

DISABILITY AND INCLUSION FORUM

MONDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Angela Clark, Lisa Hughes, Sharon Bunce, Sharon Carrigan, Tim Clare, Peter Haley, Dominic Manley, Robin Pemberton and Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra

Also in Attendance: Councillors C Da Costa, W Da Costa and Davey

Officers: Chris Joyce, Shilpa Manek, David Scott and Ben Smith

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and conducted introductions virtually.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bowden.

MINUTES FROM THE LAST FORUM AND ACTIONS MONITORING

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the minutes of the Forum on 27 July 2020 be agreed as a true and accurate record after the following amendments had been made:

Page 7, paragraph 3 should read 'It is currently planned that the West Street car park will be used for ShopMobility once the Nicholsons car park had been knocked down.'

Page 8, start of second paragraph should read 'Lisa Hughes said many people with disabilities would not be able to park for a number of reasons'.

The Chairman went through the Actions from the minutes:

ACTION: Ben Smith to find out if there were going to be any time restrictions on the disabled parking bays.

Ben Smith confirmed that there would be no restrictions on the length of stay. There were also additional drop off and collection points.

ACTION: Ben Smith to share the accessibility audit with the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

This had been completed.

ACTION: Officers to revisit the site first, followed by a joint Officer and Forum Member visit.

Officers had visited the site, a date was to now be arranged for the Forum Member visit.

ACTION: Clerk to arrange.

ACTION: Ben Smith to circulate an update on the blue badge spaces before the next meeting.

Due to officer leave, Ben Smith had brought the update to the Forum Meeting and reported that a list of locations had been identified including Park Street, West Street and a layby near Sainsburys. Work was being carried out and he would report back at the next meeting. The Forum discussed the Grove Road car park and blue badge parking. The blue badge parking in Windsor, opposite the castle was also discussed. Currently there were screwed in cones

preventing people from parking there. The taxi bays had increased and there was a loss of double yellow lines where disabled people could park. Ben Smith reported that there was a current government scheme to give more room to pedestrians as a result of Covid-19. Ben would ask Sue Fox to update the Forum by email.

ACTION: Sue Fox to provide update to Forum.

Councillor Singh suggested some of the six bays that were located on Bridge Avenue. Ben Smith would look into this.

ACTION: Ben Smith to investigate.

ACTION: Ben Smith to take forward and update at the next meeting.

Ben Smith updated the Forum.

All items that were actioned to be on next Forum agenda were on the agenda.

Lisa Hughes showed a short presentation to the Forum highlighting the A308 toucan crossing and surrounding pavements and the cycle racks at Maidenhead station. The discussion included the following points:

- The ends of the cycle racks were very dangerous to all pedestrians. Ben Smith had actioned this to be corrected.
- Conversations were taking place with GWR about all points previously raised.
- The trees around the A308 toucan crossing were further discussed and the Vice Chairman requested a tree officer also be present at the site visit.
- The diversity impact assessment was very thorough but had GWR seen all of the data, as the tree was very obstructing. Ben Smith reported that GWR had seen all information and read out a technical response from them to the Forum.
- A site visit was discussed as soon as possible. Councillor Singh, ward councillor and David Scott, Head of Communities and interim Lead Officer for the Forum, both wanted to attend the site visit.

MATTERS ARISING - A308 TOUCAN CROSSING AND SURROUNDING PAVEMENTS

The Chairman invited Ben Smith, Head of Commissioning, Infrastructure, to update the Forum on the A308 Toucan Crossing and surrounding pavements. Ben Smith informed the Forum that the design team were regularly out on the ground and had provided a detailed technical report that could be shared with the Forum members. The main issues were the location of the tree with the proximity to the crossing. There had been long conversations with the tree team about retaining the tree and a technical response was provided. The main point was what they had to do to retain the tree in the location it was in, i.e. undulation of the paving and the impact of the tactile paving. Whilst Ben Smith had explanations of why it was done, there was nothing fundamentally that changed the situation.

Ben Smith suggested two dates for a site visit with the design team for Forum Members to attend.

ACTION: Clerk to organise site visit.

Lisa Hughes went on to show some photographs that had been taken of the crossing, the tree and other serious hazards. Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that she was also a member of the GWR Focus Group and had emailed them to ask what plans they saw to allow to make a full and proper assessment for any hazards or impacts for people with disabilities.

Ben Smith informed the Forum that the ends of the cycle racks that Lisa Hughes had shown in the photos, had been picked up and were being made safer. Ben Smith reassured the Forum that he would ensure that the agreement would be circulated to all at GWR and further discussion could take place at the site visit. Ben Smith would ensure that all attended the site visit including the tree officers.

Lisa Hughes continued that it seemed a lot of conversations had taken place about protecting the tree but not much about protecting disabled people crossing at a very busy junction. The location and size of the crossing had not been considered. Significant conversations had taken place but the site visit would assist further.

