

MAIDENHEAD TOWN FORUM

Tuesday 12 September 2023

Present: Councillors Gurch Singh (Chair), Helen Taylor (Vice-Chair), Clive Baskerville, Josh Reynolds, George Shaw and Siân Martin

Also in attendance: Councillor Jack Douglas, Martin O’Keefe and David Hill

Officers: Laurence Ellis and Tim Golabek

Officers in attendance virtually: Angela Huisman and Louise Freeth

Apologies for Absence

The Chair, Councillor G. Singh, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Forum members then introduced themselves.

No apologies received.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Reynolds declared that he and Councillor Taylor were RBWM appointees to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, highlighting that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) were in attendance of the meeting.

Minutes

Laurence Ellis, Democratic Services Officer, went through the actions the previous meeting:

ACTION: Ed Goose to report back on the Maidenhead Station Team’s assessment.	Ed Goose was not invited to the meeting to allow the Maidenhead Station Team to do their assessment. Laurence Ellis suggested that Ed Goose or the Maidenhead Train Station could be invited again at a future Forum meeting, or they could forward the results of their assessment to the Forum.
ACTION: A report to be sent to Cabinet to hand over the assets of the Forecourts Scheme.	This action was still pending.
ACTION: HUB to share the website link to the existing consultation on Building C.	This was not received but Laurence Ellis stated he would chase this up.
ACTION: Simon Lymn to share his presentation slides on the A4 Crossing with the Maidenhead Town Forum.	COMPLETED – The presentations were shared.
ACTION: Simon Lymn to ask about the crossing light system and reasons for the crossing’s location near Holmanleaze, and then forward a response to Councillor Reynolds.	COMPLETED – An answer was received and then forwarded to Councillor Reynolds.
ACTION: Simon Lymn to check whether the traffic flow modelling was done before or after the closure of Broadway car park.	Laurence Ellis notified that Simon Lymn was still trying to get an answer.

Outstanding actions:

- **ACTION: Ed Goose to report back on the Maidenhead Station Team's assessment once the Station Team had completed their assessment.**
- **ACTION: A report to be sent to Cabinet to hand over the assets of the Forecourts Scheme.**
- **ACTION: HUB to share the website link to the existing consultation on Building C.**
- **ACTION: Simon Lymn to check whether the traffic flow modelling was done before or after the closure of Broadway car park.**

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Fire and Rescue Service

(The order of agenda items was changed whereby 'Item 5 – Fire and Rescue Service' was considered fourth.)

The Chair announced that that he was swapping Items 4 and 5 to allow Martin O'Keefe, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), to be relieved early from the meeting as he was on duty.

Martin O'Keefe informed that he was the East Hub Response Insurance Manager where he was responsible for fire service response within eastern Berkshire, encompassing Maidenhead, Windsor, Slough and Langley. He informed that he would discuss some progress which had taken place at Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service but added that he was unable to comment on specific buildings.

Martin O'Keefe informed that the Fire and Rescue Service had attended 1,736 incidents in July 2023. While the data responses for August 2023 was pending, he assured that the figure would be significantly lower compared to the same period in 2022, largely because of the unseasonable weather.

Martin O'Keefe informed that the Fire and Rescue Service attended 7,300 incidents throughout 2022, with 814 of these incidents being property fires. Since 2017, the Service had sought to prioritise prevention activities to reduce the number of emergency calls. This involved undertaking 37,000 Safe and Well visits whereby the Service visited homes and gave fire safety advice.

Martin O'Keefe then informed that there had been some significant investments in the Service in order to respond to the 46 recommendations forwarded to fire and rescue services in local authorities following the Grenfell Fire in 2017. From the back this, the Service had undertaken a built environment project. Phase One of the project concluded with the Service undertaking 187 inspections of high-rise buildings and providing 4,700 residents with individually-tailored fire safety advice. When undertaking the review, the Service identified 97 buildings which were placed into special management measures due to cladding issues or fire safety breaches.

Martin O'Keefe stated that there had been further investment in equipment and training for staff, which included the purchase of a high reach aerial ladder platform (reaching up to 45 metres or 15 floors) to enable an improved response to high-rise incidents. He informed that the Service had focused on water rescue incidents, particularly in east Berkshire due to a number of incidents in the last two years. The Service had delivered an additional water rescue capability which covered the east of Berkshire and was running out of Slough fire station.

Martin O'Keefe explained that the Service's East Hub Protection Department of Fire Safety Inspectors had adapted to the changes in the Regulatory Fire Safety Reform Order of 2005. This involved conducting auditing of premises which were not classed as private dwellings,

such as high-risk and high-rise buildings, where there would likely be communal areas. The Service was also working closely with local authority housing to share legislation and allow a more holistic approach to reviewing the safety of premises. For example, while the Service did not have the powers to inspect individual flats, they fell under the Housing Act.

