

PENNINES TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING Tuesday, 19th March 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Mir (in the Chair); Councillors Bamford, Blundell, Davidson, Dearnley, Emsley, Hartley, Hussain, Kelly, Stott and Taylor.

OFFICERS: T. Knight, I. Trickett, C. Woods (Neighbourhoods Directorate), F. Davies (Children's Directorate) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Two members of the public

APOLOGIES

30 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paolucci.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

31 There were no declarations of interests.

OPEN FORUM

32 The following matter was raised as part of the Open Forum:-

a) Our Rochdale: The Online Directory of Services

Further to minute 20 of the meeting of Pennines Township Committee, held 16th October 2018, a Member raised a question relating to the 'Our Rochdale Online Directory of Services' presentation at that meeting and he sought an update in relation to: the 'integration with the Council website' and 'how private businesses on the website were vetted'.

Resolved

The Pennines Township Officer be requested to seek clarification relating to the Online Directory of Services, as noted above, and to circulate any response received thereon to Members of the Township Committee.

METRO MONEYWISE CREDIT UNION

33 The Chair advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda and would be considered at the Committee's next scheduled meeting on 12th June 2019.

MINUTES

34 Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of Pennines Township Committee held 15th October 2018 be approved as a correct record.

PENNINES TOWNSHIP DELEGATED AND FUNDING SUB-COMMITTEE

35 Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of Pennines Township Delegated and Funding Sub-Committee, held 13th February 2019, be noted.

THE NEED FOR EXTRA PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES 2019 - 2023

36 The Township Committee was consulted on a report of the Director of Children's Services which advised that there was a need to keep under review the need for extra class places in each of the Borough's Townships. The purpose of the report was to set out proposals to address the need for extra Reception Year places. Pupil place planning sought to ensure that the Townships were kept aware of school spaces and pupil numbers within their area and to aid local government decision making.

In considering the report Members sought clarification on certain terminology in the report including the location of 'Pennines Central' area, what was meant by 'bulge classes', whether and how many additional primary school places were being planned in light of extensive property developments across the Pennines Township footprint, if primary schools in Milnrow would be included in the consultation, the possibility of joint working with Oldham Borough Council especially in primary schools in Newhey which often took in children from Shaw in the Oldham Borough because of proximity and ease of access issues.

Resolved:

1. The report be noted.
2. The Director of Children's Services be requested to respond to issues raised by members of the Township Committee.

Reasons for the recommendations:

The Council has a statutory duty to provide education and school places to all school aged children living in the borough and consequently has a duty to plan adequately for predicted pupil numbers.

Eligible for Call-in: No

THE NEED FOR EXTRA YEAR 7 SCHOOL PLACES 2019-2028

37 The Township Committee were consulted on a report of the Director of Children's Services which outlined strategies for managing the predicted shortfall in year 7 places for the intake years of 2019 and 2020. Appropriate staff in Children's Services were working to aid the Department for Education and any successful academy to open a new school in the Borough for September 2021 for future places that are needed.

The Council's Schools Organisation and Planning Team were currently in discussions with schools about any additional places offered for September 2019. It was anticipated that the numbers of additional places would change from those presented in the submitted report for 'own admission' authority schools. The government had made an announcement to say they were going to fund all special school applications that "meet the criteria". Rochdale Council has submitted an expression of interest to have a new secondary special school specializing in Autism and Communications special needs. The Committee was asked to note the plans for extra capacity for September 2020.

In considering the report Members of the Committee requested details of strategies in place, or proposed, to deal with likely shortfalls of secondary school places between 2019 and 2028. It was noted that at Wardle Academy for example, due to a proposed reorganisation there would have to serve lunch in three sittings to accommodate all pupils and there was not enough space for 'general' assemblies to be held. Members of the Committee sought clarification on safe walking routes for pupils (to and from school). Members asked if a direct transport link (school bus) could be operated for those Littleborough (and other Pennines based children) who attend the Kingsway Park High School in Rochdale. Members of the Committee also requested sight of the admissions criteria for Hollingworth High School, Milnrow.

Resolved:

3. The report be noted.
4. The Director of Children's Services be requested to respond to issues raised by members of the Township Committee.

Eligible for Call-in: No

PROPOSED TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER - BETHANY LANE, NEWHEY

38 The Township Committee considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods, which reminded Members that the Council's Highways Service had been commissioned to consult with residents of Bethany Lane in order to gauge views on a proposal to permanently close the lane to through traffic. The most effective way to prevent through traffic movements at Bethany Lane, Newhey, is to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting its use by all motorised vehicles over a specific short length of carriageway. This proposal was put forward in a consultation leaflet delivered to local residents in January 2017.

