

Windsor Neighbourhood Plan

Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on Wednesday 7 January 2015

18.30 – 20.30 in the Conference Room, York House, Sheet Street

Present: Claire Milne (Chair); John Bastow (Co-Chair); Susy Shearer (Secretary); Jane Carter; Brian Carter; Pauline Carter; David Eglise; John Holdstock; Alison Logan; Brian Rayner; Trevor Robinson; Anne Taylor; Cllr George Bathurst; Andrew Melville; Trevor Robinson; Dermot Whelan (CWNBP); Laura Rheiter (RBWM); Paul Roach (W&ETP); Ian Church (RBWM); Stan Labovitch

Apologies: Vivienne Allen; Cllr Phill Bicknell; Nick Clemo; Carole Da Costa; Cllr Wisdom Da Costa; Jane Daly; Cllr John Fido; Raewyn Porteous; Helen Price; Cllr Dee Quick; Margery Thorogood; Peter Wilkinson

1- Welcome

Claire welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for introductions around the table for the benefit of newcomers. She confirmed all local Councillors had been invited to attend. Apologies were as noted above.

2- Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on 19 November 2014

The minutes had been circulated for approval. P: Cllr G. Bathurst S: A. Logan **Agreed nem con**

3- Matters arising

- **Apologies** for absence from **Laura** to be added.
- **Item 5** - **Claire** confirmed the Vision consultation had started on 22/11/14, rather than 22/12/14.
- **Item 6** - **Claire** informed the meeting that she is now in the process of seeking an opinion and advice from RBWM as to whether an **SEA** will need to be included in the Plan. She said it seemed unlikely at present but we needed to be prepared in case the situation were to change.

Other matters arising were taken in the course of this meeting.

4- WNP Committee Meeting 10/12/14 (CM)

- **Claire** circulated copies of the draft minutes and indicated they would be confirmed at the committee's next meeting (later this month, date TBA). She thanked the committee for their useful work to date.

5- Matters arising (CM)

Actions arising from the committee meeting which were discussed by this meeting:

1. SWOT Analyses –

These are ongoing and still to be completed. Individual area SWOT meetings had already taken place for the Boltons and Clewer; Inner Suburbs and Dedworth to be organised soon.

- a. There was a brief discussion of this matter during which **Alison** asked what would be done with these and whether a "working document" would be created for the Steering Group/ Topic Groups. **Claire** said significant issues would be picked up and, hopefully, identification of potential sites ("**site assembly**") for development. **Susy** said that **Imperial Road** and **parts of Clewer and Dedworth** were areas with some larger plots or groups of plots further out from the town centre where

several were already being subdivided, highlighting many attendant spatial, environmental and infrastructure issues.

- b. **John H.** drew the **example of Bray Parish** and the **impact of large developments on amenities and infrastructure**. **Claire** confirmed that **infrastructure was emerging as a major focal point** in the analyses.
- c. **Claire** said that **pulling out key themes for Topic Groups** to use in their ongoing work would be an essential part of this process, to be followed by a second **“whole group” meeting/working day** to take matters to the next stage, including policy drafting.

II. **SEA –**

Claire had previously suggested that **this would be necessary only where proposals and policies focused on infrastructure** and was continuing to seek clarification from RBWM.

- a. The topic of **Park & Ride** was raised in a short discussion on this matter.
- b. **Laura** said that were this to be included as part of the WNP, it would most likely be as a **“project”** and would probably not mean that undertaking an SEA was required. She indicated any clarification required on this would be available in due course.

III. **Consultancy support –**

- a. **Claire** indicated the **typical cost** of consultancy support would be **£400-£500 per day**.
- b. **Claire** confirmed that funding through the **Locality Grant would cease in March 2015** and thereafter we would need to use **generic support**, ie. WNP’s own funds, to cover this.
- c. **David** queried the use of **consultancy support** in creating the Plan. **John B.** responded by referring to **SEA screening** and the need for professional help should this prove to be a statutory requirement for the WNP.

