

High Wycombe Town Committee Agenda

Date: Tuesday, 12th June, 2018
Time: 7.00 pm

The meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the Charter Trustees

Venue: Council Chamber
District Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe Bucks

Membership

Chairman Councillor M Clarke
Vice Chairman Councillor S K Raja

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

Membership is restricted to those Members representing the High Wycombe wards.

Fire Alarm - In the event of the fire alarm sounding, please leave the building quickly and calmly by the nearest exit. Do not stop to collect personal belongings and do not use the lifts. Please congregate at the Assembly Point at the corner of Queen Victoria Road and the River Wye, and do not re-enter the building until told to do so by a member of staff.

Filming/Recording/Photographing at Meetings – please note that this may take place during the public part of the meeting in accordance with Standing Orders. Notices are displayed within meeting rooms.

Item	Agenda	Page
1	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	-
2	Declarations of Interest To receive any disclosure of disclosable pecuniary interests by Members relating to items on the agenda. If any Member is uncertain as to whether an interest should be disclosed, he or she is asked if possible to contact the District Solicitor prior to the meeting. Members are reminded that if they are declaring an interest, they should state the nature of that interest whether or not they are required	-

Item	Page
to withdraw from the meeting.	
3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting	1 - 8
To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 April 2018.	
4 Update on Cemetery Security	9 - 11
By Elaine Jewell (Head of Community).	
5 Written update on the Town Centre Masterplan Consultation	BCC report to follow
A written update by Ben Fletcher (Project Officer – High Wycombe Town Centre Masterplan, BCC).	
John Callaghan (Team Leader - Infrastructure and Projects, WDC) will be present to answer questions.	
6 Verbal update on the progress of agreeing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to repair / renew the High Street	-
A verbal update by John Callaghan (Team Leader - Infrastructure and Projects, WDC).	
7 Information Sheets	To Follow
The following Information Sheets have been issued since the previous meeting:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q4 Budgetary Control Outturn 2017/18 	
<i>** Members are reminded to give 24 hours notice of any questions concerning an Information Sheet to ensure an answer can be given at the meeting. **</i>	
8 High Wycombe Town Committee - Forward Work Programme	12 - 13
To note the current draft work programme attached at Appendix A.	
9 Supplementary Items (if any)	-
10 Urgent Items (if any)	-

For further information, please contact Tanya Brown, 01494 421455
committeeservices@wycombe.gov.uk

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 24 April 2018

Time: 7.00 - 8.39 pm

PRESENT: Councillor A R Green
(in the Chair)

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

Also present: Councillor Katrina Wood (Leader of the Council), Councillor Dominic Barnes (Deputy Leader of the Council), Councillor Alex Collingwood, Ian McEnnis and Paul Turner.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M P Davy and M Hussain.

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matthew Davy and Councillor Maz Hussain.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 23 January 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

39 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman explained that there was a change to the agenda as he had invited Councillor Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire County Council to attend the meeting to answer questions on the County Council's submission to the Government for a single unitary proposal. The Secretary of State had announced a 'minded to' decision to implement a single unitary in Buckinghamshire, abolishing the existing County Council and 4 District Councils. There was a deadline for

representations on the 'minded to' decision of 25 May 2018. It was noted that Councillor Tett would be first main item on the agenda.

40 URGENT ITEM - MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Martin Tett (Buckinghamshire County Council) to the meeting. Councillor Tett explained that he had brought two colleagues with him, Councillor Gareth Williams (Deputy Cabinet Member for Resources, BCC) and Richard Schmidt (Head of Strategic Finance, BCC).

The Chairman opened up the item for Members to ask questions of Councillor Tett.

The following points were noted:

- That the future of the unparished areas in High Wycombe would be a decision for the Executive Board of the new single unitary authority to make but it was felt there were three options:
 - Keep it as it is.
 - Institute a Town Council.
 - Or institute a series of Parish Councils.
- That the proposed unitary council would be an entirely new Council.
- That Councillor Tett doubted he would be the head of the proposed unitary Council as there were 236 Councillors across Bucks to select from, of which the vast majority (67%) were twin hatters.
- That Councillor Tett believed a unitary Council would be the most sensible option as it could drive better economic deals (e.g. waste) and the Council would be able to command a greater voice. He stated that if there were two Councils they would need duplicated roles such as two Chief Executives, two Finance Departments, two Legal Departments, two Heads of Children Services, two Heads of Social Services, etc which would be very costly.
- That the growth corridors (East to West and North to South) needed to be looked at in order for the Borough to be globally competitive.
- The current business case for a single unitary Council, based on similar Councils in similar areas, would be made up of 98 Councillors. Councillor Tett stated that advice had been taken from the Boundary Commission and for convenience existing boundaries for County Councillors could be used and the number being proposed in the County Council submission could be doubled up to result in the 98 Councillors required. Members were informed that the proposed new housing had been taken into account.
- Councillor Tett believed the workload for staff would remain the same with the need for fewer Chief Executives and Heads of Service. It was noted that there was an enormous amount of surplus assets which if sold off could result in a massive investment in Town Centres and roads across the County.
- Councillor Tett believed the earliest the changes would take place would be May 2020. It was noted that a boundary review would need to be undertaken by the Boundary Commission.
- Councillor Tett believed that whilst the decision about whether the full District Elections in all four districts scheduled for 2019 should take place as planned was a DCLG issue, although if the new single unitary was implemented, he envisaged the 2019 District Elections being cancelled and existing offices for

Members extended by a year until the 2020 implementation date for the new Council.

- That separate Planning and Licensing Committees could be created so that local people would be taking local decisions on local planning / licensing applications which had already been done in other Boroughs.
- Councillor Tett informed Members that, in response to a question about management of County Council reserves, the population in Bucks was approximately 530,000. Members were informed that Councillor Tett agreed that High Wycombe was the most strategic section of the Borough although Aylesbury had the biggest population growth areas. Councillor Tett went on to explain that High Wycombe was where the economic heart of the community was and that as such he would not want to see the vibrancy damaged.
- Councillor Tett explained that whilst making savings was important as it would result in money being able to be re-invested in projects the proposal to go unitary was not just about the money. It was noted that the biggest gain of going unitary was bringing together the strategic planning (housing, infrastructure, etc). Councillor Tett informed Members that fundamentally it was all about providing a better service to residents.
- Councillor Tett informed Members that as Leader of Bucks County Council he had spent some of their capital reserves on an incinerator. It was noted that the reserves had been built up over a number of years to cover this cost and that the incinerator benefitted the residents of High Wycombe.
- Councillor Tett explained that if the decision was made to have two Unitary Councils as opposed to one it would result in services such as Social Services being split over two Councils which was compared to being like a 'broken egg'.
- Members were informed that if the decision was made for a single unitary there would still be a need for some one-stop shops in the High Wycombe area.
- Councillor Tett informed Members that whilst he was always being told about the differences between the north and south areas of the Borough he felt there was no difference just a real perception that there was a difference. It was noted that Councillor Tett believed it would be very important to create a new unified culture amongst the Borough to remove any divisions created in the past.
- Councillor Tett believed that for the vast majority of staff it would be a case of simply slotting them into new posts. It was noted that the business case did not assume any frontline staff would be lost. However, the decision about more senior posts would be a decision for the newly elected Members of the new Council to make.
- Councillor Tett explained that with regard to the transfer of assets to Parish Councils he felt that whether it was one or two Councils the answer would be that the Council/s would be open to discussions with existing town and parish councils. It was noted that depending on the value of assets the Town or Parish Council would have to accept some of the cost / value of it.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Tett, Councillor Gareth Williams and Richard Schmidt for attending and answering Members questions.

41 UPDATE - FUTURE PLANS FOR THE COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN THE TOWN, TO INCLUDE THE OLD LIBRARY BUILDING

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Strategic Assets & Major Property Projects, Buckinghamshire County Council and invited him to explain the future plans for the community facilities in the town, including the old Library building.

The Head of Strategic Assets & Major Property Projects, Joe Nethercoat, explained that the old Library property had been vacated 10 years ago when the new Library had opened in the Eden Centre and had remained empty. It was noted that a restrictive covenant had prevented any change of use to the building but that this covenant had finally been removed approximately two years ago. Members were informed that work had been carried out on the building to prevent further deterioration and all asbestos had been removed. It was noted that planning permission had been granted in March 2018 for the change of use to offices and the decision had been made that BCC would occupy it in its entirety to provide a location for staff to be re-located from Easton Street. Members were informed that the internal layout had been agreed and a detailed design scheme sympathetic to the character of the building that retained and restored many original internal and external features was now being progressed. Members were informed that building work was planned to commence in summer 2018 and occupation was planned to take place in January 2019.

