

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 12 June 2018

Time: 7.00 - 8.58 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Clarke
(in the Chair)

Councillors K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, M Asif, H Bull, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, M P Davy, S Graham, A R Green, M Hanif, M A Hashmi, A E Hill, M Hussain JP, A Hussain, M E Knight, R Raja and S K Raja (Vice-Chair).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms A Baughan, R Farmer, M Hussain, B E Pearce, N J B Teesdale and Ms J D Wassell.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Barnes and K Wood.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrea Baughan, Ray Farmer, Maz Hussain, Brian Pearce, Nigel Teesdale and Julia Wassell.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Alan Hill & Sarfaraz Raja wished it to be recorded that, in relation to Item 5 (Town Centre Masterplan Consultation Update), they were both members of the Planning Committee.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 24 April 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

4 UPDATE ON CEMETERY SECURITY

The Head of Community Services, Elaine Jewell, informed the Committee that last year a petition for 24 hour CCTV had been referred to the Committee by Cabinet for consideration. It was noted that five measures had been identified which were as follows:

1. Additional fencing on the northern footpath side - £20,000.

2. Additional planting along the eastern and southern edges – existing maintenance budget as minimal cost.
3. Installation of locally recorded CCTV at the two main gateways and on the rear entrance to the Snowdrop Garden - £3,000.
4. Installation of higher gates at the Lodge, Office and Snowdrop entrances - £9,000.
5. Permanent closure of the Hampden Road/Snowdrop entrance – no cost if combined with 4.

The Head of Community Services explained that measures 1 & 2 were currently outstanding as the fencing was to go on top of a wall that had fallen twice. Members were informed that measure 4 was not required at present due to the CCTV that was in place.

It was noted that no issues of vandalism or damage to memorials had since been reported to the Cemetery Officer who worked and lived on the site.

Members were informed that for a short period the public toilets on site were being used for drug dealing and that the Council had been working with the Police to stop that. It was hoped that the CCTV cameras would provide good footage to help the Police with their investigations.

Members thanked the officers involved in getting the CCTV cameras installed promptly.

RESOLVED: That an update report be brought back before the Committee in a years' time with the caveat that officers could report back to the Committee before then if needed if any additional issues arose.

5 WRITTEN UPDATE ON THE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION

The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects, John Callaghan, informed Members that a consultation had taken place on Phase 5 at the back end of 2017 on part of the High Wycombe Town Centre Masterplan. It was noted that the alternative road layout aimed to provide environmental benefits, improve journey time, provide benefits for pedestrians and help improve safety (with regard to reducing runaway vehicles coming down the hill). It was noted that the one-way system would be changed to a two-way system and would not permit any right turns at the cross roads at the end of the High Street. This junction would be signalled with an all-red phase for pedestrians. Members were informed that elsewhere informal crossings would be installed and that continued provision would be given for loading / unloading, disabled bays, etc.

The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects explained that mixed consultation results had been received and that this subject had been brought before the Committee last October but now included some worthwhile changes. It was noted that one of the worthwhile changes was the introduction of an informal crossing across Queen Victoria Road where it would have two lanes. Members were informed that the introduction of a taxi rank had been considered in Easton Street, to feed the rank in the High Street, but it had been felt that this would affect the

loading / unloading provision. Changes had also been made to improve vehicular access to the Police Station. It was noted that the Library gardens footpath had not been included, neither had a bus stop on Abbey Way.

Members were informed that it was proposed to erect a compound on the Rye from 20 June 2018. It was noted that works would start on the 2 July 2018 and should end in April 2019. It was noted that the works would be disruptive, particularly on Queen Victoria Road.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- That access to Wendover Way from Marlow Hill would be via the London Road with a U-turn at the roundabout with Gordon Road. It was believed that the alternative route suggested would not affect air pollution / air quality.
- That subject to regular enforcement by parking attendants the loading / unloading area will remain.
- Members suggested that a pedestrian crossing between the Town Hall and the WDC offices was needed. The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects explained that the crossing was further to the south because the suggested location was not a safe place to have a pedestrian crossing because the road was 3 lanes at that point, and that it would also affect the traffic flow. It was explained that the crossing suggested in the report included a central island and road markings which was believed to be remarkably better than was currently in Queen Victoria Road. The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects agreed to take this point back to BCC.
- That Bucks County Council (BCC) continued to get the best out of the bollards system in the High Street and whilst the reliability of the bollards was sometimes a problem the access controls remained in place. It was noted there was some money in the BCC budget to have the bollards replaced in the future and for some to be installed in St Marys Road.
- That the area outside the Hub could be used by a hearse and for a drop off service to the family of mourners and was also used as a temporary bus layby when needed. It was unfortunately not big enough to facilitate everyone that might attend a funeral.
- Members felt that no right turns would not work due to the lack of enforceability and that traffic movements as a whole needed to be carefully thought through otherwise the traffic would come to a standstill. The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects advised that the benefit of the scheme of speeding up traffic would be undermined by facilitating ‘all moves’ at the junction.
- Members gave feedback on what they believed to be ‘problem areas’ which was when travelling downhill to Castle Street which was felt to be okay when quiet but took a long time at peak times. Also access across Desborough Road and Bridge Street – it was questioned who had right of way as there were no road signs in place. It was felt that the two way system would have little benefit to drivers, particularly those travelling from outside the Hub up Amersham Hill. The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects explained that the benefits of having a right hand turn at Easton Street did not outweigh the benefits as a whole.

- The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects gave the Committee an example of an informal crossing that he believed worked well, that of Spittal Street in Marlow.
- The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects assured Members that some of the new lampposts would be strong enough to take the weight of hanging baskets, banners and lighting.

