

Notice of Meeting

Disability and Inclusion Forum

Lizzie Jones (Chair), Kirsty Northam (Vice-Chair), Sharon Bunce, Tim Clare, Angela Clark, David Coppinger, Peter Haley, Dennis Jeffrey, Dominic Manley (MS Society), Nagina Pazir, Robin Pemberton, Steve Sansom (Age UK), Jatinder Singh Rakhra (Leisure Focus), Louise Sugden, Marion Williams, Lottie Barr and Councillors Helen Price and Catherine Del Campo



Monday 7 September 2026 11.00 am
Council Chamber - Town Hall – Maidenhead

Agenda

Item	Description	Page
1	Welcome and Introductions A welcome from the Chair and introductions of all present.	-
2	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence	-
3	Declarations of Interest To receive any declarations of interest	-
4	Minutes To agree the minutes of the last Forum held on Monday 8 June 2026 as a true and accurate record	3-9
5	Matters arising To discuss any actions or questions from the previous meeting	Verbal report
6	Development Plan To receive an update on the new Development Plan for Windsor and Maidenhead from the Planning Policy Team.	10-13
7	New engagement platform To hear information about RBWM's new engagement and consultation hub.	14-15
8	SEND Voices RBWM To hear information from Yingni Lu, SEND Voices RBWM parent carer forum.	Verbal report
9	Equality Objectives refresh To receive an update from Ellen McManus-Fry, Equalities and Community Engagement Officer	16-17

10	Living Well Cafes To hear information from the Communities Team on the Living Well World Cafes project.	18
11	Residents Panel To hear information from Ellen McManus-Fry about a new engagement project, Royal Borough Voices.	19-20
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DISABILITY AND INCLUSION FORUM
Monday 8 June 2026, Maidenhead Town Hall

Present: Lizzie Jones (Chair), Sharon Bunce, Vicky Holt, Tim Clare, Peter Haley Jatinder Singh Rakhra, Sandra Balogac and Councillors Helen Price, Catherine Del Campo and Adam Bermange

Present virtually: Kirsty Northam (Vice Chair), Steve Sansom, Robin Pemberton, Caroline Waites, Dominic Manley, Danielle Welburn, Angela Clark, Louise Sugden

Officers: Ellen McManus-Fry, Sarah Collins, Roy Christie

Officers in attendance virtually: Yasmeen Hussein

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair, Lizzie Jones, opened the meeting, apologising for her late arrival due to a family emergency and thanking attendees for their patience.

The Chair welcomed all participants attending both in person and online.

The Chair noted that June marks Pride Month and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, and emphasised the importance of recognising and respecting the contributions and identities of diverse communities, including disabled people.

It was highlighted that:

- There are increasing concerns nationally around hate, prejudice and discrimination
- Disabled people continue to face intersectional barriers and disproportionately high levels of discrimination and hate crime

The Chair emphasised the importance of:

- Listening to diverse voices
- Standing in solidarity with affected communities
- Maintaining inclusive spaces such as the Disability and Inclusion Forum

Attendance

A round of introductions was undertaken.

The Chair noted the breadth of representation across organisations, residents, and service users.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Dennis Jeffrey, Marion Williams and David Coppinger.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were formally reviewed.

The Chair acknowledged the additional effort required due to absence of a recording and thanked Ellen McManus-Fry for producing a transcript-based record.

No amendments were raised.

AGREED: The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising

Wilderness Centre Parking

Angela Clark raised concerns regarding lack of implementation of previously discussed increase in Blue Badge parking spaces and an absence of clear updates in previous minutes.

Ellen McManus-Fry confirmed there had been delays in the proposed works and no updated information was currently available.

The Chair and Angela Clark emphasised significant accessibility issues at the site; difficulty for disabled patients and carers accessing services; the issue is worsening rather than improving.

Action: Matter to remain on the agenda

Cabinet Member Update – Adult Services (Cllr Adam Bermange)

Cllr Bermange introduced himself and outlined recent changes to Cabinet portfolios.

