

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

23 November 2011

Attendance:

Councillors:

Collin (Chairman) (P)

Berry (P)
Higgins (P)
Hiscock
Hutchison (P)
Love (P)
Mather (P)
Maynard (P)
Mitchell (P)

Nelmes (P)
Pearce (P)
Pines (P)
Prowse (P)
Sanders
Scott (P)
Tait (P)
Thompson
Witt (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Beckett

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Weston

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 October 2011, be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no statements made or questions asked.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Forum passed on its congratulations to the officers involved in securing Winchester town centre Purple Flag status for a second year, in recognition of the town as an "excellent and outstanding" evening destination.

Members also noted the on-going rollout of the County Council's street light replacement programme.

4. **VISION FOR WINCHESTER UPDATE AND THE ACADEMY OF URBANISM'S REPORT**
[\(Report WTF163 refers\)](#)

The item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. However the Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda, as a matter requiring urgent consideration, in order to avoid any further delay in the publication of the revised Vision for Winchester document.

The Corporate Director (Operations) explained that, as part of the Vision for Winchester review, the Council had taken an opportunity to participate in the Academy of Urbanism's Place Partnering Programme. This external review of Winchester was designed to provoke thought about the future of the town and was therefore a timely and useful contribution to the Vision review process.

The Forum therefore welcomed Derek Latham from the Academy of Urbanism. He explained that a Panel from the Academy had visited Winchester in September 2011 and spoken to a number of key partners, including the Leader and Chairman of the Forum. Mr Latham's presentation summarised the above Report.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Forum thanked Mr Latham for an interesting and, what many Members considered to be, a refreshing report. During the discussion that followed, the Forum noted Mr Latham's advice that, like many towns, Winchester faced difficult decisions but that the political cost of these decisions could be reduced if the Council commissioned an independent analysis of needs. In this way, potentially unpopular solutions from the Council could be seen as responses to the problems identified by an independent body.

Mr Latham also further explained that whilst there was a constant churn of occupancy, Winchester's high property prices meant that it was often only older people who were able to buy.

The Forum also supported the suggestions within the Report that the Forum itself should take a greater leadership role, reintroduce its large-scale public meetings and the idea that Winchester could learn from visits to similar towns in Europe.

At the conclusion of debate, Members noted that the Report would be considered in detail at the next and final meeting of the Town Forum's Vision for Winchester Informal Group (13 December 2011) and that the Report would made be available for all Members and other key partners in the town.

RESOLVED:

That the Academy of Urbanism be thanked for the Report and that it be considered further as part of the Vision for Winchester Review.

5. **WINCHESTER TOWN BUSES - UPDATE**
(Oral Report)

The Forum welcomed to its meeting Neil Beswick, Public Transport Operations Manager at Hampshire County Council.

In summary, Mr Beswick explained that as part of its budgetary constraints, the County Council had agreed to reduce its subsidies for bus services across the County by 33%. He suggested that this reduction was likely to have less of an effect in the Winchester town area, as many of the services serving the town were commercial operations that reduced little or no subsidy. However, at the same time as the County were set to introduce reductions, one of the main operators, Stagecoach, had announced further reductions to its own services.

The consequences of these changes were that there would be no bus services to the town centre after 9pm and a reduced service on the 6a route.

Mr Beswick also explained that the County Council was in the process of retendering its subsidised services, which would have effect from June 2012. In response to a question, Mr Beswick explained that the current changes to service had to be introduced with immediate effect, rather than waiting until June 2012, as the County Council had agreed that it was necessary to make savings on the subsidised services in the current (as well as future) financial years.

The consultation period on tender specification closed on 28 November 2011 and Mr Beswick stated that this would ask companies how they could provide a late night service for Winchester town. During discussion, it was suggested that the specification should also consider providing a service from the station to the Winnall Industrial Estate and capacity issues (regarding school children) on the Number 11 service.

In addition to these changes, Mr Beswick explained that operator of the Number 2 service (Black and White, which served Olivers Battery and Stanmore) had given notice that they intended to withdraw from the contract. It was anticipated that this service would therefore cease on 14 January 2012.

At the invitation of the Chairman, County Councillor Dickens conveyed the concerns of her constituents regarding the potential loss of the Number 2 service.

