

WINDSOR FORUM

Tuesday 19 September 2023

Present: Councillors Alison Carpenter (Chair), Amy Tisi (Vice-Chair), Devon Davies and Mark Wilson

Also in attendance (virtually): Councillor Wisdom Da Costa

Officers: Laurence Ellis and Paul Roach

Officers (virtually): Shasta Parveen and Chris Joyce

Apologies for Absence

The Chair, Councillor Carpenter, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Forum members then introduced themselves.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Knowles. He was substituted by Councillor D. Davies.

Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

Minutes

The Chair went through the actions from the last meeting:

<u>ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u>	<u>UPDATE</u>
Resident to email Andrew Durrant who would then forward information on project works around Goswell Hill.	A press release in relation explaining the works in the area was published and had been attached as a supplement with the agenda.
Andrew Durrant to investigate opening the coach park to improve access from Footbridge to The Arches.	COMPLETE – The focus at the moment was to deal with dilapidated state of the Footbridge and lift. There were no further plans at the moment. Some information surrounding the works was provided in the press release.
A motion to be forwarded at Full Council to change the name of Windsor Town Forum to ‘Windsor Forum’.	This was to be discussed and proposed at the next Full Council meeting on Tuesday 16 th September 2023.
Invite a relevant officer or Councillor to discuss the Council’s economic growth plan to a future Forum meeting.	The Chair still wished to do this at a future meeting.
Investigate whether there were grants available for the Forum to use.	The Chair suggested that Councillor W. Da Costa could look further into this.
Vision for Windsor to be added to the next	COMPLETE – Item added to the agenda.

meeting agenda.	
Chris Wheeler to investigate with the Highways Team and contractors on the repair works on Victoria Street.	COMPLETE – Answer added to the Q/A sheet attached to the agenda.

Outstanding actions:

- **A motion to be forwarded at Full Council to change the name of Windsor Town Forum to ‘Windsor Forum’.**
- **Invite a relevant officer or Councillor to discuss the Council’s economic growth plan to a future Forum meeting.**

Councillor W. Da Costa raised that he suggested an item where relevant officers present RBWM’s response to Heathrow Airport’s noise management plan consultation to the Forum. Laurence Ellis, Democratic Services Officer, replied that RBWM had responded to the consultation, but the response was not publicly available yet. Once made publicly available, he suggested that this could be added to a Forum agenda in some shape or form.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meetings held on 18th July 2023 were a true and accurate record.

Town Manager Update

Paul Roach, Windsor and Eton Town Centre Manager, gave the Town Manager Update. Starting with the Footfall Count, he informed that the trend of the footfall decreasing at around August of each year (as a result of the end of summer holidays and return to schools) had remained unchanged in August 2023 and for the last four-to-five years. In spite of this, Windsor had seen a 6.5% increase in footfall in the same period in 2022. Since 31st July 2023, Windsor Town Centre had over 655,000 visits, which was calculated from a footfall counter on Prescott Street.

Paul Roach informed that the Windsor Town Management Team was looking into a new scheme to monitor footfall across the whole of the Town Centre, which he hoped to present to the Forum in the future once the data going into the scheme had been updated. This would give a more accurate picture of movement around the Town Centre and shopping centres, in contrast to the original practice of a single counter on Prescott Street.

Car and coach parking in July 2023 were fairly static compared to the same period in 2022. Coach parking had seen a 23% increase compared to 2022 with much more tour groups returning.

Town Centre vacancy rates had decreased by 9.4% (compared to 9.8% when last reported). Windsor Town Centre did slightly better than the national average of 13.8%, though there were still areas of concern.

The recently vacated units in the last three months were:

- Reem Gallery – which had opened up but then closed within three weeks.
- New Look.
- Penriver Design Ltd.
- Top Print.
- Barclays Bank
- HSBC

Paul Roach informed that there was a new scheme called Banking Hubs, whereby all the banks came together and shared a space, usually through the post office service. There was consideration on whether this scheme could be applied in Windsor as there was a strict

criterion, such as the number of cashpoints in the Town Centre. The Windsor Town Management Team were planning to investigate this further, though Paul Roach speculated that Windsor Town Centre may not fit the criteria due to not having the adequate number of cashpoints. He suggested to possibly relay an update on this to the Forum in the future.

Despite the closures of Barclays and HSBC, Nationwide Building Society were not planning to close their Windsor branch and instead they had made a national commitment to keep and support their local branches.

