

# Windsor Neighbourhood Plan

## Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on Tuesday 24 March 2015

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

**Present:** Claire Milne (Co-Chair); John Bastow (Co-Chair); Susy Shearer (Secretary); Sue Kemp; Alison Logan; Carole Da Costa; Andrew Melville; Anne Taylor; Peter Wilkinson; Nick Clemo; Brian Carter; Pauline Carter; Brian Rayner; Cllr Christine Bateson; Ian Church (RBWM); Jane Carter; Peter Kingswood; Cllr Dee Quick

**Apologies:** Cllr George Bathurst; David Eglise; Cllr John Fido; Jane Daly; Hilary Hopper; Helen Price; Trevor Robinson; Cori Mackin; Margery Thorogood; Cllr Wisdom Da Costa; Laura Rheiter (RBWM Link Officer); Antony Wood; Ingrid Fernandes

### 1- Welcome and apologies

Claire welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted and confirmed as above.

### 2- Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on 10 February 2015

The minutes had been circulated for approval. Claire asked that the wording of Item 5 point 5 be amended for emphasis: "actionable policies which will pass at Referendum." P: A.Taylor S: J. Bastow **Agreed nem con**

### 3- Matters arising (CM)

These were raised in the course of relevant agenda item discussions.

### 4- Project Plan update (JB & CM)

- **John B.** confirmed the **intended target date for sending the formal draft WNP document to RBWM** for checking was still **July 2015**, even although local elections were taking place in May and meetings with the consultants had not yet taken place.
- **Claire** said the **survey results** confirmed the **WNP Vision had been "overwhelmingly endorsed"**. As an appropriate follow-up, the **Vision Survey Report** had been taken back to the "drawing board" and a **new summary document "Vision for Windsor"** produced, which was circulated at tonight's meeting. The new document incorporates **several additional areas of local concern which emerged from the Vision consultation ("Input from the community")**. Respective **"Suggested approaches" for ways in which the WNP would address these** (aspirational statements) are shown in the document. The new points are:
  - a) **Heritage, Housing & Community (incl. indoor leisure facilities, health and education)**
    - G. Affordable Housing
    - H. Leisure & Community facilities for young people
    - II. Ensure there are enough community health facilities
    - J. Education
  - b) **Economy (including business and tourism)**
    - G. Encourage extra business uses & facilities
  - c) **Transport (no additions)**
  - d) **Open Space, Natural Environment, Countryside & Leisure (incl. outdoor leisure facilities)**
    - F. Address localised drainage issues
- **The new Vision document will be used to guide the aims & objectives of policy writing** following the recent **Policy Drafting Workshop** led by Planning Aid Advisor Brian Whitely (CM). While there is still a great deal to do, the Workshop and day had been extremely valuable and productive. **Claire** said it was **important to consider all that has been achieved to date – a) Vision Document & Consultation; b) SWOTs and summaries; c) first stages of policy writing; and d) preliminary draft outline of the Plan (introduction, "Direction" statement, middle section) – which were needed before the formation of appropriate, accurately framed and clearly structured policies could be undertaken.**

- **Claire** stated that once the Plan is in a form the committee was happy with, preliminary engagement with it would begin as quickly as possible so that momentum and progress are maintained in to meet a July target date. **Pauline** asked if **more policy writing days** are being planned. **Claire** responded that more Planning Aid advice and support would be possible with the **new RBWM funding**. In this context **Peter K.** noted the **value of studying other NPs** and also mentioned that town centre **Conservation Areas** were currently under review.
- **Claire** added there were **benefits for WNP in not being a “front-runner” NP** and that **much could be learned from the implementation of NPs elsewhere**. She gave the examples of **Thame NP** in which **wording of environmental policies had not provided adequate protection for smaller green spaces which were now under threat from development**, and **Ascot NP** was now facing some similar issues.
- **John B. and Claire** confirmed that **three lists were now needed** to support the Neighbourhood Plan:
  - a) **Assets of Community Value (ACVs)**, nominations for which are submitted directly to RBWM
  - b) **Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs)**, with area lists now being compiled by volunteers
  - c) **Local green/open spaces** of all sizes, shapes, locations and “designations”/categories

