

ACCESS ADVISORY FORUM

MONDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2017

PRESENT: Angela Clark (Chairman), Lisa Hughes (Vice-Chairman), Sharon Carrigan, Tim Clare, Peter Haley, Robin Pemberton and Councillor Charles Hollingsworth

Officers: Victoria Gibson, Rachel Kinniburgh, Shilpa Manek, Barbara Richardson, David Scott and Neil Walter

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Forum.

The Chairman explained that the order of the Agenda would be altered to allow Officers to attend. Item 4.2 to be presented after Item 5.

Introductions around the room were made.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Love, Dominic Manley, Gordon Oliver, Lynne Penn and Chrissie Ellera.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Lisa Hughes gave an explanation of the difference between the Local Access Forum and the Access Advisory Forum. This was as below:

At the September 2017 meeting, a suggestion was made to merge the Access Advisory Forum and Local Access Forum and a question was asked about why a name change was being suggested. Below are responses to the suggestion and question:

- It was suggested that the Local Access Forum and Access Advisory Forum become one.

The **Local Access Forum** is a statutory body : Section 94 of the Countryside and Rights Of Way Act 2000 requires local highway authorities and National Park authorities ("appointing authorities") to establish advisory bodies known as local access forums. It is the function of forums to advise certain specified bodies (and such other bodies as may be prescribed) on the improvement of public access to land in their area for open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, and on such other matters as may be prescribed. Such bodies must have regard, in carrying out their functions, to any relevant advice given to them by a forum.

The **RBWM Access Advisory Forum** is not a statutory body and advises the council on the accessibility of council services and borough amenities for people with disabilities.

- Why should we consider changing the name ?

The above suggestion highlights the confusion that the similarity of names of the two forums can cause. This forum's existing name "Access Advisory Forum" is opaque for many residents, groups and others - it is not evident from its name what it does and on behalf of whom.

The minutes of the last forum were **Unanimously Agreed** by the Forum.

MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Maidenhead Town Centre Regeneration

Barbara Richardson, Managing Director - RBWM Property Company Ltd, gave the Forum a background of her role. She informed the Forum that she leads on major capital projects, borough-wide. The two current major projects that she is working on the town centre regeneration and planning for the golf club project. The areas that need to be covered are the housing supply, parking and leisure.

For the parking issue, 967 temporary car parking spaces need to be in place before the demolition of the Broadway car park. This includes 58 Blue Badge spaces. These would ideally be centrally located. The site that was being considered at present was the phase II Landings site, which was not in current use and would not be until 2020.

The Broadway car park would still be in use until temporary car parks had been built. The plan was that all temporary car parks would be built by the end of 2018 and in early 2019, the Broadway car park would be demolished.

The new car park would have 96 blue badge bays from floor 1 to 10, all with lift access.

The leisure aspects were still being considered.

Peter Haley asked about what temporary provisions would be made for ShopMobility. Barbara Richardson informed the Forum that she was still in negotiations but it was very likely that the Landings site would be used. There are due to be three temporary car parks, 300 spaces on Reform Road, 575 car parking spaces split between a multi-deck on St Clouds Way where the Magnet Centre is and The Landings, phase II area on the northeast corner with access straight on to the Broadway. All temporary car parks will follow current guidance.

The Chairman asked the difference between Housing Solutions Ltd and the Property Company Ltd. Barbara Richardson informed the Forum that Housing Solutions Ltd – is a registered provider of affordable housing. An independent company from the council, which was set up some years ago, when the council transferred its housing stock under an LSVT process. They are also a registered charity, they are not connected in any legal way to the council, since the council transferred its housing stock, although the council do have representation on their board. The RBWM Property Company Ltd – is a wholly owned subsidiary of the council. The council is the shareholder of this company, and therefore has complete control of its strategic and operation objectives. The company had been established to deliver major regeneration and redevelopment projects on behalf of the council, and enabling the delivery of housing in the borough including the affordable element of each project. The company also had an objective to review and assess any council assets which are consider surplus to requirement, in order to see if there are opportunities to redeveloped these assets and improve or create a long term income stream from them. Where projects were taken forward for residential development, the assets once redeveloped would be transferred into the property company, and would be let at a combination of both market rent and sub market rent, with a focus on keyworker housing, but not limited to this. The property company will also assist the borough in any major capital projects, which are associated with the regeneration of the borough.