(Chris Joyce, Assistant Director of Infrastructure Sustainability and Economic Growth, entered the meeting virtually at 6:43pm)

Stores which had opened in the last three months were:

- Delicious Faux.
- Banana Tree.
- Badiani Gelato.
- Time Watch Repair.
- Greggs – doing well with two-floor store, potentially their second largest unit in “this part of the world”, according to Paul Roach.
- Rogue Tattoo.
- Temptation Gifts.
- Ti Chicken.
- The Shambles.
- YourHolidays.

There were new stores which were under development in the following vacant units:

- The Halifax unit would be rented out by another provider in the near future with an agent from Halifax being interested in a unit.
- The New Look unit would be taken over by Mango, a fashion retail.
- The empty Top Shop unit had acquired some interest from providers.
- The Valarie's Patisserie unit was under redevelopment before being rented out to a provider.
- The Pyms and Brothers unit had acquired some interest.
- The Corals unit had acquired some interest.

Overall, there had been some movement in a number of units with more interest coming in for other vacant units in the next few months. It was expected that many of these would open before the 2023 Christmas period. Paul Roach stated that while it was not 100% super positive, Windsor Town Centre was doing better than most town centres.

Since the Covid pandemic, there had been a large number of new agencies which came on board (in contrast to previously being one or two agents who solely dealt with retail units) which sought to rent out vacant units in the Town Centre. From this, the Town Management Team sought to contact all the agencies which managed the empty units. As it was uncertain who managed some of the retail units, an objective over the next couple of months was to identify the agents and the receive an update from them on the status of the unit, as well as inform them of providers who may be interested in being tenants to the empty unit and the types of offers wanted for the Town Centre.

Paul Roach also planned to create a Welcome Pack to provide information for new tenants arriving to the Town Centre. This would primarily include information and who to contact in regard to planning, licensing, permits and highways.

Sarah Walker, a resident, asked a couple of questions. Firstly, whether the footfall between residents and tourists were distinguished. Secondly, clarification on how commercial retail lettings and rates worked, as well as what impact the Borough could experience on reducing rates and encouraging more and better occupancy in Windsor and how this process worked.

Replying to the first question, Paul Roach stated that residential and tourist footfall could not be determined under the current measuring scheme. However, the new footfall measuring scheme, called Visitor Insights, would be able to monitor movement in the Town Centre via any devices with a GPS signal, such as mobile phones. It was also able to inform where the particular device came from. The Town Management Team had signed up to a three-year programme for Visitor Insights. They had been uploading the data in the last three months, namely adding every property in Windsor, Eton and Ascot town centres, so the Team could potentially identify people that entered into different shops, how they moved around Windsor and where they came from based on the GPS signal.

Responding to the second question, Paul Roach answered that the Council did not set the rates but only collected them. It had limited powers around offering discounts, whereby the Borough used to offer a retail hardship discount for potential retailers for a unit if it was empty for more than 12 months as an incentive to rent it out. Paul Roach speculated that the Borough continued to run this discount offer but added he would need to double check this. He explained that the Town Management Team had an annual review with the Business Rates Team discuss the available offers.

Paul Roach stated that the Town Management Team always advised businesses to review their rates, particularly after the Covid pandemic, and many businesses discovered that they fell out of the business rates scheme because they were too small. From this, the Town Management Team encouraged businesses to receive professional advice and a valuation review of their property unit; particularly as many more larger property units were being split up into smaller units and therefore reducing the rateable value of the unit.

While stating that coach park usage increase by 23% year-on-year was positive, Jack Rankin, a resident and the Conservative Party parliamentary candidate for Windsor, commented that there was a perception in Windsor that there were inadequate dwell times for coach park users. He asked what could be done to increase dwell time to ensure it benefited Windsor more generally.

Paul Roach responded that the coach park usage was 1,400 users in August 2023, compared to around 1,100 users in August-September 2022. He stated that there had been a number of changes. For example, Windsor Castle opened only five days a week, being closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, which had a significant impact on the Town Centre.

Paul Roach elaborated that Windsor Castle did a lot of work before the Covid pandemic around improving the experience of visitors, with some feedback stating that visitors felt as if they were being rushed and hassled, and that the Castle was not up to standard. As such, he explained, the Covid pandemic provided an opportunity for Windsor Castle to reform themselves; most notably a timed entry to avoid an over-capacity of visitors.

