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WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

Thursday, 15 September 2022
(adjourned to Thursday, 22 September 2022)

Attendance:

Councillors

Craske (Chairperson)

Batho
Becker
Edwards
Ferguson
Learney

Radcliffe
Reach
Tippett-Cooper
Tod
Westwood

[Full audio recording and video recording – 15 September 2022](#)

[Full audio recording and video recording – 22 September 2022](#)

Adjourned session of Winchester Town Forum held 15 September 2022

1. CHAIRPERSON ANNOUNCEMENT - HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

At the start of the 14 September meeting, the Chairperson announced that since the summons for this meeting was issued last week, the very sad news of the death of Her Majesty the Queen had been received. However as it was not considered appropriate for discussions of the issues on the published agenda to proceed during the period of National Mourning for Her Majesty, it was proposed that the meeting be adjourned.

The Chairperson made a brief statement to the Forum and the meeting then stood in silent tribute.

RESOLVED:

That the meeting be adjourned and reconvene on Thursday 22 September 2022 at 6.30pm

Reconvened session of Winchester Town Forum held 22 September 2022

2. APOLOGIES

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

3. **DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Tod declared a personal (but non prejudicial) interest concerning agenda items that may be related to his role as a County Councillor.

Councillor Tippett-Cooper declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of item 8 (Town Forum Grants Programme) as a volunteer and director of Unit 12 who were a recipient of small grants and crowdfunding.

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson thanked the Forum for their attendance at the reconvened meeting.

5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2022**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 June 2022 be approved and adopted.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mike Slinn (on behalf of Kings Barton Residents' Association), Chris Gilham (on behalf of the Transport Group of WinACC), Nigel Davison (on behalf of the residents of Harestock Road), Charles Crawford and Andy Key (for Cycle Winchester) spoke during public participation regarding Andover Road and road networks in the north of the city, as summarised below. In addition, Ian Tait also spoke during public participation and his comments are summarised below:

Mike Slinn made reference to the following points:

- The 'Keep Andover Road Open' petition submitted to Hampshire County Council in July 2022 and to the comments made by the 3,000 signatories.
- Residents of Weeke and Harestock as well as Kings Barton had also expressed concern that their housing estates would be used a 'rat run' following the closure of the Andover Road.
- The consequences if the Andover Road was to close including heavy traffic movement through the Kings Barton development, reductions in road use by pedestrians and cyclists and increases to noise, air pollution and carbon emissions.
- Misconceptions that roads create traffic when it should be noted that it was people that created traffic, not whether Andover Road was closed or not. The problems he suggested were being caused by people using the City Centre to and from the Andover Road as a rat run through to Junction 9 avoiding traffic congestion on alternative routes to and from the A34.

- Improvements to bus, cycling and pedestrian for the residents of Kings Barton to reduce the amount of traffic were sought.

Andy Key made reference to the following points:

- Cycle route plans rely on Andover Road not being a through road for traffic.
- He suggested that Winchester Avenue could be made a low traffic neighbourhood with reduced traffic access for vehicles as this would be a useful active travel route.
- Traffic congestion issues.
- Additional cycling friendly routes.

Chris Gilham made reference to the following points:

- Significant concern that the closure of Andover Road would increase total road traffic capacity.
- Cannot accept that Winchester's central traffic should be reduced through a policy of imposing junction congestion.
- If there was an argument for retaining Andover Road that road capacity must be constrained by other means.
- Solutions had to be about sustainable transport planning and there was continuing concern that the Winchester Movement Strategy had lost its way, with its main aim to reduce traffic currently unaltered.

Nigel Davison made reference to the following points:

- Representing several residents of Harestock Road which was the main diversion route for traffic from the M3 roadworks. He asked that consideration be given to wheelchair users with existing pavement width offering inadequate space in this area.
- Sought traffic calming, speed reduction and road maintenance repairs to be carried out along Harestock Road.

Charles Crawford made reference to the following points:

- Expressed concern regarding the 40mph speed limit along Chilbolton Avenue and Harestock Road.
- Speed limits at the top and bottom ends of Chilbolton Avenue are currently set at 30mph and the rest of the road should be reduced to the same speed limit.

