

NOTES OF: **BACUP AREA FORUM**

VENUE: **BACUP LEISURE HALL**

DATE OF MEETING: **12TH DECEMBER 2005**

PRESENT: **Councillors Challinor, Eaton and Lamb**

IN ATTENDANCE: **Inspector D Shepherd, Lancashire Constabulary**
S Pimlott, Planning Officer
D McChesney, NEAT Team Officer
C McConville, Principal Administrative Assistant
13 Members of the Public/Representatives of Local
Organisations

APOLOGIES: **Councillor Farquharson**

1. INTRODUCTION

Councillor Eaton chaired the meeting and welcomed Members of the Public. He introduced Elected Members, Officers and the Police Representative who were present at the meeting.

2. NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The notes of the last meeting on 12th September 2005 had been distributed with the Agenda and were agreed as a correct record.

3. POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Shepherd reported on policing issues and gave details of activity since the last meeting of the Forum.

He advised that for the Borough of Rossendale area there had been a decrease in all crime of 7% which meant there was a total of 215 fewer crimes over all.

Within the Rossendale East area for the current year to December vehicle crime had reduced by 87 incidents (25.9%); violent crime had reduced by 84 incidents (19%); criminal damage had reduced by 44 incidents (6.7%) and burglary had reduced by 13 incidents (19.6%).

A member of the public referred to an incident she had witnessed in the Bacup Area and expressed her concerns at the difficulty she had experienced in reporting the matter to the police. Inspector Shepherd undertook to look into the matter and advise the person concerned.

A member of the public asked why the police did not issue log numbers when people called with a complaint or to report an incident. Inspector Shepherd advised that it was normal for police to issue a log number when requested in cases where this information was required for purposes of making an insurance claim but in other circumstances it was not normal practice to issue a log number although all calls were recorded and logged. Councillor Eaton confirmed that he had had occasion to contact the police about two issues which had been reported to them and whilst he was not aware of the log number in those cases, his calls were properly dealt with and the original incidents had clearly been recorded.

Councillor Lamb asked what steps had been taken to improve the public perception of crime. Inspector Shepherd advised that the figures reported to the Forum at this meeting were evidence of significant reductions in crime; he suggested that responsible reporting was important but he emphasised that there was still a need for continuous improvement and this was not only the response of the police and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership but also the responsibility of the community at large.

4. CONCERNS RELATING TO UNDERAGE DRINKING IN THE WHITWORTH AREA AND RELATED INCIDENT INVOLVING A NUMBER OF YOUTHS IN THE WHITWORTH AREA

Inspector Shepherd questioned why the person concerned had not rung the police on this occasion and he stressed that this was an essential element in assisting the police to deal with such unlawful behaviour. He reported on recent activity in respect of the problem of underage drinking and advised that six premises had recently been visited and failed when test purchases have been made. In those cases, fixed penalty notices have been served on the licensees.

A member of the public asked whether there was any cooperation between the Police and the Street Scene and Liveability Department at the Council in the circumstances where significant littering by beer cans etc occurred. Inspector Shepherd advised that meetings took place on a weekly basis with the Local Authority and the Youth Services and information relating to areas of concentration was exchanged which gave valuable information and evidence to the Police, enabling them to deal with this problem.

5. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CONSULTATION ON THE CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT

Stephen Pimlott, Planning Officer gave a presentation to the Forum on the Issues and Options report on the Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework for Rossendale. He advised that the Local Development Framework was a portfolio of documents setting out the future development on the whole of the Borough of Rossendale which included the methods of consultation and communication associated with the process of agreeing the framework.

The focus of the presentation to the Forum was the Core Strategy which was one of the key documents which set out the strategic policies within the Borough Council's planning framework. He circulated a copy of the Issues and Options report which set out the ideas for the Core Strategy. He pointed out that the Council had not yet made any decisions on its preferred options but that following consultation a further report would be prepared setting out the preferred options for the Core Strategy. A further opportunity would then be afforded for consultation. He advised that the consultation period in respect of the Issues and Options Report now before the Forum, was 6th January 2006 and that any comments, observations or responses should be in written form or sent to him via email.

A number of the public present asked questions on the process and raised specific questions in respect of the Issues and Options Report with particular reference to housing in the Bacup area and Bacup town centre. Mr Pimlott pointed out that options in respect of urban development and other provision and facilities were contained in the Options Report and the Council's Preferred Option would take account of the responses received.

6. STREET SCENE AND LIVEABILITY – NEAT TEAM

David McChesney attended and advised on the role of the NEAT team of officers which dealt with issues involving graffiti, parks, fly-tipping and missed bins.

A member of the public asked a question regarding street cleaning on New Line in the Britannia area where leaves were cleared but because of parked vehicles, large areas were left unattended. Councillor Eaton asked whether the timing of this activity could be changed so that it was undertaken following the departure of the vehicles, and Dave McChesney undertook to look into the matter.

A member of the public expressed his disappointment that the Street Scene and Liveability Department was not represented by a senior officer or the portfolio holder. He referred to the continental market held in Bacup and advised that he had asked for help with litter removal from the market; he had received an offer of assistance but this was withdrawn on the Friday before the event. He suggested that as the event was intended to attract visitors to the town, there was a need for strategic thinking to be applied to the Council's involvement in such events.

Councillor Eaton undertook to speak to the Head of Street Scene and Liveability to follow up this matter and invited the member of the public who had raised the matter to accompany him at a meeting with her.

A member of the public referred to the scheme whereby assistance with the bins was offered to people with a particular need but she was aware of one case where a bin had been left for 8 weeks without being emptied. Councillor Eaton indicated that he was aware of the particular case and in fact arrangements had been made for the bin to be emptied the previous week. He had also asked for an explanation for the previous omissions to be sent to the person in question, in writing.

Councillor Lamb referred to a letter which had been circulated to all homes throughout the Borough which requested evidence of the need for assistance. The type of evidence quoted was considered inappropriate in some cases – a benefits book, these being no longer in existence; and a doctor’s letter – this might involve significant expenditure on behalf of the individual concerned.

David McChesney pointed out that since the assisted scheme had been first introduced, changes in occupancy had resulted in assistance being offered where this was not appropriate and similarly there was a need for the scheme to be extended to those people in need.

A member of the public asked when the dog litter bins were to be emptied and David McChesney advised that this process had been re-routed and would be improved from now on.

Councillor Lamb asked for details of progress in respect of the “harbour”/mini bring site in the vicinity of 248 Newchurch Road.

David McChesney advised that consultations were currently ongoing with residents and that quotations for the necessary work were being invited. It was hoped that the project would be completed by the end of March.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.00 pm)