

WINDSOR TOWN FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 26 MAY 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Samantha Rayner (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), David Cannon, Karen Davies, Neil Knowles, Helen Price, Shamsul Shelim, Amy Tisi, David Hilton, Carole Da Costa, Julian Sharpe and Sayonara Luxton

Also in attendance: Councillor Wisdom Da Costa, Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra, Councillor Gerry Clark and Councillor Andrew Johnson

Officers: Fatima Rehman, Paul Roach, David Scott, Duncan Sharkey and Julia White

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the Chairman, Councillors Bateson and Davey, and Councillors Luxton, Sharpe and Carole Da Costa substituted respectively.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2021 be approved.

The Chairman informed Members of progress on actions arising from the previous minutes:

ACTION FROM LAST MEETING	UPDATE
Neil Walter to explore the resident season ticket potential and update the Forum through the Lead Member.	This was being reviewed by Neil Walters.
The CGR Working Group to advise why the cost of street lighting was included in the SAE.	Councillor Cannon said a written response was given offline to John Webb. ACTION: The response to be circulated to Forum Members.
Susy Shearer asked for progress on the tranche one interventions on signage to direct attention to additional pedestrian and cycling space and Paul Roach said he would take this offline.	Paul Roach, Windsor, Eton and Ascot Town Manager, said Susy Shearer was contacted and the Department for Transport speed restriction measures installed last year were being reviewed. Funding was given for specific roads that had been requested and therefore the project was not as extensive. Widening footpaths were being reviewed, with a report to be sent to the Highways team to decipher if the measures should be made permanent.

THAMES VALLEY POLICE UPDATE

Jeffrey Pick, Thames Valley Police (TVP), said the biggest crime concerns were scams and frauds. Catalyst convertors were being stolen, there were very few burglaries, and car crime was limited, apart from in Ascot where cars were left unlocked with golf clubs visible inside. Inspector Mike Darrah had replaced Inspector Tracey Croucher, who had worked at the headquarters for a year and ran numerous projects and had several projects lined up in the coming months.

Councillor Price encouraged residents to sign up to crime alerts and asked what the trend of crime figures was for Windsor. Jeffrey Pick said crime was lower than usual due to the lockdown conditions. There was a concern of antisocial behaviour from young people, and extra patrols were organised to manage this. There were plans to have two police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Sawyers Close to establish a watch scheme or similar in the housing blocks.

Councillor Tisi asked what the police could do regarding catalytic convertor theft, as there seemed to be a lot of activity in theme park car parks, which was private land. Jeffrey Pick said the police was working closely with the security team and were considering increased CCTV coverage. The reporting of suspicious activities from residents was useful and Councillor Cannon said sharing this information was helpful for TVP to know of the activity.

Councillor Cannon asked what TVP was doing regarding e-scooters, which were illegal. Jeffrey Pick said the government guidance and regulations were vague. E-scooters could not be taxed and insured in the Borough and therefore were illegal. A lot of complaints had been made to Inspector Mike Darrah, and TVP was awaiting an update on government guidance.

Councillor Cannon said Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) were issued on cycling and asked if it was an offense to ride e-scooters on the road, and Jeffrey Pick said Inspector Mike Darrah was reviewing this. It was difficult to identify who was using e-scooters on CCTV and it was a matter of resourcing. Councillor Knowles said Nottingham Knockers in Old Windsor were quickly reported and said the loophole for e-scooters to not be covered as part of the cycling PSPO had to be covered.

PLASTIC FREE WINDSOR

Phil Norris, River Clean Lead, said Plastic Free Communities were part of the Surfers Against Sewage charity formed in 1990. The charity noted the damage of single use plastic (SUP) and built the plastic free communities' subgroup. There were 718 communities across the country that impacted on local government, communities, and individuals, as well as politicians, brands, and consumers. Plastic Free Windsor had a core team of eight, with a wider group of volunteers. It was a multi-dimensional group, had a strong following on social media, and had links to other environmental groups and the council. Plastic Free Windsor was one of 130 groups to have received the Plastic Free Communities approved accreditation. The group worked with local decision makers, community allies, business champions, and organised community events and established steering groups.