Premises which were selected for auditing were either proactively or reactively led. An example of reactive auditing would be the risk-based inspection program where various risk factors (e.g., occupancy numbers and floors) were prioritized based on data. Alongside this, the Service was proactively inspecting the properties and enforcing measures.

Another example included reactive inspections which were based off the back of complaints following incidents or any concerns raised by residents after post-fire inspection. The Service would inspect and enforce when necessary.

Some additional changes to the Fire Safety Regulations were introduced in 2022 which included allowing the Service to put more pressure on responsible persons and made it a requirement in law for persons that were responsible for high-rise blocks of flats to provide information to fire services, which would then assist the Service in planning and whether an operational response would be needed. The regulations required responsible persons in multi-occupied buildings which were high-rise as well as those above 11 meters in height to provide additional safety measures, as well as updating fire and rescue services on external wall cladding systems.

Councillor Reynolds asked how residents could sign themselves or friends to Safe and Well visits if they believed that they needed one. Martin O'Keefe answered that residents could access the [RBFRS website](#) where they could find weblinks to Safe and Well visits and home fire safety checks. From there, residents could then forward their details and RBFRS team members would be in touch to arrange a visit.

Councillor Baskerville asked if there had been a decrease in heathland and woodland fires in the area in 2023 compared to previous years due to the recent damp weather. Martin O'Keefe confirmed this, stating that there had been a prolonged heatwave in the summer of 2022 which then increased the number of wildfires. This had decreased in 2023 compared to 2022 due to the changes in the weather. As a Service, he explained, RBFRS were continuing to develop, improve and prepare for these hotter and drier summers which were likely occurrences due to Climate Change. This involved equipping 4x4 vehicles with operational pumps to ensure those pumps could reach difficult terrains like heathlands and wooded areas.

The Chair asked how many buildings in the Borough had cladding issues, mentioning that there were several buildings in St. Mary's with this issue as well as the Providence Place building in which the cladding was in the process of being replaced. He added that there was a waking watch at Kidwell's Close and that the Housing Association and contractors were planning in replacing the cladding replaced.

Martin O'Keefe replied that he believed that there were two buildings with special measures and the two aforementioned buildings had waking watchers, which he explained were private companies providing an immediate response to an issue. There were meetings on returning one of the aforementioned buildings to normal business as usual. While he would need to confirm the numbers, he believed that there were two buildings within the Borough with special measures in place.

The Chair then asked Martin O'Keefe if he was comfortable with the measures in place in regard to waking watches and fire safety. Martin O'Keefe replied that he was, adding that RBFRS teams were working closely with local authorities and the waking watch providers so that the crews were aware of the buildings. The Service had increased its predetermined attendance response for high-rise fires to pre-empt the requirement for further resources to be able to evacuate properties, whereas previously one or two appliances were sent in the event of an automatic actuation of a fire alarm. As part of the special measures was a change in the

evacuation strategy of the properties, moving from a 'stay put' policy to a simultaneous policy, whereby all residents would evacuate when the fire alarm went off, assisted by the waking watchers and fire crews as they arrive.

Councillor Taylor asked when fire services get consulted during the planning process and whether this had changed since the Grenfell tragedy. Martin O'Keefe answered that fire services do get consulted whereby planning applications would be shared with fire safety inspections in which they would then have 28 days to consult on any changes. The fire services would be consulted further as the building developed and then inspect for compliance once completed. Essentially, consultations occur during the planning stages.

Councillor Martin asked whether building owners had a timeframe in which to prepare or rectify the buildings when it had been established that there was an issue with a particular building. Martin O'Keefe answered that it would vary from case-to-case, and this was done with regard to local authorities whereby they would work closely with the fire service and the building owner to rectify the issue as soon as possible. Due to the costs and timeframes to remove cladding, a generic timeframe had not been established, and thus it was based on a case-by-case basis.

(Martin O'Keefe left the meeting at 18:50)

Resident Update

(The order of agenda items was changed whereby 'Item 4 – Resident Update' was considered fifth.)

The Chair announced that he had invited David Hill, a local resident, writer and actor, to the Forum meeting to promote his new play, which was to have a theatre showing in Maidenhead.

After giving a brief background of himself, David Hill informed that he created a political and biographical theatre play called *Draining the Swamp*, in which he was the leading star. The play had five actors and was being held at the Norden Farm Centre for the Arts from Thursday 28th to Saturday 30th September with 4 performances. This followed a successful run at The Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, where 12 performances were conducted. There was also going to be a national tour of the play in early-2024. He hoped that the Forum would help promote the play.

