

TWO TOWNS AREA FORUM

MEETING, 3RD JULY, 2007

Present – 25 Members of the public attended the meeting.

Councillor Rock (Chairman)	-	Horwich North East
Councillor Hamilton (Vice-Chairman)	-	Horwich and Blackrod
Councillor Barrow	-	Horwich and Blackrod
Councillor Hollick	-	Horwich and Blackrod

Also in attendance

Ms. M. Hill	-	Children's Services
Mr. R. White	-	Adult Services
Ms. E. Miller	-	Adult Services
Ms. G. Hughes	-	Adult Services
Mr. A. Lancashire	-	Planning
Mrs. V. Ridge	-	Legal and Democratic Services
Mr. C. Bullough	-	Environmental Services
Mr. M. Lee	-	Environmental Services
Mr. S. Bamber	-	Environmental Services
Mr. A. Bolan	-	Environmental Services
Mr. R. Henderson	-	Environmental Services
Mr. P. Hansbury	-	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue
Mr. C. Harrison	-	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue
Mr. S. Vernon	-	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue
Keith Seal	-	Greater Manchester Police
Lisa Whitehead	-	Greater Manchester Police
Richard Amis	-	Greater Manchester Police
Geoff Taylor	-	Greater Manchester Police
Sandra Furnival	-	Greater Manchester Police

Andy Vernon	-	Greater Manchester Police
Ms. V. Cloynes	-	Area Co-ordinator
Ms. J. Roe	-	Area Working Support Officer
Mr. S. Rowson	-	Admin Support Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor R. Ronson and Mrs. Ronson.

Councillor Rock in the Chair.

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Councillor Rock welcomed and introduced everybody to the meeting.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Forum held on 20th 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.

It was stated that, in future, only regular attendees would receive agendas and associated paperwork through post, however, 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.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

4. FEEDBACK SESSION OF ISSUES RAISED AT PREVIOUS MEETING

Ms. V. Cloynes, Area Co-ordinator, tabled a paper which provided an update on responses to questions which were raised at the last meeting of the Forum.

Resolved – That the feedback be noted.

5. CRIME AND DISORDER THEMED SESSION

Representatives from the Greater Manchester Police and the Environmental Health Department gave presentations on the following issues, viz:-

- 1) Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005;
- 2) the work undertaken by the Police Community Support Officers; and
- 3) the Safer Neighbourhoods project.

Members of the Forum then went into workshops to discuss what they felt were the main priorities in relation to crime and disorder.

Resolved – That the presentations be noted.

6. GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND CONGESTION CHARGING

The Assistant Director of Highways Development and Regeneration, Mr. P. Molyneux, 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 increased 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. Molyneux 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 Molyneux 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) what was the view of Bolton Council in relation to the proposed bid?

It was stated that a member working party was currently considering the proposal and, therefore, no decision had yet been reached.

- b) did the charging proposals cover all types of vehicles or just private vehicles.

It was stated that the bid, at present, was just about principles and no details had yet been proposed.

- c) if commercial vehicles were charged then this would result in increased taxes for the public;
- d) were there any plans to increase the park and ride spaces at Horwich and Lostock Train Stations;
- e) how much had it cost to prepare the submission of the bid and who would be the principal authority which would determine expenditure.

It was stated that, if a scheme was implemented, this would be signed by all ten Greater Manchester Authorities.

- f) there was a need for improved information between transport links;
- (g) why was it more expensive to travel inside the ring and cheaper going outside the ring;
- (h) would people who needed to travel to Manchester to receive medical treatment be exempt from charges;
- (i) where there any proposals for a tramway system in Bolton;
- (j) people might have to work unsociable hours to avoid the congestion charges;
- (k) why were commercial bus companies subsidised; and
- (l) the charging proposals could result in increased traffic in Horwich and Bolton where there already was traffic congestion.

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

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

7. 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.

It was stated at the meeting of the Area Forum held in January, 2007, £4,350 was allocated to the Brazley/Poplar Avenue woodland project. The fencing work and the kissing gate had now been completed at a cost of £1,700, however, it had also been identified that the footpath which led up to the kissing gate needed to be made more appropriate for pedestrians.

