

MAIDENHEAD TOWN FORUM

MONDAY, 20 JANUARY 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Clive Baskerville, Gurpreet Bhangra (Vice-Chairman), Simon Bond, Phil Haseler, Geoff Hill, Greg Jones, Gurch Singh (Chair), Chris Targowski and Helen Taylor

Also in attendance: Simon Fisher (Courtney Buses)

Officers: Mark Beeley, Steph James, Kevin Mist and Barbara Richardson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baldwin, Stimson and Reynolds. An apology was also received from Ben Smith.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMIOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on the 4th November 2019 be approved.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed them that it was being recorded.

UPDATE ON REDEVELOPMENT AROUND MAIDENHEAD

Barbara Richardson provided the Forum with an update on regeneration around Maidenhead. Parking would have increased in provision across the borough after the regeneration and there would be a significant amount of change to parking in the town centre. Current plans were for a 'one stage construction', this would mean knocking down the existing car park before the new car park was in operation. There would be a report going to Cabinet for consideration in February.

The construction work on York Road was progressing well, with the construction of the building currently at 5th floor level. The project was on target and phase 2 was due to start by the end of 2020. Phase 3 would involve the heritage centre relocation and was not due to commence until 2023.

The St Clouds Way project would be constructed in two large phases. The car park to the rear of the site would remain until at least 2023. The site on Ray Mill Road East, known as St Edmunds House, was submitted for planning in April, but was still waiting to go to committee for consideration.

Nicholson's Shopping Centre redevelopment proposals were also progressing, with Areli holding public consultations. There were plans to have around 250,000 square feet of office space, up to 100,000 square feet of retail and over 600 residential units as part of the plans.

A resident asked about disabled parking in the Broadway car park and whether this would be maintained in the new car park. Barbara Richardson said that shop mobility spaces would be

relocated to West Street during the construction period and then a new provision would be available in the new car park.

Councillor Baskerville asked about parking and whether the number of spaces in the town centre had reached its lowest point. Barbara Richardson explained that the number of spaces had never become negative and that there were currently around 3,400 spaces available, with around 700 new additional spaces to come as part of the regeneration programme.

Rebecca Taylor, from JTP, explained the Vision and Charter that JTP had been creating. They recently held a Community Planning Day which was attended by over 300 people. There were a number of key issues raised at the consultation, particularly that the town centre was 'unattractive'. To tackle this, new cycle routes, green links and river walkways had been included in the plans. Young people were an important focus for JTP, especially giving them a good range of services that would make them want to stay in Maidenhead. Six key assets had been identified, for example being a town with neighbours, but also six challenges, for example number of cars and air quality.

The vision statement was designed to try and capture the essence of the work with the main message to try and reconnect the town with its centre. It was also important that this was done in a sustainable way and that there was an opportunity to restore civic pride in Maidenhead.

Matthew Shaw, Chairman of the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum, asked if there was any way of breaking down the data from the consultation, to see which groups of people engaged the most. Rebecca Taylor confirmed that this data was available and would form part of the appendices. A further question asked whether there would be any further public consultations. He was told that there were no further consultations planned and that a report would be going to Cabinet at the end of April.

SHOPPENHANGERS ROAD SINKHOLE AND UPDATE ON KEY TRANSPORT PLANS

Due to the absence of Ben Smith, Councillor Haseler gave the Forum an update which had been passed on from Ben.

- Maidenhead Station:
 - Highway works at Broadway junction and amendments to the car park exit were now complete.
 - Works at the Queen Street / A308 were substantially complete with the simplified junction; new traffic signals and enhanced pedestrian facilities had been installed.
 - Work has commenced to create the cycle hub adjacent to the station forecourt which was scheduled for completion in April 2020.
 - The forecourt works would only commence once the existing parking had been relocated to Stafferton Way multi-storey car park.