David Hill explained that the play explored the life and activities of Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s. He opined that the recent depiction of Mosley and his wife, Lady Diana Milford, in the television series *Peaky Blinders* as being portrayed as "two-dimensional thuggish villains" meant it failed to recognise them as having a more rounded personality and that it did not reduce the danger of some of their pronouncements, views and activities.

David Hill stated that he got interested in Mosley around four or five years prior, in conjunction with an intrigue with the recent rise in national-populist movements across Europe, which illustrated a rise in nationalism he stated was akin to fascism. David Hill perceived this as a possibility that the lessons of the 1930s had not been learned, particularly with former US President Donald Trump's pronouncements as well as the Storming of the US Capitol Building on 6th January 2021.

From this, David Hill believed that there were some lessons which needed to be explored further and to work out how to deal with extreme politicians, citing that Trump's popularity had increased in spite of his recent indictment.

Intrigued with recent events, David Hill explained, he decided to write a play to explore Oswald Mosley's life and activities and linking it to present day events, as well as casting himself to portray Mosley himself. He described Mosley as a "complex character", explaining that he served both as a Conservative and Labour MP, considered the finest speaker in the House of Commons in the 1920s, and preached radical ideas to resolve the unemployment and Great Depression of the late-1920s and early-1930s. He rhetorically asked how Mosley went from the former to leading the fascist party.

David Hill explained that the play explored why this transformation took place, the flaws of Mosley's character (e.g., his womanising and extra marital affairs), and his legacy. He also informed that in the 1960s, Mosley founded and led the Union Movement which advocated for European unity and that he campaigned for Britain to join the European Economic Community (EEC).

While the play focused on Mosley's life and activities, David Hill stated that it had a "chilling" contemporary twist ending. He explained that the play started in the 1960s and then went back to his life in the 1930s.

David Hill stated that the showings at The Fringe Festival in Edinburgh had good audience turnouts: the average audience of the roughly 70 plays which were put on show was around six; meanwhile, *Draining the Swamp* received around 40 people for each performance. He stated that audiences were engaged, learned more about Oswald Mosley, and found the play fascinating, thought-provoking and even slightly disturbing.

David Hill then shared some promotional imagery and screenshots of the play as well as gave further details of Mosley's life in which the play showcased: his first and second marriages, founding the fascist movement, the Battle of Cable Street (1936), his 1967 interview with David Frost, and his residency in France.

David Hill highlighted that the play received a mixed and diverse audience and found that people of various ethnic backgrounds understood the play's messages.

David Hill concluded by showcasing an advertising leaflet. He added that the play received a four-star review and positive review quotes.

David Hill gave his email address (davidhillarts@gmail.com) in case anyone wanted to share posters or leaflets.

Councillor Baskerville commented that it was an interesting topic to explore and believed that the subject and discussions on extremism had been "shied away" in recent years. He believed the play may reignite interest in the subject. He asked how much David Hill had "tapped into that psyche" and how much of this was reflected in the play.

David Hill agreed, believing that it was important to keep reminding people of the past which were sometimes relevant to the present or even impact it. He stated that his role at a playwright was to provoke questions and get people thinking.

To conclude, David Hill informed that tickets were available via the [Norden Farm website](#) or the box office. The showing times were:

- Thursday 28th September, 5:30pm and 8:00pm,
- Friday 29th September, 8:00pm,
- Saturday 30th September, 2:00pm

The Chair suggested to add the weblinks to the meeting minutes. The Chair thanked David Hill for the presentation and wished him luck with the show.

Councillor Taylor, Vice-Chair, announced that the agenda would include 'Resident Update' item whereby she would inform of any upcoming events in Maidenhead which may be of interest to residents. She welcomed anyone to email her (Cllr.Taylor@RBWM.gov.uk) any events which she could mention at meetings. She then listed some events occurring before the next Town Forum meeting on 13th November 2023:

- Laughing Chili comedy club at Smokey Joes – Friday 15th September 2023, 7:00-10:30pm,
- Maidenhead Coffee Festival at Norden Farm – Saturday 16th September, 11:00am-4:00pm,
- Harvest Bazaar at St. Mark's Crescent Methodist Church – Saturday 16th September, 10:00am-2:00pm,
- Country Care Boot and Local Market at Stubbings Café – Sunday 17th September, 10:00am-2:30pm,
- Maidenhead Town Show in the Town Centre – Saturday 21st October, 10:00am-4:00pm,
- Halloween Music Festival @ Off The Tap in Maidenhead – Sunday 29th October, 1:00pm,
- Maidenhead Christmas Lights Switch On – Saturday 25th November 2023.

EV Charging Points, Highways Permit Scheme and Road Closures

EV Charging Points:

Tim Golabek, Service Lead Transport, informed that his item covered three topics and that he would allow the opportunity for questions in between each one.

