

WINDSOR TOWN FORUM

MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Natasha Airey (Chairman), Jack Rankin (Vice-Chairman), Malcolm Alexander, Hashim Bhatti, John Bowden, Samantha Rayner and Shamsul Shelim.

Also in attendance: Liz Edwards (Legoland), Ingrid Fernandes (Legoland), Claire Milne (Windsor Neighbourhood Plan), John Bastow (Windsor Neighbourhood Plan), Francis Batt (Windsor Observer), David Lee (Windsor Express), Garry Williams (resident), Susy Shearer (Windsor Neighbourhood Plan), Anne Taylor (Windsor & Eton Society), Helen Price (resident) and Trevor Robinson (resident).

Officers: Tanya Leftwich, Tony Carr, Simon Rowberry, Christopher Wheeler and Feliciano Cirimele.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

The Chairman informed everyone present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available on the RBWM website.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

TRAFFIC SPEEDS IN WINDSOR

The Chairman welcomed the Traffic & Road Safety Manager, Tony Carr, to the meeting and asked him to address the item which had been requested by a resident, Trevor Robinson.

The Traffic & Road Safety Manager referred everyone to the briefing note on page 17 of the agenda. It was noted that traffic had been falling over the years and whilst speed was not increasing it could be down to people's perceptions. The Traffic & Road Safety Manager explained that some areas in London had put in 20 mph limits and that he wanted to start a discussion into the possibility of revised speed limits in residential areas.

The Chairman asked the Lead Member for Highways, Councillor Colin Rayner, if he had anything he would like to add.

The Lead Member for Highways reminded everyone present that it was not the Council who enforced speed but the Thames Valley Police. It was noted that the

Council could write to the Thames Valley Police to alert them to concerns raised, ask them to put up warning signs and request that they undertook 'counts'.

Trevor Robinson stated that he had been very pleased to see this item on the agenda as he felt it was very worthwhile and had been grateful for the briefing note that had been provided by the Traffic & Road Safety Manager. It was noted that Trevor Robinson hoped to see this item on the agenda again in the future. Trevor Robinson informed the Forum that he had been interested to see the figures on traffic volumes in the briefing note rather than the information about speed. The question was asked as to whether the information included in the briefing note could be found on the RBWM website.

Trevor Robinson went on to state that he did agree that the speed concerns could be down to people's perceptions and that he considered which routes to use depending on speeds / narrow roads and high kerbs, etc. It was noted that Trevor Robinson had looked again at the area from the A308 from Windsor to the Brigidine School and that the only thing that showed the reduction in the speed limit was one sign which he felt could be improved on. It was suggested that a large 'SLOW' sign painted on the road might help raise awareness along with 50 mph limit warnings along with lit up speed monitors. It was noted that there was also a very sharp turn / curve from Windsor to Ascot Road where the traffic tended to travel very fast. It was noted that people using that road might miss the speed limit sign on the lamppost. Trevor Robinson added that he was interested to hear more about the 20 mph speed limits as he felt this could be something good to think about although understood they might be quite costly.

The Lead Member for Highways explained that the Council was concerned about speeding on those junctions mentioned along with Kings Street and the crossing on the Long Walk. It was noted that discussions were currently taking place with the Crown Estate and the Head of Highways & Transport, Ben Smith, and that full public consultations would follow in due course. The Lead Member for Highways went on to explain that the Council also had a declutter policy in place which could help with the A308 Albert Road past the Brigidine school, the area past the Army Barracks in King Street and the sharp turn / curve from Windsor to Ascot Road areas.

The Traffic & Road Safety Manager explained that he felt that people tended to drive to the speed they felt comfortable with and tended to drive as per their surroundings. It was noted that there was perhaps the potential to drive round and do a review to see if there was potential to introduce 20 mph speed limits in residential areas. Resident Garry Williams added that he believed the issues were caused by individual pests rather than the public as a whole and that he would not like community speed watch schemes and mobile cameras all over the Royal Borough. It was noted that Garry Williams felt the Army Barracks, Legoland and two hospitals all had an effect on traffic in Windsor and that he believed cars on a whole were much more silent than they used to be. The Traffic & Road Safety Manager responded by explaining that the community speed watch schemes were generally run by the Thames Valley Police and manned with volunteers with mobile speed guns to gather data. It was noted that anyone caught travelling at excessive speeds were sent warning letters rather than fines and Garry Williams was assured that these schemes were not something the Council actively promoted.

