

## MAIDENHEAD TOWN FORUM

29 JUNE 2015

PRESENT: Councillors Philip Love (Chairman), Marius Gilmore, Charles Hollingsworth, Hari Dev Sharma and Derek Wilson.

Also Present: Councillor Marion Mills.

Mike Copelands, Richard Davenport, Bob Dulson (PRoM), Mark Fessey, James Harrison, John Morgan, Martin McNamee, Roger Panton and David Snelgar.

Officers: Tanya Leftwich, Peter Lerner and Laura Rheiter.

### PART I

#### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Claire Stretton and Steph James (Maidenhead Town Manager).

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

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Philip Love declared an interest in the agenda as he was the Chairman of the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan.

#### MINUTES

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 8 October 2015 be approved.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed them that it was being recorded.

#### MAIDENHEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Chairman explained that this meeting had been arranged so that Members could receive a presentation on why the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan was an exciting opportunity for everyone to have a say about how the area would develop over the next 10-15 years, would have a proper legal status and discuss issues such as:

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Tall Buildings
- Green Belt

- Parking
- Crossrail

The Chairman gave Members a presentation on the Neighbourhood Plan. A copy of the presentation was available from the Clerk.

The presentation covered the following:

- Map of Maidenhead showing the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan Boundary, Neighbourhood Plan area and the Ward boundaries.
- Working Groups (Town Centre, Development, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Design and Community Facilities).
- Assets.
- Heritage Assets.
- Key Items.
- Community Infrastructure Levy.
- The Landing.
- Stafferton Way.

The Chairman explained that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead was a vanguard in neighbourhood planning. It was noted that the Borough Council was committed to supporting local groups who wished to produce neighbourhood plans to shape development in their areas, along with the strategic policies in the Borough Local Plan. The Chairman explained that he was therefore keen to get Maidenhead residents involved in the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was noted that the Localism Act had encouraged people to have their own say for their area which had in turn resulted in ten community groups being formed to look at neighbourhood plans in the Royal Borough. The Chairman explained that for 2011-2014 the plan had been investigated by an independent investigator. Members were informed that over the last six to seven months lots of appeals had been submitted which had all been dismissed by the investigator. The Chairman explained that the neighbourhood plan had been made part of the development plan for the area at the Council meeting on 29 April 2014. It was noted that the plan had been subject to a referendum on 27 March 2014 with 91% of those voting in the referendum having supported the adoption of the plan by the Royal Borough. It was noted that the population in the Royal Borough equated to approximately 70,000 and was set to grow.

The Chairman welcomed Roger Panton to the meeting who had set up the website <http://www.maidenheadplan.com/> which to date 300 people had logged into to keep up-to-date.

Members were informed of the following timescales:

- Preparation of the neighbourhood plan (estimated 12 months)
- Draft neighbourhood plan stage
  - 6 weeks pre-submission consultation
  - Assessment of consultation responses and revision
  - 6 weeks publicity of plan proposal

- Examination and referendum stage
  - 28 days publication of information prior to referendum

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Council was currently undertaking a retail mix study to review capacity levels and look at how high buildings should be built.
- The Council was currently assessing sites and potential areas for development that had been identified in the consultation.
- It was noted that the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan covered the 'needs' for the next 10-15 years.
- An important exercise was to identify outstanding buildings and roads that were of significant character to the community.
- How the predicted population growth would affect schools, health, community and infrastructure. Identify shortfalls in provision and identify land needed to be safeguarded for neighbourhood facilities in the future.
- That it was down to each working group to decide how often they wished to meet. The Chairman explained that the Council could provide rooms to facilitate these meetings if needed.
- That any policy related document approved by the Local Authority went through a process to check it conformed to existing policy documents. For example any planning document had to conform and work with other policy documents.
- Expected population growth figures were based on census information.
- That the 2011 census data had only become public last year. It was noted that the 0-4 year old age group had significantly increased hence extra school places were being sourced. It was also noted that the demographics regarding older residents were also on the increase as they were staying in their homes longer and using services such as the doctor's surgeries for longer.
- That potential development of 2000+ flats was expected to be built in Maidenhead Town Centre over the next few years. 12,400 was the total figure expected for the whole of the Royal Borough.
- That Crossrail and Riverside would be completed and in place by 2019.
- The Chairman suggested more bungalows were needed with the Royal Borough so that the elderly population were able to downsize housing within the community, to something other than a flat, if they wished to do so. The Chairman explained if it was felt that there was evidence that there was a market for bungalows the Council could start looking to identify sites.
- It was suggested that the term 'bungalow' was very out of date and that it should be called something else.
- That the average size of a new build house had reduced by 35% due to land being so expensive – it was stated by a resident that in his opinion whilst he was not against bungalows he believed they needed too much space to make them viable.
- It was felt by another resident that building bungalows reduced the possibility of high rise developments in Maidenhead.