IV. **Borough Local Plan (BLP)**

- a. **Claire** referred to recent indications from RBWM that the **BLP 2nd Preferred Options paper** would not be published until **after the election in May 2015**. This gave rise to **questions about the relative timing of the paper and the WNP document and, by implication, the CWNPB document**.
- b. **John H.** suggested that the **WNP should follow the BLP**. Conversely, **George** quoted the **success of the Ascot NP, which had preceded the BLP by some margin**. He added that the **draft 2nd Preferred Options paper was still due to be considered by Cabinet next month (February), having been deferred from December 2014**.
- c. **John B.** said a **Plan (NP) prepared would have substantial weight prior to an Enquiry**, even without a BLP in place, which **Laura** confirmed. **Claire** reminded the meeting of **Stella’s advice that the closer we are to a Draft Plan, the stronger our position** in relation to Planning. **John B.** said although **WNP would not have legal standing prior to a Referendum**, it would **still carry important weight in Appeals**, for example. **George** indicated that **the protocol is in place to use NP evidence during Planning Meetings**, as shown in the history of the **Ascot NP**.

- d. In response to a question from **Anne** regarding its possible timetable, **George** confirmed that **although the BLP is overdue**, there is **no mandatory time limit for its issue**. The meeting agreed to proceed with the **WNP project plan on the basis of the 1st Preferred Options document**, which had already been studied. The **WNP Committee and Forum will continue to monitor BLP progress carefully and make adjustments to its own progress as and when appropriate**.

V. **Plan and Policy Writing –**

Claire suggested the **structure of the Plan** was already starting to take a clear shape and that a substantial amount of information was being drawn together in order to **begin drafting policies**. She thanked everyone for their valuable contributions to these efforts and would look at a **practical timetable** to take these aspects forward.

6- **Constitution Vote (O/S Item carried forward) (CM)**

Claire confirmed that a vote (show of hands) by the meeting would be taken this evening to approve the **formal adoption of the WNP Constitution**, following a brief discussion of two minor proposed amendments:

- Referring to **Clause 6.1 (Meetings – AGM)**, **Claire** suggested **deleting a date for this** in view of the timing of the confirmation of WNP area by Cabinet.
P: P. Carter S: D. Eglise **Agreed unanimously**
- **Claire** also proposed that the **Accounts** should cover an **annual period ending 30th June**, to allow two months' auditing prior to the AGM.
P: B. Carter S: B. Rayner **Agreed unanimously**
- Amended Constitution proposed and voted on.
P: J. Carter S: A. Taylor **Agreed unanimously**

7- **Project Plan (JB)**

- **John B.** circulated copies of the draft revised Project Plan timetable for discussion. Allowing for progress so far and provision for possible requirements, he said the earliest date a Referendum could be held was around October 2015. He noted that **Stella Scrivener** (Planning Aid) had advised that a **Pre-Submission Public Consultation was not mandatory** and that the Forum had the authority to undertake the Consultation with representative groups. Nevertheless **John B.** said that it would be preferable for the WNP to think in terms of a full consultation. A decision will be taken nearer the time. **Susy** commented that it was extremely **helpful to have the WNP project plan set out in this format** without direct reference to the BLP so that progress of the WNP could be monitored independently of any alterations to the BLP timetable.
- **"Options Paper"** – Referring to the section **"Modify as required"**, **John H.** noted that the period of two weeks shown for this might not provide sufficient time. This was noted.
- **Claire** indicated that the **WNP and CWNPB have not yet formally linked their timetables**. Responding on this point, **Dermot** suggested **a meeting of both groups should be set up soon** to begin looking at all those matters which would be integral to a wider project plan. He observed that the WNP timetable appeared to be significantly longer than the CWNPB's and he needed to confirm with RBWM which other consultations they would need to undertake and matters of scrutiny. **Claire** thanked **Dermot** for his comments and confirmed the WNP Co-Chairs would be in touch soon to discuss the matter.

