

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 16 September 2014

Time: 7.02 - 9.23 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, R Farmer, M Hanif, A E Hill, A Hussain, M Hussain, M E Knight, Ms R Knight, Ms P L Lee, B E Pearce, C Shafique MBE, T Snaith and Ms J D Wassell

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C A Ditta, S Graham, Miss S Manir and S F Parker

ALSO PRESENT:

Neighbourhood Inspector Tim McGirr Thames Valley Police
Mr John Shaw Chiltern Rangers Community Interest Company
Councillor P R Turner
Councillor A Slater

11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2014 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13 UPDATE FROM THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Local Neighbourhood Inspector Tim McGirr of Thames Valley Police was welcomed to the meeting and provided an update on the performance of the Thames Valley Police within the town. He also spoke about forthcoming national initiatives to improve accreditation of police officers and interaction between forces across the country.

With regard to performance within the town, the Committee was informed that incidences of many crimes had reduced, and in particular there had been reductions in violence against the person, mobile phone theft and theft from vehicles. In relation to the latter, education campaigns about the dangers of leaving valuables in vehicles had proved very effective in improving performance. Inspector McGirr reported that the car parks at the Swan and Eden Centre in

particular were amongst the safest in the country and that performance had improved with regard to detection rates, particularly in respect of burglary. The Committee was advised that targets for the coming year would focus on maintaining or improving performance, including in relation to reducing incidences of domestic violence, which was often under-reported. In response to questions from members the Inspector reported that the force operated a 'positive arrest' policy in relation to domestic violence.

The Inspector advised that appropriate use of stop and search powers remained an issue of concern both in High Wycombe town and nationally. The Committee heard that further work was being done to look at how stop and search powers were being applied, and this includes community partnership involvement. He explained that in relation to, for example, drugs searches it might be the case that several occupants of a vehicle were searched where only one occupant had committed a crime; therefore a more targeted approach towards stop and search was being adopted.

In relation to community work the Committee heard that the force was working to regenerate Neighbourhood Action Groups; consideration may also be given to establishing a lay panel to allow more specific monitoring of the crime figures within the area.

The Committee noted the information which had been presented and the Chairman thanked the Inspector for coming to the meeting.

14 UPDATE FROM THE CHILTERN RANGERS

Mr John Shaw, Managing Director of the Chiltern Rangers Community Interest Company, gave a presentation to the Committee detailing the achievements of the Chiltern Rangers over its first full year of operation.

Members heard that the aim of the Chiltern Rangers was to work with communities across all wards to achieve positive outcomes through conservation, in order to benefit both those who became involved and their communities. Members were invited to identify any groups within their wards which might benefit from working with the Rangers, and to assist in increasing the profile of the organisation within the community.

In response to a question about how the organisation was funded, Mr Shaw reported that it was a Community Interest Company (CIC) and not a charity. As a CIC the majority of its income was earned, although it was also eligible for grants and received donations. A current area of focus was to seek to diversify income streams. The Committee heard that Chiltern Rangers worked with a variety of public and private organisations and people, including landowners, to help to engage communities; its area of operation was not limited by boundaries but it currently worked predominantly within Wycombe district and the South Buckinghamshire area, and occasionally further afield in areas such as Aylesbury, Wendover and Wembley.

The Committee expressed support for the work being carried out by the Chiltern Rangers and the Chairman thanked Mr Shaw for his presentation and wished them well in the future.

15 ALLOTMENT REVIEW UPDATE

The Committee considered an update report detailing the allotment provision within the parishes in Wycombe District, with a view to identifying the opportunity for people on the current waiting list for an allotment within the unparished area of High Wycombe to be offered an allotment plot outside the town. It was confirmed that as at August 2014 there were 32 individuals looking for an allotment within the High Wycombe town area. The review of parish allotments had concluded that there was not a significant volume of surplus capacity available for High Wycombe residents to apply for where parishes accept non-residents on to waiting lists.

During discussions Members expressed concern about the cost of feasibility studies which would need to be undertaken before proposals could be progressed. It was confirmed that this related to the need for soil surveys, and as such were a necessary part of the process.

The Committee was asked to consider the findings. Three options were outlined in the report, and the Committee was invited to select an option(s) to recommend to Cabinet as required.

The Committee agreed that the options as set out in the report were not exclusive to each other and that if required all three could be pursued. It was also suggested that Terriers be added as a site for consideration, in order to seek to increase the provision within the town wards.

RESOLVED: That the Committee recommends to Cabinet

- (i) To continue to monitor the trend annually in terms of the number of people on the Wycombe District Council waiting list;
- (ii) To proceed with feasibility studies of Desborough Castle, at a cost of £10,000, and Castlefield Woods, at a cost of £13,000, to be funded from Special Expenses working balances;
- (iii) To wait until the Abbey Barn South development and Terriers site developments take place, which could provide additional sites within the town.

16 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY LOCAL ALLOCATION

The Committee received a report which presented the recommendations of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group. The Group had been convened as a result of a recommendation at the meeting held on 10 June 2014 in order to consider suggestions for schemes to be recommended to Cabinet on the use of the 15% local allocation of CIL funding received from developments in the unparished area which would be available for infrastructure improvements in

2015/16 (currently expected to total £200,000). The Infrastructure Officer advised that the Town Committee's recommendation would be considered by Cabinet in February 2015, with funds to be available from April 2015.

Members considered the recommendations and the Infrastructure Officer responded to more detailed questions about the projects. After discussion and clarification Members endorsed the Group's recommendations.

The Committee also noted the possibility that the allocation for 2015/16 might reach £230,000 following review in December. If this was the case the Committee recommended that the £30,000 additional funding be allocated towards the redevelopment of Pastures Church to a full scale community building.

RESOLVED: That the Committee recommends to Cabinet:

(i) the 15% local allocation of CIL funding received from developments in the unparished area for 2015/16 as follows:

Scheme	Proposed allocation
Investment in Frogmoor which may include works to establish a café, outdoor play area and a centrepiece feature including a water feature	£70,000
Feasibility and business case for a redeveloped café on the Rye including toilets	£30,000
Re-opening of the Paul's Row toilets	£30,000
Fire safety works to building adjacent to Kingsmead Depot, Fennels Road to enable use of upper floors	£10,000
Refurbishment of the Guildhall to enable greater use	£5,000
Community notice boards in locations across the town	£15,000
Redevelopment of Pastures Church to full scale community building	£20,000
Feasibility study for the extension of the changing rooms at Shelley Road playing fields to provide a new community facility	£20,000

(ii) should the total allocation increase to £230,000 following the review in December, the extra £30,000 be allocated to the project for the redevelopment of Pastures Church to full scale community building.

17 ADOPTION OF WORDING TO IDENTIFY PROJECTS IN RECEIPT OF FUNDING FROM THE HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANT

The Committee considered a report which detailed the conclusions of a working group which had been convened to consider a proposal to develop a logo and / or form of wording to identify those projects which had been funded by the High Wycombe Town Committee Community Support Grant, to enable these to be distinguished from those projects which have been funded from the Council's General Fund.

The Working Group had been established as a result of the Committee's decision at its meeting on 10 June to support the proposal. Following the meeting the Group had taken advice from the District Solicitor and Corporate Communications Team Leader, and had agreed a form of wording for grant recipients to be requested to use.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommends to Cabinet

(i) that organisations in receipt of a High Wycombe Town Committee Community Support Grant be requested to use the following preferred wording on publicity materials to acknowledge receipt of the funding: "Funded (or part funded) by the High Wycombe Town Committee of Wycombe District Council";

(ii) that a half-yearly information sheet be issued to the High Wycombe Town Committee listing the grants awarded.

18 INFORMATION SHEETS

RESOLVED: That the list of information sheets issued since the last meeting be noted.

19 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's draft work programme, looking ahead to March 2015, was presented for review.

The Committee heard that, in relation to the item scheduled to come to Committee in November 2014 on a proposed Linking Proposal with the Philippines, further work was needed and the commitment to progress the proposal remained uncertain. It was therefore agreed to defer this item until further notice.

Further information was requested in relation to responsibilities for memorials within the Town, and officers undertook to obtain this in order to determine whether the matter would fall within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted and the item on a Linking Proposal with the Philippines be deferred until further notice.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as they contain exempt information as defined in Regulation 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, more particularly as follows:

Minute 20 – Cemetery Site Options Appraisal

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information (Paragraph 3, Part 1 of schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972)

It was considered that the need to maintain the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosure because disclosure could prejudice the Council's position in any future purchase process or negotiations.

20 CEMETERY SITE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Committee was reminded that at its meeting on 10 June 2014, Members had received a report which provided an update on the results of a site options appraisal of a selected number of potential cemetery sites and sought members' views on options for progressing the project. The Committee had recommended to Cabinet that further investigations be undertaken in relation to the sites at Queensway, Abbey Barn land south of the M40, Terriers Farm, Coates Lane and Hillbottom Road, to include consultation with parish councils on the potential for shared costs and an assessment of land availability and likely cost.

The report before the Committee provided an update on the work which had been carried out. Members heard that a desk-based valuation exercise had been undertaken and surrounding parish and town councils had been approached in relation to the potential for shared costs and an assessment of land availability. Three options were presented for consideration. In relation to options 1 (proposing further feasibility work in relation to the Queensway site) and option 3 (to select the Queensway site as the most cost effective option and, as the cemetery has capacity for a further 20 years, defer spend on feasibility work for 5 years) the Committee considered that these options be rejected due to the site being located too far outside the town. Members instead agreed that further enquiries should be made in relation to the Coates Lane, Abbey Barn and Terriers sites, with a further report to the Committee once this has been undertaken.

RESOLVED: That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that officers be asked to make further enquiries in relation to the Coates Lane, Abbey Barn and Terriers sites, to include an assessment of whether the land owner

would be willing to sell, the likely purchase price for each site and whether there may be any associated planning issues, with a report to be brought back to the Committee in due course.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Mr I Hunt	Democratic Services Manager
Lund	Democratic Services
Mr G Coll	Developer Contributions Officer
Ms S Randall	Community Commissioning Manager