

## WINDSOR TOWN FORUM

TUESDAY, 12 MARCH 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Malcolm Alexander (Vice-Chairman), John Bowden (Chairman), Eileen Quick and Samantha Rayner

Also in attendance: Councillor Simon Dudley, Emma Pendry, Thames Valley Police and Jeff Pick, Neighbourhood Watch Team.

Officers: Wendy Binmore, Paul Roach and David Scott.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Da Costa.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### MINUTES

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2018 be approved.**

### CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

#### Windsor Link Railway (WLR) and Windsor Riverside Project

The Chairman stated the WLR proposal had not been accepted by the Secretary of State and therefore, the matter was closed. The Borough had noted in a local publication that the WLR had received another letter saying the Secretary of State was interested in parts of the proposal but, RBWM did not support any aspect of the project. The Chairman confirmed that he also was not in support of the project as both a Councillor and as a resident of Windsor, therefore the matter was resolved.

Councillor Dudley stated the promoters of WLR continued to make contact with the Council but, the Borough had no interest in the project and it was not viable. A Motion had been taken to Council in which a letter would be written to the Secretary of State and the local MP in favour of the Western Railway proposal. There had been no dialogue with WLR as there was no support for it.

The Chairman stated there was a proposal for a direct link from Terminal 5 at Heathrow to Staines and another from Terminal 4 at Heathrow to Bedfont. The Terminal 5 to Staines option had been successful.

Helen Price said the WLR had two phases. Phase one was to join the two Windsor lines together and the second phase was to join those lines with Heathrow. Councillor Dudley stated that the Council was not supporting either phase. The Council was supporting the Network Rail proposal on the Western Line and there was zero support for the WLR. Helen Price asked if the Secretary of State knew RBWM was not supporting phase one of the WLR. Councillor Dudley confirmed there was no need to

contact the Secretary of State as he had spoken to his Minister over a week previously and explained there was no interest.

The Chairman stated that as the WLR had not been supported by the Secretary of State, that left the Council in a position to see what development could be undertaken at the Riverside location. That scheme had been delayed while awaiting the outcome from the Secretary of State on the WLR.

The Chairman stated the arches under the railway line had been sold to a private consortium so the Borough needed to consult with them and Network Rail to see what could be done in the area. It was a future project with consultations ongoing in the future. There was also an engineering process that needed to be carried out before anything could be done and the owners of Windsor Royal Station had to be consulted. All parties would need to be consulted before anything could move forward.

### Homelessness and SWEP

The Chairman stated the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol was in place until March 2019 when the weather improved. The Council had provided a grant to the Windsor Homeless Project as they moved from the Baptist Church to Holy Trinity. He added that individuals that were staying in the bus stops on the High Street had moved on and the bus stops were now clear.

Helen Price stated she acknowledged the work of More Than a Shelter that had helped get people off the street for 10 to 12 weeks. The Chairman said he would like to offer thanks on behalf of the Borough to all the volunteers, police and officers for all their hard work and he was aware of Churches Together that had offered shelter to those in need. Susy Shearer said she echoed the comments of Helen Price relating to More than a Shelter who had been asked to provide accommodation over a two week period. Councillor Dudley stated the Borough extended SWEP for an extra month at a cost of £80,000. The Borough would review the situation at the end of March 2019 and would potentially extend SWEP to the end of April when the weather was warmer.

Helen Price stated at the last meeting of the Windsor Town Forum, SWEP was discussed as a service offered to all. If someone had no local connection, they were offered one night and then sent back to the area they had come from. Councillor Dudley confirmed the Council had always had the option to passport someone back to the area they had come from. The Council offered accommodation until that passporting took place.

### Parking Machines

The Chairman stated that any questions regarding the new parking machines would be better answered at the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel as it was such an in-depth subject, it was not appropriate to be dealt with at the Forum.

Councillor Dudley stated the machines were highly sophisticated and the Borough was able to monitor what was going on in every car park. The Borough received live data from the machines and officers knew when the machines were working and the nature of the fares being charged; they were also very good at detecting fraud as the machines will flag up excessive use of Advantage Cards and block them.

There was an initial fault when the machines were installed as some Advantage Cards had barcodes which did not work. The machines had been tested since the fault had been rectified and they were all working well. Councillor Dudley added that he had asked for better signage and instructions to be installed.

The reason the Borough did not install the same machines as that of the National Trust was because the National Trust machines did not have the same functionality as their parking was either free or, people had to pay with coins. The RBWM machines were different as residents could use their advantage cards for a discount, pay with coins, card or pay by phone.

Councillor Dudley informed the Forum that as from 8 April 2019, Victoria Street Car Park would be free for residents from 6pm to 9am instead of the current 7pm to 9am. The parking machines were working fine although they could do with better instructions but, they were fantastic at providing large discounts with the Advantage Card.