Regarding Windsor Coach Park, Paul Roach acknowledged that it required a refurbishment in terms of where and how people enter Windsor and how they get from the Coach Park to the Town Centre. He stated that there had been some discussions to improve this, but there was much work to be done. He also informed that there was some work taking place on a tourism strategy for the next five years, which would highlight the various aspects of visitors (both local residents and out-of-town tourists). He stated that improving the local economy involved increasing the dwell time of visitors and thus encourage visitors to spend more time and money. Therefore, this involved a lot of place management and consideration of how Windsor looked and felt.

Anil Singh, a resident, expressed appreciation towards an organisation for providing a budget for the flowers on Park Street. Moving onto his question, he explained that many visitors parked their vehicles on Park Street due to its close proximity to the Town Centre. He highlighted that there had been vans (in contrast to coaches) parking at Park Street in the last

few weeks. He asked if there was anything which could be done to improve this, stating that residents may have to wait to park their cars.

Regarding the first point, Paul Roach informed that the flower baskets for Park Street were provided by Windsor Town Partnership, an organisation which was funded by a number of businesses and supported by the Council. He also informed that it was agreed at around the end of July 2023 that there were some outstanding areas which required hanging baskets, and that funding was acquired to reinstate hanging baskets, such as in Park Street, Prescott Steet and Eton High Street.

Answering the second point, Paul Roach acknowledged the issue, stating that there had been a slight increase in legal parking on Park Street since the Covid pandemic and the end of lockdown as well as the works on Castle Hill. He stated that a number of parked vehicles were private hire vehicles. While parking wardens patrolled areas, he conceded that the drivers likely drove away when a warden was spotted and then returned once the warden was gone.

From Neil Waters, Parking Principal, Paul Roach explained that improvements were being planned for Park Street, namely to increase and improve the signage as well as identifying residential parking bays. On top of this, Paul Roach conveyed that he had done some investigations around some of the vehicles which were parking on Park Street, stating that some of the vehicles tended to be large, black Mercedes-Benz cars. He managed to identify two private tour operators and then written to them about the issue of parking by their drivers. Paul Roach stated that he would continue to communicate with the private tour operators on the behaviour of their drivers in hopes of at least reducing the issue.

Councillor W. Da Costa asked a series of questions. He first asked whether there had been any consultation or engagement with Windsor's local businesses on what kept their businesses located in Windsor and how aspects in Windsor could be improved to increase their successes. He also asked whether these sorts of questions were also forwarded to agents, namely what they wanted when they moved into Windsor, and therefore make improvements based on the feedback. He followed up by asking whether the data set differentiated the different types of businesses operations (e.g., bars, clubs, restaurants, food stores, and department stores). Councillor W. Da Costa then asked whether the footfall could be differentiated between daytime, afternoon, evening and late night.

In terms of business survey work, Paul Roach replied that Windsor Yards shopping centre used to do an annual operators survey which went to all the retail business units in the Town Centre before 2019. It asked them how their stores were operated, confidence in the future and barriers for customers visiting their store. Paul Roach mentioned that there had been recent discussions in reintroducing this but more frequently (possibly every yearly quarter) to get a sense or a trend from the various businesses in the area. This could be linked, he suggested, with the survey from the Visitor Insights app (which would monitor footfall in and out of the Town Centre); from there, advice could be given to retailers on where the main footfall was.

Paul Roach then informed that the data sets included the different sectors, such as financial institutions, retailers, independent retailers, health stores, non-food stores, restaurants, pubs and clubs. From this, the Town Management Team was able to see roughly how many units in the Town Centre covered each business sector (with some units covering more than one). With the collected data, Paul Roach sought to provide the data on a more regular basis so that people could see how the Town Centre moved in terms of its different sectors. There was a large sector in terms of food and eateries as well as there being many non-food sectors.

Regarding the footfall, Paul Roach mentioned that he received reports which gave a timeline of the footfall which recorded the footfall from 12:00am to 11:59pm, and thus he was able to see the footfall during the daytime and night-time. The new system would show the same data of footfall movement at certain times.

(Councillor W. Da Costa left the meeting virtually at 7:39pm)

While thankful for Paul Roach's work, Duncan Reed, a resident, commented that there was much emphasis on tourism in Windsor, opining that the development should be resident-based. He then asked why there was much focus on tourists and not so much on residents. Adding to the question, the Chair conveyed that she heard that many residents were visiting other towns and asked how they could be kept in Windsor.

Paul Roach replied that he used the term "visitor" to refer to both residents and out-of-town tourists. He then stated that the Covid pandemic and lockdown period highlighted that the importance of the visitor sector of the Town Centre, particularly as they had an international tourist window. He elaborated that it was important to maintain the visitor sector of Windsor and Eton Town Centres as it helped the local economy as well as the fact that many businesses moved into Windsor due to there being a mix of local, regional and international visitors.

