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WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

Monday, 11 March 2024

Attendance:

Councillors

Reach (Chairperson)

Batho
Becker
Edwards
Eve
Learney
Morris

Scott
Tippett-Cooper
Thompson
Tod
Westwood
Wise

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Cramoysan

[Full video recording](#)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Prest.

2. **DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Batho declared a personal (but non prejudicial) interest concerning agenda item 6 (Update from Stagecoach) as an employee of Stagecoach.

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

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson announced that this was the last meeting for the 2023/24 municipal year where many matters had been considered and progress made. The Chairperson welcomed discussions with members of the forum regarding work programme items and plans to come forward to the forum during 2024/25.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2024 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Cramoysan spoke during item 6 (Update from Stagecoach) and a summary of his comments are set out under the relevant minute below.

6. **UPDATE FROM STAGECOACH (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Councillor Cramoysan addressed the committee on this item.

In summary, Councillor Cramoysan made reference to the following points:

- Referred to the spring bus, which was the primary service serving the residents of Kings Worthy had been noticeably unreliable with frequent cancellations – as was the case with other services as well.
- Elderly residents were dependant on bus services as a means to get in and out of the city to access essential amenities and services such as doctors, shops etc that were not available nearby.
- Those with access to vehicles that were entitled to concessionary passes were put off using bus services as an alternative due to a lack of trust that bus services would arrive when expected, without lengthy waiting times or cancellations, which did not align with the council's carbon neutrality targets to reduce vehicular movements and lower carbon emissions.
- The importance of the Stagecoach feeding into the council's vision process of how Winchester develops and operates going forward.
- The outcomes of the punctuality review conducted by Stagecoach.
- Sought the views of the forum on how to progress this matter to establish a dialogue with Stagecoach going forward.

In response to the points raised by Councillor Cramoysan, the Chairperson stated that with the huge investment due to take place in Winchester with Central Winchester Regeneration and works anticipated at the station, it was hoped the opportunity to discuss improvements to bus service, the removal of pinch points where buses are delayed, improvements to the environment for users waiting for buses and the effect of road closures on town ward areas would be progressed through building working relations and dialogue with Stagecoach.

The Chairperson announced that Stagecoach had been invited to attend the forum to provide an update on their plans for the future and to enable the forum to understand the issues experienced with operating bus services in a congested city centre and discuss services on particular routes. It was noted that Stagecoach representatives had given their apologies for the meeting and that

Stagecoach would be contacted in due course to endeavour to secure attendance at a future meeting date.

The forum proceeded to raise comments on the following points during the discussion of this item:

- (a) Traffic congestion in the town centre - by managing a reduction in traffic in the town centre as part of Local Transport Plan 4 agreed by Hampshire County Council this would help to improve the majority of delays to bus services, in conjunction with other measures that Stagecoach could adopt.
- (b) An improved collaborative working relationship with the bus service operator to help minimise disruption to bus services as a result of road closures etc.

The forum thanked Councillor Cramoysan for his contribution and welcomed his views on this matter at a future meeting of the forum when Stagecoach were in attendance.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted; and
- 2. That the 'Update from Stagecoach' item be added to the work programme for 2024/25, and a date be confirmed with Stagecoach in due course.

7. WINCHESTER TOWN VISION UPDATE (WTF329)

Councillor Becker introduced the report setting out an annual update of the Winchester Vision, adopted by the forum in January 2021. The report suggested a different, planned and strategic approach to the Winchester Vision as a town forum initiative going forward. It was proposed that the forum report template would be updated to include the town vision, how the proposals coming forward to the forum to meet the vision outcomes and ensuring that the outcomes were also reflected in the Town Forum small and project grant criteria and the Town Forum Informal Group, to enable the activities of the forum to be heavily focussed on the outcomes it wished to achieve through the Winchester Vision.

In addition, as a part of this work, a practical guide for community organisations had been created to allow groups to receive guidance and support from the council to enable these groups to carry out their own work projects. This guide was now available on the council's website.

The Corporate Head of Economy and Community advised that report also set out all the actions given in the handbooks and these had been mapped against the delivery routes that were now available which highlighted that an enhanced

focus and awareness was required to work that was taking place, to capture the changes and impacts.

The forum proceeded to ask questions and comment on the following matters which were responded to by the Cabinet Member and the Corporate Head of Economy and Community.

- (a) The themes contained within the vision document were still considered to be relevant and valid with many deemed to be long term ongoing issues.
- (b) Enabling Communities – A forward looking planned approach going forward rather than a retrospective view.
- (c) Cultural work taking place with the Festivals Group and the re-tendering of the Winchester Street Markets contract which would also look at branding and design to embrace the vision going forward.
- (d) The importance of mapping the vision to the Winchester Town Forum Informal Groups.
- (e) Continuing to make small changes that make a difference within communities.

At the conclusion of debate, the forum welcomed the Town Vision update and thanked officers for an informative report. The Chairperson encouraged members of the forum to read the comprehensive vision document which was available to view in the Members Library.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the update on the Winchester Town Vision since its adoption in January 2021, be noted;
- 2. That the introduction of a revised Town Forum committee report template to include the Town Vision outcomes as a section for report authors to consider, be supported;
- 3. That revisions to the town small and project grant criteria to include Town Vision outcomes, be supported; and
- 4. That the renaming of some of the Informal Groups to reflect the vision outcomes, be supported.

8. LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS (VERBAL UPDATE)

Councillor Tod provided a verbal update regarding liveable neighbourhoods and made reference to the movement work strand and the Fulflood liveable neighbourhood initiative, to contribute towards making Winchester an even greater place to live and answered questions from the forum thereon.

It was noted that, in 2021 the Government offered the prospect of funding to develop the Mini-Hollands programme. A small number were to be funded for exploratory work and Winchester had been selected for Hampshire. This was to be joint venture between the council and Hampshire County Council, with local political support for the programme. During 2023, the report was submitted, referencing the town vision, among other priorities, setting forward a vision for the city to contribute towards reducing traffic in a way to make neighbourhoods more liveable. The Government had since concluded not to progress the Mini-Hollands programme. However, it had been agreed locally that the work carried out was useful and would progressed as the 'Liveable Neighbourhood Project', with the important principle that projects be co-developed with local residents going forward.

The initial pilot of the project had been identified for Fulflood and there was a proposal to seek views on how to change residential streets in order to make these more 'people centred', primarily to improve pedestrian and cyclist footfall and to cut through traffic to improve air quality and also to enhance connections to schools, businesses etc, similar to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs).

The first stage of the project would involve several community workshops for residents of Fulflood to capture areas of concern, examples of hazardous crossings, footpaths, roads etc in the locality and provide input on the existing systems and what changes need to be considered to progress this project to the next steps towards implementation.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received and noted.

9. **INFORMAL GROUP - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Forum received individual updates from the Chairpersons of various Town Informal Groups, where updates had not already been provided within the items considered above. Each summarised the work that had been carried out by the respective groups over the previous two-month period.

Councillor Tippett-Cooper – Heritage Group

Progress updates from the group included:

- (i) The Buttercross and Hyde Abbey Gateway – It was noted that the applications and plans for the restoration work would shortly be submitted to Historic England. There would be scaffolding and information boards installed around the Buttercross whilst works take place. Works were still scheduled to commence by Spring 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the update received from the Town Informal Group, be noted.

10. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairperson announced that a group away day was due to take place shortly and that the work programme for 2024/25 would be further discussed with members of the forum at that time.

RESOLVED:

That, the work programme for 2023/24 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 7.20 pm

Chairperson