Consequently, it was proposed to change the usage of the remaining funds, which was £2,650, to cover the costs of excavating and resurfacing the footpath with tarmac.

Resolved – That the revised scheme, as now detailed, be approved.

8. HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – COMMUNITY SAFETY 2006/2008

The Area Co-ordinator tabled a report which advised that the Forum had received an allocation from the Highways Partnership (Community Safety) 2006/2008 budget of £10,000 for the period 1st April, 2006 to 31st March, 2008.

The report proposed a scheme to be funded from the budget which was to enhance the lighting on the footpath joining Makinson Avenue and Ainsworth Avenue, adjacent to 39 Makinson Avenue and between 52 and 54 Ainsworth Avenue. The total cost of the scheme was £7,700, however, Bolton at Home would provide 50% of the funding so the amount requested was £3,850.

If the above scheme was approved , it would leave a balance of £6,150 in the Highways Partnership Community Safety budget 2006/2008.

Resolved – That the proposed scheme, as now detailed, be approved.

9. HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIP BUDGET 2007-2008

The Area Co-ordinator tabled a paper which 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.

Members of the public were invited to suggest potential schemes which could be brought forward for consideration under this budget.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

10. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS SCHEME 2006/2007

Councillor Hollick declared an interest in the application submitted by St. Katherine's Tuesday Workshop.

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

- Blackrod Art Group - £500 towards the purchase of a portable wireless microphone sound system to be used by guest speakers, demonstrations and for workshops;
- Horwich Old Angling Society - £300 towards hiring a coach in order to transport their members to and from venues which were further afield;
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Summer Daze - £500 towards providing a range of activities for 6-16 year olds during the school holidays;

- Horwich Parish Playcare Limited - £500 to create a play area;
- Friends of Old Station Park - £300 towards planting hawthorn bushes along Drinkwater Lane;
- Horwich Widows - £100 towards paying for various speakers;
- Horwich Resource Centre Management Committee - £500 towards sponsoring the Horwich in Bloom 2007 contest;
- Simply Upholstering/Soft Furnishing - £482.63 towards the cost of hiring a room at the Horwich Resource Centre and running a course to develop and improve the skills of members in upholstery and soft furnishing;
- St. Katherine's Tuesday Workshop - £400 towards the cost of providing after school activities; and
- Blackrod Over 55s/60s Club - £500 towards the costs of organising trips and coach hire.

If the above grant applications were approved, there would be an over-commitment of £49.50.

Members were advised that the Friends of Old Station Park had returned £33.13 to the grants pot.

Resolved – (i) That the applications submitted by Blackrod Art Group and Simply Upholstering/Soft Furnishing be deferred to the next meeting of the Area Forum.

(ii) That in relation to the application submitted by the Horwich Resource Centre Management Committee, consideration of this be delegated to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Forum.

(iii) That the following grants be allocated to the under mentioned groups, viz:-

Horwich Old Angling Society	- £150
Summer Daze	- £250
Horwich Parish Playcare Limited	- £250
Friends of Old Station Park	- £300
Horwich Widows	- £100
St. Katherine's Tuesday Workshop	- £200
Blackrod Over 55s/60s Club	- £200

11. OPEN FORUM

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

- a) why had a Council officer taken a decision to hold an area forum meeting in the afternoon?

The Chairman responded to the question and explained that this was an experiment suggested by members to provide more flexibility for members of the public to attend Forum meetings.

- b) why had residents on Crown Lane not been informed of the results of the survey undertaken on traffic management?

It was explained that a full explanation on this would be provided.

- c) concern was expressed regarding the length of time it took for officers to respond to enquiries from members of the public.

It was agreed that a response would be provided.

- d) what was the current situation with alley gating on Cooper Street/Lee Lane?

It was agreed that this would be investigated.

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.

12. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked members, officers and the public for their views expressed during the meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved – That the next meeting of the Two Towns Area Forum be held at 2.00 p.m. on Monday, 10th September, 2007 at Blackrod Community Centre.

(The meeting started at 7.00 p.m. and finished at 9.55 p.m.)