Several questions and a general discussion regarding **ACVs** ensued, with **John B.** asking whether open space could qualify. **Susy** said **all types of green spaces could and should be nominated**, referring to the current **Civic Voice ACV Campaign**. She added that the **RBWM Open Space Audit**, which forms part of the **Local Plan “Evidence Base”**, identifies **formal categories of open space** and includes **extensive detail** on existing open space. **Susy** confirmed this already serves as a **key reference for the WNP**. **Neighbourhood Plans can give protection to certain types**, said **Alison**, with **Claire** adding that the **Plan should set criteria which must be met**. In many parts of the town, **“views” are very important**, said **Nick**, who asked **whether these might also be considered for ACV status**. In response, **Alison** said all of these need to be identified and preserved. **Claire** concluded the discussion by **urging all Forum members to feed in any information gathered in relation to views, buildings and open spaces**.

#### 5- Vision Consultation & Engagement update (JB & CM)

- **Claire** will make a **presentation to the West Windsor Residents’ Association AGM** tomorrow evening (25/3/15). **Helen’s report** on the **Bray NP** will be **deferred** until the next WNP Forum meeting. **Claire and John B.** are planning a “follow-up” meeting with representatives from Windsor Racecourse and will report on this at the next Forum meeting (14/5/15).
- **Claire and John B.** have taken a decision that the **WNP will not submit a formal response** during the current consultation on the **Conservation Area Appraisals**. Individual responses are encouraged.
- At the **“Big Society Day”** (14/3/15, Peascod Street), **Claire, John B. and Susy** took turns manning the WNP table and all felt the event was a useful opportunity to maintain the WNP’s “visibility” with residents as well as engage with representatives from other voluntary groups. **Claire and John B.** were able to speak with **Shabana Farooq from Radian Housing** and **Susy** briefly spoke with **Andrew Green, RBWM Community Partnerships Co-ordinator** and responsible for taking forward ACV nominations.
- Earlier today (24/3), **Claire, John B. and Jane C.** attended a **BLP workshop** which focused principally on the town centre, with **CWBNP (aka Windsor 2030)** representatives also present. Discussions revealed the CWNPB are thinking about residential and other issues already being considered by WNP, with both groups raising the same questions and observations and reaching many of the same conclusions.

#### 6- Finance update (JB)

**John B.** circulated the **draft Accounts (RBWM Grant Fund) for the period ending 23/3/15** containing details of expenses to date totalling £393-12. He confirmed that the **previous Locality Grant had now been closed and funding was now provided by the RBWM £20k grant**, and stated he **would continue to report expenditure progressively during the formation of the Plan**. Presentation of the accounts was followed by a fairly lengthy general discussion during which the following points were raised:

- **Anne queried the allocation of £1k for a “Travel Budget”.** Claire responded, saying this **nominal amount** was included as the **WNP might be required to cover consultants’ travel costs**, for example. However, she reconfirmed the **commitment to maintaining a careful approach on expenditure** which had been adopted so far. **John B.** pointed out that **substantial sums could be spent on consultants’ fees alone** and that **this aspect was now being considered by the committee.**
- **John B.** confirmed that **four consultancy firms with relevant experience (two large, two small) had been contacted**, including AECOM and Tibbalds, and had all been presented with the same brief:
  - a) “Masterplanning”
  - b) Housing needs assessment
  - c) Urban planning, with a specific focus on the “rebirth” of Dedworth
  - d) Ensuring everything undertaken to date has been fully and correctly covered

He said **Locality** had made **an additional tranche of £8k available** for which WNP applied immediately and were advised we were first in the whole country to do so. **John B. and Claire** then also discovered **AECOM were already contracted by Locality** to provide NP consultancy support. **The net result is that WNP will now agree a contract with AECOM, with the likelihood that some technical advice will be provided gratis.**

