

WINDSOR TOWN FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2019

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Samantha Rayner (Vice-Chairman), David Cannon, Neil Knowles, Gary Muir, Helen Price, Shamsul Shelim and Amy Tisi

Also in attendance: Councillors Carole Da Costa and Karen Davies, and Louise Warbrick (Thames Valley Police)

Officers: Andy Carswell, Feliciano Cirimele, Chris Nash and Gordon Oliver

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Bateson. Cllr Muir was attending as a substitute.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on July 18th 2019 be approved, subject to the following amendments:

The minutes of the meeting held on March 12th 2019 should be amended to say "Susy Shearer said she echoed the comments of Helen Price relating to More Than A Shelter, who had been asked to provide accommodation *for an additional two week period and funding had been agreed with RBWM*".

The thirteenth paragraph of the Update From Thames Valley Police item should be amended to say "The police were aware that for some car crime and burglaries, people did not always bother reporting them and very few people were *reporting* bike crime".

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Regarding the update on legal action against the proposed third runway at Heathrow, the Chairman stated that this was still subject to judicial review but was currently in abeyance due to the upcoming General Election.

Regarding the Homelessness Task and Finish Group, the Forum was informed that this was scheduled to take place the following week and would concentrate on rough sleepers and sharing examples of good practice with other local authorities. Chris Nash, Community Protection Principal, stated that a bid for funding had been made for additional cold weather provision, which would help to support the Council's existing SWEP. The Forum was told that More Than A Shelter would be providing services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and would be implementing the same eight-week programme of support services from mid-January.

Regarding King Edward VII Hospital, the Chairman read a statement from the CCG website informing residents of the plans for redeveloping parts of the site for housing under the Borough Local Plan. The statement said that the CCG wanted to reassure residents that the King Edward VII and St Marks Hospitals would continue to supply services from their current locations and it was hoped that older buildings that were not suited to modern healthcare needs could be replaced with upgraded facilities; however funding had not been secured and

no agreement had been made. The Forum was reminded that comments on the Borough Local Plan could be received up until December 15th. Cllr Knowles noted that the police site on Alma Road had been released from the list of potential sites suitable for development, suggesting that Thames Valley Police had a long-term use for it.

THAMES VALLEY POLICE UPDATE

Louise Warbrick, Thames Valley Police, introduced the item and gave an overview of policing in Windsor. She gave an overview of recorded crime figures in the distinct Windsor West, Windsor East and Windsor Central policing areas from July 1st to November 1st, based on the priority detection areas.

Theft From Motor Vehicle

50 occurrences in Windsor West with 7 arrests; 57 in Windsor East with no arrests and no detections; and 52 in Windsor Central with 4 arrests.

Theft Of Motor Vehicle

9 occurrences in Windsor West with 1 arrest; 17 in Windsor East with 1 arrest and 1 detection; and 9 in Windsor Central with 6 arrests

Theft Of Pedal Cycle

10 occurrences in Windsor West with 1 arrest; 3 in Windsor East with no arrests; and 37 in Windsor Central with 3 arrests. The figure for Windsor Central could be higher as cycles were stolen from the railway stations, but this would be a matter for British Transport Police.

Business Burglaries

6 occurrences in Windsor West with no arrests; 10 in Windsor East with 1 arrest and 1 detection; and 19 in Windsor Central with 6 arrests.

Residential Burglaries

33 occurrences in Windsor West with 6 arrests; 39 in Windsor East with 4 pairs of arrests in one job and two other separate arrests; and 22 in Windsor Central with 3 arrests.

Between October 2018 and November 2019 there had been a total of 126 burglaries in Windsor West 126, 109 in Windsor East and 97 in Windsor Central. An offender from London had recently been charged in connection to burglaries in Windsor.

Cllr Shelim stated there had been an increase in cars being stolen from driveways after the keys were cloned. Louise Warbrick said advice had been issued on combatting this and there were simple ways to prevent it.