- The Interim Planning Policy Manager, Peter Lerner, suggested that rather than concentrating on bungalows, land could be secured for the older market aimed at adapting houses for use by the elderly.
- That maintenance costs needed to be taken into account and be affordable. It was suggested that smaller properties may not be the way forward in years to come.
- Roger Panton stated that he believed sooner or later the Council would need to build on the Green Belt and he felt that there was no point in resisting that fact.
- It was suggested that Green Belt sites should only ever be used for exceptional developments such as schools, hospitals, etc.
- The Interim Planning Policy Manager explained that the Green Belt land was designated back in the 1940's / 1950's and that some of the land within the Green Belt was not the same quality as other areas. . It was noted that 83% of the land in the Royal Borough was classed as being in the Green Belt, and
- it was explained that the Council would need to decide if all the Green Belt served a Green Belt purpose. The Interim Planning Policy Manager explained that up until recently the Adams Park area was in the Green Belt but had since been removed. It was noted that 83% of the land in the Royal Borough was classed as being in the Green Belt.
- Councillor Sharma believed there could be brownfield sites that could be explored for development.
- Roger Panton went onto explain that a number of people had mentioned parking issues and that the parking allocation provided per unit did not reflect current ownership of vehicles in the Royal Borough.
- That extra floors for parking were being proposed in the Nicholson's Car Park. It was noted that the Nicholson's Shopping Centre Car Park had recently been purchased and was planning to be regenerated.
- It was noted that the use of public transport needed to be encouraged.
- Councillor Sharma stated that he believed the Royal Borough needed a good sustainable transport system with proper linkage between trains, buses and the Town Centre put in place. The new bus station in High Wycombe was given as an example as it was considered to be accessible to all.
- That MAERSK were coming to Maidenhead.
- The Chairman explained that whilst Members had helped get the Neighbourhood Plans in their wards started they should be completed by residents. It was noted that Cox Green Neighbourhood Plan group met on a bi-monthly basis.
- The Chairman explained that the working groups would require 3-4 hours per week to get them started. It was noted that each working group required a core team of approximately 4-5 people to drive it through.
- Richard Davenport stated that he would be happy to chair the Town Centre working group.
- Mike Copelands stated that he would be happy to chair another of the working groups.
- The Chairman requested email addresses and working group preferences.
- The 'vision' for the Town Centre was ever changing and could be found on the RBWM website.

- It was noted that the Heathrow / Gatwick expansion proposals would soon be decided on and if the Heathrow option was chosen it would be a good time to include the additional need for housing in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The Chairman explained that the station area in Maidenhead was considered an opportunity area and that the Council planned to employ a Development Manager that would speak to the two stakeholders concerned.
- The Chairman explained that it was a challenge getting the message about the working groups out into the public domain. Councillor Derek Wilson suggested that the press could report that anyone interested in getting involved between the ages of 18-30 should email [maidenheadplan@gmail.com](mailto:maidenheadplan@gmail.com)

The Chairman thanked Roger Panton and everyone present for attending the meeting.

#### ITEM SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE FORUMS

The Chairman informed everyone present that future meetings would be a forum where ideas could be put forward and discussed as decided as to whether they were believed to be feasible.

It was requested that item suggestions be emailed to [tanya.leftwich@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:tanya.leftwich@rbwm.gov.uk)

#### DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the date of the future meetings as follows:

- Tuesday 27 October 2015.
- Monday 29 February 2016.

#### MEETING

The meeting, which began at 6.30pm, ended at 8pm.