

WINDSOR TOWN FORUM

MONDAY, 13 JANUARY 2020

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Samantha Rayner (Vice-Chairman), Christine Bateson, Jon Davey, Neil Knowles, Carole Da Costa and Shamsul Shelim

Officers: Wendy Binmore and Vanessa Faulkner

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Price, Hilton and Davies.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Rayner – Declared a personal interest as she is the owner of land that will be impacted by the expansion at Heathrow. Cllr Rayner left the room during the discussion of the third runway at Heathrow.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2019 be approved subject to the following amendments:

Update on the Windsor Neighbourhood Plans

Susy Shearer told the Forum that the Windsor Neighbourhood Plan was going to examination. It was unclear when the Examiner would respond with *his* findings. There would be the possibility to make *any necessary changes through the examination process*.

Cycle Routes

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Planner, introduced the item and outlined the Cycling Action Plan 2018-2028 that had been formally adopted in January 2019 after being developed through the Cycle Forum *and specific Task & Finish Group*.

When designing new cycle routes, the Principal Transport Planner said that the use of traffic-free routes wherever possible was desirable, and that quiet roads would be used where this was not possible, or where segregation could not be implemented. *The new Windsor “Quiet Route” had been created to help meet those needs*. Filtered permeability to give cyclists priority and using cycle symbols on the main carriageway across side turnings had been mooted. Individually branded routes to form a coherent network had been created, and it had been decided that it would assist cyclists if travel times were shown in minutes rather than distance in miles. The Forum was told that a route between Maidenhead and Windsor would be considered next. *Cllr Davies thanked Gordon Oliver and Susy Shearer for their extensive work on cycling matters in Windsor*.

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Chairman thanked members of the public for attending and opened the Forum with the latest update from Heathrow.

The result of the Judicial Review had not been published and had been delayed. The CAA rejected some of Heathrow's costings and had sent them back. Under the terms of the Development Consent Order (DCO), Heathrow could submit specific costs if the DCO was not

going ahead. Heathrow had increased their costs and asked to include more topics which the CAA has rejected. The response from Heathrow is that they will be delayed until 2028/29 which would have an impact on Windsor as they would not undertake any work on the north runway. The Chairman had received comments from Heathrow saying Heathrow could begin the works in 2023/24 so that aircraft could take off from the north runway. There would be more consultations run by Heathrow in June 2020 prior to the DCO process.

Mr Holland stated Heathrow intended to increase the volume of aircraft by 25,000 and asked if the Chairman's update included those numbers. The Chairman confirmed that the answer to that question was left out of anything that was published.

Mr Kenyan stated Heathrow was a major project but people were turning their backs on it. He wanted the focus to be on pollution levels as it did not seem to be a priority to monitor pollution, yet it was a key factor. A report had been published in Chicago of the results of a five year study on airports and their pollution levels. Pollution had been surveyed on the east side of Heathrow and that would have an effect on people's health. He wanted to see big steps on this issue. The Chairman said he was aware of the increase in pollution and that would be dealt with under the environmental impacts of the DCO.

Children's Services Update

The Chairman stated there was an ongoing consultation across the Borough on the future structure of Children's Services; when the consultation ended, feedback would be brought to the Forum. The consultation was running from 13 January 2020 until 18 March 2020. Councillor Tisi added the consultation was about the future of youth centres and youth services to see if they should have two hubs (one in Windsor and one in Maidenhead) with some outposts in other areas of the Borough. There was an online consultation as well as drop-in sessions around the Borough.

ARMY COVENANT

Vanessa Faulkner, Service Lead - HR People Services, explained to the Forum her role in HR with the Armed Forces Covenant. She stated she worked with the Head of HR, Corporate Projects and IT, and with Councillor Rayner to show the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces and to encourage ex-forces personnel to apply for vacancies within the Council. Part of her role was also to encourage existing Council staff to join the Army Reserves or become a Cadet Instructor and the Council has introduced a number of policies to support any employee who wanted to do so, including an additional two weeks paid annual leave each year. Wives and families are also very supported and encouraged.

Every job vacancy at the Council gets circulated via the MOD Career Transition Partnership and Forces Families job sites, as well as within the two regiments so that the families of serving Army personnel can also apply for jobs with the Council. Vanessa provided a little more detail that ex-Army personnel apply for current job vacancies with the Council they are shortlisted if they meet the minimum criteria for any role.

We have also updated screensavers and letterheads so they show the Army Covenant logo and there are dedicated page about the Army Covenant on the Council's website, which contains lots of information.

The Council were currently silver members of the Covenant but, Vanessa Faulkner explained the Council were considering going for gold in 2020 so the Council could show its commitment to the highest level.

Councillor Davey said the work being done was excellent and very important. Councillor Rayner stated there was a reservist unit in Windsor that can help anyone trying to join the Army.

