

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

21 June 2017

Attendance:

Councillors:

Weir (Chairman) (P)

Ashton
Berry (P)
Burns (P)
Elks (P)
Green (P)
Hiscock (P)
Hutchison (P)

Learney (P)
Mather (P)
Scott
Tait (P)
Thompson (P)
Tod

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Weir be elected Chairman and Councillor Hutchison be elected Vice-Chairman for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

2. **FUTURE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED:

That the meetings of the Forum commence at 6.30pm in accordance with the published timetable of meetings for 2017/18, as set out on the agenda.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- (i) Environmental Services Waste Contract
The Chairman advised that on behalf of the Forum she attended a consultation last month regarding the renewal of the Environmental Services Waste Contract. The consultation contained useful aspirations for the Town area going forward.

(ii) Community Speedwatch

The Chairman advised that community speedwatch scheme was now in place in Hyde and North Winchester and necessary equipment had been stored at Weeke Community Centre which was accessible seven days a week. It was hoped that the scheme could be extended to other areas of the Town, but this would only possible where interested volunteers came forward. The Chairman encouraged Members to publicise and promote community speedwatch within their Wards to generate interest from those wishing to participate and advised that she would be happy to hear from anyone willing to take part.

(iii) BREATHE Initiative

The Chairman reported that a useful presentation had been given by Oxford City Council regarding traffic movements which included lessons on how to respond to the 'BREATHE' initiative, as outlined by Christine Holloway (WinACC) at the last meeting of the Town Forum. This also included work on speed rates and speed education which would be a useful link to other issues surrounding traffic and parking.

4. **MINUTES**

Councillor Tait requested that it be noted that he had expressed concern regarding the lack of written reports coming forward to the Town Forum at the last meeting. He stated that without provision of written reports, there would be inadequate information for the Forum to base its decisions. In response, the Chairman reported that the Forum had reviewed its programme of work for 2017/18 and this was set out in Item 9 below. This would enable written reports to come forward to future meetings.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendment set out above, the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 8 March 2017, be approved and adopted.

5. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Hiscock declared disclosable pecuniary interests due to his role as Hampshire County Councillor. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, he 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.

Councillor Tait declared a personal (but non prejudicial) interest in respect of Item 7 below, as a trustee of St John's Winchester Charity who were working with the Winchester Dramatic Society to provide advice and guidance.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

7. **PRESENTATION BY SPACE, PLACE-MAKING AND URBAN DESIGN GROUP (SPUD) - HANDLEBAR CAFÉ UPDATE**

(Oral Report)

The Forum received a presentation and update on the next steps for the project from Mark Drury of Space, Place-Making and Urban Design Group (SPUD), who was accompanied by a student who had participated in the development of the project since it commenced three and a half years ago.

It was reported that the project remained a visualisation at present but progress to development was moving closer. Branding had been updated to reflect the working environment with Bespoke Biking as the operator, and it was noted that the site would always remain a social enterprise rather than a commercial business.

The current issue which had slowed down the progress of the project significantly was the identification of a high pressure sewerage pipe situated underneath the site. Surveys had been carried out to try and establish its exact location and depth as Southern Water were. SPUD had been waiting on Southern Water's permission to do a 'test drill' which had taken 18 months of communication to progress to the current stage. It was reported that a number of surveys had now been carried out pro bono by Sumo Surveys and paperwork submitted. It was noted that this was a critical element of the project in terms of getting onto the site to complete the survey work. When complete, final calculations on the overall project cost could be confirmed. Current estimates were in the region of £350,000, of which pledges for 30% (£126,000) had been made, together with sponsorship in kind for a further 29% of the project cost which had resulted in an outstanding amount of £125,000 to be raised.

A number of funding bids had been made for to achieve this, including a bid to Sport England which had been submitted but for which the first stage decision date had been delayed by a number of weeks. It was hoped that SPUD would be successful in securing this funding as advice indicated that the project met all the necessary criteria. If SPUD were successful in attaining this funding from Sports England, this would meet the full outstanding amount required to deliver the project.

The presentation outlined the list of partners and sponsors who were on board with the project who were largely providing their services pro bono, this included, landscaping and design, development and construction, legal support, construction and project management and electricity and connections.

