

Rossendale Three Tier Forum

Note of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 4th December, 2013 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup

Present:

Chair

County Councillor A Barnes, Lancashire County Council

Forum Members

County Councillor A Cheetham, Lancashire County Council

County Councillor J Oakes, Lancashire County Council

County Councillor D Stansfield, Lancashire County Council

Councillor H Jackson, Rossendale Borough Council

Councillor C Lamb, Rossendale Borough Council

Councillor P Marriott, Rossendale Borough Council

Councillor A A Milling, Rossendale Borough Council

Councillor Mrs Gladys Sandiford, Rossendale Borough Council

Councillor K Ruane - representing Parish and Town Councils in Rossendale

Councillor Jackson replaced Councillor R Wilkinson for this meeting.

Councillor Marriott replaced Councillor C Crawforth for this meeting.

Councillor Milling replaced Councillor D Smith for this meeting.

Councillor Ruane replaced Councillor D Barnes for this meeting.

Also in attendance

Mrs H Lockwood, Chief Executive, Rossendale Borough Council.

Mr G Graham, Deputy County treasurer, Lancashire County Council.

Mr H Ballantyne, Locality Officer, Lancashire County Council, Environment Directorate.

Mr M Neville, Senior Committee Support Officer, Lancashire County Council, Office of the Chief Executive.

1. Appointment of Chair

Agreed: That County Councillor A Barnes is appointed as the Chair of the Rossendale 3 Tier Forum.

2. Appointment of Deputy Chair

Agreed: That Councillor C Lamb is appointed as the Deputy Chair of the Rossendale 3 Tier Forum.

3. Membership and Terms of Reference of the Forum

It was reported that in accordance with the views expressed at the previous meeting regarding the future development of the Forum the Terms of Reference had been

amended in order to enable public participation at meetings on the basis set out in the proposed protocol on public speaking.

Concern was expressed regarding the statement in the Protocol that speeches by the public would not be expected to be the subject of debate or that questions raised would be answered was queried. The proposal that speaking would only be permitted in relation to each item on an agenda, for up to 3 minutes per person and be managed by the Chair was noted. The Chair assured members of the Forum that it was her intention to use her discretion and, where appropriate, invite members of the Forum or Officers present to respond to any issues that were raised or alternatively ask for a response to be provided outside of the meeting.

It was also noted that the Forum had no delegated decision making powers and would continue to make recommendations to the appropriate Cabinet Member at the County Council or Borough Council.

Agreed:

1. That the current membership of the Forum is as follows.

Lancashire County Council

Rossendale Borough Council

County Councillor A Barnes

Councillor C Crawforth

County Councillor A Cheetham

Councillor C Lamb

County Councillor J Oakes

Councillor G Sandiford

County Councillor S Serridge

Councillor D Smith

County Councillor D Stansfield

Councillor R Wilkinson

Parish and Town Councils representative - Councillor D Barnes (Whitworth Town Council).

2. That public speaking at the Rossendale Three Tier Forum is permitted on the following basis – on each agenda item, for up to 3 minutes per person, to be managed by the Chair at their discretion and in accordance with the 'Protocol on Public Speaking' a copy of which is attached as an Annex to this Note.
3. That the decision set out at 2 above be incorporated into the Terms of Reference for the Rossendale Three Tier Forum as set out below.
 - a) The Forum is a joint business meeting of County, District, and Town and Parish Councillors, open to the public.
 - b) The membership of the Forum will be all local County Councillors with an Electoral Division within the District and an equal number of District Councillors appointed by the District Council, and one Parish/Town Council representative nominated from the Parish Councils within the District area. District Councils and the Parish/Town Councils can nominate deputies or replacements in accordance with their own procedures. The officer(s) supporting the meeting

must be notified of any changes prior to a meeting. Political balance rules do not apply to the Three Tier Forum, although districts may follow these for their nominations.

