

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum

Minutes / Action Points of the meeting held on 4th December 2019,

at Elizabeth House, Cookham.

In attendance: Bob Beauchamp, Alistair Donaldson, Bob Dulson, David Dyer, Mark Fessey, Andrew Ingram, Mick Jarvis, Peter Koklitis, Martin McNamee, Judith Littlewood, Ian Rose, Derek Roberts, Matthew Shaw, Lesley Winch, Andy Woodcock.

Observer: Cllr David Coppinger

Apologies: Ann Beauchamp, Adam Bermange, Sarah Bowden, Rachel Cook, Mike Copeland, Jinx Dacombe, Richard Davenport, Tom Easten, Grahame Fisher, Mike Gamage, Peter Knott, Claire Laidlaw, Deborah Mason, Roger Panton, Renier Persen, Katrine Preen, Mary Shippert, Phil Smith, Richard Thorogood, Derek Wilson, Katherine Wood.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed new members and Cllr David Coppinger RBWM Lead Member for Planning to the Forum.

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising:

Minutes of the meeting held on 06 November 2019 were accepted.

Matters Arising:

No matters arising to report

Report from Management Committee

The Chair reported on the activities of the Management Committee since the last meeting.

Meetings

- 08/11 – a meeting of the Business Topic Group was held at the myWorkspot in Reform Road, chaired by Matthew Shaw. Maidenhead Chamber of Commerce and MNF have agreed to work up a survey of Maidenhead businesses
- 12/11 – RBWM Climate Emergency Committee Stakeholder Forum.
Andy Woodcock attended the meeting to represent MNF, over 50 groups from across the RBWM area were represented at the meeting in St Mary's Parish Centre. The aim of the Forum is to provide input into the emerging RMWM Climate Emergency Policy, which is being developed following the declaration of a Climate Emergency by RBWM in Jun 2019.

MNF has agreed to maintain a watching brief on the activities of the CEC Stakeholder Forum and to involve MNF members as required, as our policies develop. MNF to attend meetings (which are anticipated to be every 6 weeks to dovetail into the RBWM Officers and Members CE meetings).

Action: Secretary to attend and report back

Post Meeting Note: Next meeting of the CEC Stakeholder Forum is planned for 09 January 2020

- 14/11 – Meeting with the RBWM Planning Team (Helen Murch and Robert Paddison) to discuss getting the consultation launched on MNF's Designation application
- 14/11 – Meeting to discuss Notable Buildings (a joint meeting with the Maidenhead Civic Society and Maidenhead Heritage Centre) to develop a register of local buildings in Maidenhead, which are not listed but which can be considered of significant interest. Next steps for the group are to meet with the RBWM conservation officer to set terms of reference.
- 19/11 – First meeting of the Build Environment Group, chaired by Martin McNamee. Initial focus is on developing a survey for this topic group
- 20/11 – Civic Society AGM, where a presentation on place-making was given by Charles Champion who leads the community engagement process for JTP Studios (Nicholson's Centre and RBWM Town Centre Place Making projects).
- 23/11 – Town Centre Place Making Community Engagement Event. The Chair and several members attended whole or parts of this event held in the former Argos shop in the Nicholson's Centre. It was noted that there was a low turnout (about 100 people visited during the day) and that the event seemed to be low key compared to the previous JTP organised event for the Nicholson's Centre redevelopment. The Chair has written a blog of his experience of the event, it can be viewed at on the MNF website <https://mnf.org.uk/place-making/>
- 27/11 The MNF Management Committee had a meeting with the AECOM consultancy. AECOM are appointed by Department for Communities and Rural Affairs to provide advice to Neighbourhood Forums. This initial advice is at no cost to the Forum and forms part of a wider package of assistance which is available.

Finance

In the absence of a Treasurer (see below), the Secretary reported on the current MNF financial position.

Income:	£4909.00
Expenditure:	£539.68
Balance:	£4369.32

There is approximately £40 of commitment for expenses not yet shown in the accounts for Facebook fees and business cards.

Vacancy for Treasurer

The Chair advised the meeting that Deborah Mason has resigned for the post of Treasurer. The Chair asked if there was anyone interested in taking on this role, noting that in the interim, the Secretary and Chair both can access and manage the Bank Account.

