



# Buckinghamshire Council

## High Wycombe Town Committee

### Agenda

**Date:** Thursday 23 September 2021

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Venue:** Council Chamber Queen Victoria Road High Wycombe

**Membership:** A Alam, M Angell, M Ayub, S Barrett, K Bates, A Baughan, L Clarke OBE, T Green, S Guy, D Hayday, O Hayday, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain JP, M Knight, S Raja (Chairman), N Rana, M Smith, N Thomas, P Turner, J Wassell and K Wood

Agenda Item	Time	Page No
<b>1 APOLOGIES</b>		
To receive any apologies for absence		
<b>2 MINUTES</b>		<b>3 - 6</b>
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2021		
<b>3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>		
To receive any declarations of interest		
<b>4 HW BID CO PRESENTATION</b>		
<b>5 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION</b>		<b>7 - 12</b>
<b>6 QUARTER 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL</b>		<b>13 - 16</b>
<b>7 WORK PROGRAMME</b>		<b>17 - 18</b>
<b>8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>		
Tuesday 23 November 2021 at 7pm		

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If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability,

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please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Iram Malik / Liz Hornby on 01494 421204 / 01494 421261, email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).



# High Wycombe Town Committee

## Minutes

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 JULY 2021 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD, HIGH WYCOMBE COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 8.32 PM**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

A Alam, M Ayub, K Bates, A Baughan, L Clarke OBE, D Hayday, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain JP, M Knight, S Raja, N Rana, M Smith, P Turner, J Wassell and K Wood

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

J Ford, N Graham, F Mugari, A Sherwood, C Steuart, L Vallis and I Malik

### **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: S Barrett, A Green, S Guy, O Hayday and N Thomas.

### **2 MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 9 March and 26 May be confirmed as a correct record.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations interest

### **4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor A R Green be appointed Vice-Chairman of the High Wycombe Town Committee for the 2021/22 municipal year.

### **5 PENN ROAD CEMETERY UPDATE**

A report was submitted which requested the establishment of a Working Group to review burial provision at the Penn Road Cemetery. It was anticipated that the cemetery would be fully

functional for burials in April 2022.

Members were advised that the decision regarding the types of burial provision would be attempted to be finalised by the end of August, enabling a further report to be brought back to this Committee in September, on fees and charges for burials and the new grounds maintenance contract which would become effective from 1 January 2022. To this end the presenting officer recommended the formation of a Member Officer Working Group to review types of burial that should be offered.

A Member questioned the timeline of the decision making process and whether there would be sufficient time to remain on track with an anticipated fully functional date of April 2022 for the Penn Road Cemetery. This was confirmed in the affirmative. The presenting officer stated that in spite of the tight timescales, officers would be working behind the scenes between meetings to ensure that they were gathering relevant information, and carrying out benchmarking activities to assist the Committee in reaching its conclusion.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) Members express their interest in serving on the Cemetery Sub Group via email to the Chairman of the Committee
- (ii) The report be noted

## **6 SPECIAL EXPENSES OUTTURN 2020/21**

A report was considered which set out the revenue outturn position for 2020/21 and the impact on working balances at the years end for the High Wycombe Town Committee.

The report stated that the net outturn position for Special Expenses was £194k, a forecast underspend of £163k against a total budget of £375k. Further details were provided in the table within the report.

Some Members expressed their concern regarding the underspent grants within the voluntary sector, which they felt had become increasingly polarised since the unitary council came into being. Questions were raised as to how this situation had been brought about. Members were informed that whilst routine works had gone ahead, expenditure on maintenance had been halted due to the covid situation. It was also suggested that officers seek clarification on Hilltop Community Centre, and whether they were aware of the funding that was accessible.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

## **7 HIGH WYCOMBE MARKET UPDATE**

A report was submitted which provided as an update to the High Wycombe Market report presented in January 2021. It focused on activities undertaken post the third lockdown in December 2020 to date, with the new reopening phase from April 2021. It also provided an update on strategic market management and the development of a Market Strategy for Buckinghamshire.

In general, Members were pleased with the progression in the area noting the change and increase in stalls along with the initiatives designed to revitalise the High Street. A number of questions were raised including one on the current social media practice. It was suggested that

this needed to go further to assist in reaching people in the surrounding areas regarding the exciting activities in the town. The officer reported that she was linking with the Forward Planning Communications Lead to amplify and promote the activities taking place.