The Chairman asked about suitable housing for key workers with mobility issues. Barbara Richardson explained that anything built new or converted would adhere to part M of the planning regulations and above.

4.2 Joint Venture Redevelopment Sites for the Council

The Forum was attended by Malcolm Wood, Project Director, Countryside Properties, Richard Broome, Managing and Creative Director, Outerspace, Landscape Consultants, Alex Keene,

Principal Consultant, AECOM (Transport Consultants) and John Webber, Principal Director, AECOM (Transport Consultant). A presentation was given by the team. Presentation Attached.

Malcolm Wood informed the Forum that they were currently working with four sites, York Road, West Street, St Clouds Way and Reform Road. The York Road site was the first site they were working with and this was planned to be the civic cultural quarter linking through the whole town with a pedestrian friendly environment. For St Ives Road, the vision is that on-street parking will be retained and two-way traffic at its far end to enable residents of the planned developments to get to their parking.. Low speeds would be encouraged. There would be crossings on the south-side to St Ives Road. The aim was to make less use for drivers and make more for pedestrians. The timetable for the York Road site was as follows:

September 2017 – Public Consultation process.

January 2018 – Further public consultation.

Spring 2018 – Planning application submitted.

Autumn 2018 – Building work to begin.

Barbara Richardson informed the Forum that she also sat on the Infrastructure Board and they were looking at the impact of highways around the town centre. Barbara Richardson reassured the Forum that there would be enough Blue Badge parking around the borough.

4.3 Blue Badge Bay Parking in the Town Centre

This was covered in 4.1.

4.4 St Marks/Courthouse Road Junction

Councillor Hollings worth informed the Forum that a capital bid had been submitted for the roundabout and the traffic lights but it was not of highest of priorities. Neil Walter added that a review had been conducted with Ward Councillors and currently plans were being drawn up, these would be divided into four sectors and would be out for consultation in January 2018. If the long term parked cars were removed, the junction would improve. Some parts of the consultation were covered under safety grounds and therefore could not be changed during the consultation phase. All of this process was going on whilst capital bid going ahead.

The Chairman asked to keep this item on the Agenda.

ACTION: Neil Walter to send out plans to Forum

4.5 Maidenhead Station

Neil Walter, Parking Principal gave a presentation to the Forum. Presentation Attached.

The Forum raised the following questions:

- Why is there so much landscaped garden space?
- Where is the drop off point for disabled users?
- The taxi rank and the taxi pick up point would block the disabled spaces, might want to relook at the taxi rank position.
- How would Buses be prevented from queueing at the bus stop and blocking the entrance to the station forecourt ?
- Who would police the drop off/pick up point?
- Who is the contractor parking for.
- What is a toucan crossing?

Neil Walter explained that the initial ideas for the bridge were not feasible. Neil Walter would send all points raised to Gordon Oliver, who would respond with answers.

4.6 Local Access Forum

Lisa Hughes advised there were no updates from the Local Access Forum.

ITEMS

5.1 Update on access audit and options for a lift at the Windsor Guildhall

David Scott, Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships, informed the Forum that an update Access Audit of the Guildhall had been commissioned. Architects and access specialists were involved in the audit and a comprehensive report had just been received. There would be a full review of the report and its findings by David Scott ahead of sharing its contents, but he provided a few headlines. The report made a number of suggestions for improvement. Since the building is a Grade I listed building, Listed Building Consent would need to be sought for any significant changes. Some, very minor, improvements could be achieved relatively easily. With regard to improving access to the first floor, the report identified potential options for a disabled WC and for enabling mobility-impaired visitors to access to the first floor.

David Scott suggested a follow up meeting with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman after the report had been discussed internally with officers to consider viability.

