

ROCHDALE SOUTH TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING Tuesday, 6th December 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Philip Massey (Chair); Councillors Shakil Ahmed, Daalat Ali, Stephen Anstee, Mohammad Arshad, Elsie Blundell, Aisling-Blaise Gallagher, Rachel Massey, Daniel Meredith, Shahid Mohammed, Aiza Rashid, Billy Sheerin, Angela Smith and Patricia Sullivan.

OFFICERS: Stephen Aikman (Highways), Fay Davies (Early Help and Schools), Diane Gardner (Public Health), Nicola Hine (Performance and Improvement), Gary Finch (Townships), Alison James (Committees), Amy Johnson (Committees), Stanley Mitchell (Environmental Management), Yvonne Pickering (Customers and Communities), Julie Simpson (Environmental Management), Will Townsend (Public Health) and Helen Walton (Performance and Improvement).

22 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Aasim Rashid.

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Anstee declared an interest in Item 10 - Need for Primary School Places 2023 – 2026 report; in that he was a Governor of an affected Primary School mentioned in the report.

24 ITEMS FOR EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no items for exclusion of press and public.

25 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business received.

26 MINUTES

The Committee gave consideration to the minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2022. In reference to Minute 20, Members asked for an update on the Proposal for Township based and funded environmental deployable CCTV. The Committee was informed that an update would be provided at a future meeting.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Rochdale South Township Committee held on the 13th October 2022 be approved as a correct record.

27 OPEN FORUM

No members of the public were in attendance and no items were raised in the open forum.

28 PREVENTION STRATEGY AND HELPLINE

The Committee received a presentation of the Public Health Specialist and the Public Health Programme Officer on Rochdale Borough's All-Age Prevention Strategy and a new helpline service.

The Public Health representatives attended the meeting to present the information and address the questions of the Committee.

Officers informed of how the Council had worked with partner organisations and residents to remove inequalities and improve factors that keep life on track to prevent crisis such as good relationships in a good home, meaningful work and sufficient income, learning opportunities, culture and social life, neighbourhood environment and having an active lifestyle.

Officers highlighted how the prevention strategy was built on the learning from the Covid-19 pandemic and how different organisations had come together in their role to support people through listening and acting on what mattered to them. The strategy would aim to run until at least 2025 and would focus on providing better information for staff and better information for people so that solutions would be more easily navigated.

Officers informed that conversations between the Council and partner organisations about a prevention network started in July 2022, to look at a helpline/single point of access to connect people with advice, information and support (e.g. for loneliness, volunteering, cost of living etc.). The helpline was launched in November 2022 and would be an important way of supporting the recovery of the borough, whilst complementing other ongoing initiatives.

Members raised concerns about those residents who may not have access to online or telephone services, and effectively managing the demand of those seeking support once the service was advertised as well as residents understanding what exactly this service is for. Officers informed the Committee that a model for each Township would be developed in partnership with stakeholders which would also include in person support through drop in provision and home visits and that a Communications campaign was being developed to raise awareness.

Resolved:

1. That the prevention strategy and new helpline service be noted.

29 DRAFT COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN

The Committee received presentation from Policy Advisers on refreshing the Borough and Council Corporate Plans from 2023 to 2026.

Policy representatives informed the Township Committee of a new local plan to help map future Council priorities and create a borough of which we would all be proud. The plan would set out ambitions for improving Rochdale and meeting the needs of the people who live, work and visit the town.

With rising costs, increased demand for services and further reductions in government funding, a plan about how the Council would deliver services now and in the future would also be developed.

As part of the consultation process, Policy Advisers would engage with businesses, diverse communities and protected groups, hold stakeholder sessions with partners, conduct online and face-to-face consultations, and attend local groups such as Action Together Wednesday Weekly to help ensure the plans reflected local community needs and aspirations.

Key questions for the public during the consultation process would include what do you like about living in Rochdale and what would make it better, whereas sectors would be asked more specific questions in relation to what issues they may be facing, and what makes them want to operate or work in the borough.

The online consultation process for views to be shared had been extended and would now close on at the end of December 2022. The face-to-face consultation period would also end in December 2022, followed by a Cabinet and leadership session on the outcome of the consultation in January 2023.

Policy Advisers asked Committee Members what they thought the priorities should be for Rochdale, with responses including: having a vision led approach with high aspirations for the borough; developing housing provision including building along the rail corridor; delivering opportunities from childhood through to adulthood; keeping local high streets thriving especially in the long term and through periods of change; improving access to transport; obtaining data to target relevant demographics and helping to deliver efficient services to communities.

Members were also asked what they think the Council could do better in future with responses including: better communication- connecting residents with what's going on in the borough and people aware of all the positive aspects of the Borough.

Resolved:

1. That the Council Corporate Plan presentation be noted.

30 DIVERSION OF DEFINITIVE FOOTPATH MILFP329

The Committee considered a report from the Rights of Way Officer regarding the Diversion Order under section 119 Highways Act 1980 to divert the footpath MilFp329.

Alternatives Considered:

There were no other alternatives that the Council may decide upon, the footpath was recorded on a definitive map and described in a related statement. It was not fully accessible, causing the general public to find an alternative route, the route being used does not have any definitive status.

The Council could consider a permanent closure of the full route however it would be difficult to prove the footpath is not needed for public use, the Council would not be able to meet the legal criteria for closure of this right of way.

Resolved:

1. That the Rochdale South Township Committee approves the Diversion Order under section 119 Highways Act 1980 to divert the footpath MilFp329.
2. That the Diversion Order be executed and relevant officers be authorised to enter into any legal agreements necessary to give effect to this decision, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
3. That it be noted that, in the event that the Council receives objections to the order, the matter is referred to the Secretary of State for their consideration and decision.

Reasons for decision:

Under section 130 Highways Act 1980 the Council had a duty to assert and protect the rights of the general public to the use and enjoyment of any right of way shown on the definitive map and statement.

Under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 the Council should keep the definitive map and statement under continuous review and one method was to permanently alter a definitive footpath either by extinguishment and/or diversion.

The general public were using the new highway created to access the new properties. The route would probably be an adopted highway however there was no other option to divert the footpath. The diversion would protect the definitive network continuity to connect to other routes in the area.

31 NEED FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES 2023 - 2026

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Children's Services setting out proposals for the expansion of primary school places to meet expected demand from 2023 – 2026.

An update was provided as the report had been approved at Cabinet on 22nd November 2022.

Resolved:

1. That the Need for Primary School Places 2023 – 2026 report be noted.

32 NEED FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES 2023 - 2026

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Children's Services setting out proposals for the expansion of secondary school places to meet expected demand from 2023 – 2026.

An update was provided as the report had been approved at Cabinet on 22nd November 2022.

Resolved:

1. That the Need for Secondary School Places 2023 – 2026 report and update provided be noted.
2. That it be noted that the Rochdale South Township Committee are dissatisfied with the delay from the Department of Education for the delivery of the new secondary school provision in Littleborough.

That future, reports on School Places have a separate report on SEN provision to enable details of the differing needs and circumstances for SEN schools to be provided.