

Preston Three Tier Forum

Note of the Meeting held on Monday, 14th April, 2014 at 6.00 pm in Town Hall, Preston

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Frank De Molfetta

Forum Members

County Councillor David Borrow
County Councillor Kevin Ellard
County Councillor Jennifer Mein
County Councillor Yousuf Motala
County Councillor Keith Sedgewick
County Councillor Bill Winlow
Councillor NH Cartwright, Preston City Council
Councillor JV Collins, Preston City Council
Councillor D Hammond, Preston City Council
Councillor T Hart, Preston City Council
Councillor JT Hull, Preston City Council
Councillor J Iqbal, Preston City Council
Councillor B Rollo, Preston City Council
Councillor D Walker, Preston City Council
Parish Councillor Eileen Murray

Also in attendance:

Debbie Thompson - Environment Directorate, Lancashire County Council
Janet Mulligan – Democratic Services, Lancashire County Council

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of County Councillor G Driver and G Wilkins and Councillor P Crowe.

2. Protocol on public speaking

The protocol on public speaking, which had previously been agreed by the Forum was presented for information.

3. Note of the meeting held 2 December 2013

The note of the meeting held on 2 December 2013 was presented and agreed.

4. Action sheet update from meeting held 2 December 2013

Members received an update on the action taken in response to issues raised at the previous meeting.

In receiving the update members raised the following points:

Fishergate Central Gateway Project – An update on the progress of discussions with Network Rail about improvements to the station approach was requested.

Highway between the Saddle Inn and the Smiths Arms – It was noted that the highway had now re-opened, however further repairs were still necessary on Darkinson Lane.

School Performance Figures – There was concern that Jonathan Hewitt, Head of Quality and Continuous Improvement, was not able to attend this meeting for a second time. The Forum had requested his attendance in order to have a discussion about school performance figures; it was not sufficient to simply submit questions for him to answer. The Chairman gave an assurance that Jonathan would attend a future meeting

5. 2013/14 Quarter 3 Environment Directorate Performance Dashboard

The Environment Directorate's "dashboard" performance for the third quarter of 2013/14 was presented.

In considering the "dashboard" members of the Forum made the following comments:

Preston Station Cycle Link – the Dashboard indicated that this long-awaited link for cyclists would be completed in Quarter 4. As Quarter 4 had now passed. Members requested an update.

Shared Pedestrian and Cycle Routes (Guild Wheel) – there was ongoing concern about the shared use of some routes and the dangers presented to older pedestrians in particular. It was suggested that as the number of cyclists would increase with the onset of longer / finer days it might be helpful to encourage cycling organisations to urge their members to be more considerate to pedestrians.

Preston – East Lancashire Transport Corridor Study – a briefing about the reinstatement of the Colne to Skipton railway line was requested.

Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Master Plan – It was noted that the schemes shown on the dashboard all related to the South Ribble area and detail relating to Preston was requested.

6. 2014/15 Environment Capital Programme Plan for Preston

The 2014/15 Capital Programme for Preston was noted.

7. Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol in Lancashire

It was noted that minimum unit pricing of alcohol had been a matter of national debate for some time, but now appeared to be on the 'back burner' in central Government.

There was some discussion about whether it was realistic or sensible for Lancashire to try to tackle this issue locally. Some members felt strongly that education about the dangers of alcohol was a more appropriate way forward.

It was acknowledged that there was a need to work with all partners, including the NHS to educate people, but there was also a need for legislation – the affects of alcohol resulted in a significant cost to the public purse and there needed to be a shift in approach.

The County Council had in July 2013 passed a notice of motion to work with its 12 district councils, Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and partners in the health and third sectors to lobby Lancashire MPs and government to introduce a minimum price of alcohol. It was hoped that raising this issue through the Forums and also the Lancashire Leaders' Group would encourage Lancashire authorities to work collaboratively to lobby central government and thus achieve a national approach.

8. Tour de France 2014

Details of the route and arrangements to manage traffic during the course of this event were noted.

