

Hyndburn Three Tier Forum

Note of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 4th September, 2013 at 6.00 pm in Queen Elizabeth Room, Scaitcliffe House, Accrington

Present:

Chair

Councillor H Grayson, Hyndburn Borough Council

Forum Members

County Councillor M Dad, Lancashire County Council
County Councillor M Parkinson, Lancashire County Council
County Councillor B Dawson, Lancashire County Council
County Councillor G Molineux, Lancashire County Council
Councillor T Dobson, Hyndburn Borough Council*
Councillor J Smith, Hyndburn Borough Council
Councillor M Haworth, Hyndburn Borough Council
Councillor P Barton, Hyndburn Borough Council
Councillor P Cox, Hyndburn Borough Council
Councillor R Pinder, Parish Council representative

*Councillor T Dobson replaced Councillor B Roberts at the meeting.

Also in attendance.

Mr H Ballantyne, Locality Officer, LCC Environment Directorate.

Mr M Neville, Senior Committee Support Officer, LCC Office of the Chief Executive.

Before starting the meeting the Chair welcomed those County Councillors who had joined the Forum following the local elections in May and also the new representatives appointed by the Borough Council.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor P Britcliffe and presented on behalf of County Councillor C Pritchard.

2. Note of Last Meeting.

In response to a query the Chair confirmed that the future operational arrangements for the Forum would be discussed later in the meeting under item 8.

Agreed: That the Note of the meeting held on the 13th March 2013 is confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Action Sheet update from last meeting.

When discussing the contents of the Action Sheet members of the Forum made the following comments.

1. It was noted that in August the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport had approved the scheme for Durham Drive which was currently being advertised and, subject to no objections being received, work on drainage was due to be carried out next month with kerbing and resurfacing work scheduled for March 2014.
2. With regard to the meeting which had taken place on the 4th April to discuss traffic and safety issues at two schools in Accrington it was reported that one of the attendees (K Smith) was a resident and not a local Councillor as stated in the Action Sheet. An explanation was also requested as to why the Borough Councillor representing the Ward where the two schools were appeared not to have been involved in the meeting.

There was also disappointment that the Forum had not been provided with an update on progress over the intervening 5 months in relation to this issue.

3. Concerns were expressed with regard to County Councils use of a 0845 telephone number for to access to certain services and the cost implications for residents. It was noted that the County Council had provided alternative landline numbers for a short period before returning to the single 0845 number.
4. The proposed use of two Speed Indicator Devices (SPiDs) across the Borough was discussed and it was suggested work associated with locating the SPiD in the vicinity of Miller Fold Avenue/Willows Lane in Fern Gore be coordinated with other planned works involving dropped kerbs and traffic calming so as to minimise disruption.
5. In response to comments regarding the proposed improvements to the Sandy Lane roundabout it was reported that an update would be presented to the Forum later in the meeting.

Agreed: That the comments set out above regarding the Action Sheet update are noted.

4. 2013/14 Quarter 1 Environment Directorate Performance Dashboard.

When considering the Dashboard the following matters were raised by members of the Forum.

- It was reported that during the first quarter in Hyndburn all potholes which had been identified through highway safety inspections had been filled within the 30 day target period. In response to a query Mr Ballantyne confirmed that the term 'pothole' had a clearly defined meaning in engineering terms as opposed to other minor road surface defects. It was reported that the most significant potholes were repaired first with other minor defects being treated as a lower priority.
- There was some concern as to the quality of material used in pothole repairs and it was suggested that potholes in Cranbrook Avenue, Oswaldtwistle which had been filled two months ago had recently been repaired again.
- It was also noted that an application for planning permission was expected for further stone extraction at Whinney Hill which would ultimately provide additional capacity for landfill. The County Council currently had outline planning permission for a relief road which would unlock the potential of the site of the former Huncoat power station and it

was hoped that if the further extraction was to go ahead then some funding could be secured via a 106 Agreement towards provision of the relief road.

Agreed:

1. That the comments of the Forum in connection with the updates set out on the Dashboard are noted.
2. That the Forum be provided with details of the definitions used to determine potholes as opposed to other minor road defects together with a schedule of the location of current identified potholes/defects and a timeframe for when they would be repaired.

5. 2014/15 Environment Directorate Draft Commissioning Plan for Hyndburn.

When considering possible priorities for inclusion in the 2014/15 Commissioning Plan members of the Forum referred to the following.

- The resurfacing of Blackburn Road at Church, though it was recognised that due to financial constraints this may need to be done over a number of years.
- The provision of new street furniture and other measures such as resurfacing in Royds Street and Augusta Street in order to finish the refurbishment scheme in the Woodnook area of Accrington.
- The need for some works to improve drainage on Sandy Lane, Accrington, in the vicinity of the junction with Wensley Drive and for existing drains on New Lane in Oswaldtwistle (in the vicinity of the Britannia public house) to be cleaned.
- Carriageway resurfacing and cleaning blocked drains on a number of roads in the Church Kirk area and carriageway resurfacing along Russell Place in Great Harwood.
- The condition of pavements across the Borough, though it was recognised that the improvements associated with Pennine Reach would address some of the areas concerned.
- The introduction of a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of the junction of Grimshaw Street and Blackburn Road in Accrington.
- The reinstatement of footpaths on Fern Grove Avenue and Wordsworth Road in Accrington following work by a Utility company – at no cost to the County Council..
- The introduction of quality bus contracts to assist with the continuing provision of bus services across the Borough.