In spite of this, Paul Roach added that this did not mean that there should not be any focus on residents. He believed that some issues which residents had raised around the Town Centre were equally shared with out-of-town tourists with most complaints coming from out-of-town tourists and some of them being similar to what residents had raised. From this, Paul Roach believed that focusing on the tourist sector meant residents were losing out but rather improve what Windsor had. He also informed that the tourism strategy would include investigating the needs of local residents.

Vision for Windsor

Chris Joyce, Assistant Director of Infrastructure Sustainability and Economic Growth, gave a presentation on the progress for the Vision for Windsor.

Starting off with some context, the Vision for Windsor was a development project managed and undertaken by the Council-appointed Prince's Foundation back in April 2022. From there, a large number of engagement sessions with stakeholders, residents and community groups took place between August and November 2022 which led to a vision being developed. This was then adopted by Cabinet in February 2023.

The feedback was collated together to develop a vision statement across a number of different areas. The statements, Chris Joyce perceived, referenced discussions around a conflict between the local community and global community, and thus raised questions on how to balance the needs of residents with the desire and the demand which came from the internationally recognised assets in Windsor, particularly Windsor Castle and Windsor Great Park.

Coming out of the workshop sessions, five strategies were formulated alongside a set of actions under each strategy (totalling to around 21 actions) to deliver the Vision. The five strategies were:

- Gateways and Arrival,
- Town Centre Movement,
- Character and Uses,
- Public Realm,
- Local Governance and Community Partnerships.

Work on the Vision had begun, though there had been a short pause due to the local elections in May 2023 and the transition to the new administration. A workshop was held on 11th September 2023 for RBWM officers as a starting point to develop a long list of potential opportunities based on the work undertaken for the Vision. There were three key themes:

- What the Council was already doing in moving towards the Vision,

- Any potential quick wins based on the Borough's knowledge of those areas, and the work that's already in development.
- Identify some longer-term strategic plans which would take longer and therefore start developing them.

On the back of the feedback from the engagement workshops, RBWM officers would work with the new administration to establish their priorities based upon the Vision. There would be a prioritisation process to develop a shorter list of potential projects, taking into account some funding opportunities, particularly in the quick wins.

As part of the process for the Vision, RBWM officers sought to put key stakeholders, communities and residents at the heart of the development of some of the key projects around the objectives and scope, as much of the strength of the Vision came off the back of much engagement from them.

Chris Joyce mentioned that there was an opportunity to utilise Windsor Town Forum to shape some of these projects. He suggested to bring back the Vision for Windsor item at the next Forum meeting in November 2023, bringing back details and some quick wins for further discussion and to acquire input from residents and Forum members to help shape the work.

The projects which were in progress under each strategy included:

- **Gateways and Arrival**
 - Refurbishment works at the coach park bridge and lift.
 - Windsor to Staines Bus route, alongside an upcoming Cabinet paper for supported bus services.
 - Car parking 'facelifts' as part of the 'Welcome to Windsor' project.
- **Town Centre Movement**
 - Recent improvements on Stovell Road and Barry Avenue.
 - Improvements to wayfinding in Windsor.
 - Investments into cycle parking
- **Public Realm**
 - Works at Castle Hill Public Realm.
 - Installation at Platinum Jubilee fountain.
- **Local Governance and Community partnerships**
 - Directory of community partnerships in development.
 - Working group being established to look at a register of landlords to improve the knowledge and information on owned properties in Windsor and therefore engage with people around how the town could develop.

After thanking Chris Joyce for the presentation, Duncan Reed, a resident, perceived that the listed activities were only "small, minor projects fiddling on the edges" and that he did not see a vision. He believed that Windsor needed great consideration on a major re-engineering of the layout and how things worked. Chris Joyce responded that he agreed and that this was the purpose of the Vision: setting out some bigger and bolder ideas which could be taken forward. One of the key themes taken out of the recent workshops was quick wins in which the Council was already doing: minor works which could be done quickly with small amounts of funding.

As part of that work, there were also larger longer-term strategies, such as traffic flow and managing car parking, and coach arrivals, which would be delivered over a longer period. Chris Joyce suggested this could be brought back for further discussion to flesh them out. He reassured that there were large and small projects, but added that it did not mean smaller, short-term projects would not be worked on now while a longer-term plan was being developed.

Duncan Reed responded that the little projects in the meantime should be building up towards a larger objective.

