

TWO TOWNS AREA FORUM

MEETING, 7th July 2009

Present, 25 members of the public attended the meeting.

Councillor Pat Barrow (Chair)	- Horwich and Blackrod Ward
Councillor Raymond Barrow	- Horwich and Blackrod Ward
Councillor Michael Hollick	- Horwich and Blackrod Ward
Councillor Barbara Ronson	- Horwich North East Ward
Councillor Robert Ronson	- Horwich North East Ward
Councillor Stephen Rock	- Horwich North East Ward

Also in attendance

Val Cloynes	- Area Co-ordinator
Nicole Buhagiar	- Area Working Support Officer
John Sharrock	- Business Performance and Planning Manager, Environmental Services
Malcolm Veigas	- Assistant Director, Community Services, Environmental Services
Mike Court	- Group Building Surveyor, Development and Regeneration
Donna Cooper	- Principal Consultation and Research Officer, Communications and Marketing Agency
Jackie Casey	- Business Management Support Officer, Development and Regeneration
Laura Boardman	- Inward Investment Officer, Development and Regeneration

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Paul Round	- Head of Sports Services, Adult Services
Inspector Mohammed Razaq	- Greater Manchester Police
Raj Gohil	- Greater Manchester Police
Lisa Whitehead	- Greater Manchester Police
Shaun Vernon	- Greater Manchester Police
Ben Brookfield	- Greater Manchester Police
Ken Thomson	- Horwich Town Council
Ken Denton	- Horwich Town Council
Susan Denton	- Horwich Town Council
Isabel Seddon	- Blackrod Town Council

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Ellen Miller

Councillor Pat Barrow in the Chair.

9. INTRODUCTION

Councillor Pat Barrow welcomed everyone and asked all Councillors and Council Officers to introduce themselves to the Forum attendees. She explained that the main issues to be discussed would be the police and community safety and the new arrangements for Horwich Market.

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2009 were submitted and accepted as a correct record.

11. IRON MAN EVENT

Paul Round, Head of Sports Services, Adult Services, gave a brief presentation on the Iron Man Event which would take place on Sunday 2nd August. The competition would start at 6.00am and would decide who would be the UK qualifier for the

final in Hawaii.

Mr. Round informed the Forum that the event was now full and would include 20 – 50 elite athletes. The television audience for this event would be in the region of one billion people and the event would include a 112 mile bike ride, a swim and a run, and the last athlete would have until 11.59pm to finish the race at the Town Hall in Bolton.

Resolved – That the report be noted

12. POLICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Inspector Razaq, Greater Manchester Police, introduced himself and fellow officers and gave a presentation on police and community safety in the Two Towns Forum area. He began by discussing the crime figures for the area.

Burglary – 2 Categories:

- Burglary in a dwelling had seen a 37% reduction between April 2009 and July 2009 compared with the same period last year: last year 38, this year 22.
- Burglary Other (sheds, businesses etc.) had seen a 27% reduction between April 2009 and July 2009 compared with last year: last year 28, this year 17.

Robbery – 1 last year, 0 this year.

Vehicle Crime – 2 categories:

- Theft from a motor vehicle: last year 36, this year 28.
- Theft of a motor vehicle: last year 22, this year 8

Inspector Razaq explained that almost a third of vehicle crime occurred due to insecure property left on display in vehicles. This also related to house crime as frequently criminals gained access to houses, sheds and garages as a result of windows and doors being left insecure and in some cases wide open. Mr. Razaq also discussed anti- social behaviour and informed the Forum that there had been a 23% reduction in recorded incidents involving anti-social behaviour over the period of April

2009 – July 2009 compared to the same period last year. This resulted in a reduction of 101 incidents. There was also a significant reduction in criminal damage cases over the same period, down to 68 from 102 last year.

Inspector Razaq informed the Forum of the main issues affecting the Two Towns Forum area:

- Anti-social Behaviour
- Criminal Damage
- Speeding

He explained that Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) had been issued to a number of youths and the police had a zero tolerance approach to underage drinking and youths causing a disturbance; businesses were also being targeted regarding selling alcohol to children.

Raj Gohil, Greater Manchester Police, informed the Forum that a number of young people from Westhoughton and Blackrod had taken part in a team building exercise which was run by the Army. He explained that the same exercise would take place in August with another group of youths, some of whom were on ABC contracts.

Lisa Whitehead, Greater Manchester Police, explained that she was involved with the Eden Project run by church groups who worked alongside Football in the Community to benefit youths in the area.

Shaun Vernon, Greater Manchester Police, also reassured residents that two police officers had been assigned to each school and that anti-social behaviour was being tackled in a positive way. This meant that Greater Manchester Police were educating pupils in order to prevent crime.

