

**WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**

**15 November 2017**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Weir (Chairman) (P)

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

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

Others in attendance who did not address the Committee:

Councillors Horrill (Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing Services) and Bell

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1. **MINUTES**

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

With regards to the Winchester Town Forum (Town Improvement) Informal Group, a separate briefing and/or workshop was to be arranged with local groups etc as to how proposals may be brought forward which could qualify for bids for CIL support via the Town Improvement Fund.

The Chairman also advised that there was to be consideration of the medium to long term potential needs for improvements to the North Walls area and the impact this may have on the Town fund. This would feed into the work going forward of the Winchester Town Forum (North Walls) Informal Group.

In relation to the Winchester Town Forum (Local Democracy and Decision Making) Informal Group, it was noted that the Town Forum had recently attended an informal meeting with the Leader and representatives of HALC about potential options going forward.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20 September 2017 be approved and adopted.

## 2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr John Collinson, Director, Aethos Development Limited, addressed the Forum with regard to his company's proposals for an Ice, Activity and Lifestyle Park which could potentially be located at the old depot site at Bar End.

In summary, Mr Collinson explained that Aethos had a development programme of facilities across the country and proposals at Winchester may include an Olympic sized ice pad, etc and could be a regional sporting centre of excellence for both national and international competitions. Winchester presented a good strategic location that was highly accessible to the population and tourist markets. The Bar End site itself was ideal for synergy with existing and proposed sports and leisure facilities and with excellent access and sustainable transport links. The facility would provide 'gold standard' community benefits at zero capital cost to the Council, as well as potentially providing 'free heat' via a heat exchange to heat the proposed adjacent new sports and leisure facilities. The development cost would be privately funded with a payment of a capital premium to the Council along with a share of revenue income and other proceeds.

Mr Tony Barren from the National Ice Skating Association of England spoke of the need for new ice-based facilities in southern England. The proposals could be a centre of national excellence which would benefit future forerunners in associated sports. He also referred to there being up to 100 temporary rinks across the country and their popularity – including at Winchester, where many visitors are attracted.

The Chairman thanked Mr Collinson and Mr Barren for their presentations and advised that the officer colleagues and the Leader would be pleased to discuss any proposals that may be brought forward.

## 3. **CHESIL THEATRE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME - UPDATE FROM FLAVIA BATESON OF WINCHESTER DRAMATIC SOCIETY** (Oral Update)

Ms Bateson gave a detailed presentation to the Forum.

As well as describing the history of the theatre at this location since the 1960s, the more recent planning history for significant improvements to facilities was reported on. These were first proposed in 1999 and have been in conjunction with St Johns Winchester Charity, who now wish to develop the adjacent site as almshouses.

Chesil Theatre has been in existence for about 100 years and has been located in the former St Peter's Chesil Church since the 1960's. There are many productions at the theatre – professional, amateur and youth groups.

The Chesil Theatre Development Scheme would address several important areas of legal compliance. These included proper access for the disabled and

separate toilets and changing facilities for children. There are also improved wardrobe and costume makings areas proposed, which would be accessible to the public. There would also be additional performance space, rehearsal space, storage, and also a larger bar area and foyer and entrance. Finally, the improvements would provide assurance of future viability of the listed building as a community asset as well as an aesthetic enhancement of the conservation area and entrance route to the city.

Ms Bateson reported that both the Chesil Theatre and St Johns were currently in pre application discussions and it was hoped that there would be two separate applications submitted soon – for the theatre extension and for the alms houses. Both built schemes were dependant on planning permission being granted for each – although they could be submitted separately if one was delayed for any reason.

The Forum asked Ms Bateson detailed questions which were responded to as summarised below.

The existing auditorium size was to remain the same size and would be supplemented by the separate new performance space. However, there was another project (not part of the devolvement scheme) to make improvements to the existing auditorium so to make the seating area more comfortable and accessible.

Ms Bateson confirmed that although she had understood that all previous archaeological surveys of the site had been concluded, she would check this as it was appreciated that any mitigation required was likely to be expensive.