Plastic Free Windsor planned on working with schools and youth, focus on river waste, collaborating with other groups, reaching out to community groups as well as tourism and businesses, and getting involved in national events. Phil Hinton, Founder of Plastic Free Windsor, said recycling plastics would not solve the problem, as consumers were not correctly disposing the plastic for it to be recycled. The average sperm count in Western men fell by over 50% between 1973 and 2011, which was believed to be due to the exposure to hormone disrupting chemicals widely used in plastic production. Paul Hinton said the fossil fuel industry was purposely increasing plastic production to compensate for revenue and profit loss to sustainable energy providers.

Councillor Tisi asked how the pandemic impacted SUP use, and Phil Hinton said the pandemic adversely effected the campaign. He encouraged the use of reusable masks and said there was a challenge where some cafes did not refill coffee cups. Plastic Free Windsor had to be pragmatic during the pandemic and would push messages when restrictions lifted. Councillor Carole Da Costa said it had been difficult to reduce plastic use with the packaging of lateral flow tests but encouraged residents to continue taking tests and reduce other plastic use. Councillor Knowles said some things were better done in the past that were better for the environment, such as reusable milk bottles. If the large retailers became plastic-free, it would encourage the population at large.

Ed Wilson, Windsor resident, said he found a lot of plastic energy drink bottles in litter picks and said there was a need for better bins in Baths Island. Some bins were very old and did not lend well for clean ups. Councillor Carole Da Costa said bins in other towns included separate recyclable and non-recyclable bins, which were not standard in the borough.

ACTION: Review renewing bins for recyclable and non-recyclable waste items.

WINDSOR COACH PARK UPDATE

Duncan Sharkey, Chief Executive, said the item was brought to the Forum following commentary made in Maidenhead Town Forum. It would have been preferable to have had the item discussed at this Forum. Duncan Sharkey said the project was paused and gave a background to the project. The council identified its asset management strategy and felt the coach park and Alma Road car park sites could be used more valuably, provided it could be relocated to another location, such as a more remote coach drop-off point. Surface car parks were a poor utilisation of space, as it was low density use for a large area, and it was likely to be the only big site in town that could be used for what Windsor may need in future.

In 2018, the Council looked at possible uses of the site undertaken by consultants from GL Hearn who spoke to local parties and presented a report to Cabinet. Cabinet decided to engage a partner to look at the possibilities of the site and undertook work by speaking to local people about what was needed in the long-term. The site included the coach and car parks, but not Alexandra Gardens. GL Hearn looked at Baths Island, however through various pieces of work from the council, it was very unlikely for anything to happen on Baths Island other than improvement of basic facilities. Investments in the coach and car parks could give the council further investments in the public realm to the wider area. The report identified the possibility to enhance the green space in Alexandra Gardens.

Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet, Business, Economic Development and Property, said future proposals to improve the public realm on the riverside and Baths Island would include wider public engagement and consultation. It was important for Windsor to be a prosperous and vibrant destination for residents, visitors, and businesses. The Chairman said the vision in the Windsor Neighbourhood Plan showed that Windsor valued the historic town and wished for public realm improvements.

Councillor Knowles said he had not seen the Cabinet 2018 report and asked if the report should not be referred to in future, and Councillor Johnson agreed to the latter statement. Duncan Sharkey said the report was available to all Members. Councillor Knowles hoped for any Windsor development to align with the Windsor vision, including how the riverside would look, the possibility of a coach and ride and location of the car parks. Duncan Sharkey said it was valuable to have a vision the future of the borough that everyone could feed into and would allow the council to judge and prioritise future projects against.

