

WESTHOUGHTON WITH CHEW MOOR AREA FORUM

MEETING, 19TH JUNE, 2007

Present – 35 Members of the public attended the meeting.

Councillor J. Higson (Chairman)	-	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor Ward
Councillor Chadwick (Vice-Chairman)	-	Westhoughton South Ward
Councillor P. Allen	-	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor Ward
Councillor D. Gradwell	-	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor Ward
Councillor J. Silvester	-	Westhoughton South Ward
Councillor D. Wilkinson	-	Westhoughton South Ward

Also in Attendance

Allan Costello	Development and Regeneration
Keith Davies	Development and Regeneration
Tim Hill	Development and Regeneration
Andrew McGlone	Development and Regeneration
Paul Rigby	Environmental Services
Karl Bircher	Environmental Services
Paul Bretherton	Bolton at Home
Anne Burns	Bolton at Home
Kath Smith	Children's Services
Mandy Symes	Adult Services
Richard Lister	Contour Housing
Sue Bailey	Legal & Democratic Services
Val Cloynes	Area Working Team
Jennifer Roe	Area Working Team
Stephen Rowson	Area Working Team

Inspector Mo Razaq	Greater Manchester Police
Dean Purtill	Greater Manchester Police
Keith Atherton	Greater Manchester Police
Paul Fairhurst	Greater Manchester Police
Phil Gough	Greater Manchester Police
Paul Griffiths	Greater Manchester Police

Councillor J. Higson in the Chair.

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Councillor Higson welcomed and introduced everybody to the meeting.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Committee held on 27th March, 2007 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

3. NEW FORUM ARRANGEMENTS

The Area Co-ordinator reported on the new arrangements that had been put in place to notify interested parties about Forum meetings and how information for the meetings would be made available. More use would be made of the Council's website and information would be made available in libraries, the One Stop Shop, Area Offices, shops and post offices.

Members of the Forum felt that regular attendees at the meetings should receive Agendas and associated paperwork through the post.

The Area Co-ordinator agreed to pass the concerns on to the relevant Section.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

4. FEEDBACK SESSION OF ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING

The Area Co-ordinator circulated an information leaflet which updated members on events since the last meeting and feedback on issues raised previously.

With regard to Winter Quarters (turning circle), concern was expressed that large HGV vans and the fairground were still using Platt Lane rather than the other side of the turning circle.

The Area Co-ordinator agreed to re-examine the issue with Highways Management and report back to the next meeting.

Resolved – That the update be noted.

5. GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND CONGESTION CHARGING

The Director of Development and Regeneration, Mr. K. Davies, gave a presentation on a proposed bid to the Government by the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority, in conjunction with the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, for funding to improve the transport infrastructure across Greater Manchester.

The bid, if successful, would result in a £2.9 billion investment in the Greater Manchester infrastructure which would be made up of:-

- £1.2 - £1.8 billion from the Government; and
- the remainder from the introduction of Congestion Charging.

The bid would be put together as a package which would deliver a range of environmental, social and economic outcomes and avoid transport becoming a constraint on the delivery of economic growth. Benefits of the package would be:-

- the largest ever local transport investment programme outside London of up to £2.9 billion; and
- an increase public transport capacity in the morning peak by some 40% along the corridors affected by the charge.

The Government would decide on the Bid and, if Greater Manchester was successful, it would mean:-

- extended metrolinks;
- additional rail rolling stock and platform lengthening;
- new interchanges;
- more park and ride spaces;
- a step change in travel information; and
- a behavioural change programme.

Mr. Davies then went on to outline the proposed charges to be introduced which, in summary, were as follows:-

A - Two charge points on corridors to regional centre:

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- outer charge point – at/close to M60; and
- inner charge point – at/close to intermediate ring road.

B - Charge only during peaks and in peak direction:-

- inbound - 7.00 a.m to 9.30 a.m. (A.M. Peak); and
- outbound - 4.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. (P.M. Peak).
- Inbound - £2 (M60) and £1 (Ring Road)

- Outbound - £1 (M60) and £1 (Ring Road)
- round trip to centre and back - £5.00.
- Range of choices for traveller:-
 - change time of trip;
 - change mode of travel; and
 - consolidate trips.

There would be no charge until the majority of the investment was in place.

Following his presentation, Mr Davies invited and responded to questions from the forum and encouraged members to give feedback on proposals.

