

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

24 January 2018

Attendance:

Councillors:

Weir (Chairman) (P)

Ashton
Berry (P)

Burns

Elks (P)

Green (P)

Hiscock

Hutchison (P) (In the Chair for Item 3)

Learney (P)

Mather (P)

Scott (P)

Tait (P)

Thompson (P)

Tod (P)

1. **MINUTES**

The Chairman raised the following points arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

With regards to the Winchester Town Forum (Local Democracy and Decision Making) Informal Group, a report outlining options for the Town Forum would be taken to a future, currently unspecified, meeting date.

The Chairman also advised that, following work carried out by the Winchester Town Forum (North Walls) Informal Group, public engagement would commence during early Summer, following the local elections in May.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 15 November 2017 be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

3. **PROPOSED CORE GRANT ALLOCATIONS FOR 2018/19**
(Report CAB3010 refers)

The Forum gave consideration to the proposed grant allocations report for 2018/19. It was noted that the Council had provided funds to support the work of voluntary and community organisations in the Winchester District for many years, recognising the wide and valued range of services provided across the outcomes of the Council Strategy. The proposed total budget for grant programmes in 2018/19 was £762,500. The bulk of the money given in core funding, responsible for making contributions towards the overheads of organisations. The budget presented in 2018/19 included a presentational change by including grant awards to community transport organisations, previously reported separately.

The Strategic Director: Services outlined that it had not been possible to complete a major review of grant allocations in the current financial year.. As a result, it was agreed that a recommendation be taken to Cabinet, at its meeting on 14 February 2018 and, subject to the approval of the budget by Council on 22 February 2018, to roll forward the grant allocation from 2017/18 into 2018/19 by means of an extension to the existing three year funding programme (which had been due to end in 2017/18) in order to provide continuity to funded organisations. The scale and nature of the Council's grant giving programme would be reviewed in 2018.

The Forum supported the extension of the existing three year funding programme into 2018/19 in this instance.

Councillor Green declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in relation to The Carroll Centre, in his role as the Council's nominated representative. He left the room during the consideration of this item, taking no part in the discussion or vote thereon.

Councillor Elks declared a personal and prejudicial interest as trustee of Streetreach. She left the room during the consideration of this item, taking no part in the discussion or vote thereon.

Councillor Berry declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of the Theatre Royal due to her role as an observer. She spoke and voted thereon.

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

Councillor Learney declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as Member of WinACC. She spoke and voted thereon.

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

Councillor Tod declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in relation to the Trinity Centre (as he was a regular donor) and Winchester Churches Nightshelter (as a volunteer). He spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Weir declared a personal and prejudicial interest as trustee of WinACC. She left the room during the consideration of this item, taking no part in the discussion or vote thereon.

In his role as Chairman of the Winchester Town Forum (Town Account Grants) Informal Group, Councillor Scott thanked Members and Officers of the Group and highlighted the need to review the grants which remained an important funding source for the voluntary sector who were reliant on local authority grants to move forward. The Chairman actively encouraged Members to visit local organisations to see how grant funding was being spent and promote the grant funding process to relevant groups.

In addition, the Funding and Development Officer reported that a guidance facility Community First, are funded by the Council to provide support to interested voluntary groups and organisations around building their resilience, organisational support and the grant process

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet:

1. **That, the proposed grant allocations from the Winchester Town Account totalling £80,000 and shown in Appendix 1 of the Report be made to organisations in the Town area (funded by a release from the Winchester Town precept), and subject to the Council's approval of the Budget and Council Tax for 2018/19, be endorsed;**
 2. **That the allocations made for the Town Forum Small Grants Programme for 2017/18 under the delegated authority of The Strategic Director: Services) as shown in Appendix 2 of the Report, be noted; and**
 3. **That the Membership of Winchester Town Forum (Town Account Grants) Informal Group for 2018/19, remain at five members, in order to facilitate efficient decision-making.**
4. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT BUDGET FOR 2018/19**
(Report WTF258 refers)

The Forum gave consideration to the Winchester Town Account Budget for 2018/19 which summarised the current financial projections for the Town Account for the period 2017/18 to 2026/27, together with financial sensitivities.

The Forum noted that the last meeting of the Winchester Town Forum (Town Account) Informal Group took place in early January and that this report represented the final proposals for 2018/19. It was reported that, since the last meeting of the Town Forum in November, the government had announced provisional grant settlements which made no change to the Town's ability to increase its precept for 2018/19.

Members' attention was drawn to the updated financial projections for the financial strategy period, together with the key assumptions and sensitivity analysis, as set out in Appendix A of the Report, which included a proposed increase in Council Tax precept of 3% for 2018/19 (based on an average Band D property). The significant capital expenditure funded by the Town reserve for sports facilities means the 10% target balance will not be met by the end of 2018/19, but this is forecast to be achieved by the end of 2019/20. A proposal was put forward for a one off new expenditure budget to bring forward Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) projects in 2018/19.

Members sought assurance regarding the budget for the upgrade of St Maurice's Covert and expressed their concern regarding the delay of the project. In response, the Strategic Director: Services confirmed that the funding had been earmarked as a reserve within the revenue expenditure to carry the budget over to 2018/19 and recognised that due to the recent staffing changes the project had been delayed but would be led by Simon Finch, Corporate Head of Regulatory, going forward.

The Forum raised a number of points in respect of King George V pavilion, High Street market revenue and ongoing issues with refuse from businesses in the Town Centre.

In response, the Strategic Director: Services advised that market revenue could be raised as part of the options paper for the future of the Town Forum for further investigation or for Members to convey to Cabinet to advocate and make representations accordingly. In relation to street refuse and recycling, it was noted that progress had been made with the expected introduction of a collective trade waste bin store for traders unable to have an individual refuse service. It was anticipated that once this facility was in place there should be significant reduction in bin numbers in this area.

At the conclusion of the debate, it was agreed to recommend to Cabinet that the Town area precept for Council Tax for 2018/19 be increased by 3%.

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet:

- 1. That the draft budget for 2018/19 and the indicative projections for the strategy period be noted;**

2. That an increase in Council Tax for the Town area precept of 3% to £67.17 in 2018/19 (an increase of £1.96 per Band D equivalent) be agreed; and

3. That the budget for the Winchester Town Forum area, as set out in Appendix A of Report WTF258 be approved.

5. **WINCHESTER FUTURE 50: COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT**

(Report WTF259 refers)

The Strategic Director: Services introduced the Report which outlined the success of the Council's Historic Environment Team in securing funding from Historic England to undertake a two year pilot project to devise and trial a new approach to producing conservation area appraisals and management plans, with an emphasis on involving the local community and local amenity groups. It was noted that there was also an underspend within the General Fund to put towards this project.

During discussion, the Team Leader (Historic Environment) clarified that the Council would seek to enlist the local community to help with establishing data, this included organisations and groups on a voluntary basis, with the initial pilot of the project to evaluate a cross section of local listed buildings, monuments and conservation areas. This would take place initially within the Town Centre, with a view to rolling out the project further in the longer term.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Forum welcomed the report, applauded the spirit of the project and looked forward to continuing engagement with the Historic Environment Team.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8pm

Chairman