

Minutes from Future of Winchester Meeting 19th November 2018 Upstairs in Greens

James Martin-Jones opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and telling them the format and ground rules. The purpose of the meeting was to arrive at an outline map for the future of Winchester

Cllr Anne Weir gave a short description of how Winchester is governed at the moment

- WCC is a two-tiered district council.
- There are 16 wards: 11 are parished, 5 are unparished.
- Decisions are taken by a cabinet system: more and more decisions are being taken by cabinet, less by full council.
- There is cross-party membership of subcommittees but opposition councillors get no vote.
- Leisure centre decisions were taken behind closed doors

Winchester Town Forum (WTF) covers the 5 (unparished) city wards

- There are currently 9 Lib Dem councillors and 5 Conservative
- Most decisions concerning the city are taken by cabinet
- WTF has no formal precepting powers. It comes under council tax as a special expense and the local charge was has been frozen between 2010 and 2016 ~~over~~ last few years
- It receives 15% of does get CIL receipts money which is levied on ~~over~~ new buildings
- WTF make recommendations
- There is no Discussion of about specific planning or licencing applications is proscribed.
- Housing development is chaotic – largely developer driven – there is a lack of urban design
- Options as a structure to have influence on planning are: area committees, community councils, town council, anything else?

Tables were then asked to come up with one or two statements or questions for Anne

- What would be involved in securing a town council for Winchester (city)?
Governance review: electoral commission, boundary commission. A referendum. Another level of elections with associated expenses. Would there be a mayor of the town council? What would happen to the district mayor (different name?)
- Parish Councils can raise precepts by 25%/30%, whatever they wish. We can't because it's all part of the district budget and is constrained by government.
- If there was a Winchester tier 3 parish council then it would only have limited responsibility and powers to sort these issues
- They have area committees in Eastleigh. There is no planning committee that covers the whole area.
- We need to have a higher-level planning committee for major planning applications.
- The planning committee is uninformed and not fit for purpose. Do we need more radical action? *The committee need to follow actual planning rules.*

- Planning is developer driven through council officers. *We still need to follow national guidelines*
- The whole of the governance structure needs to be reformed. Area committee system does work as can refer planning problems up. Another tier 3 not that helpful. A town council would be able to raise a precept. No cost ceiling on what a tier 3 can charge. There is on districts.
- Is there an overall city plan we can refer to? If not, why not?
- Under Edward Heath, there was a battle between county and town in Winchester district. That battle is still going on.
- When do you propose we do these radical changes? We need to get the planning committee to respond more to residents, the environment etc now. We need massive reforms. People are intimidated by the planning committee.

Cllr Liz Hutchison gave a short talk on what sort of plan Winchester should have

- *There is huge pressure on Winchester to grow*
- *Having a plan should be really important*
- *Local plan 2013 is not a spacial plan. The policies do not refer to specific areas.*
- *WTF 2012 Vision for Winchester still stands but it is no plan. It has no outcomes, no driver, no budget. It has no influence on anything that has happened in planning.*
- *Walking Strategy 2014 - nothing has come of it*
- *If there is pressure to grow, how do we make sure Winchester fulfil its promise?*
- *Surface car parks have ruined many cities*
- *Who manages Winchester: the markets, bins, street cleaning, street furniture, the public realm?*
- *The local plan refresh is December 2019*
- *The movement strategy was published today and is out for consultation. It suggests: fewer cars; better facilities for walking and cycling; more park and rides.*
- *16,000 cars come into Winchester every day: if we produced more homes, less people would have to drive in. But what goes where? What density? What do we need? We need homes suitable for different ages and different income levels.*
- *We need to think about sports, students, retail etc*
- *Movement strategy suggests 3000 more park & ride spaces. Where?*

Tables were then asked to come up with one or two statements or questions to put to Liz

- We need to manage growth rather than resist it (house numbers). It could improve our quality of life
- We need more affordable housing in town centre. The university has lots of students who want to stay but can't afford it. It's people who work in shops and restaurants too. They drive in and create pollution.
- Don't put in too much actual student managed housing. The university gets lots of money from those. Put in more affordable homes so the council gets the money. *Dedicated student housing changes multiple occupancy housing (HMOs) back to family homes*
- We need plan-led housing
- Use the railway track to move people in and out without using the roads
- Movement strategy was very well produced. It sets out clearly aims, possible actions, time scales and costings. We need action.

- We need another P+R site. Should we have a temporary one over Christmas? Festivals manage. Surely the council could too?
- We could do temporary P+Rs, and temporary reorganisation of traffic routes, road closures etc to see what works
- Out of city car parks are needed for large lorries, and then could have smaller vehicles come into the stores. We need to get rid of the large lorries in the city centre.
- Invaluable plans, but how do we take control to put them into practice? *Leaflets, candidates. There is no better way to influence the council than to become a councillor (e.g. Lynda and the kerbside glass campaign). Have a lot of conversations with people. When you knock on doors these are the things people want to talk about. It's not necessarily discussed at council. There was a 22% swing to the Lib Dems in Upper Meon Valley in September. If we know what we want it makes it easier.*
- We don't have a plan for Winchester, just a series of wish lists. There are plans in other places.
- Car exclusion zone in city centre
- Pavements very unsafe
- Affordable housing
- Cycle storage
- Need set times for deliveries (e.g. before 10am and after 6pm like in Bath).