Starting with electric vehicle (EV) charging points, Tim Golabek confirmed that there were plans to install more EV charging points across the Borough. In February 2023, Cabinet approved the adoption of the Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan (EVCIP) ([available on the RBWM website](#)), which detailed the Borough's approach over the next decade on how the Council could support the transition from fuel (i.e., petrol and diesel) vehicles towards electric vehicles. While the Borough would not fill out a role in every single area, there were areas in which the Council could and should play a role.

Tim Golabek then conveyed the highlights of the EVCIP. There would be an appropriate pace of installing EV charge-point devices at around 75 per year over the next decade, keeping on par or slightly ahead in the forecast of the uptake in electric car ownership in the Borough and nationally.

The installed charge-points would be a combination of 'connected corners': charge-points in residential areas where a number of bays could be co-located, and residents could then access them and pay the relevant tariff which would be based on the market price. The Borough was also looking into installing some charge-points in Council-run car parks.

The Borough would work with an appropriate partner who had the technological ability to bring the EVCIP forward. A paper to recommend joining another framework for the procurement of a partnership was to be brought forward to the Cabinet meeting in October 2023 for approval.* The framework would allow the Borough to package off what it would like to see installed within the Borough.

**Post-meeting update: This would occur in the Cabinet meeting on 29th November 2023.*

The Transport Team hoped to find a partner or partners which would allow both a commercially beneficial installation and a social benefit where the Borough could direct the development and not based solely on where the partner could make a substantial commercial return. Current intelligence suggested that a commercial return could be eight-to-ten years as it would take a while for the right number of vehicles to be on the road.

The EVCIP called out a repeated investment by the Council to be matched by a procurement partner (similar to other local authorities had done). From this, the Borough could have an influence without taking the whole responsibility of the maintenance and the installation of the charge-points as this account for millions of pounds of investment over the planned period.

As the EVCIP was a 10-year-plan, there would likely be changes to the Plan as well as opportunities during this period to review to ensure the Borough continued to match the required pace.

Once the Cabinet meeting in October 2023 has taken place*, there would be some engagement with local Borough Ward Councillors and identify areas to prioritise installation which would be the highest benefit to residents and commerciality.

**Post-meeting update: This would occur in the Cabinet meeting on 29th November 2023.*

The Chair asked for a heads up on the partner. Tim Golabek replied that the proposed framework would be the one which Oxford local authority was using, whereby the Borough would access a number of partners within the framework based on whoever had the attractive terms to the Borough. He highlighted that this was a recommendation, and its approval would be based on the Cabinet meeting in October 2023.*

**Post-meeting update: This would occur in the Cabinet meeting on 29th November 2023.*

Councillor Taylor asked if there was a way for residents to engage and give feedback in regard to the communal EV charging bays in residential areas, stating that residents would more likely know where electric cars were primarily located in comparison to Ward Councillors. Tim Golabek replied that residents could notify an interest in EV charge-points on an [RBWM website](#) on Electric Vehicle Chargepoints. He highlighted that this was not a request for an EV charge-point, but rather highlighting where demands may be. From there, the Transport Team would use the collected data to help prioritise installations where demand would likely be the highest.

Councillor Reynolds mentioned that some local authorities like Reading and West Berkshire were trialling solutions with terraced houses, namely running charging cables through trunking systems in pavements, to allow residents to access charge-points without running cables across the street due to health and safety reasons. He asked if the Borough had considered this or whether the Borough had asked the other local authorities. Tim Golabek answered that the Transport Team had considered this but felt that there were inherent risks to those solutions, such as how solidly they could be installed, as a trunking system could weaken the pavement as well as there being trip hazards and legal implications, and who would be responsible for the maintenance. The EVCIP recommended that the Borough did not approve those types of solutions at the current stage. Despite this, the Borough would continue to track the progress of other authorities with these solutions; and if the outcomes of the trials were beneficial, then the Plan could potentially be amended.

Councillor Baskerville commented that Thames Valley was looking good in terms of clean energy and that it could be at forefront in leading electric cars and environmental friendliness. He stated that the key thing was to not only encourage people to use electric cars but to also get the price of electric cars down.

Councillor Martin asked if rapid chargers were being planned. Tim Golabek replied by briefly informing on the terminology: slow chargers were 3 to 7 kilowatts (kW), fast chargers were 22 kW, and rapid chargers tended to be 100 to 150 kW. It was considered that rapid EV chargers not only required the installation of chargers but often required the building of additional substations. Due to the magnitude, it was up to the commercial market to determine the right locations, such as Tesla. In spite of this, the Borough could still play a role, such as identifying locations. Referring to the EVCIP, Tim Golabek conveyed that it was recommended that the Borough should not play active investment role.