- **John B.** also advised that **a further £6k grant** might be available and expected WNP could hear about this by 27/3/15, with confirmation of its position by 1/4/15. It was anticipated that **WNP would also begin its discussions with AECOM at that time**, and **Claire said an immediate priority of these would be to ascertain the feasibility of the WNP objectives.**
- **Jane C.** queried whether a **full Housing Needs Assessment** was truly necessary. **Claire** said that **setting out a separate methodology for each individual “patch” was advisable** and she would be exploring what might be needed, **particularly since 8A, 8B and 8C were no longer included in the BLP housing sites list** and it was not yet obvious where the “replacement” sites would be. **Jane C.** observed that in small Parish areas, it can be easier to identify local needs and match them to appropriate sites. **John B.** added that **“patch” size was always an issue** but that **different factors could have different effects in different areas.** He also suggested it would be **helpful to speak with CWBNP** with regard to linking public transport access and timetabling with new development. **CWBNP** had expressed particular **concerns over the conversion of office/business space to residential accommodation.**
- **Claire** indicated it was **crucial to have extremely clear “Terms of Reference” as well as an accurate understanding in advance of the number of consultants’ “man-hours/days”** which would be needed. **Ian C.** said it was **entirely reasonable to expect confirmation** that, “Based on such a project X to be achieved, it will cost X amount.” **John B.** said the process of **matching aspirations to funding initially meant reducing some aspects of the project** to match the money available. **Claire** said there would be a **“synergy” from using AECOM** and that this represented **“a way which works for us”.** She said that **Locality** had made it clear that consultancy rates greater than £500 per day would not be accepted and that **some funds may need to be allocated for policy writing**, for which an **“Action Plan”** will need to be developed. **John B.** also said that **the exact nature of “Technical Support” was yet to be defined.**
- **Anne** wished to formally record the **Forum’s thanks for the tremendous amount of work which Claire and John B. had done** to make these arrangements. **Claire** paid **particular thanks to John B.** who, she said, had undertaken a huge amount of the preparation required to achieve this.

#### 7- CWBNP update (CM/JB)

- **Claire** had had **no direct update from CWBNP yet** but said it had been extremely helpful to chat with various members during the **BLP meeting** (see Item 5, above). She **hoped there would be an opportunity to meet with the CWBNP representatives next week.**
- **Peter W.** enquired what stage the **WLR** had reached. **Claire** said she **did not know if it was being included in the CWBNP** but that it is now mentioned as an **“option” in the BLP: RBWM will support the project provided it can be demonstrated there will be no negative impact on heritage** through its implementation.

**Ian C. urged everyone to submit their comments on the WLR during the upcoming BLP consultation.**

- **Claire** reconfirmed she and **John B.** share the view that it is not appropriate to include the WLR in a **Neighbourhood Plan**. With reference to comments made by **Cllr Bathurst** at an earlier stage, **Peter K.** said **permission would be required from the Secretary of State** in order to proceed with development. **Cllr Bateson** confirmed this, saying that Government would make the final decision. **Claire** reiterated that **anything of a strategic nature which is put into the WNP would require us to undertake an SEA**, which would be extremely costly, and is really **outside the scope of our remit**.
- **Peter K.** observed that the **proposed rail link coming in from Langley and Iver was given provisional permission last year** because it was needed as a **complement to the Heathrow transport network**. **Brian C.** noted that **although this project had been acknowledged as “reasonable”, many other proposals were also still under consideration**.

**8- AOB**

None was reported.

**Claire** thanked everyone for their wide-ranging and very valuable contributions to the meeting.

**9- Date, time and venue of next meetings**

- **Thursday 14 May 2015 in the Conference Room, York House, Sheet Street 6.30pm-8.30pm**
- **Wednesday 24 June 2015 in the Conference Room, York House, Sheet Street 6.30pm-8.30pm**