

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

Thursday, 16 June 2022

Attendance:

Councillors

Craske (Chairperson)

Batho
Becker
Edwards
Ferguson
Learney

Radcliffe
Reach
Thompson
Tippett-Cooper
Westwood

[Full audio recording and video recording](#)

1. **APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE 2022/23 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Craske be elected Chairperson and Councillor Becker be appointed Vice-Chairperson for the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Green, Scott and Tod.

3. **DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

No disclosures of interest were made at the meeting.

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson welcomed all newly elected and returning members of the Forum to the first meeting of the new municipal year. In addition, he congratulated Councillor Derek Green on becoming the 823rd Mayor of Winchester and wished him well during his mayoral year.

5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2022**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 March 2022 be approved and adopted.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Patrick Davies and Ian Tait spoke during public participation, as summarised below. In addition, Jeremy Mortimer (on behalf of Cycle Winchester) also addressed the forum regarding Item 9 (Bike Parking and Security). A summary of his representation was outlined under the relevant item below.

Mr Davies made reference to the representation he gave at Cabinet on 23 May 2022 regarding to the way the council operates, in particular, how the council deals with issues in the town area. He suggested that the role, function and duties of the Winchester Town Forum be reviewed.

Mr Davies also considered the appointment of informal groups that met in private, with limited open feedback to the public, to be an inappropriate way of addressing major issues that arise in the town area. He also referred to Cabinet's review of the governance for major projects and he queried how this would be done?

In response to Mr Davies, the Chairperson advised he would endeavour to review the role of the Forum and its informal groups regarding engagement, in line with the constitution, and advised that he would discuss the concerns raised regarding major projects with Mr Davies in due course.

Mr Tait made reference to ongoing concerns regarding anti-social behaviour in the city centre, particularly around Kings Walk, where recent works had resulted in the displacement of street drinking to other areas in the town. He made reference to the alcohol exclusion zone which he stated needed to be enforced, and also referred to the need for positive intervention, help and support.

Following Mr Tait's deputation, the Cabinet Member for Community and Housing reported that the council sponsored organisations to help with outreach programmes and advised that she would draw the comments of any worsening situation to their attention.

In addition, Councillor Tippett-Cooper referred to the availability of multiple services and organisations such as Trinity Winchester, Two Saints, Bid Rangers and the police who provided assistance and positive intervention where necessary.

At the conclusion of public participation, the Chairperson thanked Mr Davies and Mr Tait for their comments and contribution.

7. **TO NOTE THE DATE AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:**

RESOLVED:

That the date and times of meetings for 2022/23, as set out on the agenda, be noted.

8. **DRAFT BID BUSINESS PLAN AND BALLOT PROPOSAL (PRESENTATION FROM DR PAUL SPENCER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WINCHESTER BID)**

The Chairperson welcomed Dr Paul Spencer, Executive Director of Winchester Business Improvement District (BID) to the meeting. Dr Spencer gave a presentation setting out the draft BID business plan and proposals for the ballot process due to take place again during Autumn 2022.

Dr Spencer provided an update on the work of the BID, including setting out the achievements since it was established 15 years ago. He outlined the ballot process and drew member's attention to the BID draft business plan for 2023/28 which was currently available online and open for feedback.

Following the presentation, Members asked a range of comments and questions which were responded to by Dr Spencer. These included, the performance of Winchester in comparison with other cities, business barometers, vacancy rates, business mix, business support services throughout Winchester including the periphery areas, the city centre economy in attracting businesses, creative industries, partnership working and shared visions.

During debate, the forum emphasised the positive impact that the BID had delivered to Winchester over the years and highlighted its continued support going forward.

In conclusion, the Chairperson thanked Dr Spencer for his informative presentation and wished Winchester BID well with the ballot process.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the presentation be noted.

9. **BIKE PARKING AND SECURITY (WTF309 AND PRESENTATION)**

Jeremy Mortimer (on behalf of Cycle Winchester) spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Mr Mortimer stated that Cycle Winchester welcomed the opportunity to work with the council. He also welcomed that increasing the amount of cycle parking in convenient and secure locations had been identified as an objective in Appendix 1 of Cycle Parking in the City. He believed that convenient locations would generally be more secure as they were in areas of "natural surveillance".

In addition, Mr Mortimer expressed concern regarding parking locations in Middle Brook Street which he suggested would need to align with any pedestrianised area as part of the Central Winchester Regeneration and Winchester Movement and Access Strategy.

In conclusion, Mr Mortimer suggested that police data on bike thefts be considered when selecting locations for cycle racks, with Winchester Railway Station currently listed as having the highest record number of bike thefts over recent months.

The Transport Planner gave a presentation which set out the reasons for producing a cycle parking plan, how it would support policies such as the Parking and Access Strategy, the Winchester Movement Strategy and the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and highlighted cycle parking locations, identified additional capacity and gaps and priority locations, outlining the partnership working that was taking place.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency introduced the report. In summary, it was highlighted that the council were listening to the views of others and was looking at the cycle provision and facilities on offer at other local authorities. It was recognised that bike security was increasingly an issue due to high value bicycles (standard and electronic bikes) which were an attractive target for criminals.

At the invitation of the Chairperson, Chief Inspector Jon Turton of Hampshire Constabulary addressed the Forum regarding bike security and cycle theft. He reported that instances of theft had increased steadily throughout the pandemic, with 182 bicycles reported as stolen from the town centre since August 2021. He made reference to work that had been carried out on education of bike security, marking, overt patrols and the positioning of cameras at specific locations such as the leisure centre. He indicated that the focus on the preventative measures was key to tackling bike crime, together with informed plans of where best to locate secure bike parking going forward.

