

CYCLE FORUM

31 March 2015

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

David Lambourne, Harry Bodenhofer, Neil Fairbrother, Andrew Payne, Ian Taplin, Chris Heywood, Mark Powell and Susy Shearer.

Officers: Gordon Oliver, Patrick Romaya, Tayo Akinyosade (Buckinghamshire County Council), Paul Robert (Buckinghamshire County Council), Andrew Fletcher and David Cook.

PART I

37/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Michael Cammage, Miles Gripton, Owen McQuaide and Peter England.

38/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39/14 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 21 January 2015 were approved as a true and correct record.

Chris Heywood questioned if the minutes should have actions tracked via a log sheet. The clerk informed that the minutes were a reflection of the discussion undertaken at the meeting and not 'project' minutes that would have tracked actions; comments made at the Forum were to aid the discussion and not action points that would be tracked.

It was mentioned that with current ICT systems it would be better to do a word search to find any comments rather than the onerous task of logging and searching an action sheet.

Chris Heywood also mentioned that he felt Stafferton Way link road could have been better designed with a dedicated cycle path as suggested by Ian Taplin at the last meeting. Chris asked if this had been taken back and actioned.

It was mentioned that the Infrastructure Bill 2015 had the need to introduce cycling and walking in new developments. It was agreed that this could be a future discussion item.

Chris Heywood questioned the resolution regarding the A329 cycle route as he felt that a member of the Forum had raised that the money should not be

spent if the whole scheme could not be progressed. The Chairman replied that there had been a good debate on the proposals and it had been resolved that the safe sections of the scheme be progressed. Chris Heywood felt that money should not be spent on incomplete schemes.

Ian Taplin felt that a cycle route through the Great Park Windsor was a great opportunity and further representation should be made and members of the Forum could join officers in holding further discussions with the warden.

40/14 A4 CYCLE ROUTE (BUCKS COUNTY COUNCIL)

Akintayo Akinyosade, representing Buckinghamshire County Council, attended the meeting to talk about the proposed A4 cycleway and bus stop improvement scheme.

The Forum were informed that funding had been awarded by the Local Enterprise Partnership to help improve access to train station and thus encourage sustainable transport. Taplow had been identified as one of three key areas where the scheme was proposed to be implemented.

Maps of the proposed route were provided and the Forum were informed that officers would be looking at pinch points from Maidenhead Bridge to Berry Hill and possible solutions.

Completed preliminary designs should be in place by the end of May 2015 and this would be used as part of the public consultation due to be run during May to June 2015.

During discussion on this item concern was raised that people traveling from Taplow to Maidenhead would have to cross the A4 from the proposed shared path on the northern footway in order to continue their journey on-carriageway via Maidenhead Bridge. It was suggested that a crossing could be installed before the bridge at / near the Mill Lane junction.

With regards to Maidenhead Bridge Ian Taplin suggested that there could be one footpath on the south side and the north side footpath could be turned into a cycle lane. Gordon Oliver replied that this would still be too narrow for a cycle lane.

David Lambourne raised concern that having a pedestrian path that cyclists could use was old fashioned and we should move away from shared facilities as dedicated cycle ways on roads were safer. He mentioned that cycle paths around Slough were dangerous as they were too narrow and this was an opportunity to build a proper cycle route and not a second rate scheme. He understood that it was difficult to have a dedicated cycle way along Stafferton Way, however he felt that there was sufficient space to have a proper dedicated scheme. It was also mentioned that in Holland they were narrowing roads to slow down traffic to improve safety.

Councillor Beer informed that Maidenhead Bridge was dangerous for cyclists, a possible solution could be seen at Staines Bridge were they added a cantilevered path on the side of the bridge.

Peter Wilkinson asked if it was lack of funding or planning restrictions that was hindering possible solutions and mentioned that we needed to have ambition to get the problems solved.

David Lambourne said that the Forum should be a pressure group and put pressure on national government to get better funding, he felt that the Government should make cycling a bigger priority.

Ian Taplin informed the Forum that the London Cycling Campaign had been successful because there had been 10 years of mass protests. He felt that the Forum should say that we are not interested in any cycle routes unless they are segregated. He said he could get other enthusiasts to demonstrate and bring Maidenhead to a standstill and that he planned to stand against Theresa May at the forthcoming election on a cycling mandate.

Councillor Wilson reported that any development at Boulton should include a dedicated cycle bridge.

With regards to funding the Forum were informed that there was about £1.7 million in total of which just over £1 million would be used for cycling provision. It was noted that Slough were undertaking a separate scheme to link from the boundary to the existing cycle route along the A4 at Dover Road.

The Chairman thanked officers for attending the meeting and informing of the proposed scheme.