- Maidenhead 'Missing Links'
 - This project would create a cycle route from Maidenhead Station to North Town Moor, which would link to the cycle network to Cookham.
 - There were a number of phases, the most significant of which was a new cycle crossing of the A4 linking the town to Kidwells Park.
 - All elements were at the design and development stage with one of the first phases being an enhanced bridge over Strand Water (Town Moor) to create a safe cycle route. The remaining elements would then be subject to phased delivery over 18 – 24 months commencing summer 2020.

- Housing Sites Enabling Works
 - This project was a package of traffic management measures to deliver additional capacity at five key junctions around Maidenhead.

- The first junction to be completed would be the Stafferton Way (A308) roundabout which would be resurfaced and altered upon completion of the station works.

Councillor Haseler said that the right turn out of the Broadway car park had worked well over Christmas, which had been alleviating traffic coming out of Queen Street especially now there was a lack of a right turn there.

A resident said that the traffic on this stretch had presented a risk to pedestrians who had been crossing the road and were not aware of the cars. Councillor Haseler said that there was a pelican crossing in close proximity to this area and this should be utilised by residents.

Councillor Taylor said that something could be done to change the traffic lights to help the traffic flow out of Broadway car park. She said that the Queen Street lights were still not phased right and that there was one set of traffic lights too many on the junction. Without this extra set, the flow of traffic on the busy junction could be improved. Council Hill suggested that a unified traffic control system could be implemented which would be able to adapt to congestion.

A resident raised concerns that the work around the station was not helping those with a visual impairment. The traffic light crossing at the station was raised and the tree base was sloped which made it hard for wheelchairs users. They said that it was important for an inclusive design to be considered.

While Thames Water were unavailable to attend the meeting, they provided an update about the sinkhole on Shoppenhangers Road. They had located the collapse in the sewer pipe but have not been able to establish why the sewer collapsed. They have decided to replace and relay a large section of 75 meters which would help prevent further issues at the location.

The excavation had been ongoing for approximately 2 weeks. Whilst this work was being completed, two over pumps and an overland sewer were used to pump sewage from the manhole before the break to the manhole after.

There was an issue with the pumps at the weekend which caused some flooding. Due to the length of the sewer diversion and depth, approximately 3 to 4 metres, it was estimated that the work would take approximately 8 weeks. Thames Water were working extended hours, however should the works take longer than expected this would be communicated.

James Pugh, Manager at Maidenhead Golf Club, asked if signage could be put up that informed users that the Golf Club was still open. This request had been passed on to Thames Water and Ben Smith.

Simon Fisher, General Manager at Courtney Buses, informed Members of the impact the sinkhole had on the buses and future aspirations for the company. The sinkhole had not had a massive impact on services, with no cancellations and only added an extra ten minutes to some services.

Looking towards the future, Simon Fisher explained that Courtney Buses would be rebranded to Thames Valley Buses in May, with the vehicles changed to reflect the new name. The company was operating in a challenging environment, per head Maidenhead was the second lowest for bus usage in the country. There had also been a decline in the number of concessions using the buses around the town. Some extra stops in Broadway would be beneficial as a significant number of people wanted to access this area while lighting could be improved at the bus stop under the railway bridge.

Councillor Haseler asked if electric buses were something that had been considered. He was told that there was an electric bus trial currently ongoing in Slough, but after 5 hours the battery would be lower than 50%. Buses needed to be used all day and so it was unlikely to

be something available in Maidenhead in the next five years, unless there was significant battery progression.

Councillor Bhangra queried the type of bus that was currently being used, and was told that in the current fleet there were Euro 5/6 diesels. There were initially 4 hybrid buses but these had all been converted back to diesel.

Councillor Jones asked what more Maidenhead could do to help promote bus travel to residents. Simon Fisher explained that one factor was due to parking in the town being cheap and accessible. In comparison, Reading had extensive and well used bus travel due to poor and expensive parking options.

Simon Fisher told the Forum that they were currently developing a new app which would allow residents to buy tickets and plan routes on the go.

CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE

Due to Councillor Stimson sending her apologies, the Chairman said that the issue could be brought back to a future meeting.

The Chairman introduced a picture of a banner from Marlow which highlighted the Marlow Air Quality Management Area, and encouraged car drivers to be cautious with their driving.

