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WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

Monday, 13 March 2023

Attendance:

Councillors

Craske (Chairperson)

Becker
Batho
Edwards
Ferguson
Learney
Radcliffe

Reach
Tippett-Cooper
Thompson
Tod
Westwood

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Green and Scott

Councillors in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan)

[Full video recording](#)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for the meeting were noted as above.

2. **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.

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements made by the Chairperson at the meeting.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2023**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2023 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Matthew Brown, Tim Perry and Emma Back (on behalf of Sports and Arts Leisure Trust (SALT)) spoke during public participation on similar matters, in summary they made reference to the following points set out below.

In addition, Mike Biden spoke in relation to item 6 (St Giles Hill Park Management Plan). A summary of his comments are contained under the relevant item below.

Matthew Brown made reference to the following points:

- Following the success of the Lionesses during the Summer, the interest in girls football had soared with Winchester Flyer's and its facilities struggling to keep up with demand and matches were being cancelled due to the KGV play fields being waterlogged or frozen in winter months.
- The only floodlit spaces available were the 1G hockey pitches at Kings School or the Winchester University which were not conducive to football.
- Winchester Youth Provision published on 1 March 2023 aligns with this assessment and references the Play Pitch Strategy and Action Plan for 2018 regarding poor provision for football in the district.
- In converting to 3G this summer, Winchester City Football Club will provide a much needed artificial surface for football clubs to use. However, this pitch will primarily be for the use by the senior club and therefore there will still be a shortfall to address.
- He stated that there was funding available for construction of state-of-the-art pitches, but the challenge was finding suitable land in Winchester meeting the necessary requirements. He sought the support of the forum in helping the football playing youth in Winchester in capitalising on the available funding opportunities by assisting in funding suitable land to build a 3G floodlit football pitch

Tim Perry made reference to the following points:

- Campaigning for a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) to be built in one of the parks in North Winchester.
- Survey undertaken to establish the need for such a facility with positive response – 97% responding that they would welcome a MUGA in their community.
- Believed there to be a lack of MUGA and all-weather recreational facilities in this area of Winchester for children and young people with over 4,000 young people in the St Paul and St Barnabas wards and no MUGA provision available.
- Suggested building of a MUGA at St Matthews Park to address concerns regarding the lack of free to use facilities in these communities.
- Wishes to partner with the council to agree a location for the MUGA, agree a plan to finance this with the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) being

- suggested as an option and set a timetable for the works. Also committed to fundraising for part of the MUGA if required as experienced fundraisers.
- If CIL funding is approved for this project, how would the project be prioritised within the Natural Environment and Recreation Team and what are the chances of the project being completed in 2023?

Emma Back (SALT) made reference to the following points:

- Spoke in support of the community campaign for a new MUGA in North Winchester and also the quest made for 3G pitches with low provision of both across the town wards and highlighted its relevance as part of the Vision for Winchester to go some way to promote the national guidance standards towards meeting adequate MUGA provision for young people.
- No new developments in the town area had included the provision of a MUGA. It was suggested that CIL funds be invested in MUGA's to fill the existing gap.

In response to the points raised, in her capacity as Cabinet Member with principal responsibility for most of the Natural Environment and Recreation Team's work programme, Councillor Learney stated that a considerable amount of development had taken place in the north of Winchester and that whilst play areas had been refurbished and improved, the level of investment required to deal with the increase in population had not been met.

Councillor Learney agreed that the provision of a MUGA behind Weeke School in St Matthews field would be a great addition to facilities. However, it was highlighted that, in addition to 3G sports pitches, requests had also been received to respond to the 'Make space for girls' campaign and for additional cycling and running facilities, as well as requests to use land for biodiversity so a balanced approach on competing requests on limited town area land was required, also taking into account considerable budget and resource constraints. Currently there was no capacity to add new projects to existing workstreams so requests for delivery by 2023 would not be possible. Therefore, it was proposed that the consideration of any additional MUGAs (including one at St Matthews field) and all other recent requests be considered in the round as part of the review of the Play Area Refurbishment Programme and Open Space Management taking place this year.

In relation to the 3G pitch, Councillor Tod reported that he was due to make a decision for the council to invest over £1m, with the support of the Football Foundation and in partnership with Winchester City Football Club, and that there was a commitment to increasing the number of pitches the council has. In addition, he stated that the encouraging increase in participation, particularly amongst women and girls in football and other sports, be supported and that funding sources and options be explored further.

In conclusion, the Chairperson thanked the three public speakers for addressing the forum regarding the facilities needed for young people in the Winchester town area and encouraged continued dialogue with local Ward Members going forward.

