

MAIDENHEAD TOWN FORUM

MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Clive Baskerville, Gurpreet Bhangra (Vice-Chairman), Phil Haseler, Geoff Hill, Greg Jones, Ross McWilliams, Joshua Reynolds, Gurch Singh (Chair), Chris Targowski and Helen Taylor

Also in attendance: Councillor David Coppinger, Matthew Shaw (Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum), Rob Tincknell (Areli Real Estate) and PC Nathan Franklin-Mitchell (Thames Valley Police)

Officers: Mark Beeley, Wendy Binmore, Steph James, Gordon Oliver and Barbara Richardson (RBWM Property Company Ltd)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Baldwin.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on the 24th July 2019 be approved.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed them that it was being audio recorded.

NICHOLSON SHOPPING CENTRE DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; The Chairman suggested changing the order of items on the agenda, so that the Forum would start with item 10 – Nicholson Shopping Centre development and regeneration.

Barbara Richardson, RBWM, informed members of the work that was ongoing around the town centre. One key point was that all stakeholder groups were being engaged and consulted, while the infrastructure that would need to be in place was also an important consideration especially as up to 4,000 homes would be built on council owned land. JTP had been appointed to create a 'vision' of Maidenhead and come up with a clear picture of what it would be like to live and work in Maidenhead in the future. There had been positive feedback received from the public.

Barbara Richardson outlined the current developments that were being worked on:

- York Road – it was currently on time and budget. There were 3 phases to the project, with phase 1 being launched in Spring next year before full completion in 2024. The project would involve the relocation of the Heritage and the Community centres, along with the refurbishment of the Desborough Theatre.
- West Street – would look to be a mix of residential and commercial, with approximately 30% being affordable housing. The timescale was for the project to start in 2022 and for completion to be around early 2024.

- St Cloud Way – project of around 450 units, subject to planning permission. Will be 5 phases, starting in 2020 with completion in 2026. Around 30% would be affordable housing.
- Reform Road – up to 317 units but the area is a flood zone. Start would be late 2022 and completion 2025, although this site may need to be reconfigured based on the outcome of the BLP and the flood zoning in the area, from residential use to commercial use.
- Ray Mill Road East – currently waiting for a date to go before Planning Committee but is also located within a flood zone. Around half of the area shown would be maintained as a natural habitat for local wildlife. 47% would be affordable housing.
- Golf Course – would be a joint venture with CALA Homes. It would need to wait for the outcome of the Borough Local Plan before progressing. The project would be substantial, with a site area of 53 hectares.
- Nicholson Shopping Centre – would be a complex project, with the car park being moved from its current location to improve access. Planning application would hopefully be granted next year.
- A Community Planning Day is taking place on 23rd November, to look at the Vision for Maidenhead which would create a charter for all stakeholders to adopt. This would need to be co-ordinated and take account of any planning policy that was adopted for this area, including the BLP.

A member of the public asked what counts as affordable housing. Barbara Richardson explained that there were three types of tenure mainly used in the Borough; shared ownership, affordable rent and social rent.

Another question also focussed on affordable housing, and whether RBWM had achieved their targets for affordable housing in the past and whether 30% was too ambitious. This was hard to judge as private developers were unlikely to implement affordable housing, but Barbara Richardson clarified that many local authorities don't achieve the targets and admitted that it would be a challenge at some of the sites. However, there was a commitment that all council owned land would produce 30% affordable housing.

Councillor Reynolds questioned why RBWM had not done the vision part first. Barbara Richardson clarified that there had been an area action plan which plans for most of the sites were on. The vision was so that the public could see what the regeneration would look like once it was finished and gave a more tangible vision, that would help residents and businesses understand the aspiration for the town.

Councillor Hill queried about losing an important car park at the Town Hall and the potential impact this could have. He was told that the new Nicholson car park would be a direct replacement and would have an additional 250 spaces. The Town Hall was largely only available to the public at evenings and weekends and residents would benefit from having all parking in the same location. It was also confirmed that the ground floor of the new car park would be predominantly for blue badge holders and families with young children, while there would be a number of new 'drop off' areas created.

Councillor Baskerville asked if the golf course site would have an area of natural protection too. Barbara Richardson confirmed that it would, but they were still waiting to hear back from an ecology report but predicted that at least 40% would be protected.

Rob Tincknell, from Areli Real Estate, then gave a presentation to the Forum on how the Nicholson Shopping Centre would be developed. He explained how Areli had done a major

public consultation to understand what residents wanted from the project. As part of this, a Community Planning Weekend was organised which involved workshops, communicating with local groups and visiting business affected. From this, key themes were picked up and allowed Areli and JTP to ensure concerns were taken into account. After the consultation, Areli came back with a 'masterplan', with the main goal of opening up the town centre and allowing more through routes to improve access. In October, Areli held a Community Exhibition to showcase their plans for Maidenhead.