Councillor Cannon asked for reconfirmation that Alexandra Gardens was never the subject matter, and this was only regarding the coach and car park. Duncan Sharkey said this was correct, and the original report mentioned Alexandra Gardens as part of the site description.

Councillor Price asked if there was a possibility of development on Baths Island and Councillor Johnson said no development would take place on Baths Island, though there may be public realm improvements for a better visitor experience. There would only be developments if Windsor residents wished. Alexandra Gardens public realm improvements would include improving the attractiveness of the area, such as planting and improving landscaping.

Councillor Tisi asked if no development on the coach and car park would be an option, should residents wish. Councillor Johnson said no outcome could be ruled out, a decision would be made through significant public consultation, and he hoped to stop any rumours or misinformation. Councillor Knowles said the misinformation was not a rumour but given by a senior officer in a Forum meeting. Duncan Sharkey said no incorrect briefing or

announcement was given, as the officer said the project was paused. People may have been surprised because they were unaware of the original consultation.

Ed Wilson said he was reassured by the comments from Duncan Sharkey and asked for better communication going forwards. He requested for an update on the borough's website to reassure residents of no development taking place on Alexandra Gardens. Councillor Tisi suggested that going forwards, important announcements on Windsor to be brought to this Forum.

TOWN MANAGER UPDATE

Paul Roach said the statistics in the agenda were Visit Windsor rather than My Royal Borough, with updated statistics on the website. Paul Roach introduced Tiernan Mines, Founder and CEO for Hello Lamp Post, and said the Hello Lamp Post scheme was part of the reopening and recovery strategy that the town was involved with in the last 6 months. The borough successfully placed a bid for the governments Reopening High Streets Safely fund. A part of the money was used to deliver Hello Lamp Post, which engaged people using technology and anonymously asking people how they felt about the reopening of the town centres and improvements. The rich history of Windsor could also be brought to life.

Tiernan Mines said Hello Lamp Post was designed to improve communication engagement between local decision makers and end-users of the physical environment and help local democracy by enabling more people to raise their opinions and present it to local decision makers. This included consultations and culture and tourism and allowed people to make better informed decisions based on more opinions and ideas. Hello Lamp Post was anonymous and did not hold personal information of individuals.

The Chairman said this was a start for the borough to move to artificial intelligence and smart technology and interact with residents, such as bus timetables. Councillor Price asked if Hello Lamp Post was in the town centre or the whole of Windsor and the Forum was informed that the soft launch was in the town centre, with a view to roll out across the Borough.

Ed Wilson asked how Hello Lamp Post worked, the cost to the Borough and how the success would be monitored. Paul Roach said Hello Lamp Post was activated by scanning the QR code or texting on the number provided and there was no cost to the Borough as it was a government scheme. The Chairman said the information of interactions were compiled online, and the scheme helped visitors stay in Windsor for longer and see the sites and provided resident's with information. The service would be refined with time.

Councillor Knowles asked if Hello Lamp Post was GDPR compliant and asked what information was being gathered. Tiernan Mines said each user was given a hashed encrypted user ID, so personal contact details were not collected. However, the system identified if someone was a returning user, so it could be friendlier. Hello Lamp Post was GDPR compliant and was listed on a public procurement framework. Councillor Knowles raised the reasons of collecting information listed on the poster, and Tiernan Mines said that once a conversation ended, the individual was directed to further information.

Councillor Price said it was agreed in the previous Forum that the report would include all of Windsor, and Paul Roach said Dedworth and Ascot did not have footfall counters, therefore it was difficult to regularly report Windsor-wide.

COVID-19 UPDATE

David Scott, Head of Communities, presented the Situational Awareness report between 7 to 13 May 2021 in comparison to the previous 7-day period. The borough's positivity rate was 0.8%, which was down from the previous period, and continued to fall to 0.4%. The latest daily cases per 100,000 population rate was 12.5, which showed a downward trend in recent weeks, however the very latest figures were showing a slight rise. The rate of cases per

100,000 for over-60s was low, at 2.7, with overall 19 confirmed new cases in the last 7 days in RBWM.

