

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

25 June 2014

Attendance:

Councillors:

Hutchison (Chairman) (P)

E Berry

J Berry (P)

Gosling (P)

Green (P)

Hiscock (P)

Mather (P)

Maynard (P)

Nelmes

Osborne (P)

Pines (P)

Prowse (P)

Sanders (P)

Scott (P)

Tait (P)

Thompson (P)

Tod (P)

Weir (P)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Gottlieb

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

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Hutchison be elected Chairman and Councillor Scott Vice-Chairman for the 2014/15 Municipal Year.

2. **FUTURE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED:

That meetings of the Forum commence at 6.30pm in accordance with the published timetable of meetings for 2014/15.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 12 March 2014, be approved and adopted.

4. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Mather and Tod declared disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of the agenda items relating to the evening bus service and station

approach, due to their roles as County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted by the Chief Operating Officer to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Steve Harbourne addressed the Forum on behalf of a group of Worthy Lane and Hyde area residents regarding the development plans for the Cattle Market, which was part of the Station Approach proposal. In summary, Mr Harbourne expressed concerns regarding:

- The public's ability to influence decisions regarding the development.
- That the loss of the Cattle Market car park would be a mistake, as it was well used by residents and visitors to the town, helped keep cars away from the town centre and was currently landscaped to provide a welcome area of open space. Local pressure groups and businesses were also against its potential closure.
- That the proposed office/employment use re-development of the car park was unlikely to create jobs for local residents and that more effort should be put into re-developing or up-grading existing, vacant office buildings.
- That many local residents disagreed with the Council's apparent presumption that the station approach area was so shabby that the only way to improve the area would be through fundamental redevelopment.

On behalf of the Forum, the Chairman thanked Mr Harbourne for his comments and explained that they would be taken into account during the Forum's debate on the station approach (later on this agenda) and at any subsequent relevant future meeting.

Paul Buckley (Snug Architects) addressed the Forum on housing supply in Winchester. In summary, Mr Buckley outlined his concerns that the Council was unlikely to achieve its target of new housing development within the town boundary and intensification within the built up area would be detrimental to the townscape. Therefore he suggested that the Council should consider more favourably greenfield sites, just outside the boundary, as that too much dense development within the town were likely to generate local opposition and produced less viable schemes which could not make full contributions to affordable housing. This meant that the Council's ambitions for more affordable housing and more sustainable homes were unlikely to be achieved. The development of greenfield sites within a short walking distance of the town's facilities were, in comparison, more viable and, if chosen carefully, would only affect areas of low grade countryside.

The Forum thanked Mr Buckley for his presentation. In noting that his comments would be considered further as part of the Local Plan process, Members requested that a written response to the issues raised be sent to the Forum from the Head of Strategic Planning. Later in the meeting, Members

also suggested that the issues raised by Mr Buckley could be considered at a future meeting of the Forum (see WTF202 below).

6. **PRESENTATION FROM WINCHESTER COLLEGE**
(Oral Report)

The Forum welcomed to the meeting Michael Wallis from Winchester College. In summary, the Forum noted:

- The economic impact of the College, regarding both the boys' spending during term time and the employment opportunities the College gave local residents.
- The College's role as a significant local landowner and its work in making its buildings (many of which are heritage assets), as far as practically possible, open to local residents.
- The College's work in the community, including the Nightshelter, care homes and primary schools.
- The College's work to mark the centenary of the First World War.

In concluding his presentation, Mr Wallis welcomed further engagement with the local community through the Town Forum and offered that the College host a future meeting of the Forum.

On behalf of the Forum, the Chairman thanked Mr Wallis for an interesting and informative presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

7. **SILVER HILL**

Councillor Tod put forward a motion, seconded by Councillor Hiscock, regarding Silver Hill. This item had not been published on the agenda within the statutory deadline, but the Chairman agreed to accept the motion as a matter of urgent business, given that the next scheduled meeting of the Forum was due to held after the latest round of decisions on the Silver Hill development.

Councillor Tod's motion read: "That there be a further public display of the updated Silver Hill development proposals, including more details of bus provision and affordable housing, followed by a debate at full Council, before a final decision on the Silver Hill development agreement is made."

During debate, Members commented on the importance of the Silver Hill development and the need to fully inform the public on the latest proposals.

Councillors Mather, Tait and Osborne requested that it be minuted that they abstained from the vote, and they highlighted that the Deputy Leader of the Council had already agreed that the issue of Silver Hill would be debated at

Council, following discussion at The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (to be held 7 July 2014) and a decision at a special meeting of Cabinet (to be held 10 July 2014).

At the conclusion of debate, the Forum agreed that a further public exhibition be arranged to display the latest Silver Hill plans in advance of the Special meeting of Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet that there be a further public display of the updated Silver Hill development proposals, including more details of bus provision and affordable housing, followed by a debate at full Council, before a final decision on the Silver Hill development agreement is made.

8. **WINCHESTER TOWN EVENING BUS SERVICE**
(WTF203 refers)

The Forum welcomed to the meeting Neil Beswick (Environment Department, Hampshire County Council) who explained that the County Council had re-tendered the Winchester town evening bus service, on the current terms, for a further two years. Subsequently two operators had submitted bids, which were set out in the Report for the Forum to note. Members were asked whether they were minded to commit the necessary funding from the Town Account to continue the service.

