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WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

Monday, 9 March 2026

Attendance:

Councillors

Westwood (Chairperson)

Eve
Batho
Becker
Learney
Morris
Murphy

Reach
Scott
Tippett-Cooper
Thompson
Tod
Wise

[Full video recording](#)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Aron.

2. **DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Tod declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of items on the agenda due to his role as a Hampshire County Councillor. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, he remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements made at this meeting.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2026**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 January 2026 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no comments or questions made during public participation.

6. **UPDATE FROM SARAH DAVIS, BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)**

The Chairperson announced that due to unavoidable circumstances, Sarah Davis was unable to attend this meeting to provide an update from the BID. It was noted that this item would be deferred to a future meeting of the forum in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the item be deferred to a future meeting of the forum.

7. **TOWN COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ALLOCATION FOR YOUTH PROVISION (WTF343)**

Councillor Learney introduced the report as Cabinet Member and on behalf of the Climate and Open Spaces Informal Group, setting out the details of the Neighbourhood (Town) CIL application proposals to improve the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at St Matthews Field in Weeke. She welcomed the opportunity to propose funding for a major upgrade in the provision for young people in North Winchester. The MUGA provided enhanced facilities in line with council plan priorities and had received significant local support.

In addition to funding for the MUGA, it was also proposed that £6,000 be used for focussed engagement with local young people to help identify the design and explore what additional facilities may be required across the town area. Furthermore, engagement would include targeted sessions with girls, in line with the 'Make Space for Girls' approach.

If approved, approximately £100,000 would remain in the town community levy fund. Whilst some of these funds had been tentatively earmarked for the provision of speed indicator devices in the town, there was no guarantee that remaining funds would be passed onto any newly formed town council or be spent in Winchester. An additional cycle of CIL distribution was planned during the summer, with the opportunity to allocate funding for not only further improvements to open spaces, but to other schemes across the town wards.

Forum members were encouraged to identify potential schemes to bring forward as opportunities within their local communities, that could offer a good use of the outstanding CIL funds available.

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

- (a) A question was asked regarding the form of consultation that would take place to ensure the design of the Multi-Use Games Area was appropriate for various activities. In response, it was noted that additional capacity would be brought in with the £6,000 funding to engage specialists. These specialists would use techniques and contacts to reach as many people as possible. The findings would then help to shape the design and identify additional requirements.

- (b) Further clarification was sought on whether the "Make Space for Girls" group was consulted as part of the design process. It was noted that a range of officers from the natural environment and recreation, cultural, and community teams attended a briefing and training session from the group. The approaches and techniques from this group would be utilised.
- (c) An enquiry was made as to whether further community infrastructure levy (CIL) applications would be supported once work was identified through the consultation. In response, it was confirmed that a further round of applications planned for the end of the summer would provide an opportunity for the forum to look at requirements across the town.
- (d) A question was raised concerning plans to publicise the facility once it was built to ensure it was used by local residents. It was reported that press publicity and social media would be used to promote the facility. It was also anticipated that information would spread among young people interested in these facilities.
- (e) Further clarification was sought on how the consultation would be structured between a broader discussion on youth facilities and the functions of the North Winchester site. In response it was explained that the focus would be on engagement with particular groups. The process of making changes and seeking planning permission would also generate issues for consideration.
- (f) An enquiry was made as to whether there were plans to make the entrances to the field available and attractive to the public. It was noted that this would be part of the work resulting from the consultation. It was acknowledged that the entrances were hidden and there was a question as to whether these should be highlighted.
- (g) A question was asked regarding the timescale for delivery and whether the project would be completed within the current financial year. It was emphasised that the intention was to deliver the project before the end of the financial year. Furthermore, it was noted that discussions within the officer team regarding the work programme and timescales had commenced.

At the conclusion of the debate, the forum wholly supported and welcomed the new MUGA which provided a safe, welcoming and active place for all young people across the city for the future. The Chairperson thanked Councillor Batho and Councillor Learney for leading the CIL funding and enabling this to be used to deliver the MUGA and much needed youth provision facility for the town and district.

RESOLVED:

1. That the comments of the forum, set out above, be noted;

2. That the allocation of £110,000 Town CIL funding to the North Winchester Youth Provision project to improve the facilities at St Matthews Field for the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), be approved; and
3. That the allocation of £6,000 Town CIL revenue funding, and supplementary revenue budget for youth engagement and consultation, be approved.

8. **INFORMAL GROUPS - VERBAL UPDATES**

The Chairperson provided an update on the progress with the Community Governance Review (CGR) process following the recent public engagement sessions and Councillor Batho provided more detail in the informal group update, as set out below.

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

Councillor Batho – Transition to Town Council Informal Group

Progress updates from the group were as follows:

- (a) It was noted that should the decision be taken to establish a town council, that the feedback from the public engagement favoured a town council to be formed comprising of the existing five unparished town wards. Further work on this as a preference would be pursued by the informal group in due course to further explore the process. Collaboration with existing town councils of a similar size would ensue in due course to understand the transitional planning required.

It was emphasised that no decisions had been taken at this time regarding a town council. However, this recommendation would be taken to Licensing and Regulation Committee on 17 March 2026, with a proposal that a second round of consultation be undertaken, ahead of any final proposals coming forward to Full Council during 2027.

Councillor Murphy – Streets and Spaces Informal Group

Progress updates from the group were as follows:

- (a) Speed Indicator Devices – there was significant concern regarding speeding traffic in the city and high demand from residents for devices to be installed. Following the allocation of budget, the group would work with officers to develop a plan and further feedback would be provided in due course.
- (b) Winchester BID – the barometer of business report had indicated that there was growth in the High Street with footfall increasing during 2024/25, in comparison to national statistics and positive feedback had been received following this year's Christmas Market, with High Street stores also reporting the positive impact of the markets on their sales.

- (c) Students from the Winchester School of Art had been working on a project regarding Winchester routes and would be developing a trail due to launch at Winchester Gallery on 7 May 2026 which the forum were encouraged to attend.

Councillor Tippet-Cooper – Culture Informal Group

Progress updates from the group were as follows:

- a) The Buttercross – scaffolding had been erected and restoration works had commenced. Information was publicly available which provided detail of works to be carried out and indicative timings for the work that was due to be completed.

RESOLVED:

That the updates received from the Town Informal Groups as set out above, be noted.

9. **TO NOTE THE MEETING DATES FOR THE FORUM IN 2026/27**

RESOLVED:

That the meeting dates of the forum for 2026/27, as set out on the agenda, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 7.15 pm

Chairperson

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