Adding to Duncan Reed's point, Sarah Walker conveyed that the purpose of the Windsor Vision was for a vision for Windsor. She stated that in spite of there being many strategic ideas, significant resident engagement and a vision being formulated, she perceived that the workshop for RBWM officers on 11th September 2023 was "watering down" the work which had been done. She reiterated Duncan Reed's point that a proper formulated plan was needed, coming out of the vision and strategy. Chris Joyce denied that the Vision for Windsor was being watered down. He explained that the workshop was formulating more detailed planning on the long-term strategies as developing them would take a lot of work, as well as identifying the feasibility of some of the ideas. He added that the works would need to be prioritised due to the limited amount of resources at the Borough. In the short-term, the Borough sought to continue the drive improvements through the quick wins. Essentially, the workshop was not about watering down, but rather prioritising the short-term works and progressing the feasibility studies on the larger projects. It was more about how to turn the idea into reality and how to develop a plan. Chris Joyce stated that clearer worked-out plans could be presented at the next meeting in November 2023.

The Chair liked the idea of a list of quick wins for the next Forum meeting.

Nigel Griffin, a resident, asked who was responsible for setting the budget, where the finance was coming from, and which elected Councillor was championing the project. Answering the first questions, Chris Joyce replied that the workshop on 11th September 2023 included discussions on identifying existing funding streams which could be directed to some of the projects, such as central government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Fundamentally, the Borough's budget was set at the Full Council meeting every February. As the projects would require money and people's time, the prioritisation work included working with the administration to determine what money could be put into the budget as well as prioritise where officer time should be spent.

The Chair then pointed out that Councillor A. Tisi was the Lead (Cabinet) Member for Windsor. Councillor A. Tisi informed that she was involved in the Vision for Windsor project, such as taking part in some of the stakeholder meetings, and then stated that it was important the project did not get shelved and be forgotten. She stated she looked forward to working with Andrew Durrant, Chris Joyce and the rest of the team to develop it. She added that she started talking to local businesses in Windsor about their involvement with the project and that they and the Borough could draw together the Windsor Town Partnership and Visit Windsor strategy so that they could potentially help deliver the Windsor Vision project, as well as the works relating to these could be delivered collectively rather than separately.

Rewin, a resident, asked what sort of residents were involved in the engagement meetings in relation to the project currently and in the future. Chris Joyce replied that the meeting on 11th September 2023 was attended by Council officers and was to develop some of the project ideas into greater detail. The Vision for Windsor was written with a lot of input from residents and was to continue to have residents at the heart of it, whereby individual projects were shaped in partnership with residents so that the objectives and scope were clear and being achieved. This was part of the reason why the item was brought to the Forum and for the suggestion of bringing the item back to the Forum.

The Chair pointed out that the documents for Vision for Windsor had listed the stakeholders which were involved in the decision making.

Being the Councillor for Eton and Castle ward, Councillor Wilson commented that the Castle part of the ward was a key part of the Windsor Vision, and that he and the other Councillors from the ward (Councillors J. Tisi and D. Davies) had been heavily involved in speaking to residents, businesses and RBWM officers on the issues to acquire and represent residents' views. He stated that there was much discussion on some potential concepts and projects, such as one-way systems and pedestrianisation. He stated that this was an exciting time in

which he was enthusiastic to be a part of and would continue to be a point of contact for residents.

Anil Singh highlighted that Windsor lacked a cinema and a live music venue in spite of having many other features, namely many restaurants and Windsor Castle, which made Windsor a popular tourist destination. He asked whether the Vision could consider a cinema and a live music venue or club (like a jazz club). Chris Joyce replied that while the Borough could not force a jazz club to be opened, it nevertheless was engaging with agents and landlords to diversify Windsor and attract businesses and services. Chris Joyce added that the Borough sought to work with residents and visitors to bring forward facilities in which they would use in the Town Centre. He stated that he would take this away.

Adding to Chris Joyce's answer, Paul Roach stated that one of the upcoming developments was the works around Windsor Yards, which was approved in May 2023, and that this would include a three-screen boutique cinema.

ACTION: Vision for Windsor to return to the next Forum meeting in November 2023.

Digital Strategy in Windsor

Shasta Parveen, Service Lead for Infrastructure and Digital Strategy, gave a presentation on the digital infrastructure in the Borough. She explained that the Borough was part of the Digital Infrastructure Group (DIG), a pan-Berkshire organisation whereby the local authorities in Berkshire (RBWM, Bracknell, Slough, Wokingham and West Berkshire) worked with the Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver and achieve improved digital connectivity to achieve a Connected Berkshire.

