

CYCLE FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Malcolm Beer, Paul Lion, Derek Wilson (Chairman) and Lynda Yong (Vice-Chairman)

Also in attendance: Colin Wheatfield, Harry Bodenhofer, David Lambourne, Susy Shearer, Luke McCarthy

Officers: Wendy Binmore and Gordon Oliver

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Taplin.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman declared a personal interest as he was the Council appointed Member of the Maidenhead Town Partnership Board and the Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM).

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2017 be approved.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19

The capital programme detailed projects for the following year. Bids had been submitted and were listed in paragraph 2.3 of the report. The capital programme referred to the draft cycling action plan and the implementation of local neighbourhood plans. As long as the overall value of the programme did not change, items on the list could be swapped or prioritised.

Susy Shearer stated all the projects were worthy of funding and she thanked the officer for all his hard work. Susy added that she wanted to add Parsonage Lane where it joined the A308 to the list of projects as it was in need of resurfacing. Also Hatch Lane road surface was very poor with breakages at all sides of the speed cushions and edges of the road surfaces. The Chairman confirmed he would look into it and ask Streetcare to assess the road surface. Any necessary remedial works would be carried out.

Cllr Lion asked about the timescales for the Maidenhead Station improvements. The Principal Transport Planner confirmed that the timeframe for the projects to be carried out was 2019 – 2020 in time for Crossrail opening.

Harry Bodenhofer asked if residents would be consulted on the adoption of Horseguards Drive. The Chairman responded that a resident had contacted him requesting that the cycle route be removed from outside their home, since it was a private road. However, it had been operating as a part of a cycle route for a number of years and provided a valued link to the Riverside area. The Council suggested it

would seek to formally adopt that section of private road. A consultation would have to take place with all residents and if adopted, the Council would take on responsibility for the maintenance of the road. If residents did not want the adoption of the Drive to take place, an alternative route for the cycle lane would need to be found. The Chairman added that proposals and details of the consultation would be circulated to the Cycle Forum. Cllr Beer asked for a plan showing the route. The Principal Transport Planner confirmed that he would send the details via email.

With regards to cycle parking at schools, the Principal Transport Planner stated that all schools were asked to provide details on their cycle parking. If a school had no parking or, they required more parking to meet existing demand, then they were prioritised within the capital programme. Most schools had already benefited from new / additional cycle parking. Luke McCarthy asked if additional cycle parking was really needed at Newlands. The Chairman confirmed that the school was expanding.

The Chairman confirmed how funding for large ticket items worked. He stated there was a grant funding bidding process; the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had provisionally allocated funds to improve interchange facilities at the Maidenhead Station and to improve links to the Town Centre from the Station. An all-movement pedestrian crossing, similar to that at Oxford Street in London, had originally been proposed, but was found to cause unacceptable congestion, so a bridge link was being considered as an alternative.

Members of the Forum stated that Council spending on cycling still seemed to be very low with plenty of worthwhile schemes that could do with funding. The Chairman responded that if the Cycle Forum wanted to increase funding for cycling throughout the Borough, this could be reported through the Highways, Transport & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel and he would also take those comments to the Lead Member for Highways requesting more funding to encourage more cycling in the Borough. Susy Shearer said cycling needed more funding and that more funding was needed for maintenance. She added that the Forum had been successful in getting the Advanced Stop Line (ASL) implemented at the top of Hatch Lane but it had faded a lot due to traffic. The Chairman confirmed he would try and get it repainted.

Members of the Forum raised concerns that the Borough did not match the spending of other European countries on cycling. In Sweden the spend on cycling was £30 per head; while the British Government only spent approximately £1 per head. They felt the Borough should be looking to spend £10 per head to get people cycling. There were a number of new houses being built in the Borough in the next five years and the Council could be bolder in their approach with new developments.

A question was asked about how cycle parking is surveyed. The Principal Transport Planner confirmed that there was no Borough wide survey of schools which collected data on the number of pupils cycling to school. He added it used to be collected through school census but that had been dropped so there were no current figures available. Central government received some small-scale sample data on walking and cycling to schools as part of the National Travel Survey, but this data was not available at local authority level. Just sending out a form to be filled in by a school was not a simple process; schools were not prepared to do it and it was hard work obtaining responses. The Principal Transport Planner added there was no way of counting who used on-street cycle parking across the Borough as it required a large resource that the Borough did not have. However, there was an annual count to see how many people were cycling to and from Maidenhead and Windsor Town Centres.

The Chairman stated there was a Task & Finish Group being set up to look at the Cycling Action Plan. Therefore, the issue of bike storage and encouraging cycling could be better discussed at those meetings; he encouraged Members to get involved and attend the meetings.

