

DISABILITY AND INCLUSION FORUM

MONDAY, 27 JULY 2020

PRESENT: Angela Clark, Lisa Hughes, Sharon Bunce, Sharon Carrigan, Peter Haley, Dominic Manley, Jo Maxwell-Heron, Robin Pemberton, Councillors Gurpreet Bhangra and John Bowden

Also in Attendance: Barbara Richardson (MD of RBWM Property Company Ltd), Councillors Bond, Del Campo and C Da Costa

Officers: Shilpa Manek, David Scott and Ben Smith

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed all to the Forum and informed Forum Members that both Lisa Hughes, Vice Chairman and Angela Clark, Chairman had both attended Full Council on 25 February for the budget discussion and had been disappointed with the disproportional effect to people with disabilities.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Claire Watson.

MINUTES FROM THE LAST FORUM AND ACTIONS MONITORING

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the Forums held on 9 December 2019 and 6 January 2020 were agreed.

MATTERS ARISING - MAIDENHEAD STATION FORECOURT

Ben Smith, Head of Commissioning, updated the Forum on the Maidenhead Station forecourt progress. Ben Smith showed the Forum a map and highlighted the drop off points, the suggested location of the bus shelter, the flat access to Stafferton Road Car Park and the drop off point, south of the taxi rank.

Councillor Carole Da Costa asked if the disabled bays would be time limited. She explained that it would be better if they had no time limits as people could be parking and heading to long appointments in London. Ben Smith was not aware but would find out and report back. Councillor Bowden suggested a mix of timed and non-timed. Lisa Hughes confirmed that the current disabled parking bays were not time restricted. It was suggested by the Forum to have all disabled parking bays unrestricted, with no time limits.

ACTION: Ben Smith to find out if there were going to be any time restrictions on the disabled parking bays.

Peter Hayley asked about the bus stop where People to Places buses could stop. Ben Smith informed the Forum that a new bus stop was being put in the station, extended in size for buses. There would also be another stop under the bridge. The accessibility route was being carried out and other minor jobs were still being done to make the station more accessible.

MATTERS ARISING - A308 TOUCAN CROSSING AND SURROUNDING PAVEMENTS

Ben Smith updated the Forum on this matter. The current bus stop at Grenfell Place would be removed once the scheme was complete. The new scheme would be fully accessible with a bus stop and shelter. The crossing from the town side to the station was a lot better than it had been. An audit had been passed and the trees needed to be retained with conditions. The Chairman pointed out that the crossing still caused some visual impairment concerns. The Chairman and Vice Chairman would be very happy to meet with Officers at the site to discuss further. Lisa Hughes asked if an accessibility audit had been carried out and Ben Smith confirmed that one had for the whole scheme. Lisa Hughes asked if it could be shared.

ACTION: Ben Smith to share the accessibility audit with the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Lisa Hughes continued to inform the Forum that the trees at the point of crossing were obstacles, the pavements were uneven and the pebbles around the trees were also an obstacle.

Ben Smith informed the Forum that stringent conditions had been placed on retaining the tree, relocation of the tree had also been suggested but had been refused. David Scott continued that extensive discussions had taken place with limited options. The scheme included conditions that as much greenery as possible needed to remain.

ACTION: Officers to revisit the site first, followed by a joint Officer and Forum Member visit.

The trees on the station site were discussed and the possibility of adding further trees there. Ben Smith reported that this had been a difficult site to design.

Councillor Del Campo asked about the trees around the clock tower and Ben Smith confirmed that new trees would be planted adjacent to the clock tower.

MATTERS ARISING - BLUE BADGE PARKING

The Chairman opened the discussion on blue badge spaces in Maidenhead. Nine places had already been lost and none had been replaced.

Ben Smith apologised as he had not managed to get an update from Neil Walter, Parking Principal, who was on leave but would circulate before the next meeting.

ACTION: Ben Smith to circulate an update on the blue badge spaces before the next meeting.

