
ASTLEY BRIDGE AND SMITHILLS AREA FORUM

01 MARCH 2007

Councillor S. Lever (Chairman) - Astley Bridge Ward;
Councillor Mrs. H. Fairclough - Astley Bridge Ward;
Councillor J. Walsh - Astley Bridge Ward; Councillor R.
Hayes - Smithills Ward; Councillor R. Silvester - Smithills
Ward.

Also in attendance

Mr. I. Jeewa - Area Co-ordinator; Ms. S. Sameja - Area
Co-ordinator; Mrs. A. Gorton - Children's Services
Department; Mr. J. Fox - Environmental Services
Department; Mr. A. Kilpatrick - Adult Services Department;
Mr. S. Godley - Planning Division; Mr. G. Luczka - Youth
Services; Ms. H. Longworth - Chief Executive's
Department; Mr. I.D. Mulholland - Legal and Democratic
Services Department.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Councillor Mrs. Swarbrick and Mr. D. Crausby M.P.

Councillor Councillor Lever in the Chair

31 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Lever welcomed Members, Officers and the
public to the meeting

32 MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the
Astley Bridge and Smithills Area Forum held on 11th
January, 2007 were submitted.

Further to Open Forum Question Time, minute (c), it was
clarified that Home Office Regulations required homes to
be in a fit state for letting to asylum seekers.

In terms of (e) of the same minute, it was indicated that
Bolton at Home would meet the majority of the costs in
respect of the cleaning of properties prior to re-let.

Finally, with regard to (f) it was explained to the Forum that decisions regarding the working arrangements for Refuse Collection staff were the responsibility of the Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management.

Resolved - (i) That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

(ii) That the enquirer in relation to housing arrangements for asylum seekers in the Borough be furnished with a copy of the Home Office Regulations.

33 BOLTON'S CORE STRATEGY

Mr. Idris Jeewa, Area Co-ordinator and Mr. Simon Godley from the Planning Division gave a presentation which outlined the process for shaping the future of Bolton through a sustainable Community Strategy.

This Strategy would guide renewal, lead improvement of Services and tackle deprivation.

Coupled with this, were a number of key aims and objectives, viz:-

- a strong and confident Bolton;
- a prosperous Bolton;
- a healthy Bolton;
- a safe Bolton; and
- an attractive Bolton.

The Forum was advised that the Strategy would take two years to prepare and set out how each locality in Bolton would change over the next 10-15 years. The strategy would be adopted in December, 2009.

Mr. Godley went on to indicate that the Council were seeking ideas and comments from individuals on what the plan should contain.

In terms of possible issues for the Astley Bridge and Smithills area, it was indicated that these were:-

- maintaining a good quality visual environment;
- ensuring that residential areas had good access to services; and
- green belt/nature conservation issues.

In conclusion, it was indicated that a consultation leaflet was available and responses should be submitted to the Council by 13th April, 2007.

Various questions and comments were responded to.

Resolved - That the position be noted

34 YOUTH PROVISION

Mr. Gerry Luczka, Youth Services Division gave a presentation on proposals to enhance the youth provision

in the Area Forum area.

Mr. Luczka indicated that there was a problem in the Borough regarding anti-social behaviour and there was a general feeling amongst young people that there was not enough provision for them.

By way of background information, it was explained that youth provision in the area was poor and the only location in the area for youth activities was currently Barlow Park. It was explained that lessons had been learnt in Bromley Cross where young people had recently been engaged in a variety of activities following their promotion by Members of the South Turton Area Forum.

The aim in this area was to consult young people and then tailor the agenda to suit them. Mr. Luczka highlighted that it was proposed for two outreach teams to be deployed involving four members of staff. An operating base had yet to be identified.

The initial aim of the project was to engage around 50 young people in various activities including outdoor activities and also link with the Bolton Lads and Girls Club.

In conclusion, the Forum was advised that after the initial funded period of activities, Youth Services would continue outreach in a wider area and the funding of such activity sessions would be mainstreamed from the core budget in 2008.

Mr. Luczka indicated that progress on the development of the scheme would be reported to a future meeting of this Forum.

He explained that the funding for these proposals was for approval under the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Budget item in Minute 34 of this meeting.

Resolved - That the proposals for enhanced youth provision in the Astley Bridge and Smithills Area be noted and supported, subject to approval of the necessary funding under Minute 34 of this meeting.

35 NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND BUDGET

The Forum was advised that one scheme for Neighbourhood Renewal funding had been identified for consideration. This was for £38,000 to be set aside for youth provision in the Forum area.

It was explained that the aim would be to try to make contact and engage with young people from the Forum area who were currently not engaged with services aimed at young people, as indicated in Minute 33 of this meeting. The young people would be consulted on identifying their needs and wishes with the aim of involving them in

positive activities. Furthermore, the project would also have a positive impact on the local community's perception of youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour. Members were advised that if this scheme was approved, then this would leave £2,000 unallocated for the period 2006/08.

Resolved - (i) That approval be given to the spend of £38,000 of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund monies for youth provision, as now indicated.

(ii) That further decisions relating to the spend of the remaining £2,000, prior to the next meeting be delegated to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Forum in consultation with the Chief Executive.

36 OPEN FORUM

Prior to the commencement of the Open Forum Question Time section of the meeting, the Area Co-ordinator referred to a circulated update on questions asked at previous meetings of the Forum.

(a) A question regarding whether there had been any progress with necessary repairs to Barlow Park Youth Centre.

The Forum was advised that recent vandalism and a fire at the Centre had resulted in substantial damage. Repair was currently underway.

(b) A question regarding whether revenue had been lost since the Smithills Garden Centre had closed.

It was explained that the Garden Centre was a private enterprise but information regarding the loss of rental income to the Council would be provided at the next meeting.

(c) A question regarding the Council's use of consultants and whether other methods of undertaking the work were considered.

It was indicated that the amount of money spent on employing consultants was a very small part of the overall Council budget.

The Forum was advised that on certain matters the Government required the Council to use Consultants and in some divisions of the Council there were now fewer specialised staff to undertake such work.

A more detailed response would be sought on this matter.

(d) A question regarding what had happened to the proposed road safety scheme in the vicinity of Smithills School. There needed to be action at this location as there had recently been another serious accident.

It was indicated that the Director of Environmental

Services would be asked to respond on this matter.

(e) A comment that the refurbishment of Moor Lane toilets was too expensive, costing £250,000.

It was explained that GMPTE had borne the majority of the cost, although a financial breakdown would be presented to the next meeting.

(f) A question regarding whether the amount of paper circulated as part of the agenda distribution could be reduced.

It was indicated that this would be explored.

(g) A question regarding what could be done to help prevent the Royal Bolton Hospital losing services.

It was indicated that the Council had a limited role in this regard, apart from its Health Scrutiny role and that the local M.P. may be the best person to take up this matter.

Resolved - That the questions be noted and the questions that have not been answered at the meeting be directed to the appropriate Council Department or external agency.

37 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members, Officers and the public for their attendance and the views expressed during the course of the meeting.

(The meeting started at 7.00 p.m. and finished at 8.35 p.m.)