

WINDSOR AND ETON TOWN FORUM

6 FEBRUARY 2014

PRESENT: Councillors Natasha Airey (Chairman), Eileen Quick (Vice Chair), George Bathurst, James Evans, Sue Evans and John Fido.

Also Present: Councillor Colin Rayner, Councillor MJ Saunders, Mrs Allen (registered speaker), Liz Edwards (LEGOLAND), Ingrid Fernandes (LEGOLAND), Sue Kemp (LEGOLAND), Anne Taylor (Windsor and Eton Society), Hugo Vickers (The Outdoor Trust), Jim Walker (The Outdoor Trust)

Also Present: A number of residents attended the meeting.

Officers: Tanya Leftwich, Paul Roach, Ben Smith and Miles Thompson.

PART I

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Cynthia Endacott.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 3 October 2013 were approved as a correct record.

WINDSOR WALKWAY PRESENTATION

The Chairman welcomed Jim Walker and Hugo Vickers from the Outdoor Trust to the meeting and invited them to address the Forum.

The presentation on the Windsor Walkway covered the following areas:

- The Queen's Walkway.
- Principles.
- Benefits.
- Route of the walkway.
- The draft marker for the Queen's Walkway.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- The Jubilee Walkway had been unveiled on the 9 June 1977 in London.
- The markers in the path were the only way people could see it was the walkway.
- Nelson Mandela had unveiled the informative panels on the walkway in 1996.
- The panels had been and could be changed and updated as necessary.

- A brail feature had been added to the panels along with a telephone number that could be called to receive a description of what would be seen.
- The Jubilee Greenway was opened by the Queen, outside Buckingham Palace, at the end of February 2012.
- The Queen's Walkway was 6.32km of accessible, signed and interpreted Walkway dedicated to the celebration of Her Majesty serving more than 63 years and 210 days as Queen.
- It was noted that the Queen would become the longest reigning Monarch on the 11 September 2015.
- Members were informed that churches in the Royal Borough that were currently locked could be opened up to the general public.
- It was hoped that a marker could be put in the edge of the Windsor Great Park, but that permission would need to be sought before that could go ahead.
- Approximately 65 markers (disks) would be needed to mark the path.
- The draft marker suggested for the Queen's Walkway would need to be approved by the Palace before it could be used.
- Funds now needed to be raised, possibly via the lottery funds.
- Jim Walker and Hugo Vickers explained that they needed to demonstrate support of the project, possibly via a letter or email from the Forum if they wished to do so.
- Jim Walker and Hugo Vickers informed Members that a guidebook would be made available for the Walkway.
- Jim Walker and Hugo Vickers explained that pressure pads would be put on the proposed route to count the number of pedestrians and cyclists using it every thirty minutes.
- Jim Walker and Hugo Vickers informed Members that annual evaluations would take place.
- Jim Walker and Hugo Vickers explained that the markers would ideally be made from metal alloy, would be anti-slip and would be the size of a dinner plate.
- It was suggested that the Guildhall Museum be linked to the Windsor Walkway and that the Clerk provided the details of the museum to Jim Walker and Hugo Vickers.
- Jim Walker and Hugo Vickers informed Members that the walkway would be managed by the Royal Borough's Highways Team.

Members gave their support to this project.

The Chairman thanked Jim Walker and Hugo Vickers for attending the meeting and addressing the Forum.

LEGOLAND TRAFFIC UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Sue Kemp from LEGOLAND and the Highways, Strategy and Traffic Manager, Ben Smith, to the meeting and invited them to address the Forum.

The Highways, Strategy and Traffic Manager and Sue Kemp gave Members a short update presentation on Traffic Management Solutions by both the Royal Borough and the LEGOLAND Windsor Resort. The presentation, which was agreed would be emailed out with the minutes, covered the following areas:

- Context.

- Objectives.
- Solutions between 2011-2013.
- 2014 solutions.

Sue Kemp from LEGOLAND explained that she and the Highways, Strategy and Traffic Manager had worked together for the nearly four years on developing traffic management action plans.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- Sue Kemp informed Members that the additional 1,400 car parking spaces on grassed land could not be used if water logged.
- It was noted that LEGOLAND closed once all their parking spaces had been filled.
- Sue Kemp informed Members that LEGOLAND was the most expensive theme park in the UK which was intentional due to the target market they wanted to attract.
- It was noted that the traffic cameras that had been installed between 2011-2013 provided real-time information which could be used to make decisions enabling traffic signals to be adjusted when necessary.
- Sue Kemp informed Members that approximately 65% of LEGOLANDs visitors travelled from less than an hour away.
- It was noted that 60% of LEGOLAND visitors currently booked in advance.
- Sue Kemp explained that two elements were currently not included in advance bookings and these were noted to be the Merlin Group Promotions (hope to be able to do in the next three years) and Annual Pass Holders which equated to approximately 25% of visitors could not currently pre-book.
- It was noted that LEGOLAND had submitted a strategy plan for the next ten years which was available to be viewed.
- Sue Kemp informed the Forum that LEGOLAND would be opening again in mid-March 2014 and that a number of solutions aimed to be implemented by then.
- It was noted that there were also solutions to be implemented during April and May 2014 and also some for the longer term (rest of the year and 2015).
- Members were informed that LEGOLAND was now completely land locked by the Crowne Estate.

