

**WESTHOUGHTON WITH CHEW MOOR
AREA FORUM**

MEETING, 27TH MARCH, 2007

Present – 32 Members of the public attended the meeting.

Councillor David Wilkinson (Chairman)	-	Westhoughton South Ward
Councillor D. Gradwell (Vice-Chairman)	-	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor Ward
Councillor J. Higson	-	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor Ward
Councillor A. Price	-	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor Ward
Councillor J. Silvester	-	Westhoughton South Ward

Also in attendance:

Mr. A. Allan	-	Development and Regeneration
Mr. A. Chalmers	-	Development and Regeneration
Mr. J. Smethurst	-	Development and Regeneration
Mr. D. Newell	-	Commercial Services
Ms. K. Smith	-	Children's Services
Mr. D. Houghton	-	Environmental Services
Ms. J. Hargreaves	-	Bolton at Home
Ms. A. Boles	-	Area Co-ordinator
Ms. V. Cloyne	-	Area Co-ordinator
Ms. J. Roe	-	Area Working Support Officer
Mrs. V. Ridge	-	Legal & Democratic Services
Inspector	-	Greater Manchester Police
Mohammed Razaq		
PC Griffiths	-	Greater Manchester Police
PC Fairhurst	-	Greater Manchester Police
PCSO Howard	-	Greater Manchester Police
PCSO Gough	-	Greater Manchester Police
Shaun O'Donnell	-	Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Ainscough.

Councillor David Wilkinson in the Chair.

32. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Councillor David Wilkinson welcomed and introduced everybody to the meeting.

The Forum were also introduced to Inspector Razaq who had recently been appointed as Neighbourhood Inspector to replace Inspector Miskill. Inspector Razaq briefly gave an explanation as to what his role would entail and also gave assurances that anti-social behaviour was seen as a priority in particular, along Market Street.

Resolved – That a letter be sent, on behalf of the Forum, expressing its thanks to Inspector Miskill for his work in the Westhoughton Area.

33. MINUTES

That the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Area Forum held on 30th January, 2007 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

34. SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE BOROUGH, CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mr. A. Chalmers from the Planning Division gave a presentation which outlined the process for shaping the future of Bolton through a sustainable Community Strategy.

This Strategy would guide renewal, lead improvement of Services and tackle deprivation.

Coupled with this, were a number of key aims and objectives, viz:-

- a strong and confident Bolton;
- a prosperous Bolton;

- a healthy Bolton;
- a safe Bolton; and
- an attractive Bolton.

The Forum advised that the Strategy would take two years to prepare and set out how each locality in Bolton would change over the next 10-15 years. The strategy would be adopted in December, 2009.

Mr. Chalmers went on to indicate that the Council were seeking ideas and comments from individuals on what the plan should contain.

In terms of possible issues for the Westhoughton and Chew Moor area, it was indicated that these were:-

- maintaining a good quality visual environment;
- ensuring residential areas had good access to services;
- providing a choice of ways of travelling to employment opportunities;
- role and potential of Westhoughton Town Centre;
- delivery of economic development in a sustainable way; and
- future of Westhoughton protected open land.

In conclusion, it was indicated that a consultation leaflet was available and responses should be submitted to the Council by 13th April, 2007.

Various questions and comments were responded to. Issues raised included:-

(a)

concern was expressed that the protection of green belt land was only till 2012;

- (b) did the proposed Sainsbury's development conform with the Unitary Development Plan;
- (c) who were the Bolton Family;
- (d) consultation had been taking place since 1972 regarding the future of Westhoughton, however, the views of residents had never been taken into consideration. Furthermore, there were not enough services to meet demand which had occurred due to recent housing developments;
- (e) reference was made to the Westhoughton Masterplan 1972 and concern was expressed regarding the extensive use of e-government;
- (f) the social life in Westhoughton was very poor and there was a lack of recreational facilities;
- (g) concern was expressed regarding Victoria Street and, in particular, the four cottages which were situated on part of the road which was unadopted and therefore had not been tarmaced. There was also problems with the hammerhead which had been created and severe problems with anti-social behaviour;
- (h) what plans were in place for the redevelopment of Westhoughton Town Centre;
- (i) concern was expressed regarding the lack of consultation on the proposed development at Tempest Road;
- (j) there was a need for long term planning, especially, in light of the fact that pressure was increasing on landowners to sell pieces of land for residential development;