9. School Performance and Pupil Premium

Jonathan Hewitt, Head of Quality and Continuous Improvement, was unable to attend the meeting, however members had been invited to submit any questions to him via Mark Wardale, Localities Officer. Jonathan would be invited to attend the next meeting of this Forum.

10. Items raised by Members of the Forum

10a Preston Bus Station

The Forum had requested an update on plans for the Bus Station.

It was explained that it was expected to be a modern gateway into the City which would be capable of delivering a range of modern, high quality services.

The County Council had established a Programme Board to plan and implement the Project. The Board would be responsible for the delivery of key elements within the overall Project. Preston City Council was represented by Lorraine Norris.

The County Council was now working through the following transitional matters:

- Developing proposals to remodel the Bus Station and Multi Storey Car Park
- Defining the type/mix of public services to be delivered from the property
- Defining the scale and nature of the proposed Youth facility to be built within the property
- Refining the ongoing process of managing the overall facility

It was acknowledged that the overall Bus Station was far larger than necessary for modern bus/coach based requirements. In addition, the attractiveness and quality of the car park required improvement. Consequently, the County Council was now in the process of

developing detailed plans to remodel both elements of the property. These would inform decisions about the most suitable long term solutions.

The County Council's Children and Young Peoples Directorate and Building Design and Construction Office were working together to understand the County Council's service based requirements from a Central Preston Youth facility.

The Forum would be kept informed about progress

10b Cycle Paths

The briefing note had been provided in response to questions raised at the last meeting. A technical paper looking at cycle casualty figures across Lancashire was currently being prepared and would be circulated.

10c City Deal

In noting the update of the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal members raised the following points:

Preston Western Distributor – there was concern among residents that the East-West spine road would not be finished before housing developments were started and this could result in heavy, construction vehicles moving on existing roads.

New Hall Lane Gateway – An update about when improvements would be started was requested.

Tramway – No progress had been made owing to lack of detail, including the impact on traffic flow, from the provider. This was despite considerable effort from officers at the County Council.

10d Plans to Commemorate World War I

A summary of events around the county to commemorate World War I was presented.

Members were encouraged to visit the 'Marketing Lancashire' website for up-to-date information about events across the county.

It was noted that Armed Forces Day was to be commemorated on the flag market on 28 June. It was suggested that the diversity of the armed forces should be recognised as many were from the Commonwealth. The 'pals' conscription in 1916 was also an important event for Preston to remember.

10e Planning Decisions

The briefing note sought to explain why it was necessary for certain discussions to be held in private. Whilst some of the explanation was accepted some was considered to be less clear and persuasive.

It was considered very important for members of the public to understand why a decision had been reached, especially so if they had battled for years for or against an application. It was suggested that an illustrative case study be provided to clearly explain why the public may not hear the discussion in certain circumstances.

11. Review of Three Tier Forums

It was reported that a number of Forums had opened up to the public and that two, Lancaster and Chorley, had made suggestions and were developing in a different way; they would run as a pilots for the next 6-12 months.

It was considered necessary to develop more joint working and it was hoped that Districts would bring more services to the table.

There was some concern that not all Forums had yet opened their meetings to the public.

The review of the Three Tier Forums was now being taking forward as part of a wider governance review. A report would be considered by the Cabinet on 8 May after which further information would be shared with all Districts.

12. Themes for future meetings

Members of the Forum were invited to submit any suggested items for the next Preston 3 Tier Forum to Mark Wardale mark.wardale@lancashire.gov.uk. Any suggestions would need to be cleared with the Chair.

The following suggestions put forward at the meeting:

- The decline of the retail sector and a strategy to reinvigorate it.
- An update on the Growth bid (It was suggested that a recent county council Task Group report 'Local Growth and Business Support' be shared with the Forum)
- Collaborative agreements between the city and county councils
- Preston Tramway

13. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

14. Date of next Forum and future timetable

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum would be held at 6.00 pm on Monday 8 September 2014 in the Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston. Future meetings had been scheduled for 6.00pm on 2 December 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Ian Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston

