

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING 15 November 2022

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Mark Dykes (part) and Councillors Andrews, Boulter, Foxton, Hey, Hornsey, Kenyon, Milln, Oliver, Owens, Stevens, Tillett, Toynbee, Tyler, Wilcox, Williams

In attendance: Steve Kerry Town Clerk

C2022/23.43 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING AND ORDER OF BUSINESS

As the Mayor and Deputy were both absent at the start of the meeting, it was proposed by Councillor Tillett, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and

RESOLVED That Councillor Stevens takes the Chair until the Mayor arrives.

It was agreed to take the presentation on the Transport Hub first, after the Council's Chaplain led a two minute silence in memory of the late Councillor Wargen, a former Mayor of the City.

C2022/23.44 PRESENTATION ON THE TRANSPORT HUB

The Chair welcomed Laurence Butterworth and Adam Brown to the meeting and invited them to present the plans Herefordshire Council are consulting on for the railway station to become a transport hub.

Laurence explained that the purpose of the project is to preserve or enhance the appearance of the Grade Two listed station building, whilst creating a modern and efficient transport hub for rail, bus, cyclists and pedestrians with public transport access. He handed over to Adam for the detailed presentation.

Adam explained that the key principles guiding the design process were consultation, especially with the bus providers, but also with the taxi companies, the City Council, service user groups and the general public, together with a commitment to protect the views of the station and to turn an unwelcoming area outside the station into something with a real sense of place. There were three key areas, the bus bays and two peripheral sites for parking and bus layovers. Moving parked vehicles off the space in front of the station, making use of the NCP area which is under-used at present, and using spaces around the medical building were key to opening up the forecourt for buses and safe pedestrian movements. Three options had been considered and scored on nine criteria including safety, which was of paramount importance. This had led to the choice of a drive in reverse out (DIRO) facility for the bus movements, as this reduced the need for pedestrians to cross over bus routes and best protected the views.

The area will be developed with attractive spaces including planting of apple trees and possibly a fountain, with attractively designed bus shelters. Good lighting without intrusive columns and safe pedestrian routes picked out in distinct paving will be included. The DIRO area itself would be sealed off from pedestrian movements for safety and was the preferred option for the bus providers. He spent some time illustrating the design features of the bus shelters which will be distinctive.

The next steps would be to complete the consultation process, hold the final stakeholder workshops and prepare the formal planning application.

In answers to questions from members the following additional points were made. At this stage the cabinet member from Herefordshire Council, Councillor John Harrington joined the presentation group to answer questions.

There would be emergency service access through movable bollards. Is the design an over-development that doesn't link in with existing traffic use patterns? The concept is around active travel and plans for 18 bus movements an hour which allows for growth in use of public transport. Pedestrians and cyclists take centre stage hence the DIRO plan. There is considerable concern about fruit trees, leaf mould, falling leaves, falling fruit, slip/trip hazards and the possibility of kids throwing fruit around. All of this needs to be factored in with good planting and design choices. Any trees that are planted must be maintained to avoid becoming an eyesore, as too many have already on other sites.

The City Council have won £1.7m in Stronger Towns Fund money for a fleet of three electric buses and they need to be placed within this plan, preferably in the taxi rank area as the shuttle needs to be visible and easily accessible from the station exit. It is not appropriate for it to be out on the main roads. Network Rail and Transport for Wales jointly own the station itself, Herefordshire Council owns the forecourt. The other agencies support the development concept but are not contributing financially. The whole scheme will cost in the region of £10m, so far government has only released funds for design and an application for Levelling Up money will be made for capital costs. The balance between long and short stay parking needs to reflect people using the station for all day trips and longer.

There was some dispute about the plans as they relate to the bus lay over area and the preserved access to the Hereford and Gloucester Canal which has status within local planning documents. This needs to be resolved as part of the planning application process.

The frequency of the proposed Zipper shuttle bus will affect passenger numbers and footfall projection, and these will need to be worked into the design. There was considerable discussion of the proposed shelter canopy design and especially of why this did not include solar panels as it presents quite a large area of metal which can be angled to receive plenty of light. It was felt that this was a serious omission from the design. There was also some concern about how pleasant it would be to stand under metal roofs on very hot days and the extent to which these shelters would be adequately ventilated and sheltered in all weathers.

There is no cycle route to get to the station which militates against the idea of making cyclists a priority at the station. This is outside the scope of this project but will be the subject of further proposals later. Disabled people also need to be given safe and accessible routes and there needs to be good visual and audible guidance for users of the site. NMITE could be asked to contribute to the design, and they are well known to be keen to use their students to make a contribution to the life of the City in which their institute is located. The Zipper will assist with that, if it is located close to the station doors.

