

SMITHILLS AREA FORUM

MEETING – 13th October 2016

Present – 18 members of the public attended the meeting

Councillor Hayes	-	Smithills Ward
Councillor Martin	-	Smithills Ward
Councillor Swarbrick	-	Smithills Ward

Also in attendance

John Shannon	-	Area Coordinator
Stephen Rowson	-	Chief Executives Department
Steve Walsh	-	Department of Place
Heather Swift	-	Woodland Trust

Apologies for absence were submitted by Chris Green MP and Alistair Nash from the Woodland Trust

Councillor Carole Swarbrick in the Chair

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Swarbrick welcomed everyone and introduced herself, Councillors and other Officers in attendance.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 February 2016 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. THE SMITHILLS ESTATE PROJECT

Councillor Swarbrick introduced Heather Swift from the Woodland Trust, who gave a presentation on the Smithills Estate Project.

The main points were:

- The Woodland Trust had raised funds and purchased the majority of the Estate in 2015 from Bolton Council; this was the biggest project undertaken by the Trust.
- The Estate covers 5% of the Bolton area and consists of a combination of moorland, heathland, grassland and woodland, together with tenant farms and residential properties as well as many historic industrial features.
- The trusts aim was to retain historic features where possible along with improving aspects for the future such as access pathways, hedges and styles. It was also hoped to provide additional car parking off Walker Fold Road.
- £3.5 million had been required to purchase the Estate.
- The Trust had received an initial £70,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for preliminary work and assessment of the Estate including current visitor usage and existing habitats. Work had also been carried out to repair fencing, secure historical features (e.g. mine shafts) and fell hazardous trees.
- A further £5.5 million investment would be required to manage and develop the estate.
- £700,000 had been raised so far from donations and fundraising activities.
- A much larger bid for funding towards the investment in the Estate would go to the Heritage Lottery Fund late next year.
- A number of events had taken place to raise awareness of the project and the habitat. A re-enactment of the 1896 mass trespass, when 10,000 people asserted the right of walk on the Estate, took place during the summer involving local school children.
- Many Volunteers had joined the project and more would be welcome, details were available on the Woodland Trust website.

A number of questions followed the presentation and were answered at the meeting.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted

5. UPDATE ON BUDGETS AND PROJECTS

Area Coordinator John Shannon gave an update on current balances for budgets devolved to the Area Forum:

For 2013-15 financial year's budgets were now fully spent. For 2015-17 financial year's the budget balances were as follows;

Area Forum Flat Rate Budget (AFB)	£8,891.00
Highways Maintenance Budget (HMB)	£4,400.00

The following points were noted:-

- The Area Forum Budget was available to fund activities which provided a benefit to the ward
- The Highways Maintenance Budget was available to fund asset improvement work covering any of the following activities; Reconstruction, Refurbishment, Patching and Slurry seal works.

Resolved –

- i. That the report be noted;
- ii. That it be noted that the following scheme had been awarded a grant under the Council's Scheme of Delegation from the 2013-15 budget:

<u>Grant</u>	<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Award</u>
<u>Pot</u>		
AFB	Contribution to footway and highway improvements, Hollin Hey Road	£762.00

- iii. That it be noted that the following schemes had been awarded a grant under the Council's Scheme of Delegation from the 2015-17 budget:

<u>Grant</u>	<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Award</u>
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Pot

AFB	Cost of pictorial meadow planting at Doffcocker roundabout	£484.00
HMB	Contribution to cost of resurfacing Graythwaite Road	£14,800.00

6. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

Councillor Swarbrick introduced this item on the agenda and invited residents to ask any questions or put forward any comments they had regarding issues and concerns in the Ward.

The questions were as follows:

Q1 The 20mph signs on Montserrat Road didn't seem to be working, do they work in other locations?

A It was thought that the 20MPH zones do reduce speeds but that not all drivers adhere to the required limit. Highways Services would be asked for further feedback.

Q2 Are there any plans to resurface Montserrat Road? Some of the surface done recently is degrading; also, a short section had not been resurfaced.

A The road had been resurfaced in the last two years; the points made would be passed to highways Services to investigate.

Q3 Valletts Lane, it was reported that 10MPH signs had been erected but lighting was not working, also 20MPH signs had been removed during resurfacing works but not reinstated. There was also a request for linings on the road surface to highlight the junction.

A The issues reported would be passed to Highways Services for investigation.

Q4 A number of issues were raised regarding the warden managed Bolton at Home flats on Valletts Lane including old electricity meters, wiring issues and malfunctioning intercoms. It was also asked when the refurbishment of kitchens and bathrooms would take place as these were considered to be overdue.

A All the issues raised would be passed on to Bolton at Home to respond.

Q5 Members of the Johnson Fold Residents Association raised a number of issues regarding dog fouling.

A This is an issue all across the borough but if people know who is responsible please give details to the enforcement team who can take further action, this has had some success in the past. If some stencilling and lamppost signs could be put in the problem areas this would be done.

Resolved – That the questions be noted and the questions which were not answered be directed to the appropriate departments or partner agencies.

7. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Swarbrick thanked everyone for attending and advised that the next forum was still to be confirmed however would not be until the 2017/18 municipal year, residents would be informed through the usual channels.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and finished at 7.59pm)