

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**7 June 2012****Attendance:****Councillors:**

Collin (Chairman) (P)

E Berry

J Berry (P)

Green

Hiscock (P)

Hutchison

Mather (P)

Maynard (P)

Nelmes (P)

Pearce (P)

Pines (P)

Prowse (P)

Sanders (P)

Scott (P)

Tait (P)

Tod (P)

Weir (P)

Witt (P)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Humby (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Collin be elected Chairman and Councillor Maynard Vice-Chairman for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.

2. FUTURE MEETINGS**RESOLVED:**

That future meetings of the Forum be held on the following dates (commencing at 6.30pm):

- Wednesday 12 September 2012
- Wednesday 21 November 2012
- Wednesday 23 January 2013
- Wednesday 20 March 2013

3. **MINUTES**

During discussion, the Forum noted that they had discussed at the previous meeting whether the post of Tree Survey Officer should be appointed for a temporary period of two years to undertake the survey. However, the Corporate Director (Operations) explained that Personnel Committee would be considering a report to create a permanent post, as it was the Head of Human Resources' advice that there was effectively no additional cost to the Council between the two options.

The Forum also agreed that it discussed an additional alternative route during its consideration of the Hockley Viaduct report which had subsequently been considered by the Head of Access and Infrastructure.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 21 March 2012, be approved and adopted.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms McIntosh and Messers Carden, Gagg, Rutter, Cherrett, Geddes, Thomas and Blackman addressed the Forum in respect of Report WTF173 and their comments are set out below under the relevant item.

Mr Gibbons addressed the Forum in respect of Report WTF175 and his comments are set out below under the relevant item.

5. **THE VISION FOR WINCHESTER TOWN – PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

(Report WTF173)

Councillors Collin, Mather and Tod declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests as members of the City of Winchester Trust, which had commented on the Vision. These Councillors spoke and voted thereon.

Councillors J Berry, Collin, Maynard, Tait, Tod and Weir declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests as members of WinAcc, which had commented on the Vision. These Councillors spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Weir declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of the Report's references to Barton Farm due to the proximity of the development to her property. However, she did not consider the interest to be prejudicial and therefore spoke and voted thereon.

The Corporate Director (Operations) introduced the Report and recommended that subject to any minor changes and alterations to its presentation, the published document be referred to Cabinet to endorse.

During public participation, Ms McIntosh and Messers Carden, Gagg, Rutter, Cherrett, Geddes, Thomas and Blackman addressed the Forum.

In summary, Ms McIntosh welcomed the Vision and its environmental aspirations, the combined heat and power scheme, and recommended the advice that could be available from bioregional.com. She also highlighted the need for new affordable housing to be built to a decent standard and size.

Mr Carden (City of Winchester Trust) explained that the 2020 Steering Group had been formed by the Trust and WinAcc to follow on their work arising from their “24 hours to save Winchester” initiative. Whilst welcoming the Vision, the Steering Group recommended that the Forum adopt an action plan to ensure that the aspirations within the Vision become reality.

Mr Gagg (WinAcc) also welcomed the Vision but recommended that it should include greater reference to attempts to reduce traffic within the town centre and attract innovative, carbon reduction businesses.

Mr Rutter highlighted five principle issues from his submission in the Report. In summary, these were that the Vision should focus on “visitors”, rather than “tourists”; it should promote Winchester as a destination for walkers; promote public access to a historic house; be more considerate to Winchester’s elderly residents and visitors; and install a play sculpture in or near the High Street.

Mr Cherrett highlighted the need to improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

Mr Geddes (University of Winchester) spoke in support of the submission from the Winchester Fit for Future Group. In summary, he suggested that a new leisure facility be supported (with a 50 metre swimming pool) at the Bar End playing fields by a partnership of stakeholders, including the University. He highlighted the Group’s submission in the Report which explained in detail the viability of the proposal and stressed that there was a short window of opportunity to take advantage of the Olympic Legacy, low public sector interest rates and potential Lottery funding.

Mr Thomas (City of Winchester Residents’ Association) suggested that the Vision should be revised to take account of current, wider economic circumstances; that the Council should review the development potential of its estates; the importance of subsidised public transport and the need to reference residents’ associations within the Vision.

Mr Blackman raised concerns that the Vision appeared to give the false impression that development at Barton Farm was “a done deal” and had the support of the majority of Winchester’s residents. In summary, he suggested that instead the Forum should stand with the residents of Winchester and defend the town against commercial development pressures.

At the end of the public participation period, the Forum agreed that all the respondents in the report be thanked for their considered comments on the Vision.

The Forum noted a report on the feasibility of a new leisure centre would be considered by a future meeting of Cabinet and, following debate, it was agreed that the existing wording of the Vision did not preclude the development of a larger facility.

The Forum discussed in detail the issues raised by each of the presenters and the issues raised in the Report. Following debate, the Forum agreed to recommend the draft Vision to Cabinet for approval (subject to delegating to the Corporate Director, in consultation with the Chairman, further minor amendments to the text and presentation) the following amendments:

- Greater emphasis on walking and the possibility of a north-south route, as suggested by Mr Rutter;
- Ensure all relevant cross references to other policy documents;
- Reference community groups and residents' associations;
- That the wording of the Vision should better reflect the unresolved situation regarding Barton Farm and that if it proceeds the development and its integration should be guided by the Ten Principles for the Future of Winchester;
- Remove references to drinking fountains as this was considered too detailed for the Vision;
- That the Vision should aspire to improve the standards of all rented housing.

Regarding the suggestion from the 2020 Group that the Vision should include an action plan, following debate, it was agreed that officers report to a future meeting with a detailed response.

RESOLVED:

1. That, having considered the public consultations set out in the Report and the presentations at this meeting, Cabinet be recommended to endorse the Vision for Winchester document (subject to the amendments above and any further minor amendments and changes to presentation, to be delegated to the Corporate Director (Operations), in consultation with the Chairman).

2. That the respondents to the draft Vision be thanked for their comments.

3. That a report be presented to a future meeting of the Forum providing a detailed response to the 2020 Group's suggestion for an Action Plan for the Vision.

6. **WINCHESTER BID2 PROPOSAL AND UPDATE**

(Report WTF172 refers)

The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) explained that the BID2 Proposal as set out in the appendix of the Report (CAB2329 refers) had been agreed by Cabinet at their meeting held on 17 May 2012. In response to a question, the Forum noted that a report on street scene issues and the BID was being prepared for Town Forum's September meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

7. **TOWN FORUM GRANTS**

(Report WTF174 refers)

The Report set out details regarding the future administration of grants from the town account.

RESOLVED:

1) That the proposals of the Winchester Town Forum (Town Account Grants) Informal Group set out in the paper be approved to:

a) support the Town Forum contribution made towards core grants for Partner Organisations in 2012/13, and seek to maintain this proportion – as far as budgetary pressures allow – over the next two financial years;

b) discontinue Town Forum contributions towards core funding for other organisations (i.e. those that are not Partner Organisations) from 2013/14;

c) Confirm its intention to create a new Town Forum Project Funding Scheme of £5,000 from 2013/14 (which is approximately equal to the amount given in 2012/13 in contributions to those 'other' organisations as above) subject to approval of the budget for 2013/14 by full Council;

d) delegate the Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) in consultation with the Winchester Town Forum (Town Account Grants) Informal Group to establish the criteria and procedures for the Winchester Town Project Funding Scheme, and invite applications from the winter 2012 for the following financial year, and

e) recognises the need for officer support for its grant funding activities and supports the consequent cost implications (per paragraph 7.6 below).

f)

- 2) **That the following be recommended to Cabinet:**
- a) **the re-introduction of an informal group convened by the Assistant Director (Active Communities) and including the Portfolio Holders relevant to the grant applications received to review officer recommendations for all grants;**
 - b) **that a Member of the Winchester Town Forum (Town Account Grants) Informal Group be invited to sit on the above informal group when applications or Service Level Agreements of relevance to the Town Account are being considered;**
 - c) **that it support the overall approach outlined in this Report and approves its introduction with immediate effect.**

8. **MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS FOR ST FAITH'S MEADOW**

(Report WTF175 refers)

Councillors J Berry, Maynard, Pines and Tod declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in respect of this item as ordinary members of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. They all spoke and voted thereon.

