Appendix 7

**Winchester Town Forum - What does it do?**

Information sourced from [Winchester City Council](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/meetings/ou/17/)

Although Winchester City Council is the local authority for the whole 250 square mile area of Winchester district (serving over 112,000 people) the rural areas also have local community representation through Parish or Town Councils, or Parish Meetings. They provide a focus for the discussion of local issues and consideration of solutions. For the Winchester town area, there is not a similar elected body, so the City Council decided in 2002 to establish the Winchester Town Forum, to cover the six unparished Town wards. The membership of the Forum is the 18 Councillors who represent those wards.

A revision of its terms of reference in 2007 gave the Forum increased powers to better represent the Town area. This allows the Forum to act as a consultative and advisory body regarding issues which affect the town, such as commenting on the emerging Local Development Framework documents. It can also promote community engagement through consultation exercises and encourage the formation of community groups. It also considers projects financed by the Open Spaces Fund in the Town and makes recommendations to Cabinet or the Portfolio Holder.

The Forum has the power to draft and recommend a capital and revenue budget for the Town Account to Cabinet and Council. The Town Account typically includes grants to charities which principally serve the Town area, playground refurbishments and maintenance of parks and open spaces. Once the Town Account budget has been set, the Forum also has some discretion in its spending during the financial year.

However, the Forum does not consider individual planning and licensing applications. These are semi-judicial in nature and are dealt with by the City Council's Planning Development Control Committee and Licensing and Regulation Committee.

In addition to meeting regularly as a 'committee', the Forum also organises a number of public debates on a range of topics which are of interest to the Town. From the issues raised at these public meetings, the Forum has drafted a "Vision for Winchester" which sets out a guide, to build on Winchester's strengths and tackle its weaknesses. The Forum will champion the Vision, keeping it under review and encouraging the City Council and achieve its aims and objectives.