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WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

Thursday, 27 January 2022

Attendance:

Councillors

Becker (Chairperson)

Edwards
Craske
Ferguson
Green
Learney

Radcliffe
Scott
Thompson
Westwood

[Full audio recording and video recording](#)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tippet-Cooper, Tod and Weir.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Following the sad passing of Councillor Lynda Murphy, the Forum were asked to appoint a Vice-Chairperson for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Edwards be appointed Vice-Chairperson of the forum for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year

3. **DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

No disclosures of interest were made at the meeting.

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson made the following announcement:

The Chairperson stated that the 27 January marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day and asked the forum to take a minute to remember the millions who lost their lives in the holocaust and in other atrocities across the world.

5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2021**

During discussion of the minutes, in response to a request, the Chairperson asked that officers provide a breakdown to members at the earliest opportunity of the location of CIL contributions across the town area.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 November 2021 be approved and adopted.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Three members of the public spoke regarding various agenda items, with two of those speaking at this point on the agenda, as summarised briefly below.

James Batho (Safer Streets for Winchester)

Mr Batho sought the Forum's continued support with the campaign to reduce traffic speeds in Winchester with the proposal for the implementation of a default speed limit of 20mph. He made reference to the county council's Review Group that had recently met to consider a review of the policy for 20mph speed limits where there was community support. He stated that demonstrating widespread community support was critical to securing the county council's agreement to implement a 20mph limit widely. Mr Batho requested that the Forum pass the motion calling on the county council to implement a default speed limit of 20mph in Winchester and propose the allocation of ring-fenced funding to enable 20mph speed limits to be implemented county wide within five years. He further requested that the Forum write to Hampshire Highways to request that they consider placing signage at all road entry points to Winchester to alert motorists that there are 20mph speed limits in the town and that it repaints all 20mph repeater signage on roads where this was in force to ensure safer streets for Winchester.

Following Mr Batho's presentation, members gave their support to the principle of a default speed limit of 20mph in the town area and raised a number of points in relation to increasing and improving existing road signage and markings, the quality of path and road conditions, enforcement, monitoring of the speed of traffic, speed transitions, feedback from the Walking Strategy Group to the Winchester Movement Strategy, infrastructure and active travel with reduce vehicular movements.

In conclusion, the Chairperson thanked Mr Batho and clarified that whilst a motion could not be agreed at the present time, the matters raised would be considered and responded to in due course.

Emma Back (on behalf of the Winchester Sport, Art and Leisure Trust (SALT))

Ms Back addressed the forum regarding the lack of Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) in the town area and urged that the Forum correct this deficit using the 15 minute city principle. She referred to the recent article in the Hampshire Chronicle which stated that Winchester compared poorly with other areas of Hampshire. She welcomed previous support of the Forum on this matter but

suggested a lack of planning by failing to address the needs of adolescents and young people from inadequate MUGA provision, leisure facilities and health and wellbeing services. In conclusion, she suggested the formation of an adolescent and youth strategy for Winchester, working in partnership with relevant organisations to engage younger residents in the process.

Following Ms Back's presentation, members commented on the need to review the integration of younger residents in its decision making and investigate affordable leisure activity options and facilities for young people in the town area.

In conclusion, the Chairperson thanked Ms Back for her contribution and clarified that this matter should be referred to the Health and Environment Policy Committee for further consideration as a district wide issue.

7. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT BUDGET FOR 2022/23 (TO BE RECOMMENDED TO CABINET) (WTF306)**

The Finance Manager (Strategic Finance) introduced the report which updated Members regarding the current financial projections for the Town Account for the period 2021/22 to 2026/27. The forum was advised that the Town Accounts Informal Group had met and their proposed recommendations were contained within the report for the budget for 2022/23, due to be taken to Cabinet and Council for approval and also sought a town precept to be set for 2022/23. Attention was drawn to the changes and bids that had been put forward, the financial projections within Appendix A in relation to the proposed setting of a town precept of 4.5% for 2022/23, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), capital and one-off revenue expenditure, the reserves position and the recommendations set out in the report.

Councillor Learney spoke on behalf of the Town Account Informal Group and referred to the proposed increase in the town precept of 4.5% for 2022/23 which was required to deal with immediate pressures and advised of the need for new ideas and opportunities for income generation in Winchester.

The forum asked questions and raised comments which were addressed by officers accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Forum;

1. Recommends the draft budget for 2022/23 and the indicative projections for the strategy period;
2. Agrees the baseline revenue budget growth of £50k to provide an initial budget to facilitate any initial elements of the Vision for Winchester and also enable baseline improvements to the maintenance of open space facilities;

3. Recommends to Cabinet that the Council Tax precept for the Town area be increased by 4.5%% for 2022/23 and notes the requirements for the council to keep within overall referendum constraints; and
4. Recommends to Cabinet the budget for the Town area for 2022/23 be set in accordance with Appendix A of the report.

8. **PROPOSED UPGRADES TO ARTIFICIAL TURF PITCH AT RIVER PARK (WTF305)**

The Natural Environment and Recreation Team Manager introduced the report which followed the briefing paper that came to the Forum for consideration at its previous meeting and provided members with details of the upgrades to the tennis courts and artificial turf pitch facilities at North Walls Recreation Ground as well as setting out the finance options available to achieve this.

