

DISABILITY AND INCLUSION FORUM

MONDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

PRESENT: Lisa Hughes (Vice-Chairman), Sharon Bunce, Sharon Carrigan, Tim Clare, Peter Haley, Dominic Manley, Robin Pemberton and Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra

Also in attendance: Councillor Maureen Hunt, Oran Norris-Browne and Councillor Donna Stimson

Officers: Shilpa Manek, Daniel Brookman, Angela Huisman and Helen Preedy

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Vice Chairman, sitting as Chairman, welcomed all to the meeting.

Lisa Hughes commented what a summer of sport we had had, including the phenomenal tennis match.

The Royal Borough had been put on the map by some amazing Olympians and Paralympians. Tom Dean, Moe Sbihi and Jack Beaumont came home with Olympic medals and Louise Sugden claimed Bronze in Paralympic Powerlifting, Jeanette Chippington, at her 7th Paralympics and at the age of 51, got to the canoe semi-finals but couldn't defend her title. Another local Paralympian is Tamas Gasper who competed for Hungary at his first games and finished fifth in W1 Archery. Lisa Hughes commented that Tamas Gasper had been a clubmate of hers at Sportsable and had made outstanding progress in the sport.

Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that Chris Humphris, who was a director at SportsAble would be joining the Forum later to give an update on the various sports and other activities offered by others and how people could still participate.

Also, over the summer, the government had published a National Disability Strategy and a new Autism Strategy for England. It was positive that the government was setting out aims and plans but this needed to progress at pace to legislation and actions which reduced or removed obstacles that held back children and adults with disabilities.

At a local level, RBWM had been consulting with residents. Some had now closed but there was still time – and Lisa Hughes urged all to look at the consultations and to contribute to the Big Conversation on Active Travel. It was a great opportunity to highlight specific issues that made it difficult or impossible to walk or cycle in the local area. Sharon Bunce would provide an update on the few places that had been reviewed with councillors and officers but People and Families With Disabilities right across the Borough, also needed to point out issues such as pavement obstructions, lack of dropped kerbs by important places like shops, schools and medical centres or where crossing point improvements are needed. There were three engagement sessions between now and the end of the month where you could find out more.

There were signs that more organisations, including RBWM, were starting to tackle issues affecting PwD and engaging with the Forum to improve places and processes. Last week Tim Clare and Lisa Hughes had helped the Crown Estate review

accessibility at Savill Gardens and Windsor Great Park by being interviewed and filmed. Lisa Hughes commented that Tim Clare was, of course, fantastic and she hoped she hadn't put off prospective visitors!

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Bowden, Angela Clark and Claire Watson.

MINUTES FROM THE LAST FORUM AND ACTIONS MONITORING

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the minutes of the last meeting were a true and accurate record.

These were proposed by Peter Haley and seconded by Councillor Bhangra.

The regeneration item had been postponed to the next meeting.

BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

The Borough Local Plan had been submitted by RBWM to the Planning Inspector in 2017. Since then there had been two Planning Inspection hearings, changes made to the plan and modifications proposed by the Planning Inspector.

The public consultation on the main modifications ended on 5th September 2021. The next steps were for the council to collate all the consultation comments and submit them to the Planning Inspector. She would review them and produce a final report. Lisa Hughes had asked the Planning Inspector's program officer for the closing dates of those two actions but hadn't yet received a reply. Once the final report had been issued it would indicate whether the BLP could proceed and come to full council for their approval and become the adopted plan.

WEB IMPROVEMENTS

Dan Brookman gave a presentation to the Forum.

Dominic Manley asked if the site was currently released. Dan Brookman responded that it was released but the postcode lookup and accessibility was only functioning on the live site, the white space integration was close to complete. The feedback loop would be made live in a few weeks.

Lisa Hughes asked about the different websites, there were at least three that Lisa was aware of. They were rbwm.gov.uk, rbwm.moderngov.gov.uk and rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk. Lisa Hughes asked what would happen with these going forward. Dan Brookman explained to the Forum that the rbwm.gov.uk site was the core website and was there for the detailed information and for the council to give core information to residents and for businesses to contact the council. The Moderngov site was an external provider that was a document management system that maintained the council meeting agendas and minutes. The [rbwmtogether](http://rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk) website was a new engagement platform that would have all council consultations where communities could engage with the council and also with each other. The Windsor.gov website was managed by the tourism marketing team, which was also third party but managed by the team. That was not managed by Dan Brookman but all guidelines would need to be followed for that website too. Lisa Hughes asked if any other

websites were planned and Dan Brookman commented that none were currently planned.

Lisa Hughes commented that there were some issues currently that included going through multiple pages to get information. The consultations loading page was very difficult to find, there were no closing dates and once on the page, it was not very clear. It was also a very difficult process to find the council calendar on the website. Lisa Hughes commented that it would be great if these could be looked in to. Dan Brookman reassured the Forum that he would look into these and other feedback given. The Friends of the Website group were also assisting with looking at these issues.

Lisa Hughes then commented that the content on the information pages was out of date. An example was the parking information was incorrect and there was no mention of ShopMobility. Dan Brookman would look into these and if there were any other incorrect or out of date information, the feedback loop would hopefully pick these up. Dan Brookman commented that a six-month check/review would be put into place, which would also help.

Peter Haley commented that he had recently received an invite to a meeting from CCG. The link on the email invite to register for the event was correct and worked but the link to find more information was directed to a generic homepage. It would be very helpful to provide links to specific pages, not just the generic homepages.

Dominic Manley asked if a specific page should be dedicated to disabled issues.

ACTION: Anyone with comments to send to Shilpa Manek or Helen Preedy to then collate and send to Dan Brookman.

The Chairman thanked Dan Brookman for attending and giving an update to the Forum.

COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT

Helen Preedy read out an update on behalf of Jesal Dhokia, Transformation Project Manager. Jesal Dhokia had been keeping the Forum updated during the last few meetings. Helen Preedy highlighted that if any members wanted to join any of the Maidenhead sub-groups and get involved. The details were as follows:

For more information on Maidenhead Embedding Community Response and the sub-groups

Please go to

www.rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk

A generic contact for all groups is volunteer@rbwm.gov.uk

There were 5 new sub-groups for Maidenhead, these were:

- Maidenhead Community Empowerment – last meeting on the 9th September next date TBC
- Maidenhead Community Safety- Meeting TBC
- Maidenhead Physical Environment Monday 20th September 12.30pm-1.30pm via zoom

- Maidenhead Health and Wellbeing- Tuesday 12th October 10.30am-11.30am via zoom
- Maidenhead Employment and skill Wednesday 15th September 5.45pm-6.45pm

Lisa Hughes asked how many people would be involved in each project and how would the people be asked to get involved and how were councillors getting involved and how much engagement was taking place with them.

Action : Helen Preedy to feed questions back to Jesal

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Sharon Bunce, Forum Member, gave an update to the Forum.

There were two issues to report to the Forum about on pedestrian accessibility in Maidenhead and Windsor.

The first one in Maidenhead was identified by Lisa Hughes some time ago and culminated in a walkabout session on 19/8/21 around Queen Street and Broadway near the temporary car park which was attended by Cllrs Stimson & Singh, Tim Golabek (Service Lead – Transport and Infrastructure), Marco Guttilla (RBWM), Sharon Bunce and Lisa Hughes. The aim was to demonstrate the various hazards of crossing the roads at those busy, town-centre junctions and consider mitigations.

As a wheelchair user, Sharon Bunce was able to show the councillors and officers how the hazards affected the safety of wheelchair users. Lisa Hughes invited Councillor Stimson to push her in her wheelchair in order to experience the difficulties of pushing someone across the junction.

The crossing point from the temporary car park towards the town centre was sited close to where traffic, coming from behind you, had the option of going left, right or straight ahead. So you had to look over your shoulder and figure out if cars were going left or ahead and consider if it was safe to cross.

Then you encountered the next problem that you had to cross about 1.5 metres of cobbles as well as the asphalt traffic lane. This was very hazardous for wheelchair users, anyone unsteady on their feet and people with visual impairments and really slowed you down, so unsafe when you don't know what traffic was approaching from behind. Also, the direction that the cobbles were laid in was different to the tactile paving so it removed the cues some visually impaired people used to orient themselves and cross to the other kerb.