Before moving onto the next topics, Highway Permit Schemes and Road closures, Tim Golabek highlighted that the responsible officer from the Highways Team was not available and that he was presenting on their behalf.

Highway Permit Schemes:

With the Highway Permit Schemes, Tim Golabek informed that there was legislation in which the Borough had to abide by as a highways authority (i.e., the Borough controlled local roads but not highways which were handled by national agencies). On the back of this legislation, a Permit Scheme was created whereby a team looked after requests to this Scheme. These requests could be based on chosen work which the Borough or other developers conducted, but it was all about what access was required to the road space. From this, the Permit Team could then see what was being requested, what would be sensible in that situation and therefore ensure that the road space could continue to be utilised by users.

There was also the requirement for utility providers to have access to the road space and their assets on it (either to introduce or to maintain said assets). This access could not be restricted; however, under the Permit Scheme, the Borough could work with providers to identify ways in which the work could be done in an efficient manner. For example, avoid multiple utility providers from accessing a similar piece of road space at the same time and thus avoid significant impact on the highway network.

The Permit Scheme had a series of requirements in terms of how early providers needed to advise depending on their request as well as the timeframe for the response from the Borough which was determined based on the impact of the works. Utility providers were allowed to do emergency works, particularly when utilities risked the health of people, such as a gas leak. In spite of this, certain rules applied. The utility provider would have to apply for a 5-day-permit within two hours of being on-site. If the repairs required more time, then the provider would need to apply for an extension up to a maximum of 21 days. Further steps would be required if this got extended.

The Permit Team managed demand for permits carefully to minimise the impact, acknowledging that any allocation of permits would likely cause inconvenience.

Councillor Reynolds asked what more could the Borough do in regard to communication with residents on the works as well as coordination to prevent long periods of unnecessary disruptions. He highlighted that some Councillors received several complaints from residents in regard to utility works, namely the frequency of the works, the communication from the providers and the quality of the work.

Tim Golabek replied that the Permit Team had always sought to minimise disruptions but added that it could not predict whether another utility provider may apply for a permit on the same piece of road shortly after another provider had been working there as well. If the Team were aware of multiple permit requests, they would try to manage this the best they could. In terms of communications, the Borough used a system called [One.Network](#), which could be found on the RBWM Transport webpage. This website showed all the current and planned roads impact by works across the country as well as including information and contact details. The Permit Team also sought to engage with the utility provider to forward more information on their works. The Borough also had the authority to review the work whereby inspectors

would arrive on site and determine whether the utility provider had adhered to what the Borough allowed. If it turned out that it did not, the Borough could stop further works and ensure the providers applied for a new permit, as well as charge a fixed-penalty notice. Overall, while the Borough sought to provide as much information as it could, particularly if the works were being conducted by the Borough itself, it was sometimes dependent on the cooperation of the utility providers.

Councillor Reynolds then asked who residents should report to in the Borough if there were any unsatisfactory utility works. Tim Golabek answered that the first point of contact would be the utility providers, of which there would be signage around the area on who the utility provider was. The next point of contact would be the Highways Team who could send Highways Inspectors to investigate the quality of the work which had taken place. There were also [‘Report It’ weblinks](#) on the RBWM website in which residents were able to make comments.

Councillor Taylor asked whether information on permits and works were publicly available on the RBWM website or was this only presented on the One.Network website. From his understanding Tim Golabek replied that the information was provided into One.Network and thus shared. He believed that this was not replicated on a separate webpage on the RBWM website – unless it was a major piece of work, such as the maintenance of a major asset in the Borough – as there would be many works being undertaken and therefore many additions and updates on the RBWM website.

Following up, Councillor Taylor explained that she was unable to find a way to set up an alert system on One.Network. She stated that residents could sign up to alerts for any planning applications which would affect certain postcodes on the Planning portal. From this, she asked whether something similar could be established on the One.Network whereby residents could sign up and receive notifications of any upcoming road works.

Tim Golabek speculated that the RBWM network or One.Network did not have the capability to do this, but he stated that he would need to investigate this question away.

Councillor Martin asked what would happen in a situation where a resident needed to access their vehicle, but all the surrounding roads were closed due to permits. From what he knew, Tim Golabek replied that if there was a road closure and there were no alternative access to a location in a *cul-de-sac* situation, the Borough would communicate as early as it could to advise residents to move their cars. In terms of whether the newest possible roads were permit-only, then it was a question for residents to determine whether a temporary permit could be issued or how far they would need to go to find an alternative location to park their vehicle. He stated that the Borough tried to avoid stranded, trapped cars. He stated that he would take this question away.

Councillor Martin added that there were certain places in Maidenhead where there were no alternative spaces nearby to park in proximity to the Town Centre. She stated that it would be good to find an answer to this.