Points raised by the Forum included the following:

- Spaces in front of Town Hall had gone, which had been very useful for visiting the Town Hall and/or library.
- Could the Members courtyard parking be used as the disabled parking.
- What the formula was to calculate how many blue badge parking spaces should there be available. Ben Smith advised the Forum that there was a recommended percentage in new build car parks but not for on-street parking.

The Chairman summed up and suggested for this item to stay on every Forum agenda. This had been discussed many times, but no solutions had been suggested.

ACTION: Ben Smith to take forward and update at the next meeting.

MATTERS ARISING - REGENERATION UPDATE

Barbara Richardson, Managing Director, RBWM Property Company Ltd, updated the Forum on the Regeneration.

Due to Covid-19 the York Road site had been closed till 18 May 2020. Various measures had been put into place in order to reopen the site, mainly social distancing of workers. Previously, there were 150 workers, which had now been reduced to between 70 to 80 workers. There had been some delays to phase one, with an approximate 4-6 month delay to completion. Some of the completion would begin in 2022. Countryside would start some sort of sales launch in September 2020. The phase two work was due to begin at the end of 2020 but this would now be delayed till February/March 2021 if the contractors were to catch up with the backlog.

The West Street project had also been delayed. This was currently being used for ShopMobility. This would result in only one move for them.

The next regeneration site was St Clouds Way, which had been delayed as 75% of staff had been furloughed. The planning application was planned to go to the planning committee in September/October 2020 for work to begin in April/May 2021, depending on the new Braywick Leisure Centre build. The completion of the Braywick Leisure Centre was planned for October 2020.

The site at Reform Road was being relooked at. It was possible this would be used as office space due to the flood zone status.

The public consultation for the Golf Course site was due to begin in summer 2020 but this has now been delayed. This needed to be done in an efficient way, dependent on the Covid-19 progression.

The borough was not the applicant for the shopping centre, only the car park. The application had been submitted on 29 May 2020 and was currently going through planning consultation.

Barbara Richardson informed the Forum that there was also one Windsor site, the Windsor coach park. This was being looked at for putting a mix of development on the site. This would not be until 2021.

The Chairman asked about the proposal for parking for patients of the St Cloud Way surgery. Barbara Richardson informed the Forum that parking would be available for staff at the front of the surgery and adjacent parking for patients. This had two key phases. The car parking would remain till 2023/24. A solution had to be found for staff parking or to seek an area to relocate the entire health centre to a major health hub with its own parking. There had been a 4-6-month delay with this.

MATTERS ARISING - PLANNING APPLICATION FOR MULTI STOREY CAR PARK NICHOLSON QUARTER

The Chairman informed the Forum that a response had been submitted on behalf of the Forum. Lisa Hughes thanked everyone for their input and individual submissions. Lisa Hughes reported that objections had also been submitted by Mencap, SportsAble, Stroke Club, MS Society, People to Places, Autism Partnership Board and PaCiP. Lisa Hughes was concerned that many issues had been picked up by the Forum and not by the professionals.

Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that pre-application meetings that presumably took place between RBWM and the applicant did not consider or address the access and use of the car park People with Disability (PwD). Plans had been submitted without due regard for the needs of PwD or any communication with relevant organisations such as P2P. Over the past year, the Nicholson Quarter developers had emphasised the community involvement in developing their plans, which in some ways made the car park debacle even worse. Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that Councillor Reynolds had offered to set up a phone call with the

developers, Barbara Richardson would discuss with the consultants and developers and Councillor Greg Jones would raise with Lead Members for Planning and the Chairman of the Planning Panel.

Lisa Hughes went through some recent case law which tested whether a local authority complied with its Public Sector Equality Duty when it granted planning permission for a redevelopment. Lisa Hughes asked if there were any EQIAs or other documents which demonstrated RBWM's compliance with its PESD in relation to the new MSCP, and in granting permission for the redevelopment of the Town Hall Car Park. Lisa Hughes continued that at the December Forum meeting, it had been flagged that there was lack of knowledge of the PESD and wider Equality Duties within Planning, Highways and on the Development Panels. This was another example of who needed to decide what appropriate training was required for officers and councillors so that they could understand and comply with their Equality Duties.