Councillor Jones commented that hoarding around Maidenhead for the redevelopment could be used to put the banner on.

Councillor Taylor said that while the idea was good in theory more practical ideas were needed, for example speed bumps. Something was needed to help prevent a fatal accident.

Councillor Baskerville said that racers needed to be encouraged to go to race tracks and learn how to drive properly. Organised car clubs could help achieve this.

MAIDENHEAD TOWN PARTNERSHIP

Steph James, Maidenhead Town Manager, explained to the Forum what the Maidenhead Town Partnership involved. It aimed to work with partners to make Maidenhead an attractive and memorable destination for residents, businesses and visitors. The idea was to make Maidenhead the best it could be, while working with businesses and the council on initiatives to support the town.

Members of the partnership included:

- RBWM
- Nicholson's Shopping Centre
- Three
- Shanly Homes
- Maidenhead and District Chamber of Commerce
- Norden Farm
- Countryside Limited
- Baylis Media

Funding for activities comes from income from private sector partners, commercial activity and sponsorship of events.

Looking at the national picture, the partnership was important to ensuring that Maidenhead did not suffer from reduced footfall and changing consumer habits. The partnership gave Maidenhead the opportunity to increase its footfall with a variety of different events. The 'Enjoy

Maidenhead' brand campaign had been a particular success, and would soon be changing its name to 'Make Maidenhead'.

Steph James explained the plans the partnership had for 2020. They would be focussing more on office workers, promoting food and drink and holding more events amongst other things. There could also be an increase in pop up shops, which were offered on a short term lease and could be used for things like art galleries and community projects too.

Councillor Jones said that he had seen a few business which had not kept their shopfronts in good condition and whether anything could be done to encourage this.

Steph James said that it had to be significant and an endangerment to health and safety before the council could step in, but shopfront grants could help improve this.

BRAYWICK LEISURE CENTRE UPDATE

Kevin Mist, Community Project Lead, gave an update on the construction of Braywick Leisure Centre. In 2016, a public consultation was held and it was hoped that Braywick would improve on the strength of the current Magnet Leisure Centre. The new building was designed to last 45 years and there was a desire to restore some civic pride in the project.

The application was 'tree led', which meant that there was a particular focus on retaining as many trees at the site as possible. There were aspirations for around 1 million people to visit the centre each year, with funding having been secured from future development on the Magnet site. Heating and lighting had already been installed and it was confirmed that the day after the Magnet closed, Braywick would be open to the public.

One of the main parts of the site was the street which went through the middle of the centre, which was 70m long and 7m wide. The street would go under the centre and would allow easy access to the car park. The swimming pool was 10 lanes and had a length of 25m, which was 2.5 times bigger than the current pool at the Magnet. Tiling of the changing room area was ahead of schedule and would include accessible changing rooms and toilets.

The café was another important aspect, which would be able to seat 100 and would have glazed doors which could be opened up to increase the space available. A cultural space was also included which would be able to seat up to 650 people, with 450 seats being retractable and 200 being on the ground floor.

It was confirmed that the opening date would be 5th September 2020.

A resident asked about the spoil which had been created from the construction. Kevin Mist confirmed that this was created due to clearing of the site before construction, with the majority being reused. Any leftover would be cleared before opening.

Councillor Taylor asked if there could be more planting on the boundary with the cemetery to ensure that there was adequate privacy and restrict noise caused by the leisure centre. Kevin Mist noted the suggestion and said that the centre had been designed appropriately with the cemetery in mind.

Councillor Bond asked about electric car charging points. Kevin Mist confirmed that there was currently 2 at the site but this would be increased to 6.

The Chairman asked about membership at Braywick and whether it would transfer across from the Magnet. He was informed that membership would be transferred for the first 12 months at the current price.

ITEM SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE FORUMS

Items that were suggested for future meetings:

- Maidenhead United Football Club – Update from the club on their plans to move from York Road to Braywick Park
- Street Furniture in the high street

It was requested that item suggestions be emailed to mark.beeley@rbwm.gov.uk

DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.50 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....