The reason that RBWM joined DIG were to:

- Improve digital connectivity across the borough and support the broader corporate plan goals.
- Provide opportunity for residents and businesses and look at emerging digital technology and then bring them to the Borough.
- Have a uniformed approach to make it easier for infrastructure companies to work with the Borough.

The Borough recently had signed the Digital Adoption Strategy on 11th July 2023 which outlined the goals that DIG sought to achieve, primarily to support economic development and business engagement. Shasta Parveen suggested that she could return to the Forum and give an update to the Digital Adoption Strategy.

The benefits of the Borough being part of DIG were:

- Achieve broader and faster broadband coverage, ensuring that it was available for everybody.
- Ensuring mobile coverage and enabling 5G roll out.
- Enabling opportunities for emerging digital technology (e.g., internet of things, smart cities).

In terms of what was happening, the Digital Infrastructure Team were:

- Engaging with multiple providers and facilitating the roll out of FTTP (fibre to the premises) in the Borough, which would include an infrastructure roll out of cables.
- CityFibre had completed the roll out in Maidenhead and mobilisation would commence in Windsor early-2024. Shasta Parveen offered to provide more details in terms of the location of works when the information would become available.
- Rolled out FTTP to 26 schools within RBWM, allowing them the choice to connect, and thus expanding more opportunities.

- Engaging with multiple mobile network providers on the roll out of 5G mobile connectivity. Windsor would be one of the first areas in RBWM to have a small cell deployed.

The three main providers were:

- **Gigaclear:**
 - **5,594** premises were ready for service within the Borough.
- **Openreach:**
 - Delivery was completed, **4,600** premises ready for service borough-wide.
- **CityFibre:**
 - Have **6,125** properties borough wide 'ready for service'.
 - 350 connected customers on the borough network at present).
 - Run rate of around 20 connections/week.

They would ensure that the Borough would have live connections for local residents and businesses and therefore possess fast broadband speeds.

Regarding the timeframe in Windsor:

- **August 2023 – present**
 - Virgin Media/O2 were working to upgrade telecoms cabinets, with a planned 864 cabinet upgrades borough-wide.
- **Early-2024**
 - CityFibre to commence roll out of FTTP infrastructure in Windsor – detailed plans were pending.

Jon Davey, a resident, briefly asked if high-speed broadband was 10-to-20 times faster than normal broadband, to which Shasta Parveen confirmed. He then asked whether the new technologies would decrease the likelihood of latencies (delays) in wireless connection, for example, in the garden or certain parts of a house. Shasta Parveen replied that she could take this question away and provide a more accurate answer; but she believed that the FTTP was a stronger and faster signal.

Jon Davey then asked if the 5G small cell deployment would be applied at industrial sites and the Town Centre or across the board. Shasta Parveen replied that it was across the board. She added that the providers, working collaboratively with the Borough, were expressing their interest in certain locations where they would ideally like to deploy a 5G cell. From there, a process in which the Borough would assess whether the location was viable to deploy the cell, ensuring that it would be deployed correctly and safely.

Anil Singh stated that when he approached provider companies (such as Vodafone) on getting faster broadband connection on Park Street, he received unsatisfactory responses. He then requested for Park Street to be included in the work. Shasta Parveen responded that she had noted Park Street and would take the question away. She then stated that the providers were encouraging; and that there was a process where residents could submit questions regarding certain areas and postcodes, in which timely responses were sent.

Anil Singh added that a neighbour of his had followed the aforementioned process and had reached a dead end. This then led to some consideration for residents of Park Street to improve the connectivity privately, but it would cost thousands of pounds and therefore it was not ideal. He hoped that this issue would be resolved. Shasta Parveen reiterated that she would take this point away; adding that another Councillor had raised a point in relation to connectivity on Prescott Street and thus would investigate Park Street alongside Prescott Street.

The Chair highlighted that there had been connectivity issues in the Town Centre and mentioned that she would contact Shasta Parveen regarding a local business not acquiring internet. Shasta Parveen gave some feedback on Prescott Street, stating that it was being investigated with some engineers being deployed. She added that some messages may have

been missed due to the holiday period. Nevertheless, she reiterated that she would investigate this.

John Reed, a resident, stated that he worked with the local business referenced by the Chair to get them access to the internet since December 2022 until August 2023. He stated that it was impossible for the business to get internet access (near the B Road, off Dedworth Road) apart from a 4G signal. He also briefly highlighted that there were other internet blind spots in Windsor. Shasta Parveen stated that she would take this away.

