

## ACCESS ADVISORY FORUM

MONDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2016

PRESENT: Angela Clark (Chairman), Mary Smith (Vice-Chairman), Sharon Carrigan, Peter Haley, Hughes, Manley and Robin Pemberton

Officers: Alan Abrahamson, Daniel Gigg, Shilpa Manek, Gordon Oliver and Lynne Penn

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Neil Walters.

### CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman introduced everyone to the meeting.

### MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

### MATTERS ARISING

#### MAIDENHEAD TOWN CENTRE

Daniel Gigg, Team Manager in Planning, updated the Forum Members that there had only been a few changes over summer to the planning applications. Two variations had been agreed with Chapel Arches:

- The predominantly residential site was going to have public art across the site for one of the buildings but it has now been agreed to remove the public arts for one of the buildings as this wouldn't really work. The applicant is now preparing a public art strategy and an artist had been appointed.
- The north side of the high street, around the Colonnade, has a waterway going through it and this has been amended to have a wider body of water going through it.

In relation to the Landings site, no applications had yet been received. The Vice Chairman asked if the Landing site was an all rented accommodation site. Daniel Gigg informed the Forum that the Landings site was a 200 property scheme and the council would have no control over the occupancy, it would be up to the developer.

The Chairman asked about the level access at Chapel Arches. Daniel Gigg informed the Forum that no changes had been made. The lift would go down to the lower level. The details of which were still to be issued.

**ACTION: To invite a Member of the Regeneration Sub Committee to a future meeting to update the Forum.**

#### GREAT WESTERN - ACCESS TO MAIDENHEAD TRAIN STATION

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Policy Officer, initially apologised as the Great Western representative could not attend the Forum. Gordon Oliver informed the Forum that he was hoping to have a design to show Members at the meeting but unfortunately the last design had many issues. Gordon Oliver hoped that the Forum could see the design before it went to the Cabinet Sub Committee on the 20 December 2016.

Dominic Manley asked about whether a multi-storey carpark above the tracks had been considered. Gordon Oliver informed the Forum that it had been considered, as had a multi-storey at the current car park site but funding had not been received. Options were still being explored for a multi-storey carpark in the future.

Dominic Manley asked about the Golf course site and the suitability for parking, Gordon Oliver advised that the Golf course site was going to be used for housing. The Stafferton Road carpark was being considered.

Lisa Hughes asked about the pedestrian access on the new concourse and the many restricted areas in and around the town. The Forum was informed that access to the station was being looked at including the King Street/Queen Street junction and the north of the station, other than these, other redevelopment sites were being taken up. Lynne Penn advised the Forum that she was happy to discuss any specific issues.

### ST MARKS/COURTHOUSE ROAD JUNCTION

In the absence of Councillor Hollingsworth, the Chairman informed the Forum that this had been moved to the next financial year.

### ADULT SOCIAL CARE CHARGING

Alan Abrahamson, Finance Partner – Adults and Communities, informed the Forum about the results from a recently completed consultation that had looked at residential respite charges and attendance allowance.

#### **Residential Respite**

To remove the subsidy from residential charge. The council has reviewed it and looked at all the impacts and the decision was made that a new rate without subsidy will be brought in with immediate effect. A rate of £665 per week was chargeable to those who could afford to pay. For those currently paying, £469 would remain for this financial year and then this would increase to £549 for the next financial year.

#### **Attendance Allowance/Disability Living Allowance**

The council has reviewed and updated the scheme. The council has looked at the national position and the finances. There is funding available for necessary care which is currently being introduced and assessed currently.

### GUILDHALL ACCESS

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

### ACCESSIBLE PARKING CAMPAIGN

In the absence of Neil Walters, Mary Smith and Lisa Hughes gave an update on the event.

The event was very well attended by many Councillors, the Mayor and the Mayor of Bracknell too. May press teams were present and the story was picked up in the wider disability press. Many wanted other councils to take part to stop the abuse to disabled car parking spaces.

Mary Smith suggested that it be done again in Maidenhead and other areas such as Cox Green and Furze Platt.

The Chairman thanked SportsAble and Shop Mobility for the use of the wheelchairs.

The Chairman read out a letter thanking the Forum from Councillor David Hilton.

## ITEMS

### CONSULTATIONS

Lynne Penn, Transport and Access Team Leader, informed the Forum Members of two current consultations: Resident Satisfaction Survey and Boundary Review.

If anyone wishes to see the consultations online, they can be found at:

<https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/consultations>

### NICHOLSONS CAR PARK

Peter Haley, Shop Mobility, gave an update on the Nicholsons car parking situation in relation to Shop Mobility. There are still problems of people parking in the Shop Mobility parking spaces. The signage was not clear. The registration plates were being recorded and this showed that there were no repeat offenders but people who parked in the Shop Mobility bays knew they shouldn't be parked there. Lynne Penn suggested using the barriers that were previous used.

