

## TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FORUM

TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Colin Rayner (Chairman), Gerry Clark, Jesse Grey, Shamsul Shelim and Nicola Pryer

Also in attendance: Peter Langthorne (Windsor Town Horse Drawn Carriage), Svetlana Langthorne (Windsor Town Horse Drawn Carriage), Don Yates (French Brothers), Mark Persad (Windsor Great Parks), Amanda Bryett (Windsor Tourist Guides Ltd), Steve Harris (Private Boat Hire), Sunil Kalia (Jetset Coaches) and Susy Shearer (Windsor Neighbourhood Plan/Windsor and Eton Society)

Officers: Julia White, David Scott and Andy Carswell

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Alan Mellins and Paul Roach.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### MINUTES

The Part I minutes of the meeting held on June 15<sup>th</sup> 2017 were unanimously agreed as an accurate record.

### WINDSOR TRAFFIC PILOT UPDATES

The Head of Communities and Highways informed members that a pilot scheme to revise the flow of traffic around River Street, Thames Street and Thames Avenue had been implemented the previous week. The intention was to look at the flow of traffic, particularly with regards to the City Sightseeing buses that had previously been using Castle Hill but were now using bus stops at the bottom of Thames Street. Members were told that this had been done on a temporary basis to alleviate, in particular, traffic in the area around the bottom of Castle Hill.

The Head of Communities and Highways stated that signage and concrete build outs had been fitted as part of the implementation of the pilot scheme. Initial feedback suggested the revised traffic flows were working and no significant impacts had been caused, which is what had been anticipated. However there had been some instances of vehicles, particularly cyclists, ignoring new 'no entry' signs. The Head of Communities and Highways said that the effectiveness of the scheme would be reviewed at the end of the pilot and a view would be taken as to whether to extend the pilot. He encouraged people to contact him if they had any issues with the pilot scheme.

Responding to questions from members, the Head of Communities and Highways stated that the structures were temporary and that no design had been undertaken yet for any permanent structures should the pilot scheme be successful and fully adopted at a later date, but that he would investigate ways of making them look more aesthetically pleasing. However the focus of the pilot was to investigate whether the revised flows of traffic were the right ones to proceed with, and to study their impact. From there the impact on disabled parking, loading bays and bus stops could then be evaluated as the next phase of the proposals. It had been

agreed to carry out the pilot before the end of the main tourist season, but not during the peak summer season.

Responding to a question from the Chairman, the Head of Communities stated that the pilot scheme had been introduced following discussions with the Lead Member for Highways regarding alleviating congestion at the bottom of Castle Hill, with a view to creating a transport hub there.

The Chairman stated that the Forum had not been consulted on the proposals for the pilot scheme and requested that the forum be consulted on any final design..

## SECURITY MEASURES UPDATE

The Head of Communities and Highways reminded members that temporary Hostile Vehicle Mitigation measures had been brought using the National Barrier Asset following the terrorist attack in Westminster in March. This was done after both the Metropolitan Police and Thames Valley Police reviewed their risk assessments of Windsor, particularly in association with the public nature of the Guard Change, which attracts large volumes of the public and is held at published and well known times.. Although the threat level was not altered following the terrorist attacks, it was felt necessary to introduce vehicle mitigation measures in Windsor to reduce the potential threat.

The Head of Communities and Highways informed members that the integrated and permanent mitigation factors to be deployed were being designed in liaison with Thames Valley Police. A tendering process was implemented to find a design partner who could provide an agreed design for a permanent solution, with the specialist firm MFD being chosen. The Head of Communities and Highways stated that MFD had submitted a set of proposals for measures to the Council recently , and these would be taken forward to a review meeting with the Royal Borough and Thames Valley Police so that a final design could be formulated. It was anticipated that the mitigating features would be installed in the same locations as where the temporary features are currently.

Members were informed that work was still ongoing to refine mitigation features to protect residents and visitors to the town queuing for entry to the Castle via St Albans Street and watching the Guard Change at the top of Peascod Street, as these had been identified as being particularly vulnerable to the threat of a potential terrorist attack as crowded places. It was hoped that the designs could be refined within the next couple of weeks. Members were informed that the new design features were capable of withstanding a range of vehicles being driven into it at speeds of 50mph.

The Head of Communities and Highways informed members that it was hoped the cost of the project would be shared with Thames Valley Police, and that it was hoped additional funding could be secured from a grant from central government. As some of the measures would be installed in Conservation and Heritage areas, it would be necessary for the Council to submit the proposals through the planning process.

Responding to a question, the Head of Communities and Highways stated that the mitigating measures would be designed to fit in with the existing street furniture and it was hoped that it would not be too visually intrusive. He stated that there was no evidence to suggest any perceived drop in public safety when integrated measures were deployed, compared to the more obvious temporary measures. Most of the feedback to the temporary mitigation measures had been of positive acceptance.

Members were advised that the final arrangements for the proposed security measures would come back to the Forum.

## GUARD CHANGE UPDATE

The Visitor Manager advised members that there had been no further alterations to the Guard Change schedule. She reminded members that the Saturday Guard Change had been reinstated earlier in the year.

The Head of Communities and Highways said it was hoped information regarding any future changes could be shared with members.

## VISITOR MANAGER UPDATE

The Visitor Manager informed members that work had started on making improvements to the Windsor Tourism website, with a focus on making navigation easier; better use of images; improved information on tourist sites beyond the most well-known attraction; and use of integrated blogs around the site. The product pages were being improved, providing business partners with improved value for money. The Visitor Manager said that the site was moving away from offering online booking in favour of “polling” which would offer the end user price comparison across a number of online travel agents such as Booking.com. It was felt this offered a more complete service to customers.

The Visitor Manager said that there had also been a renewed focus on social media use to engage with tourists. Following a recent competition on Facebook the number of visitors and followers to the page had increased, which in turn helped to grow the consumer database. A competition had also recently been launched on LinkedIn, as a means of improving engagement with business and corporate partners and raising the profile of the area.

The official visitor guide for 2018 was in the process of being put together. The Visitor Manager requested that any images partners would like used in the guide should be sent to her.

The Visitor Manager informed members that her team had now been integrated with the Corporate Communications team and the wider digital team, reporting to the Corporate Communications Manager and the Managing Director. The team was now based at the Station Master’s House in central Windsor following the closure of York House for refurbishment.

Members were told that planning approval had been given for digital screens to be installed within the existing monoliths around Windsor. These would be used for providing tourist information and advertising local tourist attractions and events. . It was hoped that the digital screens would go live in October.

The Visitor Manager informed members that the Tourism Development Day would be taking place at Ascot Racecourse on October 4, and that three speakers had been confirmed.

The Visitor Manager informed members that the Tourism Action Plan had been agreed earlier in the year and was in the process of being implemented; however not all of the task groups had been set up yet. It was hoped that this process would be completed in time for October. Industry partners had been invited to take part in the task groups, which in turn would form the steering group needed to fully implement the Action Plan.

Responding to questions from members, the Visitor Manager said:

- The use of QR codes would be looked into following a suggestion from Susy Shearer. The Visitor Manager said she would speak to Susy Shearer about her ideas on how the screens could be used to promote cycling in the borough.
- Usage of the Windsor Wifi had shown a healthy increase, and an increase had also been noticed in the number of return users. Glitches in the CitiWise app had been reported back to the software developer in order to improve it.
- There had been a sharp increase in the number of people downloading the official Windsor and Maidenhead app. The ‘Destination’ app was not being switched off until the end of March.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of the next two meetings were noted.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was unanimously agreed to approve the resolution.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 7.40 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....