- c) The Forum will discuss issues that are of joint interest across the three levels of local government in the area. Agenda items will focus on strategic issues relating to all local councils in the area.
- d) Any member of the Forum can request that an item is considered at a future meeting of the Forum. The Chair is responsible for agreeing the agenda and deciding whether an issue raised by a member will appear on an agenda. Where issues are raised that do not fall within the remit of the Forum these will be dealt with via the appropriate mechanism.
- e) *Public speaking is permitted on the following basis - on each agenda item up to 3 minutes per person at the discretion of the Chair.*
- f) The Chair is responsible for managing the debate at the meeting. The Chair's ruling on any aspect of a member of the Forums right to speak will be final. Members who persistently ignore the ruling of the Chair may after being warned, be asked to leave the room for the duration of the meeting.
- g) Decisions of the Forum should be by consensus wherever possible. In the event that a consensus cannot be reached, decisions are by simple 'show of hands' majority with the Chair having a casting vote.
- h) The Forum is not a formal committee of County, District or Parish Councils, therefore Access to Information provisions do not apply. However, as they are public meetings, agendas and minutes will be available on the County Council's website and by request can be obtained in person at County Hall, Preston.
- i) The Chair and Deputy will be elected at the Annual Meeting from amongst the membership of the Forum. Should a vacancy arise during the year, a new Chair or Deputy will be elected. A Chair or Deputy may be removed from their position by a vote of the Forum.
- j) The Forum will meet 3 times a year, one of which will be the Annual Meeting. The Forum does not have the authority to establish sub groups or working groups. From April 2014, the Annual Meeting will be the first meeting of the Forum after the County Council's AGM.
- k) Urgent business is allowed, with the consent of the Chair. Any member wishing to raise a matter of urgent business should advise the Chair via the officer support for the Forum as soon as possible.
- l) The "Protocol on Public Speaking at Three Tier Forums" applies.

4. Apologies

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of County Councillor S Serridge.

5. Note of the Last Meeting

Agreed: That the Note of the meeting held on the 11th September 2013 is confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

6. Action Sheet update from the last meeting

Reference was made to the discussion at the previous meeting regarding work being undertaken by utility companies and the need to maintain access for pedestrians. Mr Ballantyne informed the meeting that United Utilities had provided a contact number which the public could use to report any concerns regarding works being undertaken by the company to the Operations Manager.

Agreed:

1. That in future members of the public be encouraged to report any concerns regarding work undertaken by United Utilities to the Operations Manager on 0845 7462200, quoting reference CT80022366.
2. That the Note of the meeting held on the 11th September 2013 is confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

7. Lancashire County Council Budget

Mr Graham informed the meeting that the County Council was facing significant financial challenges over the coming years due to a reduction by the Government in public spending combined with increasing costs in areas such as inflation, pensions and the demand on services of an increasingly older population.

As a result the County Council was faced with making savings of around £300m over the next few years and had adopted a number of approaches to achieve this, including a review of planning assumptions/forecasts which had led to a reduction of £17.4m in the level of savings required over the next four years and the identification of £19.1m of efficiency savings over the next two years through measures such as reducing the level of supplies, squeezing costs, removing staff vacancies or reducing their hours.

It was noted that the County Councils strategy was to initially set a balanced budget for 2014/15 and then work towards achieving the necessary savings moving towards 2017/18 which would involve reshaping many of the Councils services.

When considering the report the following issues were discussed by members of the Forum and the public who were present.

- a) It was suggested that in the future it was vital that the County Council ensure it received value for money in relation to the investment it made into the provision of services.
- b) It was suggested that the County Council should not neglect areas such as the arts which brought investment into Lancashire and recognise that the recent transfer of responsibility for public health from the NHS to the County Council provided a valuable opportunity to work with partner organisations in the Voluntary Sector to provide quality services at a reduced cost.
- c) The introduction of the Living Wage and its importance in terms of the local economy was discussed and it was noted that the County Council had adopted the Living Wage for its own employees.
- d) With regard to the cost for the public in contacting the County Council it was reported that the Cabinet was due to consider a proposal to begin using 0300 numbers for services which was cheaper than the existing 0845 numbers.
- e) Greater use of telecare services were discussed though it was recognised that previously such services had not operated satisfactorily in areas of the Borough such as Turn Village. In view of the geographical nature of the Borough it was suggested that services based on land lines rather than mobile services should be pursued.
- f) It was acknowledged that learning from recent reviews of procurement activity undertaken by the County Council's Internal Audit Service would inform its work for the Borough Council.
- g) Concern was expressed regarding the financial implications of the County Council decision in relation to the bus station in Preston which it was felt would impact on the capital budget and draw funding away from other parts of the County. In response the Chair stated that the County Council was committed to the provision of a new bus station in Rawtenstall which would accommodate public transport demands in the Borough.
- h) There was also concern about the prospect of severe winter conditions and the impact that would have on traffic flows in the Borough. In response the Chair reported that the County Council had allocated funds for winter service and would grit main road routes.

It was reported that comments from the meeting would be taken into consideration when developing further proposals to meet the remainder of the savings requirement in 2014/15 which would be presented to the County Councils Cabinet in December and January and would be the subject of further consultation in due course.

Agreed: That the comments set out above be forwarded to the County Treasurer for consideration by the County Council's Cabinet as part of the process for finalising the 2014/15 budget proposals.