**ACTION: Neil Walters to be informed about the ongoing issue and the use of the barriers.**

Lisa Hughes informed the Forum about an unfortunate reoccurring incident that she was having in the Nicholsons car park. Lisa Hughes explained that she had registered numerous times as a blue badge holder. Every time she used the car park, there were issues with getting in to the car park, leaving the car park, no responses from the help button and then having to reverse the car and cause disruption to other drivers.

The council had been alerted two weeks ago but no response had yet been received.

**ACTION: Neil Walters to be informed about all the issues.**

Forum Members discussed the lack of spaces for the disabled near the shops.

### LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Lisa Hughes informed the Forum about Local Access Forum that she had joined. See Lisa Hughes' notes below:

## **Local Access Forum**

### **Background**

The Local Access Forum is a partnership to promote and develop sustainable access for the growing benefit of the environment to our community. 'Access' in this context refers to the ability of all people to get to and make use of land in the borough, for example the countryside and its facilities, open spaces and public rights of way.

Established in 2003, the Forum is a statutory advisory group which advises the Council on the management and improvement of public access to land in the Royal Borough for open-air recreation.

It works closely with the borough council, rights of way user groups, landowners and parish and town councils. It also works with and provides advice to other bodies such as Natural England and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Forum membership can include up to 22 local people and is currently made up of a balance of 53% user interests, 29% land management, 6% other interests and 12% RBWM Councillors.

The forum meets twice a year and the next meeting is on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **The Forum's Recent and Planned Future Work**

The Forum discussed and gave advice to the Council on the following topics during 2015/16:

- Multi-user routes and bridleways.
- M4 Smart Motorway proposals.
- Ramblers Big Pathwatch.
- Improvements for cycling.
- Proposed diversion of Hurley Footpath 18 at Berkshire College of Agriculture.
- Proposed gating of Eton Footpath 51 at Thameside, Eton.
- Use of volunteers for works on public rights of way.
- Responding to the South Lincs and Rutland LAF consultation regarding a national access forum.

The work programme for 2016/2017 is as follows:

- Multi-User Routes
- Fostering closer engagement with parish councils
- Opportunities and issues with identified large development sites
- Millennium Walk
- Improvement to access at Ashley Hill, Hurley

## **The Impact of Green Spaces on Health & Wellbeing**

It is now widely accepted that access to green space improves our mental wellbeing, reducing the need to treat for anxiety and mental health conditions.

Spending time in green spaces has been shown to produce levels and patterns of chemicals in

the brain associated with low stress and positive impacts on blood pressure.

Urban green spaces provide pleasant areas to relax and socialise, promoting greater levels of social activity and stronger neighbourhood relationships. This can be particularly important in maintaining a high quality of life for elderly people.

## **Representing People with Disabilities**

I was recently invited to join the Local Access Forum and will be representing the interest of people with disabilities. My initial focus will be to try to improve access in the more urban of our green spaces for mobility and sensory impaired people.

Structures on Rights of Way such as kissing gates, stiles, anti-motorcycle barriers and U chicanes can prevent access not only for people with mobility and visual impairments but also parents with children in pushchairs.

My plan is to contact local charities and community groups for people with disabilities to inform them about the work of both the Access Advisory Forum and the Local Access Forum and to gain insight into their members' most pressing issues in the borough.

## **ACTION: Lisa Hughes to update the AAF of relevant recent LAF news.**

Lynne Penn informed Members of an internal merger, the Parks and Countryside's teams had merged into one now.

Robin Pemberton asked for information on the Thames Path on the way to Temple. The land had all been reclaimed by the farmers. Lisa Hughes would highlight at the Local Access Forum on the 8 November 2016.

## **REAL TIME INFORMATION PROJECT**

Lynne Penn informed the Forum about a Real Time Information project that was currently being undertaken. Currently there were a number of sites that provided real time information such as bus stops. There were five service providers that were currently providing the information. The project in place was set up to improve the information. The first stage was looking at improving the quality of information and the second phase would concentrate on

increasing the information points at Sainsbury's, Nicholsons Centre, library, train station, St Marks hospital, other points in busy areas and areas in Windsor and providing more information using smart screens and using audio. It was a manifesto commitment.

Lynne Penn asked Members to email her with any ideas and thoughts.

### OUTSOURCING OF CHILDRENS AND ADULTS SERVICES

The Chairman informed Members of the outsourcing of Adults and Children's Services.

The Chairman requested that a presentation be given at the next Forum on how the current services would be maintained.

**ACTION: A presentation for the Forum at the meeting**

### DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Forum Members noted the date of the next meeting, Monday 12 December 2016 and requested that it start at an earlier time of 10.30am.

**ACTION: Checked and confirmed by the Clerk.**

Dominic Manley suggested that the health and safety instructions in case of a fire on the agenda be amended for wheelchair users.

**ACTION: Clerk to amend instructions.**

The meeting, which began at 11.00 am, finished at 12.30 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....