

**WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**

**16 November 2016**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Weir (Chairman) (P)

Ashton

Berry (P)

Burns

Elks (P)

Green(P)

Hiscock (P)

Hutchison (P)

Learney (P)

Mather (P)

Scott (P)

Tait (P)

Thompson (P)

Tod (from Item 5)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Weston (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Built Environment) and Councillor Bell

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Godfrey (Leader) and Councillor Byrnes (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Professional Services)

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1. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

(i) Commercial Waste

Officers had been in discussion with Westminster City Council as a leading authority with regards commercial waste. On 15 February 2017, officers were to attend a briefing to explore the working practices achieved by Westminster to take forward as examples for the collection of commercial waste within the Town Centre. Feedback would be made available to the Town Forum in due course.

(ii) City Museum Update – Roger Brown's model

The Chairman provided a summary of the work scheduled to take place at the City Museum. This set out a brief outline of works, details of what was happening to the current shop display, a link to the Jane Austen celebration for 2017, refurbishment timetable for closures and re-openings, the provision of pop-up shop facilities, progress on the restoration of Roger Brown's Model of Victorian Winchester, progress on fundraising to support the total cost of the refurbishment project and

details of the scheme developed by HCC architects in order to bring the lift back into service.

It was noted that part of the refurbishment of the City Museum included the installation of Roger Brown's Model of Victorian Winchester to be located on the ground floor. This was to be supported by new displays and interactives. The main theme of the exhibition would be Winchester and its street stories which would include links to the model and other displays, most notably King Alfred and Jane Austen. The story of Winchester as a trading centre would be explored through the characters of shop keepers and familiar names such as Hunt, Cobb and Fosters to introduce new characters and objects. The retail area would be improved and expanded into part of the main exhibition space.

The first stage of the restoration works to Roger Brown's model had been completed, including cleaning, replacement lighting and fire retardant treatment etc. Once installed, the Cultural Trust would carry out the next stage of works to restore and fit the model pieces together properly after the damage caused over years of location changes.

(iii) Bar End Forum

The first meeting of the Bar End Forum took place on 9 November 2016 was very successful and held in an informal style format which resulted in lively participation. In conclusion the Forum agreed that the whole area should be looked at and be subject to a masterplan. It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum would be confirmed in due course.

(iv) Central Winchester Regeneration Informal Policy Group (CWRIPG)

It was noted that the deadline of submissions for the brief to commission an urban design practice with multi-disciplinary skills was 21 November 2016, with a decision expected on the successful bidder by early December 2016, which the Town Forum had previously agreed to oversee. A report on the progress of the Central Winchester Regeneration Supplementary Planning Document commission, and how the Town Forum could feed into the process to help and guide the consultation for the Town area would be given consideration at the next meeting. In conclusion, the Chairman invited expressions of interest from Members of the Town Forum (not existing IPG members), to work with the consultants and the Head of Policy and Projects on the consultation side of the commission, as set out above.

(v) Air Pollution Survey

Volunteers were sought by WinACC to run a repeat of the Air Pollution survey on Saturday, 26 November 2016. Interested Members were requested to contact Christine Holloway at WinACC.

RESOLVED:

As outlined in (iv) above, Councillors Scott and Tait be appointed to work with the consultants and the Head of Policy and Projects on the Winchester City 'public' consultation element of the commission.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 21 September 2016, be approved and adopted.

3. **DISCLOSURE 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.

Councillor Green declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of Item 4 below as he was acquainted with Abdul Kayum who had registered to speak during public participation on behalf of the Winchester Muslim Cultural Association.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Weston addressed the Forum in respect of Item 6 (Enhancing St Maurice's Covert). A summary of her representation is outlined under the relevant item below.

Shafi Hussain, Margaret Mason, Daisy Nessa, Abdul Kayum and Sulaiman Zafarul-Kayum, representatives from the Winchester Muslim Cultural Association (WMCA) addressed the Forum seeking support for Winchester's Muslim community going forward through the Central Winchester Regeneration IPG process and the provision of interim facilities. During public participation, Councillor Bell also addressed the Forum in relation to the provision of bus services at Pitt Park and Ride. A summary of their comments are outlined below.

Representatives of the WMCA addressed the Forum outlining the major modification for the provision of cultural and community facilities to suit all specific needs, as set out by the planning inspector during the LPP2 process. WMCA was a registered charity ran by volunteers offering a large variety of activities in partnership with organisations. However, it was becoming increasingly difficult to continue to meet the needs of the community when finding appropriate ad-hoc venues for groups to use; for both mixed and separate facilities for men and women, in particular for prayer. Current

facilities did not lend themselves to the sensitivities of the Muslim faith. For example, the sale/serving of alcohol should be prohibited from any venue where prayer occurs, which was not currently the case. Therefore the provision of an appropriate community facility in a Town Centre location was urgently sought in the short term, preferably with sole use, this would enable the participation of the wider community, with the long term vision for a permanent purpose built community centre or mosque. Examples of a similar ethnic community models provided by surrounding local authorities for peppercorn rents were outlined and it was felt that facilities for this purpose could be investigated in areas such as Winnall, Badger Farm and Weeke.

In response to Members questions, WMCA representatives highlighted the former registry office building, currently owned by the Council, could be considered as a possible option.

In conclusion, it was noted that there were a number of community buildings that could be considered for this purpose. However, community buildings were usually owned and run by the community or Parishes. Although, the Council owned the land where the former registry office was sited, a model would need to be looked at and consultation carried out with the groups involved in order to progress this matter further.

Councillor Bell addressed the Forum with regard Pitt Park and Ride bus capacity issues. As initially expected, most buses have been full during peak times resulting in lengthy delays for members of the public using this facility. She suggested that the Forum give consideration to the use of Bus No's 5 and 66 to collect remaining customers that may be waiting at the Pitt Park and Ride. In response, it was noted that the use of the Number 6 and 55 services would not be permitted as these were commercially operated buses and the Park and Ride service was a subsidised service. In the first instance members of the public could manage their journey or use other parking provisions at South or East Park and Rides. But in order to overcome the current capacity issues experienced by the public at Pitt Park and Ride, consideration needed to be given for the Council to investigate the provision of additional buses on this route, at an additional cost.

RESOLVED:

That the Assistant Director (Environment) investigate the cost for additional bus services at Pitt Park and Ride for consideration at a future meeting of Cabinet.

5. **HANDLEBAR CAFÉ UPDATE**  
(Report WTF246 refers)

The Forum noted that the item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration due to the need to consult with the Forum on its content prior to consideration by Cabinet.

The Forum received a presentation and update from Mark Drury, Space, Place-Making and Urban Design Group (SPUD) and Heather Evans (Bespoke Biking), accompanied by two students who had participated on the development of the project.

The project, ongoing over the last two and a half years, had resulted in a modest design in the form of a disused railway carriage, consisting of timber structures, including a 'bike booth' workshop for cyclists to repair their bikes and the public to purchase parts. Planning permission had recently been obtained and conditions were being worked through. An ambitious timeline had been set to sign contracts for the build to commence by mid February to March with the aim of opening by August 2017 to give the operation a chance of meeting some of the Summer trade to generate income and launch the scheme. A dedicated Project Team had worked on the project over two year period giving their time willingly for free and all said that they would continue their pro bono work to completion.

Accurate costs for the construction of the café were now available which had come in at a total of £330,000, including professional fees. This figure had taken into account the in-kind contributions from sponsors and was highlighted as a significantly higher than the very early costings provided when SPUD Youth initially presented the project to the Forum. To address and reduce this figure, the SPUD team reported that costs would be drilled down, without affecting the design quality the project, along with engagement with potential sponsors and grant funders, including the County Council (HCC) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). In terms of further income generation, it was also noted that the Handlebar Café website had just been finalised and that 'crowd funding' would be set up where rewards would be added for people to donate in due course.

The Forum also gave consideration to expected footfall figures, potential operators, the status of Bespoke Biking's success and their involvement in the project, car parking facilities and options and Members' questions were answered thereon.

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

The Forum gave consideration to the Report which outlined the progress in the development of the 'cycle café' that had been actively supported by the Forum over the previous two years and the detailed financial implications, as set out in Section 2 of the Report, which were also for consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 7 December 2016.

Although supportive of the project, several Members queried the long term sustainability and the on-going running costs of the facility and its alternatives uses for the future, should its function as a café not generate the income to operate as expected. The Assistant Director (Economy and Communities)

clarified that the facility could be re-let in this instance and would be viable for a number of alternative uses such as space for a small creative practice or community space for local groups. In any event, it was noted that there was a requirement within the lease to 'make good' the site in this case and the expected return of the facility would be the same for any other alternative use, essentially the Council would be investing in the building.

In response to Members' questions regarding revenue projections, staffing costs and HCC grants, it was noted that the SPUD Youth had two HCC funding programmes it could bid for, for which they had submitted information and were waiting for a response on how to proceed.

The community benefits of the scheme were highlighted with cycling activities to enable the provision of a unique building in this locality which could have a number of alternative uses. The Forum were asked to contribute to this capital asset which would also benefit the National Park as a 'gateway' location.

The Forum continued to offer its support the project but welcomed the opportunity to enable the Town Forum (Account) Informal Group to investigate the budget as a whole at this stage.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the progress of the project be acknowledged and the wishes of the Town Forum to see the project brought forward to construction be noted;
2. That consideration be given to include an additional £25,000 in the Capital Programme for 2017/18, be brought forward through the normal budget process; and
3. That a more robust mitigation plan be submitted by SPUD.

**6. ENHANCING ST MAURICE'S COVERT**  
(Report WTF247 refers)

The Forum noted that the item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration due to the need to consult with the Forum on its content prior to consideration by Cabinet.

The Forum considered the report of the Assistant Director (Economy and Communities) which outlined the proposals to enhance the commercial centre of the city to which the Town Forum had allocated a budget to enhance the presentation of the Covert as a linking route between the High Street and the

Cathedral, as a shelter and as a covered space for community activities and cultural performances.

