

Minutes of: **WHITEFIELD AND UNSWORTH TOWNSHIP FORUM**

Date of Meeting: 8 March 2016

Present: Councillor D Jones (in the Chair)
Councillors P Adams, R Caserta, E Fitzgerald, J Grimshaw,
J Mallon, Whitby and M Wiseman

Advisory Group representatives: Leonard Lott – Whitefield and Unsworth Homewatch Assn
Marlene Dawson - Victoria Estate TRA
Pamela Taylor - Hollins Village Community Assn Yvonne
Moore - Old Hall Park Residents Assn
Mrs S Bannister – Jewish Representative Council
Mrs T Heyworth – ELMS TRA

Public Attendance: 36 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Greewood and Councillor A Matthews

WUTF.788 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in relation to any items to be considered.

WUTF.789 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

With reference to minute number WUTF.577 - Update Hickory Grange, Councillor Caserta reported that he contacted the owner of the site (Stewart Milne Builders) to enquire if the company had been declared bankrupt. This was following a comment made during a previous meeting of the Township Forum. He also asked whether there was any possibility of the development being completed. The response from the company was that it was not bankrupt and there were no plans at this time to complete the development or to sell the Hickory Grange site.

Delegated decision:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 5 January 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

WUTF.790 CAR PARKING

Following the number of questions raised at meetings of the Township Forum regarding car parking in Whitefield and Unsworth, Mr John Foudy (Council's Car Parking Supervisor) attended the meeting to explain how parking within the borough was managed and to answer questions.

The meeting was informed that the Councils Car Parks service involved the following areas:

- Management of 65 car parks;
- Arrangement of school enforcement patrols (checks made morning and evening);
- 50+ yellow line restrictions checks and enforcement;

- The Council has appointed NSL to undertake parking enforcement action provided by 6/7 operatives operating on 2 shifts (7:30am – 4:40pm and 10:00am – 7:00pm). The tender for this service runs until 2019;
- Attending 'hotspot' areas covered between 7:00pm – 9:00pm;
- Sunday operations covered over 2 (four hour) shifts.

A team of enforcement officers will target areas of the borough to address 'hotspots' following concerns or complaints made by residents/ businesses. It was not possible to cover all areas as and when required due to the limited resources available. The Council no longer used cameras to monitor parking and take enforcement action following a decision by the government and instead enforcement officers undertake the work.

When officers are patrolling around school, social media is used to alert parents when enforcement officers are seen, usually resulting in a reduction in illegal parking. However, the parents will continue to park near to schools once officers move on. In most instances illegal parking involved a minority of drivers with the majority parking in unrestricted areas.

The most common complaint received involved taxis and fast food delivery drivers parked on major roads and blocking a lane. It was difficult for officers to carry out enforce in these situations due to the time required to observe a vehicle, giving a reasonable amount of time for the driver to return, before taking action (usually up to 10 minutes).

Visits by enforcement officers to areas around schools in the borough take place about twice each term.

The Chair invited questions.

Mr Knight asked if the Council could employ extra enforcement staff on a self funding basis where commissions could be used to enhance pay based on the number of penalty notices issued.

It was explained that the projected income generated from penalty notices would not cover the on-costs of additional staff. Also, setting of penalty notice targets for enforcement officers would not be considered as acceptable practice. The contract that had been agreed with NSL was seen as the providing the best value for money in comparison to specifications set by other councils.

Requests were made for action to be taken at the following locations:

- Unsworth Pole – vehicles over staying the allowed time limit;
- Co-op store on Parr Lane – vehicles being parked on yellow lines;
- Faded yellow lines on Manchester Road (Hollins Lane to Sunnybank);
- Cars parking in bus lay-byes:-
 - Prestwich – adjacent to the Tesco store
 - Knowsley Street (outside Town Hall)
 - Market Street, Bury

The information provided would be used to target resources in the areas.

The Chair thanked Mr Foudy for his attendance.

WUTF.791 UPDATES

The meeting was attended by David Fowler (Assistant Director – Localities) to provide an update on issues that had been raised by local residents.

Updates were received on the following:-

Porada Restaurant, Whitefield – car park installed without planning permission, hedge removed. Discussion had taken place with the Chief Executive of Bury Council and it was decided that the views of local people be sought before agreeing on action. The options included action to reinstate the area, accept and regulate the car park and seek payment from the owners of the restaurant building and site and request that a planning application is made.

The Chair summarised the feeling expressed at previous meetings that residents believed that a land grab had taken place which was unacceptable. People had pride in their area and to disregard the ownership of land and carryout development without permission was not right. The area of land was also within a conservation area.

