

CYCLE FORUM

21 JANUARY 2015

PRESENT: Councillors James Evans and Derek Wilson.

David Layzell, Neil Fairbrother, Ian Taplin, Chris Heywood, Andrew Payne, Mark Powell, Daniel Mitchell and Miles Gripton.

Officers: Gordon Oliver, Patrick Romaya and David Cook

PART I

25/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillor Beer, David Lambourne, Susy Shearer, Harry Bodenhofer, David Usher, Peter England and Peter Wilkinson.

As the meeting was not quorate the Chairman asked the Forum if they wished to proceed with the meeting even though any decisions would not be binding on the authority. Councillors not in attendance would be consulted on any decisions made.

RESOLVED: That the Forum agreed to continue with the meeting even though it was not quorate.

26/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27/14 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 7th October 2014 were approved as a true and correct record.

Ian Taplin, Holyport resident, wished it recorded that the minutes did not provide an equal representation of what was said at the last meeting. He felt that as Gordon Oliver was mentioned as the presenting officer there should be equal representation of his comments and that in his opinion the minutes were vetted.

The Chairman replied that the minutes were a reflection of what was said at a meeting and he did not wish the minutes to be too onerous. Points that were pertinent to the resolution were included and he was reluctant to have 20-30 pages of minutes.

The clerk informed that the minutes were not verbatim, that they were a reflection of the discussion and were draft until approved at the next meeting.

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Policy Officer, introduced the report that informed about the Government's Draft Delivery Plan and suggested how the borough and its partners should prepare for its implementation.

The Forum was informed that delivery plan was based around four key themes:

- Vision, leadership and ambition.
- Funding.
- Infrastructure.
- Safety and perception of safety.

Some of the key points noted from the report were:

- in return for committing to undertake actions to deliver changes that would promote walking and cycling, local authorities would be given access to funding and support;
- the plan sets out an aspiration of cycle funding of £10 per person by 2020/21, which is far below the current level of spending in other countries such as the Netherlands;
- the Government would expect local authorities to take steps in cycle proofing local roads and would be providing guidance on how to achieve this;
- improving safety by engaging with organisations / departments and creating safe cycle / walking routes especially to schools.

The Forum was informed that the informal consultation on the draft plan had been undertaken at short notice with the results yet to be published. The main points raised by the South East England workshop were the inclusion of walking as it seemed to have been added as an afterthought and the lack of information about funding.

Local authorities had been invited to express their interest in developing a partnership with government, however RBWM had not done this yet as they felt that there were too many unknowns and so they were waiting for the Final Delivery Plan to be published. It was expected that the Government would make an announcement regarding cycling prior to the election.

During discussion of the report a number of points were made. For example it was questioned if current catchment areas for school were restricting pupils from cycling / walking to school. It was noted that this was an issue especially as parental choice resulted in pupils going to schools outside their catchment area or areas such as Windsor having all schools within a single designated area, resulting in many cross-town trips. .

David Layzell reported that due to an early appointment he had to cycle during the rush hour and he was concerned how dangerous it was. He had pre-planned his route so that about 60% was off-road and thus safer. He felt

that more off-road cycle routes would help encourage more cycling and that there was a concern for schoolchildren cycling during the morning rush hour and after school, especially on main carriageways. There was a need for more segregated cycle paths.

Chris Heywood said that there was a need for off-road cycling and a need for cyclists commuting to work, especially as lorries, taxis and stressed out mothers could make it difficult for cyclists on the road. He felt that there was a need for access in and out of Maidenhead especially to the station.

Neil Fairbrother recommended that where there was insufficient space to have dedicated cycle paths, consideration should be given to reducing speed limits.

(Cllr Wilson joined the meeting)

Ian Taplin asked if RBWM were considering following London boroughs in reducing speed limits. The Chairman replied that speed limits were reduced outside schools; however there would be an enforcement issue for further reduction and that there would need to be police buy in.

It was recommended that the police are invited to a future meeting of the Forum. Concern was also raised that when incidents regarding the behaviour of motorists were reported to the police they were logged but no further action was taken unless there were witnesses.

Ian Taplin said that reducing the speed limit to 20 mph would send out a message and that cyclists should have access to the whole of the RBWM road budget. He mentioned that London was embracing change and so should RBWM. He also recommended that there should be a segregated cycle route as part of the Stafferton Way Link Road, it may be short but he felt it would be a start.