The Forum noted (as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the Report) that the County Council's Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment would be asked to consider potentially significant cuts to public transport spending in autumn 2014. If agreed, this could affect the costs of the operator of Winchester's evening bus service (the operator could choose to serve 2 months notice) and Members would be informed of any changes and need to make further decisions regarding the continuation of the service.

During debate, some Members expressed concerns that contributing to community transport was not traditionally a District Council function; that (in the absence of more detailed data) the service appeared to be little used; and that it provided services to parishes of Harestock and Badger Farm, both of which had decided not to contribute to the service.

However, at conclusion of debate, the majority of Members agreed to commit funding as set out in the Report as they considered it provided a vital service. In response to Members' suggestion that the service should be better promoted, Mr Beswick explained that this was already a requirement of the tender process and would therefore be included in the contract. He further agreed to undertake further investigation of the service's use, which included analysis of ticket information and interviewing passengers on board.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Account budget for 2015/16 and 2016/17 include provision for the Winchester Town Evening Bus Service.

9. **PRESENTATION FROM THE 2020 GROUP REGARDING THE VISION FOR WINCHESTER**
(Oral Report)

The Forum welcomed Michael Carden, David Ash and Phil Gagg from the 2020 Group. They gave a presentation (available from the Council's website) which in summary offered assistance to the Forum to monitor progress against the aspirations set out in the Vision for Winchester document. In addition, they offered their services to contribute in a workshop event to discuss their ideas further.

In welcoming the work of the 2020 Group, the Forum agreed that this should be considered and progressed by the Winchester Town Forum (Vision for Winchester) Informal Group (WTF202 considered below refers).

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted and be referred to the Winchester Town Forum (Vision for Winchester) Informal Group for further consideration.

10. **STATION APPROACH UPDATE**
(Oral Report)

The Corporate Director gave an update on the proposed re-development of the station approach area. In addition the comments made by Mr Harbourne during public participation (see above), the Forum noted that:

- The Council had commissioned Tibbalds to undertake a technical study of the station approach area, the results of which were due to reported in August 2014.
- In addition, the Council was considering the potential to develop the area through the Local Plan process. The Director explained that, as yet, no decisions had been made regarding the future of the area.

In response to Members' questions, the Director explained that consultation on the Tibbalds report was likely to involve stakeholders, such as local pressure groups, professional experts and Ward Members. Local residents would be invited to comment as part of the, separate, local plan consultation in the autumn of 2014.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

11. **2014/15 WORK PROGRAMME AND APPOINTMENTS**
(Report WTF202 refers)

The Forum noted that in addition to the suggested agenda items included in the Report, it was anticipated that the next meeting (24 September 2014) would include presentations from the Cycle Café and St Johns Charity.

The report asked Members to suggest possible subjects for future meetings to consider and, after debate, the following subjects were suggested (set out in no particular order):

- The options for providing bus services.
- Walking Strategy (to report to the September meeting).
- To consider improving the gateways/entrance roads into the town.
- To consider the changing use and relevance of the town's playareas.
- To consider the City Council's stewardship of large trees in the town.
- The provision of Affordable Housing in Winchester.
- Where to develop in Winchester (the issues raised by Mr Harbourne in public participation above).
- Updates from the Hampshire Wildlife Trust on their work on the meadows.
- Updates on the Stanmore and Winnall Masterplans.
- To consider the opportunities for greater sustainability (including greater use of solar panels) in Winchester's public buildings.

The Forum also agreed that, where possible, future meetings of the Forum should correlate to the themes set out in the Vision for Winchester Document and welcomed the opportunity (offered by Mr Wallis, above) to hold a future meeting at Winchester College.

The Forum delegated authority to the Corporate Director (in consultation with the Chairman) to draw up the 2014/5 work programme, incorporating the above suggestions.

The Report also requested that Members re-appoint various informal groups of the Forum and these were agreed as set out below.

In regard to the Vision for Winchester Informal Group, the Forum agreed to clarify its terms of reference to "Examine progress against the aspirations set out in the Vision for Winchester Document and make any recommendations as necessary to Cabinet, the Forum or the Council's partners as appropriate; and recommend to the Forum any amendments to the Vision as necessary."

RESOLVED:

1. That the detailed work programme for the Forum for the 2014/15 Municipal Year be agreed by the Corporate Director, in

consultation with the Chairman, having regard to the discussion outlined above.

2. That the following Informal Groups be appointed for 2014/15 with membership as outlined below:

- (i) Winchester Town Forum (Account Informal) Group:
Councillors J Berry, Hutchison, Sanders and Thompson. NOTE: to accommodate working Members, it was agreed that this meeting would commence at 6.30pm.
- (ii) Winchester Town Forum (Town Account Grants) Informal Group:
Councillors Hiscock, Pines, Scott and Tait.
- (iii) Winchester Town Forum (Vision for Winchester) Informal Group:
Councillors Hiscock, Hutchison, Pines, Tait and Thompson with the amended terms of reference set out above.
- (iv) Winchester Town Forum (St Maurice's Covert) Informal Group:
Councillors Tait (Chairman), Hutchison, Mather and Nelmes.
- (v) Walking Strategy Group: Councillor Hiscock.

12. **COLIN VEAL**

This was the last meeting to be minuted by the Senior Democratic Services Officer, Colin Veal. The Committee passed its thanks to Colin for his work in servicing the Forum since its start in 2002 and wished him well in his future career as the Assistant Secretary to the Royal Albert Hall.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.15pm

Chairman