



High Wycombe Town Committee minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on Tuesday 20 June 2023 in The Oak Room Wycombe Swan St Mary Street High Wycombe HP11 2XE, commencing at 7.00 pm and concluding at 9.00 pm.

Members present

A Alam, M Ayub, K Bates, A Baughan, T Green, S Guy, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain JP, Majid Hussain, S Raja, N Rana, M Smith, N Thomas, J Wassell and K Wood

Apologies

S Barrett, L Clarke OBE, D Hayday, O Hayday, Maz Hussain and M Knight

Agenda Item

1 1 MINUTE SILENCE

Members observed a minute of silence in remembrance of Mrs K Peatey who had sadly passed away in recent days.

In paying tribute, Councillor Green stated that Mrs Peatey epitomised High Wycombe and had been involved in a whole host of activities over a long period of time. During her time as Councillor she had served as both Leader and Chairman of Wycombe District Council and as Mayor of the Town. Furthermore, she possessed many skills and attributes which she had devoted to the town. Mrs Peatey was very proud of High Wycombe and her role in the running of it over many years of service. As such the whole Committee wholeheartedly agreed that it was right that she should be remembered in the appropriate way.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs: Mr & Mrs Hayday, Barrett, Knight Clarke and Maz Hussain.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE- CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor A R Green be appointed as Vice – Chairman of the High Wycombe Town Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

4 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 14 March and 17 May 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A Hussain declared an interest in item 5 (Curve Building) and withdrew from the meeting as he had ownership of a property adjoining the building.

Councillor S Raja (Chairman of the Committee) declared an interest in agenda item 5 (Curve Building) and withdrew from the meeting.

Councillor A R Green (Vice Chairman) in the absence of the Chairman took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

6 PRESENTATION ON THE CURVE BUILDING (Councillor A R Green in the Chair)

A presentation was delivered on the Curve building which was a scheme to redevelop a building in High Wycombe to offer new housing and commercial spaces.

The representatives of the owners of the Curve building (former Eden Nightclub) presented initial design ideas for the site and outlined the aspirations of the new owners to deliver mixed-used residential led development of the site.

A number of questions followed relating to the development, including one on the likely timeframe, availability of parking and the plans for the flyover. A question was also raised regarding the height of the proposed building in comparison to the adjacent hotel, and the likely sight line, and whether the church would still be visible.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

A number of questions followed relating to the development, including one on the likely timeframe, availability of parking and the plans for the flyover. A question was also raised regarding the height of the proposed building in comparison to the adjacent hotel, and the likely sight line, and whether the church would still be visible.

Members thanked the presenters for their time and for the interesting overview and update.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted

7 HIGH WYCOMBE REGENERATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members received an update report on the Town Centre Regeneration. The meeting was informed that Local Economic and Regeneration team continued to develop a multi- faceted work programme focusing on the regeneration of the town centre and Cressex area in conjunction with a variety of partners from both the public and private sectors.

Members were requested to note the report which was submitted for information.

One of the major issues voiced by Members was that of safety concerns within the town centre and surrounding areas, which in turn had an impact on people's intention/ability to walk or cycle. It was highlighted by another member that whilst Thames Valley Police continued to face staffing difficulties, the matter needed to be escalated and the levels of anti-social behaviour remained consistently high in comparison to Aylesbury. In addition, it was evident that such behaviour was now beginning to move away from the town centre and into other areas often outside of businesses. It was felt that the urgent matter of anti social behaviour needed to be tackled as a whole.

The extent of the problem was acknowledged by the presenting officer, who stated that it was a challenge that stakeholders continued to work on and aimed to provide both short and long term solutions.

Another issue raised was regarding the markets which had dropped significantly in both quality and number. It was confirmed that new ways of making improvements were being explored including a new campaign aimed at attracting new traders within the town.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) The report be noted
- (ii) Markets be included in a future update report on the town centre.

8 COMMUNITY AND FACILITIES GRANTS - PROPOSED CHANGES

A report was considered which stated that the current process of the grants function was being reviewed. The grants were for projects within the unparished area of High Wycombe, with an annual budget of £10,000 for the voluntary and community sector and another £10,000 for the provision of grants to facilities which had community use as their primary purpose.

The report also highlighted the proposed changes which had been identified following internal consultation with those involved in the process of awarding grants.

In considering the report a number of questions arose, and an amendment which was suggested as a change to the process was to request all applicants making a claim to be **required** to possess an equal opportunities policy within their terms of reference or within their organisations framework, and to abide by it. This change was agreed by Members as a whole.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the proposed changes be agreed, subject to the inclusion of a requirement for applicants to have an equal opportunities policy in place.

9 HIGH WYCOMBE TRAVEL CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

A report was submitted which requested that the summary of the public consultation results on the draft Transport Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), be noted. The report also outlined the proposed next steps for progressing the draft plans through to adoption and highlighted that a separate briefing was being arranged with local Members relating to this.

Members considered the report and asked various questions some of which were answered whilst others would be followed up in the separate briefing.

One such question related to where the flyers, posters and banners had been displayed across 14 locations in High Wycombe as part of the consultation. It was confirmed that this had primarily been in central locations such as the train station, and the business park. Further information would be provided at the forthcoming briefing.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

10 SPECIAL EXPENSES OUTTURN 2022/23

Members considered a report on the revenue outturn position for 2022/23 and its impact on working balances at year end for the High Wycombe Town Committee. The net position for the year was £225k, a forecast underspend of £203k against a total budget £428k. The table set out on page 83 of the agenda pack highlighted the details at activity level.

The impact of activities conducted in 2022/23 were provided in the table on page 85 of the agenda pack. Members noted that the working balances as of March was £718k a figure higher than the minimum level of £150k. It was emphasised that the year end accounting for the council was yet to be finalised, and that the amount had been set aside as a reserve and ring fenced for the High Wycombe Town Committee.

The presenting officer also brought Members` attention to the underspends on recreation grounds, community grants and footway lighting and the expenditure budget underspend of £141k for the cemeteries category as well as small overspends on War Memorial and Allotments.

A number of questions arose, some of which were answered in meeting. A list of recreation grounds covered by special expenses would be provided individually following the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

11 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the work programme be noted.

- (ii) Update items on CIL monies and the Bucks University regeneration programme be included for the scheduled September meeting

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 26 September 2023 at 7pm.