6. **ST GILES HILL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN (WTF315)**

Mike Biden addressed the Forum on this item. In summary, he made reference to the following points:

- Spoke regarding the role of volunteers, as referred to in section 5 of management plan. In December 2020, following the suspension of the successful green flag working parties due to resident's concerns regarding public liability issues, information was provided by the former Natural Environment and Recreation Manager advised in writing that the only way to overcome these concerns was for residents to set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to organise any future voluntary working parties. However, it was noted that a residents' association could not become a CIO as it was not a charitable organisation and the matter had not been resolved due to Covid.
- Since Councillor Radcliffe initiated the preparation of a new management plan, interested residents had been encouraged to form a new charity to be known as 'Friends of St Giles Hill Park' which was now in hand. Whilst there was some way to go before it was registered and up and running, steps were being taken by founding trustees to start to form 'friends' working parties during this Summer.
- He and other founding trustees welcomed the new management plan which was an important step towards. It was hoped that with the close collaboration between council officers and the friends group, it would be possible to give the park a brighter future.

Councillor Learney introduced the report which provided an update on the St Giles Hill Management Plan, outlining the background and history of the park and the importance of open space on the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly those who reside live in flats or built-up areas without access to outdoor space. The plan, set out in Appendix 1 of the report, set out the planned and aspirational actions for the five-year period from 2023 to 2028 to bring about outcomes including increased biodiversity, carbon sequestration, improved public access and utility, increased community engagement and improved information about the park's heritage.

The Natural Environment and Recreation Team Manager thanked Councillor Radcliffe, Mike Biden and other residents who had contributed to the plan to enable this to be brought forward.

The forum proceeded to ask detailed questions on the following matters which were responded to by the Cabinet Member and the Natural Environment and Recreation Team Manager:

- (i) The range of management of St Giles Hill Park is varied so this needed to be broken down into a number of areas due to its diversity and to organise contractors etc.
- (ii) Working with volunteers and residents – Works will be based on the management plan and involve the groups on activities for leaders to head of various element. A number of tasks have been identified for volunteers to work on and there are expertise within the group to assist on this. It was noted that the St Giles Hill Graveyard Group had already

been working successfully on graveyard and it was recommended that members of the forum take a walk there to see the sustainable works that had taken place in that particular area.

- (iii) Tree management stakeholder engagement.
- (iv) The encouragement of biodiversity.

In conclusion, the forum thanked Councillor Radcliffe, the trustees and volunteers involved in the 'Friends of St Giles Hill Park' and officers. The forum welcomed and supported the St Giles Hill Park Management Plan, the formation of the volunteer group and its partnership work with the council going forward.

RESOLVED:

1. That the St Giles Hill Management Plan 2023-2028 be endorsed and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted.

7. WINCHESTER TOWN VISION - PROGRESS UPDATE (WTF316)

The Chairperson introduced the report which provided an annual progress update on the Winchester Town Vision. The ten-year vision was launched in March 2020, initially as a pragmatic design led concept to create a vision for what Winchester could be in the future but which evolved during Covid with changing priorities and aspirations and residents asking 'how' Winchester could deliver and 'how' residents could contribute in the process instead. The Forum noted that progress on the town vision would continue to be monitored on an annual basis to listen to where improvements could be made going forward.

The Corporate Head of Economy and Community provided a summary reviewing the work that had taken place against the five vision themes and highlighted some of the key activities that had taken place in the last year, including cultural network activities, enchanted light garden, green week and supported the peoples experience of living in Winchester, particularly those that have moved to the city as Ukrainian refugees and as a result of the cost of living crisis, alongside working with support partners and organisations and the work of the neighbourhood services team.

The Forum were reminded that the 'step to guide' was continuing to be developed to explore how to bring forward facilities and new services into local areas by residents themselves.

The Forum proceeded to ask detailed questions on the following matters which were responded to by the Chairperson and the Corporate Head of Economy and Community:

- (i) Milland Road streetscene improvements – an update would be provided to Councillor Reach in due course.
- (ii) What contributions from the Forum would help implement and encourage residents to utilise the Vision for Winchester? – Assistance with capturing the breadth of activities taking place in local areas between groups and

- organisations so feedback from local councillors regarding what is happening in their local areas would be very useful and informative.
- (iii) Carrying out audits to establish gaps in grant funding and service provision in local areas.

During debate, the Forum welcomed the annual update of the vision and thanked officers for their hard work and contribution in developing and delivering projects and working with community groups on grant funding.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted.