Wendy Wyatt then gave her vision of what Winchester could be like.

- *Background: Lived in Winchester for 11 years, moved down from London. Sells cycling illustrations (graphic design). Used to work for Boris and Ken Livingstone. Creative London: "I want to make London the most creative city in the world". Regeneration: Olympics 2012, Tate, South Bank, London fashion week*
- *Winchester is culturally rich and has a wonderful heritage.*
- *Creativity is very hard to find even though there is a strong creative underbelly (37 architects, WSA etc)*
- *Idea: Bring them to the surface. Have Winchester Design Festival*
- *It would be great for the economy and children.*
- *Creative industries are growing*
- *Anglo-Saxon museum? Beautifully designed. Think Gustav Klimt – Paris's first digital art museum - warehouse full of art*
- **Embrace the future but respect the past**
- *We take our culture for granted but need to move it into the modern age*

Tables were then asked to think about their future vision of Winchester and what they would like to see. AW asked for milestones and tangible things.

- We need more creative space
- Friarsgate quarter could be arts related
- We are not currently making use of the assets we do have. The old registry office has been left empty. It could have pop shops or be a temporary art studio. Be more proactive in making better use of empty properties
- Winchester needs some modernising, branding, but heritage still important.

- We need more affordable housing
- Car free days: keeping cars out of the city centre. Or traffic free centre permanently?
- Good connections: Better signposting of the walking and cycling routes already in the city. Better walking routes and cycling routes into Winchester
- Not having to cross a busy road to get from the railway station to the city centre
- Pay more attention to pedestrians and cyclists
- In 12 year's time we will be in the middle of a crisis on climate change. We need to get all the major buildings (schools, hospitals etc) covered in PV panels and not have cars in the city centre
- Engagement: involve people who will be living here in 20 or 30 year's time. Have a youth council in the town council? Our values should be developed by the next generation. What kind of city do our kids want to grow up in? It's currently great for sport, but there isn't much else for young people
- Branding of the city for the future: "A city looking forward, not looking back"
- International advice forum for people disenfranchised by Brexit
- The High St is declining. It's hard to compete with West Quay, Basingstoke, online shopping etc
- Covered market (*this idea split the room*)
- We have empty shops due to high business rates. We need a more vibrant High St with independents. But we need more footfall to make them viable (tourists and workers).
- BID needs to work with the independents to advertise them. It needs to work with the council more - have a clear relationship - who is responsible for what
- Incubation hub for small businesses
- More integration between city centre and peripherals
- Improve relationships between town and gown (some people don't know the uni exists)
- Planning is piecemeal - everything should be linked
- Health economy - people go to London to have diagnostic healthcare. Have it here.
- Leisure centre with health referrals.
- Make it a healthy city with walking and cycling. Being a healthy city is really important. We have an aging population. We need a city where it is easy to be healthy
- We need open spaces for people to meet
- We need attractions: museums etc
- "The loos have to be clean or nobody goes"

Final Comments on Second half

- There are 37 architects in Winchester but we are not using their skills to marry the old and the new
- Manchester City Council worked with local design industry community. Design should be at the heart of planning.
- WCC's carbon footprint was always big because of the leisure centre. The new one will have a 50 % bigger carbon footprint. The council gave themselves planning permission.
- We need to tap into young people. Have a Winchester conference or Winchester forum

- People will get involved but if they don't feel the council is listening they will stop
- We need connection between vibrant small enterprise and the people building the places for them to live
- What is Winchester doing about the homeless? *Very good compared to other places. The more we do, the more people come. Lots of people volunteer and donate. Homelessness is not just about affordable housing, but monthly payment responsibility. Govt has to realise substance abuse is a medical problem, not a crime.*
- Park & Rides were originally brought in to turn city centre car parks into housing
- Manchester City Council digital strategy. Smart city project: number of local firms informed the strategy
- Sustainability: Digital Futures building aiming to be greenest in Winchester. This should be celebrated
- The university was involved with the new leisure centre so should have pushed to make that greener
- We need a clear ethos: [3 messages to be distilled from this](#)

What happens next?

- Lynda to circulate minutes by 25th November
- Any comments/corrections to be sent to Lynda by 1st December
- Lynda to circulate final version by 9th December
- We need a working group to [distil the key \(3\) messages from this output and translate this into campaigning materials. make a list of things to put in a survey that we can distribute to all city residents. It will be a campaign tool, online and offline.](#) Liz ~~ander~~-Anne ~~to will~~ coordinate
- We will make change happen by campaigning and winning the council!
- More discussion is needed on governance.

We demand a Winchester fit for our children!