It was reported that a further drop in session had been scheduled to take place on 30 November 2016, to enable technical officers to look at the proposed plans ahead of any planning applications. Figures for the works were also being fed into the Council's budget process prior to the delivery phase of the project. The Forum gave consideration to the proposed list of improvements and estimated costings together with the proposed enhancements for the Covert, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report respectively.

It was reported that the Steering Group considered delivery in two 'packages'; the first being phases 1 and 2, with progression to phase 3 at a future date, if required. The Forum had already identified an allocation within its Town Account of £40,000 to support the enhancement of the Covert. A fee of £10,000 from this had been spent to commission a design scheme and the outstanding £30,000 was intended to support the delivery of the scheme.

The Forum gave consideration to the best estimated costings at this stage of the project, as set out in Section 2 of the Report and noted that the estimated budget to progress the delivery of the first package of works which sought the views of the Forum, prior to consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 7 December 2016.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Weston addressed the Forum during the consideration of this item.

In summary, Councillor Weston stated that she was in support of the project in principle and considered that the service treatment, lighting and visual draw through the Covert were important in this area. She advised the Forum that she had not been briefed by the Steering Group or taken part on how the project had evolved and expressed some concerns regarding the total capital expenditure sought from the Council. Councillor Weston suggested that there were areas that had not been addressed, such as the long window display of Debenhams and detailed discussion with Wessex Hotel to investigate how these businesses could integrate into this space, through displays and themes. There may also be opportunities for them to work collaboratively with the Council to explore a lower cost effective approach to improve this space, such as the installation of bins and lighting to be carried out in the first instance with a lengthy delay.

The Forum expressed their support for the enhancements to the Covert and the engagement that had taken place via the Steering Group and by ScottWhitby Studio to achieve and create a desirable Enhancement Strategy for this area.

## RESOLVED:

1. That the Enhancement Strategy produced by ScottWhitby Studio to improve St Maurice's Covert be welcomed;
2. That the Forum agree to proceed to delivery of the project;
3. That the £30,000 budget identified to support the enhancement scheme be agreed and made available as soon as the necessary consents are in place to commence delivery;
4. That the Forum consider a further capital contribution at a later date following the Town Forum (Account) Informal Groups assessments of the budget implications for 2017/18;
5. That the Town Forum (St Maurice's Covert) Informal Group be extended for the delivery of the enhancement works; and
6. That Councillor Weston be added onto the Town Forum (St Maurice's Covert) Informal Group as an invited attendee.

7. **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT PROJECT OFFICER**  
(Oral Report)

The Forum received an update from the Head of Development Management with regard to the appointment to the post of Historic Environment Project Officer (HEPO). The Forum were advised that the Council had recently appointed two part time Historic Environment Team Leaders (job share) to the role of as a replacement for the previous post holder.

The Historic Environment Team Leaders were currently looking at working with the Town Forum and the City of Winchester Trust, among others, to seek further funding to deliver a greater number of projects. This included a bid to Historic England with ideas for a pilot to develop a conservation area management plan and work would be carried out with the Town Forum to deliver this. Feedback on the engagement process was welcomed.

The Forum were asked to nominate one Member from the Town Forum to work with the Head of Development Management, other officers and the Portfolio Holder and express the views of the wider Town area in order to develop a list of priorities to be taken forward and report back to a future meeting of the Forum.

## RESOLVED:

That Councillor Tait be appointed representative of the Town Forum to assist Historic Environment officers with the development of a priorities list for the Town area.



8. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL POSITION**  
(Report WTF244 refers)

The Head of Finance introduced the Report which outlined the Winchester Town Account Medium Term Financial position and provided a summary of the Town Account revenue projections for the period 2016/17 to 2021/22 as a basis for the consideration of the Winchester Town Account Budget, as set out in Appendix A of the report. The Forum also gave consideration to the Play Area Refurbishment Plan, as set out in Appendix B of the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the forecast earmarked reserve balance over the medium term and the requirement to develop a strategy to address this be noted; and

2. That no specific feedback to drawn to the attention of Cabinet .

9. **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY AND TOWN IMPROVEMENT FUND – REPORT OF WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM INFORMAL (ACCOUNTS) GROUP**  
(Report WTF245 refers)

Members noted that the Report had not been made available for publication within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration due to the need to consult with the Forum on its content prior to consideration by Cabinet

The Forum gave consideration to the report which set out principles for spending the Winchester Town Forum's part of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in order to provide for the community led improvement of the environment and infrastructure in Winchester Town.

RESOLVED:

1. That the approach to spending the Winchester Town part of the CIL, as set out in Section 8.7 of the report, be approved in principle; and

2. That the Town Forum (Account) Informal Group bring forward guidelines and mechanisms for inviting and adjudicating project proposals, and disposing of funds, at its next meeting in January 2017.

10. **FEEDBACK ON THE COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH PROGRAMME**  
(Oral Update)

The Forum were informed that volunteer applications were currently being processed and the Chairman encouraged Forum Members to complete an application and contribute by becoming a volunteer.

RESOLVED

That the Community Speedwatch Update be deferred for consideration at the next meeting.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.50pm

Chairman