Following a Cabinet reshuffle, responsibility for Adult Services had transferred to Cllr Bermange. Cllr Del Campo was now focusing on Housing delivery, particularly affordable and social housing.

Cllr Bermange's personal background includes being a former trustee of Autism Berkshire, a parent of a child with SEND and having personal experience supporting a sibling with care needs and supporting older relatives. This was noted as informing his understanding of Adult Social Care across the life course.

He highlighted the strategic priorities within Adult Services, including providing access to support to residents to access the right services at the right time and focusing on maintaining independence. Cllr Bermange discussed the importance of community partnerships to deliver these priorities and provided the example of the HeadsUp programme and the work of the RBWM Communities team. Other projects focused on service transformation, neurodiversity and mental health and supported housing were also highlighted.

Kirsty Northam suggested stronger engagement with the armed forces community. Cllr Bermange acknowledged that there was current prioritisation in some services (e.g. housing) but further work needed to understand and respond to needs. Kirsty Northam offered to facilitate engagement with armed forces families. Sarah Collins also mentioned the potential to develop that engagement through the council's corporate engagement.

Autism Strategy Consultation (Yasmeen Hussein)

Yasmeen Hussein, Policy, Research and Information Officer in Adult Social Care, noted that the public consultation had been launched on RBWM Together and encouraged people to participate. The consultation approach includes easy-read materials developed, the option to submit feedback with email and partners packs for organisations. Yasmeen thanks Caroline Waites for the collaborative work with the Learning Disability Partnership Board in producing consultation materials.

There is ongoing work with the working groups, including the development of video-based engagement.

Consultation actively encourages challenge and critical feedback and all responses will be reviewed individually.

The timeline for the project was shared, with a target for approval of the strategy in the post-summer period. Yasmeen shared ways in which Forum members could be part of this work through promoting the consultation and facilitating engagement with networks.

Optalis Performance Update (Roy Christie)

Roy Christie, Head of Service for Optalis in RBWM provided an overview of Optalis' service and performance, noting that the annual report and business plan was yet to be presented at full council so some figures could not be presented here.

Optalis has been a local authority trading company delivering social care for the past 15 years and is jointly owned by Wokingham Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Optalis has 7 regulated services in RBWM (all rated Good). These support 172 regulated service users, with 152 day service users, and additional users of the supported employment service. Optalis supports 340 individuals overall.

In a workforce contact, there are approximately 450 staff in RBWM with a 96% staffing level and 159 recruits in the last year, reducing the need for agency staff. Roy Christie provided further details on the reablement figures with 469 people supported to discharge from hospital and 352 people supported to prevent admission. He discussed the Imperial Road site and ongoing work looking at future development of community lives in Windsor.

Cllr Price raised concerns regarding the lack of provision for young adults (16–25) with physical disabilities and their need for social spaces, opportunities for peer interaction and independence without over-supervision.

It was acknowledged that current services are limited in this area and that provision is stronger for learning disabilities than physical disabilities. A suggestion was made to work with the Youth Council to discuss improving engagement with young people with disabilities. Kirsty Northam drew attention to her work with Neurodiverse Community CIC and their Employability programme.

Equality Objectives Progress Update (Ellen McManus-Fry)

Ellen McManus-Fry, Equalities and Community Engagement Officer, provided a verbal update on the council's equality objectives (2023–2027), which are part of the council's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The equality objectives and the annual progress update are all available on the council's website. The current set of objectives run until 2027 and the process to develop a refreshed set of objectives, including through community engagement, is expected to begin in the autumn.

The council has five higher level objectives around improving insights and understanding of inequality; strengthen equality impact (EQIA) processes; embedding equality considerations in planning and procurement process; reducing inequalities in the borough and developing inclusive workforce.

Ellen shared the priorities which sit under each of the objectives and summarised some of the activities and projects which had been highlighted in the most recent annual progress update. It was acknowledged that members would need more time to share comments on this item as there was a technical difficulty in showing the slides. Ellen invited any comments and questions from Forum via email and also invited ideas about how the Forum could be engaged in the development of the refreshed objective.