New squares would be created, for example St Nicholas Square, which would create open space for shoppers and workers to enjoy. All buildings would be a similar height, with one building being taller than the rest which was supported by the majority of those asked at the consultation. Pedestrianised routes would be created in Sydenham Place and Pineapple Way. Moffatt Street would be a food-led area, while streets like White Hart Yard would be a 'lanes' area which had been successful in other town centres which Areli had been involved in. The Nicholson car park would be moved and relocated to a better location.

A member of the public was interested to hear any other examples of Areli's work, so that it could be compared to what was happening in Maidenhead. Rob Tincknell explained that while there were a number of projects were similar, each one was unique. Areli would keep residents updated on the regeneration as work progressed.

Councillor Reynolds commented that the plans were impressive, but expressed concern about what would happen to Maidenhead while regeneration works were taking place. He was reassured that the whole project was being run by the same company and therefore they would be fully committed to making it work. Rob Tincknell explained that there would be a period of change, but this would be carefully managed.

Councillor Hill queried about the parking situation, with some flat being created without parking so there would be a reliance on public transport which was not always practical. He had seen some situations where residents needed parking after moving in due to situation changes. Rob Tincknell said that with senior living the parking ratio would be higher, but things like car clubs and lift sharing were viable in some locations if needed. Underground parking was expensive, but a range of options would be looked at.

Councillor Baskerville commented on the links that Areli had made to the past, including the local brewery name being used in the regeneration. He explained that Maidenhead had also been previously known for its brickworks and whether this could be incorporated into the project. Rob Tincknell confirmed that they would use local schemes if possible, as it was important for the community. He pointed to the example of 'Made in Battersea' which was part of the development of Battersea Power Station.

The Chairman told members that it would be good to invite Ariel back to the next Forum meeting in January for a further update on how the regeneration project was going.

CYCLE THEFTS IN MAIDENHEAD TOWN CENTRE

The Chairman introduced the item and informed members that Maidenhead had been listed in a report recently as one of the country's crime hotspots for cycle theft.

PC Nathan Franklin-Mitchell, Thames Valley Police, updated the Forum on the number of cycle thefts in the town centre, with there being 108 reported in 2018. However, from 2018-2019 there were 32 thefts so the number had significantly decreased.

He also explained what the police were doing to decrease this figure further:

- More targeted patrols in known crime areas
- Speaking with cycle owners and making them aware of how to better protect their bikes
- Communicating with local business about what they can do to help

- Working in partnership with the British Transport Police

Councillor Baskerville asked how many had been apprehended. He was told while this information could not be made public, two suspects had been identified how were believed to be involved with a significant number of the thefts.

The Chairman asked what the Council could do to help the police, to which the Forum was told to be vigilante and report anything suspicious. A member of the public queried what the need was to report things, while another question asked whether bikes were being targeted from sheds and homes. PC Nathan Franklin-Mitchell explained that reporting incidents could give useful information to the police and that the figures discussed were only for roads around the town centre.

CYCLE PARKING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Planner (RBWM), updated the Forum on the cycle action plan that was currently being implemented in the town centre. As part of the presentation, Gordon Oliver informed members of the current cycle parking options and the ones which would be created in future. The council was seeking to provide cycle parking at key public destinations and there were a number of principles that cycle parking needed to meet:

- Secure
- Well located
- Fit for purpose

Key challenges included finding the space to install the cycle parking, ensuring the design was appropriate to its setting and fitted in with other street furniture, whilst also ensuring CCTV coverage. For example, at the station there would be a two-tier rack so that demand was met, with the 170 current spaces being replaced by a 300 space compound and dedicated CCTV.

The Chairman commented on 'cycle stores' which he had seen and asked if they would be part of the increase in cycle parking. Gordon Oliver explained that the council had looked at using 'bike hangars' in residential areas with older flats/Victorian terraces, with the main challenge being the space limitation.

Councillor Reynolds asked about the current cycle routes, many of which didn't have segregated lanes for pedestrians and cyclists and whether new cycle routes would be segregated. He was told that segregation was challenging to implement but a new cycle route across town would be traffic free and would be traffic free for most of its length. Also, developers were being asked to provide segregated facilities where possible as part of the new developments.

Councillor Reynolds asked a further question about Furze Platt school, as if the infrastructure was in place students could be encouraged to cycle to school. He also asked if he could assist with a visit to the school. Gordon Oliver confirmed that he would be happy to visit the site with Councillor Reynolds to see what could be done.

UPDATE ON THE QUEEN STREET RIGHT TURN

Gordon Oliver gave an update on the situation to the Forum. He explained that completion of the on-street works was scheduled to be before Christmas and that lane closures around the station would be limited and restricted to off-peak as much as possible.

