

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 15 September 2015

Time: 7.00 - 9.40 pm

PRESENT: Councillor A R Green
(in the Chair)

Councillors K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, Ms A Baughan, M Asif, H Bull, M Clarke, M P Davy, R Farmer, S Graham, M Hanif, M A Hashmi, A E Hill, M Hussain JP, M Hussain, M E Knight, B E Pearce, R Raja, S K Raja, N J B Teesdale and Ms J D Wassell.

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr Oliver O'Dell	Chief Executive, HWBIDCo
Mr Gary Saunders	Market Operator
Ms Phillipa Sawyer	Station Manager, Wycombe Sound

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs L M Clarke OBE and A Hussain.

9 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2015 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

11 UPDATE FROM HWBIDCO

The Committee welcomed Oliver O'Dell, Chief Executive of the HWBIDCo, to the meeting.

Mr O'Dell apologised for not being able to attend the last meeting of the Committee. He commenced by reminding the Committee that the BIDCo was an independent, business-led organisation with a Board comprising appointed and elected directors, which had a fixed term mandate of five years, two of which remained. He commented that inevitably, attention would be focussed on the legacy of the first BID term and a decision as to whether to pursue a second term and, if so, its priorities going forward. Mr O'Dell summarised the evolution of the company and highlighted that year 3, had been built around an ambition to become more visible

in order to differentiate the company from the Council, and in order to make it obvious in which initiatives it was instrumental.

Moving forward into year 4, Mr O'Dell explained that it was intended this was the year of engagement and collaboration. The Committee was informed that its input would be sought in relation to the following areas:

- How the Town Committee might consider financial support for some BIDCo activities (as background support so as not to jeopardise independence);
- What priorities the Town Committee might have with regard to an economic vision for the town centre and how these could align with the aspirations of the BIDCo;
- Where the BIDCo is seeking to drive strategic debates, how the Town Committee could contribute to the process, with particular reference to the Purple Flag and Thames and Chilterns in Bloom initiatives, and areas of work such as reducing empty commercial space and assisting in aligning diverse cultural interests through co-ordinated cultural activity.

In summary, Mr O'Dell also asked about the public toilets in Pauls Row and whether there was an opportunity to re-open the facility.

The Chairman thanked Mr O'Dell for his presentation, and commented that this Committee had previously agreed that the public toilets should be re-opened, funded by CIL money. It was noted that tenders had been completed for the project and the Council had confirmed that work would commence in quarter 3 of the year.

The Committee also wished to place on their thanks to Mr O'Dell for his updated and presentation, and brief discussion took place on issues such as attracting people to the town, events, evening economy, and parking.

12 TOWN MARKET UPDATE

The Committee welcomed Gary Saunders, Market Operator to the meeting, who gave an update on the High Wycombe Market.

It was noted that the current issues for the Market included seeking to replace the existing infrastructure. New equipment was required to replace the existing stock and discussions were currently taking place to do this. Mr Saunders also highlighted a concern relating to the pedestrianisation/vehicle access to the High Street via the controlled barriers, and commented that he was confused by the current position. He commented that he felt it should either be totally pedestrianised or open for vehicle access, one or the other, as commercial vehicles and lorries making deliveries were being allowed through on market days. There had not been any incident to-date but this was a concern. A final current issue surrounded using Church Street, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays when there was a high occupancy of the market.

The Committee noted that the current occupancy rate of the market was 80%, and it was operational on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Income was up this year by 6% and Members noted the current charges. It was noted there had not been any rent increase for some time, and charges may be re-considered if the new infrastructure was implemented. Mr Saunders also summarised how customer complaints and trader disputes were handled, and Members noted that the Market Manager was on site during market hours to deal with such matters.

In relation to initiatives, Mr Saunders outlined Food Court, trader sales training, the Market Facebook/High Wycombe Facebook pages, and the trader social media training, currently being piloted. Looking ahead for the future, Mr Saunders commented that new infrastructure would change how the market looked and would greatly enhance it. He was hopeful that Church Street could be used for the Saturday market, and concluded by commenting that the market was really successful in meeting the needs of certain demographic in the town.

Members thanked Mr Saunders for an interesting presentation. During discussion, the Committee asked about charities, and expressed concern that some traders were seen to leave early on occasions. Mr Saunders responded that on Tuesday and Fridays, traders should remain until 4.00pm, and to 5.00pm on Saturdays. He commented that this was enforced and written warnings were issued if not. In relation to charities, it was noted that free space was granted to them and there was 1 permitted per trading day.

With regard to the pedestrianisation and the vehicle access, Members did express some concern and asked about the current arrangement, and who was responsible. It was noted that this was the responsibility of Buckinghamshire County Council and the Police, who were ultimately responsible for enforcing it.