Action: all Forum members to share any feedback on equality objectives and the process to refresh them.

Cllr Del Campo made an observation about the growing negative rhetoric around equalities, including around disability and neurodiversity, and the importance of defending existing, hard-won rights. Lizzie Jones agreed with that observation, noting that it makes it more important for the Forum to use their online presence. She shared a document from Disability Rights UK and requested for it to be circulated after the meeting.

Action: Ellen to share Disability Rights UK document

Cllr Price noted that the negative rhetoric also affects people of different faiths and different origins and backgrounds. She also highlighted the positive work being done in the space and the improvements made to the EQIA process at RBWM while she has been a councillor. Ellen stressed the importance of undertaking community engagement as part of the development of the next set of equality objectives so that the diversity of challenge and experiences of borough residents can be reflected. Ellen also highlighted the good work and positivity of groups like the Disability and Inclusion Forum and the value of celebrating people who are working to make things better.

SEND Voices Update

This item was deferred due to absence of presenter.

Shopmobility Relocation (Peter Haley)

After the imminent closure of the Nicholsons Centre, Shopmobility will temporarily operate from the Town Hall, with Scooter delivery via minibus. It was acknowledged that this was not an ideal arrangement but that it would enable Shopmobility to continue its services. This system will be in place until the end of August, when Shopmobility will move to the former Café Nero site. They will stay at this location until the new premises is built (in 3-5 years) and they can move into the car park, which is part of the planning permission that has been granted. Peter highlighted the problem of not having dedicated parking while in their temporary locations and the

wider issues of accessible parking within the town centre. He expressed concerns about the impact this would have on people with mobility needs accessing Maidenhead town centre. The lack of accessible toilets near the locations was also highlighted as a concern, particularly while based in the Town Hall.

Forum Accessibility Improvements

The improvements to the sound and video set up for the hybrid meeting were acknowledged, with the new microphone system improving the audio quality online and in the Council Chamber.

Ellen made a request for any concerns or feedback about meeting accessibility to be shared with her, including physical accessibility, accessibility of the online meeting and accessibility of related documents.

Some proposals had been discussed by the Chair, Vice Chair and Equalities Officer prior to the meeting and were presented for comment:

- A survey of all Forum members to better understand accessibility needs and ensure that appropriate adjustments could be put in place where needed.
- The development of a guide for Forum members, clarifying what to expect, how to participate etc.
- A session to support members who are less familiar with MS Teams

Cllr Price also suggested making it clear whether water would be provided and advising attendees to bring water bottles if not. She also recognised that more written reports were being shared for consideration before the meeting but that it would be helpful if the papers could be numbered with the agenda item.

Action: Ellen to update format for next agenda

Consultations Update

Ellen McManus-Fry drew attention to recent and current council consultations:

- Play park refurbishment survey (closed)
- Autism Strategy Consultation
- Information, Advice and Guidance Service survey
- Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation

A concern was noted in relation to the flood risk management strategy, that surface water flooding can have greater impacts on disabled pedestrians. Kirsty Northam also noted that SEND Voices RBWM had submitted responses to the national SEND reform consultation and for RBWM's Ofsted inspection.

Any Other Business

Events Noted:

- Carers Expo (10:00–14:00, Braywick)
- Carers Week events
- Learning Disability Week activities
- Parallel Windsor (5 July)
- Windsor Day (17 July)

Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked attendees and closed the meeting.

Subject:	Development Plan for Windsor and Maidenhead
Reason for briefing note:	Disability and Inclusion Forum
Responsible officer(s):	Lucinda Pinhorne-Smy
Senior leader sponsor:	N/A
Date:	7 th September 2026

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Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead

SUMMARY

The Council is preparing a new local plan, called the Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

This Plan will guide how the Borough grows and changes over the next 20 years. It will help shape where homes, jobs, infrastructure, community facilities and green spaces are located.

