

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum

Minutes / Action Points of the meeting held on 6th November 2019,

at Elizabeth House, Cookham.

In attendance: Bob Beauchamp, Ann Beauchamp, Cllr Simon Bond, David Dyer, Mark Fessey, Mick Jarvis, Peter Koklitis, Martin McNamee, Matthew Shaw, Derek Wilson, Andy Woodcock.

Apologies: Phil Adkins, Rachel Cook, Mike Copeland, Richard Davenport, Grahame Fisher, Mike Gamage, Jane Gifford, Andrew Ingram, Peter Knott, Deborah Mason, Roger Panton, Derek Roberts, Ian Rose, Richard Thorogood, Jane Wright.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed new members to the Forum.

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising:

Minutes of the meeting held on 02 October 2019 were accepted.

Matters Arising:

Privacy Policy:

Note that a revised privacy policy has now been posted on the MNF website.

Report from Management Committee

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

Designation Progress

The Chair reported that following a period of little activity by RBWM concerning our application, (it is now 5 weeks since the application was submitted), an email had been received from RBWM Neighbourhood Planning Officer expressing some concerns over the extent of the MNF engagement with the wider community. Particular concern was raised regarding involvement of the business community e.g., the developers of the Nicholson's Centre, Areli and the JTP consultancy. (The latter has 2 separate commissions in the town – advising Areli and the Town Centre Placemaking study for RBWM).

The Chair advised that the Business 'Topic Group' was due to have its inaugural meeting on Friday (8/11), and that the membership of the group is drawn from the local business community. This was evidence that MNF was involved with the local businesses in town.

Following this meeting the chair will respond to the email from RBWM and arrange a meeting with Robert Paddison to discuss his concerns.

The Chair recalled that the presentation to the Maidenhead Chamber of Commerce several weeks earlier had been well received and that the members were generally supportive of what the MNF is seeking to achieve.

Membership

Interest in the Forum continues to grow, with around 50 members interested in participating in the activity of the Forum and around 270 who have expressed a wish to be 'kept informed'. On this basis the Management Committee is confident that we have enough support to continue with the work of the Forum and the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. More members are always welcome particularly from the areas of the community we have found hard to reach.

Maidenhead Town Forum

The Chair attended a recent meeting of the Town Forum, some of the issues raised by members of the community, whilst of interest were not directly relevant to the work of the MNF. A presentation by Areli was of given outlining their ideas. The Town Centre Manager also presented plans to provide displays of street art during the redevelopment phase. It would appear, that following representations the developers are considering the use of street names with historic relevance to the town centre.

N.B. The Town Forum is an RBWM bi-monthly meeting to enable members of the community to meet their councillors – agenda and Minutes are on the RBWM website. It has limited influence as issues discussed have to be elevated via the formal council procedures before officers can act.

Borough Local Plan (BLP) – Special Council Meeting

The Chair and Treasurer attended the special meeting of the council held on 23/10/19, where the revised BLP submission (BLPSV) was discussed. A motion by opposition councillors to defer a decision to submit to a later date was lost. This was intended to allow councillors more time to review the revised submission rather than rush it through. *(The text of the revised document amounting to c.4000 pages with all the supporting documents).*

The council agreed to progress to the next stage of the submission process, which is to launch a 6-week public consultation. This was agreed and the consultation runs from 01 November to 15 December 2019. (Details of the consultation and how to respond are on the RBWM website).

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201026/borough_local_plan/1500/proposed_changes_to_blp_submission_version

Following the notification of the revised BLP submission, the Chair posted various interactive maps on Facebook and on the MNF website. The Facebook post to 3500 people has been viewed by over a 1000 people representing a 30% engagement rate.

Town Centre Placemaking meeting

The Chair attended a kick-off meeting with the JTP project team who have been commissioned by RBWM to undertake the town centre placemaking study.

This will be followed by an all-day community planning workshop on 23 November in the Nicholson's Centre, the output of which will be a 'Vision and Charter' for the town.

This is billed under the 'Make Maidenhead' banner.