In response to the highway matters raised above, the Chairperson reminded those in attendance that highways were the responsibility of Hampshire County Council. However, it was noted that Hampshire County Councillor Heron had been asked to attend the next meeting.

Councillor Tod responded to points raised during public participation in his capacity as Hampshire County Councillor. He acknowledged the concerns of

residents in relation to how the road would run from the north and general concerns regarding under specification of the road and severance points. He highlighted the importance of taking a balanced view of the issues and the need for a comprehensive road system plan for the whole of the north of Winchester that also enabled residents to choose sustainable transport.

In conclusion to points raised by the Forum, the Leader agreed to contact Hampshire Highways and Highways England on behalf of the council, to address the diversion issues being experienced across the city and to address the wider road issues in the north of Winchester.

Ian Tait made reference to the following point:

- Begging in the city centre – Mr Tait thanked that council for the actions taken in Kings Walk which had been successful. He continued to be concerned regarding the number of beggars on city centre streets and made reference to the diverted giving scheme to allow residents/visitors to deposit funds into an appropriate channel for beggars which needed further promotion to raise general awareness of its existence.

At the conclusion of public participation, the Chairperson thanked all those in attendance for their contribution.

7. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT FINANCIAL PLANNING 2022/23 (WTF310)**

The Finance Manager (Strategic Finance) introduced the report and provided an update of the current financial position of the Winchester Town Account and financial projections over the medium and long term to support the development of a refreshed financial strategy with final budget recommendations due for consideration by Town Forum in January 2023, prior to final approval by Cabinet and Council. In addition, he stated that feedback from the Winchester Town Forum Accounts Informal Group had been incorporated within this report and that a further report on the budget options would come forward for consideration by the Town Forum at its meeting on 9 November 2022.

The Leader and the Finance Manager (Strategic Finance) responded to detailed questions from Members in relation to additional cost pressures, changes as a result of recent significant increases to inflation, the assumed town precept, the strategic use of community infrastructure levy (CIL) to address the needs of the entire district area, resource implications, anticipated forecast changes to the existing budget and budget pressures and sensitivities.

During debate, the Forum recognised the budget challenges ahead as a result of the impacts of contract inflation, general rises to costs and the additional demands on town funds and emphasised the need to prioritise, manage spending and work together as a forum going forward.

RESOLVED:

1. That the financial projections, set out in Appendix A of the report be noted and the budget timetable for 2023/24, be agreed.

8. **TOWN FORUM GRANT PROGRAMME**
(WTF311)

The Funding and Development Manager introduced the report which set out the town forum community grants awarded in 2021/22 and the grant programmes proposed for the current financial year 2022/23 and highlighted the important role of the forum in helping to increase awareness of the grant schemes on offer. The Chairperson emphasised key points including the underspend on grant funding over the last few years raising concern that the grants programme was launched too late during September. It was suggested that a rolling grant programme be explored to enable the grants to be spent throughout the year.

Councillor Batho reported that the Town Vision Informal Group would be carrying out an audit, in line with vision principles, to investigate where the money was being spent and identify good practice where successful organisations had taken advantage of the grant programme in order to identify gaps, in discussion with Town Forum Members.

The Service Lead: Community and Wellbeing and the Funding and Development Manager responded to detailed questions from Members in relation to ward areas for small grants and analysis of grants by sector, crowdfunding review, limited use of the crowdfunder, matched funding, uplifts to small grant limit awards, funding assistance and advice to raise awareness of the grant process.

The Forum welcomed the report and thanked the small grants team for an informative report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and noted; and
2. That the following be approved:
 - (i) That delegated authority be given to the Corporate Head of Economy and Community to approve the grant criteria and allocations, in consultation with the Town Forum Vision Informal Group;
 - (ii) The reopening of the small grants scheme with immediate effect with the following updates:
 - (a) Increasing the maximum award from £500 to £1,000 in response to the cost of living crisis and rising inflation; and
 - (b) Amending the criteria to include an element of core costs, where the cost of living is having an impact on the organisation.

