

MILNROW, NEWHEY AND FIRGROVE AREA FORUM

Thursday 8 December 2016
Milnrow Cricket Club, Harbour Lane,
Milnrow OL16 4HF

MINUTES

Present: S. Lowe (Chair), S. Worrall, C. Baron, D. Dawai, I. Bland, M. Thompson, P. Stansfield, C. Craven, J. Hill, B. Greenwood, D. Hannant, J. Edge, D. Greenhalgh, S. Perryman, E. Thorpe and C. Barber

Councillors: Councillors Burke, Butterworth, Davidson and Kelly

Officers: Sgt Glyn Martin, PC Martin Adams (GMP), Tracey Knight, (Townships), Dwayne Wells (First Bus) and Nick Roberts (TfGM)

Apologies: Councillors Blundell, Hussain and Mir (RBC), S. Leach, C. Houston, I & T Rigby and R. Horton

1. INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. PACT - GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE

The Police introduced themselves and gave the following updates:

Crime Figures:

	Sept 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Vehicle crime	5	1	5
Domestic burglary	5	2	1
Burglary other	2	2	3
Theft from person	0	0	0
Theft from dwelling	0	0	0
Theft cycles	0	0	0
Theft from vehicle	4	4	5
Shoplifting	3	3	5
Arson	2	0	0
Criminal damage	6	14	9
ASB	19	14	9

The figures are generally good in comparison to other areas in the Borough. Operation Dark Nights is now underway which provides advice for staying safe and protected during the winter months.

Car crime

GMP has received several reports of tyres being slashed in Milnrow and Newhey. It is believed to be an individual carrying out the attacks. The Police don't think the person is local and the motive is unknown.

Quad bike nuisance

The Police confirmed that they had received two reported incidents during the previous two months. There are no immediate solutions for this issue, however, residents are encouraged to report every incident as it helps the Police to build a picture and it also helps to direct Police resources.

Speeding Kiln Lane

This is a matter that is regularly raised at the forum; it is a concern for the local community. The Police don't have the resources to enforce the speed limits on every street. It was discussed that determining the speed limits in the area would be helpful.

Action 1: Pursue a speed survey via RBC Highways (Tracey Knight)

PCSOs

A resident asked whether GMP still have PCSOs as they don't appear to be as visible as they have been in the past. It was explained that whilst there has been some staffing issues and reductions, PCSOs are still active in the community and continue to be the eyes and ears for the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Burglary

Details were given about a recent local burglary that had taken place. The Police apologised for the lack of follow up since the incident. The resident was reassured that the correct action will now be taken.

Possible abandoned car

Concern was expressed about a car that appears to have been abandoned near to Harbour Lane. The Police advised that if an abandoned car is a danger to the public they have the powers to remove, which isn't the case with this car. The forum was advised that the Council's Community Safety Officer was dealing with this matter.

No Right Turn on Ladyhouse Lane

It was reported that a number of vehicles, during peak times, have been witnessed queuing to turn right into Ladyhouse Lane which is prohibited. Whilst the Police understand the community concerns in reality they do not have the resources to enforce the traffic order at this junction. The Council has previously looked into this issue and it is thought that the work was too cost prohibitive.

Action 2: Revisit the scheme details and costs at Ladyhouse Lane (Tracey Knight)

Speeding

It was reported that cars are speeding on Huddersfield Road, Dale Street and Smith Hill. The Police agreed to carry out enforcement operations when resources allow. The Township will also consider speed surveys in these locations.

Action 3: GMP to carry out traffic operations (Sgt Martin)

Action 4: Establish the feasibility of traffic surveys at these locations (Tracey Knight)

Light timers

The Police confirmed that home light timers are invaluable as a deterrent. Opportunist thieves are looking for an easy option and will discount a property if there is a chance somebody is at home.

Goods recovered

The Police advised that £20k worth of stolen plant equipment has recently been recovered from a local farm.

3. BUS SERVICE CHANGES IN MILNROW, NEWHEY & FIRGROVE

Nick Robert (Transport for Greater Manchester) - TfGM's responsibility is to provide bus services that are not met by the commercial market; they do respond to needs where possible; there are financial constraints; they are aware of the community passion regarding local services; filling service gaps isn't easy as it costs money but they are committed.

Dwayne Wells (First Bus) – role is to develop and enhance services; involved in the Oldham network review; the 181 and 182 services are currently being looked at.

Issues raised

Q. Will the 58 be changed to an hourly service?

A. It was recognised that there has been some issues with the frequency of this service which has sometimes been due to traffic issues across the network, however, it was confirmed the service will remain as a half hourly service.

Q. There are concerns that the community is being 'cut off' rather than being 'joined up'. Residents are struggling to get to local hospitals, not just for appointments, but some also work there.

A. Officers at TfGM are aware of this concern which has been raised previously with them by Ward Councillors. Options are being looked at. First Bus are also looking at the reliability of services with a view to making the bus network more dependable.

Q. Why was the 182 bus withdrawn?

A. It wasn't generating enough income to cover the costs of operation. As a commercial operator, First Bus has to match supply to demand; there was too much local competition.

Q. Residents expressed their concern that drivers do not account for all passengers, which distorts figures and gives a false representation of data and use of the service. There is concern that buses have been withdrawn for this reason.

A. This is a common observation but it isn't the only data set that is used when making operational decisions.

Q. Residents asked how long will the 451 and 462 continue to run through the estates. These are smaller buses that are deteriorating and it is understood that First Bus have no plans to purchase any more of these size of vehicles.