John Reed then highlighted that the people in rented properties were forced to take out 12–24-month leases with internet providers and often they were only on a six-or-12-month tenure, and they may be required to have an 18-month service with their service provider. He asked whether the Local Enterprise Partnership could do anything to encourage service providers to offer shorter-term contracts which do not cost a fortune. Shasta Parveen said that she would take this away and investigate.

John Reed commented that he believed that it would help people in rented properties because they would not need to then be in long-term contracts with fixed service providers.

Chris Joyce raised that one objective in which DIG was working on was more affordable tariffs that could come forward, particularly for residents on low incomes; adding that one of the benefits of the Berkshire local authorities working together under DIG was that they had more clout in those discussions with operators. He suggested that this was a point which could be taken into discussions amongst the other local authorities under DIG, stating that it would be a useful to have a collective engagement with the companies on how a product could be developed which worked well for renters.

Elliot Howells, a resident, commented that there were two issues. Alongside the issue of installing fast broadband in homes, he stated that there was a broader issue of signal capacity, in contrast to signal speed and strength. He asked if there was any work being done to address this. Elliot Howells then highlighted that signal blockers around Windsor Castle (likely for security reasons) were often blamed by local businesses. Shasta Parveen replied that she would take these points away.

Frankie Theobald, a resident, asked how DIG determined which areas should be prioritised for the roll out of FTTP, or who determined the program. Shasta Parveen replied that the decisions came from the providers rather than DIG. Nevertheless, the Borough would find out when works were happening through DIG and step in when necessary and support the facilitation process, such as setting community drop-in sessions for CityFibre. While she did not have the information on which streets in Windsor were being rolled out and when, she stated that once received, she could forward the information.

Councillor A. Tisi asked whether the roll out of FTTP would predominantly be focused on the Town Centre or would encompass the wider town of Windsor. She then stated that the area between Eton and Eton Wick was a rural area which had poor internet connectivity, and asked whether the roll out in this area could be chased up. Shasta Parveen replied that she would take these points away. She confirmed that the roll out would encompass the wider Windsor area and that she had a location map of where it covered. In regard to Eton, she stated that there were pockets of poor internet connection which were being investigated and improve the connectivity.

Gareth Jones, a resident, asked whether there would be any disruptions during the roll out of FTTP, such as roadworks. Shasta Parveen replied that there would be some disruption. However, this would be well communicated with the Digital Infrastructure Team working closely with the providers to ensure that this would be minimised. She cited that CityFibre had communicated well with residents and business when doing works in Maidenhead.

ACTION: Shasta Parveen to forward answers to the following queries on:

- **Whether the new technologies would decrease the likelihood of latencies (delays) in wireless connection, for example, in the garden or certain parts of a house.**
- **Investigate any works on improving broadband connectivity on Park Street and Prescott Street as part of the Digital Adoption Strategy.**
- **Internet access for a local business near the B Road off Dedworth Road.**
- **Whether the Local Enterprise Partnership could anything to encourage service providers to offer shorter-term contracts in regard contracts in rental properties which do not cost a fortune.**
- **Whether there was any work being done to address the issue of internet capacity and whether signal blockers around Windsor Castle played a role in this.**
- **Which streets in Windsor would be prioritised for the roll out of FTTP and when this would happen.**
- **What areas of Windsor would the roll out of FTTP be implemented, whether the Town Centre or wider Windsor, and including the rural areas of Eton and Eton Wick.**

Resident Questions and Item Suggestions for Next Forum

The Chair asked for any questions or item suggestions.

Gareth Jones informed that he was a member of WAMCLT (Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead Community Land Trust), which sought to provide housing for the community, and that they had an interest in the Borough Local Plan (BLP) sites. He asked if there were any updates on the BLP sites AL21 and AL22 in west Windsor. As Chair of the Windsor Development Management Committee, Councillor Tisi stated that the outline permission for the BLP near Aldi in the west of Windsor was approved in early 2023, and the reserve matters (details of the design of the plan) would be forwarded to the Panel shortly (likely in October 2023). The other site had been built.