8- Vision Consultation & Engagement update (CM)

- **Claire confirmed that around 320 responses had been received so far which equated to around 2.5% of WNP area residents. A separate delivery of forms with covering letters had gone to local schools, businesses, organisations and services. She was pleased by the fact that although it is a relatively long survey paper, the reaction to the “Vision” had been overwhelmingly positive, confirming it was “something that everyone would want.” The cut-off for responses would be the end of this week.**
- **In response to George’s query regarding numbers (pop. 22,500), Claire said that survey forms had been delivered to 12,800 households, with the option for individuals to complete the questionnaire online. Claire noted that information usually needs to be presented five times in order to be “seen”, and attempts had been made to ensure the message was made visible by as many means as possible. With regard to statistics, George pointed out that the higher the response numbers, the greater statistical confidence levels in the results. Claire said the survey seemed to be hitting the right targets of “representativeness” in relation to age and gender.**
- **Stan said he had come to tonight’s meeting after receiving a form. He had completed the survey online and wondered how and when he would be able to access the results. Claire responded by saying that data was still being entered by hand and that new issues were emerging, and an appropriate system was still being devised to code and analyse the information. She said the results would appear on the website in due course.**
- **Referring to the CWNPB’s recent experience, Dermot said that ideas had been captured first through data recorded in an “open-ended” fashion, and a meaningful “filter” had to be identified in order to see what could be taken forward. Reflecting on both survey experiences, Claire said it was quite interesting and reassuring to look at the Business Plan’s results. George indicated that the key issue to emerge was preserving heritage.**

9- Finance Update (JB)

- **John B. confirmed that our existing Locality funding ceased on 31st December 2014 and that any funds which have not been used by that date must be returned to Locality.**
- **Copies of the accounts relating to this Locality (and RBWM “starter”) grants were circulated to the meeting. These covered expenditure dating back through WENP, former CWNP and WNP phases which related to the production of the Plan and its examination. The meeting considered it was very helpful to study these at this point and that they were an accurate reflection of spending to date.**
- **John B confirmed that the RBWM has enabled NP activity to continue by the award of a £20k grant to both of the two NP groups in Windsor. A WNP bank account has been opened to administer these funds – see below.**
- **Claire confirmed that RBWM would take on the cost of the Plan once a draft document had been submitted.**
- **In the ensuing discussion, John H. suggested it would be useful to have both a written procedure and a business plan. He also requested sight of the grant ground rules and suggested that a budget breakdown be prepared. NB: These are now attached to the minutes.**

- a. **Susy** suggested it could be **very helpful to be able to consider a draft business plan alongside the draft project plan timetable**. **Alison** proposed that the matter be added to the **next committee meeting agenda**.
- b. **Dermot** concurred with the **difficulty of setting a budget**, suggesting the WNP look at what needed to be paid **now** and consider using "bridging funds". **Claire** responded by saying the WNP had been precluded from using these because of funding already in place.
- c. **Claire** indicated that **new DCLG grants would be available from April 2015** and that **Stella** had confirmed **we would be able to apply** for these. **George** confirmed he had **helped Cllr Bateson arrange for the current £20k funding** to be made available to each groups, for which **Claire** and **John B.** expressed sincere thanks on behalf of the Forum.

10- CWNPB for Business (Windsor 2030) update (DW)

This update stimulated a very lengthy discussion within which the following points were raised:

- **Dermot** said that the CWNPB had **had no funding to begin with** and a delay in knowing where they stood in terms of a "separate plan". This had resulted in the **"Vision Day" being postponed until finances were in place**. The **response to the survey had been very good**, drawing attention to **"single site issues"**, and the feedback was now available on the website. He agreed the **CWNPB would like more participation from residents** and that there was also **"still room at the table" to have greater involvement from the WNP**, asking **Claire** if she would please circulate this invitation.
- The **CWNPB can only move forward as quickly as funds will allow**, and the **Plan will be expensive due to particular issues**. The monthly **Forum meetings (first Friday of each month)** were welcome, useful opportunities to engage with contributors from both Plans. **Claire, John B.** and **Jane C.** had already been attending these. **Steering Group meetings** took place with a smaller, more focused group of members who dealt with **"topic group" matters** and specific tasks to progress the Plan.
- **Dermot** wished the Business Plan to be seen to have **open and collaborative dialogue with residents**. **John H.** indicated that **residents would be immensely interested in the ideas coming forward and their implications**, in "specifics" rather than simply in procedure, as **all residents had a keen interest in the town centre and access** to it. **Dermot** indicated his full appreciation of these concerns. Although there were restrictions on absorbing and reacting to other views, he **acknowledged the importance of taking opportunities to hear what was being said** and to **find the right balance between the needs and views of businesses (as a "Business" Forum) and those of residents**.
- **Claire** said it would be **in no one's interest to produce a Plan which would be turned down**. **Laura** raised the matter of **widening the Referendum area**, to which **George** responded by confirming that the **Inspector would make a recommendation on which RBWM would then take a decision**. **Dermot** said the CWNPB was **keen to use the work done under the previous NPs and contributing Business views to those Topic Groups looking at use of and access to the town centre**.
- Regarding an **integrated Communications Policy**, **Claire** confirmed that **Helen** has monitored and, in some cases, corrected misinformation and misperceptions contained in some local websites. As a general rule, however, it was felt to be **in line with "best practice" that the WNP did not enter into any website dialogues and directing people instead to the WNP website** for all updates and accurate information. **Dermot** said **this approach was equally shared by the Business Plan**, and suggested a **"joint approach" might be formally agreed by**

both Plans in the interests of democratic agreement, transparency and positive working practices.

- **Claire** mentioned she'd been advised that **"blogs" can be problematic in their use by NPs** and that a **policy had evolved of putting forward factual statements** and adhering to agreed principles. **Jane C.** asked **how would comments left on the WNP website would be taken forward.** **Claire** said no one had yet done this but that the **standard response should be an invitation to come to the Forum meetings.** **Jane C.** said relevant policies should be developed prior to the Draft Plan stage. **Claire** indicated the **"Single Issue" forums** would also provide valuable opportunities to channel responses, agreeing that **all decisions on the matter of communications should reflect "best practice"**.

11- **AOB**

- **Trevor** was **extremely concerned** by the fact that **the 702 bus service was being curtailed.** He asked whether there had been **any consultation with residents;** whether the **service depended to any extent on RBWM funding;** whether **trade unions** should be contacted; and how **effective connections with Crossrail** would be made as a result. He said he was minded to contact the Councillors for Park Ward, through which the service runs. **John B.** indicated that the **WNP would not cover bus services per se since these did not fall within planning jurisdiction, although cycling did** (this confirmation in response to **Brian C.**'s question). However, he added, we have yet to define the scope of our plan. Planning a bus service is definitely out, but the provision of a bus service and cycling routes for new developments should be included.
- Referring to these points, **Alison** suggested **we as individuals can use this evidence to communicate with decision makers and give voice to important local views.** **John B.** indicated we should be saying to RBWM and developers, **"If you want to put in X no. of houses, you need to provide the requisite level of public transport."**
- **Dermot** suggested that **issues from the "evidence base" would provide the "values" in the Plans.** He raised the use of **CIL**, saying if there were an **infrastructure requirement**, **CIL** could support as well as provide this. It would need **cross-borough co-operation**, which involves slightly different ways of using the Plans. **Claire** said a **clear expectation** needs to be communicated that **if infrastructure is required, it must be provided.**

Claire thanked everyone for coming and for contributing to the wide range of excellent discussions.

12- **Date and time of next meeting**

Tuesday 10 February 2015 from 6.30-8.30pm VENUE TBC