Although previous plans in conjunction with St Johns had included a pedestrian bridge to the site over the river, this was not under consideration as part of the latest plans. In terms of audience arrival, the majority came from Chesil Street Multi Storey and an additional route therefore from the Weirs was unlikely to be beneficial to the theatre.

All the land fronting the river belonged to St Johns and pre application discussions would include the potential to enhance this area.

RESOLVED:

That the Oral Update is noted.

4. **WINCHESTER CAR CLUB- PRESENTATION BY DAVID COYLE, ENTERPRISE HOLDINGS**

Mr Coyle gave a presentation on Enterprise Car Club in Winchester.

Mr Coyle thanked the Council for providing designated spaces in its car parks and reported on the initiative, which so far had about 245,000 members across the country. He reported that as well as being a viable alternative to private car ownership, the scheme had the potential to save significant

quantities of carbon emissions. There were four hubs in Winchester (with two hybrids and two low emission vehicles) and to date, there had been 96 sign ups in Winchester with 1000 hours driven, totalling about 6000 miles. He explained the process for joining the scheme and how straight forward it was to easily access a vehicle as and when this was required.

The Forum asked Mr Coyle detailed questions which were responded to as summarised below.

If Car Club members required access to vehicles at similar times, Enterprise had access to a wider fleet which could be easily utilised as were located at Winnall.

For the scheme to be viable at the locations in Winchester, there must be at least 20% usage. Mr Coyle advised that he was aware that there was currently a lack of take-up at Friarsgate and he was looking to further promote before considering relocation, subject to some marketing. An option was to move this to the university and/or also to include a van as an option to hire. Electric vehicles may also be an option in the future, although customers currently had concerns of their range etc. Enterprise were also looking to work with employers with regard to their staff travel.

Mr Coyle clarified that car club members were advised to quickly check condition of vehicles before they are driven in case there was any unacceptable damage that was likely to be over and above usual wear and tear.

The Enterprise Car Club addressed a current gap to their brand with regard to daily rental and Mr Coyle explained that it was accepted that it may not make much money overall in isolation. It was likely to be successful (compared to previous similar schemes in Winchester) due to it being a countrywide initiative.

#### RESOLVED:

That the presentation is noted.

#### 5. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL POSITION** (Report WTF254 refers)

The Finance Manager (Strategic Finance) introduced the Report, explaining that it was by way of an update on the current financial position and also set out various issues and options for the Forum to consider. A final report setting out a Town Account Budget for recommendation to Cabinet would be presented in in January.

During discussion, the Strategic Director clarified that the £13,000 referred to in paragraph 10.17 was the contribution towards the revenue expenditure associated with the Historic Environment Project Officer post. The officer was

a district wide role and the Forum commended the work undertaken to date within the town area.

With reference to the work of the Community Wardens, the Chairman advised that she would be arranging a meeting with officers with regard to their work in areas supported by the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund so that this could be better acknowledged where possible.

The Chairman also reported on the £50,000 Town Improvement Fund allocated for 2017/18 and she suggested that any individuals with relevant one off capital projects which may benefit should be encouraged to speak to either her or town area ward councillors.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That there are no budget issues to consider further in advance of recommending a Town Account Budget to Cabinet in January 2018.
2. That the forecast ear marked reserve position is noted.
3. That there is no feedback to Cabinet at this time in relation to wider budget consultation.

**6. ANNUAL UPDATE ON PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENTS**  
(Report WTF256 refers)

The Forum commended the work of the Landscape and Opens Spaces Team with regard to the progress to deliver the schemes in the report. Members were also supportive of the engagement undertaken with local communities with regard to specific schemes and recognised the team's work to maximise the use of open space areas in general. As were valued facilities within local communities, play areas should be properly funded within budget framework going forward.

During further discussion, the Head of Landscape and Open Spaces acknowledged that play areas today now have to reach across age groups and also, where possible, have unique features to attract users. There remained a duty of care to users and therefore facilities must be as safe as possible in their design.

**RESOLVED:**

- That the progress on the play area improvement programme is noted.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and concluded at 8.45pm

Chairman