

MILKSTONE AND DEEPLISH AREA FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING Monday, 15 November 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Zaheer and Zaman and 12 members of the public.

OFFICERS: PCSO Beaver, PCSO Hussain, PCSO Mehboov, L. Wardle (Enforcement Officer, Environmental Management), G. Finch (Township and Engagement Officer) and C.Harrison (Community Safety Engagement Officer).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Brett and two members of the public.

INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES/CODE OF CONDUCT

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The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and reminded everyone of the need to adhere to the code of conduct for the duration of the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Brett and two members of the public.

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE INCLUDING PACT MEETING

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PCSO's Beaver, Hussain and Mehboov attended the meeting for this item.

The following issues were raised:

- It was reported that during the Covid pandemic restrictions the Ward experienced significant reductions in drug dealing, traffic offences and burglaries.
- The Ward is currently experiencing an increase in begging, anti-social behaviour and shoplifting. Milkstone Road and Tweedale Street being identified as particular begging hot spots.

It was commented that beggars in the Ward are not homeless and that residents should only donate to bonafida charities.

- In response to a question residents were reassured that GMP takes drug dealing extremely seriously, however there are limited resources available to deal with this issue. It was also explained that once a drug dealer is taken off the streets they are immediately replaced.
- Operation Street Shield, a multi-agency initiative aimed at prostitution continues in the Ward.
- Plain clothes operations were undertaken in the Ward on the lead up to Bonfire night which this year was relatively incident free in comparison to previous years. Shops were also visited prior to the 5 November to discourage under age purchasing.
- Operations in unmarked vehicles are undertaken in the Ward in an attempt to deter anti-social behaviour and drug dealing.

- It is hoped that a traffic operation will be held in the Ward in the near future.

Residents raised the following issues:

- A resident highlighted the anti-social behaviour problems being experienced on Boundary Street and Lloyd Street.

In response GMP accepted these areas require more monitoring. However it was explained that GMP in the Ward is working with limited resources and capacity and has to cover Milkstone and Deeplish, Town Centre, Sparth and Freehold.

- A lengthy discussion took place concerning the problems experienced in the Ward and the resources available to GMP. It was suggested that the Deputy Police Commissioner or a Rochdale Council representative be invited to the next meeting of the Forum to discuss this. It was also asked that a Senior Officer from GMP attend the next meeting.
- It was commented that GMP need to be more visible in the area.
- A resident commented that he recently attended a Police Surgery at Deeplish Community Centre where a discussion took place about the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for the area. It was agreed to investigate this further.
- It was commented that an opportunity had been missed to address criminality in the Ward by not extending the Public Protection Order into other areas of Milkstone and Deeplish.
- In response to a question concerning the Streetwatch initiative it was commented that funds for this are available and it was hoped that progress would be made.
- In response to a question it was explained that GMP are not allowed to pursue drug dealers on e-scooters, mopeds, motorbikes, etc.

It was agreed that the PACT priorities for the Ward going forward would be – vehicle crime, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and begging,

OPEN FORUM

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Residents raised the following issues:

1. A lengthy discussion took place regarding the proposals to introduce a traffic scheme on New Barn Lane aimed at reducing the amount of vehicle traffic in the area.

Although a variety of views were expressed at the meeting which supported and objected to the proposal it was explained that the engagement exercise

in place at the moment was being done to generate resident's views. All the responses received would be analysed and will assist with any future proposals put forward. The Forum was also informed that any future proposals would be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order which would provide residents with the opportunity to formally support or object to any proposals put forward.

In response to a question it was commented that no timeframe is currently available regarding this, however the Township Officer would request updates.

2. In response to a discussion that took place regarding the ongoing traffic problems in the Ward an update was provided on the Active Neighbourhood initiative that is currently ongoing in the Ward. In summary Sustrans, a registered charity which promotes safe cycling and walking areas has undertaken three workshops aimed at understanding traffic problems in the area and how these could be reduced by the reconfiguration of traffic flow.

It was explained that a fourth workshop will be held to discuss the issues that have been raised and outline the plans for taking these forward. It is understood this workshop will be a face to face meeting although no date for this event is currently known. The Township Officer agreed to request updates on this matter and encouraged residents to attend this session when organised.

3. Concerns were raised again about the 'S' bend on Milkstone Road as another accident had occurred. It was explained that it was highly unlikely the re-configuration of the road would occur in the short term, although this stretch of road is referred to in the Rochdale Station Supplementary Planning Document (Masterplan), which may imply changes in the long term.
4. A lengthy discussion took place concerning the problems being experienced on some streets in the Ward by numerous cars being privately sold. It was explained that this had been going on for some time, however residents are now becoming frustrated as the problems seems to have worsened which is creating a tension.

It was acknowledged that this issue had been raised previously at Area Forum meetings and investigated. It was explained that it is very difficult to take action if the cars allegedly being sold are not actually advertised as for sale. In addition if cars are insured and have a valid mot certificate nothing can be done. However it was agreed to refer this to the appropriate service for further investigation.

5. A resident commented that a no parking sign had been erected on ? Car Park. It was agreed to investigate this further.
6. Pigeon droppings are causing the footpath adjacent to Dorset Street car park to be slippery / dangerous.

7. A resident asked why some public houses in the Town Centre had been allowed to extend their premises onto the footpath. It was explained that this was possibly done in response to Covid restrictions and encourage footfall in the area which in turn would help the Town Centre economy.
8. The Forum was informed that work had commenced to introduce a one-way system on Kent Street. A resident questioned why this was being done when similar requests for one-way systems on Castlemere Street and Mere Street had been rejected.
9. It was asked if the footway at the corner of Mere Street / Tweedale Street could be extended. It was agreed to investigate this further.
10. A resident commented that because of the restrictions on Tweedale Street outside of Castlemere Community Centre unloading / loading was problematical. It was explained that the restriction would not be removed and that the timings when loading / unloading is permitted are clearly shown.
11. It was reported that fly tipping was a problem on the private land opposite Castlemere Community Centre. It was agreed to investigate this further.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING/MATTERS ARISING/UPDATES

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The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10 February, 2020 were approved as a correct record.

COUNCILLOR UPDATES

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The following updates were provided:

1. Rochdale South Delegated Sub-Committee is to be held on Wednesday 17th November 2021 at Number One Riverside.
2. Parking restrictions for Back Drake Street are currently being considered.
3. Many roads within the Ward have been upgraded over the last twelve months and a programme of works going forward has been produced
4. A 'Whats App' group for the area was set up during the height of the Covid outbreak which proved successful.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

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The next Area Forum meeting will be held at Deeplish Community Centre on Monday 7 February 2022, commencing 6.30pm.