A number of issues were raised, as follows:-

- a) the new infrastructure would have to be much improved and in place before the charging began in order to give people alternatives;

Mr. Davies stated that there would be no charges until the majority of the investment was in place;

- b) the need for platform extensions at Lostock Station to enable trains to go direct to Wigan;
- c) Manchester could suffer economically in that people may choose to shop elsewhere;
- d) vulnerable people who were ill and needed to travel to Manchester to receive medical treatment may be disadvantaged.

This would be looked at as part of the detailed scheme if the Bid was successful.

- e) public transport fares may go up. Details of proposed fare structures should be provided;

- f) what type of jobs would be created?

There would be a whole range of jobs across Greater Manchester. Congestion was, at present, having an adverse effect on economy.

- g) concerns that further congestion charges could be introduced outside of Greater Manchester once this scheme had been implemented.

Mr. Davies thanked people in attendance for their input and agreed to pass the feedback on to the GMPTA.

Resolved – That Mr. Davies be thanked for his informative presentation.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND 2006/2008

The Area Co-ordinator advised that the Forum had received a total allocation from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund budget of £35,000 for the period 1st April, 2006 to 31st March, 2008.

The Area Co-ordinator put forward a scheme for funding to host a Washacre showcase event on 21st July, 2007 at the John Holt Centre, with the aim of encouraging people to access the service available from the Centre, engaging members of the local community to participate in the local community radio station and helping to publicise services available from other sources.

Funding was requested to pay for marquee hire, a public address system and publicity materials at a total cost of £1,000.

If the project was approved, there would be a balance of £14,160 unallocated from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Resolved – That the project be approved and the sum of £1,000 be allocated, as detailed in the report now submitted.

7. HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIP BUDGET 2007/2008

The Area Co-ordinator advised that the Forum had received a total allocation from the Council's Highways Maintenance Partnership Budget of £32,888 for the current Financial Year up to 31st March, 2008.

The Area Co-ordinator put forward a scheme for consideration in respect of 36 Cherwell Road for the removal of bushed verge to bring it into line with all other verges on the road and reduce litter build up. The total cost was £400.

If the project was approved, a sum of £32,488 would remain unallocated from the Highways Maintenance Partnership Budget.

Resolved – That the project be approved and the sum of £400 be allocated, as detailed in the report now submitted.

8. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS 2007/2008

The Area Co-ordinator advised that there had been three applications for Voluntary Sector Grants, as follows:-

- Westhoughton Visiting Services - £500 towards the provision of a free hot Christmas dinner for the elderly;
- Westhoughton Carnival Queen Association - £500 towards continuing an old Westhoughton tradition of crowning the carnival royalty and hold a garden fête with stalls and refreshments; and
- Eatock Mother and Toddler Group - £400 towards the installation of a permanent baby changing unit in the toilets to improve facilities and hygiene standards for children and their parents.

If the above grant applications are approved, there would be £2,600 remaining for allocation.

Resolved – (i) That £250 be awarded to Westhoughton Visiting Service;

(ii) That £250 be awarded to Westhoughton Carnival Association; and

(iii) That the application from Eatock Mother and Toddler Group, in the sum of £400, be approved.

9. OPEN FORUM

Verbal and written questions were received, which detailed the following issues:-

- a) High Street Library had recently been refurbished with new computers. When would Westhoughton Library receive the same?

Westhoughton Library were due to receive new computers this year.

- b) Problems with dog fouling on Chew Moor. What could be done?

The Area Co-ordinator would take the matter up with Environmental Services. Future instances could be reported to Access Bolton who would inform the Dog Warden.

- c) There were rumours about the possible closure of Westhoughton Primary School due to the places not being filled. However, the places would be needed once the new housing developments were completed.

The Area Co-ordinator agreed to investigate the issue and report back.

- d) Problems with excessive advertising signage for new housing developments in the area, which were now completed. When would they be removed?

The Area Co-ordinator would contact the Enforcement Section and report back.

- e) How would Daisy Hill Train Station be accessed?

The Area Co-ordinator agreed to report back.

- f) Why did Councillors have to declare interests?

The Democratic Services Officer gave a brief outline of the requirements placed on Councillors to declare personal and prejudicial interests under the Members' Code of Conduct.

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.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Forum would be held on Wednesday, 4th September, 2007 at 7.00 p.m. at Westhoughton High School.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 7.00 p.m. and finished at 8.50 p.m.)