In response to the points raised during Mr Tait's deputation above, Chief Inspector Jon Turton outlined a number of measures that were taking place to prevent homelessness, including any associated anti-social behaviour and the displacement of these groups within the town centre. He reported that these were often vulnerable individuals with complex mental health issues and/or substance dependencies that needed professional specialised support and help to review at their lifestyle and that a significant number of positive interventions were in place to assist with these issues, in addition to the use of the criminal justice system, where it was deemed necessary.

Members asked a range of comments and questions which were responded to by the Cabinet Member, Chief Inspector Jon Turton, the Head of Programme and the Transport Planner. These included cross checking of proposed pedestrian and cyclist road crossings, relative funding provision and costs, footfall in car parks, long term bike storage facilities for residents, disabled bike parking locations, sensor lighting at secured cycle parking facilities and engagement on the variety and use of bike locks.

In conclusion, the forum supported the cycle parking plan and welcomed the offer from Cycle Winchester to provide further input to the ongoing development of the plan. The Chairperson encouraged the Winchester Town Forum (City Centre) Informal Group to continue dialogue with representatives of Cycle Winchester going forward.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and the comments of the forum on the development of the cycle parking plan, be noted.

10. **WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM - 2022/23 INFORMAL GROUP APPOINTMENTS AND WORK PROGRAMME (WTF308)**

The Forum agreed the work programme as set out in the report, subject to noting that the Local Plan would come forward to the September meeting of the forum with the possible reorganisation of agenda items for this particular meeting date.

Regarding the informal groups, it was agreed that a Town Vision Informal Group be established for 2022/23 as suggested at the previous meeting of the forum to underpin, engage and support all of the informal groups going forward. It was agreed that the Town Account Grants Informal Group be merged into the work of the newly established Town Vision Informal Group going forward. The proposed terms of reference and governance for this particular informal group were outlined.

In addition, it was agreed that the North Walls and KGV Informal Groups be combined (to include the St Giles Hill park area) to form the newly named 'Parks and Recreation Informal Group'. The membership of these newly appointed and newly combined informal groups and the other existing informal groups for 2022/23 was agreed as set out below.

RESOLVED:

1. That, subject to the inclusion above, the 2022/23 work programme be approved and authority be delegated to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Chairperson, to further set the detailed work programme for the municipal year.
2. That membership of the Forum's informal groups for 2022/23 be approved as stated above and set out below:
 - (i) Planning for the future in Winchester Town:
Members: Becker, Craske, Edwards, Reach, Scott (tbc) and Westwood
Lead Officer: S Finch

- (ii) Winchester Town Forum (North Walls) (KGV) and (St Giles Hill) Informal Groups – combined to form newly named Winchester Town Forum (Parks and Recreation) Informal Group
Members: Batho, Becker, Ferguson, Learney, Radcliffe and Tippett-Cooper.
Lead Officer: S Croker
- (iii) Winchester Town Forum (City Centre) Informal Group
Members: Batho, Edwards, Learney, Radcliffe, Thompson and Tod
Lead Officer: S Finch
- (iv) Winchester Town Forum (Account Informal) Group
Members: Ferguson, Learney, Reach and Tod.
Lead Officer: D Kennedy
- (v) Winchester Town Forum (Heritage) Informal Group
Members: Radcliffe, Thompson, Tippett-Cooper & Westwood
Lead Officer: R White
- (vi) Winchester Town Forum (Outdoor Swimming) Informal Group
Members: Becker, Tod and Tippett-Cooper
Lead Officer: S Croker
- (vii) Winchester Town Forum (Town Vision) Informal Group (newly established to include the Town Accounts Grants
Members: Batho, Becker and Craske
Lead Officer: S Robbins

11. INFORMAL GROUP - VERBAL UPDATE

The Forum received individual updates from the Chairpersons of various Town Informal Groups. Each summarised the work that had been carried out by the respective groups over the previous two-month period.

Councillor Radcliffe – Parks and Recreation Informal Group

This group now consolidated the work of the previous North Walls and KGV Informal Groups, together with the St Giles Hill Park in order for officers to provide strong support on these three projects. It was reported that North Walls were currently moving from the planning to the implementation stage and that KGV was underway with improvements and the build out of a new skate park with the next stages being the construction of the new pavilion, improvements to the pitches and an upgrade to the playground area. Councillor Radcliffe welcomed the support of the Forum for an ambitious new management plan at St Giles Hill, where it was hoped restoration would commence going forward.

Councillor Edwards – City Centre Group.

It was noted that a street scene officer had recently been appointed to oversee proactively address issues throughout the city centre.

St Maurice's Covert lighting and the ceiling works were now complete and the art commission for the mural had three accepted proposals which were available to view on the council's website before 24 June for comments.

Councillor Tippett-Cooper – Heritage Group

Ongoing works were taking place at Hyde Gate which would be a key focus for the rest of the year. A construction stone engineer had recently been contracted to undertake restoration works to the gate which was due to commence shortly once necessary consents had been obtained. Work was due to commence to carry out the waxing of King Alfred over the coming weeks. Works had also been carried out to reattach the kite to the kite flyer in Parchment Street, additional bracing had been installed and a thorough clean had taken place.

RESOLVED:

That the updates received from the Town Informal Groups, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.00 pm

Chairperson