Answer received after the meeting:

The closure would normally only cover a small section of the area, and the utility company in majority would put in mitigation, like restricted working hours so that the person/people directly affected by the closure could move their vehicle prior to closure times being implemented or make alternative arrangements. The presence of permit schemes around would not influence the consideration for the closure and there was no legal obligation on any statutory undertaker to provide alternative parking or consider any parking restrictions when applying for a road closure.

The Chair asked whether developers were encouraged to do all their works under one permit and construction schedule to reduce disruptions; rather than apply for multiple permits and dig up the same road multiple times for different works. Tim Golabek replied that when the Permit

Team were aware that multiple utility providers needed to access the same piece of road, then the Team would seek to do this to promote efficiency. However, the challenge would arise if the Permit Team was unaware of multiple needs or was not forthcoming. While the Team would acquire as much information as they could, it would be difficult if there was a lack of notice in advance or a lack of coordination between third-party providers.

The Chair followed up by elaborating on whether developers were notified of permits before utility providers applied for a permit. Tim Golabek replied that he would take this question away.

Answer received after the meeting:

The developers were not part of the Permit Scheme as they were not statutory undertakers. In majority, the Highway Authority had no power to force them to ensure their connections were collaborated to reduce impact on the highway. The Planning did not possess such powers.

Following up in response to Councillor Taylor's earlier question, Councillor Reynolds stated that [email alerts](#) can be set up on the One.Network. This involved setting up an account on the One.Network and set up alerts for either the whole town or a prescribed area and the alerts could be received daily, weekly or monthly.

Councillor Baskerville commented that there had been so many road works recently across the Borough which made travel very difficult. He believed that there needed to be a national initiative to encourage coordination and communication between the utility providers and promote efficiency whereby they could one set of road works rather than multiple separate ones.

Councillor Shaw asked if there were any obligations or systems in place to get the road up and running in the event of planned works not being completed due to the utility provider, adding that there had been cases where road works had been left for months without being covered or any signage notifying of an estimated time for it to be completed. Tim Golabek replied that the application for a permit under the Scheme was time restricted and therefore the provider would need to complete the work within the timeframe of the permit. If they failed to meet their objectives within the permit's timeframe, they would then need to apply for an extension to the permit, subjected to the Permit Team granting this if it was feasible. If other works needed to be done, they would need to make good with their permit and return at a future time under a new permit being issued. It would be in contravention to their permits if a utility provider left a strip of road unfixed; therefore, an investigation would be required, and action would be considered.

Road closures:

Moving onto the final topic of his item, road closures, Tim Golabek informed that the permits were handled under traffic management: narrow lanes and temporary traffic lights being installed but the roads remained open, or at least partially. There were some works which required a full road closure whereby some works could not be done safely without halting traffic altogether, such as a full resurfacing of road tarmac.

There were two types of road closures. Planned closures were when the Borough received a minimum of three months advanced notice to identify the effects, diversionary routes, any other nearby works, and therefore minimise the impact on traffic. This applied to all utility providers, developers and the Borough. Emergency closures took place when emergency works were required, such as a gas leak. The provider would be required to apply for a permit for the road closure so that One.Network could be updated as quickly as possible as well as ensure that they followed the boundaries of the permit scheme.

Councillor Shaw asked if the definition of 'emergency works' was different to definition from service providers, elaborating that there was a case where he was notified that emergency

works were taking place but a permit was given three months in advance. Tim Golabek replied that legislation clarified what constituted as an emergency: utility providers had a right to access the roads and the Borough could not refuse them. He added that communication and language being used may have an effect as the utility provider may claim to be doing emergency work when in reality it was permit-based work. Based on this, the Borough needed to liaise with the provider as much as it could to ensure the nature of the works was clear.

Councillor Shaw then asked if the minimum timeframe in which providers notified residents was a legal requirement or a Council-imposed requirement, and whether this could be extended if necessary. Tim Golabek answered that the legislation which the Borough used had the three-month minimum timeframe to forward an application for a road closure. If the request for closure met the three-month minimum notice, then the Borough would conduct its assessments and then grant permission for closure at the time the provider had requested. Within that three-month period, the provider had to ensure that they notified nearby residents of the upcoming works. If the provider did not provide the minimum three-month notice, then the Borough would refuse on principle.

Councillor Shaw followed up by asking if there was an obligation for when providers to notify residents. Tim Golabek said he would take away this question.

Answer received after the meeting:

There was no legal obligation on any statutory undertaker to notify residents etc. of a road closure by any mean. In majority the statutory undertaker would place advance warning signs around 10 days prior to closure date and do a letter drop, however neither were a legal requirement and there was no period of time within which the notices were to be provided.