Councillor John Bowden informed everyone present that before he had been elected he had written to the Thames Valley Police to highlight two areas of concern to him which was the Goslar 'speedway' (a 40 mph down to 30 mph zone within 20 / 30 yards

of a junction) and Alma Road. Councillor John Bowden explained that he had not been satisfied with the response he had received from the Thames Valley Police which had been that they felt the two areas were considered unsafe for them to stop vehicles / place someone there with a speed gun.

Resident Helen Price informed everyone present that recently the Thames Valley Police had imposed a 20 mph speed limit in Imperial Road when the schools finished for the day. Helen Price asked whether the Council received feedback from these initiatives. The Traffic & Road Safety Manager explained that flashing speed limits were only advisory limits.

Trevor Robinson thanked the Forum for the debate that had taken place tonight. It was noted that the Council had a Local Transport Plan (2012-2026) which was felt to be a worthwhile document and well worth a read.

RESOLVED: That the Lead Member for Highways would write to the Thames Valley Police on behalf of the Council to see if they could address the issues raised at tonight's meeting.

It was requested that a contact for speed issues be added to the minutes.

BRIEFING ON THE RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE STUDY CONDUCTED LAST YEAR

The Chairman thanked the Interim Planning Policy Manager, Simon Rowberry, for attending the meeting and invited him to give Members a presentation on the Retail and Town Centre Study. The presentation covered the following areas:

- How it was done.
- Engagement.
- Main findings for Windsor:
 - National retail rankings.
 - Retail / non-retail units.
 - Diversity of uses.
 - Retail capacity.
- Study conclusions.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- That the change of planning laws regarding permitted development rights which had resulted in a lot of office space being changed in to residential properties was believed to be having a damaging effect on the Town Centre. It was noted that a positive effect was that it was pulling people in to live in the Town Centre which in turn was supporting the shopping convenience culture and cafes but a negative effect was the effect on the Night-time Economy and that 8 / 9 years ago there were three use classes (A3 – A5) and each had a different importance on residential amenities. There were noted to be conflicts between residential and business use in the Town Centres.
- That Article 4 (Conservation Areas) took away other uses e.g. permitted development rights. It was noted that an Article 4 direction could be used theoretically to stop public houses changing to residential properties, although this might be challenged, but that this should not be used as a blanket tool.

- That the study showed findings for both internet shopping (click & collect) and instore shopping. It was noted that it would be useful to know if there had been an increase in click & collect shopping.

Councillor Bhatti arrived

- It was noted that the Visitor Economy was a mix of day and stay over visitors and that there would have been some effect on spending / shopping seasonality.
- That the planning system did not allow for tight sectoral planning.
- That planning frameworks did not allow a more holistic approach.
- That the main findings in Windsor with regard to retail capacity indicated the potential for extra capacity in the Town Centre or at least retaining the vitality in the Town Centre.
- The Chairman suggested that the 2014 RBWM Retail Study be Googled.

UPDATE ON THE AIR QUALITY REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

The Chairman welcomed the Environmental Protection Officer, Feliciano Cirimele, back to the meeting (after a year) and asked him to address the item which had been requested by a resident, Helen Price.

The Environmental Protection Officer referred everyone to the briefing note on page 19-23 of the agenda. It was noted that whilst the data collected showed that Windsor's air quality was generally good there were two hotspot areas of pollution which included Arthur Road and the junction at Imperial Road and St Leonards Road. Members were informed that concentrations had been decreasing in these areas however in recent years they have remained fairly static.