Lisa Hughes continued that the car park was the only place that people with disabilities could park because of a number of reasons. This included no blue badge parking on the ground floor, low ceiling height, there was no ShopMobility on the ground floor, there was no drop off point, all ShopMobility and Changing Places was on the second floor, the lifts were not big enough to accommodate wheelchairs and the doors were not wide enough. The ShopMobility and Changing Places were on the second floor.

David Scott informed the Forum that the Managing Director had already put in place a new post for a position to focus on equality, including the training aspect. The advert had already gone out. David Scott informed the Forum that he would be the interim Lead Officer for the Forum until the Equality Officer was in post.

Peter Hayley informed the Forum that People to Places had been operating in Windsor and Maidenhead for over ten years and the number one complaint had always been the car park. It was essential to get the car park right.

Lisa Hughes pointed out that currently all blue badge spaces and ShopMobility were on the ground floor with level access to the High Street and the Nicholsons Centre.

ACTION: Place on next meeting agenda

MATTERS ARISING - HOUSING FOR ALL WITH DISABILITIES

Lisa Hughes, Vice Chairman informed the Forum that the submissions made to the December 2019 consultation had been reviewed by the planning inspector. In early June, the inspector sent a Matters, Inquiries and Questions (MIQs) to RBWM. These answers would be the basis of the planning hearings later in the year which would test the plans legal compliance and soundness.

The MIQs contained several housing questions for RBWM relating to the elderly and People with Disabilities (PwD). The inspector asked if the plan enough to support the needs of older people and those with disabilities. Lisa Hughes would be attending the planning hearings.

Lisa Hughes reported that both the Chairman and Vice Chairman would be meeting with Cllr McWilliams as the Lead Member for Housing, Russell O'Keefe as the Executive Director Place, Adrien Waite, Head of Planning and Tracey Hendren, Head of Housing and Environmental Health. They would discuss the types of housing and joining up housing, Housing Solutions, AfC and Optalis and Planning.

ACTION: To report back at next meeting.

ITEM - ACCESS TO RESTAURANTS AND PUBS

Dominic Manley gave a presentation to the Forum. Dominic Manley informed that he lived in Maidenhead and was a wheelchair user. Dominic Manley went through the presentation and explained how AccessAble worked.

After listening to the presentation, the Forum felt that this was something to pursue. It was agreed that a project scope would be agreed. The points that were discussed included updating of information on the AccessAble database, cost, other parallel strategies to take forward and contacting the restaurants to feed in accurate information through a template.

The Chairman requested that the costs of this system be investigated and a further discussion to take place at the next meeting.

Robin Pemberton informed the Forum that this had previously been in place and that he had a hardcopy of the form that had been used to collate the data.

ACTION: David Scott and Robin Pemberton to discuss collection of the form for scanning and circulating to the Forum.

ACTION: Place item on next agenda

ITEM - ACCESSIBILITY IN GREEN SPACES

Lisa Hughes reported to the Forum that an Accessibilities Access Forum had been set up. A framework had been created to develop walking route spaces for all to access. The Milestones Statement and PROW improvement plan included a section on accessibility as a priority (Milestones 2020-21 attached).

Lisa Hughes continued to inform the Forum that six pilot sites around the borough had been selected for an accessibility audit and mapping. This included Battlemead, which had already been surveyed and recommendations for improvement had been sent to the Park and Countryside. Six benches with arms had been installed earlier this year. The surveying of Green Way and Cock Marsh was in progress and the Local Access Forum carried out a site visit at Ockwells Park and Thrift Wood in early July and initial accessibility feedback had been provided.

It was essential that people with access issues could enjoy the countryside and green spaces.

DATE OF NEXT FORUM

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The next meeting date of Monday 14 September 2020 was noted by the Forum for a virtual meeting.

The meeting, which began at 11.00 am, finished at 1.10 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....