The intention is that members present consider whether they would like to put themselves forward for the position. The Chair indicated that the task is not particularly onerous due to the low level of expenditure and no cash income. By the next Forum meeting it is hoped that someone will be willing to take on the role.

BLP Survey feedback

The online survey was launched on 18 November and ran until 25 November, to canvas views from the public, to assist in developing the MNF response to the BLPSV- Proposed Changes consultation. The survey was widely viewed, with over 300 useable responses being received. Respondents came from all 7 Maidenhead Wards, across all age groups and genders.

This first survey has provided MNF with valuable experience of preparing on-line surveys and provided insight into how the survey software works together with its analytical capability. Details of the analysis are available on the MNF website.

<https://mnf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/MNF-BLP-Survey-2019.11.25-min.pdf>

Andrew Ingram has kindly offered to assist with the generation of future survey material.

Designation Progress

To note that RBWM has commenced the formal public consultation on the Designation of MNF as the Neighbourhood Forum. This runs for 7 weeks until 06 Jan, after which the Cabinet will have to consider the responses received from consultees and either grant or decline the application for designation. It is anticipated that this will be made around 24 February 2020.

Borough Local Plan Submitted Version – Proposed Changes (BLPSV-PC) – discussion concerning the MNF response.

The Chair reminded the meeting that the current consultation by RBWM on the BLPSV-PC is due to close on 15 December 2019, individuals and organisations have until then to make a submission. It was noted that the format of the response is required to conform to the RBWM response documentation format.

Further to the action agreed at the November meeting, a draft MNF submission to the BLPSV-PC consultation had been prepared jointly by the Chair, Secretary and Editor, using information gained from the survey responses; this had been circulated to members and followers. The purpose of the discussion was to consider the wider view of members on the draft text of a submission from MNF.

There was a wide-ranging discussion in the meeting, touching some areas which are out with the consultation.

The overall concerns of those present can be summed up as:

- Total numbers of dwellings to be constructed and the concentration in the central Town Centre Area
- The plan does not appear to reflect the required mix of housing for Maidenhead
- There seemed to be an overreliance on tall buildings and resulting increase in density
- The feeling that the BLP is seeking to create an inner-city townscape within a small country town, which is somewhat inappropriate for Maidenhead
- There has been a lack of meaningful public involvement in drawing up the BLP

- Lack of additional infrastructure to support the increased densification of the Town Centre area (exacerbated by the zero rate of CIL)
- Concern about building on the Greenbelt (this issue had the largest number of concerns in the survey response)
- The total number of residential units in the BLPSV-PC now appeared to be overproviding as the net of the number of units in the PC version was greater than the original submission.
(Cllr Coppinger was able to inform the meeting that the difference was made up of a contingency (10%) and an element of catching up from previous years' backlogs (5%))

There was an overall feeling that the draft MNF submission as written, whilst picking up many of these concerns, was perhaps too conciliatory towards the proposed changes to BLPSV.

Some discussion ensued on the implications of rejecting the BLPSV-PC.

There was a feeling that the BLP, with the subsequent proposed changes, was now sufficiently flawed to warrant its rejection.

There was a strong contrary view, that having no accepted BLP is worse than a plan which has some areas which could be changed and improved.

It was noted that the consultation was only about the proposed changes, not the substantive document.

There is also a view that a Neighbourhood Plan (when approved) could provide a means of correcting some of the deficiencies in the BLPSV-PC version.

Following the discussion, it was agreed that the draft MNF submission required its tone (particularly in its preamble), to be amended to better reflect the overall concern of members. The draft submission did however contain a good mix of issues which are of concern to members.

It was agreed that a further draft would be prepared and circulated taking onboard the sentiments of the discussion. Members are welcome to submit further comments.

Action: Chair and Management Committee to revise and circulate.

AOB

No items of AOB were raised.

Meeting Closed at 2100

Next Meeting: Wednesday 8 January 2020 @7.15pm – United Reformed Church, West Street Maidenhead. SL6 1RL

AW

06/12/19