8. **LOCAL DESIGN CODES – PRESENTATION BY ANDY VON BRADSKY (PRESENTATION)**

The Chairperson welcomed Andy von Bradsky to the meeting who gave a presentation which provided information regarding design coding as a tool for the planning system and outlined how this would work for Winchester and how this would apply for the town area. An overview was provided on what part of Winchester town may serve best as a test for how design coding may be developed, how this would inform updates required to the High Quality Places Supplementary Planning Document and the criteria and testing issues for design coding. It was noted that five areas of Winchester within the town area had been highlighted; North Winchester, Easton Lane, Romsey Road, Stanmore and Oliver's Battery/Bushfield Camp, setting out the character and design code implications for each of these areas. A scoring matrix was carried out on each of the five areas looking at which best addressed the testing issues for Winchester, including the opportunity for change, community and stakeholder involvement, context, nature, heritage etc, with North Winchester scoring highest to these tests. In addition, the important aspects to coding surrounding design parameters were also summarised.

The forum were reminded that at its last meeting, there was agreement to take the opportunity to collaborate with Andy von Bradsky, who would act as a 'critical friend' in the preparation of a local design code. In addition, the forum had suggested locations, accepted that the cost would be shared among the forum, the City of Winchester Trust and the council and gave authority to a contribution of £3,000 from the vision delivery budget towards the collaborative cost of this work.

The forum proceeded to ask detailed questions on the following matters which were responded to by the Cabinet Member, Mr von Bradsky and the Strategic Planning Manager:

- (i) How would having a design code make an area change? In response, it was noted that design coding was about the spaces between buildings and the quality of roads, streets and public spaces to ensure you have quality consistently in an area by setting out requirements. In

North Winchester, there was potential to improve diverse issues such as spaces between public buildings, the green infrastructure and parking arrangements.

- (ii) The weighting given within the scoring matrix. It was noted that weighting had not been applied but heavier scoring had been given to areas that had an identified community and a vision (opportunity for change) which were both important aspects and whether it addressed the key issues across the town and the wider area. Therefore, if weighting had been applied, similar outcomes would be achieved.
- (iii) How enforceable would a design code be? In relation to its interaction with the local plan, it was noted that a code would give a bit more detail on the back of the regulation 18 local plan and it was proposed that this would be adopted as a supplementary planning document to give it weight in the planning process. This would be the next step to bringing the vision from regulation 18 local plan into fruition.
- (iv) Community and stakeholder engagement. Including the opportunity to work with Littleton & Harestock and Headbourne Worthy Parish Council's on the North Winchester design code to align with Village Design Statements (VDS)
- (v) The opportunity to create a 15 minute neighbourhood.
- (vi) The Government's aspiration is that design codes become part of the local plan as an adopted tool, with potentially the equivalent weight as a local plan, but would have to go through a supplementary planning document process to achieve this.

In conclusion, the forum thanked Andy von Bradsky, the City of Winchester Trust and officers for the work carried out to date. The forum supported the proposal to focus on North Winchester as an area to commence the design code process, welcomed the opportunity to be a leader in this process going forward and noted that a Design Code Board, together with its terms of reference, would be established in due course.

RESOLVED:

1. That the presentation be received and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted; and
2. That North Winchester, as the initial area for the commencement of the design code process, be agreed.

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 Tippett-Cooper – Heritage Group

Progress updates from the group included:

- (i) The Buttercross – project works to commence during Summer 2023.

- (ii) Hyde Abbey Gateway – project works due to commence during Summer 2023.
- (iii) Repair works to the arch at Nun’s Stream due to commence following the trout spawning season.

RESOLVED:

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

10. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairperson reported that an issue had been identified with the grants programme, where work does not commence until the Town Grants Informal Group is established at the June Town Forum meeting and as such this does not report back until September losing three months in the process. The existing grants team were asked to work with the forum in the interim period between the new municipal year and June so that when this came forward next year the programme can be accelerated by three months. Councillors Batho and Becker were asked to continue their work on this informal group going forward.

RESOLVED:

That, an item ‘Review of the Winchester Town Vision’ be added to the 2023/24 work programme for March 2024.

11. **VOTE OF THANKS**

The forum were reminded that this was Councillor Craske’s last meeting as Chairperson of the forum and the last meeting of the municipal year. The forum thanked Councillor Craske for his hard work and dedication during his time as Chairperson of the forum, and particularly for his work on the development of the Winchester Town Vision and wished him well for the future.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.45 pm

Chairperson