In discussion Members questioned whether the old Library building could in the future be an art gallery. The Head of Strategic Assets & Major Property Projects responded by saying 'never say never' but that for now it would be used for office accommodation. It was noted that parking permits had been built into the business case which would enable staff to park around the back of the Swan Theatre, at a cost. Members stated their delight at hearing that the old Library building would be brought back into use after it being vacant for such a long period of time. It was felt that the old Library building was a significant and attractive building for the town. One Member referred to it as a 'human library for the citizens of High Wycombe'.

The Head of Strategic Assets & Major Property Projects explained that it was very early days but BCC were looking into creating a hub on Green Street that local Councillors would be made aware of it and a consultation would be undertaken when the time came. Members asked the Head of Strategic Assets & Major Property Projects to ensure that whatever was created in Green Street included some sort of parking provision that residents could also use. The Head of Strategic Assets & Major Property Projects agreed to contact the Project Manager at BCC and inform him of the request.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Strategic Assets & Major Property Projects for attending and answering Members questions.

42 CONCRETE BURIAL CHAMBERS: WORKING GROUP FINDINGS

The Chairman welcomed the Leader of the Council, Councillor Katrina Wood, to the meeting and explained that she had been invited to attend for this item following the motion that was passed at the last Full Council meeting.

The Head of Community Services, Elaine Jewell, informed the Committee that the Working Group were still meeting hence this was an interim report due to the timescales involved.

The Head of Community Services explained that in 2011 the Committee resolved to fund the installation of concrete burial chambers, following requests from Muslim community representatives. The chambers were identified by them as more suitable for Islamic burial practices than the metal frames supplied by the Council up to that date. It was noted that the new vaults were deeper and would be installed as previously, i.e. grave spaces laid out head to foot with a 1m path along the foot of the grave and 450mm gaps between graves for access around as a minimum.

The Committee was informed that it had been a very severe winter and that there had been a significant flu outbreak which had resulted in a high demand for the burial chambers. The Head of Community Services explained that she believed the remaining vaults would be exhausted by the summer so was hoping to implement the deeper vaults, which incidentally were cheaper, that could provide about a year's supply.

Members were informed that there were two options.

- Option one – to install a new area of vaults. The capital cost of new vaults would need to come from Special Expenses and would be repaid by income received for vault burials.
- Option two – to cease to provide vault burials, in which case earth burials would be the only option.

Members made a number of points which included looking at a smaller number to last for one year, which was felt to be 40 burial chambers. It was noted that if less were provided the terrace would only be partially filled and would need to be re-excavated which could cause distress to the families of those buried nearby and disrupt the service. The Committee was informed that the Muslim community in High Wycombe was believed to be growing and that an aging population and varying death rates meant that the 52 vaults may be used at a quicker rate than predicted.

The Head of Community Services explained that there was still a bit more work to be done by the Task and Finish Group on specifications, testing and soft market testing local suppliers.

It was agreed that the Head of Community Services would confirm that the vaults would be bottomless, terms on which vaults could be reserved, the number of vaults currently available, and the fees to be charged and would provide the information as an addendum for the minutes.

Councillor Mahboob Hussain proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Zia Ahmed and supported by the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

- (i) That £35,360 for 52 additional burial vaults from the Special Expenses Account be approved; and
- (ii) Delegated authority be given to the Head of Community, in consultation with the Chairman of the High Wycombe Town Committee, to make amendments to fees and charges relating to new concrete chambers for Muslim burials.

The Leader was present at the meeting and agreed the recommendation which meant it would be the subject of an individual Cabinet member decision and would not therefore need to go before Cabinet.

Information gathered after the meeting:

- As of 04/05/18 there were 8 vaults in the ground for burials.
- Cost for a current chamber was £756 (original cost of Frame) + Interment Charge £323 + Purchase Right of Burial £727 = £1806.
- Cost for new chamber was £680 (original cost of Frame reduced rate) + Interment Charge £323 + Purchase Right of Burial £727 = £1730.
- The Chamber was open at the bottom.
- The Link to the fees and information on reservations has been linked to the cemetery page.

43 INFORMATION SHEETS

RESOLVED: That Information Sheet 03/2018 Q3 Budgetary Control Report be noted.

44 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

RESOLVED: That the forward work programme be noted.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Ian Hunt – Democratic Services

Tanya Brown – Democratic Services

Catherine Spalton – Communications

Julie Openshaw – Legal Services

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Agenda Item 4

1. UPDATE ON CEMETERY SECURITY

Officer contact: Elaine Jewell; elaine.jewell@wycombe.gov.uk; ext:3800

Wards affected: Town Wards

PROPOSED DECISION

To note that the agreed works at High Wycombe Cemetery appear to have been successful in addressing incidents of vandalism.