Councillor Knowles wanted to know how many members of staff at the Council had joined to be a reservist. The Service Lead - HR People Services responded a survey of all employees was carried out six months previously which showed numbers were low. There were only 11 members of staff that had any military links. Councillor Knowles suggested running a recruitment event to show what reservists did, and to encourage more people to join. The Service Lead - HR People Services explained there was a stand at the last Wellbeing Day which showed how people could join and that a Reservist information morning was being arranged.

Councillor Knowles said he would provide the details of the organisations and recruitment agencies which specifically helped ex-forces personnel back into work, to the Service Lead - HR People Services. The Service Lead - HR People Services added that an article on joining the reserves was being published in the next edition of the Around the Royal Borough publication. Susy Shearer stated that if there were posters available and leaflets, she would put them up in her local churches and she could include the website address in the online communications of the Churches Together newsletter.

Councillor Knowles requested that both Families Officers from the Welsh and the Coldstream Guards attend the next meeting of the Windsor Town Forum to give their voice to the Forum. By nature, the armed forces were quite insular but, he believed if the Families Officers were to attend, they could get some of their concerns addressed. Councillor Rayner stated the Council also had the One Borough Group which would be a good forum for the two regiments to attend. She added the Council could never do enough to support the armed forces.

- ❖ **Action** – Vanessa Faulkner, Service Lead - HR People Services, to send Susy Shearer the posters and any information on the Army Covenant to help with recruitment into reservist roles.
- ❖ **Action** – Vanessa Faulkner, Service Lead - HR People Services, and/or Councillor Knowles to invite the Families Officers from the Coldstream Guards and the Welsh Guards to the next meeting of the Windsor Town Forum.

HOSTILE VEHICLE MEASURES UPDATE

Councillor Rayner provided Members with a brief update on the progress of getting the Hostile Vehicle Measures (HVM) installed. The key points were as follows:

- The second phase of the replacement at the Castle hotel was to be completed by 31 January 2020
- Thames Street section would run until 28 February 2020 and that would replace the barrier outside the Real Greek restaurant.
- Park Street would be completed by 9 April 2020
- Victoria Street would be completed by 11 May 2020 in time for the start of the main tourist season in the summer.

Mr Holland stated the ones that had been installed were identical to the ones installed in London and were nothing like the ones that were shown in the consultation in the Guildhall. Councillor Rayner said she was hoping the new barriers at Park Street would be more aesthetic. The Chairman stated the barriers being different to those shown at the consultation could be down to cost. But, the new barriers in Peascod Street were very attractive and they were easier to operate. Thames Street and River Street barriers will be reduced to just one barrier. The Chairman confirmed the barriers were being funded by the Council and Thames Valley Police. Bids had been submitted to the Ministry of Defence and Central Government but, they had been unsuccessful. Councillor Tisi stated the Council were funding £942k and Thames Valley Police were funding £250k towards the costs of the replacement barriers.

Mr Holland stated the traffic in the area surrounding the Castle was hell and cars were parked within 30 to 40 metres to the military band during changing of the guard. There were cars without permits parked and there was no one checking the cars; he felt the situation was

becoming very complacent. He had spoken to the police about it and been told it was a Council matter but, the parking wardens were not nearby. The Chairman said he was aware of the situation and he had made comments about weak points in the area but, had received a negative outcome. He added he would speak to Duncan Sharkey, the Managing Director of the council, to write to Thames Valley Police to see if the situation could be resolved with the assistance of Neil Walter in Parking. The Chairman went on to say that although the cars were not displaying a permit or a ticket, cars could still be parked legally if they purchased a ticket using their mobile phone as parking had also gone digital. Councillor Rayner reminded the forum that there was an online report it function on the council's website and she would request more frequent patrols by wardens in the area.

TOWN MANAGER UPDATE

The Chairman explained that the Town Manager was unable to attend the Forum meeting and so he would provide the Town Manager update. The key points highlighted were as follows:

- The White Company was now open and trading in Windsor Yards
- The unit where Next used to be was temporarily occupied with a pop-up shop.
- Another new children's wear shop had opened up in the town.
- Karen Millen had closed.
- The William Hill shop was still vacant and for it to become a different retail unit, it may need a change of use
- J. Hunt, the butchers, was still vacant.
- Madam Posh was reopening in April 2020 following their refurbishment.
- Gayle's Bakery was opening in the town.
- Lakeland was closing at the end of the week commencing 13 January 2020, and there were no plans for that site as yet to become a cinema.

The Chairman stated that Windsor Yards and Windsor Royal Station were private areas and the Council had no jurisdiction over the units in those areas.

The Ivy restaurant at the Harte & Garter had been delayed and may need some additional planning permission due to the refurbishment being undertaken in a listed building and in a conservation area.

Susy Shearer stated Pure Spa had not closed but it had moved and she was also aware of questions over Metro Bank and Superdry so she wanted to raise that to see if the Councillors knew anything about them potentially closing. The Chairman stated a nail bar and men's groomers had opened up in Peascod Street and Metro Bank was subject to financial discussions.