ACTION: David Scott to arrange meeting with Chairman and Vice Chairman in the New Year.

Lisa Hughes asked why public meetings were held at a venue that didn't allow wheelchair users and some other people with disabilities to attend. Lisa Hughes suggested that the council might want to think again about using this as a venue for council and committee meetings until its accessibility can be improved.

5.2 Access Advisory Forum and Planning Applications

Lisa Hughes scrutinises planning applications on behalf of the forum, to check that accessibility features were included in line with regulations. Lisa Hughes had checked 229 applications and had raised 44 questions/issues/objections since the June forum meeting but had not had any response from planning.

Victoria Gibson, Team Manager in Planning, informed the Forum that all of the responses were viewed and scanned in on the relevant applications and considered by the planning officer. All comments/objections were summarised. There was no ongoing dialogue but all responses were documented and addressed. On all complex schemes, planning officers would respond.

Lisa Hughes asked if there could be a point of contact in the Planning department. Victoria Gibson offered to be that point of contact.

Lisa Hughes talked about the Local Access Forum recently developing positioning statements for pre-application discussions between Planning and potential developers. Lisa Hughes asked if it was possible for the Access Advisory Forum to do the same for expectations around accessibility in the built environment. Victoria Gibson informed the Forum that the position statement was only taken as guidance but would support the work.

Victoria Gibson offered to arrange a training session for Lisa Hughes to increase her knowledge of the planning process and regulations.
The Chairman requested some feedback from Planning on some of the planning applications at the next meeting.

ACTION: Victoria Gibson to arrange training session for Lisa Hughes.

ACTION: Feedback on planning applications at next meeting.

5.3 Raising profile of the Access Advisory Forum

The Chairman asked if the Access Advisory Forum had a small budget. The Forum wanted to have some leaflets produced to raise the profile of the Forum and place them in GP Surgeries and public places such as libraries. An article had already been published in Around the Royal Borough and future articles could be placed in there.

ACTION: Clerk to find out about any budget available for AAF publicising and way of raising the profile.

5.4 RBWM Draft Consultation – Equality Policy

Rachel Kinniburgh, Strategy Officer, gave a verbal update to the Forum on the Equality & Diversity Policy. The points Rachel Kinniburgh covered included:

- An update on the Strategy teams activity since we last met on 19 June.
- Acknowledged at the June meeting that the council was due to review and if appropriate, refresh, its equality and diversity objectives ahead of 1 April 2018. The team were working to do this currently as part of an integrated planning approach.
- The council agreed its new strategic plan in July 2017 which incorporated a new vision – “Building a borough for everyone” and 6 strategic priorities.
- Between November and March, two new corporate plans, the People Plan and the Customer Plan. These were being developed to align to the new strategic plan and would be incorporating equality objectives as they relate to the council’s role as both employer and service-provider. At the same time individual services would be developing their service plans and they too would be considering equality objectives as they relate to their service’s particular mandate. A much more proactive approach to equality and diversity was being taken by embedding it fully into the planning process and ensuring full ownership of objectives as a result.
- Preparation of an annual report within which we would routinely include an annual statement outlining the council’s progress against its existing equality and diversity objectives – so enhancing transparency and accountability.
- At the same time we have taken opportunity to refresh our Equality & Diversity Policy. Very much a draft at present and would invite the AAF’s commentary and feedback on this by end January to support its development and so that we may publish the refreshed policy by no later than 1 April 2018.

- Lisa Hughes noted that the link to the current Equality & Diversity Policy on the RBWM website was broken.

ACTION: Forum Members to provide feedback on Equality & Diversity Policy by end of January 2018.

ACTION: Rachel Kinniburgh to look into acknowledging “access for all” as a key theme more overtly in council strategic plan and related documentation.

ACTION: Rachel Kinniburgh to check why the link to the current Equality & Diversity Policy is not working.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Forum Members noted the date of the next meeting would be Monday 19 March 2018.

The meeting, which began at 11.07 am, finished at 1.10 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....