The Environmental Protection Officer explained that he understood there were some Highway (traffic management) solutions on the table and whilst these might help with improving traffic flow at junctions it was also the volume of traffic that was the issue and in particular in Arthur Road where pollutants were not being efficiently dispersed. It was noted that air pollution was particularly bad at peak times when volumes of traffic and congestion were high.

Resident, Helen Price, explained that her primary concern was the close locality to schools as children were very susceptible to the pollution. It was noted that people were often unaware they were living in the hotspots and that she therefore felt this should be higher up on the Council's agenda.

The Environmental Protection Officer stated that any future development in the Royal Borough would need to address air quality by way of completing an Air Quality Assessment. It was noted that the new fountain did not provide air wash.

Members were informed that the third runway would likely increase traffic and therefore have an effect on air quality in the surrounding areas. The Chairman explained that Heathrow had submitted their response and had assumed local residents' health would be worse and lives shortened but that they had felt that was OK compared to the economic benefits. The Chairman went on to explain that the Council had strongly objected on behalf of their residents.

It was felt that weight limits were only enforceable by the Thames Valley Police and that it was very difficult to prosecute over 40 tonnes.

The Environmental Protection Officer explained that the Council had not ruled out their use of electric cars and was currently only trialling a keyless, automated scheme which was not available for electric cars. It was noted that the Council would look at electric vehicles as part of this scheme if they were available in the future. Councillor Phillip Bicknell informed everyone present that he was recommending that the Council purchased two Nissan Leafs.

UPDATE ON ARTHUR ROAD & IMPERIAL ROAD

The Chairman welcomed the Business Improvement Principal, Christopher Wheeler, to the meeting and asked him to merge and address the next two items which had been requested by a resident, Helen Price.

The Business Improvement Principal referred everyone to the briefing notes on page 25-28 of the agenda. It was noted that the Council was committed to reducing congestion where practical to do so and this aligns with the Manifesto commitment to “continue to review and reduce unnecessary traffic lights”. Members were informed that the Arthur Road corridor had been identified as a location where a consultation on possible alternative junction arrangements should be considered.

It was noted that draft options had been developed for two alternative options for the junction of Maidenhead Road / Stovell Road (a mini-roundabout or a priority junction) and an alternative layout for Arthur Road / Alma Road (mini-roundabout). Members were informed that each option would also include provision of pedestrian facilities.

The Business Improvement Principal went onto explain that it was not considered viable or appropriate to consider removal of the traffic signals at the junction of Arthur Road with Vansittart Road. It was noted that a mini-roundabout was not possible, as the required stepped back give-way lines would lead to sub-standard visibility, whilst conventional give-ways on the two Vansittart Road arms would introduce safety risks due to the lack of clarity over priority between the two opposed right turn movements from the Vansittart Road arms. Members were informed that more importantly there would also be no suitable locations for convenient pedestrian facilities to be accommodated under alternative layouts at that junction.

With regard to Imperial Road the Borough had undertaken a consultation from 15 October to 20 December 2015 on possible changes at the junctions of Imperial Road / St Leonards Road and Winkfield Road / Clewer Hill Road. It was noted that the decision to consult on possible changes was primarily made as a response to demands of local residents to ease congestion during peak periods and improve air quality. Members were informed that the consultation had invited comments on two outline design options for removal of traffic lights at both junctions:

- Option A included a give way junction at Clewer Hill Road with no right turns from that junction onto Winkfield Road and a roundabout at the Imperial Road junction with St Leonards Road.
- Option B included a mini-roundabout at the Clewer Hill Road / Winkfield Road junction, with the Imperial Road and St Leonards Road junction reconfigured

so that traffic on the eastern arm would give way to the other two arms and be banned from turning right.

Members were informed that two public drop-in events had been held to allow members of the public to meet with officers and Councillors, ask questions and have their say on the consultation. It was noted that signs were also positioned on site to advise of the consultation, letter drops were carried out, press releases were arranged and information on the consultation was included in Around the Royal Borough and on the Borough website.