Residents asked if there were any future plans for the Town or, any updates on any ongoing plans regarding the Town. Councillor Rayner responded that there was a Windsor Project but, that was not going to Cabinet until February 2020. However, she would request the Managing Director of the RBWM Property Company attends the next meeting of the Windsor Town Forum to discuss the strategy for the Town.

Councillor Davey stated that he agreed with the residents. there was always a lot of talking done at the Windsor Town forum, but he would like to see more action with Councillors being more involved and voting on stuff. He wanted to be more engaged and proactive. The Chairman responded that the Windsor Town Forum did not have any voting powers and as a resident, he would also like things to get done. The Windsor Town Forum was for discussion and then officers and Members reported back to the Council for things to move forward. Councillor Knowles stated there was nobody there to hold to account which meant the Forum lacked accountability; the public wanted to attend the meetings and challenge the Council over services and other important issues. He wanted to challenge officers regarding the Hostile Vehicle Measures but, no officers were in attendance. Councillor Knowles added there was scope for the Council to allow the Forum to bring things forward to move them along.

Councillor Tisi stated the Terms of Reference for the Windsor Town Forum talked about commissioning small projects or investigating projects that could be done. There were no reports at the Forum so it was not possible for read up on matters. Councillor Bateson stated that this was her first Windsor Town Forum meeting and all the items on the agenda should have an officer present so they can answer questions. It was very unfortunate as there was not a full Panel and no officers were present. She hoped the next meeting had a better attendance for each item. The Chairman responded it was the first meeting that officers were not in attendance. It was a Forum with Councillors from the local area that could answer questions relevant to their Wards and the surrounding areas.

The Town Manager had been working with the MEAM Coordinator and the community Wardens to take positive action with rough sleepers as there had been encampments set up with tents in the Goswells area and so the tents had been removed and offers of accommodation and assistance made to the rough sleepers. The Chairman said he had carried out walk rounds of the Town Centre and had been talking to the owners of Zizzi's to resolve issues so he could identify where his land ended; he then went up onto the High Street and spoke to the Town Manager as there were three people that had laid out their belongings on the street and a container for donations outside the Castle. All the items had been left unattended and cardboard had been placed in bus shelters too so he had been patrolling every day. Trinity Church was being used five days per week and there had been an application for a caravan to be placed on Council land by the Coach Park to help the homeless. SWEP was ongoing and resources were being directed to alleviate homelessness.

Councillor Shelim stated the Forum used to be held quarterly and well attended by the public. Now that the meetings were bi-monthly, attendance by the public was dropping and he felt it was because there were too many meetings.

Susy Shearer stated she had concerns about place making and the appearance of the Town. She was aware that JTP were providing information on how Windsor would look and what to expect. The unit vacancies were higher than usual and it was important to get them filled as it impacted the look of the Town. She added that in the Borough Local Plan, there was a lot of place making for Maidenhead and Ascot, but very little for Windsor. Councillor Knowles said the homelessness issue was to divide the line between beggars and homeless rough sleepers; Westminster Council used to give passes to homeless people so they were able to be identified and separate from professional beggars. Homeless people should have somewhere safe to sleep so they can stay in Windsor.

Councillor Rayner responded the Council were looking into a three stage plan so the Borough could accommodate rough sleepers. Susy shearer stated More than a Shelter were concentrated in the Town Centre and provided people a safe, comfortable and hospitable place to stay, seven days a week. Information on the service provided could be found on the More than a Shelter Website. Susy Shearer added she helped to provide food to Trinity church to help and she wanted all the agencies to come together and work instead of working separately. Councillor Rayner responded the future was the Council had to work better with charities.

One local resident said the process was not quite right, and residents were being quite upset as there were serious incidents happening where the police were called but then no update provided afterwards. The Chairman stated the police would be invited to the next Windsor Town Forum meeting to answer any questions from the public.

- ❖ **Action** – The Clerk to invite Tracy Hendren, Head of Housing, and the MEAM Coordinator to the next Windsor Town Forum meeting with a report on the council's approach to homelessness.
- ❖ **Action** – The clerk to invite the Managing Director of the RBWM Property Company to the next Windsor Town Forum meeting to discuss the ongoing strategy of the Town.

- ❖ **Action** – The Clerk to invite Thames Valley Police to the next Town Forum meeting to provide an update on crime figures for the Windsor area and to answer any questions from residents.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Members discussed potential future items and those to be considered were as follows:

- Royal British Legion – and their plans for the Windsor area Poppy Appeal.
- VE day plans
- Full report on Hostile Vehicle Measures and vehicles being parked on Sheet Street during changing of the guard.
- Windsor night time economy
- Thames Valley Police update
- Military Risk Assessments for changing of the guard to assess and evaluate security and safety in terms of events and action points
- Windsor homelessness
- Windsor Town Plan – Barbara Richardson to present
- Parking machine review
- Christmas Market
- Windsor Plan – looking at retail offer in the Town Centre
- Report on poor quality road dressings that have not been resurfaced.
- Report on air pollution.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.30 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....