In conclusion, it was noted that despite an unsuccessful bid for £50k grant funding from Veolia and advice that SPUD would need to apply for funding

through the Sustainable Communities Fund of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) (but to a maximum of £10k rather than the originally suggested £50k), SPUD were confident that with the recent appointment of a fundraiser, Sam Perry of Daily Bread Consultancy, the bid submitted to Sports England and the work currently being carried out with Councillor Humby to champion the project (with support from Steve Brine MP) in the submission of a match funding grant application direct to the Department for Transport (DfT) currently in progress, the project would be in a position to secure the additional £125,000 of funding required to make it viable.

The Chairman thanked the SPUD Team for their informative presentation outlining the latest position with the Handlebar Café project, which continued to receive the support of the Town Forum.

In response, the Forum queried the proposed course of action to be taken to resolve the issue of the sewerage pipe situated beneath the site. SPUD reported that this was dependant on the depth of the pipework. Work was taking place with ARUP and Southern Water to investigate the idea of putting the whole build on railway lines so the building could be on castors, if this was deemed necessary. This approach would enable the build to be moved down the embankment in order to provide Southern Water access to the pipework should the need arise in the future. The cost of this would not be disproportionate to current indicative costs. Therefore, it was considered that in this respect the issue could be resolved in any event by using this method as an alternative approach if required.

The Assistant Director (Economy and Communities) made reference to report previously approved by Cabinet and Town Forum, setting sets out the Town Forum's proposed contribution towards the project. The decision was taken on the understanding other parties would also be making a contribution. In light of the recent change of advice by SDNPA, it was considered that the Town Forum's contribution towards the project would need to be re-affirmed.

Members confirmed that they would be happy to re-affirm the Town Forum contribution towards the project and agreed that this should be considered at the next meeting of the Town Forum as part of the pre-budget setting.

In respect of Town Forum contributions, reference was made to the Chesil Theatre grant of £90,000 which remained outstanding and suggestion was made that this be used for alternative earmarked projects. In response, the Chairman agreed to invite representatives for the Chesil Theatre to attend a future meeting of the Forum to provide an update on their progress on this matter.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress of the project be acknowledged and further update on progress with the project be provided to the Town Forum later in the year; and

2. That a report setting out the Town Forum's contribution towards the Handlebar Café project be brought back for endorsement at the next meeting of the Forum.

8. **DRAFT BID PROPOSALS – PRESENTATION BY CATHERINE TURNESS, WINCHESTER BID**
(Oral Report)

The Forum received a presentation from Catherine Turness, Executive Director, Winchester Business Improvement District (BID). Ms Turness outlined the progress on the BID Renewal Ballot for 2018-2023 and the work carried out by Winchester BID over the past five year term and she responded to Members' questions thereon.

Members' attention was drawn to the draft business proposal document for consultation (Spring 2017) which had been circulated to its 700+ BID members prior to the ballot which was due to take place from 5 October to 2 November 2017 to determine if the Winchester BID should continue into its third five year term.

The presentation outlined the facts and figures from the evolution of the BID and highlighted its achievements. The BID was a business led partnership, collecting an annual levy from 857 hereditaments, equating to 711 businesses each of whom pay an annual levy of 1.5% based on the rateable value of their premises. The Winchester BID was formed in 2007 for its first five year term. A ballot is then required every five years to establish if the BID should continue for a subsequent term, based on a set of proposals designed to enhance the commercial success of businesses in the designated BID area.

The key objectives for the new business plan were outlined as follows:

- Reputation– Raising Winchester's brand and profile through various events for residents and visitors
- Strengthening Intelligence and Partnerships – On street police presence, pub watch and shop watch, gaining intelligence and sharing it with partners. 'Spare Change for Real Change' – raising awareness of giving to safe charity boxes rather than street beggars
- Supporting Businesses
- A Collective Voice
- Celebrating Independent Business
- Gathering 'Big Data Evidence – To share with the City Council, County Council in relation to the mapping of customer journeys, car parking sensors ' Park Winchester' app for use by visitors to the Town.

The new Business Plan consists of four areas of focus:

- Positioning and Promoting;
- Managing and Enhancing the Cityscape;
- Supporting Business Growth; and

- Influencing and Inspiring Change

At the conclusion of the presentation, it was reported that the consultation and voting process would include feedback from businesses on the process which would be incorporated into the final business plan by September. The Forum noted that the postal ballot renewal of the BID would need to win on two tests: the number of individual voters, and the proportion of rateable value represented. Failure to win on both counts would result in the Winchester BID coming to an end.

The Forum were reminded that further information on the Winchester BID and the Ballot for 2017 was available via the website <http://winchesterbid.co.uk/>. Ward Members were asked to encourage local businesses in their area to participate in the ballot process.