There was a steady decline in weekly rates of confirmed cases since March 2021, with 11.9 as the latest weekly rate per 100,000 population on 21 May 2021. This was good for the borough, but Forum was advised not to be complacent as there were variations. Health England and Health Protection team for Berkshire were working closely with the borough and neighbouring areas to track activity. Actual cases and resident contact to those who had COVID-19 were monitored to ensure residents isolated accordingly.

The Borough had two lateral flow test centres, which had been scaled down due to the drop in demand because of the wider availability of alternative home testing. This included community collect arrangements that were available from five leisure centres, pharmacy collection arrangements from 27 pharmacies, and online home delivery. The local contact tracing service continued, which attempts to contact those positive cases that the national Track and Trace service are unable to reach. The local service has received lower volumes of cases in recent week, with a possibility of reorganising the arrangements to combine the track, test, and isolation support services. Further detailed information was available on the Berkshire Public Health website, and it was to be noted that absolute numbers should be viewed in conjunction to the rates, as small changes could appear large due to the low overall numbers.

The vaccination process was essential for the exit plan, which was being rolled out at three main sites for our borough, with 31- and 32-year olds currently being offered vaccinations. Follow-ups were made with those who were hesitant to take the vaccination to help encourage them to get vaccinated. The interval between the first and second vaccination had reduced from 12 to 8 weeks. Councillor Shelim asked if staff could self-test weekly, and David Scott said staff could collect a batch of tests or request for tests online, with next day delivery. David Scott advised all staff to test at least twice a week.

WORK PROGRAMME

Susy Shearer said the 'Cycling Action Group Tranche Funding Update' item would include the findings from the cycling and walking scheme consultation. Susy Shearer informed the Forum of Windsor Cycle Hub's formal launch at The Swan, Mill Lane on Sunday 30 May, from 12pm to 3.30pm.

Councillor Cannon said there would be no further updates from the Windsor Town Council, as the recommendations would be published in July 2021 to Council. Councillor Price asked if residents requested for items to be put on the Work Programme, and the Forum was informed there were no further suggestions. Councillor Price suggested to have the social media reminders circulated earlier.

Councillor Knowles requested for an update on the British Legion poppy appeal and remembrance events, which could be addressed in the Town Manager update. Councillor Knowles suggested having parking charges as an item in the November 2021 meeting. John Webb, Windsor resident, asked for e-petitions to be highlighted in the Forum, but not debated. The Chairman said the legal team would be contacted on this matter.

Councillor Tisi requested for repetitions in the Work Programme to be removed and Ed Wilson asked for Houses in Multiple Occupation to be brought back to the agenda, as it was withdrawn. Ed Wilson asked for the poor conditions of cemeteries and war memorials in Windsor to be considered in a future meeting, and the Chairman said a response would be given through the Council.

WINDSOR CONSULTATIONS

The clerk informed the Forum that the two consultations pertinent to Windsor residents were the single person discount review, and Windsor Town Council consultation that was due to close on 2 June 2021.

Councillor Price said the night flights consultation had been extended to September 2021, which was pertinent to residents who were affected by aircraft noise at night. Councillor Hilton said the consultation came through the Aviation Forum and the night was from 11pm to 7am. There were studies on the health impacts of aircraft noise and the Aviation Forum decided to make representations to those managing the joint strategic needs assessments, who agreed to add the impact of aircraft noise on health. There was a lot of noise in Datchet and Old Windsor, and it would be good to reduce and then stop overfly at night.

DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

All future meetings to be held on the following dates (at 6.15pm):

- 13 July 2021
- 2 September 2021
- 16 November 2021
- 13 January 2022
- 8 March 2022
- 17 May 2022

The Chairman thanked all officers, Members and residents.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 8.33 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....