Some of the paving around the crossing had sunk so the kerbs weren't flush which was creating a tipping and trip hazard for wheelchair users and others. Some of the tactile paving was broken or not well laid, causing further risks to people with visual impairments.

It was also highlighted that the hazards to people with visual impairment caused by the lack of visual contrast between new cycle racks and the pavement as well as a gully running across part of the pavement.

It was agreed that the pavements had become degraded over time and required updating. It was intended that work to increase safe accessibility and appropriate crossing points in this area would need to be tied in with The Landings construction which was due to start imminently.

Tim Golabek had reported back recently that the maintenance team were actioning some of the items highlighted but that at present the issue with the cycle racks was an outstanding action that may take a while to resolve. We would keep in touch with Tim on this and report back to the Forum at our next meeting.

The other issue identified was in Windsor at the castle precinct. Access restrictions caused by some temporary bollards which had been erected to create outside seating for eateries opposite the castle were highlighted to Tim Golabek as no provision had been made for wheelchair/rollator/trike users or people with visual impairments to cross the castle precinct and Sharon Bunce was pleased to report that these had now been removed.

To contribute to the Active Travel Big Conversation consultation please use this link:

<https://rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk/hub-page/travelforwards>

Links to other relevant consultations on the Disability and Inclusion Forum's Facebook page 'Disability Matters in Windsor and Maidenhead:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/247376129601111>

Lisa Hughes reminded all that the Active Travel weblink could be used to highlight real time issues.

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Lisa Hughes updated the Forum. Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that Local Access Forums operated across England. They brought together groups like walkers, cyclists and equestrians with landowners and others to consider matters relating to the recreational use of land. They made recommendations to the local authority.

Within the RBWM Local Access Forum, there is an accessibility sub-group that had been documenting several walks in the Borough. The aim was to provide PwD sufficient information to decide whether that walk was accessible for them and to recommend specific improvements that would tackle inaccessibility. It had taken longer than expected but it was hoped to test drive the first walks very soon.

A multi-user sub-group had recently been formed with walking, cycling, riding and accessibility involvement. The sub-group was identifying where fragmented rights of way could be joined up and where footpaths and cycle-ways could become multi-user routes, open to equestrians as well.

Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that construction of the car park at Battlemead had begun. There would be 4 blue badge spaces there.

Dominic Manley asked where further information was available, and Lisa Hughes informed the Forum that it would be on the RBWM Website. All information would be

accessible with many other features. Dominic Manley suggested a function of using maps to show exact routes.

ACTION: The map function suggestion could be taken back to the Local Access Forum and the Countryside Team.

LIBRARIES TRANSFORMATION UPDATE

Angela Huisman gave a presentation to the Forum.

Angela Huisman thanked the Forum for all of their input to the libraries transformation strategy and assistance with the EQIAs.

Dominic Manley thanked Angela Huisman for a very informative presentation. Dominic Manley asked if any libraries had closed as had been suggested. Angela Huisman responded that only one library had closed and that was Eton library. All of the other libraries had remained open, some with reduced hours. There was a container library in Wraysbury. Sunningdale and Holyport would have pop up libraries.

Councillor Hunt asked if the space in libraries was rented out and was it reasonable to rent out? Angela Huisman commented that the spaces were flexible and were rented out and the prices were set at Full Council annually.

Councillor Bhangra commented that it was an excellent presentation and consultation.

Angela Huisman asked if the library policies could be brought to the December meeting and the Forum was happy with that suggestion.

ACTION: Put library policies item on December agenda

SPORTS AND LEISURE

Lisa Hughes welcomed Chris Humphris to the meeting. Chris Humphris was the Director of SportsAble before SportsAble closed. Chris Humphris was very concerned when Sports Able closed to what disabled people would do for sport facilities. Chris Humphris reported that both he and John Jenkins took it upon themselves to contact Leisure Focus to put on activities for disabled people. After discussions, swimming now takes place for disabled people at Braywick Leisure Centre on Saturday afternoons. There are two sessions that can accommodate a total of more than twenty people with disabilities and assistance from volunteers . Other activities were taking place too such as wheelchair basketball on Sundays, Arts and therapy and Boccia. Discussions were in progress for indoor archery. Shooting had moved to Marlow Shooting Club. Wheelchair dance was being considered. Progress had been made and was continuing.

