

WINDSOR TOWN FORUM

MONDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Jack Rankin (Chairman), Hashim Bhatti, John Bowden, Samantha Rayner and Eileen Quick

Also in attendance:

Officers: Wendy Binmore, Harjit Hunjan, Rob Large, Craig Miller and Paul Roach

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alexander and Shelim.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2016 were agreed as a correct record following the amendment below:

That the minutes of the Windsor 2030 Group website were all updated and uploaded to the website and not just the minutes from their previous meeting.

With regards to the item on the Crosses Corner pedestrian crossing at the end of St Leonards Road, the Chairman confirmed that money had been allocated to reform the junction so that the timing of the lights for pedestrians crossing the road could be resolved. The Chairman requested the clerk to write to the head of Highways & Transport to request the timing of the lights issue is resolved.

WINDSOR TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY WARDEN INTRODUCTION AND ACTIVITY UPDATE

Tiia Stephens and Jamie White gave a brief talk on their role as community wardens within the borough. Members noted the following key points:

- Wardens carried out patrols in the town centres during the hours of the night time economy from 7pm Friday nights to 3am Sunday mornings.
- Most of the problems they encounter include taxi's parking where they are not allowed, littering and licensing operation issues.
- The community wardens were the eyes and the ears of the town and often report to Street Care, Licensing and Environmental Protection.
- Community wardens used marked cars and sometimes unmarked cars so even if the public did not see them, it did not mean they were not there.
- Community wardens got involved with a lot of work carried out by other agencies, they can check if music was played too loudly and dealt with anti-social behaviour issues.
- Community wardens liaised with other agencies and also interacted with the homeless and signposted other services to them.

- Aside from their night time duties, community wardens often visited homeless shelters in the area and homeless drop in centres.
- They visited the Windsor Baptist Church where homeless people could get something to eat, get a shower and receive help with drug dependency issues.
- Community wardens worked shifts but there were always community wardens on duty
- Evening tasking took place once or twice per week where they checked hotspot areas and they filled in tasking sheets and noted the time and place where an incident had taken place so that it could be tracked.
- Wardens liaised with the licensing team over illegally parked taxis. They took note of the licence plate and vehicle details so that licensing were able to deal with it
- Community wardens carried a needle kit to dispose of discarded, used needles when found.
- As part of their role, community wardens also work to safeguard the elderly and young children and they can refer them onto other services.
- Community wardens also carry out a lot of ad hoc duties such as taking lost property to police stations and dealing with buskers, checking if they had a licence to busk and moving them on if they did not.
- Community wardens carry out visits to the Kind George VI day centre and the Bows Lions Sheltered Housing where they sit and have a cup of tea with the residents. The community wardens can help with issues such as faulty street lighting.
- Community wardens were linked into the town centre radio system so they can hear when they are needed.
- They enforce dog fouling fines and litter fines
- Tiia Stephens worked closely with the recycling team and supported community recycling events
- Community wardens patrolled events that took place when the weather was nicer such as unlicensed BBQs and also provided home safety advice.
- Community wardens carried out operations with the police against pick pockets operating in town centres and prevention of camping in local parks.

Jamie White, community warden confirmed that there was always community warden cover so that even if there was a team working nights at the weekend, there would still be a team on duty during the day. The team worked in shift patterns and staff were rotated.

Cllr Rayner stated there was a lot of homeless in Windsor. Jamie White stated that a lot of them came from Slough as they know that Windsor had a lot more tourists and there was more money than in Slough. Community wardens advise the homeless that they could get shelter and accommodation at York house but, even if they did get help with housing, they still needed money to live so would continue to beg on the streets. Paul Roach, Windsor Town Manager stated that some people looked homeless but they were not. They had somewhere to live but stayed in Windsor as they may have had an illness or addiction which they needed to fund through begging.

Cllr Quick stated the community wardens work made such a big difference and that they had grown the role to cover more areas and duties. Craig Miller, Head of Community Protection & Enforcement confirmed the community warden service was a seven day per week service and offers wardens could respond 24 hours per day.

Helen Price stated that the Windsor Homeless Project was struggling to cope with the volume of homelessness in the Windsor area as it was very intensive trying to reintegrate the homeless back into society. Cllr Rayner responded saying they Borough had opened up two houses for the homeless including an emergency shelter where people could stay a night during severe weather. The Chairman confirmed that the budget to help with homelessness had been increased to help with the issue. Tiia Stephens stated that if anyone saw someone begging, they should call 101 as that would help to build up a log of evidence. Craig Miller confirmed it was a Manifesto commitment to increase the number of community wardens from 18 to 36 by 2019 for the whole Borough.

Tiia Stephens confirmed that the street entertainer with the dog made out of sand had been moved on and had been told he was not allowed to work in the Town. However, if he was seen again, the public was to call 101 and report him.

