

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 10 September 2019

Time: 7.00 - 8.25 pm

PRESENT: Councillor A R Green
(in the Chair)

Councillors Z Ahmed, M Asif, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, M Clarke, R Farmer, M Hanif, A E Hill, M Hussain JP, B E Pearce, R Raja, S K Raja and Ms J D Wassell,

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Ahmed, Ms A Baughan, M A Hashmi, A Hussain, M Hussain, M E Knight, N J B Teesdale and Ms K S Wood

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 11 June 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12 CHILTERN RANGERS UPDATE

The Committee were provided with an update on the work of the Chiltern Rangers by Mr John Shaw (Managing Director of Chiltern Rangers CIC (Community Interest Company)).

The key points outlined by Mr Shaw were as follows:

- Mr Shaw explained these were challenging times for the Rangers and over the next 6 to 9 years the organisation would be engaging in long term transformation.
- The aim would be to relocate to Abbey Park in industrial units by April 2022. Substantial funding would need to be raised to build a community hub.
- Mr Shaw provided artistry work for members to view which provided an idea of how the units and community hub would look.
- He thanked the planning team for their support and collaborative work on the project and added that this would be built to the highest environmental standards.
- The hub would also help engage with the wider community and enable the rangers' projects to lead by example.

- Other organisations would also be based at the hub.
- Funding had already been obtained via Community Infrastructure Levy monies and bids for further funding had been undertaken. Lottery match funding was also being investigated.
- An additional two full time members of staff had been employed.
- Partnership work had included working with the NHS, Local Area Forums, Schools and Buckinghamshire County Council.
- The Chiltern Rangers had a 5 year plan of growth and sustainability.
- Other projects included work to support veterans to help build community involvement with members of the forces, and working with the NHS to support people with mental health issues.
- During August a clear up of the river had taken place which included 20 young people from CAMHS.
- Mr Shaw noted that partnership working with WDC was an integral aspect of the work of the rangers and he was looking forward to working with the new authority.

Members were concerned at the amount of fly tipping that was taking place and if the charges now implemented at the recycling centre was adding to this issue. Mr Shaw explained that litter and fly tipping was always a problem and suggested that more education at schools was required. Also that larger fines could be given to people who were convicted of fly tipping which could subsequently act as a deterrent. Mr Shaw noted that the rangers did not have adequate funding to provide education in schools however this work was built into projects.

With regards to maintaining wild flower areas at road sides Mr Shaw explained that this should be dealt with a mixed approach with some areas being left longer for pollination and some specific areas being cut. Good sight lines would need to remain for traffic management along the sides of the road.

Mr Shaw confirmed that discussions were taking place with Wycombe District Council senior officers regarding plans to develop Funges Meadow Nature Reserve as a community area. Mr Shaw explained that the reserve needed to be managed and protected, and was concerned that the area could be irreparably damaged if open to the public on a permanent basis.

The estimated cost of the new centre was between £1.1 and £1.2 million, it was noted that £250k has already been obtained from CIL funding and the remaining from lottery funding, other organisations and charitable donations.

In response to a query it was noted that chalk streams were internationally important and water levels were reducing. It was believed that this was due to extraction issues and climate change.

Members thanked Mr Shaw for his presentation and congratulated the Chiltern Rangers for their hard work and achievements.

13 HIGH WYCOMBE MARKET

Members were provided with written responses to questions previously submitted on the High Wycombe town market, and Peter Wright, Interim Head of Regeneration attended the meeting to provide further clarification if required.

Members considered the information and a number of queries were raised. The main points were as follows:

- Members were not satisfied with the written responses to the questions and there were inconsistencies in the answers.
- The issue regarding the green and white gazebo covers for stalls had not been resolved and more information regarding this matter was requested.
- There was a suggestion in the responses that the market be open for an additional day. Some concerns were raised regarding adding an additional day that would primarily be for food and this was not necessary.
- Some members were also concerned that food stalls at the market were not paying licence fees for the table and chairs that were set out on market days.
- There were thriving markets around the country and an indoor market should be considered. Mr Wright confirmed that the Chiltern Shopping Centre was privately owned and an indoor market was not an option on this site.
- Consideration should be given to changing the market operator and the council should invest in the market. In response Mr Wright noted that the contract with the current market operator was in place until 2021 and it would be for the new unitary authority to make decisions regarding the market contract in the future.
- Some members were concerned that hot food was taking over the market however some members supported the hot food sales.
- There were a number of termination clauses in the contract however there had been no issues that met these high thresholds for termination of the contract.
- Mr Wright noted that there were no resources available to manage the market in house at the District council.
- It was suggested by some members that there should be a range of diverse food stalls and food providers should be congratulated on the current variety.
- It was noted on the high street that business pay a levy to the HWBIDCo and market traders do not pay, and that market stall holders could be effecting businesses on the high street.

A motion was put forward by Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE; that the market would not be extended by one more day for further hot food sales, this was seconded by Cllr M Hussain JP. A vote was taken on the motion which was carried 7 in favour, 5 abstained.

A further motion was put forward by Councillor J Wassell; that the option for an international food market be investigated, this was seconded by Cllr S Raja. A vote was taken on the motion which was carried 7 in favour, 4 against and 1 abstained.

The Chairman confirmed that these proposals would be referred to Cabinet for discussion.

Recommended to Cabinet:

That the following proposals be discussed and considered -

- i) the market does not open for one more day for further hot food sales and;
- ii) the option for an international food market be investigated.

14 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

RESOLVED: That the forward work programme be noted.

15 SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no supplementary items.

16 URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Mrs J Durkan

Senior Democratic Services Officer

Mr P Wright

Interim Head of Regeneration & Investment

Mrs K Khanna

Principal Solicitor