It was noted that one of the JTP Partners, Charles Campion, is also involved with the Nicholson's Centre project for Areli, however it is understood that the two projects are managerially separate within JTP, to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

All MNF members and supporters are urged to be involved in the process.

Link to the event website is: <https://www.jtp.co.uk/projects/visionmaidenhead>

Data gathering to support the MNF evidence base.

The chair informed the meeting of the various public data bases that are available for perusal by members of the public (a legacy of the 'Big Society' initiative).

These include:

- Historic England – for listed buildings/buildings of historic importance
- Ordnance Survey - general mapping information
- Land Registry – details of 23m individual land parcels
- Valuation Office – details of rateable value of business premises, location of private car parking
- Post Office – details of all official postal addresses
- Office of National Statistics
- Environmental Agency
- Natural England – data on green spaces
- DEFRA (Department for Food and Rural Affairs)

These datasets have been downloaded and are available for the Topic and Interest Groups to use in gathering information to support policy development.

Draft Development Programme for the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan

Copies of the draft programme giving an indicative timeline for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, which had previously been discussed by the Management Committee, was shared with members. (The draft plan will be included in the Documents section of the MNF website).

The Secretary outline the various elements which lead up to the date for a proposed community engagement workshop during 13/14 March 2020. This will enable the Topic and Interest Groups to share their initial ideas, and the issues raised through the responses to a questionnaire, with the wider community and for members of the community to become involved with the work of the Forum by submitting their own ideas during the workshops. These can then be developed by the various Forum sub-groups into appropriate policies with supporting evidence for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Nicholson's Centre Manager has tentatively agreed to making a space available in one of the unused shop spaces for the event in March 2020.

The target is to have the first draft of the NP ready for wider consultation by mid-August 2020. Given the statutory process that the NP has to follow from that date, it may well be mid-2021 before the plan is adopted.

It was pointed out that in the draft timeline, the referendum was shown to occur around the summer holiday period in 2021. It was noted that the dates after the submission of the draft plan to RBWM (August 2020), were only indicative at this stage, and MNF has no control over this part of the process other than the time taken to respond to comments from the RBWM and the Plan Examiner.

Some concerns raised over the availability of Inspectors to review the draft plan which may impart further delay. It was noted that Neighbourhood Plans are scrutinised by Examiners rather than Planning Inspectors and that there is a better availability, it does however represent a risk to the overall programme.

Finance

The Treasurer has provided the following financial summary:

Grant Income	£4909
Expenditure to date	£288 – Room hire for 2020 Forum meetings £251.68 – cost of setting up the website and email accounts etc

Borough Local Plan (BLP) – resubmission

As reported above, following the special council meeting on 23 October, it was agreed that the redrafted BLP should be submitted to the Planning Inspector and thus triggering a formal public consultation process. RBWM has stated that the consultation will run from 01 November until 15 December 2019. The issue which the Forum needs to consider is, does the MNF make a formal response to the consultation, and if so, what position should the Forum adopt regarding the revised BLP submission? This prompted some debate amongst members present.

Of concern were the plans to allow taller buildings in the town centre, the lack of clarity on the number of 1 or 2 bedroomed flats being provided, as opposed to family accommodation, access and parking in the town centre area and general level of traffic congestion arising from the numerous developments close to the town centre.

It was noted that without a Local Plan in place, the opportunity to shape developments was more limited and that having a plan in place, should be to the overall benefit for the future of the town. Noting that the current target of new home construction planned for the Maidenhead area over the forthcoming years (712 units per year).

There also remains some uncertainty as to the position the Inspector will take over the deliverability of the proposals, so the approval of the revised BLP without further revision/amendment is not at all certain.

The consensus of the meeting being that MNF should submit a response to the consultation, and that at this stage it was felt that a broadly neutral position should be adopted, given that the MNF policies are in their infancy.

It was agreed that an email/facebook questionnaire should be created with a view to eliciting from respondents the top 5 issues which concerned them regarding the future development of Maidenhead.

The results of this questionnaire, together with the knowledge and experience gained by MNF from the previous work in developing the MNF policies, should then form the basis of a response.

Given that the role of Neighbourhood Forums is to support the delivery of Local Plans, it was however felt that our support should be matched by the support of RBWM for the designation of the MNF (as noted earlier, the consultation on the MNF designation is currently delayed within the RBWM).

In order to link in with the timescale for responding to the BLP Consultation, it was agreed that the questionnaire responses would need to be used to create an initial response to be discussed at the December meeting of the Forum in order for a final response to be drafted and submitted.

To achieve this, it was suggested that Mick Jarvis, Ian Rose and Richard Davenport draw up a list of potential questions to be considered by the next Management Committee on Wednesday 13/11 to enable the questionnaire to be issued.

Action: MJ/IR/RD

Meeting Venue for 2020

Further to the views expressed at previous meetings, that the MNF should meet at a central venue within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, a meeting room has been secured at the Maidenhead United Reformed Church on West Street.

Parking is available in the car park on West Street, (free to Advantage Card holders after 19:00).

The room is available from 19:00 – 21:00 and following a brief discussion it was agreed that the meetings in 2020 should commence at the slightly earlier time of 19:15.

Due to the first Wednesday of January being New Year's Day, the first meeting of 2020 will be held on Wednesday 08 January, thereafter it will revert to its usual day of the first Wednesday of the month.

Topic Group activity

Due to a lack of time this was deferred

Please see Appendix for the briefings, where available.

AOB

Letters of introduction and business cards

Following a point raised by one of the topic groups concerning how members of the Forum should be recognised, it was agreed that a letter of introduction should be prepared which any of the groups could use when entering a dialogue with external parties and that non-personalised business cards would be printed and be made available to members who have a need for them.

Action: Chair to arrange Business Cards, Secretary to draft Letter of Introduction

Topic group email accounts

To avoid using personal email accounts when dealing with individuals/organisations outside the membership of the Forum, the chair advised members that the lead of each topic group has a topic group email account which can be used for external communication.

Meeting Closed at 21:05

Next Meeting: Wednesday 4th December @7.30pm - Elizabeth House, Cookham.

AW

08/11/19

Appendix: Topic Group updates

The following updates are presented in writing.

The Natural Environment topic group

Currently a small group undertaking research and outreach on different areas - more people welcome to get involved

Looking at: Green spaces:

- Reaching out to user groups/friends of in current parks/spaces listed on RBWM website
- Identifying smaller green spaces particularly within housing developments to gain understanding of current use/views of residents in order to inform policy for future green spaces in new developments
- Setting up meetings with green space stakeholders (eg National Trust)
- Working through Wild Maidenhead habitat map and biodiversity action plan to map green corridors and ensure policies in line with species protection etc.
- Looking at evidence base for effect of large increase in water extraction for new homes and water table and how that impacts gravel pits, ponds etc both from an amenity (no sailing on Summerlease in August for example) and wildlife/ecosystem point of view.

We expect to have developed a framework for wider consultation by the end of November.

The Built Environment topic group

The team is being assembled, and meetings are due to begin November 18th. Most of the work done by the predecessor forum comes under this topic group's auspices, which means the group is well advanced.

The Getting About topic group

First meeting held on 5th November. The group has parcelled up work to undertake research into the following areas:

- Journeys
- Parking
- Vehicle infrastructure
- Road infrastructure
- Public transport
- Cycling
- Walking

The Employment, Business and Retail topic group

The group will be working in partnership with Maidenhead & District Chamber of Commerce. The first meeting is due 8th November. The joint team comprises:

- Will Ballantyne – director of myWorkspot (a co-working centre)
- Paul Brimacombe – former councillor, management consultant, Maidenhead District Chamber of Commerce lead
- Mark Harris – Commercial property agent
- Katrine Preen – local accountant
- Matthew Shaw – chair, MNF
- Gurch Singh – Councillor for town centre and local business owner
- Jane Wright – Manager of Nicholson’s, chair of Town Partnership