BT PHONE BOXES

The Community & Business Partnerships Manager stated that there were approximately 3,600 phone boxes across the UK which had been identified by local communities for adoption. BT had carried out a study on what how often the phone booths were used and if they were not used, instead of removing the phone boxes, BT were allowing community groups to adopt them.

BT said that red kiosks were very iconic and can sell for up to £30,000. The adoption scheme had been going for a while and if you were a Local Authority, parish council or charity, you could apply to adopt a phone box which would then be sold for £1.

The Community & Business Partnerships Manager stated some uses for adopted phone boxes included being converted into libraries, commercial uses such as selling ice cream, some schools had adopted them and others were used to promote local landmarks. He added it was a simple process to adopt a phone kiosk, a form needed to be filled in online and BT would continue to maintain the electricity supply for the kiosk but, nothing else.

BT ran a local consultation where they identified 36 phone boxes within the Royal Borough which would be available for adoption. Some of the locations included Furness Way, Windsor Great Park, the junction of Alma and Springfield and the junction of Kings Road and Queen Anne's Road.

Cllr Quick stated she had been contacted by regarding the phone box on Alma Road, they wanted to convert it into a Geo Cache location and also install a mini book swap. They were very keen to operate it. The Chairman suggested using the phone kiosks to house defibrillators.

The Community & Business Partnerships Manager confirmed that BT were selling some phone boxes to commercial companies and once a phone box was purchased, they could be used for almost any purpose. Cllr Bowden stated that some of the phone boxes were iconic and he did not want to lose them so it was a good idea to think of uses for them. The Windsor Town manager said he had seen some in other areas be turned into Wi-Fi zones and phone charging stations.

Susy Shearer suggested that some phone boxes could be maintained as phone boxes for those people who did not have a mobile phone. The Community & Business

Partnerships Manager confirmed that BT owned the phone boxes and it was possible to object to them being sold. Some of the phones identified in the consultation had not been used at all. He added that BT took accident blackspots into account so that there would be a means of reaching the emergency services if an incident occurred. There was a mechanism in place to object to phone boxes being sold.

The Community & Business Partnerships Manager explained to Members that phone boxes came under planning regulations and so the appearance of the kiosks could not be changed without planning consent. There were a number of parish councils that wanted to buy their local phone boxes. Local Authorities and registered charities could also apply to buy them.

- ❖ **Action:** The Community & Business Partnerships Manager to circulate the list of phone boxes available for purchase to members of the Windsor Town forum.

CCTV IN WINDSOR

Craig Miller, Head of Community Protection & Enforcement explained to Members that the Borough's CCTV network was in line for a full technological review of equipment. The CCTV was first installed in 1996 and there were 121 public space cameras and over 100 cameras which covered car parks.

Technology had moved on and the system currently in place was an analogue system which required hardwiring so the paper was looking at possible options for replacement. The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement was about to commission the services of a company to take on the review work. The findings would then go to Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet.

In Windsor, there were a significant number of cameras and the website showed their locations. A review had been carried out to know how to move forward. The council had spoken to Thames Valley Police (TVP) as CCTV played an important role in the Borough and the police had provided a list of camera locations they would want to be included in future CCTV networks.

The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement confirmed that although there are Metropolitan Police that carry out specific protection duties within the Borough, TVP had their general police operation and their ceremonial events team. The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement had been involved in meetings with the police and had the area commander and chief constable had attended Cabinet. The Metropolitan Police operated inside the Castle areas but, the CCTV network did not cover those areas.

The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement confirmed that the Borough had statistics that showed how the CCTV network was used by the police. However, it was more about the perception of crime and providing a sense of security for residents. Cllr Bowden stated he was a member of the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Panel and he felt Windsor needed a better system. The current CCTV network used an old VHS set up and a new digital system would help secure convictions by using better quality footage. He added he would have liked to receive a contribution from the home Office for installation of any new system due to the protection of the Royal Family and also from the Ministry of Defence due to the changing of the guard. Cllr Bowden also encouraged commercial sponsorship to help keep the town secure.

The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement said he was happy to receive feedback from residents and the local community and they could contact him directly.

YORK HOUSE - PRESENT PLANS AND THAMES VALLEY POLICE UPDATE

Rob Large, Property Service Lead stated the council had applied for planning permission for the development and extension of York House. The proposed plans would go before the Planning and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 20 March 2017 with the intention to enter into a contract for the car park and new police station. Consultants had been appointed and a planning application was submitted by Hunters Architects. There would be columns outside the front of York House which was be for aesthetic as well as structural purposes.

Councillor S. Rayner said that employers would leave the building in June 2017 and will go into hubs in Windsor Library so that residents could still receive help with enquiries. The hubs will be open longer till 7pm and would also be open at weekends which would provide a better service. The arrangements would be in place until the York House works were completed. The Property Service Lead confirmed the works would be completed in 2018.