A resident asked what the lead time was on getting damaged or faulty parking machines fixed. Later on in the meeting, Councillor Dudley confirmed that the lead time was four hours if reported by 3pm. If after 3pm then they would be seen to by 10am the next day. The Chairman said that Advantage Cards needed to be updated if they had expired in order to get the discounted parking. Councillor Dudley confirmed that residents would not have to pay for overnight parking at Victoria Street Car Park.

#### Electric Vehicle Charging Points

The Chairman stated four electric charging points had been installed near the Police Station in Alma Road and they were already in use. The Council is aiming to provide more charging points in the near future. Susy Shearer said she had encountered them and they did not look like charging points and asked if they could be more clearly marked. The Chairman responded they were as close to the edge of the kerb as they could be and the larger they were, the more obstructive they would be. The charging points had been discussed at the Highways, Transport & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel and the minutes of that discussion could be found on the Council's website.

The Chairman requested members of the public attend a planning application appeal for a site on Alma Road on 26 March 2019 which had huge public opposition. The planning appeal was being held at Windsor Racecourse and he urged the public to attend to show the inspectorate how much Windsor residents were opposed to the planning application.

#### POLICE UPDATE FOR THE WINDSOR AREA

Emma Pendry from Thames Valley Police (TVP) provided members of the Forum with an update on the crime statistics for the Windsor area. The key points highlighted were:

- The volume of bike thefts in West Windsor remained the same. However Central Windsor had seen an 83% increase.
- There had been a 14% increase in dwelling burglaries in West Windsor with a 17% increase in Central Windsor

- Shed break ins and non-dwelling burglaries had seen a 47% increase in West Windsor and 57% increase in Central Windsor
- There had been a 41% of car thefts in Central Windsor with a 27% increase in West Windsor.

The Central Team had done a lot of analytical work on bike thefts and they had produced a problem profile. The point of the initiative was to prevent bike thefts and so posters had been displayed. People spent a lot of money on the purchase of their bikes but, they did not spend out on a decent lock. TVP were also working with the British Transport Police to hold bike marking events. Jeff Dicks from the Neighbourhood Watch Team said the posters would be in size A1 and would be displayed in high crime areas. He added there had been no dramatic change in dwelling burglaries in the last six months as the team were doing lots of work and were engaging with people that were released from prison to help prevent crime.

Emma Pendry explained TVP were offering a free home security surveys and advice on how to improve home security. Residents could also sign up to receive free Thames Valley Police updates and can follow TVP on Facebook and Twitter.

The police were running problem profiles to help tackle thefts from cars and the police were educating people on how to prevent car crime; one reason car crime happens is because people did not lock their cars so those people needed reminding. Jeff Dicks added residents should double check their door when locking a car using a key fob. The signal of the key fob could get intercepted so keyless car keys needed to be kept in a metal cage device to block the signal being cloned or scanned.

Emma Pendry informed the Forum that posters of known shoplifters were being displayed in high crime areas and the police had built good relationships with security and shop staff and wardens. All parties were now using the radio system in town to keep everyone informed and it was working well with some good results and some prolific shoplifters being arrested.

The week commencing 11 March 2019 was knife crime week with lots of different operations taking place. There would be a higher police presence in town and the problem solving team had been doing a lot of work around County Lines with a significant arrest being reported in the local paper. Emma Pendry added the police would be doing sweeps in local parks in Windsor and Datchet, including Dedworth following reports of needles being found. The parks would be dealt with in conjunction with community wardens.

Gary Williams, a local resident asked if there were places residents could dispose of old knives they no longer needed. Emma Pendry responded he could take them to a police station as they had knife bins. The Chairman said they could be taken to recycling centres too. Councillor Dudley asked if the Council could have police support in providing a facility to dispose of knives at libraries. Emma Pendry replied there may need to be a memorandum of understanding between the police and the Council but, she could take that forward. Councillor Quick said she was delighted to hear about all the joint work the police were doing with the Borough and thanked Mr Pick for all his hard work. She added that the Around the Royal Borough publication went to every household in the Borough so an article could be added on how residents could keep themselves safe and secure. Emma Pendry said that it would need to be approved by the TVP Communications Team but, she would be happy to support an article in the local publication.

Councillor Alexander said the Borough was promoting cycling and bikes were not cheap. He asked what the success rate of returning stolen bikes to their owners was. Emma Pendry replied in 2018, they managed to return four bikes that were marked, Jeff Pick stated a lot of people did not remember what their bikes looked like so the police may have someone's bike but have no idea who that bike belonged to, Jeff Pick recommended bike owners take a picture of their bikes with the frame number so if it got stolen, there was a chance to return them to the owners.

Residents asked if knives could be handed in at Windsor police station. Emma Pendry confirmed there are police present at Windsor police station but, that it is closed to the public. There was a yellow telephone outside that the public could use to contact the police.

The Chairman asked for more action on people cycling through Peascod Street in town. Emma Pendry explained a member of her team had been working on that and there had been a good response. £80 fines could be issued to those cycling in pedestrian areas. The police had another similar operation planned.

- ❖ **Action** – The Borough's Communications and Marketing Team to produce an article for the next issue of the Around the Royal Borough publication, in conjunction with Thames Valley Police on how residents can keep themselves safe and secure.

## UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TWO WINDSOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Sally Stevens informed Members that the Windsor Central Neighbourhood Plan had had a productive meeting with Jenifer Jackson, Head of Planning and Jenifer Jackson had offered two workshops on design guild and also to review retail policies. She thanked the Head of Planning for her help and told the Forum she would confirm the dates for the workshops. The Windsor Central Neighbourhood Plan Group were waiting on a formal response on the draft Neighbourhood Plan before submitting.

Claire Milne of the outer Windsor Neighbourhood Plan stated they were almost at the final draft stage. They had been through pre-submission and the consultation was almost completed including pre-submission comments. The final draft would be submitted by the end of April 2019 then the Borough would carry out a Regulation 15 Consultation.

Councillor Quick stated a huge amount of work had been done by volunteers and she thanked the volunteers for their hard work. Councillor S. Rayner added she attended one of the consultations and was very impressed and thanked all the volunteers.

## TOWN MANAGERS UPDATE.

Paul Roach, Town Manager stated he wanted to note the work carried out by Community Wardens in helping rough sleepers, he had also been working with them and a lot of work had also been done working with vulnerable adults.

The events programme had been released and the first event was pancake day; over £900 was raised and split between three charities which included the Alexander Devine Children's Hospice and More Than a Shelter.

Negotiations had been ongoing with American High School Marching Bands and approval had been sought to host 16 high school bands on the grass moat of the Castle and 16 school choirs to sing at the Windsor Parish Church. The event was due to begin on 9 June 2019 and would run until the end of July 2019. The Town Manager was formalising dates for the bandstand programme of events.

Windsor would host two sculpture trails. The first was from World Welfare Horses Charity and would be 10 miniature horses and would be linked to the Windsor Horse Show. They would be installed in April until the end of July 2019. The second sculpture trails would consist of lions and would be installed by the Windsor Lions around October 2019. Both of the trails would end in an auction and the money would go to charity. The Windsor Lions Sculpture Trail would include up to 60 lions across the whole of the Borough and they were still looking for suitable locations and were happy to receive suggestions.

Shop vacancies were running at approximately 5% but three new shops had opened including Sea Salt and House of Hyde. The national vacancy rate was approximately 9.9%.

There had been an increase in footfall to December 2018, up by 0.6% on last year. Businesses were facing challenges due to online shopping and the Town had to make sure what it offered was attractive and so they were looking at a number of retail specific events. The Town Manager had been working with both shopping centres and were looking at dedicated events in the Town. He added the fruit and veg market would begin again at the end of March 2019 and there had been discussions with a potential tenant on taking over O'Driscolls Fish Mongers but, the talks were unsuccessful and it was decided that that potential tenant would instead hold a stall two days a month selling wild fish in Peascod Street.

The Chairman stated he attended the Tourism Development Forum on 11 March 2019 and a representative from the Royal Household attended and confirmed they had seen a surge in visitors at the Castle and were expecting more visitors when the Duke and Duchess of Sussex moved to Windsor.

Claire Milne asked if Windsor had considered a Christmas Craft Market in Windsor as a lot of other historic towns had them. the Town Manager said it had been discussed over many years and there was about to be a tender document being sent out. there had been a couple of attempts over the years and there had been a small one. There were a number of events planned at Christmas but it was not possible to put a stall in front of a shop as there were some parts of Peascod Street that were too narrow and the stores did not want a stall right outside their shop for six weeks. There had been a German Market in the Royal Station but it had caused problems for retailers.

David Scott, Head of Communities, Partnerships and Enforcement confirmed York House would be reopening in April 2019. The Town Manager confirmed there had been no interest from potential tenants at the old Fenwicks site in Windsor Yards. Regular discussion about the unit took place but, nothing concrete had been forthcoming. The landlords were looking at a number of pop-up options for the site.

Helen Price asked why the Council were not successful in obtaining a Better High Street Fund bid. Councillor Dudley explained there were two phases of the fund and the second phase was better; officers felt it was better to go for the second phase as it was worth £25m for both Windsor and Maidenhead and the decision would be made in the next three months.

Susy Shearer said the police from outside the area were cycling down Peascod Street because the signage was too high and cyclists did not see it. The Chairman replied the signs were set at specific height and cyclists that cycled down that street would not follow signs and would be able to tell it was a pedestrianised area. It was only one officer that cycled down that street and so it was raised so they could be informed.

Councillor S. Rayner stated there were new business rates relief for businesses on the high street that would benefit if they applied for it.

The Chairman provided a brief update on the work of the Aviation Forum. He said there were no extra attendees at the last meeting despite raising it with the Windsor Town Forum in December. He stated a consultation had been published but the plans only showed the noise on individual runways and not the two runways at the same time so, Windsor would be in a corridor of noise. Another consultation was coming shortly around land mass. The Leader of the Council was at court on Monday 11 March 2019 to help start the legal challenge on the grounds of noise and air pollution.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....