Rewin raised concerns regarding the speed (or lack of speed) of planning enforcement in regard to the removal of the signage, fencing and enclosure of the pathway at Alma Road and Vansittart Road. While appreciative of the support from local Councillors, she stated that residents were nevertheless concerned of the lack of speed of enforcement and this being regarded as of medium importance, and therefore little clout in regard to resolving the issue. Rewin sought to re-emphasise the concerns of this issue and acquire more support that the land was recognised as a green area since the mid-1980s (including the pathway). She reiterated that Planning Enforcement was slow in resolving the issue, which started on 30th May 2023 according to Rewin, and was a cause of concern for nearby residents. According to Rewin, yesterday afternoon, the private owners of the land had moved the fencing due to the nearby highways works. She stated that this allowed residents to use the walkway more efficiently. But when it was fenced off again, she described the pathway as “look[ing] ghastly” and not being maintained in anyway.

The Chair stated that she was aware of the issue. Councillor Wilson responded that he shared the concerns about the aforementioned piece of land, mentioning that he regularly cycled down the pathway, and understood the frustration with the pace of planning enforcement. He stated that he was ensuring that Planning Enforcement Officers were aware of this as well as understand their process. He stated that there was a challenge in communicating with the landowners, and that, as far as he was aware, planning enforcement had not contacted the owners, adding that this was a problem. He nevertheless perceived this as a very high-risk site. He informed that he was planning to catch-up with the Planning Enforcement Officer within the week and receive an update from them. He perceived that the actions within the Planning Department moved quite slowly, to which he apologised for, as well as contacted the local PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) in anticipation of some additional work taking place and an opposing demonstration taking place. Overall, he considered this issue as very serious, particularly as it was a green space.

While appreciative of the support from local Councillors, Rewin then raised that there was much concern about a third planning application (since 2010) around the old Imperial House site.

Jon Davey asked about the name change of the Forum. The Chair replied that there was a suggestion from residents in the Forum meeting in May 2023 to change the Forum meeting from 'Windsor Town Forum' to 'Windsor Forum' on the grounds that the Forum covered the whole of Windsor. When Jon Davey queried on the areas the Forum encompassed, the Chair informed that it covered the unparished wards of Windsor: Clewer and Dedworth East, Clewer and Dedworth West, Clewer East, Eton and Castle, and Old Windsor.

Rewin commented that the discussion around the name change was to be make the Forum more inclusive of all areas of Windsor.

The Chair reiterated the request for tree management and Vision for Windsor on the next meeting agenda. Councillor A. Tisi suggested an item from Visit Windsor.

Anil Singh requested that, as part of the Vision for Windsor update, the quick wins would be included and potentially circulated before the next meeting. He stated that he had seen two dates for the next meeting: one time stating 9th November 2023 and another time mentioning 8th November 2023. He therefore asked for clarification on which was the correct date. When the Chair directed the question to Laurence Ellis, he replied that the recent rearrangement of Cabinet and Full Council meetings had meant that the dates of other meetings had to be moved, including Windsor Town Forum. Therefore, the confirmed date was Thursday 9th November 2023.

Nigel Griffin asked if any lessons had been learnt around consultation, stating that work on the refurbishment of the Footbridge had stalled and a response was received after a minor demonstration and some press coverage. Councillor D. Davies replied that the lessons learnt included ensuring businesses knew what was going on and that communication needed to be improved. He informed that this would hopefully be improved with a new CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system which was going to be installed.

When asked by the Chair about delays surrounding the work on the Footbridge, Chris Joyce stated that as a result of feedback from businesses, the programme was altered whereby works on the lift and the bridge were split rather than both worked being simultaneously. The works on the lift would take place first, which would enable the bridge to remain open during the Christmas period. The works on the footbridge would take place after Christmas period whereby the footfall would be low.

Chris Joyce then stated that a lot of the issues surrounding the works on the Footbridge were based on the Borough having an agreement with Network Rail, for which they insisted that they pick up the discussions with businesses and The Arch Company as part of that engagement. He stated that this was not picked up as well as it was hoped. From this, he stated that the lesson learnt from the Borough's perspective was that it was important for it to be close to local businesses and ensuring that they were receiving the information they needed. Overall, Chris Joyce stated that the Borough listened to the feedback, and as such changed the work programme, and therefore the impact on businesses as a result of the works would be improved.

Councillor A. Tisi expressed appreciation to Chris Joyce and the rest of the Infrastructure Team for their work in relation to the Footbridge.

The items suggested for future Forum meetings:

- Tree management
- Vision for Windsor

- Visit Windsor

Date and Location of Next Meeting

The Forum noted that the next meeting would be held on 9th November 2023 at 6:30pm at York House, Windsor. The subsequent meeting dates (all 6:30pm) were:

- 11th January 2024
- 12th March 2024
- 8th May 2024

The meeting, which began at 6.31 pm, finished at 8.20 pm

Chair.....

Date.....