

CYCLE FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Derek Wilson (Chairman) Malcolm Beer and Paul Lion

Also in attendance: Susy Shearer, Steven Shepherd, David Dyer, Graham Jones, Rosie Morton, David Lambourne and John Payne. Julian Scriven (Nextbike UK).

Officers: Gordon Oliver and Karen Shepherd

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Yong.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2017 be approved.

PUBLIC BIKE HIRE SCHEME

The Forum received a presentation from Julian Scriven of Nextbike UK. Mr Scriven explained that bike sharing had started in the 1960s with the first recorded scheme in Amsterdam. The guiding principle of Nextbike was that cycling, and therefore bike shares, should be for everyone. Nextbike undertook a lot of promotion to non-core cyclists. Nextbike worked collaboratively with councils to discuss what would work in their area. The company was strongly focussed on innovation. It was important that a bike share scheme was also positive for those not using it; it should not be an inconvenience to others.

Nextbike had 45,000 bikes worldwide in 25 countries. The company had been founded in 2004 in Europe and had subsequently spread to the USA, UK and India. They had five existing schemes operating in the UK and five UK launches had been confirmed for the first half of 2018. Nextbike offered customised system types including station based, free floating and hybrid systems. Bikes were built to the highest European standards and would survive 10 years of use. Unlike those in London, Nextbikes held all their technology in the bike itself rather than in the terminal. This allowed for lighter on-street infrastructure and provided GPS and wifi triangulation on the bikes themselves.

Nextbike users could unlock bikes in a number of ways, using a smartphone app, via the bike computers, with a smart card and through a 24 hour customer contact centre. Geofencing technology was increasingly being used to directly control where bikes could and could be returned. Nextbike offered a 24 hour extraction of faulty bikes and bikes abandoned in appropriate places within 1 hour if in high security locations. Nextbike offered a rebalancing scheme to ensure bikes were available in the right

places at the right time. Service teams were often third sector organisations including local charities trying to get people back to work.

Mr Scriven commented that Windsor was a unique place and therefore presented challenges, including limited shared public space, a high tourist influx and legitimate security concerns. Nextbike would propose infrastructure-light docking stations for the town which would help address the space and security issues. These could be moved in 2-3 hours to accommodate events. A geofencing overlay could alert the service team, and the police if necessary, if a bike had been left somewhere other than a docking station. A tariff structure could allow for differentials between charges for tourists, residents and concessions.

In response to questions, Mr Scriven confirmed:

- Three gearing options were available (3/7/8) to deal with hilly areas.
- Areas such as the Long Walk could be defined as embargoed parking zones. It would be made clear in terms and conditions that membership would be revoked if a person cycled in an embargoed zone.
- The app could include local cycle routes.
- If a base station were removed, the app would automatically be updated.
- All bikes displayed identification numbers.
- The police would be able to move or remove bikes. The role of RBWM Ambassadors could be investigated to report / relocate abandoned bikes.
- The standard membership was £60 per year which allowed for the first half hour of each ride for free and 50p thereafter. Residents could be offered membership for £30 or less and an extended free period.
- Nextbike tried to avoid the council paying directly for any infrastructure; often sponsors could be brought on board or grant funding for sustainable transport could be utilised. Partial capital funding by Nextbike was also an option. In the long term revenue covered costs.
- A minimum density of 50 bikes was required for viability, with 100+ bikes preferred.
- Nextbike had experienced issues in Milton Keynes with vandalism of bikes, possible as there were a number of cycle routes away from main roads.
- Seasonal demand could be addressed by changing stock levels.

The Chairman thanked Mr Scriven for his presentation. He explained that the Forum had requested a presentation from another bike share provider. After that, it would consider a recommendation to Cabinet.

OPERATION CLOSE PASS

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Planner, explained that 'Operation Close Pass' had begun in the West Midlands. A plain clothes police rider would alert officers further along the road if a car passed them too closely. The driver would then be pulled over, presented with video evidence and offered a 10 minute educational session or points and a fine. The scheme had been successful in reducing the number of incidents and complaints. It was hoped that Thames Valley Police would be able to attend a future Task and Finish Group meeting.

David Lambourne commented that a flashing rear light even in the daytime made a great difference and people should be encouraged to use them. Susy Shearer

commented that problems often arose during commuting times. Steven Shepherd asked if TVP would accept the cyclist's own footage of close passes as evidence.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That it be recommended that Thames Valley Police be approached to see if they would be willing to work with the council to develop and deliver Operation Close Pass within the Royal Borough; and for this to be supported by a comprehensive joint communications programme.

NCN50 MAIDENHEAD TO COOKHAM CYCLE ROUTE

Gordon Oliver explained that Route 50 between Maidenhead and Cookham had originally been planned as part of a longer route but this had been put on hold. The route include a permitted path across the Summerleaze estate. The landowner had welded bars across the gates to stop motorbikes but this had also limited access for most cycles as well as preventing access for pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters. The Rights of Way team had worked with the landowner to ensure the existing barriers were replaced with K barriers along with some surfacing improvements. Councillor Beer thanked Gordon Oliver and his colleagues for the achievement.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the contents of the report be noted.