Lisa Hughes asked about table tennis and kayaking and if these would be available to disabled people. Chris Humphris commented that table tennis had been spread across four clubs locally that had happily accepted disabled people. With respect to kayaking, this had not yet been discussed with anyone. Chris Humphris reported that he had joined the Bisham Sailing Club that had a charity attached to it. There were three things to mention about this, there was a wheelyboat which was suitable for disabled people. There was also a sailing club on Wednesdays for disabled people

where a hoist was available. There were also sessions for SEN children from schools in term time. Chris Humphris commented that he also ran a social club and quizzes online.

Dominic Manley asked what had happened to the SportsAble minibus and Chris Humphris informed the Forum that it had been disposed of as it required a lot of work.

Doinic Manley asked how Chris Humphris and John Jenkins were contactable and was advised that Leisure Focus had promised that they would include details on their website soon. There was also a Facebook page called AfterSportsAble where many groups were posting on. The SportsAble website would also soon change to AfterSportsAble.

Lisa Hughes had spoken with Councillor Rayner and asked for support for disabled sport facilities.

ACTION: Helen Preedy to follow up on this for the next meeting.

ACTION: Keep item on agenda

Peter Haley asked if this was a positive step forward for disabled sport? Chris Humphris found that there were other ways to do the same things, however the concern was that there was no single point of contact for new disabled people that could signpost them to different sports. The need for introductory sessions to new disabled participants at leisure centres and a need to consider how this was promoted. Peter Haley asked if ShopMobility could assist in some way. Chris Humphris and Peter Haley would discuss offline.

Councillor Stimson commented that the council were very happy to support the groups and move forward. Councillor Bhangra agreed.

Chris Humphris informed the Forum that they were looking to put a post in place for a single point of contact. Chris Humphris would keep the Forum updated. Lisa Hughes thanked Chris Humphris for attending and giving an update to the Forum.

Unfortunately, Steph James was unable to join the meeting, so Helen Preedy read out an update on Norden Farm. It read:

RBWM has supported Norden Farm with annual grants however due to budgetary constraints it was agreed that in 2021/22 Norden Farm would receive a reduced grant of £64k with grant funding from the council ceasing in the 2022/23 financial year. In 2019/20 Norden Farm received £158k and in 2020/21 £141k.

An additional pot of £50k was set aside to assist both the arts centres in Maidenhead and Windsor to seek additional funds or appoint consultants to advice on raising additional income. It was agreed that a minimum of £16k of the £50k would go to Norden Farm resulting in a total of £80k in grant funding in 2021/22.

RBWM officers have been holding meetings with Norden Farm to discuss their business plan and future operating model since it was confirmed that funding would be reduced and then cut in 2022/23 and will be working with them to hopefully secure the future of the arts centre in Maidenhead. The council recognises the valuable work of Norden Farm.

Dominic Manley commented that this was shocking as it cost a lot to run Norden Farm.

The Clerk commented that Norden farm reported at the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on a regular basis. The Clerk would inform Forum Members when Norden farm were next presenting.

Councillor Bhangra informed the Forum that there was work in progress that would also be reported at the Communities O and S Panel.

AOB & DATE OF NEXT FORUMS

Dominic Manley asked if the replacement for the property company was in post. The clerk would check and inform the Forum.

Peter Haley commented that the footfall in Maidenhead was still very low. The regeneration was having an impact on the footfall. It was essential to encourage people to come into the town centre.

Lisa Hughes commented that despite recent absences from the Forum, PaCiP were still engaged but going through a reorganisation. The Forum were also trying to engage directly with Young People – through Achieving For Children.

The Forum noted the date of the next meeting was Monday 13 December 2021 at 11am. This would be a virtual meeting on Zoom.

The meeting, which began at 11.00 am, finished at 1.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....