The slides for the presentation are shown below, including specific points on which feedback from the Forum would be appreciated:

- What are the biggest accessibility barriers people face in the borough today?
- What should the local plan do to help create a more inclusive borough?
- Are there particular places, services or routes where accessibility needs improvement?
- Are there any examples of best practice in the borough that we can learn from?

Preparing a new Local Plan: “Development Plan for Windsor & Maidenhead”

What is a Local Plan?

- The borough’s long-term plan for growth and development.
- Sets the vision, policies and site allocations that guide planning decisions.
- Coordinates housing, employment, infrastructure, open space and community facilities.

Why are we preparing a new one?

- Update the plan (current plan runs to 2033).
- Need to respond to much increased national formula-driven housing need.
- Opportunity to coordinate infrastructure and support delivery of Council Plan priorities.

Where development happens and how places are designed has a direct influence on accessibility, independence and inclusion.

Why Accessibility Matters in Planning

Planning can influence how accessible places are.

- Good design benefits everyone.
- Access to services, community facilities, transport and green spaces is important.
- Inclusive neighbourhoods help reduce barriers to participation in everyday life.
- The local plan can help secure accessible and adaptable homes and better designed public spaces.



Accessibility and Inclusion: What the local plan can influence and what is covered nationally

What the local plan can influence:

- ✓ Local priorities for accessibility and inclusion.
- ✓ The location of new homes, services and facilities so that they are easier to reach.
- ✓ Creating accessible neighbourhoods, town centres, green spaces and community facilities.
- ✓ Encouraging developments that support independent living, social inclusion and healthy communities.

What is covered nationally:

- ✓ National planning policies used when planning applications are determined. The 2026 NPPF includes national decision-making policies that apply across England and are a material consideration in planning decisions.
- ✓ National expectations for inclusive design and accessibility.
- ✓ Building Regulations and other statutory accessibility requirements.

The Local Plan Journey – Why Now Matters

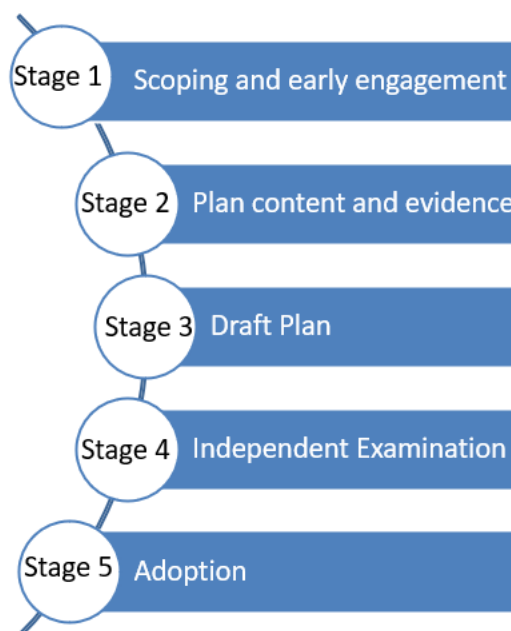
We would welcome insight on:

- Sustainable transport modes, including public transport
- Public realm design and wayfinding.
- Access to green spaces and recreation.
- Community facilities.
- Inclusion and independent living.
- Barriers experienced by disabled residents.

What we are doing now:

- Building evidence
- Identifying challenges
- Shaping priorities

Scoping Consultation and Call for Sites
30 July 2026 to 13 September 2026



More Information at: [New Local Plan | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#)



Discussion Questions:

- What are the biggest accessibility barriers people face in the borough today?
- What should the local plan do to help create a more inclusive borough?
- Are there particular places, services or routes where accessibility needs improvement?
- Are there any examples of best practice in the borough that we can learn from?

Subject:	RBWM's new engagement and consultation hub
Reason for briefing note:	Disability and Inclusion Forum
Responsible officer(s):	Ellen McManus-Fry
Senior leader sponsor:	N/A
Date:	7 th September 2026

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Royal Borough
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SUMMARY

RBWM has recently procured a new consultation platform, changing providers from Granicus (RBWM Together) to Delib (Citizen Space). The new platform can be found at <https://engage.rbwm.gov.uk/>

From 30 July 2026, all new consultations and surveys will be hosted on the new platform. Existing consultations and surveys which launched on RBWM Together before this date will stay on that site for the duration of the consultations. The RBWM Together platform will go offline at the end of November when that contract runs out.

