

ROCHDALE NORTH TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING Tuesday, 11th June 2019

PRESENT: Councillor O'Neill (in the Chair); Councillors: Ali Ahmed, Iftikhar Ahmed, Sultan Ali, Cocks, Gartside, Heakin, Holly, Massey, Rana, Wazir and Winkler.

OFFICERS: V. White (Neighbourhoods Directorate), A. Eadie (Environment Directorate) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Inspector Fearn (Greater Manchester Police) and five members of the public.

APOLOGIES

1 There were no apologies for absence.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2 There were no declarations of interests.

OPEN FORUM

3 The following matters were raised in the Committee's Open Forum session:

a) Syke Common, Healey

The Township Committee received a question from Mr. R. Lord regarding activities being progressed to repair and improve the paths around Syke Pond, some sections of which continue to collapse into the pond. The Committee received an answer to Mr Lord's question, from the Council's Environmental Management Service and noted that a full report on this matter would be submitted to the Committee's next meeting on 10th September 2019.

b) College Bank Flats, Rochdale

The Township Committee were addressed by Mr. R. Parker regarding proposals by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) to demolish four of the seven high rise accommodation blocks at College Bank, Rochdale, commonly known as the 'seven sisters' and with regard to the consultation exercise that RBH had carried out in relation to this matter. Members of the Committee expressed their concerns at the consultation exercise that RBH had undertaken and noted their support for the work of the residents who were opposed to the course of action being proposed by RBH.

c) Greater Manchester Police

Inspector Fearn (Greater Manchester Police (GMP)) updated the Township Committee on activities and initiatives that were undertaken by GMP in the Rochdale North Township.

- a. Operation Sceptre – an operation to target and counter 'knife crime'. This was an initiative that was taking place across the whole of GMP's

footprint and it was recorded that Rochdale had the second lowest level of knife crime of the 10 Greater Manchester authorities (after Bury). GMP were involved in a wide ranging campaign in this regard that included conveying messages via social media outlets and visits to schools and colleges.

- b. Operation Dynamo – an initiative to counter a recent ‘spike’ in the theft of motor vehicles and the theft of property from motor vehicles.
- c. Operation Dragster – an initiative to counter the illegal use of ‘off-road’ vehicles including the use of drones. This initiative had resulted in the seizure of three vehicles.
- d. Operation Considerate – an initiative to clamp down on illegal and dangerous driving practices. This exercise was undertaken at different locations in Rochdale and resulted in action being taken against drivers for offences such as using mobile phones whilst driving, drivers and front seat passengers not wearing seatbelts and drivers not having valid road tax or insurance for their vehicles
- e. Operation Bohemia – an initiative to counter youth anti-social behaviour in and around Rochdale’s town centre and the town’s College bank area.

In addition Inspector Fearn reported that three new Officers had recently commenced their duties in Rochdale and that GMP had improved its web-site to make it easier for the public to contact the Police.

MINUTES

4 Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of Rochdale Township Committee, held 13th March 2019 be approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment to minute 51 (Rochdale New Allotments Provision) to note that Mr. Morrell addressed the Committee to object to the proposals to locate allotment plots at Hutchinson Road, Norden.

SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE - UPDATE

5 The Township Committee considered a report of the Director of Economy which advised that sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) were local planning designations covering areas of nature conservation importance in Greater Manchester which contain locally valuable habitats, plants and animals. Whilst they did not provide legal protection, they could be taken into consideration when determining planning applications which may affect the site and its nature conservation interest.

New SBIs and changes to existing SBIs were recommended on an annual basis by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) and were reported to the relevant Township Committee in order that they may be adopted for planning purposes.

The latest review which GMEU had undertaken recommended that the existing Ashworth Valley SBI be extended to include two hectares of additional woodland habitat, and that the existing Fordoe and Naden Woods

SBI be extended to include an additional 1.8 hectares of grassland and habitat for butterflies, and upgraded from grade C to grade B. The proposed extensions were demonstrated on maps detailed on the submitted Committee report.

Alternatives considered:

The alternative would be to not support the proposed changes to the SBIs. This course of action could leave some important areas of habitat more vulnerable to damage from development in the area or nearby.

Resolved:

The Rochdale North Township Committee approves the extensions to the SBIs, detailed in the submitted report, so that the nature conservation interests of the new areas can be taken into account when planning applications which may affect those interests that are being considered.

Reasons for the decision:

The National Planning Policy Framework stated that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, protecting and enhancing valued sites of biodiversity value. The areas in question had been identified by experts as being of local biodiversity value and the Council should thus try and protect this value by taking it into account in planning decisions.