Agreed:

1. That the comments of the Forum regarding priorities for the 2014/15 Commissioning Plan as set out above be noted.

2. That any guidance/regulations regarding works to be undertaken by other parties such as Utility companies to reinstate the highway be provided to the members of the Forum for future reference.

Councillor Dobson left the meeting at 6.55pm.

6. Pennine Reach

It was reported that the County Councils Cabinet on the 5th September 2013 would be informed of the Key Decision taken on the 15th August by the Leader of the County Council and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to apply to the Secretary of State for Transport to make a Stopping Up Order under Section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of a number of roads in the Borough associated with the introduction of the Pennine Reach scheme.

Consultation was currently underway in relation to the location of bus stop as part of the scheme and the provision of additional parking in some areas was being pursued.

Agreed: That the update be noted

7. Items raised by members of the Forum

The following items which had been raised by the Chair were discussed.

- a) Concern was expressed regarding road safety and the level of traffic using the junction at The Walton Arms in Altham and it was suggested that consideration should be given to replacing the existing roundabout with traffic signals or a filter lane to assist traffic turning left into Altham Lane. It was also suggested that there was too much signage/street furniture on the existing traffic island and there were concerns that the future expansion of a local business would only add to the volume of traffic at what was already a busy junction.

County Councillor Molineux left the meeting at 7.20pm.

- b) It was reported that the purchase of two SPiDs for use across the Borough had been delayed due to the investigation of a new product which had come onto the market which had a longer lasting battery life than existing models.

It was noted that once the two devices had been purchased they would be operational in Huncoat, Rishton and Clayton-le-Moors.

County Councillor Parkinson left the meeting at 7.25pm

- c) It was reported that initial concerns regarding the cost and design of the Sandy Lane Roundabout scheme had been addressed and work was expected to proceed as soon as possible once the necessary funding had been agreed. The Forum asked that drawings of the scheme be presented to the next meeting for information.

- d) Concern was expressed that a scheme to resurface Livingstone Road in Accrington had been put back into the 2014/15 programme, after assurances that the work would be done in to current financial year.
- e) It was also reported that as the three owners who had "occupied" County Council land at Whinney Hill had not responded to written requests to move their boundaries back to their legal position the matter had been passed to Legal Services for further action.
- f) With regard to 20mph speed limit schemes it reported that residents in the Windsor Road/Stanhill Road area had indicated that the scheme had reduced some vehicle speeds. It was also noted that progress with the Springhill scheme had been delayed due to the addition of some extra roads and that schemes on Blackburn Road and in the Milnshaw area were expected to be completed by Christmas. Once complete all schemes would be monitored to assess their effectiveness.

Officers were also asked to check the location of a plate on a pole outside 21 Walmsley Avenue which was felt to be too high to be effective for placing a SPiD.

- g) It was noted that the Milnshaw Roundabout scheme was included in the Commissioning Plan 2013/14, though it was recognised that due to the current financial constraints on the County Council it was likely that introduction of the pedestrian crossings would be done on a phased basis over a number of years

Agreed: That the above updates be noted and where appropriate responses provided to the members of the Forum on specific issues raised.

8. Themes for future meetings.

Mr Ballantyne reported that the future operation of 3 Tier Forums had been discussed at the recent meeting of the County Councils Management Group who had requested that each Forum be consulted on how it would like to see the role of the meetings develop in the future.

In considering the matter several members of the Forum referred to the Lancashire Local meetings which had been replaced by the Forum. Whilst it was acknowledged that the Forum was different from its predecessor in that Lancashire Locals had been established as formal joint Committees of the County Council/District Council with delegated decision making powers, a devolved budget and meetings that were open to the press and public, it was felt that there were some aspects of those arrangements which could be applied to the future development of the Forums.

Whilst the majority of members of the Forum present felt that future meetings should be open to the public there was some concern that this would lead to meetings becoming politicised.

Agreed: That the County Councils Management Group be advised that the Hyndburn 3 Tier Forum would want the following issues to be considered in relation to the future development of the role/operation of all Forums.

- That in the interests of openness/transparency there should be some scope for public involvement in the future as this would also lead to greater accountability, though care should be taken to avoid meetings becoming politicised.
- Meetings should continue to involve all three tiers of local government and address strategic issues.
- There should be less emphasis on the work of the Environment Directorate and the Forum should look to other areas such as health and education.
- The Forum should have some devolved decision making powers.
- That for Hyndburn the Forum should meet on a quarterly basis in the future with meetings continuing to be held in the Borough and starting at 6pm.

9. Urgent Business.

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

10. Date of Next Meeting.

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would be held at 6pm on the 11th December 2013 in the Queen Elizabeth Room at Scaitcliffe House, Ormerod Street, Accrington.

Ian Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston