

CYCLE FORUM

11 FEBRUARY 2013

PRESENT: Councillors James Evans (Chairman), Councillor Malcolm Beer and Councillor Derek Wilson.

Karl Benz (Guards Club Residents Association), Peter England (CTC), Roy Fabry (Sustrans), David Lambourne (Thames Velo), David Layzell (Maidenhead Cyclists Action Group), Paul Messing (Maidenhead Cyclists Action Group), Andrew Payne (Maidenhead and District Cycle Club), Mark Powell (Resident) and Susy Shearer (Windsor & Eton Society)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor David Coppinger and Councillor Geoff Hill

Officers: Gordon Oliver, Patrick Romaya and Simon Wright

PART I

25/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Peter Cox, British Cycling.

It was also noted that Cllr Wilson and Susy Shearer would be late attending due to other commitments.

26/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27/12 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 29 October 2012, be approved, subject to the following amendments:

- **Mark Powell clarified that in respect of the minute 18/12 relating to Cycling Capital Programme 2013/14 his suggestion was that there was “sufficient land between Bissley Drive and Breadcroft Lane to connect national route 4 together”**
- **That the statement “He also commented that there were insufficient links near Bisham Abbey” was wrongly attributed to Mark Powell and had been mentioned by another forum member.**
- **Inclusion of reference to the fact that Mark Powell had made a second suggestion that was to fix the infrastructure at the junction between Altwood Road and Wootton Way / Norden Road in west Maidenhead.**

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Geoff Hill, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to the meeting. Cllr Hill gave an overview of his role and explained that his portfolio was varied and focussed mainly on strategic highway matters including the resurfacing of highways on a proactive basis but did not include reactive maintenance.

David Lambourne referred to highway inspections and, whilst acknowledging the government guidance, suggested that potholes of only 1” in depth could cause significant damage to bicycles and anything deeper was dangerous. David Lambourne indicated that inspections were not regular enough in places and it was vital that RBWM took a lead and adequately trained inspectors to identify potholes that could be dangerous to cyclists. The Chairman acknowledged the concern and emphasised the importance of reporting defects so that they could be rectified quickly.

Cllr Hill concurred and advised that defects should be repaired within two days of being reported. It was further reported that additional funding of £300k was contained in the draft budget for the next financial year towards repairs. It was further advised that RBWM exceeded government targets for roads maintenance but it was acknowledged that things could always be better. David Lambourne agreed that repairs were of a good standard but reiterated the need for better training of highway inspectors and referred to the petition that had been submitted to Council in this regard. Cllr Hill advised that a balance needed to be struck to ensure that the budget was spent as effectively as possible. It was agreed that targeting areas that could be dangerous for cyclists would be positive. The Chairman advised that feedback was important and it was good that the Lead Member was taking a positive approach.

(Susy Shearer joined the meeting at this juncture)

Cllr Beer made reference to the petition that had been submitted and suggested that the real problem was with the Department for Transport guidelines and pressure needed to be put on them to be aware of the issues for cyclists. Cllr Beer raised concern that Community Wardens could be used to undertake inspections. Cllr Hill gave an assurance that Community Wardens would only be expected to identify potential problems and refer them on for full inspection. Cllr Beer suggested that the quality of roads in the borough was better than elsewhere.

Susy Shearer asked about the best way of reporting concerns. Cllr Hill advised that potholes could be reported online at www.streetcare.com. Karl Benz highlighted the problem of damaged manhole covers which were dangerous for cyclists and that it often took some time to get them repaired as responsibilities were not always clear, such as on Oldfield Road. Cllr Hill agreed and advised that a priority for him was to ensure that utilities undertook repairs and reinstatement more quickly and to a better standard

with penalty notices being issued if necessary. Cllr Hill undertook to investigate the damaged cover on Oldfield road personally.

Susy Shearer identified speed humps as a problem for cyclists partly due to their design and maintenance. Cllr Beer suggested that use of tapered (sinusoidal) speed humps could be advantageous as they were easier for cyclists to ride over. The cost implications were acknowledged but it was hoped that they would reduce in cost.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hill for his attendance and willingness to discuss issues of concern with the Forum.

29/12 CYCLING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/13

The Forum considered a progress update on the 2012/13 cycling capital programme. The Principal Transport Policy Officer introduced the report and outlined the current position with regard to the schemes.

Cllr Beer highlighted the poor state of the footway surfacing in Kings Road, Windsor and near the roundabout. The Chairman suggested that improvements could be considered as part of proposed new schemes in the area.

The Chairman clarified that local objection to the Trinity Place, Windsor cycle gate related to loss of a parking space which the scheme would require. The Chairman indicated that this may be a difficult matter to resolve. Susy Shearer urged all involved to keep looking at options for the area.

Further clarification was given that additional barriers and mirrors were being implemented in response to illegal cycling activity at the subways beneath the Clarence Road roundabout in Windsor and the route of the new shared use path was outlined. Susy Shearer indicated the introduction of double yellow lines in Hatch Lane had been beneficial.