The Property Service Lead stated that the roof of York House would be removed, the inside of the building gutted and an extra floor added to the top with different design and treatments to what was currently there.

Ann Taylor stated she was told it was not definite the police would be joining the council at York House. The Property Service Lead confirmed that it was still being negotiated and details were being finalised. The intention was to sign contracts and he had spoken to his opposite at TVP and he was happy for that to be made public. The Chairman confirmed that a lot of the detail was in Part II and could not be discussed at the Forum, particularly the costs associated with the development.

The Property Service Lead confirmed that due to a previous paper which had gone to Cabinet in December 2016, a feasibility study was carried out which considered different options and as a result of that, Cabinet had decided to go ahead with the scheme. The Chairman stated there was a business case in place to ensure the numbers worked. the business case was a Part II document so it was not possible to discuss that at the Forum.

Helen Price stated that she was pleased that the staff at York House would be utilising the library during the works as it will maintain services in Windsor.

RIVER STREET CAR PARK

The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement stated there was a lot of development and regeneration going in within the Borough and so his team had been looking at what parking needs would be required. Due to the regeneration, there was a case to provide extra parking at River Street.

Currently, there was a potential proposal of providing an additional deck of parking at the site and additional feasibility work would be carried out on that. There were lots of issues such as planning permission, which needed to be considered; and if there was an investment case there, any decision would need to be made by Full Council.

Other sites were looked at such as Windsor Library and Alexander Gardens but, overflow car parks were working well. Windsor Racecourse was looking at future development of a hotel so, the council were looking to see if a deck solution at River Street was viable. The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement was taking a report back to Cabinet and an investment case to Full Council.

The Chairman stated he supported extra parking in the area. The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement confirmed initial work suggested the council required an extra 100 spaces. The proposal was to look at a deck solution. It was a sensitive site and needed planning permission.

Councillor Quick said she knew of the plan and had noticed when you stand and look the Castle from the rear, it was a long way up to the ground level so, it might be possible to incorporate a deck without it being seen at ground level. It is the Borough's biggest car park, used by the Theatre and restaurants. The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement explained that sensor parking had been considered but, the proposal for the River Street car park considered off street parking, where sensor parking was considered more appropriate for on-street parking. Members were keen for residents and visitors to park in the town as easily as possible.

Helen Price commented that sometimes, parking machines did not work with Advantage Cards. The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement stated a paper on short stay provision went to Cabinet in 2016 which covered that area. Machines were being renewed and the Head of Community Protection & Enforcement had spoken to the Lead Member who was looking at that aspect so it could be resolved.

Helen Price stated that by having an extra 100 parking spaces, that would increase air pollution. The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement responded that the council had to consider everything; the vibrancy of the Town Centre and air quality etc. by looking at that and other locations that was where it was possible to see the balance and air pollution was an area he was working in conjunction with other teams within the council to address.

UPDATE ON 20MPH SPEED LIMIT CONSULTATION

The Chairman stated that 5,198 letters were sent to residents asking them to respond to the consultation. 158 (under 3%) returned their slips with comments / feedback. Due to the low level of response, the Lead Member said there was not enough support to reduce the speed limit. Of the 158 responses, only a quarter of them were in support of the reduction. The Chairman added that traffic cameras were regularly moved so that motorists did not get used to them.

CYCLING IN PEDESTRIAN AREAS

Paul Roach, Town Manager stated the issue of cycling in pedestrian areas came about last summer with takeaway delivery cyclists cycling in the pedestrian areas of the Town Centre. It came to a head by Christmas 2016 when it had become a severe problem. The Windsor, Eton & Ascot Town Partnership and shopping centres managed to obtain the details of the cycling supervisor and was told that cyclists should not be cycling in the pedestrian areas. The police carried out a number of patrols following the reports of cycling and they asked cyclists to dismount through the Town Centre. The delivery company was looking for an alternative area to use as a base to keep the cyclists away from the Town centre.

Craig Miller, Head of Community Protection & Enforcement stated he was currently working with Cllr Cox and looking at what powers or accreditation there was for community based staff to help tackle the cycling issue. The Chairman stated he welcomed the cyclists but only in the right areas where it was safe to cycle. Susy Shearer expressed her thanks for the updates as the Cycle forum had been concerned. There were other problems with the cyclists such as not using working bike lights and cycling at speed and in the wrong direction to traffic flows. She requested that any communications regarding this issue be shared with Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Officer so they could be circulated to the Cycle Forum.

- ❖ **Action:** Paul Roach, Town Manager to write to the delivery companies in Windsor reminding them not to cycle in the Town centre in pedestrian areas.
- ❖ **Action:** Craig Miller Head of Community Protection & Enforcement to obtain relevant powers for community wardens to enforce restrictions of cycling in the Town Centre pedestrian areas.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.45 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....