The Forum was provided with an update that since the publication of the report, a decision had been taken to stop all games played after sundown on the artificial turf pitch due to issues with the lights failing and safe play being compromised as a result. It was anticipated that this would resume as a matter of urgency upon approval of the proposals contained within the report.

During debate, Members asked questions and raised comments in relation to the life span of facilities, maintenance of lighting and resurfacing of pitches, upgrades to tennis courts, consideration of the towns asset management, submission of bids to the town CIL for other projects, provision of MUGA's and easy online booking options which were addressed by officers accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to approval of the overall town account budget by Cabinet and Council, the town forum:

1. Approves the budget and expenditure of £99k for the fencing and floodlighting improvement works required in 2021/22 financed by the Town Community Infrastructure Levy, subject to any necessary approvals through the CIL process;
2. Delegates authority to the Natural Environment and Recreation Team Manager to undertake the procurement process and appoint the relevant contractors to enable the improvements work; and
3. Approves the budget and expenditure of up to £150k in 2022/23 for the resurfacing of the tennis course financed from internal borrowing.

9. **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 Westwood – Walking Strategy Group

Updated the forum that due to funding, the delivery of the capability and improvements to walking around Winchester had been delayed. However, there was now opportunity to progress with active travel modes supported by the Government following the pandemic, resulting in funding streams being available to implement and improve facilities within the town area. Discussions had taken place with relevant transport planners at the council and county council to review consultation papers and progress this matter in conjunction with the Winchester Movement Strategy to secure funding going forward.

Councillor Craske – Town Planning Group

Updated the forum on the progress of the group in collaboration with the planning team. In summary, he stated that it had been recognised that the new local plan also needed to deal with design issues, as well as how it considered Winchester town and the wider district in order to ensure it delivered high quality places. The engagement and involvement of local communities with experts was outlined. All the feedback obtained would inform the evidence base of the draft regulation 18 local plan due to be consulted on during August/September 2022. Councillor Craske considered that the next phase would be to look at the detailed spatial plan and investigate where CIL funding could be spent looking at developments and infrastructure.

Councillor Learney (on behalf of Councillor Tippett-Cooper) – Heritage Group

Updated the forum that Hyde Gate pigeon proofing was almost complete. The next stage was restoration on the building itself and arrangements were being made with Historic England to obtain consent for the works and similarly it was hoped that agreement could be sought from Historic England regarding regular maintenance at the Buttercross. In relation to the collapsed wall at Nun's Stream, it was noted that a specialist consultant needed to be appointed to look at its restoration further.

Councillor Edwards – City Centre Group.

St Maurice's Covert outstanding works regarding lighting and commissioning of a mural were on schedule to be completed by Spring 2022 and the proposal for a memorial plaque was being progressed. Restoration of the kite flyer sculpture in Parchment Street was expected to commence in March 2022. It was noted that responsibility for the maintenance of street furniture was passing to the street maintenance team.

Councillor Becker – Outdoor Swimming Group

The group had been recently established and has now set its terms of reference with invitations issued to group representatives. It was noted that the Lido Group had accepted an invitation to attend and speak to the group on this matter.

RESOLVED:

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

10. **WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22**

Geoff Wright spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Geoff Wright (Member of St Giles Hill Residents' Association)

Supports the briefing paper provided by Councillor Radcliffe and made reference to the scope of the previous management plan and to previous concerns regarding liability issues for volunteers which resulted in the suspension of their work at the park. Since this time, it was noted that the areas previously worked on had returned to scrub. He suggested that any future park plan would only work with the benefit of a volunteer group in order to maintain the groundwork going forward. In conclusion, he requested that the council revisit its decision on volunteer engagement that currently placed responsibility on volunteers to establish their liability mitigation and also to implement a 'volunteer friendly' policy.

In response, the Natural Environment and Recreation Team Manager clarified that legally there was an opportunity for volunteers to continue their work but this required a group to take on a specific role to support personal liability which St Giles Hill Residents' Association had indicated that they were unable to pursue.

Councillor Radcliffe introduced his briefing note that had been circulated to the Forum regarding the restoration of St Giles Hill park, requesting a new park plan to remedy the maintenance and disrepair issues at the park. He referred to a number of ideas from residents for the park going forward. Councillor Radcliffe stated that since the old park plan expired in 2020, there was nothing in its place and therefore proposed that the level of ambition be raised for the new park plan to be drawn up to restore the park and improve biodiversity, in consultation with the community.

The forum asked questions and raised comments which were addressed by officers accordingly. Members considered that empowering communities be further investigated as part of the Vision for Winchester.

The Chairperson thanked Councillor Radcliffe for bringing the briefing paper forward which was welcomed by the forum members and suggested that work to progress the St Giles Hill Park Management Plan be added to the work programme for the next municipal year 2022/23.

RESOLVED:

1. That the 2021/22 work programme be noted; and
2. That St Giles Hill Park Management Plan be added onto the work programme for the next municipal year 2022/23.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.00 pm

Chairperson

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