

# High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 4 March 2014

Time: 7.12 - 9.35 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor A R Green  
(in the Chair)

Councillors M Hussain JP, K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, I Bates, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, R B Colomb, C A Ditta, R Farmer, M Hanif, A E Hill, M Hussain, M E Knight, Ms P L Lee, S F Parker, B E Pearce, C Shafique MBE, T Snaith and Ms J D Wassell

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Graham and A Hussain JP

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Mr Oliver O'Dell Chief Executive, HWBIDCo  
Chief Inspector Colin Seaton Thames Valley Police

## **38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2014 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

## **39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of Interest.

## **40 UPDATE FROM HWBIDCO**

The Chairman was pleased to introduce to the Committee, Mr Oliver O'Dell, Chief Executive of the HIWBIDco. Mr O'Dell was invited to provide the Committee with a update on the work of the HIWBIDco.

Mr O'Dell explained that four new Board members had joined, drawn from the wide and varied interests of the town centre's businesses and economy. He informed the meeting that five new stakeholder groups had been created and that a more strategic approach had been taken at Board level.

Members heard that the BIDCo had successfully renewed the towns Purple Flag accreditation for another two years by working closely with a number of partners including Wycombe District Council. Mention was made of the Safer Business Award with distinction that was received for the Safe and Secure business security partnership, which had made the HWBIDCo one of the leading partnerships nationally in terms of procedures and policies.

In addition, he updated Members on the Enterprise HQ project which aspired to use empty commercial space to creatively support young entrepreneurs to develop within the town.

Other issues discussed with Mr O'Dell included:

- Employment of a new Town Ranger
- Wycombe in Bloom project
- Improvements to the gable end of the Brunel Railway shed
- Reducing commercial space
- Security partnerships
- Town Centre Events, Frogmoor
- Enterprise HQ project

Mr O'Dell emphasised the importance of the Council's backing for the aims of the BIDCo and its support for businesses. He said he wanted a constructive relationship with officers at Wycombe District Council, adding that it was important to work together towards their shared objectives for the town.

#### **41 UPDATE FROM THAMES VALLEY POLICE**

Chief Inspector Colin Seaton, Thames Valley Police was welcomed by the Chairman and invited to speak to the Committee to provide an update on police matters within the town. He spoke to the Committee about the performance of the Thames Valley Police within the town.

The Chief inspector presented the performance data and informed the meeting that whilst crime had reduced, there was an increase in reports of robbery from business properties, domestic violence with injury and sexual offences.

Members were informed that the increase in incidents of domestic violence and sexual offences could be due to more victims reporting the incidents. The chief inspector added that there would be certain amount of under reporting in relation to domestic violence and emphasised the importance of encouraging victims to report incidents.

The Chief Inspector informed the meeting that Wycombe was the best performing police area in the Thames Valley and the envy of Police Area's across the country. In summing up, he concluded that crime remained low and that strong partnerships were in place with good ethical working practices to tackle crime.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Inspector for coming to the meeting.

#### **42 MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal presentation from the Major Project and Estates Executive on the major projects currently being undertaken to regenerate the area. These included:

- Wycombe Sports and Leisure Centre and Handy X Hub project

- Cressex Island
- Hughenden Quarter
- Improvements to the market and town centre property acquisitions

Members were informed that the refurbishment of two prominent shop units within the Old Town would help accelerate the regeneration programme and also provided Wycombe District Council with the opportunity to participate in future plans for the Chilterns Shopping Centre.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

#### **43 SITE OPTIONS FOR AN ADDITIONAL CEMETERY**

The report considered by the Committee sought Members' views on suggested sites for consideration by officers for the provision of an additional cemetery for High Wycombe. Members were informed that the current High Wycombe cemetery capacity was sufficient for some 20 to 25 years.

During discussions, Members suggested that Abbey Barn and Terriers Farm be considered as potential sites for a cemetery. A Member felt that the possibility of working in partnership with Parish Councils in need of their own cemeteries should be investigated.

It was mentioned that land in the town should be safeguarded as a potential cemetery site and that a proportion of the Council's CIL income should be reserved to meet the potential costs of bringing a future town cemetery into use. This would be funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy sum allocated to the Committee.

The Chairman requested that Members forward any suggestions to the Head of Community for consideration.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee request officers to consider Abbey Barn and Terriers Farm as potential sites for a cemetery

#### **44 COMMUNITY GRANTS**

The report before the Committee detailed that the community grants programme was for the benefit of voluntary and community sector organisations operating in the unparished wards of High Wycombe.

Members recalled that an annual budget of £20,000 was recommended by the Committee, divided as £10,000 for Community Facility Grants and £10,000 for Community Support Grants. The maximum award for community support grants was £1,500. The report showed that after two years funds were almost fully allocated.

During discussions, some Members queried the accessibility of the grants to all voluntary sector organisations within the unparished area.

Members requested that a 2014/15 annual report on community grants be presented to the Committee to coincide with decisions on the Committee's budget.

A proposal to increase the Community Support Grant to £20,000 was put to the vote and failed.

**RESOLVED:** That the 2014/15 annual report on the community grants be presented to the Committee to coincide with decisions on the Committee's budget.

**45 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED:** That the Work Programme be noted.

**46 SPECIAL HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE MEETING**

Members were informed that a Special High Wycombe Town Committee had been scheduled for Wednesday 26 March 2014 commencing at 7pm. The meeting was needed to discuss the New Local Plan.

**47 DISTRICT SOLICITOR**

The Chairman thanked the District Solicitor for all his hard work over the years and wished him a very happy retirement.

---

Chairman

**The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:**

Miss C MacKenzie	Principal Democratic Services Officer
Mr D Ruddock	District Solicitor
Mr C Brocklehurst	Major Projects and Property Executive
Ms E Jewell	Head of Community