Following the presentation two questions were put to the officers from Greater Manchester Police:

- Why was it when residents dialled 999 they did not always get an immediate response?

- Why were Horwich and Blackrod missing a P.C.S.O.?

Resolved – That the report be noted.

13. HORWICH MARKET: THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS

Malcolm Veigas, Assistant Director, Community Services, Environmental Services, gave a presentation on the subject of the new arrangements for Horwich Market. Firstly, he explained the status of the previous location:

- A CCTV camera had been installed. Enhanced community police patrols had commenced, along with additional night time patrols.
- A local resident leaflet drop had been arranged via the Council's Community Safety Team giving advice to residents on what to do if they saw people acting suspiciously.
- The interior of the former market building had been cleared.
- A type 3 asbestos survey had taken place and local residents would be informed of the schedule of demolition.
- The preferred contractor was on site. A protective fence had been erected around the site and they would begin the soft strip of the asbestos roof subject to the relevant contractor guidelines being followed.

Mr. Veigas informed the Forum that the Council had been working closely with its partners regarding safety and the building should be brought down by the end of August 2009. He also explained that a leaflet drop had taken place informing residents of the changes, and advertising and promotion of the new market would be taking place.

The Assistant Director, Community Services, Environmental Services, also informed the Forum that communication was being made with small businesses in order to determine whether they would be willing to trade at the new Horwich

Market. The Sunday market was being trialled at the St John Street site and residents were encouraged to support the new location.

Following the presentation a number of questions were put to Mr. Veigas:

- When would the road signs be altered to point in the right direction to the market's new location?
- Could the canopies read 'Horwich Market' as opposed to 'Bolton Market'?
- What were the plans for the land by the old market?
- If the market was a success, the only available place to park would be the land near Harrison Street. What was the solution?

Several comments were also made regarding the market:

- There had not been enough investment in Horwich Market and Middlebrook was taking a lot of the trade away from Horwich.
- It was not a good enough solution to put out market stalls. Horwich Market should be in a building. Could the old Job Centre site be considered as there should be enough money now the building had been sold?
- The residents wanted to build on the community "feel good factor".

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

14. UPDATE ON BUDGETS DEVOLVED TO THE AREA FORUM

Val Cloynes, Area Co-ordinator, gave a presentation on the subject of budgets and grants available to the Two Towns area. She explained that there were now five different areas of funding to consider:

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- Area Based Grant Horwich North East - £4,820
- Area Based Grant Horwich and Blackrod - £4,926.50 (includes carry over from 2008/9 of £746.50)
- Area Forum Budget Horwich North East - £24,627.66 (includes carry over from 2008/9 of £9,845)
- Area Forum Budget Horwich and Blackrod - £22,000 (including carry over from 2008/9 of £7,000)
- Voluntary Sector Grant - £5453.70 (including carry over from 2008/9 of £1,453.70)
- Highways Maintenance Budget Horwich North East - £10,245
- Highways Maintenance Budget Horwich and Blackrod - £10,245
- Positive Contributions Budget Horwich North East - £10,000
- Positive Contributions Budget Horwich and Blackrod - £10,000

The following decisions were confirmed under the Council's Scheme of Delegation from the Area Based Grant:

- £6,000 for a Greater Manchester Police vehicle to allow increased access to the Two Towns Forum areas. This would be split equally between the Horwich North East and Horwich and Blackrod Wards.
- Summer redirection activities for young people, involving Greater Manchester Police in partnership with Youth Services: Horwich North East - £1,820; Horwich and Blackrod - £1,926.50

Area Based Grant remaining - £0

Decisions had also been made under the Council's Scheme of Delegation regarding the Voluntary Sector Grant:

Voluntary Sector Grants for Two Towns
Combined budget 2009/10 - £5453.70

- Lostock Athletics Club - £500
- Horwich Cycling Club - £500
- Horwich Churches Welfare Cricket Association - £250

Q8

- Blackrod Scarecrow Festival - £500
- Transition Links - £309

Balance still remaining - £3,394.70

Resolved – That the report be noted

15. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

Councillor Pat Barrow introduced this item on the agenda and invited residents to ask questions or put forward any comments they had regarding issues and concerns in the Two Towns Forum area.

- Should Bolton Council be providing the police with a vehicle? Why could they not provide their own and where was the funding coming from?
- What was the situation regarding extra parking at Horwich Parkway?
- When was the last time a pedestrian census was taken in Horwich and Blackrod?

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

16. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Pat Barrow concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and announced that the next Two Towns Area Forum would take place on Wednesday 4th November at 6.00pm.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 7.40pm.)