

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 13 November 2018

Time: 7.00 - 9.20 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Clarke
(in the Chair)

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor H McCarthy
Councillor D Barnes
Councillor Ms Wood

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H Bull, M Hanif and M A Hashmi.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman declared that he had been a member of the Remaking the River Wye Task and Finish Group referred to in Item 5. The Chairman remained in the meeting during the item.

19 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman informed the Committee that he would be adding an item under the Item 10, Urgent Items. This would be a statement providing information on a member fact finding visit to Salisbury City Council in April 2018.

20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

With regards to Minute 11, it was reported that the Chairman had written to Local Area Forum at Bucks County Council regarding the issues in respect of on-street parking and verge parking. The Chairman confirmed that this would be considered at the next Local Area Forum at the County.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 11 September 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21 EASTERN QUARTER UPDATE

The Chairman informed the Committee that as an Information Sheet had been provided on the Eastern Quarter that the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration, Councillor Broadbent and Peter Wright, Interim Head of Regeneration and Investment would not be attending the meeting.

The Chairman noted that Cabinet had agreed, in principle, at the meeting on 12 November the compulsory purchase of the Brunel Shed and the surrounding land. Some Members expressed concern that they had not been consulted or updated on the progress of the Eastern Quarter and requested that Councillor Broadbent attend the next meeting of the Committee to provide further information.

22 REMAKING THE RIVER WYE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

In advance of the presentation Councillors A Hill, R Farmer, R Raja, Mahboob Hussain and Mrs L Clarke declared they had also been members of the Remaking the River Wye Task and Finish Group. The members remained at the meeting and contributed to the discussion.

The Committee was provided with a presentation on the recommendations of the Remaking the River Wye Task and Finish Group. The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor Hugh McCarthy and Philip Simpkin, Natural Environment Officer, outlined each recommendation and the reasons behind these.

Members made a number of points and received clarification on a number of queries. The discussion included the following:

- Members were concerned that the achievements of the Eden centre were not acknowledged and highlighted the success of the shopping centre.
- Shopping patterns were changing and it was suggested that the use of cars in town centres would lessen in the future. The financial value of the benefits of opening up the river were difficult to quantify, however significant health and wellbeing benefits were expected and research showed that benefit to cost ratio for similar projects were in the region of £7 for every £1 spent.
- Roadside drainage to avoid pollution from the road to the river would be considered and it was noted that Environment Agency had not yet highlighted any issues.
- The existing culverts would have to be assessed however it was expected that some of these would need to be replaced. If the river was remade then some culverts would remain, the extent would depend upon the finalised design and there would be less pressure on these in the future.
- The costs of the full project was not yet confirmed, however the initial costs for the feasibility work had been prepared by civil engineers and was believed to be accurate.

- The area could be improved with increased rentals on units and a restaurant culture by the river.
- If the project to remake the river did not happen with the phase 7 town centre masterplan road works then there was concern that it would never happen.
- The timescale of the project had not been estimated as phase 7 of the masterplan had not yet been agreed. It was noted that £3 million was the practical estimated cost to integrate the works for the river with the road works.
- The flyover was not expected to be removed in the near future and when building the Eden shopping centre there should have been consideration given to opening up the river at that time. In response it was noted that the flyover was a key part of the current infrastructure but this did have a limited life expectancy.
- There had been positive feedback via local groups on the project.
- There was trout in some places in the river. By remaking the river in the town centre this would improve the fish stocks upstream and improve the ecology in the area.
- Once the culverts were removed it was expected that the river would have a natural gravel riverbed.
- The river once remade was expected to be about 4 metres wide. There would be variable flow which was expected as a chalk stream river.

The Chairman requested any comments on the recommendations which members would like to have noted for the Improvement and Review Commission to consider. It was requested that the following comments be noted:

- That sufficient water flow be made available to the river.
- That the public should be consulted on the reopening of the river.

A majority of the Committee supported the recommendations.

Councillor Hugh McCarthy and Phil Simpkin were thanked for their comprehensive presentation and responses to the various questions.

23 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY UPDATE

The Committee received a report regarding Community Infrastructure Levy Funding across the unparished area by John Callaghan, Team Leader Infrastructure and Projects, and Simon Barlow, Planning Policy Officer.

It was noted that 15% of the CIL raised was allocated to parish and town councils. Cabinet had previously resolved that the High Wycombe Town Committee would

annually recommend to Cabinet on the use of the local allocation in the unparished wards. Members were provided with information on suggested projects to consider funding. It was noted that due to business support the provision of a security gate at Bull Lane services yard has been reduced to £23,000. Also with regards to the Penn Road cemetery £476k was being sought for the project.

In response to a query it was noted that the Committee were usually provided with updates for projects on an annual basis and the allocation of this CIL funding would for 2019. Members also requested an update regarding the new café and toilets at the Rye.

The Committee discussed setting up a working group to consider projects and recommendations to Cabinet on schemes for 2019. It was noted that the working group findings would be brought to the next Committee meeting on 15 January 2019.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) A working group be set up to work with officers to recommend to Cabinet schemes for the CIL 15% allocation;
- (ii) That the following Members be appointed to serve on the working group: Councillors K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, Farmer, Green, Hill, Knight, SK Raja, and Wassell.
- (iii) That findings from the working group be brought to the High Wycombe Town Committee meeting on 15 January 2019.

24 INFORMATION SHEETS

The Chairman informed the Committee that if there were any questions concerning the following information sheets that these should be sent to the clerk for a response from the relevant officer.

RESOLVED: That the following Information Sheets be noted:

- i) 04-2018 Q2 Budgetary Control Report
- ii) 05-2018 Eastern Quarter Update

25 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

It was noted that the new Town Centre Manager for HWBIDCo had started in post in November 2019. It was suggested the Councillor Green contact the new manager to confirm her availability to provide an update to the Committee at the meeting on 15 January 2019.

RESOLVED: That the forward work programme be noted.

26 URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

In accordance with the Council Standing Order 21 the Chairman notified the Committee of an urgent item that provided details of information gathered from Salisbury City Council during a fact finding visit in April 2018.

The reason for the urgency was due to the timing of the announcement from the Secretary of State to create a Single Unitary District Council in Buckinghamshire. The Chairman read out a statement regarding the visit to Salisbury which had taken place in April 2018 to gather information on how Salisbury City Council had been set up when Unitary local government in Wilshire was introduced.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Mrs J Durkan	Senior Democratic Services Officer
J Openshaw	District Solicitor
Mr S Barlow	Spatial Planning Co-ordinator
Mr J Callaghan	Team Leader (Environment and Infrastructure)
Mr P Simpkin	Natural Environment Officer