8. Draft East Lancashire Highways and Transportation Master plan - consultation

Ms H Straw, Transport Planning Manager, from the County Councils Environment Directorate, gave a presentation in connection with the consultation on the draft East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan.

When considering the draft Masterplan members of the Forum made the following comments.

- a) Whilst it was recognised that the Metrolink provided a useful transport link to Bury/Rochdale it was suggested that due to its geographical location public transport links from Rossendale to other parts of the County were limited.
- b) Public transport was discussed and it was noted that the majority of bus services were operated by private companies which the County Council had little influence over. It was noted that as the Borough Council owned a bus service care had to be taken when considering future services in order to ensure compliance with the rules regarding procurement.
- c) Ms Straw recognised that the draft Masterplan did not currently include any major schemes though she emphasised that an accessibility study may identify issues within the Borough around the transport needs of young people to get to employment or older people in terms of healthcare, which could then lead to future schemes. It was further reported that local knowledge would be vital in order to inform the rail connectivity and cycling studies which were planned.
- d) It was suggested that the Masterplan did not recognise the significance of the Borough in terms of being a gateway into Lancashire and that attention was focussed on outbound traffic and did not take into account the significant amount of traffic which travelled into the Borough, particularly in association with tourism and recreation.
- e) Developments made to the East Lancashire Heritage Railway were discussed and it was suggested that the railway would benefit from some support via the Masterplan as a means of alleviating pressure on the M66.

Agreed: That the comments of the Rossendale 3 Tier Forum, as set out above, are referred to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation for consideration and taken into account when finalising the East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan.

9. 2013/14 Quarter 2 Environment Directorate Performance Dashboard

The following points were raised during consideration of the updates set out in the Action Sheet.

- With regard to the performance figures for pothole repairs it was reported that in future the information would be presented in terms of absolute numbers of potholes that were

reported/fixed within a given period and not just those which had been identified as the result of Highways Safety Inspections.

- It was reported that discussions were underway with the Borough Council in relation to whether planning permission was required for a temporary bridge which would be installed in Irwell Vale while work was undertaken on Ogden Bridge.
- The condition of Folly Bridge at Crawshawbooth was to be raised with the Highways Agency at the next 'Making Space for Water' Group as there were concerns that if the bridge were to collapse it would dam the river and cause flooding.
- In response to a statement that rather than being directed to work elsewhere County Council contractors had been idle following an issue with powerlines on Stubbylee Lane Mr Ballantyne undertook to look into the matter and report back.

Agreed: That the comments set out above are noted and where appropriate further responses be provided via the Action Sheet or outside of the meeting.

10. 2014/15 Environment Directorate Commissioning Plan for Rossendale

The Forum was presented with a list of suggested schemes, with their associated estimated cost/technical ranking in terms of priority, for consideration in relation to the Local Priorities Response Fund.

In considering the list the Forum recognised that the highest ranked scheme would cost a total of £246,170 to implement whereas the whole of the Rossendale allocation for the Fund totalled £89,700. As a result it was suggested that instead of only being able to fund a small part of the highest ranked scheme consideration should be given to using the total allocation to fund a number of smaller schemes.

The condition of roads on the Fieldfare estate in Bacup was discussed and it was reported that as the developer was no longer in business it would not be possible for the roads to be brought up to the standard so that they could be adopted by the County Council. In view of the situation it was suggested that consideration be given to the adoption of the roads concerned as an exception.

Agreed:

1. That the proposed scheme for resurfacing Bury Road in Haslingden (£246,170) be considered for inclusion in the main capital programme.
2. That schemes in relation to the following suggestions be developed and referred back to the members of the Forum (with estimated costings and technical rankings) so that they can be considered in relation to funding from the £89,700 in the Local Priorities Response Fund for Rossendale.
 - Carriageway resurfacing on Bridleway in Newchurch.
 - Clearing of gullies in Moor Lane, Haslingden

- Resurfacing of the carriageway on Rook Hill Road in Stacksteads
 - Improvements to the road surface and drainage on Whitworth Rake together with clearing of the cattlegrid.
3. That, having considered the proposals referred to in 2 above, the Forum recommend a list of schemes to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation for approval.
 4. That the Locality Officer investigate the current situation with regard to the condition and status of highways on the Fieldfare estate in Bacup and report back to the Forum in relation to the feasibility of them being made up to a standard where they could be adopted by the County Council.

11. Quality Bus Route - Nelson/Rawtenstall

Mr Ballantyne informed the meeting that the quality bus route corridor study had been completed by consultants though there were a number of revisions which were currently being discussed and it was intended to bring a further report to the next meeting. Some members of the Forum asked for details of the type of improvements which could be implemented as part of a quality bus route.