The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects went on to explain that with regard to the compound, the intention was that the team would make a planning application with more office space/facilities size which would allow the project to be run more efficiently, but that an initial compound without the full facilities could be established under permitted development rights (a planning application was not required). Members noted that in addition a separate materials store was proposed at the junction of Easton Street and Abbey Way as well as another satellite compound in Cressex to serve the phase 6 works.

The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects explained to Members that the proposed area on the Rye was the most suitable option for the site compound. It was noted that these works would be an intrusion on the Rye and would last in duration of 9-10 months and the land on the Rye would be restored to its original condition.

It was noted that the phase works would be taking place at the same time as the works on Cressex Road and that the same contractor would be used. It was noted that £3.2million had been set aside for the proposed works.

The Chairman reminded Members, particularly those on the Planning Committee, that a planning application might be received in the future if the site needed to be enlarged or have a change of use, and that members of the planning committee might wish to refrain from making observations.

In the ensuing discussion about the compound the following points were noted:

- It was stated that the Rye was considered a jewel in High Wycombe's crown.
- Local Members were incredibly disappointed that they had not been consulted on the proposal and stated that the first they had heard of it had been at the beginning of May. The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects agreed to take that point back to the project team.
- That it had been stated that the contractor did not like having to share the entrance of Railway Car Park with the general public, something Members felt would also be an issue at the Rye.
- Concerns were raised about the nearby water plant that supplied 1million+ people.
- One Member stated that she would be writing to the Leader to ask why local members had not been consulted and when she / Cabinet had first heard about the Rye proposal.
- That this proposal would not preclude the use to showmen / fairgrounds but might encourage them to use alternative locations.
- It was questioned whether WDC would be receiving any revenue for this proposal and if so whether it could be used to improve the toilets on the Rye. The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects stated that he did know

about the revenue side of things but would ask the question. The Head of Planning and Sustainability, commented that this was a joint project which would be funded via a Government grant and CIL, so any charge for the use of the Rye would be funded from the project budget. It may be that there was an administration fee for issuing the license. It was noted that the contract included the land being put back to the same state as now.

- Vacant yards in Cressex Industrial Estate were suggested as an alternative location. The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects explained that location wise they would not be ideal from an operational perspective.
- A split site Railway Car Park and outside the WDC offices was suggested which would allow there to be compounds at either end of the site.

Councillor Tony Green proposed that the Committee asked the Leader to advise the relevant officers that the High Wycombe Town Committee (HWTC) did not support the issuing of a licence to Bucks County Council and contractors to use The Rye for the use of the compound, which Councillor Lesley Clarke seconded. Upon being put to the vote, this was agreed (no Member spoke against the motion or voted against it). Members of the Planning Committee abstained.

RESOLVED The Leader be asked to advise relevant officers and project team be advised that the HWTC does not support the issuing of a licence to Bucks County Council and contractors to use The Rye for the use of the compound.

6 VERBAL UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF AGREEING THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) TO REPAIR / RENEW THE HIGH STREET

The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects gave Members a verbal update on the progress of agreeing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to repair / renew the High Street.

It was noted that the majority of the High Street and surrounding areas were considered to be conservation areas.

Members were informed that over the years the Highway funding had never been in abundance so had focused on Category 1 defects which they had repaired with black top patchwork. It was noted that Bucks County Council had been responsible for the repairs made to the Town Centre and that better quality materials were used on an adhoc basis.

The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects explained that what had been missing had been a more formal arrangement. It was noted that WDC had drafted a memorandum of understanding which stated the willingness to fund repair works in the Town Centre using CIL. Members were informed that there was £106,000 in the capital programme to use for this purpose and that BCC would be responsible for carrying out monthly inspections. It was hoped the memorandum of understanding agreement, once signed, would ensure that the Town Centre was better and continually maintained in the future. Members were informed that it was hoped this agreement would be completed by the end of summer / end of September at the very latest.

The Chairman invited the County Councillor for the area in question, Councillor Lesley Clarke, to address the Committee. Councillor Lesley Clarke explained that unfortunately the change of staff at BCC had resulted in a delay with regard to the agreement being signed but that she hoped this could be done without further delay.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- One Member stated that he would have preferred the money allocated to changing the road layout to have been spent on making repairs to the High Street.
- That it was believed acrylic grouting would be used to make repairs in the High Street.
- The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects explained that the quality of the repair works being done relied on the contractors appointed doing a good job. It was felt that improvements with regard to the quality of work had been made over the years.
- It was suggested that a single surface be used in the Pauls Row area which would in turn help people with mobility issues. The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects stated that he was unable to comment on the Paul's Row area but that it might be a subject that was revisited in the future. It was requested that if it was revisited that local Members be consulted.
- One Member stated that he believed the High Street needed to be decluttered from street clutter. The Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects informed Members that decluttering took place in 2011 when a high volume of unnecessary street signs had been removed.

The Chairman thanked the Team Leader – Infrastructure and Projects for answering Members questions.

7 INFORMATION SHEETS

RESOLVED: That Information Sheet Q4 Budgetary Control Outturn 2017/18 be noted.

8 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's draft work programme looking ahead to March 2019 was presented for review.

It was requested that an agenda item be added for September to allow discussion on the financial information sheets. It was suggested that an item currently scheduled for September on 'Update from HWBIDCo' be deferred to make space for this item.

RESOLVED: That the forward work programme be noted subject to the request above.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Mrs T Brown	Democratic Services Officer
Mr I Hunt	Democratic Services Manager
Mr J Callaghan	Team Leader (Environment and Infrastructure)
Ms E Jewell	Head of Community
Ms P Tollitt	Head of Planning & Sustainability