Mr Marshall stated that the planning permission given for the development of the restaurant did not give the Council as the owner and if this was the case, was the decision illegal. Also the development of the car park did not enhance the conservation area it was in.

Mr Fowler reported that a certificate of ownership had been presented for the planning application. The planning application decision did still stand and the period for a judicial review had passed. If a retrospective planning application was submitted for the car park then adjacent properties would be notified, site notices posted and details listed on the Council website.

Former Natwest Building - Bury New Road access to the car park had been blocked off. Access to the Metrolink had been restricted.

The owner of the building and site had installed the blocks to prevent access on to the site. The Council is unable to act on the matter. A petition is ongoing regarding the access to the Metrolink.

Parking on Hamilton Road – planning permission would be required.

34-44 Radcliffe New Road – removal of restrictions – The Council will look at this proposal.

High Bank junction – Mercedes dealership – the Council is considering action to protect the junction to prevent parking.

Hickory Grange – the development was started but has been shelved. The Council can only encourage its completion in view of the site being in a good state and is protected by a perimeter fence which is maintained.

Whitefield Town Hall – dialogue has taken place with owner. A proposal was made to increase the size of the development which included the purchase of a piece of land from the Council.

Councillor Caserta reported that following a legal challenge on the sale price of the land a decision had determined the price for the piece of land identified. A meeting has now been arranged to take place with the owner who was willing to enter into an agreement with the Council which would return the land to the Council the development had not started by a specific deadline, in accordance with a new planning permission approval.

Pilsworth – former cinema complex site – demolition work had started and a pre-application meeting was planned with the owner and Council planning officers on development proposals.

Uplands – there was nothing to report at this time.

Sedgley Park Rugby Club – a planning application for a 400 seat temporary stand was proposed. No details on parking had been received.

Councillor Mallon reported that Swinton RUFC was considering a move following promotion. Arrangements and solutions for parking around the ground would be critical.

Stand Cricket Club – Councillor Mallon reported that there were parking issues regarding visitors to the club parking on the road in the surrounding area.

Parking Consultation – Councillor Mallon stated that a consultation on the parking arrangements in Whitefield was needed to discuss and consider the best way to allow parking arrangements to develop in order to sustain shops and businesses. The current parking arrangements may have a negative impact on the vitality of the area and could result in businesses relocating if a workable solution was not found.

WUTF.792 BUSES UPDATE

The meeting was attended by Dave Brotheridge from First Bus to provide an update on bus services in the Whitefield and Unsworth area.

The meeting was informed that there were no changes to the current services in Whitefield. First Bus was in the process of arranging the decommissioning of 20 vehicles.

There appeared to be an issue regarding the reliability of services (10% reduction) resulting from delays caused through single lane traffic on Great Clowes Street. This had been ongoing since January.

First Bus was aware of the possible development of the Pilsworth site and would work closely in order to ensure that bus services were provided for any future development.

Mr Hague asked why First Bus had provided newer buses for the routes between Manchester and Stockport and not for the north of Manchester on the routes through Bury.

It was reported that First Bus had purchased 'Finglands Coaches' which had ran services between Manchester and Stockport. Finglands did not own the vehicles used on the route and First Bus (Rusholme Depot) needed to provide vehicles in order to maintain the service.

The Chair thanked Mr Brotheridge for his attendance.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted

WUTF.793 POLICE UPDATE

The meeting was attended by Inspector Victoria Shaw (GMP) who gave an update on policing matters within Whitefield and Unsworth.

The meeting was informed of the figures relating to anti social behaviour, burglary and theft crimes as well as incidents recorded as hate crime that had been committed in Whitefield and Unsworth. A comparison was also given on figures from the previous year. It was explained that a racially motivated incident involved situations where a racial slur had been used as opposed to a racially motivated crime. Details of all figures on all recorded crime were available on the GMP website.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

WUTF.794 TOWN PLAN UPDATE

The Chair reported that there were no updates to be reported on Township Plan.

WUTF.795 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions from the members of the public present at the meeting regarding the work and/or performance of the Council or the Council's services relevant to the Whitefield and Unsworth area.

Mr Hague asked why had funding been used to introduce 20mph signage and markings for the Sunnybank area.

It was reported that the Council had received funding from the Government that had been earmarked specifically for the introduction of 20mph markings. If the work was not undertaken within a specific timeframe the funding would be withdrawn.

WUTF.796 FUNDING REPORT

A copy of the funding report was submitted on decisions taken to fund requests from local groups.

It was agreed:

That the Funding report be noted.

COUNCILLOR D JONES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 8.50 pm)