The turning circle restrictions of the design need to be clarified so the viability of using a midibus on the site can be confirmed.

The consultation closes on 12 December, and nothing is set in stone yet.

The Chair thanked Laurence, Adam, and Cllr Harrington for their time.

The Mayor had arrived during the presentation and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

C2022/23.45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness were received from the Mayor who had been stuck in traffic after an earlier engagement.

Apologies for absence were noted from Councillors Carwardine and Powell.

C2022/23.46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hornsey repeated the declaration of a pecuniary interest in the item referring to Close House she had made at the Community Development Committee.

C2022/23.47 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

C2022/23.48 MINUTES OR PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by Councillor Milln, seconded by Councillor Andrews and

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of Council of 27 September 2022 be accepted as a true record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

C2022/23.49 CLOSE HOUSE FUNDING AWARD AND LARGE GRANT

Having declared a pecuniary interest Councillor Hornsey left the meeting at this point.

The Clerk explained that both these items had been considered by the Community Development Committee and were recommended for acceptance. Members of the Committee would be able to speak to justify that recommendation if required, although Ben Lea from Close House was also present to answer any questions.

It was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Wilcox and unanimously

RESOLVED That the one off grant of £15,000 to support the EPICS recommended by Community Development Committee is agreed.

That the increased service level agreement of £20,000 per annum recommended by Community Development Committee is agreed.

Councillor Hornsey re-entered the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

C2022/23.50 WHEELED SPORTS 4 HEREFORD LARGE GRANT APPLICATION

The Clerk explained that this was another referral from the Community Development Committee and members of the committee would be able to justify their recommendation if there were questions. Councillor Andrews stated that she was very happy to support this and paid tribute to the huge efforts made by former Councillor Anna Toon to support this project. Councillor Foxtan added that the work of former Councillor Lloyd-Hayes in the early stages should also be recognised.

The Mayor thanked both former members for their efforts in this long running development of what has become one of the best things the City Council has been associated with.

It was proposed by Councillor Tillett, seconded by Councillor Owens and unanimously

RESOLVED That a large grant of £7,950 to enable a water supply to be installed at the skate park be agreed as recommended by the Community Development Committee.

C2022/23.51 FINAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2021-2022

The Clerk (and Responsible Financial Officer) presented the final external audit report which had confirmed that there were no qualifications on the accounts and that procedures had been satisfactorily followed throughout the year. The Mayor thanked the Officers responsible.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Boulter and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Council records its thanks to the Administration and Events Manager and the Finance Officer for their work throughout the year recognised in the successful internal and external audit reports.

C2022/23.52 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND CIVIC EVENTS 2023

The Clerk presented for information the calendar of events including the timing of key meetings around the May elections. He asked members to note that Mayor-making had been moved to a Tuesday as holding it on a Monday meant all the preparation had to be condensed into one day which creates additional pressure for no very good reason. He had been advised that all counting was planned to be completed on the Friday after the elections and he would be at the count to ensure all newly elected members got an induction pack which would include details of training events.

The calendar was noted for information.

C2022/23.53 BUS PROJECT

The Clerk introduced his report and gave an account of the visit to the European Bus Expo at the NEC, where members and their advisers had been able to examine the buses on offer. Normally, it was the case that one tender was lower in price and quality, and it was a question of a trade-off between lower expectations and a lower price, or justifying the higher price on some non-financial grounds. This time the group felt that the slightly lower priced offer was also the slightly better offer, which had made it easier to come to a recommendation.

Councillor Hey, part of the working group, added that although there is still an issue with funding agreements, the Clerk and the Chief Finance Officer at Herefordshire had found a way to work around that which would mean we could proceed on a memorandum of understanding which would avoid delaying placing the order once the decision was made. She thanked the Clerk for organising attendance at the Expo which had been extremely informative. There was the possibility of doing something exceptional with the buses with high specification and good quality to create a wow factor. It was however quite frustrating that cooperation from the designers of the transport hub and Herefordshire Council's Transport Team had been rather poor so far.

In further discussion it was noted that the proposed bus had good access for prams and pushchairs, better than the second ranked option, and that the deposit requirement for the proposed acquisition was considerably less onerous than for the other option. It was also confirmed that now that the government has released some £3.5m of STF monies for projects

it is committed to the second year payment so we can order with confidence despite concerns with other areas of public spending.

It was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Milln and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Council thanks the working group for their work in evaluating the bids.

That the Council accepts the conclusion of the working group that Bus A offers both a more competitively priced and a technically superior solution.

That the Council directs the Clerk to enter into a memorandum of understanding with Herefordshire Council to release the first tranche of funding as required to secure the order for the buses.

That the Council directs the Clerk to place an order with the supplier of Bus A for three buses and to draw down funds for the payment of the deposit from Herefordshire Council.

