

Two Towns Area Update

Newsletter for Blackrod and Horwich

December 2007 Edition

What happened at the last meeting

In September, the Two Towns Area Forum received presentations on the service provision for under-fives and their families in Bolton and the needs of older people and the range of services available to them in the area.

Every area in the borough will soon have their own children's centre, providing a range of services. The presentation by Ms C. Greer, Head of Early Start outlined current and proposed services and explained what a Children's Centre can offer.

There are enough childcare places in the area to allow parents to return to work, however, there is a need to close some of the gaps to meet the needs of families. One of the initiatives to address this is the establishment of the Children's Centres, which will be rolled out in three phases.

With regard to this particular forum area, Lord Street and Brazley were within the disadvantaged areas and, therefore, were included within Phase 2 of the rolling programme for Children's Centres.

Mr. K. Durkin, Head of Older People Strategy and Involvement, also gave a presentation to the Forum which outlined the needs of older people and the services available within the Blackrod and Horwich areas.

The presentation focussed on the national picture and the new undertaking of older people's needs, looking at the 2006/2007 – Feel the Benefit Campaign and Better Bolton for Older People: involving older people in improving services. Examples were discussed of how older people can benefit from, and contribute to, the various initiatives currently happening in Bolton.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

It was reported that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had, under delegated authority, approved a contribution to a borough wide project to tackle residents' concerns about traffic speeds.

The intention was to use two signs per Area Forum. One sign type would give a positive message to drivers if they were driving at, or below, the speed limit, and the other would indicate the measured speed limit and the degree to which the vehicle was complying with the speed limit or was

speeding. Each sign would be moved three times per year. The cost of the project for this Forum is £2,500.

A further scheme was also put forward which was aimed at young people from the age of thirteen to participate in activities and trips which would offer opportunities to gain further accreditations and recorded outcomes during the October half term. The scheme would operate from Blackrod Youth Centre for a period of five days, six hours per day. The total cost of the project is £1,062.50.

Voluntary Sector Grants

Grants are available to voluntary, community and not-for-profit groups to help make a difference to the local area or to improve their livelihoods.

Up to £500 is available and can be used to buy sports equipment, office consumables, towards event costs to pay for day trips. Groups can apply for one grant annually and application forms are available from Stephen Rowson, tel: 01204 331252 or email: stephen.rowson@bolton.gov.uk

The forum approved grants to the following applications:

Claypool Residents' Association, £250 towards purchasing a colour laser copier to produce a newsletter and occasional flyers for the residents on the Claypool estate

Horwich Visiting Service, £500 towards organising additional publicity material; providing training for volunteers; and organising a summer fete and Christmas lunch

Jesus Club (St. Katherine's After School Club), £225 towards the provision of refreshments for children attending the club

Horwich Resource Centre Management Committee, £20 towards hiring a room

Simply Upholstery/Soft Furnishing, £482.63 towards the cost of hiring a room at the Horwich Resource Centre and running a course to develop and improve the skills of members in upholstery and soft furnishings.

The next meeting is Monday 28 January 2008 at St Johns Methodist Church - Victoria Road, Horwich. Police drop-in at 2pm, drop-in for council services and those of our partners at 2:30pm, main meeting at 3pm.

Councillors contact numbers:

Horwich and Blackrod

Cllr John Raymond Barrow	01942 831461
Cllr Ian Hamilton (Vice-chairman)	01204 699703
Cllr Michael Hollick	01204 697933

Horwich North East

Cllr Stephen Rock (Chairman)	01204 437820
Cllr Barbara Ronson	01204 695742
Cllr Robert Ronson	01204 695742

Bolton
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Your questions answered

Will the council consider reopening the payments office at Horwich and Blackrod Area Office on a part-time basis?

Response received from Operations Manager, Corporate Resources: Horwich and Blackrod Area Offices are still able to take credit and debit card payments for Council Tax. In Horwich, please go to the Enquiry Office and in Blackrod, please go to the Library counter where there will be a member of staff who can take payments. There are 14 alternative payment locations with opening hours amounting to 840 hours. A list of these locations is available from the Area Working Team. Early next year we plan to complete a review of customer satisfaction before making any decisions on the future of the service.

Is anyone monitoring the 7½ ton limit on Crown Lane? Also, the weight limit signs are placed where they can't be seen until lorries are already on the road – can these be moved into a more visible location?

Response received from Highways Management:

There is no particular mandate to monitor the weight limit, but if we feel that usage is increasing again, then we could install some survey equipment. The difficulty which we have is that the police are very reluctant to enforce it and until such time that enforcement powers are granted to the council, we can't enforce it either.

The signage locations are reasonable and we are limited where we can position them because of other signs and street furniture at the start and finish points of the weight limit.

There is excrement on the ginnel between 8 and 10 Harrison Crescent, Blackrod; can this be put on a regular cleaning route?

This was completed on 13.09.07 and is on a three weekly cleansing schedule

A complaint was made about vehicles exiting Dickinson's. A list of Dickinson's operating hours was submitted to Graeme Mitchell, Group Planning Officer (Enforcement) on 24 April, but no response to the complaint had been received.

Response received from Group Planning Officer, Development and Regeneration: Cllr Hollick and the Group Planning Officer at Bolton Council visited Dickinson's and agreed that the vehicles leaving the site will use Mason Street and therefore not pass along Crown Lane. No further complaints have been received.

Can something be done to improve the appearance of the bus stop at Black Horse Street in Blackrod near the toilets.

Response received from Greater Manchester Transport Executive (GMPTE): The Area Working Support Officer is investigating the matter further and will report back at a future meeting. However, GMPTE carried out a site visit and agreed to renew the timetable case at bus stop WA3401, remove the tripping hazard at bus stop WA3400, and re-set the pole at bus stop WA3407 outside 298 Manchester Road.

The Arriva bus 575 service between Bolton and Wigan via Blackrod is not reliable, resulting in residents of Blackrod being late for work etc. Upwards of 50 minute wait is quite common. What can be done to improve the situation?

Response received from Arriva Customer Services Department:

The Operations Manager at Bolton depot has advised that every effort is made to operate our services as per schedule. Regrettably there are occasions when services are delayed or disrupted due to circumstances beyond our control (i.e. traffic congestion, roadworks etc).

Arriva can only offer our sincere apologies for any inconvenience that may have been caused and thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

If residents have any further comments regarding any of our services please do not hesitate to contact our Customer Services Department on: 0844 800 44 11

Concern was expressed regarding the new development at the Blackhorse Hotel

Response received from Senior Enforcement Officer, Development and Regeneration:

I have today been advised by the receivers who currently hold control of the site, that contracts will shortly be exchanged with a new developer who will be acquiring the site. It is anticipated, therefore, that progress will be resumed on the development in the near future.

Concerning the builder's debris that lies on the site, I have asked the receivers if they can arrange to have this cleared in the interim and they have been given an assurance that they will look at the problem.

If you require this information in another format or language, please contact the Area Working Team on 01204 331252 to discuss how we can help.

Area co-ordinators
Anne Boles – 01204 331062
Val Cloynes – 01204 331064

Area working support officer
Jennifer Roe – 01204 331124

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