- (iii) Reopening of the Crowdfund Winchester Town Community Fund with immediate effect until 15 November 2022, with the following update:
 - (a) Amending the criteria to include an element of core costs, where the cost of living is having an impact on the organisation.
- (iv) That the £40k grant budget be used flexibly to allocate funds between different grant programmes to meet the demand for small grants and crowdfunding.

9. **KGV NEW BUILD PAVILION - REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL BUDGET (CAB3363)**

Councillor Ferguson introduced the report which sought the forum's approval for the additional allocation of £200,000 Town CIL funding, bringing the total funding from Town CIL to £450,000, towards the cost of procurement for the new pavilion at King George V (KGV) playing fields. It was noted that the request for additional CIL funding had arisen due to the ongoing and significant escalation in building costs, labour and materials since the initial allocation of the pavilion project funding was set.

The importance to replace the two existing outdated pavilions on site with one larger sustainable modern pavilion was recognised which would contribute to the provision of a hub of quality sport venues, along with the facilities at the Winchester Sports and Leisure Park and Winchester University.

Councillor Ferguson and the Corporate Property Surveyor responded to points raised including the potential to seek additional/increases to grant funding and income streams, future sponsorship opportunities to generate revenue, the likelihood of further increases in construction costs and the district wide users and groups anticipated to use the new facility.

The Forum noted that Cabinet had considered and agreed the report at its meeting earlier in the day and welcomed the progression of the new pavilion project at KGV.

RESOLVED:

That the additional £200,000 of Town CIL funding, bringing the total funding from Town CIL to £450,000, be approved.

10. **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 Craske – Planning for the future in Winchester Town Group

A town forum zoom meeting had taken place on 5 September regarding the SHELAA sites which had been recorded and was available to share and view. Feedback was positive and the consultation process was due to proceed as planned with a special meeting of The Scrutiny Committee due to take place on 29 September 2022.

Councillor Radcliffe – Parks and Recreation Informal Group

North Walls River Park – It was reported that the council had adopted an ambitious ten year programme of improvements where soaring construction costs were creating challenges. Officers were working on costings towards the initial phase of planned works and carrying out a technical study.

St Giles Hill Improvements – Progress was slow with some sundry works undertaken but larger scale works remained some way off pending agreement of a new park management plan. Practical suggestions had been reported back to officers. However, due to current staffing constraints, the draft park plan had not yet been developed.

Other Updates - Work was advancing on playground improvements, the refurbishment of the Abbey Gardens play area had commenced and would take up to six months to complete. Officers had carried out a thorough consultation process to gauge what facilities/equipment should be included. Refurbishment works to the play area at North Walls Recreation Ground was due to commence in Spring 2023 and a coffee van was now stationed at the entrance to the park three days a week on a trial basis initially.

Councillor Edwards – City Centre Group.

It was noted that various works had been carried out over the last six months these included: the repair and refurbishment of high street benches, planters on blocks had been removed, litter bins would be replaced or repaired throughout the city and bin stores were being addressed. Working with Winchester Bid it was noted that there had been a concerted effort to remove graffiti and cleaning and maintenance of public toilets had been improved whilst a strategy for refurbishment was being investigated.

Councillor Tippett-Cooper – Heritage Group

He thanked Hyde 900 for the community dig weekend. The King Alfred statue had recently been waxed and cracks in his cloak were being monitored and treated. A contractor had been identified to repair the wall at Nuns stream which officers were in the process of arranging this. Pigeon proofing at Hyde Gate had improved the area. Also at Hyde Gate the structural repair and restoration work was ongoing following a summer survey carried out at the request of Historic England and the public realm work was being explored further by Cabinet and officers.

RESOLVED:

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

11. **WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

The Forum considered the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year, 2022/23.

During discussion, Members suggested the consideration of the council's Tree Strategy and the Local Plan be added to the work programme for the November meeting. In addition, the Chairperson requested that the University of Southampton be invited to a future meeting of the Forum.

Reference was made to Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) provision and a previous request that this come forward for consideration by the Forum. However, it was noted that it had been agreed that this matter be considered by Health and Environment Policy Committee, with the report placed on their work programme for 6 December 2022.

RESOLVED:

That the 2022/23 work programme be noted, subject to the revisions set out above.

The reconvened meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.10 pm

Chairperson