Roy Fabry asked about objections to the Woodlands Park to Grove Park cycle route. In response it was reported that concerns had been raised regarding urbanisation of the area and potential clashes with pedestrians on a shared route. There was a consensus that the route would be feasible and the Chairman suggested that he could discuss it further with Ward Members to see if a suitable way forward could be found.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) Progress on 2012/13 schemes be noted; and**
- ii) The Chairman be asked to discuss concerns regarding the Woodlands Park to Grove Park further with the Ward Members.**

30/12 CYCLING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Forum considered priorities for the 2013/14 capital programme. The Principal Transport Policy Officer introduced the report and outlined the proposed schemes funding bids in the new capital programme.

David Layzell expressed concern at parking issues in Switchback Road South where cars parked on both sides of the road thus leaving insufficient space for vehicles to safely pass cyclists.

Susy Shearer sought clarification as to whether the telephone box obstructing the shared use path on Maidenhead Road, Windsor would be relocated. In response it was explained that there would need to be consultation if it was proposed to move the telephone box and there were problems with the box being vandalised. David Lambourne asked about the possibility of other schemes coming forward. The Principal Transport Policy Officer advised that this could be possible if slippage from 2012/13 was carried forward.

David Lambourne requested measures to improve safety for cyclists turning right out of Bottle Lane, Knowl Hill.

Mark Powell suggested that improvements to Cannon Lane could be beneficial for cyclists. Susy Shearer highlighted potential improvements in Windsor including Goslar Way/Clarence Road to provide an alternative route to the town centre and Old Windsor. It was further suggested that a route at Clewer Hill Road to link with local schools would be positive. The Chairman suggested Clewer Hill Road was narrow so works could be difficult.

RESOLVED: That the Forum notes and agrees the schemes to be funded from the 2013/2014 Capital Programme.

(Councillor Wilson joined the meeting at this juncture)

31/12 LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND

The Forum gave consideration to a report updating on progress with delivery of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme. The Principal Transport Policy Officer introduced Patrick Romaya who had been appointed as 'Bike It' Officer and explained the work he was undertaking with schools.

Patrick Romaya advised that a number of schools in Maidenhead had already signed up and others were joining all the time. In response to Susy Shearer it was advised that Queen Anne's school in Windsor had recently signed up. It was explained that the aim of the scheme was to provide cycle training, raise the profile of cycling and work with parents to encourage family participation. Susy Shearer highlighted the importance of training and providing cycle parking facilities. David Layzell asked if cycle parking facilities were checked at schools participating in the scheme. Patrick Romaya confirmed that they

were and if improved cycle parking was required then this was discussed with the school.

The Principal Transport Policy Officer explained how the Workplace Cycling Challenge worked and that it would incorporate other initiatives such as the bike tryout and Dr Bike sessions. It was clarified that the funding only related to Maidenhead but some initiatives such as 'Love to Ride' were available borough wide. The Chairman advised that some promotion had been undertaken of the 'Love to Ride' scheme and recommended that Forum members have a look at the initiative and register to take part.

Cllr Wilson gave a brief update regarding the possible redevelopment of Maidenhead town centre and potential changes to crossing arrangements at the King Street / Queen Street junction to include three single stage and shared crossings that would allow cyclists to cross more easily near the railway station. Cllr Beer expressed some concern at the potential conflict with pedestrians on the crossings. Cllr Wilson explained that the crossing areas would be much wider and hopefully this would prevent problems. The Forum agreed that it was important that arrangements for cyclists were looked at early in the scheme if possible. David Layzell highlighted the need to bear in mind that there were peak usage times at the station. This was acknowledged and it was reported that additional cycle parking was being pursued at the station.

Andrew Payne advised that he was trained to be a Ride Leader for the Sky Ride initiative and the commitment was for four rides a year. David Lambourne reported that he had enquired about becoming a Ride Leader and had been told that a British Cycling Level 1 coaching qualification was needed. Andrew Payne advised that he understood that this was not the case and courses were free, local and based on delivery of the Sky Ride product. It was clarified that Ride Leaders needed to be 18+ and CRB checks may be required. It was noted that first aid qualifications were needed for ride leaders, but not for assistant ride leaders.

(Roy Fabry left the meeting at this juncture)

Susy Shearer asked about the best mechanism for getting extra cycle parking. The Chairman clarified that this would need to be through the Capital Programme. David Layzell highlighted the need to consult with MCAG on proposals for new cycle parking. Discussion ensued regarding the positioning of cycle parking to ensure it was as secure as possible. There was a concern regarding conflict between the need to place racks in pedestrianised areas to improve natural surveillance and the need to ensure that no cycling areas were properly enforced to avoid conflict. It was suggested that improved signage could also help. In response to Cllr Beer it was clarified that schemes were financed through grant funding.

The Forum then noted the progress in delivering the LSTF programme.

32/12 PARTICIPATORY BUDGET 2012/2013

The Forum received a report providing an update on the 2012/2013 participatory budget programme. A plan outlining the proposals for Peascod Street in Windsor was circulated. It was explained that the intention was to consult on a scheme to make the central section of Peascod Street two-way for cyclists to enable easier access to the cycle parking area.