13 WYCOMBE SOUND - COMMUNITY RADIO FOR WYCOMBE

Members welcomed Philippa Sawyer, the Station Manager for Wycombe Sound Community Radio to the meeting, who provided an update on the work of the Community Radio.

Mrs Sawyer commenced her presentation by outlining that they were now three years in, and outlined the objectives of the Community Radio station. These included engaging with local people, enthusing local people about what is good in High Wycombe, informing local people what is going on, bringing great entertainment and reporting on serious matters, boosting local economy by encouraging more people to come to the town, and bringing the town together.

In terms of where the station currently was, Mrs Sawyer outlined the following key issues:

- Moved this year to new premises in Bridge Street
- Building 2 studios
- Developing a satellite studio
- Developing 'The Blue Room'
- there would be a christmas broadcast in the Eden centre.

- A number of projects had been undertaken during the summer

In relation to businesses, the Committee was informed that the station had something for all types of businesses. For small businesses, there was the opportunity to take advantage of 'The Enterprise Hour', to talk about their business on air free of charge. For larger companies, programme sponsorships were available. A range of business services were continuing to be developed.

Mrs Sawyer also outlined that the station provided free training for people who came and worked as volunteers for the station. Formal training was also offered and being developed, which would lead to a qualification. It was noted that the number of volunteers were growing year by year, and Mrs Sawyer confirmed that there were new volunteers again this year.

The Committee noted that the launch this year would be on 19 November for a period of 4 weeks. This was the same date as the Christmas lights switch-on, and Mrs Sawyer explained that broadcasting would start at breakfast time. Members were informed that the broadcasting this year would include enhanced traffic and travel reporting, together with enhanced outside broadcast facilities.

Mrs Sawyer also stated that OFCOM would be considering the station's application for a permanent licence at the time of this year's launch on 19 November. A decision was expected in the Spring of next year although it was hoped that a decision would be made earlier.

The Committee thanked Mrs Sawyer for her interesting presentations and wished her and the Station well for both this year's launch, and the application for the licence.

14 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDING STRATEGY

The Committee considered the setting up of a working group to produce a three year CIL funding strategy that would set out a range of projects that the Committee would then recommend funding for, through the CIL local allocation collected from developments in the unparished areas.

It was noted that in order that more structured decisions could be made by the Committee on what infrastructure projects they wished to recommend funding from the CIL local allocation over the next three years, the Cabinet Member for Planning had requested that the Committee develop and put forward to Cabinet for approval, a High Wycombe Town Committee CIL Funding Strategy to inform decisions.

The suggested terms of reference for the working group was set out for Members' consideration. It was noted that proposals would be presented to the November meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee for onward recommendation to Cabinet.

The Chairman also reported that there was a necessity to establish a task and finish group to co-ordinate the process relating to noticeboards. It was noted that a

CIL allocation sum of £15,000 had been agreed by this Committee and Cabinet, for Member noticeboards last year, and a group was required to manage the allocation of this sum, to include considering requests, and determining landowner issues. A report would be brought back to this Committee at the conclusion of the project spend. A group comprising five Members was proposed.

RESOLVED: That (i) A working group be set up to work with officers in producing a High Wycombe Town Committee CIL Funding Strategy to be approved by Cabinet.

- (ii) The proposed terms of reference for the working group, as set out in paragraph 10 of the report, be agreed.
- (iii) That the following Members be appointed to serve on the working group: Councillors Green (Chairman), Knight, Wassell, Mahboob Hussain, K Ahmed, Farmer, Pearce, SK Raja, and Hill; and
- (iv) A task and finish group to manage the CIL sum of £15,000 allocated to Members noticeboards be agreed and the following Members serve on the group: Councillors N Teesdale (Chairman), Hill, Mahboob Hussain, Baughan, and Pearce.

15 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's draft work programme, looking ahead to June 2016, was presented for review.

It was noted that the report back from the CIL working group on CIL Funding Strategy would be added to the November 2015 meeting.

RESOLVED: That the forward work programme be noted and updated as above.

16 INFORMATION SHEETS

RESOLVED: That the Information Sheet 05/2015 be noted.

17 URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman had requested that the report on 'Short Term Employment Land Review', which would be considered by Cabinet on 21 September 2015, be added to this agenda to enable Members to have the opportunity to be aware of the issues outlined in the report relating to the town centre.

It had been considered as an urgent item as Cabinet would be considering the report at their next meeting on 21 September 2015.

The Chairman commented that he wanted to ensure Members were aware of the report and encouraged any member who had any questions or concerns about the

report to contact the relevant officer or Cabinet Lead Member in advance of the Cabinet meeting, and/or attend the meeting itself on 21 September.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Mr I Hunt

Democratic Services Manager

Mr G Coll

Developer Contributions Officer