Impact on users

The main differences for residents taking part in council consultations and surveys will be:

- Different website address to proactively look for council consultations
- Different look and feel to site
- Registration not available on new site
- Surveys can be saved mid-way to be completed at a later time
- Respondents can request to be emailed with a copy of their survey response
- Easier to see outcomes of past consultations
- Planning consultations and other consultations will be all on the same platform for the same time

All current pages on RBWM Together are being reviewed and any which are still current (such as the Carers Support and the Here to Help hub) will be moved before the contract ends, either to the new engagement hub or to the main RBWM website, so there will be no gap in the information provided.

Accessibility on the new platform

The Citizen Space site meets WCAG 2.2 AA standards. There are other accessibility features, such as accessibility labels on questions and images, which support users who use keyboard navigation, screen readers, navigation through speech recognition software, or need to zoom the page view or alter colours, contrast levels or fonts within their browser or device settings.

Subject:	Equality objectives refresh
Reason for briefing note:	Disability and Inclusion Forum
Responsible officer(s):	Ellen McManus-Fry
Senior leader sponsor:	N/A
Date:	7 th September 2026

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Royal Borough
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SUMMARY

The publication of equality objectives every 4 years is part of the council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The current set of equality objectives were created in 2023 and will expire in 2027.

This autumn we will be commencing a programme of community engagement to inform the process of reviewing and refreshing our equality objectives.

The current equality objectives can be viewed online: [Equality objectives | Our commitment to equality and diversity | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#). These are presented as 5 high-level equality objectives with underlying priorities, as listed below:

Objective 1: Investigate and strengthen our understanding of the nature of inequality, disadvantage, and discrimination in RBWM

- Strengthen the council's insights and evidence on inequalities and disadvantage
- Strengthen relationships with diverse groups in our communities, and specifically those with, or representing those with, protected characteristics
- Ensure engagement activities are inclusive and provide opportunities for community involvement in decision making

Objective 2: Acknowledge and respond to the equality impacts of our emerging proposals and seek to mitigate any adverse impacts where possible, whilst maximising positive impacts

- Embed a greater awareness of equalities across the organisation
- Improve the consistency and quality of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) to influence and support decision-making
- Establish clear political and officer leadership on equalities

Objective 3: Integrate equality considerations into planning and procurement processes, in order to deliver services effectively for all communities

- Ensure that the accessibility of physical and digital spaces and resources is considered in the planning and delivery of policies and services
- Strengthen the incorporation of equality considerations within the development of KPIs and service specifications as part of the pre-procurement process

Objective 4: Reduce inequalities within the borough

- Keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe and in a good state of repair through increased investment, partnership working and engagement
- Ensure that every child in the borough is able to experience positive outcomes in childhood, through healthy living, readiness to learn, and positive parenting, and support targeted at those most at risk
- Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help and prevention, to maintain and extend independent living
- Help to reduce the impact of cost of living rises on our residents, with a focus on those most at risk, through targeted financial and practical support *
- Embed accessibility into the planning and design of our streetscape, buildings and public spaces

Objective 5: Recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve and ensure our people feel valued and respected

- Continue to encourage and welcome increasing numbers of job applications from candidates with disabilities, who are care leavers, and from the Armed Forces community
- Seek to understand the needs of employees with protected characteristics through engagement with employee networks and data gathering through staff surveys and personal diversity records
- Deliver a range of measures to improve opportunities for those who want to combine work with family or caring responsibilities
- Commit to becoming an anti-racist organisation

Feedback from the Disability and Inclusion Forum is requested on:

1. Any existing priorities which you would like to see continued
2. Any key gaps you see in the priorities identified

Subject:	Living Well Cafes
Reason for briefing note:	Disability and Inclusion Forum
Responsible officer(s):	Gemma Burgin, Sumayyah Zeib
Senior leader sponsor:	N/A
Date:	7 th September 2026

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SUMMARY

The Living Well Together programme is a community-based initiative aimed at improving residents' health, wellbeing and social connectedness through a network of local events in community spaces.