That the Council pre-approves the payment of the deposit required to secure the order so that officers may act as soon as the payment is requested, provided funds have been received from Herefordshire Council and that member approval of the payment is considered to have been given by this resolution.

That if the physical attendance of two cheque signatories is required at the bank to approve the deposit payment, the signatories are asked to respond as quickly as possible to enable the delivery time to be started.

C2022/23.54 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor confirmed he had been very busy since the last meeting in September. Highlights had included the launch event of Hereford AppleFest which had been excellent and the AppleFest Banquet which had also been an enormous success. Social media had given overwhelmingly positive responses. Barrels beer festival had also been immensely enjoyable. The Hereford version of a Monopoly board has been launched and is selling well, Phillip Morris reported they had sold out with 700 pre-orders. The joint SSAFA/Samaritan event at the cathedral had been very good and both groups were very grateful for the City's financial support in putting this on. Finally, he had attended the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service awards night where firefighters had been honoured for twenty, thirty and even forty years of service and several civilians had also received recognition for prompt and brave acts in emergencies.

C2022/23.55 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Councillor Toynbee apologised that she had to leave the meeting at this point.

- a) **Climate and Bio-diversity Committee 4 October** no questions.
- b) **Community Development Committee 3 October (Grants), 10 October (Grants) and 18 October** no questions
- c) **Planning and Highways Committee 8 September and 6 October.** Councillor Stevens expressed concern that on the application for a license for the distillery many of the objections raised were related to planning matters and would not be considered by the licensing authority. It was stated that the application had originally not attracted any objections when

it was just for a distillery, but now it was for an off license many local people felt that they had been denied their opportunity to object to that and that they had not been treated fairly. The comments of the Committee reflected that. It was possible that there would have to be a revised planning application as the scheme had changed so significantly from its original description.

- d) **Policy and Resources Committee 11 October** no questions
- e) **Youth Council 18 July** no questions. Minutes of the later meetings would be presented to the next meeting of Council.

C2022/23.56 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

- a) **Municipal Charities** no report, the next meeting is on Friday.
- b) **Three Choirs** no report and this will be taken off the agenda until the next year the festival is coming to Hereford. Any exceptional items will be flagged up by members to the Clerk.
- c) **Twining Association** no report.
- d) **Hereford in Bloom** no report, now but HiB are coming to the next meeting of Community Development Committee to present their annual report and seek release of their annual grant. It was noted that the recent cleaning up of the underpasses was not the work of the contractor Balfour Beatty, but in fact was done by volunteers from HiB, local litter pickers and the BID. The promised blitz clean up from Herefordshire Council had not so far been forthcoming. Members were reminded that the Council holds a stock of litter pickers for long term loan to local groups.
- e) **Close House** covered in their annual report.
- f) **Hereford BID** Cllr Stevens will circulate their next newsletter.
- g) **Stronger Towns Board** The position on the buses having already been noted, Councillor Hey reported that the first physical meeting of the Board had taken place. The Council is generally ahead of the game compared to many projects and we have completed our Project Initiation Document based on the business case already submitted. There is an ongoing discussion between the Board and Herefordshire Council about the legal agreements to enable funding, but we have worked around that to avoid a delay with the bus project.
- h) **Bluecoat School Charity** Councillor Wilcox reported a very good meeting at St Thomas Cantilupe School which had made a strong recovery from special measures. The charity will support the chaplaincy proposal previously discussed with around £3,000.
- i) **Youth Council** It was agreed to roll this item into the reporting of minutes of their meetings.
- j) **Community Land Trust** Nothing to add since the comprehensive report at the last meeting.
- k) **Hereford Allotment and Leisure Gardeners** (Noted that this also covers item (l) on the agenda). Nothing to report. It was agreed that Councillor Kenyon will continue to represent

the Council to HALG and will attend Community Development Committee whenever allotments issues are being discussed.

C2022/23.57 TOWN CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk reported that on advice from the Council's accountant who had been with us for half a day to finish off the budget plans for next year, we would be increasing our holdings in the Local Authorities Deposit Account with CCLA. This was now offering a useful rate of interest. To this end he had a cheque for £500,000 for the signatories to approve the transfer of funds.

The Clerk reported that he had been concerned at the number of cadets who fainted during Remembrance Sunday. There were several possible factors including an unnecessary and prolonged stand to attention in St Owen Street, a longer than usual service and possibly the warmer weather. He and the Mayor's Officer would be meeting Col Taylor and Revd Morgan tomorrow to see what could be done to streamline the arrangements whilst leaving all the essential elements in place. He had received two letters, one from a cadet CO and one from a member of the public on this issue.

C2022/23.58 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 6 December 2022 at 6pm

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed.

Signed

Date