In response, Members asked a number of detailed questions which were answered accordingly, as summarised below:

- (i) Shop Vacancies/Loss of Retailers – The Forum were reminded that, whilst several retailers had moved from the Town Centre, Winchester had one of the lowest vacancy rates in the UK. There was an element of ‘natural churn’ in every town and city. However, further work would be progressed during the next term moving forward. In addition, it was noted that rents were at a premium in the Town Centre and this would continue until further units were available to drive down cost.
- (ii) Members were informed that the compulsory annual levy for Winchester BID services was payable by all businesses paying business rates at a threshold above £1,200 per annum.
- (iii) Members raised concerns regarding the rubbish in the High Street and the need to remove the line of bins opposite Robert Dyas. In response, the Forum were advised that these issues were being investigated internally at the BID with officers due to report matters to the Board meeting next month for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation by the Winchester BID and information regarding the renewal ballot 2018-2023 and draft business proposal document for consultation Spring 2017, be received and noted.

9. **WORK PROGRAMME AND APPOINTMENTS – 2017/18**
(Report WTF252 refers)

The Forum gave consideration to the report which set out the draft work programme for the Forum for the new Municipal Year 2017/18 and asked Members to consider its appointments to the Informal Groups established

during the previous Municipal Year. The report outlined the previous membership and terms of reference of these Groups.

In respect of the Town Forum (Account Informal) Group, it was noted that this Group would also be looking at the Town Forum Improvement Fund and project proposals during September. In light of this, it was considered that there was a need to review the terms of reference for the Town Account Informal Group to take account of this work.

The Forum noted that the re-appointment of the Town Forum (Play Areas) Informal Group was not required at this time due to the establishment of a Strategy streamlining play areas going forward. Therefore, Members agreed that this matter be considered on 'as required' basis with the Strategy being delivered.

The Forum made reference to the formation of a new Informal Group for 2017/18. The Town Forum (North Walls) Informal Group, supported by the Head of Landscapes and Open Spaces, would engage in providing an understanding to third party groups by looking at the direction going forward in respect of North Walls. It was agreed that terms of reference for this Group be discussed at its first meeting and brought back to the Town Forum in due course for approval of the way forward.

The Forum noted that the Local Democracy and Decision Making Informal Group had not met during 2016/17. However, it was reported that work with a number of Parish Council's regarding re-parishing (i.e. Littleton and Harestock and Barton Farm) was in progress. As a result, there was a need to investigate what the options were for the Town Area going forward. It was considered that the work of this Group going forward could tie in parish consultancy work and therefore this Group would be re-appointed for 2017/18 on this basis.

Members suggested possible subjects for future meetings to consider (set out in no particular order):

- Annual Update on Play Area Improvements – 15 November 2017
- 'BREATHE' Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) Update, together with the inclusion of Community Speedwatch as a brand under 'BREATHE' Initiative – Unallocated Item
- Green Energy Opportunities – Unallocated Item

In addition, Members suggested that the Town Forum look at inclusivity and the changing nature of the Town Area at a future meeting of the Forum.

In conclusion, the Report requested that Members re-appoint various informal groups of the Forum and these were agreed as set out below, together with appointment to the newly established North Walls Informal Group and amendments, as suggested above.

RESOLVED:

1. That the detailed work programme for the Forum for the 2017/18 Municipal Year, as set out in Appendix 2 to the Report, be agreed, having regard to the discussion outlined above; and

2. That the following Informal Groups be appointed for 2017/18 with membership as outlined below:

- (i) Winchester Town Forum (Account Informal) Group:
Councillors: Weir (Chairman), Burns, Learney, Mather and Thompson
- (ii) Winchester Town Forum (Town Account Grants) Informal Group:
Councillors Scott (Chairman) Berry, Elks, Learney and Tait.
- (iii) Winchester Town Forum (St Maurice's Covert) Informal Group:
Councillors Hutchison, Mather, Tait and Tod
- (iv) Walking Strategy Group: Councillor Hiscock. Councillor Tait invited to attend as an interested Member.
- (v) Winchester Town Forum (North Walls) Informal Group:
Councillors Burns, Elks, Hutchison, Tait (and any other interested Member of the Town Forum TBC)
- (vii) Winchester Town Forum (Local Democracy and Decision Making) Informal Group:
Councillors Thompson (Chairman), Hutchison, Tod and Weir
- (viii) Winchester Town Forum (Town Improvement) Informal Group:
Councillors Berry, Hiscock, Hutchison, Mather, Scott (TBC) and Tait

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.45pm

Chairman