

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 25 November 2014

Time: 7.09 - 8.39 pm

PRESENT: Councillor A R Green
(in the Chair)

Councillors K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, I Bates, R B Colomb, C A Ditta, R Farmer, S Graham, M Hanif, A E Hill, M Hussain, M E Knight, B E Pearce, C Shafique MBE, T Snaith and Ms J D Wassell

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Hussain JP, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, A Hussain, Ms R Knight, Ms P L Lee, Miss S Manir and S F Parker

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr Oliver O'Dell Chief Executive, HWBIDCo

21 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman commenced the meeting by apologising for the delayed start. It was noted that this was due to a meeting of the Charter Trustees, held immediately before the Town Committee meeting, overrunning. Members noted that, as a public meeting, and in accordance with the legislation, meetings of the Town Committee were required to start at the stated published start time.

The Chairman stated that, as a result, the current set up should be reviewed, with the arrangement reverting back to the previous one of the Town Committee meeting prior to the Charter Trustee meetings and commencing its meetings at 6.30pm. An item would be added to the Committee's next meeting to review it.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2014 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

24 UPDATE FROM HWBIDCO

The Chairman welcomed to the Committee Mr Oliver O'Dell, Chief Executive of the HWBIDCo. Mr O'Dell was invited to provide the Committee with an update on the work of the HWBIDCo.

Mr O'Dell reported that October marked the start of the third year of operation of the BIDCo, and therefore represented a key period for delivery of the business plan and projects ahead of the re-affirmation ballot in 2016. He outlined the economic action plan for the BIDCo over the year, which was centred around 4 core aims: reduce commercial vacancy; support and enable a more sustainable leisure and hospitality economy in the town centre; actively seek to introduce new or start-up businesses to the BID area; and actively seek to improve the quality and role of partnership working in key economic locations.

He updated Members on the work which was being done to progress these aims, which included:

- developing the Enterprise HQ project to use empty commercial space to encourage new entrepreneurs within the town;
- building relationships with stakeholders to move key empty spaces within the BID area forward for new investment (e.g. the Brunel Shed and the Old Library);
- looking at supply and demand and working with existing independent premises in the town centre to develop cafes and a night-time economy;
- working to agree and deliver formal plans for Frogmoor.

Mr O'Dell emphasised the importance of the Council's support for the aims of the BIDCo, highlighting that it was important to work together towards a shared objective for the town. Members congratulated Mr O'Dell on the recent successful Christmas lights switch on which had been popular and well-attended.

The Chairman thanked Mr O'Dell for an informative presentation and the update was noted.

25 TOWN COMMUNITY FACILITIES UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which outlined progress made to date against the gaps identified by the member working group which had met in 2010 and 2011 to look at deficiencies in community facilities within the unparished area of High Wycombe. The report also outlined the further work which was proposed to be undertaken to address remaining deficiencies.

In relation to the information presented it was noted that the report stated that work to address the deficiency in Bowerdean was on hold because there was no suitable site within the ward. This was questioned, and officers were asked to liaise with Bowerdean ward members to review whether a suitable site may in fact be available.

In relation to Daws Hill / Abbey Barn, it was commented that whilst a facility would be implemented as part of the development of the Daws Hill site, it would be a number of years before the Daws Hill Centre was completed and functional as a community facility.

In relation to the proposed scheme for North Hughenden Quarter, Members requested further information on whether the site to be vacated by the District Scouts, the capital receipt from which would be allocated back to the scheme, had been valued. Officers were asked to provide further information on this.

RESOLVED: That the ongoing work to progress the findings of the 2010 Task and Finish Group report on community facility deficiencies in the unparished area of High Wycombe be supported, subject to Members' comments as outlined above.

26 ANNUAL FEES AND CHARGES - CEMETERY FEES FOR 2015/16

The Committee considered a report which proposed prices for burials, interments and other cemetery related charges to be applicable from 1 April 2015. It was noted that price increases of 1.2% (September 2014 CPI) were proposed in relation to Burial Rights, Memorial Permits, Saturday Fees and steel-framed burials. Three options were presented in relation to interment fees.

Additional information was provided in relation to the fees and charges levied by neighbouring authorities. From this it was noted that Wycombe's fees were generally lower than average, following the recommendation of the Committee in January 2014 to reduce fees for 2014/15.

In debate a motion was proposed for an increase to interment fees of current charge plus 10%. On being put to the vote the motion fell.

It was recommended that following the Council elections in 2015, consideration should be given to cemetery charges being set over a four year period rather than on an annual basis.

On a vote it was

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the proposed charges for burial rights, memorial charges, Saturday fees and steel-framed burials be agreed; and
- (ii) Option 2 (to retain the current pricing structure plus inflation of 1.2%) be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

27 INFORMATION SHEETS

The Committee received information sheets as listed on the agenda.

In relation to Information Sheet 05/2014 (Buckinghamshire County Council Devolved Services Update), it was noted that a decision had been taken by Buckinghamshire County Councillors to remain with Transport for Buckinghamshire and their contractors Ringway Jacobs for the delivery of services across the town. Members expressed concern that the decision had been taken by the County Council without consultation with the Town Committee, and agreed that a County Council representative should be invited to the next meeting to provide further information in relation to questions arising from the information sheet.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the information sheets be noted; and
- (ii) That a representative from Buckinghamshire County Council be invited to the next meeting to take questions in relation to the information provided.

28 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the forward work programme be noted.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Mr I Hunt	Democratic Services Manager
Ms E Lund	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Ms S Randall	Community Commissioning Manager