It was noted that the consultation on Imperial Road had ended in December and a summary of the results could be found on the RBWM website. Members were informed that short-term measures would be put in place before Easter and after the next Legoland season long-term solutions would be put in place.

The Lead Member for Highways stated that the Council had worked very hard on both areas and that he was looking forward to the Arthur Road consultation that would go out to local Councillors and then out to the public ideally before the end of March.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- It was questioned whether the Council could model improvements gained as a result of the traffic signal review to air quality from the final design. A response to this would be attached to the minutes.
- It was confirmed that as far as the Business Improvement Principal was aware there would not be part of the trial in Arthur Road where the traffic lights would be stopped. It was noted that a trail may however be felt appropriate when suggestions had been received from the consultation.
- The parking system in Thames Street was being changed from a pay on exit to a pay on entry car park. It was noted that business permit holders and the Bowles Club would be provided with special coins / pass card to enable free entry / exit.
- Members were informed that this new parking system was live in the Nicholsons Car Park in Maidenhead and once any bugs had been ironed out it would be introduced into the River Street / Meadow Lane Car Park. It was noted that the new parking system would give change and would also allow users to pay online or by phone.
- That arrangements for Blue Badge Holders and business permit holders / season ticket holders with regard to the new parking system would be attached to the minutes.
- The Chairman urged local residents to raise their suggestions with their local Ward Councillors.
- The Chairman expressed her concern over the exit from the Leisure Centre as she felt leisure centre users might be at a disadvantage and unable to exit the Arthur Road corridor. The Lead Member for Highways explained that this was part of a separate scheme.
- That the new parking machine was already in 400 car parks and was part of the Councils Manifesto commitment.
- That the Environmental Team had an input in Highway schemes.
- That specific classes of vehicles could not be banned in the Royal Borough from using specific routes.
- The Chairman congratulated her fellow Councillors on the 4000+ consultation sheets / leaflets that had been distributed and the Lead Member for Highways on what he had done to get this moving.

- Helen Price stated that she did appreciate the change in including residents in consultations.

It was requested that the Parking Principal, Neil Walter wrote a letter / sent an email to coach companies asking them to adhere to the signed coach route.

It was suggested that if the current Police & Crime Commissioner was re-elected in May he could be invited to a future Forum meeting to discuss local priorities.

STREET SCENE UPDATE - CAFE ENCROACHMENT

The Chairman asked the Business Improvement Principal to address the item.

The Business Improvement Principal referred everyone to the briefing note on page 29 of the agenda. It was noted that a number of stakeholders including retailers in the town centre had raised concerns regarding restaurants and cafés encroaching with tables and chairs beyond the permitted areas on the street (as set out in their individual licences). The main difficulty this caused was restriction on the highway, hindering the public from moving freely in these areas.

Members were informed that In order to address these concerns, the Council had purchased studs to be placed on the highway denoting the extent of the area that businesses could put their tables and chairs out. It was noted that these studs would be installed by the Council's term contractor (Amey) before Easter which would enable easier enforcement.

The Business Improvement Principal explained that there had also been a number of cases where A-boards had been placed on the highway by businesses. Members were informed that the Borough's policy was that A-boards were not allowed. It was noted that enforcement was carried out in November 2015 to remove the illegal A-Boards, which proved to be relatively successful. However, this would require ongoing enforcement alongside the table and chair encroachment. The Business Improvement Principal went onto explain that once the studs were in place outside cafes another round of enforcement would take place before Easter.

An example stud was shown to everyone present.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- The Chairman asked how often licences needed to be re-applied for. It was agreed that a response would be attached to the minutes.
- Councillor Alexander thanked officers for taking the concern of encroachment on board and he hoped the enforcement would back up the suggested solution of studs being added to mark boundaries.
- Councillor John Bowden explained that he often witnessed delivery vehicles in Peascod Street that were obstructed by cafes outside areas. It was questioned why cafes weren't limited to use their outside areas until after delivery hours. It was agreed that a response would be attached to the minutes.
- It was questioned whether table and chair licenses allowed for delivery vehicles, refuse vehicles and emergency service access. It was agreed that a response would be attached to the minutes.
- That a fair ground ride before Christmas had also caused access issues. The Business Improvement Principal explained that it was a fine balance that needed to be found between cafes, nightlife and night markets.

