

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 11 June 2019

Time: 7.00 - 7.55 pm

PRESENT: Councillor A R Green (in the Chair)

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

Also present Councillor D Barnes (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Engagement & Strategy).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H Bull, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, M Clarke and N J B Teesdale

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 5 March 2019 be agreed as a correct records and signed by the Chairman.

3 WYCOMBE TRANSPORT STRATEGY - UPDATE

Members were given a comprehensive presentation by Simon Barlow (Infrastructure & Projects Officer – Planning & Sustainability) assisted by Rosie Brake (Principal Policy Officer – Planning & Sustainability) on the High Wycombe Transport Vision and Strategy.

The presentation represented an update on that given to Members back in January, Mr Barlow mentioned the forthcoming workshop in respect of the Strategy to be held in Committee Rooms 1 & 2 at Wycombe District Council the following Wednesday 19 June 2019 2pm to 5pm, at which all Members input was most welcome.

Mr Barlow emphasised the tie in of the Strategy with the ongoing regeneration work in the District overseen by the Council's Regeneration and Investment team.

The Strategy was to include a vision of how High Wycombe was to look and feel in 2050. It would help stakeholders to:

- Understand existing and potential future transport issues;
- Manage the impacts of proposed developments;
- Deliver wider place related improvements; and
- Better co-ordinate planned and future transport schemes.

Overall the Council wished to be more proactive than reactive within formulating and delivering the Strategy.

Referring to the map outlining the Study Area, it was noted that this was not just the Town Centre, it included the whole built up area of High Wycombe; this recognised that impacts came from further afield.

Key questions to be addressed in the Strategy were:

- How do we travel now, what will be the impact if we just carry on as now i.e. business as usual?
- How might we travel in the future?
- How might things change with new technology?

Developments over the last 30 years had been numerous, it would be hard to anticipate those of the next 30 years to 2050. Trends that could be certain were a lower carbon economy, an aging population, a growing population and a more urban population. Trends that could be less certain were an openness to new transport and the sharing of transport.

Members made a number of points and received clarification on a number of issues:

- Marlow was not included in the Strategy as it was a separate town and was not subject to as much development as High Wycombe under the current Local Plan;
- The Town Centre Masterplan related to the present, evidenced by the delivery of the recent Queen Victoria Road changes and the imminent opening of the Gas Works link road. The Strategy represented the future long term vision for the Town.
- Members emphasised that one could not over exaggerate the importance of public transport provision for the Town in the future;
- Driverless cars, car sharing and incentives to entice people away from their cars were all referred to;
- Car usage to be seen as a privilege rather than a right; with a change in culture being needed;
- Work place parking levies and congestion charges were usable options, if there was sufficient courage to utilise them;

- Members were assured that good practice from Europe and worldwide were to be looked at and considered / adapted for our Town;
- It was confirmed that CIL (Community Infrastructure Levies) could be utilised to subsidise transport schemes and initiatives;
- Reliability and cheaper pricing of public transport was seen as key to greater take-up;
- Being plugged into the TFL (Transport for London) system / grid was seen as a beneficial move to be considered not only ahead in the Strategy but also in the near future; and
- The consultees due to input into the consultation were outlined and the need for a broad cross section of views and interests was noted.

Mr Barlow and Ms Brake were thanked for their comprehensive and informative presentation on a key issue for the Town and District, they assured Members that their comments made this evening, which were invaluable input, would be fed into the said consultation.

4 UPDATE ON HIGH WYCOMBE CEMETERY SECURITY

Members noted the actions taken to date (and the cost thereof) in respect of the 5 potential security measures previously identified. Two of the five actions, that of:

- The installation of locally recorded CCTV at the two main gateways and on the rear entrance to the Snowdrop Garden; and
- The permanent closure of the Hampden Road / Snowdrop entrance

were noted as having been carried out.

Importantly the Members both noted and commended on the reduction to nil in respect of incidents of vandalism for the current year.

Members noted that the additional fencing on the northern footpath side was still scheduled and monies had been set aside for such. However given the reduction of incidents there was now no plan to install the higher gates at the Lodge, Office and Snowdrop entrances, these were well covered by the installed CCTV.

Officers were thanked for their considerable and successful work in respect of these issues over the last year or so.

5 HIGH WYCOMBE CEMETERY MUSLIM BURIAL VAULTS

Members considered the report which outlined the Councils resolution in 2011 to fund the installation of concrete burial chambers, following requests from Muslim community representatives. These chambers had been identified as more suitable for Islamic burial practices than the metal frames supplied by the Council up to that date.

The planned new vaults were to be deeper and to be installed as previously i.e. graves spaces laid out head to foot with a 1m path along the foot of the grave and 450mm gaps as a minimum between for access around the graves.

Members noted the concrete vaults that had been purchased and installed and had met the majority of Muslim residents families' requirements. It was planned that these chambers be sourced again and installed on the current cemetery site to be provided ahead of the planned new cemetery at Hazlemere.

Members commended officers on the work they had carried out over the period since 2011 to provide reasonably priced and suitable burial vaults.

Recommended to Cabinet that:

- i) £44,880 for 66 additional burial vaults be released from the Special Expenses Account;
- ii) £76,500 for works to install an additional terrace be released from the Special Expenses Account; and
- iii) Delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing, Environment and Community Services, in consultation with the Head of Finance and Commercial and the Chairman of the High Wycombe Town Committee, to make amendments to fees and charges relating to new concrete chambers for Muslim burials.

6 INFORMATION SHEETS

Members had been asked to note an error in respect of the Information Sheets as featured on the agenda, in that Q4 Budgetary Control Outturn 2018/19 had been referred to as info sheet number 1/2019 when in fact it was number 3/2019 and that additionally it had not been circulated in hard copy at the time of agenda publication / circulation.

This had been e-mailed this to Members earlier in the day of the Meeting and hard copies had been left on Members desks that evening.

Members received confirmation that the fees received for allotments and sports pitch use were retained by the operators under the terms of their contracts with the Council, these receipts and the retention of such were suitable accounted for in the original setting / tendering of the contract prices by these providers.

RESOLVED: That Information Sheets:

- 02/2019 High Wycombe Charter Market Update; and
- 03/2019 Financial Outturn Position for 2018/19

be noted.

7 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's draft work programme looking ahead to March 2020 was presented for review.

Members suggested and the Chairman was in agreement, to the inclusion of a Report on the High Wycombe Charter Market on the agenda for the 10 September 2019 meeting. The Chairman pointed out that officers needed to know the exact issues on which Members wished to be updated in respect of the Market. And accordingly were invited during the next 14 days to submit such to the Democratic Services staff for referral to the appropriate Estates Services team officer.

It was noted that though Members could request the presence of a representative of the Company running the Market at the 10 September 2019 meeting, they could not compel them to attend.

RESOLVED: That the forward work programme be noted.

8 SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no supplementary items.

9 URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Simon Barlow	Infrastructure & Projects Officer – Planning & Sustainability
Jacqueline Boosey	Business Partner – Financial Planning & Analysis
Rosie Brake	Principal Policy Officer – Planning & Sustainability
Peter Druce	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Sue Drummond	Community Services Manager
Julie Openshaw	District Solicitor
Andy Sherwood	Contract Manager – Community Services

Julia Turner

Business Partner – Financial Planning & Analysis