MATTERS ARISING - BLUE BADGE PARKING

Ben Smith had spoken with Neil Walter, Parking Principle and Hugh Jones, Road Safety Officer and had asked what work had been completed and what was still being done. Hugh Jones had provided a list of locations that had been identified to be used as blue badge bays. The list suggested bays on Park Street, West Street, King Street and a layby near Sainsburys and also revisiting the work done on lowering the curb on St Ives Road. Unfortunately, Neil Walter and Hugh Jones had not had an opportunity before the meeting to discuss further but Ben Smith could update the Forum further at the December meeting. The Chairman asked about using some of the bays in the Grove Road car park as Neil Walter had suggested at a previous meeting. Ben Smith would update at next meeting.

ACTION: Ben Smith to circulate the list of proposed blue badge parking bays.

ACTION: Ben Smith to provide update on blue badge bay parking at next meeting

Lisa Hughes asked about the blue badge bays in Windsor opposite the castle. It seemed like screwed in cones had been put there to prevent people from parking. The taxi bays had also been extended causing loss of double yellow lines where blue badge holders could use to park. Ben Smith explained that a lot of the parking around town centres had been given up to provide more space to pedestrians and cyclists as part of the Emergency Active Travel Scheme, set up by government to make it safer to walk and cycle through the Covid-19 emergency.

ACTION: Ben Smith to provide a written update to members before the next meeting.

Councillor Singh informed the Forum that he had met with Neil Walter and there was an opportunity for additional parking bays on Bridge Street and maybe a couple of the six bays could be provided for blue badge bay holders.

ACTION: Ben Smith to provide update on new parking bays on Bridge Street.

MATTERS ARISING - PLANNING APPLICATION FOR MULTI STOREY CAR PARK NICHOLSON QUARTER

The Chairman reminded the Forum that at the July Forum meeting, they had been informed that objections from the Forum had been submitted together with local charities and other local community groups for the multi-storey Nicholsons car park. Councillor Reynolds had agreed to set up an initial Zoom meeting with Areli, the Nicholson Quarter developers and Stripe, specialist car park architects to discuss the car park, this took place on 5 August 2020. The developers were very responsive and discussed all the concerns raised by the Forum. It would seem that specifications RBWM had provided for the car park did not take into account of the needs of older people and those of us with disabilities or the information that the Forum and Shopmobility had provided on several occasions. A second meeting took place on 11 September 2020 where all the plans were reviewed, amended and endorsed to resolve all the concerns that were raised. The plans were still draft. The Forum would request to RBWM

Planning that a Forum member and a ShopMobility representative be kept involved at all future meetings where plans would be modified.

The Chairman summarised the amendments to the car park were as follows:

Street level

Set down point for People to Places minibuses at the closest point to the ShopMobility entrance.

Ground floor of the car park

- Raised ceiling height of 2.6m clearance to accommodate taller vehicles
- Tight turns eliminated to improve access for drivers using hand controls only
- All 17 dedicated ShopMobility parking spaces (these could revert to Blue Badge spaces when ShopMobility is closed)
- 7 Blue Badge parking spaces
- ShopMobility facility next to the pedestrian car park exit:
- ShopMobility office, scooter storage and charging area, space to transfer to & from own equipment to scooters
- Disabled WC & Changing Places facilities. Both can be accessed outside ShopMobility hours
- Power assisted doors

First Floor of the car park

- 18 Blue Badge parking spaces
- Power assisted doors

Lifts for all floors

- Fewer but Larger lifts.
 - The number of lifts is reduced from 4 to 3
 - Each now measures 2 metres x 2 metres. This was large enough for wheelchair and mobility scooter users to manoeuvre comfortably
- Lift controls
 - They were investigating whether lift control systems could prioritise lifts called from the first floor. This would minimise the wait time for Blue Badge holders parking on the first floor

This was a very positive way forward.

Lisa Hughes commented that they had been pleasantly surprised by the discussions. The developers had worked through every concern that had been highlighted and had spent a lot of time trying to resolve each issue. The developers had really thought of how they could make improvements to make it better and easier for people with disabilities and elderly people to move around the town centre.

Peter Hayley, Dominic Manley, Councillor C Da Costa and Councillor Bhangra all commended the work by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the developers.

ACTION: To keep on Agenda for next meeting

MATTERS ARISING - HOUSING FOR ALL WITH DISABILITIES

Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that she and the Chairman, Angela Clark, had had a meeting on 5 August 2020 with Councillor McWilliams, Adrien Waite and Tracey Hedren to discuss Housing for People with Disabilities (PwD) and older people.

