

HEATON AND LOSTOCK AREA FORUM

MEETING – WEDNESDAY 3RD FEBRUARY, 2016

Present – 13 members of the public attended the meeting

Councillor Robert Allen	- Heaton and Lostock Ward
Councillor Andrew Morgan	- Heaton and Lostock Ward
Councillor Colin Shaw	- Heaton and Lostock Ward

Also in attendance

Idris Jeewa	- Area Co-ordinator
Jane Bickerstaffe	- Business Support Officer
Kevan Roberts	- Environmental Services
Alex Allen	- Principal Development Officer, Planning
Helen Williams	- Principal Development Officer, Planning
PC Andy McMath	- Greater Manchester Police
PCSO Sandra Furnival	- Greater Manchester Police

Councillor Morgan in the Chair

10. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Councillor Morgan welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Councillors Allen and Shaw and the other Council and partner officers present.

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted by Chris Green MP.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

There were no Declarations of Interest.

13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 30th September, 2015 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

14. POLICE COMMUNITY UPDATE

Councillor Morgan introduced PC Andy McMath, who gave a brief update on police issues in the Heaton and Lostock ward.

PC McMath informed the forum that in 2015 there had been a large number of thefts of lead flashing, but these had greatly reduced since the change in the law regarding selling scrap metal. Unfortunately, this had been superseded in the last three months by the theft of York stone from properties in the Heaton and Lostock area and PC McMath asked residents to be vigilant.

PC McMath also explained that the Interim Mayor of Greater Manchester, Tony Lloyd, had started a Community Chest Fund of £900,000 and the public were being encouraged to enquire about accessing the fund by visiting the website at www.gmpcc.org.uk/funding

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

15. PRESENTATION – PLANNING ENFORCEMENT IN BOLTON

Councillor Morgan introduced Alex Allen and Helen Williams, Principal Development Officers from Bolton Council's Planning Department. Alex and Helen gave a presentation on Planning Enforcement in Bolton. The main points were:

Planning Enforcement Team

First line officers (excluding listed buildings, trees and untidy land cases) are:

- Alex Allen
- Helen Williams (Heaton and Lostock general matters)
- Paul Bridge
- Martin Mansell
- Jeanette Isherwood

- Jonathan Mayo (Heaton and Lostock householder cases)
- Simon Coles (householder cases)

Enforcement specialists handle all cases where there is an actionable breach of planning control along with first line response to listed buildings, trees, untidy land cases and alleged business uses from dwellings. They are:

- Matthew Kilsby (Heaton and Lostock)
- Alan Barnes

Workload and Performance

On average we receive about 800 cases a year:

- 60% usually involve no breach or are not expedient to pursue.
- 40% are actionable in some way and are pursued by the enforcement specialists.

Our performance targets are aligned with the 9 other Greater Manchester Local Authorities.

- Our current target is that 60% of cases will have an initial visit within the prescribed timescales dependent on type of case.
- We are currently achieving this target.

Performance - Speed of action on cases where a planning breach exists

We aim to bring 50% of cases to an action milestone within 13 weeks of receipt. The action milestones are:

- Decision on expedience.
- Receipt of planning application.
- Instructions prepared and case passed to legal for formal action (for example, enforcement notice to be served, prosecution).
- Resolution of issue by negotiation.
- We are currently achieving 62%.

Our Approach

- The way we conduct our activity is in line with current best practice and advice including legislative provision and Greater Manchester City Region current practice.
- At the local level, we seek to contribute positively to the wider regeneration agenda including:
- Protecting the amenity and community safety of the people of Bolton from undesirable development or neglect of land and buildings;

- Ensuring that environmental, economic and social benefits negotiated through planning permissions are achieved;
- Protecting the natural and built heritage of the district;
- Enabling business to operate competitively but not at the expense of the environment and public amenity of the borough.

Resource Management

- Every case that we receive is investigated and processed in accordance with our procedures.
- We focus available resources on breaches that are causing significant demonstrable planning harm.
- Our approach is mindful of the provisions of Planning Practice Guidance which forms part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012.

Expedience – Government Guidance

- Enforcement action should always be commensurate with the breach of planning control to which it relates (for example, it is usually inappropriate to take formal enforcement action against a trivial or technical breach of control which causes no harm to amenity in the locality of the site).
- While it is clearly unsatisfactory for anyone to carry out development without first obtaining the required planning permission, an enforcement notice should not normally be issued solely to "regularise" development which is acceptable on its planning merits, but for which permission has not been sought.

This means that it is not always expedient to take action where a breach of planning control exists.

Expedience – Our Considerations

- A robust approach is essential when considering the next steps on a case.
- Each case is considered as if it were the subject of a planning application. This ensures full and proper consideration of the planning issues. Where the development is deemed to be acceptable on its planning merits, no further action is taken.
- However, it must be noted that in these instances development remains unauthorised and could affect the sale or transfer of the property in the future.

Q1	A resident asked if the Planning Officers could provide figures for the people that were prosecuted for not complying with enforcement in 2014/15?
A	Alex Allen said they did not have these figures, but Councillor Morgan added that this information should become available through the upcoming planning enquiry/review.

Two written questions, received prior to the meeting and number of other questions were asked and answered on the night.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

16. BUDGET UPDATE

Councillor Morgan introduced Idris Jeewa, Area Co-ordinator, who gave a brief overview on budgets available for 2015-17.

Deprivation Budget - £622

Area Forum Flat Rate - £9,375

- Members have approved a grant of £300 to Lostock Residents Group to help service the group.
- Therefore, there now remains £9,075 in this budget.

Highway Maintenance Budget - £19,200

As and when decisions are made on the remainder of these funds, they will be reported back to future area forums.

Resolved – That the report, together with those projects approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, and those questions asked and answered on the night be noted.

17. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

Councillor Morgan 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.

Q1	A resident expressed their concern that there is no pavement on the Glengarth Drive, Junction Road West, Sudbury Drive junction and this could be very dangerous, especially for people with young children. Also, the street lighting on Middlebrook Drive, by the train station, is very poor and you cannot see the pavement.
A	These issues would be looked into by the Councillors and possibly referred to Highways
Q2	Could an update be provided on the Northern Power House as part of the GM Devolution?
A	A Communications Team is being put together to keep the public informed.
Q3	Could the local MP propose a Private Members Bill so that planning fines could be issued and people prosecuted for non-compliance of planning regulations?
A	The Councillors would pass this onto Chris Green MP.

Resolved – That the questions be noted and that any unanswered questions would be forwarded to the appropriate department.

18. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Morgan informed the residents that the Council were proposing to reduce the Area Forums to once a year and that an email had been sent out regarding this and residents were being urged to take part in the consultation by responding with their thoughts/queries etc. He then thanked everyone for attending and for their contributions. The date of the next Heaton and Lostock Area Forum was yet to be confirmed, but this will be publicised through the usual channels.

(The meeting started at 7.02pm and finished at 8.29pm)