Following discussions between residents and Milnrow and Newhey Ward Members, there was majority support for a closure of Bethany Lane to be implemented on an experimental basis. There then followed a six-month objection period for affected parties to raise their concerns and no objections were received. Milnrow and Newhey Ward Members engaged with local residents and there was support to make the Order permanent.

Alternatives considered:

The Committee could consider recommending that the experimental Order be not made permanent.

Resolved:

Pennines Township Committee agrees that the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order in respect of Bethany Lane, Newhey, be made a permanent Order.

Reasons for the decision:

The Council, in proposing to make the Order permanent is operating within the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and its major effect would be to prevent 'through traffic' from using Bethany Lane, a measure that

has the support of those who reside in the area and of Milnrow and Newhey Ward Councillors.

Eligible for Call-in: yes

PENNINES NEW ALLOTMENTS PROVISION

39 The Township Committee considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods which advised that across the Borough there were currently 524 allotment plots, which was not considered to be not enough to meet current demand. As at 25th February 2019 there were 985 people on the waiting list for an allotment in the Borough, more than quadruple the figure in 2015. Allotment plots were presently allocated at the rate of 30 plots per year through natural turnover and, on average, the Council received 160 new applications for allotments year on year. The waiting time had therefore increased significantly from seven years in 2015 years ago to a potential 33 years if the demand was to remain at its present level.

The Council's Environmental Management Service had been tasked with creating 100 new plots a year, every year, for the next five years. This had been approved by the Cabinet with provisionally allocated Capital funding to enable delivery. Each Township had been asked to identify viable sites within their boundaries. The Environmental Management Service had been working with the Council's Planning and Estates services to create a list of potential sites.

The Committee was being asked to approve that formal consultation be held regarding the potential use of Great Howarth, Wardle/Smallbridge for new allotment provision. In addition Township Committee Members proposed sites at Barnes Meadows in Stansfield, Littleborough, land in Newhey (between junction 21 of the M62 and the Ellenroad Steam Museum) and land at Uncouth Road, Rochdale.

Alternatives considered:

A variety of sites across the Township had already been considered and declined at the shortlisting stage by officers for technical reasons. In addition Members were invited to nominate additional sites for technical testing to see if they were viable options.

Resolved:

1. The Committee approves that the following sites be approved, for consultative purposes, as potential sites for allocation for new allotment provision in Pennines Township: Great Howarth, Wardle/Smallbridge, Barnes Meadows in Stansfield, Littleborough, land in Newhey (between junction 21 of the M62 and the Ellenroad Steam Museum) and land at Uncouth Road, Rochdale.
2. Members of the Committee be requested to liaise with appropriate officers in the Council's Environmental Management Service regarding areas for potential use as allotment sites, in their Wards.

Reasons for the decision:

The recommendations in the report would enable the Council to work towards meeting recommendations of Government standards on how many allotment plots should be provided and would also enable the Council's Environmental Management Service to make progress towards its target of achieving an additional 500 allotment plots across the Borough.

Eligible for call-in: Yes

PENNINES GRASS VERGE MANAGEMENT

40 The Township Committee considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods which examined proposals for cutting grass verges across the Township. The proposals outlined in the report were intended to: deliver cost savings, develop a suitable habitat for wildlife; improve the appearance of the Township; minimise the need to mow; enable the trialling of new models for how verges are to be maintained; deliver floral verges in the summer months; and to retain a neat finish in the winter months after flowers have faded. The appendix to the report detailed a series of locations across the Borough where the proposed grass cutting could occur. This included a potential site at Birch Road Wardle, which Members of the Committee felt was inappropriate. As an alternative the roundabout at the junction of Albert Royds Street and Halifax Road, Smallbridge was proposed.

As part of the process to implement the programme, the Director of Neighbourhoods reported upon the intended use of a growth retardant chemical to slow the rate of grass growth and therefore reduce the frequency of mowing. This would mainly be used on verges where Traffic Management Orders were required. Members expressed their concern at the proposed use of the growth retardant chemicals.

Alternatives considered:

To cease mowing entirely: this option not to be pursued except for rural/informal areas where that method will not look out of place.

Resolved:

1. The Township Committee approves the shortlist of sites detailed in the appendix to the report provided in the attached document, for the grass verge management scheme, on the condition that the growth retardant chemicals are not used.
2. The proposed site at Birch Road, Wardle be removed and replaced with a scheme at Albert Royds Street, Rochdale.
3. Members of the Committee be encouraged to advise appropriate staff in the Neighbourhoods Directorate of suitable potential locations in their Wards, for inclusion on the programme.

Reasons for the decision:

To enable the Council's Environmental Management Services to improve the quality of grass verges in terms of floral features, wildlife habitat value and to reduce pollution whilst delivering budget savings.

Eligible for Call-in: Yes