A. This is a TfGM contracted service which stipulates it is operated by a smaller vehicle. When put out to tender it may be First Bus that bids for it along with other suppliers, but the specification of the contract will have to be delivered.

Q. Why do the surrounding areas, out of the Rochdale Borough, appear to have a much better inclusive service?

A. First Bus and TfGM agree that the local services could be improved.

Q. Why are so many buses late or don't appear at all. Drivers don't adhere to the timetables and are repeatedly setting off early from bus stops.

A. Timetables are an approximate time and they are often subject to change due to a number of influences out of a driver's control. If a driver is witnessed departing early from a timing point, please report it.

Q. Please can you explain why, since the timetable changes in September 2016, the 451 bus service has been so erratic – there are buses constantly late or even missing; data and passengers are not being recorded. A lot of people depend on this service with varying needs. Can you please explain how this is considered acceptable? In addition to this a number of supplementary questions and observations were also raised, as follows:

- There is no incentive for the drivers to check passes and record passenger numbers.
- Drivers don't have time to check and record passengers because they are always late.
- Rossendale operate a ticket system which appears to work better.

A. First Bus are concerned about the issues raised and realise that there may be a driver training issue which will be looked into, as will all the issues raised. Recruitment of drivers has changed; customer service professionals are now recruited and then taught how to drive instead of the other way round. Best practise will be looked at.

Q. Will the 182 bus service be reinstated?

A. No, it wasn't a sustainable service. The decision was taken following an independent survey.

Q. The 451 and 58 services are timetabled to depart from Rochdale Bus Station at the same time. Why are they operating in direct competition?

A. This issue will be investigated.

Q. A resident complained about a double decker bus being used for The Cray Estate service.

A. This is due to breakdowns. To ensure a service is provided sometimes larger vehicles have to be used.

A resident had emailed in the following statement – 'The bus service is less than atrocious for the residents of Kiln Lane, Huddersfield Road and over on the Ladyhouse Estate. We have lost the 452, which linked Hollingworth Lake and Littleborough. The 462 and 451 run every two hours with a big gap to accommodate the school runs. The 58 is less than reliable and for residents living in these areas it is less than useless if they have mobility issues. We have a good tram link but again this is no good for residents in the above areas.

Final Points

Residents were thanked for their input; there are a lot of common concerns. It was reiterated that First Bus only supply services where they will make money and recover their costs; it takes a lot of people to use a service in order for it to be sustainable. There are similar problems in other areas, ie rural areas are struggling. TfGM are looking at how a link to the hospital can be provided. Current legislation may change; there is an argument for greater control which could change how bus services are delivered at a local level. There is no easy solution but TfGM and First Bus will listen to concerns and will work closely with Councillors and residents.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record, apart from the following correction – Sgt Martin clarified that GMP are able to chase quad bikes if the level of risk permits. Each individual case is assessed and any action taken is risk proportionate.

Action 1: Quad Bike intelligence on social media

Due to privacy settings, GMP are unable to access some social media accounts. Anyone with information is encouraged to report it.

Action 2: Firgrove Playing Fields responsibility

The land was granted to Milnrow Urban District Council on 15 November 1934.

Action 3: Local Bus Services

Representatives from TfGM and First Bus attended the meeting.

Action 4: Grounds maintenance on Hawthorn Lane

The land is the responsibility of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH). The area was inspected by RBH Grounds Supervisor and they confirmed the area averaged a cut every 12 working days.

Action 5: Garages and land at the rear of Rochdale Road

Response from Estates – 'We are aware that Firgrove Playing Fields' garage site is misused, but this occurs more in the evenings and at weekends when we are unable to inspect it. When we find vehicles parked on site during our routine inspections we do put notices on these, however, we don't know if the vehicles belong to tenants who have simply left their vehicles out of their garages.

The rents for the plots are the same for all garage tenancies and any change in these would need to be approved by the Trustees of Firgrove Playing Fields.

Action 6: Renewal of road markings

Highways confirmed the work on Smith Hill won't be extended to include Pennine Drive.

5. OPEN FORUM

Road markings

A request was made for the road markings at Egremont Road, Elizabethan Way and Beechfield Road to be repainted as they are barely visible. There is concern the lack of stop and give way markings will cause an accident.

Action 5: Request areas are inspected and any actionable defects carried out (Tracey Knight)

Lorry parking

Articulated lorries are parking on Station Road overnight taking up three or four car park spaces.

Action 6: Establish if these vehicles are permitted to park in this area and take the necessary action if not (Tracey Knight)

Railway Street parking

A resident reported a high volume of vehicles parking on Railway Street when either using the library or visiting the nearby school. The street cleaning vehicle is unable to clean the area because of the parked vehicles, and they were also in the way of the clean-up that should have taken place following the recent floods. Residents asked whether they could have a residents' only parking scheme.

Action 7: Establish if the area meets the criteria for this scheme (Tracey Knight)

Bins on Rochdale Road

A resident reported that a number of bins are being continually left out and not returned to properties when they have been emptied.

Action 8: Report to Environmental Warden and request site visit (Tracey Knight)

Metrolink Car Park

A resident asked when the Metrolink Car Park on the former Coral Mill site would be ready. Councillors advised that this wasn't part of the planning application; however, the Council is looking at alternative local sites.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16 March 2017

Police Contact Details:

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Crimestoppers 0800 555 111 www.crimestoppers-uk.org

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Emergency calls 999

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