

Notes of: HASLINGDEN AREA FORUM
(including Edenfield and Helmshore)

Venue: Haslingden Primary School

Date of Meeting: 14th June 2006

PRESENT: Councillor Ruddick (in the Chair)
Councillors Cheetham, Essex, Ruddick, Sandiford,
Smith and Thorne

IN ATTENDANCE: Inspector Dave Hodson, Lancashire Constabulary
PC Linda Haywood, Lancashire Constabulary
Dave Whiteman, NEAT Manager
Dorothy Mitchell, Rossendale Community Network
Val Bertenshaw, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS
Trust
Janet Simpson, Lancashire County Council
Julian Joinson, Democratic Services Manager

Approximately 20 members of the public and press
were present.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dickinson, Morris, J and S Pawson and Starkey and from Claire Angus, NEAT Team Officer.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members of the public to the meeting and introduced elected Members, officers and police representatives who were present.

3. NOTE OF LAST MEETING

Subject to the under mentioned discussion, the notes of the meeting held on 13th March 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

(a) Review Team on the Provision of Council Car Parks (Minute 5b)

A member of the public enquired about the enforcement of on-street parking on Lower Deardengate. Councillor Sandiford responded that the Council was looking at enforcement issues and possible waiting restrictions and would need to refer the latter to Lancashire County Council for consideration. There was a suggestion from the floor that 1 hour waiting might be appropriate. In addition, the licensing authority

was considering the number of spaces on the taxi rank. Members of the public also indicated that large numbers of taxis were waiting opposite the Bay Horse pub on yellow lines. The Chair indicated that parking attendants would be undertaking some night working and he would raise this matter with the Parking Manager.

4. POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Hodson provided an update of the latest crime figures up to 31st March 2006. For all crimes there had been a decrease of 68 in Haslingden. Since April this had decreased by a further 50. Reported crime for criminal damage had increase last year, but this increase had slowed in the current year. Operation 'Summer Nights' would commence shortly to include additional officers. Auto crime, violent crime and burglary/dwelling crime were all down. Detection rates had increased from 32% last year to 34% this year.

Other work included the 'Ring of Steel' initiative, which continued to focus on robberies and theft of high performance vehicles. Criminal from Greater Manchester were targeted. Vehicles had been spotted on false number plates. Operation 'Fallout' had taken place yesterday, involving the execution of five drug warrants in Haslingden with two arrests. This had been based upon successful use of intelligence from the community. Further arrests might follow. It had also generated some good publicity with councillors and press in attendance.

The Crimestoppers telephone number: (0800) 555111 was promoted.

The Chair commended the Police for their professional approach during the operation, which had involved the careful use of leafleting and consideration of local residents and children. He also referred to the bravery award won by the Haslingden BEAT Manager for his actions in the rescue of a colleague.

Members of the public raised a number of issues as follows:-

- What was the total figure for criminal damage? - The figure was 504. This type of crime was often difficult to prevent because it was spontaneous and, therefore, hard to target. Operation 'Summer Nights' should help.
- Specific local groups were carrying out good work with youths, but what other work was being done? - A Youth Theme group had been established within the Local Strategic Partnership. Councillor Essex had just been appointed as Young People's Champion for Rossendale Borough Council. Councillor Essex indicated that there had been two adverse reports in the local press about youths last week, but 32 positive ones. The majority of youths were positive and actively contributing to society. However, further work could be done.
- The number of HGVs using Grane Road had been reduced, but was

this monitored? A number of foreign vehicles and vehicles from businesses in the region had been observed using this route. It was also suggested that the signage was in the wrong place. - There had been some initial monitoring and a 'cooling-off' period had been used to educate drivers. Box vans and vehicles under 7.5 tonnes could still use this route. Members of the public might wish to note registration numbers and report drivers to their parent companies. There were safety considerations which restricted the ability of police to pull over vehicles already using the route. It was envisaged that the scheme would be made permanent.

PC Haywood gave an update on local police activity, including:- an arrest in Helmschore under Operation 'Nimrod'; enforcement of a CRASBO on a repeat offender for being drunk and disorderly in Haslingden; and the successful execution of a warrant in Manchester Road. Members of the public were encouraged to report matters to officers via their police mobile phones.

5. NEAT TEAM UPDATE

Mr Whiteman provided an update of NEAT team activity within the area. Community clean-ups were being supported in each town. One had taken place in Edenfield. The assistance of the public was sought to identify further sites.

The working of the Sharps Squad had been extended. Drugs litter would normally be removed within 1 hour. A free phone number was available on: (0800) 7313697. The number could also be used to report dog fouling and stray dogs.

Abandoned vehicles would normally be removed within 24 hours. Enforcement action had seen the numbers reduce from 15 to around 2 or 3 per month. Arson had dropped by 20% on abandoned vehicles. Officers assessed risk to determine whether to issue a 24 hour or 7 day removal notice.

An education programme would be rolled out to schools to include refuse, recycling, environmental and litter issues. Further dog control measures were being developed. Fly posting was being tackled with 48 hours' notice being served for the removal of posters. The Council also had powers to remove posters itself and could prosecute the beneficiary of the poster. The Chair indicated that fines could now be issued for cigarette and gum litter.