The four key requests were:

1. RBWM to deliver up-to-date and relevant Equality/Inclusive Design training to officers and councillors.
2. RBWM to develop an up-to-date estimate of the current and projected housing needs of older people and PwD.
3. RBWM to apply the data and knowledge of those housing needs when plans and policies are developed.
4. RBWM to require Social housing registered providers operating in the borough to include Accessibility information for available properties on their website – that was accepted at the meeting.

The meeting was very productive and collaborative. Councillor McWilliams was to now organise a round table meeting with Forum members and others in the community, RBWM officers and councillors, housing providers and developers.

Sharon Carrigan highlighted that the Forum had requested projected numbers of young people that would need help as they got older. These figures were never provided.

ACTION: Provide figures of young people that would need help in the future to the Forum.

Robin Pemberton informed that he had been involved in longstanding conversations with Hilary Hall about supported accommodation for young children with autism.

ACTION: Place on next Agenda

MATTERS ARISING - ACCESS TO RESTAURANTS AND PUBS

Dominic Manley, Forum Member, talked the Forum through the presentation and went through the four project options, which were:

- Contact AccessAble to conduct a survey.
- Influence restaurants to improve their website accessibility information.
- Conduct an independent survey.
- Utilise Accessibility Guides.

Dominic Manley talked through each option in detail and concluded with a project options analysis. Dominic Manley recommended that AccessAble was the best option.

The Chairman asked if all pubs were included, as well as restaurants and it was confirmed that it was all places that the public could access including leisure centres, shopping centres and car parks.

Lisa Hughes asked about how many restaurants there were in the borough and how quickly information was updated. An annual update may be an issue.

Peter Hayley commented that with his experience at People to Places, many service providers exaggerated the suitability. Peter Hayley pointed out that it was a lot of work and a significant task for Forum Members to undertake. Peter Hayley suggested contacting Our Community Partnership to see if the project was eligible for a grant to fund the project.

Robin Pemberton informed the Forum that a lot of work had previously been carried out which had been passed to David Scott. Robin Pemberton asked who would lead the project and was there any history of what was previously collected. Robin Pemberton also reminded the Forum that the 1995 Disability and Discrimination Act put a duty on all service providers to share this information. David Scott reported that he had received all that Robin Pemberton had sent. The

memory stick was not readable. David Scott felt that the information was very outdated, the challenge would be to keep it accurate and any system up-to-date.

Councillor Davey ran a business in Berkshire and agreed with David Scott that it would be difficult to keep any information accurate and it would be better to use Facebook and social media.

ACTION: Keep on Agenda for next meeting

ITEM - STAFF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE EQUALITY ACT

David Scott updated the Forum that an Equality Officer was being recruited and would hopefully be in post late October/early November. This officer would be the Lead Officer for the Forum. The MD was clear and had recognised the requirement for better understanding and further development in the organisation.

The post holder would hopefully be in place for the December Forum.

ITEM - CLIMATE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Transport, gave a presentation to the Forum. Chris Joyce encouraged all to complete the consultation.

Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that she was also a member of the climate emergency stakeholder group. Lisa Hughes had circulated the four key points of the strategy to the group as follows:

Circular economy This referred to more sustainable resource use. Attention would be focused on reducing waste, encouraging material re-use, increasing recycling and supporting less resource intensive lifestyles.

Energy 66% of the borough's emissions were as a result of energy consumption in buildings. Reducing our energy consumption and decarbonising our supply of energy was therefore absolutely key to realising the borough's net zero emission ambitions.

Natural Environment Quality of life and the role of the natural environment in creating great places was a critical part of the success of the borough economy, and to our residents' health and wellbeing. We would take action to deliver biodiversity net gain and in doing so this would help protect the ecosystem service benefits we received (e.g. clean air and water). Conserving and sustainably managing biodiversity was also critical to addressing climate change.

Transport As a local authority, we would reduce the need for carbon intensive travel by encouraging walking and cycling as well as investing in digital infrastructure. We would create conditions for sustainable travel through the provision of infrastructure such as cycle routes and electric vehicle charging points and minimise the impacts of road traffic by encouraging cleaner vehicles.

Lisa Hughes asked the Forum to give thought to what ought to be included to ensure that People with Disabilities (PwD) contributed to and benefitted from the strategy and did not get left behind or accrue further disadvantage.

Lisa Hughes offered to collate all responses from Forum Members and put a Forum response to the Consultation. Chris Joyce thanked Lisa Hughes and informed the Forum that they were happy to have a Forum response but individual responses too.

Councillor Carole Da Costa highlighted that there were no disabled parking places with an electric charging point in the borough. Also it was very difficult to buy a new car suitable for a disabled person and electric. It was time to encourage car manufacturers to have these vehicles available. Councillor Da Costa also encouraged Forum members to commit to change energy providers to renewable suppliers.