Miles Gripton said that the Delivery Plan needed funding to back up its recommendations, there was a proposed amendment to the Infrastructure Bill to provide dedicated funding for cycling and he recommended that people should be encouraged to lobby their MP.

It was noted that the recent road surfacing work on the A308 had improved safety for cyclists, that neighbourhood plans should be examined to see what they have suggested regarding cycling and that it would be helpful to have a vision / plan for improving cycle infrastructure throughout the borough.

Councillor Wilson suggested that the information from the recent cycling workshops should be reviewed alongside proposals from the neighbourhood plans, that it may not be possible to follow the London model due to the huge cost and infrastructure restrictions and that the suggestion regarding Stafferton Way would be passed to relevant officers. He informed the Forum that Cabinet would be considering an Access and Movement Study for Maidenhead Town Centre in March and provided an update on the

implications of moving from S106 contributions to the Community Infrastructure Levy.

With regards to the Stafferton link road, Gordon Oliver reported that there was insufficient space to have a segregated cycle route, but that a shared footway/ cycleway would be provided on the north side. Ian Taplin suggested that there could be a one way system for traffic controlled by traffic lights to provide sufficient space for cyclists. He felt that cars should be taken out of Maidenhead, that the Stafferton Way plans would increase traffic and that the goal should be to decrease it for Maidenhead.

Councillor Wilson replied that the need for a Stafferton Way link road had been identified as far back as 1967, there was a need to have the relief road to move traffic away from the town centre. There had been extensive consultation, including this Forum, and that if cycling provision could be included it would. In response to questions Councillor Wilson informed that HGVs would continue to use the existing route as a preferred option and that there was a proposal for a multi-storey car park for the station with a bus interchange / taxi rank where the Green Giant building was.

RESOLVED: That the Cycle Forum note the contents of the report, supported any future expressions of interest / applications for funding, invite the police to a future meeting, explore decreasing speed limits, look at example of best practice and recommend that the borough have a vision / action plan for cycling.

29/14 LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND PROGRAMME

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Policy Officer, introduced the report that provided an update on how the Council was progressing with the delivery of its Local Sustainable Transport fund programme.

The Forum were informed that the authority had secured £2 million of grant from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to deliver measures designed to reduce congestion and carbon emissions.

The Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid was set around three themes:

- Managing the Network
- Improving Accessibility for All
- Promoting Sustainable Transport

With regards to cycling most of the focus was being delivered under the Sustainable Transport Theme via the following projects:

- Bike It
- Sky Ride Local
- Training
- Workplace Cycle Challenge

The report provided detail of progress under the 4 projects; there were a number of successes in particular:

- Altwood C of E School more than doubled their regular cycling from 2.7% to 7.5%, while Homer First School increased pupils regularly cycling from 11.5% to 19.3%.
- Children cycling outside of school had increase from 41% to 59%.
- Bike it Champions were being trained within each school to maintain longevity of the project.
- Between July and October Sky Ride Local had undertaken 19 rides with over 200 participants.
- Women only bike rides had been introduced via the Breeze programme.
- Balance bike sessions had been introduced for young children.
- Adult cycle training sessions had been introduced.
- The second Maidenhead Workplace Cycle Challenge had succeeded in achieving an increase in the number of organisations and people taking part.

Ian Taplin highlighted that table 6 for the workplace cycle challenge made reference to CO₂ emissions and asked if it was an aim to reduce emissions because if it was he felt that the Stafferton way link road would result in increased traffic and thus more CO₂.

In response to Ian's questions the Forum were informed that the CO₂ figure in the report was there for information to show the CO₂ saved if the equivalent journeys had been undertaken by a typical car. With regards to the Stafferton way link road this was being introduced to remove 'pinch points' and improve the flow of traffic that would also help decrease CO₂. Officers were not saying that increased car journeys would decrease CO₂ as Ian Taplin had stated.

In response questions about the Waterways project Cllr Wilson informed the Forum that Phase 1 of the scheme focused on restoring the southern stretch of the waterway up to the town centre. The whole scheme was due to be finished by 2017 with bigger plans to extend it to Cookham by 2030. Residents were informed about the scheme via Around the Royal Borough, the Council's website and the waterways group's own website: www.maidenheadwaterways.org.

RESOLVED: That the Cycle Forum note the presentation.