Members of the public raised a number of issues and responses were provided follows:-

- The NEAT Teams and refuse collection were separate arms of the Street Scene and Liveability Service, but worked closely together.
- A recycling centre based near the Co-op was often unsightly. The

site was well used and officers were looking into the frequency of emptying.

- The road sweep had been found to be very helpful and was welcomed by the community. There were three throughout the valley, funded through efficiency savings. They were learning the various local 'grot spots' and would empty some public bins too. In addition, a survey of bins was being carried out and bins which were too small might be replaced.
- Public bins were sometimes improperly used for domestic waste. Officers were carrying out bin audits to identify any abuse.
- A number of 'grot spots' were referred to Mr Whiteman, including:- a felled tree at playing fields off Cherry Tree Way, Helmshore; grass verges on Grane Road; and St Peter's Avenue play area.

Members of the public also expressed concern that grass needed cutting at the Woolpack roundabout, Tesco roundabout and some sections of land at the Rising Bridge roundabout. Councillor Sandiford indicated that mowing at Rising Bridge was the responsibility of Rossendale Council, Lancashire County Council and the Highways Agency, depending on the section of land concerned. Concerns had been expressed previously about the co-ordination of grass cutting at this site and improvements were in hand. The Woolpack and Tesco roundabouts were the responsibility of the County Council, who would be informed of the matters raised. In addition, there were health and safety issues in relation to works at the Tesco roundabout, which might involve the closure of the highway.

6. EAST LANCASHIRE HOSPITALS PUBLIC CONSULTATION DISCUSSION ON THE 'HEALTH AMBITION FOR ROSSENDALE'

Dorothy Mitchell, Vice-Chair of the Community Network, introduced the above two items. The Community Network was hoping to build a picture of health provision in Rossendale following the changes being consulted upon. The public were asked to consider what services would be needed to deal with ill health and its prevention and the promotion of good health in the Borough. The community, local authorities and health services were working together to shape local health services for the future. An information pack was circulated to the public at the meeting.

Val Bertenshaw, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, introduced a DVD presented at several public meetings, giving doctors', nurses' and patients' views about the proposals. Although the DVD focused on Blackburn and Burnley Hospitals, the changes could also see the introduction of a birthing centre, urgent care centre and other services at a new build for Rossendale.

Councillor Sandiford read out the contents of a letter which she had received from a member of the public who had been unable to attend this evening. The letter, which focused on issues relating to the current

hospital building and site, was passed to Ms Bertenshaw. An assurance was given by the health representative that any funds released from sale of the current site would be reinvested in Rossendale. The Chair commented that it would be better to focus discussions on health care, not the building.

A summary of issues raised by the public was as follows:-

- Some of the existing Rossendale Hospital buildings, such as the physiotherapy unit, are relatively new.
- A hospice could be provided.
- X-ray facilities should not be lost from Rossendale.
- Any rebuild should be on the same site, since this was a on a good bus route.
- What other locations were being considered for the site, eg Rawtenstall Town Centre?
- How would people have a say in the new Health Campus? Details of the Rossendale Development Group were included in the information pack circulated.
- Where would Accident and Emergency patients from Bacup be treated if Burnley and Rochdale no longer provided these facilities?
- Would the ambulance service be able to cope with additional journey distances?
- Would patients survivability be threatened by longer journey times to Accident and Emergency?
- The closure of Haslingden Health Centre on Saturday mornings had already reduced some services.
- Could a dentist be provided at the Rossendale Health Campus?

Ms Bertenshaw responded to the questions raised. She indicated that acute services such as heart attacks and traffic accidents could not be maintained everywhere and that specialist units were inevitable. However, many other services could be provided locally. Concerns about A&E services had been recognised through the consultation process. Initial paramedic response, journey times and 24 hour access to hospital consultants all affected survivability, but journey times had the lowest risk under this model. Senior Management were due to visit the hospital next week to share information with staff.

Those in attendance were invited to complete the questionnaires provided and to attend the Community Network event at Alder Grange School on Saturday, 1st July 2006.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A number of issues were raised from the floor:-

- Why did the Council charge £21.99 for a new green bin for people who had moved into newly built homes, given that other authorities did not charge and that blue bins were free?

- Grass verges on Niton Close, off North Street required more frequent cutting.
- Fees for the use of the sports field at Haslingden Sports Centre had recently been increased from £14 to £16. Could the increase be spent on re-seeding the pitch at the close of the season to prevent games being called off in winter. - The Chair reported that the Leisure Trust operated the facilities and determined how to spend the income generated. Its plans included a new leisure suite.
- A specific complaint about a lack of response to an e-mail. - The Chair reported that customer service standards had been introduced setting out reply time targets, however it did take some time to instill throughout the organisation. Other members of the public reported more positive responses.
- An observation that the 'Rossendale*alive*' logo at Haslingden Cemetery might be in appropriate.

The above matters would be looked into.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

(The meeting opened at 7 pm and closed at 9.05 pm)