The Forum expressed general support for the Peascod Street scheme. It was however suggested that more cycle stands may be needed and there may still be some conflict with large vehicles accessing the area for deliveries. Cllr Beer also highlighted that tactile paving could help delineate areas and make access arrangements clearer. Cllr Wilson indicated that this was also being looked at as part of the Maidenhead regeneration scheme. In respect of potential issues with pedestrians it was acknowledged the threat was often only perceived and accidents were actually a rarity.

The proposals for spending the Participatory Budget were then noted.

33/12 CYCLING FOR HEALTH

A report was received in respect of how cycling can contribute to beneficial health outcomes and discharge of new Council responsibilities for improving public health by encouraging and enabling more people to cycle. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Coppinger, Cabinet Member for Public Health, to the meeting.

Cllr Coppinger explained that the transfer of responsibilities in April would be a big challenge and the process had taken longer than expected. The Structure for delivering services was outlined and it was clarified that there would be local lead officers. Cllr Coppinger indicated that overall the borough was a relatively healthy one when measured against national indicators and it was an aim to provide local initiatives to benefit residents.

Susy Shearer referred to the Neighbourhood Plan process and asked if there was a way of addressing health issues through that mechanism. In response it was explained that neighbourhood plans provided a strategic framework with topic groups undertaking more detailed work under that.

Karl Benz asked about funding for the new responsibilities. Cllr Coppinger confirmed that funding of £3.6m would be transferred from NHS funding. The Forum discussed the role of cycling in providing a healthy lifestyle and meeting policies/targets. Peter England indicated that under the NHS promotion of a healthy lifestyle had been somewhat limited and expressed the hope that the change in responsibility would help. Cllr Coppinger advised that the newly created Health and Wellbeing Board would be proactive in this regard and was a key priority. Discussion ensued in respect of GP's being able to refer patients to leisure centres to undertake monitored exercise to improve their health.

The Forum noted the content of the report.

34/12 MAIDENHEAD CYCLISTS ACTION GROUP PROPOSALS

The Forum received a report outlining suggestions from Maidenhead Cyclists Action Group (MCAG) for making cycling safer in the Royal Borough. David Layzell indicated that many of the issues in the report had already been discussed in the meeting.

David Layzell highlighted a couple of additional matters in respect of the Maidenhead Festival in June and the opportunity to promote cycling at that event. It was agreed that the matter could be considered in more detail at the next meeting.

Secondly it was suggested that a scheme whereby unemployed youngsters undertook repairs on bicycles which they could then use to attend interviews etc could be beneficial and could be based in a vacant unit in the town. The Forum agreed that this would be a very positive scheme and should be investigated further in conjunction with the Town Centre Manager.

David Layzell then highlighted one aspect of the submitted report in respect of 20mph limits. A copy of a recent newspaper article was circulated and David Layzell suggested RBWM could be more proactive in pursuing 20mph limits in urban areas and reduced speed limits on rural roads. The Chairman indicated that 20mph limits had mainly been focussed on roads near schools. The Principal Transport Policy Officer outlined that some local authorities who had adopted 20 mph limits had recorded fewer collisions as a result. The Forum was reminded that this would be a political decision and would need financing. David Lambourne questioned whether the political will was there to support changes and expressed disappointment at the comments of the previous Lead Member for Highways in the media in response to the MCAG call for 20 mph speed limits.

Karl Benz highlighted the important role of Community Speedwatch in monitoring traffic speeds and the introduction of suitable traffic management initiatives. Peter England referred to Department of Transport guidance on setting speed limits and that community involvement was a key factor. David Layzell asked if reduced limits actually encouraged more cycling. The chairman suggested that statistical evidence would be needed to demonstrate this. Paul Messing suggested that limits outside schools were actually only needed at peak times and lower speeds actually increased pollution. It was opined that variable speed limits that could be altered at different times of the day would be more practical. The Forum agreed that this should be looked at in more detail.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) That the report be noted; and**

- ii) **That further information be presented at the next meeting in respect of Maidenhead Festival and Young unemployed cycle repair workshops.**
- iii) **That further information be presented on variable speed limits at a future meeting.**

35/12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Developments in Windsor

Susy Shearer highlighted a number of issues of concern in Windsor and circulated a plan relating to the new Tesco development at Hatch Lane. It was acknowledged that the supermarket had only recently opened but there was already local concern particularly in regard to the possibility of another vehicular access being created. Susy Shearer suggested this could have an impact on some of the planned cycling infrastructure improvements and safety of cyclists.

The Chairman acknowledged that there were a number of potential developments within Windsor and the potential impact for cycling provision needed to be borne in mind. David Lambourne commented that, in general, there needed to be effective traffic management and education was key in making people aware of cyclists needs.

Use of Online Forum

Mark Powell reiterated previous concerns that the online forum (<http://groupspaces.com/rbwm-cycle-forum>) did not seem to be very active and was an excellent way to communicate about issues outside of meetings and thus mean the Forum could make better use of it's meetings to make decisions. The Chairman agreed that it was an excellent facility to use between meetings and for plans to be uploaded and commented upon. He encouraged attendees to use it more regularly.

36/12 MEETING

The meeting, which began at 7.00pm, ended at 9.25pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....