It was agreed that figures for serious crimes would be presented to a forthcoming meeting.

Louise Warbrick confirmed that there was a policing operation plan for New Year's Eve in Windsor. Thames Valley Police were waiting to confirm the input from South Central Ambulance Service. There would be some input from specialist officers from the Council. Consideration was being given to implementing a one-way system to alleviate traffic congestion. It was confirmed that Atik would be open until 4am under a Temporary Event Notice; there had been no grounds under crime and disorder that the police could realistically object to. Louise Warbrick stated that Atik would be employing additional security. She said that staff at a number of venues in Windsor would be using body worn cameras to assist in crime prevention and detection. This system was already in place at Atik, and consideration was being given to including it as one of the venue's licence conditions.

Residents attending the Forum raised a number of concerns regarding serious offences being committed in central Windsor, including drug taking, serious assaults, urinating in public and sexual assaults. Residents said offences were being committed on a regular basis throughout the early hours, and many people were too scared to look out through their windows to see

what was happening in case there were repercussions. Louise Warbrick said that all significant crimes reported would be subject to a review each morning and investigation plans formulated. If offences related to a specific premises then the police would look to work with the venue to combat future incidents. The Chairman stated his belief that more policing resources needed to be deployed to combat serious offences being committed in this area.

Residents of Spinners Walk stated that cars were, with increasing regularity, being driven along the pavement in order to get around vehicles that were parked in the road, due to it being so narrow.

Louise Warbrick said that if someone was witnessing a crime in progress then they should call 999, but if this was not possible then action could still be taken against an offender retrospectively if evidence could be captured.

Cllr Shelim left the meeting at 7.29pm.

Louise Warbrick told the Forum that new initiatives had been introduced to try to tackle serious violence. One of these was the Aspire Project, an early intervention scheme run in partnership with Reading Football Club that was targeted at children identified by police or partners as being at risk. This would be run at Windsor Boys school. The VAL-U holiday programme had been set up to provide diversion work for children on edge of criminality, who had been identified through school exclusion, first time attention to the police, and through the Youth Offending Team. This would run during the 2020 school holidays. Drama performances relating to youth violence and knife crime was being rolled out to secondary schools and Gaming Buses were being deployed in key hotspot locations, with the aim of engaging young people and breaking down barriers. Mini police schemes were being introduced to children aged 9-12 to engage with youngsters and get them involved in community activities. In addition there was an ongoing commitment to carrying out knife and alcohol test purchase operations each month.

UPDATE ON THE WINDSOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Susy Shearer thanked Cllrs Price and Davey for their assistance in setting up four public meetings to provide information on the Borough Local Plan. She said these had been helpful and made residents feel represented.

Susy Shearer told the Forum that the Windsor Neighbourhood Plan was going to examination. It was unclear when the Examiner would respond with its findings, although it was likely there would be the possibility to make further changes.

Regarding feedback from a recent Windsor 2030 workshop, the Chairman read a statement from Paul Roach, Windsor Town Manager. Attendees had been asked to place coloured dots on a map to indicate places they liked and did not like, and areas they would like improved. Concerns were raised about the insufficient design of Windsor's main shopping streets and the effect this had on visitor numbers. Visitors to the workshop also discussed uses for future infill sites and potential improvements to the riverside area.

The Forum was told that the programme of Christmas events had been posted out. Unfortunately it had not been possible to host the proposed Christmas market in Windsor. This was partly due to a preference to host it for six weeks, but some areas of the town could not be used due to existing commitments. Hosting a Christmas market in 2020 would be a priority for 2020. It was suggested that leaflets outlining the programme of Christmas events could be included in Around The Royal Borough, with separate leaflets going into the magazines to be distributed around Windsor and Maidenhead.

