

NOTES OF: BACUP AREA FORUM

VENUE: BACUP LEISURE HALL

DATE OF MEETING: 9 MARCH 2006

PRESENT: Councillors Driver, Challinor and P Steen

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Entwistle
PCSO Graham Rowe, Lancashire Constabulary
PS Gordon McGeechan, Lancashire Constabulary
David Whiteman, NEAT Team Manager
Eugene Leal, Traffic and Parking Manager
David McChesney, NEAT Officer, Bacup
Sean Spencer, Business Support Manager
Heather Moore, Executive Office Manager
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer
11 Members of the Public/Representatives of
Local Organisations

1. INTRODUCTION

Councillor Driver chaired the meeting and welcomed members of the Public. The Elected Members, Officers and the Police Representatives who were present at the meeting introduced themselves to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Janet Farquharson and Inspector Shepherd.

3. NOTES OF LAST MEETING

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

4. POLICE ISSUES

PS McGeechan reported on policing issues and gave details of activity since the last meeting of the Forum.

He advised that Anti Social Behaviour Orders were at the same level as last year and that 18 warrants had been executed in Bacup for such things as stolen property and drugs with a large amount of drugs having been seized in the last few weeks.

One member of the public asked how much crime had been reported in one particular area of Bacup and PCSO Rowe agreed to take the person's details and relay the information back.

Another member of the public referred to the amount of graffiti in Bacup and they were informed that a new scheme called CURE (Clean-Up Rossendale East) had been set up.

Concerns were raised in respect of a number of incidents in the St James St area and PCSO Rowe indicated that the Police were taking action by way of issuing crime prevention information to shopkeepers and looking into the installation of lighting in the back alley. One member of the public asked about erecting gates at each end of the alley but it was confirmed by PCSO Rowe that this would be a problem in relation to accessibility for market staff-holders and waste collection services.

No further policing issues were asked and both officers were thanked for their assistance.

4. NEAT TEAM UPDATE

Sean Spencer, Business Support Manager, reported on a number of improvements to the refuse and recycling service which would be introduced in April 2006, at which time the Council would begin to accept textiles and cardboard as part of recycling.

He informed the meeting that collection days would change and all customers would be notified accordingly by way of an information pack during the week commencing 13 March 2006.

Concerns were raised regarding charging for the removal of bulky items. It was reported that the Audit Commission had recommended that fees be introduced and as such Rossendale's Charges was one of the lowest in comparison to other authorities.

The meeting discussed scrap/abandoned vehicles and it was reported that the Council promptly acted upon the receipt of information received.

Sean Spencer informed the meeting that as part of the improvements there would no longer be Monday collections to support the bank holiday arrangements and to minimise disruption to customers.

A member of the public raised concerns about bins being left out for long periods before they were due for collection. David Whiteman indicated that the Council would be happy to investigate specific issues.

Councillor Driver thanked the NEAT team for their presentation.

5. REVIEW TEAM ON THE PROVISION OF COUNCIL CAR PARKS

Councillor Entwistle, as lead member on the Car Park Review Team explained that the review team were looking at the conditions and facilities of car parking in the Borough and the purpose of attendance at the area forums was to gather information from the public on that issue.

Eugene Leal, Traffic and Parking Manager informed the meeting that the Council wanted to ask each area what their problems were, with each area having different issues. This would enable the Council to co-ordinate a Rossendale approach on all the car parks and was an information gathering exercise to enable the review team to make their final decisions.

A number of concerns were raised in relation to on-road/street parking on Alma Street and the Police officers present indicated that the police were targeting the area and if vehicles were parked inappropriately they would be issued with fixed penalty notice on their vehicle. The police agreed to work with the County Council to do a site visit to the area.

Another issue from the public was the amount of car parking spaces in Bacup and Eugene Leal indicated that if the public felt that there was not enough spaces then they should let the review team know of their views.

One member of the public commented on the state of the existing car parks and enquired about planned improvements. Eugene Leal indicated that there was a budget of £5,000 for repairs and maintenance of car parks. Councillor Driver informed the meeting that there was a need to look further at this issue and if there was a health and safety hazard then the Council would need to look at this.

It was reported that no decision had been made on the introduction of car parking charges and this would be considered as part of the consultation process. It was noted that the Council was currently looking into proposals in respect of signed sponsorship of car parks.

Other issues discussed included; bus exchange in Union Street, problems with mass demolition areas and Bacup Market Hall.

Councillor Driver closed the meeting by reaffirming that no decisions have yet been made and that the review team are going around different areas looking at what is happening (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley) to see how they were running their schemes.

Councillor Driver thanked everyone for their attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and closed at 8.30 pm)