In January, the next phase of work would start in which the cycle hub would be created. Forecourt car park was to be relocated to Stafferton Way multi-storey, once agreements had been signed with Network Rail and GWR. A small drop off area would also be created next to the car park with a fully accessible route created between the car park and station entrance.

Courtney Buses, which had originally objected to the loss of the right turn out of Queen Street, had been consulted and were now happy with the proposals.

Gordon Oliver encouraged members to check on social media for further updates and said that there would be an information board available to keep residents updated.

STREET ART INCLUDING MURALS AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE

Stephanie James, Maidenhead Town Manager, gave a presentation on the above titled item. She explained that as there would be a significant amount of free space due to the regeneration work that was currently ongoing. Street art had the potential to make parts of the town centre more attractive. A mural was already in place on West Street that was commissioned and organised by Art on the Street. James Maddison was the artist who had come up with some proposed new street art ideas.

Members agreed that the work was very positive and would bring some life to the town. Councillor Baskerville commented that some street art could be related to the history of the town.

Councillor Targowski queried if James Maddison was the only artist involved in the project, and was informed that there will be others involved too and their ideas would also be considered.

A member of the public was interested to know if there would be an opportunity for schools to get involved. Stephanie James said that similar projects had been done in the past in collaboration with schools and that James Maddison has experience of running workshops with young people.

The Chairman told members that he had seen the work done by James Maddison in Cheltenham and felt that it had a positive impact on the town. There was agreement that the Forum could manage the budget for street art and a paper would be submitted to Cabinet to request funding.

MAIDENHEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Matthew Shaw gave a presentation on the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum, which he was currently Chairman of. He explained that there was overlap with the Borough Local Plan, but the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum was a 'bottom-up process' and represented the interests of local people. Windsor and Maidenhead were unparished, therefore the Forum does the same function that a Parish Council would do. There were currently over 50 members but more 200 had signed up to part of the Forum. Matthew Shaw explained that there were a couple of challenges facing MNF:

- The Forum does not have a political mandate and was just a cross section of the local community to ensure a range of views
- Members were self-selected and volunteers, therefore there was a higher proportion of elderly and retired members but the Forum wanted to engage with other age-groups

Matthew Shaw informed members that the MNF would be holding a consultation in March 2020 and that the group met once a month and that meetings took place in Cookham, until the new year when the venue would change.

Councillor Reynolds asked for clarification on where the line between the MNF and BLP was. Matthew Shaw explained that the BLP was the framework and that the MNF looked at the smaller details. For example, the group had created a list of notable buildings in Maidenhead that needed to be considered, this was something that was not done in the BLP.

The Chairman asked why Maidenhead needed its own Neighbourhood Forum. He was told that Maidenhead had a democratic deficit due to a population of over 53,000 being

represented by 14 councillors. With the MNF, it gave people the feeling that they are able to influence and get involved.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT - WHAT IS THE COUNCIL DOING?

Councillor McWilliams gave a verbal report on what the council was doing to try and increase youth engagement. He explained that there was a wide range of services provided and that a large number of volunteers helped to run after school clubs and other activity groups. 'Youth Voices, Youth Choices' was a new scheme where individuals or groups could win money from the council to use on things that would be of benefit. A consultation that would look at how support should be delivered would go to the next Cabinet and Councillor McWilliams had commissioned a report on what young people want from their local authority.

To further improve engagement, there would be a 'National Takeover Day' which would see young people given the opportunity to shadow people in the council. Councillors were encouraged to volunteer if they were available so that they could be shadowed. Social media was also an important tool and Councillor McWilliams supported having the Forum streamed on services like Facebook Live and Periscope which would encourage engagement from young people.

The Chairman supported the idea of live streaming meetings, but clarified that currently it was not possible to stream all meetings.

Councillor Reynolds commented on the Marlow Road youth centre and that more needed to be done to encourage young people to attend. The Chairman agreed and felt that the facility was currently underused. However, he questioned whether the location was suitable and that it was potentially a barrier which was impacting attendance. The Forum was told that it was hard to judge regarding the location but believed that it was relatively well connected.

A member of the public told the Forum about the work of the local rugby club and the impact the recent Rugby World Cup had. Councillor Baskerville supported this view and said that the council should be supporting local sports clubs as it allows young people to thrive in a safe environment.

Councillor Reynolds said that going into schools and speaking to young people is the best way to promote opportunities and engage them with their local authority.

ITEM SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE FORUMS

The Chairman informed everyone present that future meetings would be a forum where ideas could be put forward and discussed as decided as to whether they were believed to be feasible.

Barbara Richardson suggested that an update on regeneration around Maidenhead would be suitable for the next meeting of the Forum, along with representatives from Areli if they were available.

It was requested that item suggestions be emailed to mark.beeley@rbwm.gov.uk

DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting, which began at 6.35 pm, finished at 9.11 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....