CYCLE ROUTES

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Planner, introduced the item and outlined the Cycling Action Plan that had been formally adopted in January 2019 after being developed through the Cycle Forum. This set out a clear vision for cycling and was supported by objectives, targets, actions and an annual monitoring programme. A list of high priority schemes had been identified valued at £5million. Road safety, permeability and cycling potential had all been taken into consideration when formulating these schemes. Cycle wayfinding was also a key priority.

The Principal Transport Planner told the Forum that there were 2,345 cyclists per day entering or leaving Windsor town centre. Windsor Bridge was by far the most popular access point, followed by Barry Avenue, although Victoria Street was considered to be underperforming given the number of residential properties that it served. It was noted that only 16 per cent of cyclists in Windsor were female, and a need to provide cycle parking at points where people arrive in the town centre and at transport interchanges had been identified.

The Principal Transport Planner stated that the main barrier to cycling between West Windsor and the town centre was Clarence Road roundabout. This junction had a poor cycle casualty record, but it was not considered feasible to provide a safe surface-level cycle route. In addition the subways were too narrow to convert to shared use and it was considered too expensive to widen them. When designing new cycle routes, the Principal Transport Planner said that use of traffic-free routes wherever possible was desirable, and that quiet roads would be used where this was not possible, or where segregation could not be implemented. Filtered permeability to give cyclists priority and using cycle symbols on the main carriageway across side turnings had been mooted. Individually branded routes to form a coherent network had been created, and it had been decided that it would assist cyclists if travel times were shown in minutes rather than distance in miles. The Forum was told that a route between Maidenhead and Windsor would be considered next.

Cllr Knowles suggested that in some locations, where appropriate, pavements could be taken out to make way for dedicated cycle lanes. He stated that this had been done successfully in Woolwich. However residents also raised concerns that in some locations cyclists were ignoring signs and using routes designed for pedestrians only. This was being tackled by the Council's Community Wardens, who now had the power to issue fixed penalty notices to cyclists.

AIR POLLUTION

Chris Nash, Community Protection Principal, told the Forum that the figures collated by the Council relating to air pollution had been ratified by Defra. The principle source of air pollution in the Royal Borough came from car emissions, and factors such as congestion and overdevelopment work could exacerbate air pollution levels. Continuous real-time monitoring of nitrogen dioxide levels had taken place at the Clarence Road roundabout in Windsor, in addition to Frascati Way and Aldebury Road in Maidenhead; all three locations had given readings below the national objective of 40 micrograms of nitrogen dioxide per cubic metre of air. The Community Protection Principal stated that air quality levels in Windsor were improving and there had been a 20 per cent decrease in nitrogen dioxide levels, although there were no plans to scale back on the efforts in place to keep reducing, not the air quality management areas. Proposed traffic management schemes for major projects and, as previously mentioned, cycle schemes were considered important ways of continuing to alleviate air pollution.

Consideration would be given to the feasibility of 'no idling' signage toin the future as part of the Council's continued plans to reduce air pollution. Idling was considered by residents present at the Forum to be a particular problem on Clewer Hill Road. However the Community Protection Principal said that any roll out of these proposals would depend on the feasibility testing as explained.

It was asked by residents at the Forum if consideration had been given to monitoring pollution levels outside schools. Feliciano Cirimele, Environmental Protection Officer, stated that this had been done two years previously and that higher concentrations of pollutants existed in localised areas along roads, with limited risk foreseen for schools. It was suggested by the Community Protection Principal that a review could be updated in the first instance to identify which schools, if any, were at increased risk than others (such of those within an Air Quality Management Area) and to see whether any monitoring may be necessary at these locations. It was noted by residents attending the Forum that Windsor Boys School was in an Air Quality Management Area and Windsor Girl's School was between two.

