

CYCLE FORUM

1 July 2013

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

Karl Benz (Guards Club Residents Association), Peter England (CTC), Josie Heffernan (British Cycling), David Lambourne (Thames Velo), David Layzell (Maidenhead Cyclists Action Group), Andrew Payne (Maidenhead and District Cycling Club) and Gary Taylor (Maidenhead and Cox Green Neighbourhood Plan)

Officers: Gordon Oliver, Patrick Romaya and Karen Williams

PART I

01/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Mark Powell, Susy Shearer and Ian Taplin.

02/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

03/13 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 24 April 2013 be approved.

04/13 NEWS AND UPDATES

The Forum noted that the following updates:

The council had received £2m for the Stafferton Way Link Road. The proposals would include cycle routes along and across the link. Officers were also currently discussing a contra-flow cycle lane along the High Street with the developer of the Colonnade site. Councillor Beer requested early sight of the plans for the link road. The Principal Transport Policy Officer agreed to speak to colleagues in Highways to ensure this happened. Councillor Wilson commented that the council would be contributing over £1m to the Link Road project. As Chair of the Maidenhead Development Control Panel, he was aware that the Highways Authority was due to submit an application in August 2013, for the Panel to consider in December 2013/January 2014. Consultation would take place as with any other application. The documents were therefore likely to be available from August 2013. The Principal Transport Policy Officer would circulate the link when available.

Skyride Local had kicked off the previous weekend. A full programme of rides was planned through the summer. Extensive promotion included leaflets and banners.

The workplace Cycle Challenge now involved 23 organisations and 267 people had registered to ride. The organisers had commented that Maidenhead had been a hard town to engage.

Nine schools were now involved in the first year of the Bike It project. Events were planned for throughout the school year and over the summer. More schools would be approached to be involved in year two.

The Chairman commented that he had agreed the content of two letters to be sent to all Members in relation to the Get Active programme. He anticipated they would be sent later that week. He would also circulate information on the North Town Moor issue by the end of the week.

David Layzell reported that the number of bikes stolen at the train station had decreased. The new racks were being well used.

Councillor Beer commented that the majority of current schemes were Maidenhead based. There were no cycling clubs of significance in Windsor but there was a lot of triathlon activity. It was noted that the funding bid had to be focussed one area to be successful and that Windsor had already benefited from funding from a previous major scheme bid.

05/13 CYCLE ROUTES TO CHARTERS SCHOOL

The Principal Transport Policy Officer explained that the Ascot and Sunnings Neighbourhood Planning Group had asked officers to identify potential cycle routes to connect up the school to the local settlements. All options including off road routes had been considered but nothing suitable had been identified. Many of the existing verges were narrow therefore any solution would need to be on the carriageway. A solution used in the Netherlands that introduced a single lane for vehicles with two advisory lanes for cyclists was considered but rejected due to the lack of mutual visibility through bends in the roads. The option of traffic calming would require street lighting, which was likely to be resisted by local residents. It was noted that the railway bridge near the King's Corner surgery could not be used as it was part of a private estate with no public right of way. There were only two accesses to Charters school on Charters Road and Devenish Road; both had been considered. The option of making some roads one-way would likely lead to increased speeds and carriageways would still be narrow with a contraflow cycle lane.

Officers would work up a scheme and present their finding to the Neighbourhood Planning Group to see how they wished to proceed.

The Chairman requested the possibility of another access route to the school be considered.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

06/13 A308 CYCLE ROUTE

The Forum noted that there had been a number of complaints about the cycle route between the Braywick roundabout and Monkey Island Lane. The shared use facility was too narrow and there were many private access and roads along the route. A number of incidents had been reported at Cannon Hill Way. Two options had been considered:

- Widen existing paths. This would require a retaining wall that would affect the character of the road and adjacent trees.
- Amend the route to take cyclists up Monkey Island Lane along the public bridleway then through quieter roads in Bray.

It was noted that Monkey Island Lane had no street lighting and would be dark in winter. The path surface would need to be upgraded.

In general, Members were supportive of the Money Island Lane proposal and requested officers to draw up proposals. The Principal Transport Policy Officer commented that he would need to clarify the access rights for the southern section of Monkey island Lane.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted and the Principal Transport Policy Officer be requested to draw up proposals for a cycle route via Monkey Island Lane.

07/13 BIKE CRIME REVIEW

The Forum noted that bike crime in public places had halved, as detailed in the report. The police had targeted local gangs that had been undertaking organised bike theft from Windsor town centre in particular. In addition enforcement action by the police and promotion of bike security had helped. Thefts from house were classed as burglary and hence not included in the figures.

It was suggested that bike shops be involved in the scheme to encourage buyers to register their new bike. David Layzell commented that he had taken his granddaughter's bike to be labelled and was told that labelling was no longer included in the service. He felt this was detrimental as a label acted as a deterrent. Karl Benz suggested the issue of funding of the labelling scheme be raised with the Community Safety Manager. It was suggested that the scheme could be delivered by community wardens. Councillor Beer commented that he could raise the issue at Crime and Disorder Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED: That the Forum note the significant improvement in performance and thank the Thames Valley Police and the Community Wardens for the achievement.

