

MAIDENHEAD TOWN FORUM

TUESDAY, 14 JULY 2020

PRESENT: Councillors John Baldwin, Clive Baskerville, Gurpreet Bhangra, Gerry Clark, David Coppinger (Chairman), Geoff Hill, Greg Jones, Gurch Singh, Chris Targowski and Helen Taylor (Vice-Chairman)

Also in attendance: Councillor Simon Bond

Officers: Mark Beeley, Chris Joyce, Fatima Rehman and David Scott

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Stimson and Councillor Reynolds. Councillor Singh was attending as substitute for Councillor Reynolds.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th January 2020 be approved.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed them that it was being livestreamed to residents via YouTube. He explained that he was delighted to be the new Chairman of the Forum and it would be non-political, as the forum was there to benefit residents.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth, explained that he had recently given a presentation on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel. CIL was introduced to simplify the system of developer contributions and was applied to any development over 100m², with various exemptions and relief that could be applied. The Borough introduced CIL in September 2016 on residential development and some charges on large retail warehousing. All the money so far had been related to residential development.

The CIL process consisted of four stages; application, planning permission, start of development works and then payment. The Borough had three charging zones. At the time of the CIL examination, the viability of development in Maidenhead town centre was not able to justify a CIL charge for development, due to higher costs of development.

Councillor Baldwin joined the meeting.

Chris Joyce said that CIL payment was split across three pots:

- 5% was set aside to cover the administrative costs
- A neighbourhood portion of 15% which is given to Parish Councils to spend locally
- Remaining 70-80% is held by RBWM for borough-wide priorities

The estimate income of CIL was £2 million to £3 million a year, which would be used to support the council's capital programme.

Councillor Baldwin asked if the documentation which supported the 0 rate in Maidenhead Town Centre was available to view yet. He said that lots of contractors were under Part II and if this was the reason why the document had not yet been released.

Chris Joyce explained that it was nothing to do with Part II and the team had been very busy recently dealing with the response and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The CIL examination happened in public and there would have been no reason why it would need to be considered in Part II. The decision was made by an independent inspector.

COVID-19 RECOVERY

Chris Joyce gave the Forum an update on RBWMs response and recovery to the coronavirus pandemic. The emergency response structures had been innovative and collaborative, but they were now looking to step down from the initial response stage. The Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum was focussed on the main impacts, which were; health & wellbeing, direct/indirect impact, hardships and economic effects.

Volunteers had played a hugely important role and the council were now well prepared for any future pandemic. There had been a Berkshire-wide tactical recovery effort, which consisted of three main phases; response, recovery, renewal. The current stage, recovery, involved things like reopening town centres and rebuilding confidence and trust. A social media campaign had encouraged residents to support local and shop local. The community recovery effort included a redeployment programme to help those that had lost their jobs, while it was hoped that a new transport plan would encourage visitors back to the area.

Councillor Baldwin, considering the risk of a second wave of cases, asked if measures were in place so that the response effort could be increased if it was needed again. He was told that emergency structures could be stepped back up if needed and RBWM was in a good position to deal with any future problems.

Councillor Taylor asked if the number of benches in the high street could be increased, especially as some had to be closed off due to social distancing. Chris Joyce said that he would pass the request on.

Councillor Clark gave his thanks to all the officers who had been involved and had worked hard during the pandemic, especially as they had gone beyond the call of duty in many ways. The Chairman agreed and said that the Forum would echo these comments.

Councillor Bond asked how easy it was for bars, pubs and restaurants to spread onto the street to allow for more outdoor seating.

David Scott, Head of Communities, explained that new legislation would be coming in to support premises and the Licensing Team would be looking to see what could be done. Some areas had PSPOs which meant there were restrictions on alcohol being consumed, but work would be done to find the best approach.

Councillor Hill joined the meeting.

CYCLING GRANTS

Chris Joyce explained that the project was being led from Ben Smith's team in the Highways department. The Emergency Active Travel Fund had been announced which would provide funding to promote walking and cycling with the aim of increasing journeys without using public transport. £45 million in total had been made available by the government, with local authorities needing to submit a bid by mid-June. RBWM were successful in their first round bid, gaining 100% of the amount asked for which was £140,000. There would be a specific focus on Maidenhead and Windsor, with 20mph speed limits around the town centres along

with wider pavements. Another £180 million had recently been announced, with bids needing to be submitted by August.

Councillor G Jones said that there were a number of cyclists in Maidenhead who ignored the signs, for example along the towpath. He asked what measures would be in place to stop unauthorised cycling.

David Scott said that RBWM was looking at how to uphold cycle free zones in the town centre areas. It would require a targeted enforcement activity and it appeared that it needed delegation from the police, which would allow Community Wardens to enforce cycle free zones. This was being progressed by Thames Valley Police. The towpath was a harder area to enforce, but they would be looking to utilise Community Wardens in the area to educate and engage if enforcement was not possible.

Councillor G Jones further asked when enforcement would start. David Scott said that in the town centres it would hopefully be next month and on areas like the towpaths as soon as possible after that subject to the necessary powers being confirmed. Some of the enforcement measures could include physical barriers but this could create accessibility issues for some pedestrian users.

Councillor Baskerville said that there used to be a Cycle Forum that looked at issues with cycling. A number of cyclists did not follow the Highway Code and believed that a mix of enforcement and education was the best approach here.

David Scott agreed that it was important to educate cyclists that used footpaths, especially as signage had little or no effect. There was also the rising issue of e-scooters that had started to become popular, this was a new challenge for RBWM and the police.

Councillor Taylor said that often people cycled the same route that they would drive. Discussions with cycling groups could ensure safer routes were identified and then these could be promoted.

Chris Joyce said that this was a good idea and he would take it away from the meeting.

The Chairman said that abroad cyclists mixed with other road users well and there was no reason why that could not happen here.

RESIDENT SUGGESTED SCRUTINY TOPIC

Councillor Targowski, in his role as Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, explained that it came to the Panel in February. The Panel agreed with officers recommendation that no further action taken, but decided that it should also be considered by Maidenhead Town Forum.

Councillor Taylor said that she agreed with officers recommendations and that the request was specially about having trolley parks in car parks. This was not a facility currently offered in Broadway but redevelopment was currently in progress. The suggestion could be passed on to the developer and Councillor Taylor encouraged the resident that made the suggestion to email herself and the Chairman who could help clarify this proposal further.

The Chairman agreed and said that the trolleys could also be for the Nicolson's Shopping Centre.

ITEM SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE FORUMS

Councillor Hill requested an item on the York Road Community Centre and Maidenhead Heritage Centre. With the planned redevelopment of the area, he understood that there was

not enough space for groups that used these venues and this needed to be considered and debated openly.

The Chairman said that he would discuss this item with Councillor Hill after the meeting.

Councillor Baldwin asked for an item on a suitable location for the Hindu Society of Maidenhead.

Councillor Taylor requested items on the Maidenhead Missing Links Cycle Route and the roundabouts in Maidenhead that are due to be upgraded in an infrastructure update.

DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 7.25 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....