The Chair asked about the timescale of completion on the A4 crossing as a cycle lane was being installed. He then asked for confirmation that the A4 road was not being closed off completely and it was only going to be reduced to one lane. Tim Golabek answered that the A4 road would not be closed in its entirety. The works were planned to take place over six weeks, starting on 30th August 2023 and were expected to be completed by 15th October 2023. While this was a tight window of activity, this was done to make ensure that the A4 would be fully reopened just as maintenance works were going to start at Cookham Bridge for which the A4 was the diversionary route and therefore could not be reduced in capacity. The Borough was ensuring that the works on the crossings were on schedule. Further phases at Holmanleaze and the southern A4 roadway were being planned to avoid any conflict with diversion measures.

Councillor Martin informed that she recently received an email from a resident who witnessed a fire engine not being able to go through Clivemont Road, Maidenhead due to road workers placing some orange traffic cones. (A traffic warden was nearby and moved the cones to allow the fire engine to pass). Tim Golabek replied that he could not comment on individual situations but stated that permits had a requirement to allow access for emergency vehicles. If this could not be maintained, then it would raise questions on whether a full road closure would be a more appropriate way to deal with that particular incident.

When asked by Councillor Martin on who should she forward the email to, Tim Golabek suggested to forward it to the Highways Team and copy himself in the email.

Councillor Shaw asked if there were any provisions for businesses during closed roads, similar to provisions with emergency services. For example, would a taxi service have to park their taxis outside of the closed roads or close during a timeframe. Tim Golabek said he would take this question away. Nevertheless, he stated that in this sort of situation, residents and occupants of a nearby road would be informed of alternative locations.

Answer received after the meeting:

This would need to be a direct conversation between a business holder and a statutory undertaker should they wish to seek clarity on how and if they would be affected.

Maidenhead Library Services

Angela Huisman, Library and Resident Contact Lead, alongside Louise Freeth, Assistant Director of Revenues, Benefits, Library and Resident Services, gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the Maidenhead Library services.

Angela Huisman informed that a Library Transformation Strategy was established in 2021. The vision was to “provide physical and virtual spaces that build connections and facilitate access to knowledge, resources and support so that residents are equipped to aspire and thrive.”

Angela Huisman announced that Maidenhead Library, the ‘flagship library’ in Windsor and Maidenhead, recently had its 50th anniversary for its construction with 7,000 people visiting the Library during the week to celebrate. Maidenhead Library received around 1,000 visits per day with residents utilising its physical space.

Angela Huisman then explained services in which Maidenhead Library provided.

Lending offers included a collection of physical books and e-books, millions of songs in which visitors could listen for free, audio e-books which could be downloaded and listened anywhere, newspapers and e-newspapers which were available on PressReader and included international newspapers alongside UK newspapers, and a collection of e-magazines. Electronic tablets on loan were provided for visitors who did not have their own devices or internet connection, as well as a video streaming platform called Kanopy which provided thousands of movies.

There was also an Online Reference Offer with 30 online reference resources. These included:

- [Universal Credit How To Guide](#)
- [BFI Replay](#) – 60 years of screen stories, digitised and preserved for visitors. Thousands of films and TV programmes from the National Archive.
- [Access To Research](#) – Free access to over 30 million academic journals, research papers and articles from top universities.
- [FutureLearn](#) – Short online courses from top universities and specialist organisations.
- [Training & Tools from Google](#) (Google Digital Garage) – Basic Digital Skills Training
- [Learn My Way](#) – Training from starting to use the internet or email to staying in touch and office programmes. Visitors could learn how to manage and spend their money online, manage their health online and understand internet safety and security.
- [Which?](#) – ‘Best buys, don’t buys’ and so much more.
- [AncestryLibrary™](#) – Family History.
- [RBWM Cobra](#) – Business Support for start-ups and small businesses with templates, start-up guides, sector guides and updates, business support, business rules and regulations, business information factsheets, local area profiles and a Business Legal Library.

In terms of events and activities, they included:

1. CLASS (Adult Learning) support twice a week,
2. Lego Create Sessions,
3. Children’s Games Clubs,
4. Friends in Need Book Group,
5. Pop-Up Poetry,
6. Storytimes and Rhymetimes,
7. Knit and Natter,

8. IT Help,
9. Weekly Accessibility mornings,
10. Outreach events in the community,
11. Voluntary and Community Sector (CVS) support in libraries.

Library events were able to be viewed on the [Library Events RBWM webpage](#). The events list was constantly changed as they tailored to the community and delivered by members of the community.