RESOLVED: That the Cycle Forum note the proposed A4 Cycleway and Bus Stop Improvement Scheme.

41/14 WORKSHOP: CYCLING STRATEGY

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Policy Officer, gave a presentation on the proposed RBWM Cycle Strategy.

The Forum were informed that the reasons why a strategy had been proposed was to set out what we are trying to achieve, ensures a coherent and consistent approach, aid the allocation of resources effectively, co-ordinate activities across council departments / partner organisations and help support funding bids.

Ian Taplin asked if there would be a decrease in funding over the next couple of years and was informed by Gordon Oliver that this was an unknown due to the forthcoming election and the black hole in Government spending. Ian Taplin responded that cyclists would not accept any cuts in the cycling budget especially at a local level.

Gordon Oliver went on to show the proposed structure of the strategy which was accepted by the Forum.

It was explained that the guiding principles behind the strategy were to put residents first, help provide value for money, help equip ourselves for the future and help provide partnership working.

The Chairman said that the Government were looking at the benefits of any funding and thus we need a strategy that will show how we can increase cycling and the benefits of doing this. It is difficult to demonstrate this when we have a low base when being compared with other projects seeking funding. We know how important cycling is but it is quantifying this against other priorities.

Ian Taplin asked why the police had not been invited to this meeting as requested at a previous meeting. The Chairman replied that the police could be invited to a future meeting but they had not been invited to this meeting as their attendance was not required for the items under consideration.

Gordon Oliver continued the presentation by setting the strategy within a strategic framework of national strategies, regional strategies and local strategies and initiatives.

Gordon Oliver went on to show the proposed vision of the strategy which was accepted by the Forum. It was noted that the strategy would be brought back to the Forum.

Councillor Beer suggested that the school cycling strategy should be a stand alone strategy as it was important to get children cycling.

The Forum were shown the proposed aims and objectives for the strategy that would include a number of SMART targets.

Councillor Beer recommended that instead of saying that we should ensure that cycle facilities are designed and built in accordance with national guidance and best practice, we should aim to be better than these standards to improve safety. David Lambourne mentioned that he and Councillor Beer had presented to Cabinet concerns about the national standard regarding pot holes as he and a number of cyclists had blown tyres on pot holes that were within these guidelines.

The Forum were next shown a list of strengths that included increased levels of cycling, some good utility and recreational routes and good sports cycling groups. This was offset by a list of weaknesses that included cycling not being perceived as being safe, over-reliance on shared paths and the difficulty in fitting cycle facilities into the constrained road network.

Gordon Oliver then went on to show a list of opportunities such as regeneration in Maidenhead and the station interchange, the development of

the Borough Local Plan and the need to tackle obesity levels that may open up new funding streams.

Susy Shearer recommended that the two neighbourhood plans in Windsor should also be added to the list of strengths and also asked if the Community Infrastructure Levy was a threat.

There was, however a number of threats that were shown to the Forum and these included no dedicated funding for cycling from central Government, that the benefits of cycling not being accepted by all and the poor perception of cyclists behaviour.

David Lambourne mentioned that there was a need to work on the perception of cycling as people are quick to complain about cyclists but this was not reciprocated in poor driving.

With regards to promoting cycling Ian Taplin recommended that there be a model, similar to the regeneration of Maidenhead model, that would show the work being undertaken over the next five years.

Gordon Oliver went on to show the proposed action plan and was asked by Ian Taplin if the proposed model could be included in the marketing and communication actions and also raised concern that a cycle shop in Maidenhead was closing down and that this in part was that Maidenhead business rates were higher than Windsor. Councillor Wilson mentioned that he had sent a petition to the Labour Government about the business rates in Maidenhead.

The Forum were also shown a list of potential funding streams that included the RBWM Capital Programme, developer contributions or public health funding.

David Lambourne mentioned that there had been a drive to get a cycling circuit within the borough, however the previous administration had acted too slowly to access funding to make this happen. Chris Heywood mentioned that there was also people who would take advantage of an off road track and used Bracknell Forest as an example. It was also mentioned that Eton College may be interested in a cycle circuit.

The Forum were then shown how it was proposed to monitor the success of the strategy and what the next steps were with the development of the strategy.

RESOLVED: That the Cycle Forum note the presentation.

42/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Andrew Fletcher informed the Forum that the draft "Statement of Action" and draft "Site Specific Schemes" had been developed with the Local Access

Forum for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan review. He welcomed the Forum to send him any comments or suggestions that they may have.

Susy Shearer mentioned that there had been an accident involving a cyclist at the Clarence Road roundabout and that there had been a pedestrian crossing installed along Berry Avenue but there was no indication on the cycle path to warn cyclists.

43/14 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings dates were noted.

44/14 MEETING

The meeting, which began at 7.00pm, ended at 9.55pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....