Peter Hayley commented that he had been in the transport industry for a long time. People to Places had a number of minibuses that ran on diesel. It would be a massive undertaking for a small organisation to change their fleet to electric vehicles, however, it was fundamental. Peter Hayley continued that the strategy aim was to reach zero % by 2050 and asked if this target would be revised. Chris Joyce commented that the strategy was by 2050 but would try to bring forward as the technology increased and we identified barriers and ways to tackle them.

The Chairman asked about the disposal of car batteries and if there was a better way. Chris Joyce commented that it needed to bring some expertise to learn more from about batteries. This was a central government role in supporting those sectors to build the economy going forward. It was our role to lobby government on focussing on the right areas.

Councillor Wisdom Da Costa asked how the strategy would be achieved before 2050. He asked if it was a political issue and needed councillors to push and be more robust. Councillor Da Costa asked when climate resilience would be added and suggested that it be sooner so all could start working towards resolving it. The world was seeing more and more extreme weather and the vulnerable people would be affected the most. Chris Joyce explained that the council would be looking to implement an infrastructure delivery plan and build climate emergency in the plan.

The Chairman asked if there was any joint working with other local authorities. Chris Joyce informed the Forum that there was a few different levels of cross working, this included working on a Berkshire level, local enterprise level, officers working alongside officers at different councils and Members working with members from other councils. There was lots of joint working.

Lisa Hughes asked all Forum Members for any comments by Monday 21 October 2020. Lisa Hughes would collate all the responses and submit a Forum response before the closing date.

Lisa Hughes also informed Forum Members of two other consultations that were taking place, a Library Services Consultation, of which the closing date was 30 November 2020 and another on the A308 between Bisham and the M25 at Staines, the closing date for this was 27 September 2020. Lisa encouraged the Forum to look at these and respond. Chris Joyce informed the Forum that the consultation on the A308 was not a formal consultation, it was mainly for councillors at present and key stakeholders but they would welcome the views of the Forum.

ITEM - CHANGES TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

The Chair and Vice Chair attended the council meeting on 25th February where the savings of £166 compared to last year, towards supported employment were discussed. The efficiency description was to "Optimise the delivery of the supported employment service by integration with council-owned services" and the implications were "More effective, efficient and responsive delivery of the supported employment service through joining up with existing Optalis teams. This would include recruiting a full time headcount within Optalis to provide a full service to residents providing greater opportunities to integrate the service in collaboration with local employers. Communication with local employers was already in place, for example, promotion of workplace health by the Lead Member and Director of Public Health.

Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that there were 325 people who were getting support, 168 supported by Ways into Work and in employment, 79 people getting supports from Ways into Work but not yet in employment and 78 people on the Ways into Work's waiting list.

It was announced at the Council meeting that from 1 May 2020, Optalis would take over and support the cohort of people likely to transfer across when the existing contract came to an end on 30 April 2020. The Ways into Work contract was extended for three months over the summer period.

The Forum would like to invite an officer to explain this matter further.

ACTION: Invite the appropriate officer to the December meeting

ITEM - COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION: Place on next agenda

ITEM - GETTING OUT AND ABOUT PROJECT

Lisa Hughes informed the Forum a project that was being piloted in the **Clewer and Dedworth East** ward to improve access to key the local services and places for older residents, families with SEND children and people of all ages with disabilities, chronic illness or mental health issues. The aim was to help residents get out into the community and reduce loneliness and isolation.

The RBWM project team wanted to understand the difficulties faced by older and disabled residents when going out, or wanting to get out and about, in the community. They planned to survey participants, asking about issues people encountered in getting to key places such as shops, banks, medical centres, post offices, libraries and community or leisure facilities. The outcome of the consultation would assist the project team in identifying ways to improve access, through street repairs or other works.

The Project Stages were:

Stage 1 : Map where relevant residents lived in the ward to identify clusters of residents.

Stage 2 : A questionnaire for relevant residents. It would ask about any feelings of loneliness or isolation, key places for the resident, the routes they used (or want to use but can't/ don't), and the barriers on those routes. These could be issues with pavements, crossing places, bus stops, lighting, anti-social behaviour or a lack of toilets en route.

Stage 3 : The results would go to the Highways Team who would build a plan of works and carry those out over the winter.

Stage 4 : After a few months of residents using the routes a further survey would be done to check if and how it had improved residents' ability to get out and about.

The D&I forum had contributed to the project by contacting the community groups and charities they had a dialogue with (PaCiP, Sportsable, Mencap, MS Society, Parkinson's, OPAF, Autism groups, Stroke Club, Electric Eels) and asking for them to assist the project team by:

- Publicising the project to their members – perhaps on social media.
- Requesting and recording the postcodes and numbers of members living in the ward.
- Sharing the questionnaire with their members who lived in the pilot area.

ACTION: Keep on next agenda

DATE OF NEXT FORUM

The Forum noted that the date of the next meeting was 14 December 2020.

The meeting, which began at 11.00 am, finished at 1.30 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....