As the programme is currently in the planning and development phase, the presentation will provide an overview of the proposed model, the aims and objectives of the initiative, planned partnerships, and how the events will support residents to access information, activities and wellbeing support within their local communities.

The session will also outline next steps and opportunities for engagement as the programme progresses.

Subject:	Residents Panel (Royal Borough Voices)
Reason for briefing note:	To update the Disability and Inclusion Forum on progress towards the launch of the council's resident's panel
Responsible officer(s):	Ellen McManus-Fry
Senior leader sponsor:	Sophia Waite-King, Assistant Chief Executive
Date:	Monday 7 September

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Royal Borough
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SUMMARY

This note provides the Disability and Inclusion Forum with an update on work towards launching Royal Borough Voices - the council's new residents' panel - later this autumn.

This work is part of a Council Plan commitment to strengthen engagement with residents and ensure that local people have a greater voice in shaping council services and priorities. It will also support the council in developing evidence-based policies and services, while enabling residents to play a more active role in local decision-making and shaping the future of the borough.

The panel will provide residents and other stakeholders with regular opportunities to share their views on a wide range of local issues through online surveys.

Panel members will also receive information about other engagement opportunities, including public consultations, focus groups and community participation activities, helping the council to gather informed feedback from a broad and diverse range of residents.

Membership is open to all borough residents aged 16 and over. As Royal Borough Voices is an online panel, participants will need access to an email account to receive surveys and updates. Participation in Royal Borough Voices is entirely voluntary.

Support with setting up and accessing email accounts is available through the council's library service, helping to ensure that as many residents as possible can take part.

What to expect from us:

- A regular email that links to an online surveys
- The chance to share their views on a range of topics and to help shape the services and facilities that the council delivers

Item 11: Residents Panel

- The opportunity to guide the subjects that the surveys cover, so that participants can share views on the things that interest them
- Regular updates on what the council has heard from Royal Borough Voices and how we plan to use that information
- Information about other council engagement opportunities, like public consultations, surveys and focus groups

While the panel is one way that residents can share their views - the council's public consultations will always have an alternative way to respond, whether through paper surveys, in-person drop ins or email. Library staff are also available to support anyone who needs help to use the computer or get online.

Subject:	Consultations update
Reason for briefing note:	Disability and Inclusion Forum
Responsible officer(s):	Ellen McManus-Fry
Senior leader sponsor:	N/A
Date:	7 th September 2026

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SUMMARY

On RBWM Together:

- Appointeeship Charging: The Deputy and Appointeeship Team are seeking views on proposals to introduce a charge to the Appointeeship service, which is provided to residents who lack the mental capacity to manage their own financial affairs and who require the Council to act on their behalf. Closes 7 September.
<https://rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk/appointeeship-consultation>
- Public Space Protection Orders Consultation. The Community Safety Team are seeking views on proposal to continue the existing PSPOs which allow enforcement around the use of BBQs in public spaces and on anti-social drinking in public spaces. Closes 10 September.
<https://rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk/public-space-protection-orders-consultation>

On Engagement and Consultation Hub:

- Development Plan Call for Sites. The Planning Policy Team are seeking submissions of sites that should be considered for housing development. Closes 13 September.
<https://engage.rbwm.gov.uk/planning/call-for-sites-2026/>
- Development Plan Scoping Consultations. The Planning Policy Team are seeking input on the new Development Plan, which will guide how the Borough grows and changes over the next 20 years. Closes 13 September.
<https://engage.rbwm.gov.uk/planning/scoping-consultation/>
- Community Governance Review. The Council is seeking residents' views on proposals to create town councils in the unparished areas of Windsor and Maidenhead. Closes 30 September.
<https://engage.rbwm.gov.uk/consultations/community-governance-review/>