08/13 HILLINGDON CYCLE CIRCUIT

The Forum received a presentation from the Chairman and David Lambourne on their recent visit to the Hillingdon Cycle Circuit. The circuit was located on an area of scrubland resulting from the Hayes bypass. It had been developed via Section 106 funding and was now a country park. The circuit featured a mechanic's area including a storage unit for tools and parts.

It was noted that the facility was well used by all sections of the community. The slipstream group, which catered for children aged 5-15, had 300 members. Children could hire bikes for a session. Schools often hired the circuit for periods of time. The circuit was run by volunteers who put in a lot of time and effort, particularly into coaching. A number of parents took the basic coaching course and got involved. All coaches underwent DBS checking (formerly known as CRB checking). The coaching helped children become more confident and aware so they would be safer when cycling on roads. The quality of coaching and cycling was demonstrated by the full trophy cabinet on display at the circuit. Team GB provided support including Sir Bradley Wiggins as patron.

The Chairman commented that both he and David Lambourne felt strongly that such a facility should be developed in the borough. The identification of a suitable site would be key. Possibilities included Braywick Park, Eton-Dorney Lake, Claires Court School and Berkshire College of Agriculture.

RESOLVED: The Chairman be requested to raise the issue with Members of his group, to ascertain political support for such a facility.

09/13 GUILDFORD BIKE PROJECT

The Forum received details of the Guildford Bike Project which had been set up a year previously to provide work experience to the long-term unemployed. The project was set up by the Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership and received extensive support from Guildford Borough Council including use of a derelict building. The project had received a grant for tools, insurance and decoration. The council also provided a 10 year old van that was deemed to be at the end of its life but was perfectly fine for use by the project.

In the first year of operation, 55 volunteers had come forward, of whom 7 have gone into full time employment. At the moment all training was peer-led, however it was hoped that accredited training could be offered in future. So far, the project had received 1200 donated bikes to be refurbished and sold on at an average of £40. The project was currently running at a profit. The majority of parts were recycled from donated bikes hence costs were low. At the moment bikes could only be sold online. Storage of bikes was a growing problem and the project had taken over two containers to house the donations.

The workshop was open four days per week. A shop was being planned which was anticipated to be open six days per week. The shop needed refurbishment, but the project had received a grant to enable this to happen.

Councillor Beer commented that one volunteer ran the accounts and tracked the bikes through the system. It was noted that although the project had attracted a variety of people, at present no females were involved.

The project coordinator had indicated that he would be happy to provide advice to the borough should it wish to consider a similar project. Those in attendance at the meeting were supportive of such a proposal. The Chairman commented on the need to promote the idea to other councillors and the Grow Our Own team, and proposed that a meeting be arranged.

Josie Heffernan commented that similar projects had been run in Watford, Uxbridge and Slough.

At this point Councillor J Evans left the meeting and the Vice Chairman, Councillor Derek Wilson, assumed the Chair.

RESOLVED: That a meeting be arranged to inform relevant parties of the details of the scheme.

10/13 FUTURE ITEMS

Councillor Beer commented on the need to encourage people to report problems with the state of the roads in the borough. The borough was good at dealing with problems if reported. Karl Benz commented that he had reported a broken manhole cover at the last meeting when the Lead Member for Highways and Transport had been present but nothing had been done. David Lambourne referred to the petition he had submitted to Cabinet on the levels of inspection undertaken by officers. The council inspected based on the national standard of up to two inches, whereas the courts considered anything more than one inch to be substandard. Since attending the Cabinet meeting at which the petition had been discussed, he had been disappointed with progress.

The Principal Transport Policy confirmed that, following the Cabinet meeting, he had presented to all streetcare inspectors on the impact of defects on cyclists. Councillor Beer also stated that he had met with the Head of Highways to outline the problems.

It was confirmed that if CTC were informed of a pothole, the details were passed on to the relevant council for action. The Principal Transport Policy commented that the issue of highway repairs was an priority raised in the residents' survey, but it was not clear as to the extent or nature of the problem therefore a more detailed survey and benchmarking exercise with other authorities was being undertaken.

RESOLVED: That the following items be included on future meeting agenda:

- **Cycle routes linking Maidenhead town centre to the outer areas of the town (The Principal Transport Policy to provided suggested routes prior to the meeting).**
- **Community Sport Action Fund bid – recreational activities including cycling**

11/13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Forum noted that the Urban Limits cycle ride from Maidenhead to Reading was due to take place on 12 July 2013 starting at 10am. The route, which zigzagged across the A4, was 25miles long.

12/13 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that meetings of the Forum were scheduled as follows:-

Wednesday 2 October 2013 – Council Chamber, Town Hall, Maidenhead

Thursday 9 January 2014 – Guildhall Chamber, Windsor

Thursday 3 April 2014 – Council Chamber, Town Hall, Maidenhead

13/13 MEETING

The meeting, which began at 5.00pm, ended at 7.15pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....