Eligible for Call-in: Yes.

ROCHDALE TOWNSHIP FUNDS REVIEW

6 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods that asked Members to approve the Rochdale North Township Funds' terms and conditions, and to agree delegation arrangements concerning funding decisions.

Alternatives considered:

In considering the report, the Committee's Members were asked to decide whether or not to approve the allocation of funds to funding streams and to adopt appropriate terms and conditions.

Resolved:

1. The Committee notes the expenditure, commitments and balances for Rochdale North Township revenue and capital funds at financial year end 2018/19 (as outlined at Appendix 1 and 2 of the submitted report).
2. The Committee notes the findings of the review of Township Funds 2018/19 (as outlined at Appendix 3 of the submitted report) and evaluations received to date for some of the projects funded (as outlined at Appendix 4 of the submitted report).
3. The Committee approves the allocation of Rochdale North Township Funds to funding streams in 2019/20 as detailed in Appendix 5 of the submitted report.
4. The Committee approves the terms and conditions for Rochdale North Township's revenue and capital funds for 2019/20 (as described at Appendix 6 of the submitted report).

5. The Committee authorises the delegation arrangements for Rochdale North Township Funds 2019/20 as detailed at 4.6 of the submitted report, subject to an amendment, approved by the Committee, that the amount which the Chair, Vice Chair and opposition Spokesperson may make decisions on the allocation of funds be reduced from £5,00 to £3,000.
6. The Committee authorises any uncommitted/unspent funds be reallocated to a central revenue or capital funding stream as appropriate before the end of January 2020 to enable Members to spend/commit all Rochdale North Township Funds during 2019/20 financial year.

Reasons for the decision:

The management of the Rochdale North Township Fund is a matter that is delegated to the Rochdale North Township Action and Resources Delegated Sub Committee to determine. Rochdale North Township Funds are allocated to projects that benefit the Township's community and environment, and realise the Township priorities. The decision enables the Committee to monitor and review the use of the Rochdale North Township Funds to ensure continued efficient and effective use of those funds.

Eligible for Call-in: Yes.

ROCHDALE NORTH TOWNSHIP DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS 2019/20

7 The Township Committee considered a report of the Director of Resources that requested that Members confirm their delegated decision making arrangements and make appointments to the Township Sub-Committees, including the Chairs, Vice Chairs and substitute members; the appointment of "lead" opposition spokespersons; and the appointment to other bodies.

Alternatives considered:

The Committee could choose not to appoint Sub-Committees and undertake all delegated functions themselves, however this could have a detrimental impact on the ability to progress Township priorities or to deal with urgent items of business. The Committee could also, if it chose to do so, adopt alternative Sub-Committee arrangements.

Resolved:

1. The proposed Sub-Committee structure of the Rochdale North Township Committee comprising of the Rochdale North Township Action and Resources Delegated Sub-Committee and the terms of reference, as outlined at Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be approved;
2. Members be appointed as follows: –
 - (a) Rochdale North Township Action and Resources Sub-Committee: Councillors – O'Neill (Chair), Cocks (Vice Chair), Ali Ahmed, Iftikhar Ahmed, Sultan Ali, Gartside, Heakin, Holly, Massey, Rana, Wazir and Winkler.
The opposition spokesperson be Councillor Winkler:

- (b) The relevant Ward Councillors be appointed to attend their respective Ward Forum;
 - (c) Rochdale Regeneration Group – Councillors Sultan Ali, Holly, O’Neill, Rana and Wazir;
 - (d) Township Older Persons Champion – Councillor Massey;
 - (g) Township Young Persons Champion – Councillor Massey;
 - (h) Rochdale North Township Planning Panel – All members of the Rochdale North Township Committee to be invited to attend meetings - except those Members who have also been appointed to the Council’s Planning and Licensing Committee
- (3) Any amendments to the appointments be delegated to the Chair of the Rochdale North Township Committee to determine.

Reasons for the decision:

The Council has established and appoints Township Committees that may exercise both executive and non-executive powers as set out in the Responsibility for Council Functions in Part 3 of the Constitution, which states that: appointments to Township Sub-Committees, Township Working Parties, Partnership Arrangements and Local Outside Bodies shall be made at the first meeting of the appropriate Township Committee in the new Municipal Year’.

The Sub-Committee exercises either delegated powers or acts on any matter detailed in the Committee’s Terms of Reference on which it is essential to take a decision.

Eligible for Call-in: No.