The Environmental Protection Officer explained that whilst readings above the national objective of 40 micrograms had been recorded at three monitoring locations, none of these were directly adjoining residential properties. As there was some distance between the monitor and the nearest residential façade, the risk was reduced or mitigated. It was explained that these figures had been collected through the process of calculating the annual mean result and did not point to the 1 hour objective of 200 being exceeded. Even the results at the continuous real-time monitoring did not exceed the one-hour mean objective. The Environmental Protection Officer explained that action would need to be taken if the annual mean exceeded 60 micrograms (as an indicative value giving rise to suspicion of a site likely to risk breaching the 1 hour target) of nitrogen dioxide per cubic metre of air; however there was no risk of this being exceeded in the Royal Borough.

Regarding pollution caused by Heathrow air traffic, the Community Protection Principal explained that aircraft flying over the Borough were at sufficient height to allow for dispersal over a wide area. This would therefore not have a significant negative impact on air quality in the Royal Borough, and in Windsor in particular where aircraft approaching Heathrow would be at a lower height. It was not considered a priority to specifically monitor pollution created by air traffic. It was suggested by residents at the Forum that current aircraft air pollution levels should be recorded in order to provide a comparison in the event of the third runway being completed; to show evidence that air quality levels were being negatively impacted. The Community Protection Principal said he would liaise with neighbouring boroughs to see if there was any precedent for doing this.

It was asked if priority for tree planting could be given to areas where there were concerns about air pollution. This was agreed by the Chairman. The Vice Chairman stated that the Council was inviting suggestions for where trees could be planted. The Community Protection Principal stated that this should be done with care, due to dense planting in some cases creates a canyon effect, which could actually decrease the ability for pollutants to disperse.

WINDSOR PARKING RESTRICTION

Cllr Cannon introduced the item and stated that the various residents' parking schemes in Windsor had been introduced on an ad hoc basis. Often this had simply moved problem parking from one road to another and had not solved the issue. Cllr Cannon stated that the schemes were under review in order to provide better mitigation for residents. He said there was the possibility that some schemes could be removed if they were no longer required or workable. There was no timescale for the review taking place, but Cllr Cannon said he hoped to receive the relevant data, and with it the proposals to take forward, within the next few weeks.

Cllr Cannon stated that enforcement of parking on yellow lines had been intermittent, but staffing levels had been increased by 25 per cent to improve enforcement. Rural areas and identified hotspots would be targeted initially. Cllr Cannon said that the 'report it' function on the RBWM website allowed residents to report problem areas for parking, such as persistent parking on yellow lines or abuse of resident-only scheme areas. The Forum was told that all yellow lines and resident-only schemes had to be authorised by the Council, even those that were resident managed. Members were reminded that parking offences committed outside of

those areas – for example, parking across a private driveway – was a police matter. Cllr Cannon said concerns could also be reported to a resident’s ward member.

It was noted that the feedback regarding the installation of the ANPR system at the Victoria Street car park had been positive, and it had helped to decrease antisocial behaviour.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr Knowles said he would like to receive updates from the Town Centre Manager regarding ongoing plans, although it would not be necessary for this to be done every meeting.

Susy Shearer asked if there was any truth to the rumour that the tourist information point at Central station was being closed. The Vice Chairman said there were no plans to close it, although its opening hours may be reviewed. On the subject of speculation within the town centre, the Chairman said that empty shop units were not the responsibility of the Council and it was down to individual landlords to fill them. It was noted that the branch of William Hill had recently closed, and that it would be necessary for a change of use to be submitted if applicable.

Regarding a question about cycle storage, the Forum was reminded that the centre of Windsor was a Conservation Area so ‘safe storage’ devices may be met with some opposition. The Principal Transport Planner added that it was not possible to install two-tier storage racks at either of the railway stations due to the Conservation Area.

Regarding a question about the future of Combermere Barracks, the Vice Chairman stated that the Council had not been informed of any proposals. Cllr Knowles said the MOD had recently announced its disposal plan up to 2030, and Windsor was not mentioned. The Vice Chairman suggested that the Council’s work with the armed forces could be included on a future agenda item and suggested a presentation from Vanessa Faulkner, who had done a lot of work on the Armed Forces Covenant.

The meeting, which began at 6.35 pm, finished at 8.53 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....