Additional questions were asked about the new provision of space for charity stalls, that had been a specific request of Members. The officer confirmed that she was scheduled to attend a meeting this week with the Market Operators to discuss the booking process for charities to use a pitch space and would share this directly with members once determined.

Members were asked to note the following Facebook social media accounts in the interim:  
MyWycombe (High Wycombe Business Improvement District)  
High Wycombe Market (Saunders Markets)

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted

## **8 WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme for the Committee was submitted for information. It was

**RESOLVED:** That

- (i) Penn Rd Cemetery Burial Types be added to the September meeting
- (ii) Town Centre regeneration be added to the September meeting
- (iii) Penn Rd Cemetery fees & Charges be added to the November meeting
- (iv) Existing Cemetery Regulations at Hampden Rd Cemetery be added to the November meeting.

## **9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday 23 September 2021 at 7pm.

## **10 PETITION REPORT - PINE TREES DAWS HILL**

The Board considered a petition which requested that `the Council reconsider its decision of denying support for the maintenance of the children`s play areas on the Pine Trees estate for the safety and wellbeing of the children of the community`

The petitioners wished to see the maintenance of the play area as part of the council tax revenue received from this housing area. It had been further suggested that this area may be covered by a maintenance company to which households already paid a fee and which could incur increased charges to all households on the estate. The presenter also asked that the Special expenses budget also be explored as a possible option for the maintenance of the play area.

The officer recommendations had determined that maintenance for the area by the Council was not financially sustainable and that a commuted sum would need to be paid by the developer to cover the associated costs. This was in line with council planning policy.

In considering the petition, at the Community Board meeting, some Members had expressed their concern over covering the cost from the Special Expenses budget, as he felt that the residents within his ward would not wish to contribute an additional cost towards the maintenance of facilities in a similar estate to their own. Following a brief discussion, it was

agreed that the High Wycombe Town Committee would be best placed to consider the petition. Members agreed that the matter needed to be resolved and progressed quickly thereby bringing the play area back into use.

Members views were sought prior to the Board considering its own response to the petition at a future meeting.

The Presenting Officer provided detailed information on the background.

Members concurred in that swift action needed to be taken but that there was a wider long term issue which needed to be addressed with regards to access to play areas. A strategic overview needed to be adopted to ensure that organisations were held to account and that the Council had the appropriate control to enable it to have adequate facilities in place.

A Member proposed that Bucks Council, Planning and Legal Services establish discussions with Taylor Wimpey regarding the S106 payment which was silent in the 2013 Planning application about any commuted sum payable to the council for the management and maintenance of both the play area and parkland.

Following members` deliberations it was

RESOLVED: That

- (i) Officers consider initiating a discussion with Taylor Wimpey with a view to agreeing in principle a commuted sum for an appropriate period.
- (ii) The report be noted and referred to the High Wycombe Community Board for its further consideration.

## **11 SUB GROUPS**

The Chairman stated that he intended to establish a Special Expenses Sub Group and a sub group for the memorial for covid heroes as soon as possible, in addition to the sub group for the Penn Road Cemetery. Members were invited to contact the Chairman via email should they wish to be involved.



## Report to High Wycombe Town Committee

**Date:** 23 September 2021

**Title:** Update on Regeneration in High Wycombe

**Author:** Councillor Jocelyn Towns and Shabnam Ali

**Recommendations:** To note the activities of Buckinghamshire Council in the delivery of Regeneration in the town centre of High Wycombe

### Background

- 1.1 Since the Unitary Council of Buckinghamshire's formation in 2020 a greater emphasis is being placed on regeneration of Town Centres in the County. This means current plans will be incorporated into a wider Buckinghamshire Regeneration Programme but also that greater capacity and skills are being incorporated into the Team.

### Main content of report

This report provides an update on current and proposed regeneration activity in Buckinghamshire with an emphasis on High Wycombe Town Centre

### 1.2 Future High Streets Fund

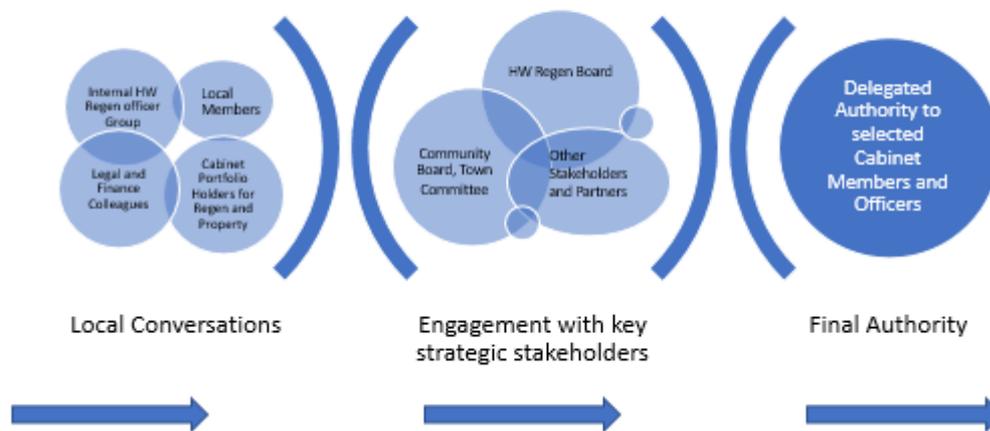
Bucks Council have been awarded a total of £11.8m with Council match funding of £3m over 3 years. Current progress is that we have received £6.7m in June, with the rest to be distributed at different intervals. We are talking to MCHLG about possible substitutions due to not all the initially identified projects going ahead. The current progress updates are included in presentation slides. Acquisitions will require sign-off by the leader and members for new schemes.

The old Argos building is currently being used by DWP as a pop-up job centre, where they have taken out a 5-year lease on the building.

Information sharing and keeping stakeholders and Members up to date on this programme is important. It was proposed that before any major decision and final sign off is made on a project, there will be information sharing on this at the local level where Members, Stakeholders and Partners will be updated. Some of this will

happen via the Regeneration Board, some of it will happen at the local level with Ward Members and Town Committee. We have set out how we are going to do this by using the following process –

Flow of conversations to share information and raise awareness of FHSF allocations as per agreed programme of projects



### 1.3 Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework

The Economic Growth and Regeneration Team (EGR) will be undertaking work to develop a Buckinghamshire wide Regeneration Framework. This will be a high-level document which sets out key principles that shape and inform regeneration plans for our Town Centres. Partners, Investors and stakeholders can also be directed by such principles which can help inform their plans. The Framework will be developed with input from a range of Partners and Members with the Regeneration Board helping move it forward.

### 1.4 High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy Refresh

EGR Team is also looking to update and refresh the High Wycombe Strategy so that it is relevant to current times and has incorporated and responded to the current shocks of Covid 19 and related economic factors. The Strategy will refresh its evidence base, factor in latest trends and market sentiment and review current governance arrangements to support swift and efficient delivery of major regeneration projects. The refreshing of the strategy will happen in consultation with local Members, Town Committee, stakeholders, and Partners. Further plans on this will be shared when developed.

### 1.5 High Wycombe Regeneration Board

As part of the refresh of the Regeneration Strategy a consideration will be made about the governance for delivery of our large strategic regeneration projects. We would want to see the Regeneration Board playing a big part inputting into strategic design and schemes and taking a much more forward plan, long term visionary approach to regeneration in Wycombe and having greater connections with other Boards delivering regeneration across Buckinghamshire. Therefore, we would want to make sure membership of the Board reflects this aspiration and that people are equipped with adequate skills and information to do this. The day-day operational issues in Wycombe Town Centre would get considered in other forums with Officers that are able to respond in a speedy and efficient way.

#### **1.6 Welcome Back Funding**

Government provided an allocation of funding to all Councils to support them in reopening their High Streets Safely. The Welcome Back Funding allows for local places to develop projects that will encourage shoppers, communities, and visitors to return as well as to help businesses reopen. There are caveats and criteria around what this money can be spent on and we have to 'spend at risk' and claim back.

Although there is a range of initiatives already in our High Streets such as planters, new shop windows, and events; there is current engagement underway for Community Boards and stakeholders to identify further projects that can help our High Streets welcome back shoppers. New project ideas are being checked against Welcome Back Funding criteria to develop delivery plans.

#### **1.7 Markets**

The Markets offer in the Town Centre is delivered under contract by Saunders Markets and this Committee is provided with a six-monthly update on the market activity (July and January). As advised in these update reports Bucks Council will be looking at market delivery countywide offer for all our Town Centres to ensure vibrancy, opportunity, and value for money.

#### **1.8 Footfall Monitoring**

As part of the Reopening High Streets/Welcome Back Funding we have secured footfall data from March 2020. This provides an important baseline to monitor the effectiveness of our animations and activations (as delivered by HWBIDCo and the market for example). Data and reporting is available from October onwards, we will be able to provide this information at that point.

#### **1.9 Wye North (Eastern Quarter)**

Programmes and schemes for the Wye North Station area were already in place pre unitary. The Regeneration Strategy refresh will consider the existing plans to ensure

deliverability and uses post Covid 19. Opportunities for funding continue to be explored for individual schemes in this area.

#### 1.10 **Cressex Business Park**

Recognised as an important economic cluster of businesses for High Wycombe. Discussion started with business in 2018/19 about creating a second industrial park business improvement district (BID) as a sister to that established at Globe Business Park in Marlow in 2015. A business-led Steering Group is in place. This project activity was placed on pause due to Covid-19 and will be progressed further over the coming year with a ballot targeted for 2022. This will help businesses of the area have much more input into the projects that are needed to tackle the issues on the Business Park.

#### 1.11 **DWP Partnership Agreement**

Given the rise of unemployment levels in Bucks and the impacts of Covid 19 on the economy, businesses and residents; a new Partnership approach is being undertaken by Bucks Council and Department of Works and Pension (DWP). This outlines priority groups so that support can be directed to them that will help them back into employment as quickly as possible. In addition, the Job Centre Plus is growing its estate in High Wycombe so that it is accessible to local residents where they can access advice, support and referrals to support and training. The priority areas of the Agreement fall into four broad categories–

- a. **Unemployment Trap** – those that are on the cusp of losing their job or have just lost it which will cause them to spiral into a whole raft of social or physical challenges including mental health. Their employment was the only thing saving them from such issues
- b. **Accelerated Pathways** – this is a set of short and accessible training provision that will enable people to reskill quickly into an employment sector that has jobs growth in it. Examples are where people have been made redundant from retail but can quickly retrain to go into Health and Social Care, Construction etc.
- c. **Enterprise Start Up** – some people have aspirations to set up their own business but just need a little guidance and advice which can help them on their way.
- d. **Young People** – data shows that young people are one of the most adversely affected group from Covid 19. Kickstart and other such schemes are enabling young people to gain experience, grow confidence and get back into employment but other initiatives need to be established that can support young people.

#### 1.12 **Economic data**

In July 2021, **12,805** Buckinghamshire residents were claiming ‘out-of-work’ related benefits (the Claimant Count).

There were **7,265** more claimants in Buckinghamshire in July 2021 than at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020.

Within Buckinghamshire, the Claimant Count rate is highest (and above the national average) in the **Wycombe** parliamentary constituency area (5.7%).

25-49 year olds make up a slightly greater proportion of all those claiming currently than in March 2020, whilst a smaller proportion are aged 50+. The proportion of claimants aged 16-24 is the same.

London has experienced the largest increase in Claimant Count rates since the start of the pandemic, with edge-of-London areas (particularly those close to Heathrow and Gatwick airports) tending to see higher than average increases in Claimant Count rates and higher than average levels of furloughing.

**Table 1: Claimant Count – July 2021**

Area	March 2020		July 2021		March 2020 - July 2021	
	Number	%	Number	%	Change	% point change
Parliamentary constituency						
Aylesbury	1,420	1.8	2,975	3.8	1,555	2.0
Beaconsfield	820	1.4	2,200	3.7	1,380	2.3
Buckingham	710	1.1	1,820	2.8	1,110	1.7
Chesham and Amersham	750	1.4	1,820	3.3	1,070	1.9
Wycombe	1,840	2.6	3,990	5.7	2,150	3.1
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>5,540</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>12,805</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>7,265</b>	<b>2.2</b>
England	1,063,505	3.0	1,946,790	5.5	883,285	2.5

Source: DWP, via NOMIS



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## Next steps and review

- As the projects listed above develop further with more detailed plans surrounding them, further information can be shared at regular intervals to this Committee. Where there are opportunities to collaborate, consult and engage, Bucks Council will formally discuss with Town Committee on the best approach for this.

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# **High Wycombe Town Committee Special Expenses Quarter 1 2021/22**

Author: Tamsin Lloyd-James

Presenter: Fiorella Mugari

Date: 23 September 2021

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## Introduction

Committee are asked to consider and acknowledge the Q1 forecast position for 2021/22. This report sets out the 2021/22 revenue forecast position and the impact on working balances at year end for High Wycombe Town Committee.

## Special Expenses Q1 Forecast 2021/22

The net forecast outturn position for 2021/22 is £351k, a favourable variance of £15k against a total budget of £366k. The table below provides the detail at activity level.

Activity Area	Analysis	2021/22 Budget	YTD Actuals	FY Forecast	Variance
		£	£	£	£
Footway Lighting	Exp	1,800	0	1,800	0
	Inc	0	0	0	0
	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>0</b>
Cemetery	Exp	337,746	21,655	337,746	0
	Inc	-182,250	-69,654	-195,000	-12,750
	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>155,496</b>	<b>-47,999</b>	<b>142,746</b>	<b>-12,750</b>
Town Twinning	Exp	3,000	0	3,000	0
	Inc	0	0	0	0
	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>0</b>
Community Grants	Exp	25,660	1,000	25,660	0
	Inc	0	0	0	0
	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>25,660</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>25,660</b>	<b>0</b>
Recreation Grounds (Local)	Exp	144,085	7,598	144,085	0
	Inc	0	0	0	0
	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>144,085</b>	<b>7,598</b>	<b>144,085</b>	<b>0</b>
Allotments	Exp	20,430	2,176	20,430	0
	Inc	-60	0	-60	0
	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>20,370</b>	<b>2,176</b>	<b>20,370</b>	<b>0</b>
War Memorial	Exp	3,000	0	300	-2,700
	Inc	0	0	0	0
	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>-2,700</b>
Community Centres	Exp	13,000	0	13,000	0
	Inc	0	0	0	0
	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Exp</b>	<b>548,721</b>	<b>32,429</b>	<b>546,021</b>	<b>-2,700</b>
	<b>Inc</b>	<b>-182,310</b>	<b>-69,654</b>	<b>-195,060</b>	<b>-12,750</b>
	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>366,411</b>	<b>-37,225</b>	<b>350,961</b>	<b>-15,450</b>

## Commentary on variances

### Cemetery

An increased forecast in cemetery income is due to an increase in the number of ashes burials. This is most likely due to people storing the ashes of their loved ones during lockdown until such a time as a funeral could be held with more attendees.

### Community Grants

Community Grants are forecast to be spent, however proactive engagement by the Committee with the community is required to ensure this budget is spent.

### Recreations Grounds (Local)

The Recreation Grounds (local) are on routine maintenance this year and so at Quarter 1 are being forecast to be spent in full.

### War Memorial

No cleaning scheduled for this year as comprehensive cleaning took place last year. Potential for minor repairs if required, therefore forecast is for 10% of budget as an estimate. Comprehensive cleaning will take place in 2022/23.

## Impact on Working Balances

The impact of 2021/22 activities are given in the table below:

	£	£
<b>Balance at 1st April 2021*</b>		<b>-540,726</b>
Revenue Expenditure Forecast	350,961	
Precept	-271,924	
Interest	-8,200	
<b>Movement in reserves</b>		<b>70,837</b>
<b>Balance c/f 31st March 2022</b>		<b>-469,889</b>

*\*figure subject to finalisation of BC statement of accounts*

The estimated working balance as at March 2022 is £470k which is higher than the recommended minimum level of £150k. This is set aside as an earmarked reserve and therefore ring-fenced for HWTC.

## New Cemetery

The new cemetery is currently still within the developer's maintenance contract until 27 November 2021. From 1 January 2022, it will be added to the new grounds maintenance contract. The details for this contract have not yet been released and award to the successful bidder is pending. The cemetery is expected to be open for use next year (2022).

## Buckinghamshire Council

## HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

## Work Programme – MARCH 2021 – JANUARY 2022

Title & Subject Matter	Meeting / Date to be taken	Contact Officer
<b><u>November 2021</u></b>		
One Can Trust	Nov 21	
Chiltern Rangers Update	Nov 21	
Q2 Budgetary Control Report	Nov 21	Tamsin Lloyd-James, Accountant
CIL Update	Nov 21	John Callaghan
Penn Road Cemetery – burial types offered	Nov 21	Lindsey vallis
Wardens to be made permanent	Nov 21	Chairman
Alternative route progress	Nov 21	Chairman
Existing Cemetery Regulations for Hampden Rd Cemetery	Nov 21	Andy Sherwood Andy Sherwood/Lindsey Vallis
<b><u>January 2022</u></b>		
Special Expenses Budget 2022/2023	Jan 22	Tamsin Lloyd-James, Accountant
Markets update	Jan 22	Jacqueline Ford
Penn Road Cemetery – proposed fees and charges and cemetery rules and regulations		Lindsey Vallis

Meeting contact officer: Iram Malik, iram.malik@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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