

CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Gerry Clark (Chairman), Marius Gilmore (Vice-Chairman), Judith Diment, Mohammed Ilyas, Ross McWilliams, Shamsul Shelim and Simon Werner

Also in attendance: Councillors Jones, Majeed, Stretton and D.Wilson.

Officers: Jenifer Jackson, Andy Jeffs, Shilpa Manek, Kevin McDaniel and David Scott

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Grey. Councillor Ilyas was substituting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Clark declared a personal interest as he knew several members of the Maidenhead Target Shooting Club Member. Councillor Clark was attending the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor Ilyas declared a personal interest for item 5 as he is the RBWM representative of the Youth Counselling Agency (Windsor and Maidenhead Youth and Community Counselling Service).

Councillor Samantha Rayner declared a personal interest as she knows the founder of Forest Bridge School, Councillor Simon Dudley, Leader of the Council.

Councillor Stretton declared a personal interest for all Members as they all know the founder of Forest Bridge School, Councillor Simon Dudley, Leader of the Council.

Councillor Werner declared a personal interest as he is a personal friend of Tony Hill. Councillor Werner was attending the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor Derek Wilson declared an interest as Lead Member of Planning for item 4. Councillor Wilson made no reference to the planning scheme as this would be discussed at another meeting so not prejudicing his decision. Councillor Wilson was attending with an open mind.

MINUTES

Minutes of the last meeting were **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED**.

CALL IN - FOREST BRIDGE SCHOOL

The Chairman introduced the item and made it very clear that the discussion would only be looking at the call in and no other issues.

The Chairman addressed Mr Andrew Hill with reference to his question and advised that this would be considered at Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Thursday 20 April.

The Chairman invited Councillor Werner to inform the Panel on why the call-in was made. Councillor Werner explained that the school provided a unique service, it had fantastic staff. It was great that a free school was created in Maidenhead offering great services for residents. It was important that the school expanded.

The call in was made because of two main reasons:

- Interaction with other users – there is not much detail in the report and consultation. Further interaction required on building on green belt, expanding the leisure centre to accommodate more residents and consulting with the Braywick Park Users Club.
- The process followed – There is lots of land and lots of regeneration taking place. Each individual case needs to be scrutinised. All leisure issues need to be scrutinised by Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel before further action is taken.

Councillor Werner was disappointed that the Forest Bridge School report had not been considered at the Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Majeed addressed the Panel and highlighted that he had had many comments and complaints from residents. These included :

- The school was doing amazing work but was proposing extending on green belt land.
- Residents were not consulted.
- The scheme was approved under the radar.
- No formal consultation taken place for residents, families and groups to comment.

Councillor Majeed suggested option C, to refer the matter to Council for consideration, after a public consultation.

Forest Bridge School gave a brief presentation to the Panel. Some of the points raised by the school included;

- There are 58 pupils currently at the school.
- All years groups have waiting lists.
- Many individuals and families have the opportunity now to go and do simple things such as go shopping, or eat out at a restaurant.
- Majority a parent founded school for their own children and also expanding to the wider community.
- The Borough had been very supportive of the school.
- Current accommodation not large enough to expand to 94 pupils, the full approved size of the school.
- The current land users, Maidenhead Target Shooting Club, had been found a new location.
- There would be a joint use multi games area for the school and for residents.
- A Planning application had not yet been submitted, however a full consultation will be carried out once plans submitted.
- This school will be an asset for the whole community.

Paul Sergeant, local resident expressed that there was pressure to build on land in many areas that had been restricted. Residents support school expansion but not on green belt.

David Scott, Head of Communities and Highways, gave a presentation to the Panel. The presentation provided the context of the site, background details to the approach taken, details of existing site use, details on the proposed Forest Bridge School site and the current land use, details of previous consultations and responded to the key issues for the call in.

David Scott explained that it was a large site with multiple users. The site has complex ground conditions where the site was previously used as a land fill site. The site has a long standing and established User Group. This site development links to the wider regeneration agenda for Maidenhead. A consultation had taken place which included the site proposals for Forest

Bridge School. The consultation received over 110 responses, none raising the school site as an issue and none from the current users on the plans to include the school.

Points raised at the meeting included:

- The report for The Forest Bridge School went to the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 22 March 2017 and Cabinet on 23 March 2017.
- There will be an area that will be available for local residents to use.
- The current users have no issues.
- The park is currently used by users of all age groups.
- The plans for the new leisure centre were still being discussed and developed.
- The focus of the consultation was on the new leisure centre.

The Chairman summed up the general discussion and queried that should the Panel discuss the process carried out or the use of land. Does the Panel need to do anything further?

Councillor Werner stressed that the call in was not about the school being built but about the process followed. A proper consultation needed to have been completed, followed by the report being scrutinised by Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel. All future regeneration items need to go to all relevant Panels for discussion. This was more about recognising where we went wrong and to learn from our mistakes and do better next time, so not to make the same mistakes again.

Councillor McWilliams felt that there had been enough opportunities for questions, because it had been discussed at the Children's Overview and Scrutiny and before it went to Cabinet. Councillor McWilliams questioned whether the call in was necessary and recommended that no further action was taken. The Chairman agreed.

Councillor Jones commented that the report had been discussed at Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel but with the remit for education. It is not considered whether the report has been to another Panel. There needs to be more transparency.

Councillor Ilyas confirmed that he felt better informed after the presentation and since it was the same process used for other proposals, he was satisfied that the correct process had been followed and recommended Option A.

Councillor S Rayner informed the Panel that a press launch had been carried out with the Maidenhead Advertiser. There had been contact with all Braywick Park users, though the user group. RBWM was assisting the shooting club to relocate. Councillor S Rayner confirmed that there had been two opportunities for the public and Members to comment.

Councillor D Wilson discussed the Borough Local Plan and the importance of the need for primary schools and special needs schools. All planning issues would be discussed at a completely separate planning meeting.

Councillor Stretton raised the following issues:

- The School is great, providing local children with specialist school places;

- The consultation was not adequate, there were no responses, for or against that related to the school.
- The political decision is separate from a planning decision. The planning committee only discuss planning issues.
- The Borough Local Plan shows that RBWM is short of public open spaces.
- Braywick Park has been removed from the greenbelt in the Borough Local Plan and is designated to recreational use.
- If the school was in Braywick Park, there would be no room for expanding in the future. This would be necessary as there is a need for this school.
- The Magnet Leisure Centre would also not have enough space for the future of Maidenhead with increasing number of residents.

Councillor N Airey reassured the Panel that all Panels had been working together as a team and not in isolation. Many sites had been looked at for the school. The school was satisfied with the proposed site.

The Chairman proposed Option A, to take no further action. This was seconded by Councillor Gilmore and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** by the Panel.

CONTRACT AWARD - OPERATION OF 4 MARLOW ROAD, MAIDENHEAD

The item was introduced by the Chairman and the moved into Part II.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....