Regarding the Support and Accessibility Offer:

- All library staff are trained to provide effective signposting to support and services as well as to assist with a full range of Council Services.
- Volunteering Opportunities were available from age 14, and Weekend and holiday jobs from age 16.
- Libraries are designated Safe Spaces – staff were trained in safeguarding, domestic abuse and disabilities. *“Libraries are safe spaces if you are feeling anxious or concerned. You can ask for help and will be signposted to the correct support.”*
- Children from the age of 8 were able to use the library unaccompanied.
- Public PCs and Free Wi-Fi including digital support from staff and volunteers was available on site.
- Summer Reading Challenge and Study and Homework Support.
- Reading Development and Inclusions Work which included:
 - Outreach to the most disadvantaged children,
 - Literacy days, author visits, character engagement stories and reading development work with vulnerable groups including young mums and Looked After Children,
 - Army Welfare mornings at Broom Farm,
 - Bookstart and BookAhead,
 - School RDS Library Service.

An extensive accessibility offer was available via the [Accessible Services at Royal Borough Libraries webpage](#).

The key priorities of the Library services were:

- Traditional Library Services – Lending (Digital and Physical), Reference (Digital and On Site), Local Studies, Public PCs and Wi-Fi, Digital Support, Events & Activities, Enquiry & Information Services, including Face to Face Council Customer Services.
- Economic Recovery, Business Support, Training & Skills Development, DWP Employment Journey Partnership.
- Develop Library Staff as Community Builders and Connectors, working closely with the VCS and statutory services to promote health and wellbeing, support aspiration and reduce dependency.
- RBWM’s “Best Practice” Community Library Model – an exceptionally efficient way to deliver library and support services within the community.
- Home Library Service – residents who could not access the library could have books delivered to their homes or borrow tablets to read e-books and receive support alongside this at the home.

To conclude, Angela Huisman that Maidenhead Library was always reviewing itself to discover any new initiatives and best practice ideas. She encouraged people to visit the Maidenhead Library.

After the Chair praised the range of services in which Maidenhead Library provided, he asked for clarification that the services were free of charge. Angela Huisman confirmed this.

Councillor Taylor asked about the Communities Celebration 2023, stating that she decided not to raise this during the ‘Resident Update’ item in case Angela Huisman wanted to discuss it. Angela Huisman informed that the event was scheduled on the evening of Friday 29th September 2023. It was to be a big celebration of the partnership and work between the

Borough and the volunteering community sector and was to take place at Maidenhead Library. The event was planned to be similar to Maidenhead Library's 50th Anniversary celebrations, including a silent disco, Vinyl Frontier evening, music and karaoke. In addition, anyone was welcome to attend.

Angela Huisman added that the library space was the most exceptionally flexible space with no limit, whereby Maidenhead Library could do anything with this space, including opera, discos and silent studies.

When the question was raised by the Chair on the start-time of the Communities Celebration 2023 on Friday 29th September, Councillor Taylor informed, and Angela Huisman confirmed, that the start-time was 6:30pm.

Being the Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure, Councillor Reynolds expressed appreciation for Angela Huisman and Louise Freeth for attending Maidenhead Town Forum and presenting an overview of the library services. He stated that it was important to champion and advertise the library services and offers in Windsor and Maidenhead.

Resident Questions and Item Suggestions for Future Forums

Councillor Reynolds reiterated his request for an item from the Maidenhead Town Team on any new retailers coming to Maidenhead in the next few months. When asked by the Chair, Laurence Ellis stated that he could ask Robyn Bunyan, Maidenhead Town Manager, if she could attend the next Forum meeting in November 2023 and then ask her to include the new retailers. He also highlighted that the Forum meeting in July 2023, Robyn Bunyan mentioned that she may not be able to publicly give away certain details.

Councillor Taylor suggested that Councillor Douglas, as the Champion for Volunteering, could do an item on the work at the Maidenhead Community Centre, namely what facilities were available and the types of volunteering they offered, so residents had an idea on what they could get involved in. Councillor Douglas agreed.

Laurence Ellis highlighted that an item which the Chair suggested outside of the meeting was inviting Holyport F.C. and asked if the Chair still wanted this, to which he confirmed.

Councillor Taylor suggested to regularly invite charity organisations in Maidenhead to Forum meetings where they could give an overview of their work, how people could get involve or donate. She gave reason that the charities in which she supported were not well known and were local and thus the Forum could help raise their profile. She asked if the Forum had any thoughts on this item.

Councillor Reynolds liked the idea, seeing it as helpful to know how certain local charities worked as well as to raise their profiles.

The items suggested for future Forum meetings:

- Maidenhead Town Update (including new retailers in Maidenhead),
- Holyport F.C.
- A charity.

Dates of Future Meetings

The Forum noted that the next meeting would be held on 13th November 2023 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Maidenhead.

They also noted the other upcoming meetings (all at 6:30pm):

- 15th January 2024
- 13th March 2024
- 9th May 2024

The meeting, which began at 6.32 pm, finished at 8.12 pm

Chair.....

Date.....