- ❖ **Action:** Provide regular updates to Members on spending on cycling within the Borough to show if spending is decreased or increased.

MAIDENHEAD STATION

Members received a brief presentation on the potential layout of Maidenhead Station. There would be cycle parking for 300 bikes in a well-lit area with CCTV. The presentation showed possible options for a pedestrian bridge and shared use surface crossings.

The Principal Transport Planner stated the current drawings within the presentation were conceptual and feasibility work was ongoing to evaluate the options and work towards a final design. Members of the Cycle Forum stated the station was a key area for the Town Centre but in its current state, it was a mess. The Principal Transport Planner said that the forecourt would be improved and there would be seating and landscaping with attractive paving. The new forecourt layout would provide much more space for pedestrians.

Harry Bodenhofer said that he found it disheartening that cyclists would not be able to use the footbridge and asked why the road could not be put into a tunnel so pedestrians and cyclists could cross on the level. This would allow the free flow of traffic underneath. The Principal Transport Planner said it was challenging as there were roads that led to that area from different directions. It would not be possible to shut Queen Street due to it being used as an exit for the service roads from nearby buildings. Also, the area has experienced flooding issues previously and sinking the road further would exacerbate the issue..

Susy Shearer said she was concerned about bikes being chained to the railings of the train station. The new cycle parking was too far away from the ticket hall which made continuing to use the railings far more attractive to cyclists. The Chairman responded that Network Rail did not want parking for bikes on the railings. The site of the proposed cycle parking was Council owned land and the parking would be covered, safe, secure and well-lit, therefore, making it more attractive to cyclists. The new parking would be right next to the crossing and the entrance to the forecourt of the station.

Councillor Yong stated she would be difficult to persuade people to use the footbridge after a long day at work and they would be more likely to use the surface crossing, she felt a better solution was needed.

Luke McCarthy asked if the bridge could be taken into the station at platform level. The Principal Transport Planner explained that there was no platform on the north side of the bridge. The Chairman said the Borough had been in discussions with Network Rail to create a bridge link on the south side between the station and Stafferton Way car park, but the platform is too narrow and Network Rail did not want this.. The Principal Transport Planner confirmed that no public consultation had taken place yet

regarding the changes to Maidenhead Station and it was still in the initial stages of design.

Councillor Yong suggested building an underground pedestrian tunnel to be used as a crossing. The Principal Transport Planner said that would not be good for disabled access as the ramps would not be long enough. Also, people did not like to use subways due to security issues, there would also be flooding issues due to rainwater and sewers.

Councillor Lion stated residents had contacted him with concerns regarding the maintenance of cycles parking and was concerned about the lack of maintenance there currently was. The Principal Transport Planner offered to write to Great Western Railway in order to address the issue.

- ❖ **Action:** The Principal Transport Planner to write to Great Western Railway raising concerns regarding the lack of maintenance to the cycle parking at Maidenhead Station.

MAIDENHEAD MISSING LINKS

The Principal Transport Planner provided Members with a brief presentation on the four opportunity areas of development within Maidenhead town centre and how the 'missing links' project would join them up to make connectivity better for pedestrians and cyclists..

The Chairman explained that there were a number of opportunity areas in Maidenhead and the Borough wanted one developer to regenerate all of them. A tendering process was carried out and Countryside PLC was chosen by independent assessment. Countryside had £1.6bn of assets and had successful schemes in Acton, Ealing and Slough. Countryside were scored highly during the tender process and if anyone wanted to know more, they could visit www.rbdevelopments.co.uk which would provide a link to the developments proposed in Maidenhead. The four opportunity areas were all currently at the concept phase with consultation events planned. The West Street and York Road sites would be progressed first. The new leisure centre would need to be completed before the old one could be closed and the site redeveloped.

Harry Bodenhofer wanted to know if the subway near to Waitrose would be opened up to cyclists. The Principal Transport Planner said that subway did not form part of the missing links bid as it was too narrow and widening was prohibitively expensive.

Luke McCarthy asked if motor vehicle use could be limited to access only on King Street to prioritise cyclists and pedestrians. The Principal Transport Planner indicated that there was disabled parking, businesses and retail outlets that all needed access to that road.

The Chairman said that the Nicholsons Car Park was due to be demolished to create a new 1,500 space car park while creating two way access on Broadway, so there may be an opportunity to address King Street at the same time.

BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Chairman updated the Forum on ongoing developments of the Borough Local Plan. He stated that the Regulation 19 consultation had closed on 27 September 2017 and the Council had received a huge amount of feedback and representation from residents on the last day of the consultation. Officers were going through all feedback and that was being transposed onto a form for submission to the Secretary of State by December 2017. The December deadline depended on how quickly the council was able to transfer the representations onto standard forms.

Susy Shearer commented that the forms were not very straightforward to use when she made representations. The Chairman stated every other Local Planning Authority had used the same software and that was why the Borough had used it. Councillor Beer also found the form very difficult to use and could not access it or get it to load.

The Chairman stated there were various representations made regarding cycling but they were still being assessed. He added the deadline to make representations was extended by an additional month to help combat any issues. Once the data had been collated, it could be shared with the Cycle Forum.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cycle Wayfinding

Susy Shearer stated wayfinding and information about new signage in Town Centres was raised at the Visitor Management Forum; there more signage was needed at the entrances to the town to cater for tourists and residents. The Windsor Neighbourhood Plan Group had been looking at improving signage at public open spaces. The group wanted better engagement that would link tourism, cycling and residents with the Cycle Forum and the Visitor Management Forum. The Chairman commented that Members of the Cycle Forum should have a think about ideas to encourage cycling in the Borough and send them to The Principal Transport Planner.

Councillor Beer stated there were still signs in Old Windsor for the Thames Path which stated no cycling allowed, but that only applied to some parts of the Thames Path and not others. The Principal Transport Planner stated that Anthony Hurst had been liaising with Thames Path Trail Authority to review the cycling policy. Susy Shearer said it would be raised as part of the Neighbourhood Plan to try and get cycling access along the whole of the Thames Path.

Residents wanted to know how shared use areas where both pedestrians and cyclists were present were being managed, following the tragic death of a pedestrian in London following a collision with a cyclist. The Principal Transport Planner stated the Council tried to avoid shared use where possible but, it was extremely challenging. The Chairman agreed it should be a priority issue to protect both cyclists and pedestrians but, the problem was that the borough had an old road network and limited space. The Principal Transport Planner confirmed that it was very rare in the Borough to have pedestrian injuries / fatalities caused by cyclists.

Cycling in Peascod Street

Susy Shearer stated that Peascod Street was a principal shopping area which had been pedestrianised for 22 years. There were no cycling signs at the top of the street, but they were not visible to cyclists as they were placed too high up the posts. A further sign is present at the bottom of Peascod Street and on the entrance from

Charles Street slightly lower down, but there were no other no cycling signs anywhere else despite there being six or seven entrances to the pedestrian areas. She added that cycling was on the increase on Peascod Street and it was only a matter of time before there was an accident. Susy Shearer added that cyclists were becoming more aggressive with an assault in Nicholsons Walk when a cyclist was asked to dismount but, there were no signs in the area to point out it was a no cycling zone. Other streets such as King Edward Court had far more signs. She added that signs should be on every lamppost in both directions of travel and at the right height.

Councillor Yong suggested that the community wardens could issue fines to discourage cyclists. The Chairman said he would get the signage checked and then get the wardens to patrol. The Principal Transport Planner said the sign at the top of Peascod Street will be moved to a more visible location and will be illuminated. There were no cycling signs at the bottom of Peascod Street to prevent cycles and there was a no entry sign on William Street. Repeater signs had been removed from within Peascod Street because they do not comply with the traffic signs regulations. The Principal Transport Planner added that wardens did not have the legal powers to stop traffic. The Chairman suggested a press release to stop cyclists in pedestrian areas and also positively promote and encourage cycling.

Ascot & the Sunnings Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor Yong stated the new hospital in Ascot had been approved with an aspiration to incorporate a cycle path to Ascot Station. There were plans for 230 houses with a lot of workers commuting. At present the Borough needed to negotiate with Network Rail as soon as possible to open up a route they closed years ago or, to talk to Crown Estate to release a small piece of land to enable the cycle path to join up.

River Thames Crossings

The Principal Transport Planner stated that the new bridge going across Boulters Lock was going to be a footbridge only. Dual use was rejected and would only be for pedestrian use at certain times. The Council did lobby for dual use but the developer and South Bucks Council rejected it.

Cycling Action Plan Task & Finish Group

The Chairman stated the Task & Finish Group was set up at the request of the Highways, Transport and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel. The work carried out by the group would last approximately three months and would involve working on the Cycling Action Plan. The Principal Transport Planner stated there would be meetings where issues would be raised, officers would take those issues away and do work on them and this process would be repeated until all issues were as resolved as far as possible. The Chairman of the Highways, Transport & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel requested representatives from the Cycle Forum to attend. Members interested in being part of the group should contact the Principal Transport Planner.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 9.30 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....