In response to a Member's question, Mr Beswick explained that due to financial constraints, the County Council was not currently able to require the use of low-floor entrance buses on specific routes. However, he added that from January 2015, it would be a national requirement for all single decker buses to have low-floor entrances.

Mr Beswick also agreed to highlight to Stagecoach the apparent commercial opportunities of a late bus serving the Harestock pub.

At the conclusion of debate, Members noted that the County Council held biannual Passenger Transport Forums, which were often well attended.

The Forum agreed to invite a representative from the County Council to explain any further changes arising from the June 2012 retendering process and that Members should be better engaged with the specification for the next subsidised bus contract, when it expires in four years.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

6. **20MPH SPEED LIMIT UPDATE**

(Oral Report)

The Corporate Director (Operations) explained that the first 20mph limit in Winchester had recently been introduced in The Square, as part of its refurbishment and the County Council would be monitoring the success of the new scheme. The County Council had allocated £150,000 for the implementation of the scheme in 2011/12 and a further £70,000 in 2012/13 and another £70,000 in 2013/14.

It was noted that the Chairman, together with the Vice-Chairman, County Councillor Dickens and the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Access would meet with County Council officers to discuss the implementation of the scheme across Winchester and report back to the future meeting of the Forum.

During discussion, a Member highlighted the need to reduce the speed limit along the semi-pedestrianised lower High Street, especially following the introduction of market stalls to this area.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

7. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT BUDGET 2012/13**

[\(Report WTF162 refers\)](#)

Councillor Pines declared a personal (but not prejudicial interest) in respect of the Forum's discussion on the proposed North Winchester Youth and Community Action project at Stoney Lane as he was an Elections Advisor to the Winchester Muslim Association and was an acquaintance of the organisers. Councillor Pines spoke and voted thereon.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Beckett explained that it was unlikely that the General Fund would be able to maintain its current level of grant to the Trinity Centre and the Winchester Citizens Advice Bureau. He therefore requested that the Town Forum consider increasing the Town

Account's contributions to these charities to make up the potential shortfall (a total of approximately £29,000).

In response to questions, the Head of Finance explained that because of the reduced expenditure on the Recreation Grounds and Open Space budget, arising from the new Depot Services Contract, an increase to the Town Account's grant budget as suggested by the Leader was sustainable, subject to decisions made on the budget proposals/options as a whole. On this basis, the Forum agreed that the Leader's proposals should be considered in detail at the next meeting of the Winchester Town Forum (Town Account) Informal Group, with a view towards increasing the grants budget to £60,000. This meeting would also consider the contribution of surrounding Parish Councils to the Trinity Centre and Citizen Advice Bureaux.

During discussion, the Forum agreed that the emphasis of its grants should be focused towards people rather than places.

The Forum also agreed that the Informal Group should consider in detail whether to make recommendations to Cabinet to fund specific Town Account Capital Requirements up front from the Town Earmarked Reserve. This would enable those specific schemes be recommended to become part of the approved Capital Programme. The Forum also agreed that the Group should consider how the Town Account could support a new family and youth facility in Stoney Lane.

Members then considered each of the budget growth proposals set out in Appendix 3, which had been suggested by the Informal Group. Following discussion, the Forum agreed to place the priorities against each of the items:

- Mobile Flashing Speed Signs: high priority
- Working with the BID to improve property management: medium/low priority (it was suggested that this work should be funded by the BID directly)
- Additional support from the Neighbourhood Wardens to Weeke: medium/low priority
- Neighbourhood Design Statement: high priority/de minimis budget
- Clausentum Fen, St Cross: high priority (although concerns were raised regarding its on-going maintenance)
- Footway Lighting at North Walls: high priority

Members also discussed the proposed works to the sports/changing pavilions set out in Appendix 5 and requested further information from the Estates Department before finalising the budget.

Similarly Members requested further information from the Community Safety Team regarding the potential additional increase in CCTV coverage. A Member requested that a camera be placed at the junction of Stockbridge and Andover Roads.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted and that the discussion outlined above be considered further by the next meeting of the Winchester Town Forum (Town Account) Informal Group.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.30pm

Chairman