As part of his introduction to the Report, the Head of Landscape and Open Spaces highlighted a number of amendments to be made to the Report. This included amendments to:

- paragraph 1.2 "In 2005/06 Cabinet allocated an annual grant of £5,000 from Planning (Environmental Improvements) Grants budget for..."
- paragraph 1.5 "In 2005/06 Cabinet allocated a final grant of £7,000 from planning (Environmental Improvements) Grants budget for further works at St Faith's Meadow to..."
- Insert Paragraph 1.6 "By the end of 2011, the Wildlife Trust had completed all the preparatory work (wildlife surveys, tree surveys etc.) for the grant application. The Council was advised that £5,000 of the grant originally allocated in 2009 remained unspent. With agreement of the Assistant Director for High Quality Environment, this environmental grant was re-allocated to provide financial support to the Meon Valley Project in 2010/11. Full details of the work undertaken by the Wildlife Trust at St Faith's Meadow since April 2009 are provided in Appendix 2."

The Head of Landscape and Open Spaces also explained that a report from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (The Wildlife Trust) had been produced after the publication of the Report and was available to Members on

request. This report set out details of work undertaken from 2009 and the preparation of the Higher Level Stewardship application.

During public participation, Mr Gibbons (a resident of Clausentum Road, Winchester) addressed the Forum. In summary, he explained the failures of previous attempts to manage the Meadow, including dredging the canal and dumping the spoil on the banks, draining the area, and strimming the nettles. He therefore suggested that Council should closely monitor the progress of its agreement with the Wildlife Trust to ensure both the restoration of the Meadow and value for money.

In response, the Head of Landscape and Open Spaces agreed that past management of the Meadow had failed to produce improvement and that a new approach was required. He advised that the new proposals included removal of a number of trees, particularly the non-native poplars (planted in the 1970s) which are considered to be damaging the habitat. Along with minor adjustments to the flow of water on the site, it was envisaged that this would help reduce the dominance of nettles. It was anticipated that the programme of works lead by the Wildlife Trust would allow Natural England to re-classify the Site of Special Scientific Interest from its current status of "Unfavourable Declining" to "Unfavourable Recovering" and ultimately "Favourable". He also confirmed that the management of the Meadow and delivery of the works programme would be monitored by Natural England, in addition to the Council.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Remnant (The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust) explained how the Trust would engage the local community in the restoration of the Meadow and the Forum noted the successful management of the Winnall Moors.

At the conclusion of debate, the Forum welcomed the proposals and agreed the recommendations as set out. In addition, the Forum agreed to consider the management of the town's meadows as part of its work programme.

RESOLVED:

1. That the successful entry of St Faith's Meadow into Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) and Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLS) with effect from 1 March 2012 be noted.

2. **That Cabinet be recommended that Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust be offered a ten year lease of land at St Faith's Meadow and that Head of Legal Services settle the detailed arrangements having regard to the principles set out in paragraph 1.13 of the Report.**

3. **That Cabinet be recommended that the Council enters into a Service Level Agreement to be settled by the Head of Landscape and Open Spaces with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, providing a grant of £4,000 per year (subject to an**

annual inflationary uplift derived from February CPI, starting from February 2013) over ten years for the management of St Faith's Meadow and delivery of the ELS and HLS schemes. This will pre-commit a total budget of £40k at today's prices.

9. **2012/13 WORK PROGRAMME AND APPOINTMENTS**

(Report WTF171 refers)

The Forum discussed Councillors' scope to communicate with the Police and, following a debate, agreed the relevant recommendations as set out below.

The Chairman explained that he would be inviting an officer from the County Council to update the next meeting of the Forum on evening bus services serving Winchester Town.

From their debate on the Reports above, the Forum had agreed to consider the management of the town's meadows and requested a future report on a possible action plan on the Vision for Winchester document. At the conclusion of the discussion, it was agreed that the Forum would forward their suggested future discussion topics (which could include sports provision and young people's facilities) to the Head of Democratic Services. The Forum delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Operations), in consultation with the Chairman, to set the detailed work programme.

RESOLVED:

1. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director (Operations), in consultation with the Chairman, to set the detailed 2012/13 work programme.
2. That the Town Account Informal Group be continued with a membership of Councillors J Berry, Collin, Mather and Maynard.
4. That the Town Account Grants Informal Group be continued with a membership of Councillors Collin, Pines, Prowse, Tait and Witt.
5. That the Safer Neighbourhood Panel be discontinued.
6. That representatives of the Police be invited to attend a future meeting of the Forum to report on progress on the Partnership and Communities Together meetings and wider Policing matters.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.45pm

Chairman