September 2014) concludes that development, in general terms, is both financially viable and could be achieved successfully in urban design

terms. **Tibbalds work recommended principles but they were not commissioned to provide a detailed design for redeveloping the areas.** The area has been given its own policies in the draft Local Plan Part 2, based on the principles recommended by Tibbalds, because it is of sufficient importance to merit a policy statement in its own right. This has also recently been the subject of wide consultation in preparing the draft Local Plan Part 2 (early 2014) and on the draft Local Plan itself (but analysis of responses is not available yet).

In summary, the key opportunities are to:

- improve the station and Cattlemarket areas to provide high quality 'gateways' to the City;
- provide significant new business space in modern, purpose built offices;
- enhance the public realm and public transport interchange in the station area;
- enhance the frontages to Andover Road and Worthy Lane;
- improve pedestrian, cyclist and traffic flows through the site, particularly at the City Road, Andover Road, Sussex Street junction;
- improve the quality and location of parking provision to meet identified need;
- identify opportunities for housing, retail and other facilities as part of the regeneration of the area.

There is significant interest from companies/developers interested in bringing new business to Winchester, as well as from companies which wish to stay in Winchester but which may have difficulty meeting their accommodation requirements if they wish to commit for the long term. If Winchester cannot provide property to meet their requirements then it may lose just the kind of employment that it needs to grow.

How do we move forward?

The vision of new employment opportunities on sustainable town centre sites such as a Station Approach has been set out and agreed by the Council. Whilst that discussion has generated a variety of views, it is clear that the principle of regeneration of the Station Approach area fits with a vision for the City, and carries significant support from many quarters.

It has been suggested that the Council should have a detailed masterplan for the whole area including all the private sector land in the area. In all likelihood the area will not be redeveloped as a single comprehensive entity and there is insufficient justification for that to be a requirement on existing owners and occupiers. But the development concept for the whole area must add up to a well-integrated, functioning neighbourhood with an emphasis on movement and quality of space between buildings. It is therefore proposed to move forward on the basis of a City Council led redevelopment of public sector land which demonstrates clearly as part of the process how other redevelopment, if it takes place, fits into the framework that has been created.

Timing is important and the current position within the economic cycle means the Council is well placed to take advantage of commercial appetite for high quality development and for achieving leases for occupation on terms which will fund the quality of urban design that we aspire to. Significant delay will mean that we may 'miss the tide'.

Work on assessing transport, parking and access issues and producing an evidence base to guide design outcomes in favour of improving walking and cycling routes will be carried out in parallel with the pre-planning stages of the process.

It is recognised that some local residents and occupiers are uncertain about the need for regeneration and concerned about the local impact. They must be consulted on how they would be affected by redevelopment and how any negative effects can be mitigated. Their concerns need to be considered and addressed, and their ideas included where possible as the project moves forward.

Proposed Next Steps

To engage local residents, existing occupiers and the business community it is proposed:

1. To produce a very succinct 'brochure' setting out the case for regeneration and its broad aims and objectives, as well as answering some key questions, and to circulate this to local residents and businesses in the area, inviting comment and establishing a 'baseline' of ideas, ambitions and concerns
2. To discuss those points through a series of smaller 'charrette' style meetings with local residents and other stakeholders to test the baseline and establish the extent to which the issues identified in the feedback received can be successfully addressed.
3. To discuss with specific stakeholders, such as adjoining land and property owners or the local business community, their point of view and ambitions. Also to make them aware of the process and opportunities to identify their future requirements.
4. To seek the views of the Town Forum and Cabinet (Major Projects) on translating the outcome of the previous stages into project requirements.
5. To prepare a brief for a first stage design competition. The brief will be for the development of the two Council owned sites with regard not just to the

incorporation of the required built form, but also the incorporation of improved public realm, transport and access proposals which will be fully functional in their own right but which will create (rather than limiting) opportunities for further improvements when other development takes place. Whilst we will not look for detailed proposals for areas in private ownership, those responding will be expected to address these in broad terms as part of a comprehensive overview of the area. The proposals will have to meet a financial viability test before submission.

6. That there is public feedback on the competition, which will be judged by an expert panel.

7. That the chosen design team is appointed by the Council to work up a detailed scheme and proposals for a planning application.

Steve Tilbury 21/01/15