- Councillor Shamsul Shelim stated that he believed Ward Councillors had not been made aware that Madame Posh were able to place tables and chairs outside their venue. The Business Improvement Principal agreed to check the cafes licence.
- Trevor Robinson stated that these issues were all problems of success.

LOG OF FORUM ITEMS & CURRENT STATUS

The Chairman referred everyone to the spreadsheet on pages 31-34 of the agenda that the Clerk had created and would continue to update which showed a log of the items that had come to the forum and their current status.

It was agreed that the Clerk would request a briefing note on the past Policy and Performance Managers items dated 03.10.13. It was noted that an officer was not required to attend the next meeting to give an update on the three items.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

It was noted that the dates of future meetings had been scheduled as follows 6.30pm in the Guildhall):

- Thursday 2 June 2016
- Tuesday 4 October 2016
- Monday 13 February 2017

Any items suggestions for the next meeting were requested to be emailed to the Chairman (Cllr.Airey@rbwm.gov.uk) and / or the Clerk (tanya.leftwich@rbwm.gov.uk).

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.45 pm.

Information gathered following the meeting:

Imperial Rd/ Winkfield Rd/ Clewer Hill Road – traffic signal review consultation

Q. Can we model improvements gained to air quality from our final design?

A. *There is ongoing monitoring at this junction and the Environmental Protection Team can provide data, however seasonal variations and yearly fluctuations in air quality may be greater than the margin of improvement resulting from a scheme. A separate air quality model of the junction could be commissioned and this would test different scenarios and predict the outcome for air quality. The model would take into account traffic volumes and queuing times and predict the corresponding emissions. The cost of a separate air quality model is not specifically provided for in the approved budget for the scheme.*

Street Café encroachment

Q. Does 'Madame Posh' have a street café licence?

A. Yes.

- Q. Do table and chair licences allow for delivery vehicles, refuse vehicles and emergency service access?
- A. *In pedestrianised areas delivery vehicles need to be accommodated where no time restriction is in place. Such vehicles are able to navigate along Peascod Street without a problem.*
- Q. Are street cafés limited until after delivery hours?
- A. *Some are dependent on location. In the past we have had complaints about cafés putting their items out before deliveries were complete but not in the last 6 months.*
- Q. How often does the licence need to be re-applied for?
- A. *Every three years.*

New parking equipment River Street / Meadow Lane Car Parks

- Q. How will Blue badge holders be accommodated?
- A. *Free parking for blue badge holders in both car parks will be handled by the help point who will take details and allow free exit. Instructions will be provided in the car park.*
- Q. How will businesses permits/ season ticket holders be accommodated?
- A. *Business permit/ season ticket holders will be given a pass card for the car park which will enable them free entry/exit. Instructions will be provided to permit/ season ticket holders.*

Arthur Road Corridor Junctions – traffic signal review consultation (Arthur Rd/ Alma Rd)

- Q. Please can we write to coach companies asking them to adhere to the signed coach route?
- A. *Neil Walter (Parking Principal) will send an email to the coach operators association who will be able to advise their members.*

Email addresses for Highways, Transport and Streetcare enquiries were noted as follows:

- For highway defects, litter or graffiti – streetcare@rbwm.gov.uk
- For street lighting enquiries - streetlighting@rbwm.gov.uk
- For highway and planned maintenance - highways@rbwm.gov.uk
- For capital projects and parking consultations - projects@rbwm.gov.uk
- For public rights of way issues - PROW@rbwm.gov.uk
- For traffic and road safety enquiries - traffic@rbwm.gov.uk
- For passenger transport, school transport and bus shelters - transport@rbwm.gov.uk
- For winter service enquiries - winter.service@rbwm.gov.uk

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.45 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....