CYCLING ACTION PLAN TASK & FINISH GROUP

The Chairman reported that a number of meetings had been held to identify changes needed to the Action Plan. The next meeting would take place in February 2018.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the content of the report be noted.

A.O.B

Susy Shearer explained that she had become aware of a conversation on social media in the last 6 months relating to the variable heights and shapes of traffic cushions in the Dedworth and Clewer areas. She had forwarded the details of problems on specific roads to Gordon Oliver. Often the road surface around the cushion was of poor quality and in need of resurfacing. Ms Shearer referred to a scheme in Galleys Road that was 15 years old but had a smooth road surface and a sinusoidal hump profile. The Chairman commented that the humps on Dedworth Road had been put in when the Tesco store had opened. They had originally been too high and an ambulance had got stranded so the height had been reduced. Cllr Lion asked if the humps were needed. There had been a history of speeding and the humps were effective in addressing this.

David Lambourne referred to the traffic calming scheme on Burchetts Green Road. He had objected to the scheme when it was proposed and had asked for gaps to let cyclists through. He had been told the humps would be kept in good condition but this had not happened; there was a particular problem with the granite setts around the humps. The Chairman suggested that Volker highways be asked to undertake an audit of the road surface.

- ❖ **Action:** Volker highways be asked to undertake an audit of the road surface on Burchetts Green Road.

Gordon Oliver confirmed that a line had been included in the 2018/19 capital programme to look at humps in the Dedworth area. Councillor Beer highlighted the need for people to look at the situation from the point of view of the cyclist. David Lambourne commented that unfortunately inspections were undertaken to the national standard of being safe for the motorist.

David Lambourne commented that to encourage people to cycle the figure of £10 per head recommended by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group should be recognised and applied. The government did not meet their standard but the borough should try to do so. Holland had achieved a cycle network by ring-fencing funds each year. He had stopped attending the Forum in the past because of a lack of will by the Cabinet. The current administration was spending more but not enough. The Action Plan was very good but unless funding was available it would simply be a piece of paper. Studies had shown that every £1 spent on infrastructure had a £2 health benefit. The Chairman suggested this was a national problem therefore contact could be made with the Secretary of State for Transport. Residents could also meet with Theresa May as the local MP to raise concerns. With the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy, a parish council with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan would receive 25% of contributions to spend on local infrastructure.

Gordon Oliver referred to a communication he had received from Mike Gammage highlighting the need to understand why people did not cycle. He explained that the council undertook an annual survey that included a series of questions about cycling and went to a random sample of residents. The Chairman suggested the issue should be discussed by the Task and Finish Group.

- ❖ **Action:** The Task and Finish Group to consider why people did not cycle.

The Forum considered the style of cycle parking that should be installed outside the row of shops on the A4 to the east of Maidenhead. The standard in Maidenhead town centre was the fin style racks. Councillor Smith had suggested an 'M' style that would provide better physical support. Susy Shearer and Rosie Morton commented that the fin style allowed for bikes to fall over and for wheels to be vandalised. The Chairman suggested examples be sent to Councillor Smith and the Forum for feedback.

- ❖ **Action:** Examples of cycle parking to be sent to Councillor Smith and Forum Members for feedback

Gordon Oliver explained that there was nothing in legislation that could stop someone locking a bike to street furniture. A sign could be put up to say any bikes would be removed; this was being considered for Eton bridge. A by-law could be passed to prohibit bikes from being left in certain places. Forum members were advised to use the 'report it' function on the borough website to report bikes left locked to street furniture that had been vandalised and abandoned.

John Payne commented that he regularly cycled on the A308 to Windsor cycle path. He had reported many times that some hedges were 50% overhanging the pavement. He had been told homeowners would be asked to cut the hedges back but it did not always happen. The Chairman agreed to speak to relevant officers about the issue.

- ❖ **Action:** The Chairman to raise the issue of hedge-cutting on the A308 with relevant officers.

Councillor Lion raised the issue of aggressive cyclists in the pedestrian areas in Maidenhead Town Centre. The police had said they could not do anything to address the issue unless they had a witness, and that it was the responsibility of the local authority to take action. However the borough had said it was also powerless. Gordon Oliver confirmed that a traffic regulation order was in force but enforcement was lacking. There had been suggestions for the TRO to be enforced by Community Wardens, but only the police had the power to stop and fine an individual. Councillor Beer commented he was aware of cyclists on Peascod Street being prosecuted. The Chairman asked for the TRO to be included in the cycling strategy. Steven Shepherd commented that people cycled on the pavement because they felt safe; there was a wider infrastructure issue.

- ❖ **Action:** The TRO on Maidenhead High Street to be discussed by the Task and Finish Group.

Susy Shearer clarified that the feasibility study in relation to the town centre and riverside area of Windsor had been in progress for 3 months and a report would be submitted to Cabinet later in the year. The intention was to collect evidence of what people would like to see in the town centre.

The Chairman suggested that a presentation from Heathrow would be useful at a future Task and Finish group.

- ❖ **Action:** Heathrow be asked to present at a future Task and Finish Group meeting.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.32 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....