Reason for Decision

There has been resident concern about suspected incidents of vandalism at the Cemetery. Last year the Town Committee delegated authority to the Head of Community Services to implement some or all of a list of measures to address concerns about Cemetery security. This report provides an update on progress.

Corporate Implications

The report contains no additional financial requirements.

Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything, including incurring expenditure, which is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions; as a burial authority under Section 214, the Council already has power to provide and maintain cemeteries in our outside its area. In addition, Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (“general power of competence”) provides power to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to the provisions of Ss 2-4. These powers enable the Council, if it wishes, to implement all or any of the measures outlined in this report.

Executive Summary

Five potential security measures were suggested, which could provide reassurance to the bereaved that the Cemetery is monitored and reasonably secure. As a public Cemetery crossed by footpaths used by the public the site can never be completely secure and the measures implemented have left unfettered public access in daylight hours while increasing security at weaker points and monitoring visitors at the main entry points.

Sustainable Community Strategy / Council Priorities - Implications

People – the additional security measures should reassure bereaved relatives about the safety of the service.

Background and Issues

The work last year was initiated in response to a petition for 24 hour CCTV, which had been referred to the Committee by Cabinet for consideration. Given the large volume of space to be covered this was not supported at the time as it was an expensive option that would fundamentally affect the Cemetery in negative ways, as

the majority of trees would need to be removed to aid visibility; night time lighting would also be needed.

Last year's report identified five additional measures that could be undertaken 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.

To date actions 3 and 5 have been implemented at a cost of £3,895. It remains the intention to install additional fencing and planting but given the two recent wall collapses, undertaking reinstatement works has taken precedence. Additional fencing will be implemented this financial year, using the already agreed funding reserved by the Committee.

At present there is no intention to proceed with the installation of higher gates as CCTV is in place and out of hours access by climbing over the current gates has not been evidenced.

Report on recent incidents

Thames Valley Police has been asked and has no reports from members of the public of any damage to memorials. One resident who campaigned for CCTV has been contacted and has not received any reported concerns.

We are aware that for a short period the public toilets on site were being used for drug dealing and have been working with the Police to stop this. Unfortunately one of the additional cameras that we installed on the path way adjacent to the toilets is not working yet due to a connection issue.

No issues of vandalism or damage to memorials have been reported to the Cemetery Officer, who works and lives on site.

Options

Not applicable

Conclusions

The Committee is asked to note the work undertaken to date and the reduction in incidents of vandalism to nil for the current year.

Next Steps

To complete fencing and planting works and resolve connection issues to the 7th camera. The Committee may wish to request that an annual report on incidents relating to the Cemetery be produced from now on.

Background Papers

Petition to Council on CCTV at the Cemetery and previous Committee reports.

Agenda Item 8

Wycombe District Council

HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

Work Programme – SEPTEMBER 2018 – MARCH 2019

Title & Subject Matter	Meeting / Date to be taken	Contact Officer
<u>September 2018</u>		
Q1 Budgetary Control Report (Information Sheet)	11 September 2018	Julia Turner - Senior Accountant, Financial Management
<i>TBC - Informal Working Group (Town Market) update</i>	11 September 2018	Tanya Brown, Democratic Services Officer
<i>TBC - Update from HWBIDCo</i>	11 September 2018	Tanya Brown, Democratic Services Officer
<i>TBC - 'Revive the River Wye' recommendations be presented before they go before Cabinet</i>	11 September 2018	Jemma Durkan, Democratic Services Officer
<i>TBC - Chiltern Rangers Update</i>	11 September 2018	Tanya Brown, Democratic Services Officer
<u>November 2018</u>		
Q2 Budgetary Control Report (Information Sheet)	20 November 2018	Julia Turner - Senior Accountant, Financial Management
<u>January 2019</u>		
Policing Update	15 January 2019	Tanya Brown, Democratic Services Officer
Community Infrastructure Levy Funding Update	15 January 2019	Gerard Coll - Senior Infrastructure Officer
Special Expenses Budget 2019/2020	15 January 2019	Julia Turner - Senior Accountant, Financial Management

Title & Subject Matter	Meeting / Date to be taken	Contact Officer
<u>March 2019</u>		
Q3 Budgetary Control Report (Information Sheet)	5 March 2019	Julia Turner - Senior Accountant, Financial Management

Meeting contact officer: Tanya Brown, 01494 421455,
Committeeservices@wycombe.gov.uk Work Programme Updated: 22 May 2018