

## ROCHDALE NORTH TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF MEETING Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020

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

**OFFICERS:** F. Davies (Children's Directorate), G. Finch (Neighbourhoods Directorate), A. Shepherd-Smith (Economy Directorate) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate).

#### 16 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ali Ahmed, Iftikhar Ahmed, Holly and Massey.

#### 17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### 18 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of Rochdale North Township Committee, held 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020, be approved as a correct record.

#### 19 **OPEN FORUM**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Prior to the meeting Members of the Committee received a written update on events and activities across the Rochdale North Township Rochdale's town centre area, which was provided by Inspector Meena Yasin of Greater Manchester Police (GMP).

The update highlighted that the GMP's priorities in recent months had been to contribute to the Greater Manchester and national efforts to manage the issues and demand generated by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Partnership work between GMP and Rochdale Council was described as excellent, with weekly meetings to share information, to offer advice/guidance and joint enforcement opportunities which has included issuing warnings and prohibition notices.

The Covid-19 pandemic had interrupted GMP's 'business as usual' activities and had added additional pressures and demands on policing. However, GMP's Neighbourhood teams, operating in the Rochdale North Township, had carried out the following key activities:

1. Burglary initiatives across Bamford and Norden in October 2020 involving the whole neighbourhood team, with high visibility patrols and plain clothes officers looking to disrupt and detect criminality.
2. One burglar was convicted at Court from the Spotland area.
3. Operation Dragster (Norden and Spotland Wards) – an off-road bike initiative on moorlands north of Rochdale. Several vehicles were seized and the activities of various criminal gangs were disrupted. This was

seen as a successful example of partnership working and it saw the active involvement of the local community via a 'what's-app' group - one of several ideas GMP were utilising to try to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour problems.

4. Community Speed-watches were conducted during the 'lockdown' period and most recently were used to target motorists across the Township.
5. A new homewatch schemes were established in Prickshaw and Broadley Fold (Spotland beat).
6. Drugs warrants/searches were conducted at several locations across the Township and several cannabis farms were dismantled as a result.
7. 120,000 cigarettes (worth approximately £50,000) were recovered and two males arrested following an intervention by local PCSO's.
8. Operation Treacle - Patrols around fireworks/bonfires and associated anti-social behaviour.
9. A well-known local drug dealer and burglar was arrested after illegally riding a quad bike and being in possession of drugs in the Spotland area.
10. A male was arrested for robbery in the Spotland area and another male was arrested and convicted for burglaries carried out in Norden.

Resolved:

That the Greater Manchester Police update be noted and welcomed.

## **20 SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Economy that sought approval for the designation of Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) within the Rochdale North Township. SBI's are local planning designations which cover areas of nature conservation importance across Greater Manchester containing locally valuable habitats, plants and animals. Whilst they were not statutory designations, like Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Conservation Areas, and therefore 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 as such were reported to the relevant Township Committee in order that they may be adopted for planning purposes.

The latest review which GMEU had undertaken had recommended that the existing Naden Brook SBI be extended to include 1.1 hectares of additional woodland habitat in the north of the site. Naden Brook lost 0.1ha for technical reasons. Overall therefore the site gained 1ha.

Alternatives considered:

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

Resolved:

The extensions to the SBIs, so that the nature conservation interests of the new areas can be taken into account, when planning applications which may affect those interests are being considered, as outlined in the report, be approved.

Reasons for the resolution:

The National Planning Policy Framework states 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 have duly been identified by experts as being of local biodiversity value and efforts should therefore be made to try and protect this value by taking it into account during the determination of planning decisions.

## **21 NEED FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES 2021 - 2024**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Services which detailed the need for primary school places across the Borough between 2021 and 2024. It was reported that a peak in births for the 2021/22 Primary school intake birth rates appeared to be levelling off and there had been a subsequent reduction of numbers in some area of the Borough. However in-year applications for school places continued to be high with the usual rate of key stage 1 (age 5 - 7 years) and increased numbers arriving at Year 3 and above.

Large numbers of new housing developments across the Borough, in the last few years, had impacted on the ability of the Council's school admissions team to provide school places in schools of preference, especially so in certain localities.

Forthcoming and planned housing developments especially in the Pennines, South Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood parts of the Borough meant that some expansion of the school estate would continue to be needed. In some places inability to further extend schools would require that new schools be built. Where a new school and site was being delivered through developer contributions, a trust will be needed to run the school and the 'Free School Presumption Route' would need to be followed.

The Committee was advised that this report was presented to the Cabinet, at its meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020, where the recommendations contained therein, were approved.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

## **22 SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES 2021 AND 2022**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Services regarding the provision of secondary school places in the Borough in 2021 and 2022. Rochdale Council it was reported is awaiting delivery of two new mainstream Secondary schools that were being delivered by the Department

for Education (DfE), through the Free School Programme. The DfE would not guarantee when the schools will open until planning consent for the schools is guaranteed and until a date for practical completion is set. Until the dates are determined the Council must work to meet its statutory obligation to offer every child living in the borough a place in Secondary school.

The Council's School's Organisation and Development Team are working closely with the DfE to deliver the new schools as soon as possible but must also plan for the scenario where any new school places are delayed.

The Committee was advised that this report was presented to the Cabinet, at its meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020, where the recommendations contained therein, were approved.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.