

MILKSTONE AND DEEPLISH AREA FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING

Monday, 16 May 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Shahid Mohammed, Mohammad Arshad, Aiza Rashid and 25 members of the public.

OFFICERS: PCSO 65125, PCSO 72961, PCSO 70665, PC17118 and G. Finch (Township and Engagement Officer)

INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

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Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. Members of the Forum were reminded of the need to adhere to the code of conduct for the duration of the meeting.

No apologies had been received.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

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Ghulam Shazhad was elected Chair of the Forum.

Abida Niaz was elected Vice-Chair of the Forum.

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE

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Following the announcement that PCSO Beever was retiring the Forum thanked the officer for his support, service and efforts in the Ward over many years.

The following issues were raised by residents:

- A resident asked if GMP could provide advice concerning the best way to deal with canvassers in the area. It was agreed that advice would be provided going forward.
- A resident commented that someone had been filming children in the pocket park on King Street East.
- Concerns were raised about anti-social behaviour problems close to the 'Stepping Stones' sheltered accommodation properties in the Ward.
- Residents raised concerns about a number of drug related hotspots in Ward, namely, King Street South, Lucknow Street, Pullman Street, Pomona Street, Sussex Street and Monmouth Street.

In response it was acknowledged that drug related problems are across the Ward. However numerous arrests have been made in recent months which will hopefully result in convictions.

Residents were again encouraged to report criminal activity in the Ward with as much information/detail as possible being provided.

- Following a lengthy discussion concerning GMP's recruitment and retention policy, policing plans, resources in the Ward and the lack of a

senior ranking officer's attendance at the Forum the Township Officer was asked to contact the service for further information.

It was acknowledged by GMP that the force is currently going through a transformation programme following the new Chief Constables appointment.

- Residents again identified speeding as a problem in the Ward with Tweedale Street and Deeplish Road being identified as hot spots. In response it was explained that traffic operations could be arranged to combat this.
- It was reported that there had been a drop in the number of prostitutes working in the Ward, although it was accepted that their presence still results in anti-social behaviour.
- It was agreed that GMP's priorities for the Ward over the coming months would be traffic issues, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and begging.

OPEN FORUM

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Residents raised the following issues:

1. Following the recent Council advertisement in the Ward concerning the streets that would be included as part of the 20mph zone it was asked that any future communications of this nature are advertised more widely and comprehensively. The use of social media, community centres and Rochdale Council of Mosques could be used to promote such initiatives.

In response it was explained that Highways have possibly approached this issue by complying with legislative requirements. However the views of the Forum will be forwarded to Highways.

2. A discussion took place about the lack of support that Castlemere Community Centre had received from previous Ward Councillors. It was commented that this lack of support had resulted in the reduction of funding being made available by the Council.

It was commented that community centre funding across the borough has been reduced in recent years due to budget reduction measures. It was reiterated that funding is available from Township funds should organisations wish to apply.

It was also commented that funding is also available from a variety of sources. It was suggested that the Community Base Network may be able to assist with this.

3. Following a discussion concerning the introduction of a one-way system on Castlemere Street and Mere Street Ward Members agreed to support this and request that Highways undertake a feasibility study

into this proposal. As a consequence the Township Officer agreed to convey this message to Highways.

4. A resident raised concerns about the introduction of benches at Stoneyfield Park arguing that they could attract anti-social behaviour. Following discussion it was agreed that the situation could be monitored once the benches had been installed with the option of removing them should anti-social behaviour incidents significantly rise.
5. Parking concerns were also highlighted at the Mosque on Ashfield Drive. It was suggested that the Rochdale Council of Mosques intervene to help resolve the situation.
6. Residents were informed that delays had been experienced in the completion of the one-way system on Kent Street due to Eon related issues.
7. A resident was critical of the highways schemes that had been introduced into the Ward – one-way system on Milkstone Road, the introduction of the ‘s’ bend adjacent to Kent Street and the reduction of Tweedale Street at the junction of Milkstone Road / Lower Tweedale Street
8. Following a discussion about poor practice amongst some private landlords it was asked if the Private Landlord Forum was still in operation.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2022, MATTERS ARISING AND UPDATES ON ISSUES RAISED AT THIS MEETING

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The minutes of the Forum meeting held on Monday 21 February 2022 were approved as a correct record.

It was reported that all issues raised at the meeting and identified within the report had been reported to the appropriate service.

It was understood that no progress had been made with the New Barn Lane and Sustrans (Active Neighbourhoods) initiatives.

It was commented that GMP had not provided an update on the Streetwatch initiative.

COUNCILLOR UPDATES

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Ward Councillors introduced themselves and commented that their election represented a fresh start. They would endeavour to represent their constituents and the Ward.

It was commented that the following issues would represent their workload in the near future:

- Development of Stoneyfield Park
- Fly tipping
- Casework
- New Barn Lane and Sustrans initiatives

Residents were informed that Surgeries will be introduced in the near future. It is hoped that these will be held on the last Saturday (Castlemere Community Centre 11am-12noon) and Wednesday (Deeplish Community Centre 6pm-7pm) of each month.

It is also planned to introduce street surgeries.

It was also commented that a planning application had been received for the Ronald Gorton Centre.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

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The next meeting of the Area Forum will take place on Monday 8 August 2022, commencing 6.30pm at Deeplish Community Centre.