Agreed:

1. That the Forum be kept informed of developments regarding the introduction of a quality bus route within the Borough.
2. That members of the Forum be provided with details of the type of infrastructure improvements which would be introduced as part of a quality bus route.

12. Items raised by members of the Forum

a) Details of the number of surplus places in schools across the Borough.

The Forum was presented with figures regarding the current numbers of children on roll in primary/secondary schools across the Borough together with the predicted figures for 2018.

When considering the information the Forum noted that while many schools currently had a surplus of places it was anticipated that by 2018 this would be reduced and in some cases would have become a shortfall of places as a significantly sized cohort of pupils moved through the educational system.

In response to concerns regarding the migration of pupils from outside of the Borough to schools within Rossendale and the impact this would have on the availability of places for local children Mr Ballantyne undertook to investigate the matter and report back to members of the Forum.

Agreed: That the information presented is noted and a response regarding the likely impact of the inward migration of pupils from outside the Borough on the availability of places for local children be presented to members of the Forum in due course

b) The findings of an Overview and Scrutiny Task Group on planning application education/highways contributions.

Mr Ballantyne reported that the Task Group was due to meet early in the New Year and the Forum would be informed of any recommendations from the Group in due course.

Members of the Forum acknowledged that the work of the Task Group would be of assistance to the Borough Council as planning authority in terms of providing a better understanding of the rationale applied by the County Council. Further to the discussion on the previous item of business it was also suggested that the benefits to be gained from education/highways contributions could have a significant impact in terms of attracting people into the Borough.

Agreed: That the Forum be informed of the findings of the Task Group in due course.

c) The levels of usage of public transport across the Borough.

As Councillor Wilkinson was not present at the meeting the Chair stated that she would speak to him outside of the meeting in relation to the above.

13. Themes for future meetings

The future role of the Borough Council Neighbourhood Forums was discussed and it was suggested that in future the Forums could develop links with the 3 Tier Forum

With regard to future topics for discussion at the Forum it was suggested that a report be presented to the next meeting in connection with the transfer of responsibility/funding for public health from the NHS into the County Council via the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board.

Agreed:

1. That a report regarding the transfer of responsibility/funding for public health from the NHS into the County Council via the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board be brought to the next meeting
2. That any additional suggestions for themes to be discussed be forwarded to the Chair and Locality Officer outside of the meeting for consideration.

14. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business for discussion at the meeting.

15. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Forum would be held at 6.00pm on Wednesday the 2nd April 2014 in the Council Chamber at the Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup.

Ian Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston

ANNEX

Protocol on Public speaking at the Rossendale 3 Tier Forum

For the purpose of this protocol, "members of the public" includes members of the press and parish and district councillors who are not members of the Forum. It does not include officers of county or district authorities who are in attendance to support and advise the meeting.

Each Forum will agree at what points of the meeting members of the public will be entitled to speak. **On the 4TH December 2013 the Forum agreed that members of the public would be allowed to speak during the discussion of each item on the agenda.**

Each Forum may also set a maximum length of time for any individual speech from a member of the public. **On the 4th December 2013 the Forum agreed that each speaker would have up to 3 minutes per person, to be managed by the Chair at their discretion.**

Public speaking must be on topics included on the agenda for the meeting.

Whilst a member of the public is speaking, no interruption shall be allowed from either a member of the Forum or another member of the public.

However, the Chair of the meeting may intervene in the speech of a member of the public. This includes the right of the Chair to terminate a speech if it is felt appropriate to do so. The Chair's judgement will be informed by the following provision:

Members of the public must not

- Speak at a point in the meeting other than those specified
- Interrupt another speaker
- Speak for longer than the allotted time
- Reveal personal information about another individual

- Make a personal complaint about a service provided by County, District or Town / Parish Councils in the area
- Make individual or personal complaints against any member of the authority
- Reveal information which they know or believe to be confidential
- Use offensive, abusive or threatening language
- Ignore the ruling of the Chair of the meeting

Members of the public who breach these guidelines may, following a warning, be asked to leave the meeting. If a person refuses to leave the room, the Chair shall adjourn the meeting for a short period of time and if necessary to a later date

Speeches by members of the public are not expected to be the subject of a debate, nor are any questions raised expected to be answered. The Chair may, at his or her discretion, invite a response or comment from an appropriate officer or Forum member, but it is anticipated that this will be the exception rather than the rule.

The contents of any speech by a member of the public will be noted by officers supporting the Forum and will be dealt with via the appropriate mechanism.