30/14 CYCLE ROUTE – A4 MAIDENHEAD

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Policy Officer, informed the Forum that the Maidenhead cycling workshop on 6th November 2013 had identified the need for a cycle route to connect the town centre to the Riverside area of Maidenhead. A draft scheme was presented to the Cycle Forum in March 2014 and a subsequent workshop was established to develop a revised scheme.

The amendments made were a change from a two-way, off-carriageway, segregated cycleway on the south side, to accommodate two wide, on-carriageway cycle lanes with bus stop bypasses. Provision had been made for cyclists within a proposed slip road from the A4 into Moorbridge Road, and it was proposed to have a link from the existing cycle route across Town Moor. Options were investigated for widening the subway at the end of Moorbridge Road so that cyclists could cross the A4 without dismounting, however the costs were too high.

The scheme was intended to form part of a longer-distance cycle route linking Maidenhead and Slough. The layout for the A4 cycle route scheme was currently being revised to accommodate agreed changes in the vicinity of the Miller Homes development and it was hoped to go out to consultation on the final scheme in February 2015.

It was noted that to have a cycle lane across Maidenhead bridge would require the grade one listed structure to be widened at a cost estimated to be in excess of £15 million.

RESOLVED: That the Cycle Forum note progress being made with the scheme.

31/14 CYCLE ROUTE – A329 HIGH STREET ASCOT

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Policy Officer, informed the Forum that the Ascot and Sunnings Neighbourhood Plan had identified the need to extend the existing route along the A329 toward Ascot town centre and then link the town centre to the Windsor Great Park to create a route between Bracknell and Windsor.

The report highlighted a number of safety concerns about the proposed scheme particularly pedestrians stepping out of buildings onto the shared path and a number of obstructions such as the bus shelter. For this reason, the safety audit had recommended that route should not be extended beyond the pedestrian crossing to the east of the racecourse reception building.

Miles Gripton questioned whether it was worth implementing a scheme that would bring cyclists to a dead end. However, the Forum felt that it would be a benefit to implement the parts of the scheme that could be delivered.

It was suggested that perhaps a route could be achieved along the south side of the High Street, taking advantage of opportunities to widen the existing footway presented by the proposed hotel development.

With regards to the bus shelter, concern was raised that it seemed that buses were being given priority over cyclists.

It was mentioned that if cyclists could use the Great Park 24 hours a day there would be more demand for a safe route into Ascot.

RESOLVED: That the Cycle Forum recommended that the safe parts of the scheme be implemented and pressure be maintained on the Crown Estate and Ascot Racecourse to improve cycle links in future.

32/14 WINDSOR GREAT PARK

The chairman informed the Forum that he would be meeting with the new deputy park ranger on 29th January 2015 with the main focus on getting a safe route from Windsor to Ascot and Bracknell.

It was highlighted that Sheet Street Road provided unacceptable for cycling and it was suggested that motorists would prefer cyclists to be on an alternative route.

In response to questions the Chairman said that during past meetings he had been told that a byelaw was in place that prevented cycling in the park after dark and that if they allowed cycling along the Great Walk it would discourage walkers.

Ian Taplin reported that he was annoyed that cyclists were prohibited from using the Great Park and suggested that there could be a parallel cycle route along the tree line away from the Great Walk or a designated cycle path along the Great Walk. He recommended that the deputy park ranger be shown the work done by Eton College at Dorney Lake.

RESOLVED: That the Cycle Forum note the update.

33/14 CYCLING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Item withdrawn.

34/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

APPCG's report 'Get Britain Cycling' – it was noted that the Forum were aware of the report that made a number of recommendations including a minimum level of funding for cycling of £10 per person, per year. It was felt unlikely that all of the report's recommendations would be adopted.

Ian Taplin reported that with further Government spending cuts it was important to defend cycling. A good cycle infrastructure in Maidenhead would decrease the use of NHS services and reduce car usage; he felt that there needed to be better joined up thinking in the borough.

It was agreed that items should not be raised under AOB without prior notice. If a Forum member wished to include an item on the agenda they should contact Gordon Oliver or the clerk two weeks before the meeting. The final agenda would be agreed with the Chairman.

35/14 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings dates were noted:

- 31/03/15, Town Hall Maidenhead.

36/14 MEETING

The meeting, which began at 7.00pm, ended at 9.15pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....