- (k) there was no monitor or plan management arrangements in Westhoughton;
- (l) what did the term 'sustainable' mean;
- (m) reference was made to the housing land availability report and the argument for new development versus regeneration;
- (n) concern regarding the use of abbreviations which members of the public were not familiar with; and
- (o) concern was raised again regarding names and addresses of objectors to planning applications being put on the internet.

Resolved – (i) That the presentation be noted.

(ii) That the Chief Planning Officer be requested to attend a future meeting of the Forum to look at issues regarding development in Westhoughton.

35. WESTHOUGHTON WITH CHEW MOOR ANNUAL REPORT 2006/2007

The Chairman gave a short presentation on the work and achievement of the Forum over the past twelve months.

He highlighted the following issues:-

- summary of Forum activity since July 2006;
- tackling local issues;
- drop-in sessions;
- 'Open-Forum' question session;
- how residents were kept informed;
- allocation of the Forum budgets; and
- the ongoing work, in partnership with agencies and local residents to tackle issues.

The Chairman concluded by thanking everyone involved in making the Forum a success.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

36. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS 2006/2007 UPDATE

Councillor Higson declared a prejudicial interest in the application from the Hunger Hill Action Group and left the meeting during consideration and determination thereof.

Ms. A. Boles, Area Co-ordinator tabled a report which provided details of four applications which had been received for grant aid, viz:-

- (a) The Forwards Centre – a request had been received for £286.58 to continue to maintain and develop the gardening club/project;
- (b) St. James' Church, Daisy Hill Community Group - a request had been received for £100 to promote organisations for children and young people;
- (c) Chew Moor Sports Club – a request had been received for £500 to purchase equipment for the under 7 and 8 children's mini football group and repairs to facilities; and
- (d) Hunger Hill Action Group – a request had been received for £426 start up grant to purchase stationery to help promote a new group and plan activities.

The Forum was advised that there was currently £1,312.58 available for grants and, if all the grant applications were approved at the amount requested, the allocation for this financial year would have been spent.

Resolved – That the grant applications, as now detailed, be approved.

37. NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND 2006/2008

Ms. A. Boles, Area Co-ordinator tabled a paper which put forward two schemes for consideration for funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Budget for 2006/2008.

The schemes were as follows:-

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| Mabel Street
Lighting Scheme | - | this involved the replacement of four concrete columns with five new galvanised steel columns to accommodate a 50 watt SON (white) light at an estimated cost of £5,800; |
| Sandalwood,
Hoskers and
Hemley Close | - | the aim of the project was to provide gating and fencing to some of the green and pathways that were bounded by Sandalwood, Hoskers and Hemley Close at an estimated cost of £3,000. |

The Forum was advised that the costs for the above projects were £8,800 which, if approved, would leave £15,160 remaining to be allocated from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund 2006/2008.

Resolved – That the projects, as now detailed, be approved.

38. OPEN FORUM

Prior to the commencement of the Open Forum of the meeting, the Area Co-ordinator referred to a circulated update on questions asked at previous meetings of the Forum. Furthermore, the Area Co-ordinator tabled a schedule which updated the Forum on the questions which had been submitted and replied to in advance of the meeting.

Verbal questions were then received which detailed the following issues:-

- (a) what action could be taken to address the litter problem which stretched from Platt Lane to Westhoughton Town Centre;

It was agreed that this would be taken up with the Council's Enforcement Team;

- (b) severe problems were being experienced with vandalism and anti-social behaviour in Alma Road from children who attended Westhoughton High School. This issue had been raised on numerous occasions with the school but the problems still persisted.

It was agreed that this would be investigated.

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

39. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members, Officers and the public for their attendance and for the comments expressed.

(The meeting started at 7.00 p.m. and finished at 9.40 p.m.)