The Chairman invited Mrs Allen who had registered to speak in advance of the meeting for three minutes to address the Forum. Mrs Allen informed Members that she had seen the LEGOLAND presentation at the Highways, Transport & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel on Monday and felt that no-one at the Council was taking a holistic view of the impact of LEGOLAND on residents and other businesses to ensure informed decision-making. Mrs Allen went on to say that she believed there was a lack of communication and integration between departmental 'silos' and gave an example of this by stating that after the LEGOLAND reps had left the meeting on Monday there was an agenda item about the poor air quality at the St Leonard's Road/Imperial Road Junction. Mrs Allen explained that an Environmental Officer presenting the paper had explained that the poor air quality problem at the junction since 2011 was exacerbated by LEGOLAND. Mrs Allen explained that LEGOLAND's objectives did not seem to include issues around reducing air pollution. It was noted that Mrs Allen had been given contradicting information about when the strategy plan had been submitted by LEGOLAND. Mrs Allen informed Members that the traffic volume increased year on year and questioned why this wasn't being

addressed in the plan. Mrs Allen stated that she believed the 'solutions' stated would be totally ineffective as LEGOLAND were simply trying to manage the traffic and not reduce it. Mrs Allen suggested that the bottleneck at the two sets of traffic lights at Imperial Road and Clewer Hill Road could be removed and questioned how much LEGOLAND would be contributing to the solutions that had been suggested.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- The Highways, Strategy and Traffic Manager assured Mrs Allen that he and LEGOLAND were well aware of the air quality issues mentioned and assured her that they had been consulted on. It was noted that a reduction in congestion and an improvement in air quality were aligned.
- The Highways, Strategy and Traffic Manager informed Members that the bottleneck issue at Imperial Road was up for discussion and that his team would work with local Ward Members and the appropriate Lead Members to look and consider improvements. It was noted that the list of solutions mentioned in the presentation was not an exclusive list and assured Members that there was a good degree of joined up working taking place within the Council.
- Sue Kemp informed Members that the KPI information would be made available to the public but that the format of this information had not been decided yet.
- Sue Kemp explained that LEGOLAND was a commercial business and as such needed to make a profit.
- Members were informed that the queues to enter LEGOLAND on the highway network had been reduced significantly by new operating arrangements within LEGOLAND Windsor Resort which meant that queues could be contained within the resort, off the highway network.
- The Highways, Strategy and Traffic Manager informed Members that the traffic did flow more freely once it had gone through the traffic signals on Imperial Road but that the main problems in that area were down to road space and capacity.
- The Vice-Chair requested that work be done on surveying Imperial Road to see if it could be widened.
- Councillor James Evans suggested that LEGOLAND visitors should be incentivised to not get to the theme park by car or that they be allowed to use an alternative entrance / exit to the car park.
- Sue Kemp informed Members that LEGOLAND did not accept 'walk up' guests.
- Sue Kemp reassured Councillor Fido that when the next set of trials for alternative routes took place Clewer Hill Road would not be made into a dead end road.
- Members were informed that LEGOLANDs gates opened at 8am and the park opened at 10am.
- Councillor Bursnall suggested that the theme park should look at opening at 9am rather than 10am to allow early birds to attend.
- It was noted that the traffic lights on Imperial Road, and new traffic lights at Clewer Hill Road had been linked to maximise the capacity of these junctions, thereby improving traffic congestion.
- Councillor Bathurst stated that whilst he appreciated the contribution LEGOLAND made to the Windsor Town Partnership he believed traffic congestion, if it continued, would seriously damage the town.

- The Highways, Strategy and Traffic Manager informed Members that there were a whole range of solutions that if delivered would have some benefit. It was noted that signage off the motorways would no doubt help traffic congestion.
- Sue Kemp welcomed the opportunity for a number of organisations to be able to work together.
- Councillor Saunders informed Members that he had also attended the Highways, Transport & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel and had asked about the planning implications as it was considered a tight site. Councillor Saunders went on to explain that he, if asked, would not be able to name the senior officer, or Lead Member driving this. The Vice-Chair suggested that she, Councillor Hill and Councillor Saunders work together as a 'team' to drive solutions forward.

The Chairman thanked the Highways, Strategy and Traffic Manager and Sue Kemp for attending the meeting and addressing the Forum.

BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Chairman invited the Planning Policy Manager, Miles Thompson, to give the Forum a brief update on the Borough Local Plan Consultation and explained that once this meeting had closed a meeting about the Borough Local Plan would take place.

The Planning Policy Manager informed Members that the Borough Local Plan was currently out to consultation with regard to the preferred options document. It was noted that the end of the process would be to adopt a new Local Plan for the area which planning applications would be judged against. The Planning Policy Manager informed Members that the aim was to use the Borough Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plans alongside one another.

The Planning Policy Manager informed Members that the Borough Local Plan outlines issues and the different options available to deal with them. It was noted that once the Borough had received the feedback from the consultation a final version of the report would be produced and then submitted to a Planning Inspector.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that further information was available on the Royal Borough's website and that hard copies could be found in local libraries, parish offices and York House.

The Chairman thanked the Planning Policy Manager for attending the meeting and addressing the Forum.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was to be confirmed by the Clerk (6.30pm in the Guildhall, Windsor).

Any items suggestions for the next meeting were requested to be emailed to the Chairman (Cllr.Airey@rbwm.gov.uk) and / or the Clerk (tanya.leftwich@rbwm.gov.uk).

MEETING

The meeting, which began at 6.30pm, ended at 8.00pm.