Lancashire Local - Rossendale

Meeting held at the Old Fire Station, Burnley Road, Rawtenstall on Monday 28th July 2008

Minutes

Present:-

  County Councillor R Wilkinson (Chair)
  Councillor Alyson Barnes
  Councillor Judith Driver
  Councillor Brian Essex
  Councillor June Forshaw
  County Councillor Hazel Harding
  County Councillor S M J Serridge
  Councillor Tony Swain

Apologies were received from County Councillors James Eaton and Duncan Ruddick.

East Lancashire Commuter Rail Link

The meeting was preceded by a presentation given by Malcolm Vickers reporting on the present position regarding a feasibility study of a potential rail link between the Rossendale Valley corridor and Manchester. The Study was being taken forward by an Officer Steering Group which included a representative from the County Council’s Environment Directorate’s transport Group. Two possible models were being investigated, one utilising standard train units and one using tram units. There were logistical issues with the latter, particularly of interfacing the technical differences in wheelbase design on the tramcar with the rail track network. The presentation provided information on the methodology being used to take forward the Study, potential service frequency and costs. Further work was needed before fully costed options could be finalised.

Mr Vickers responded to questions from Members and from the floor.

Members extended their thanks to Mr Vickers for his presentation and expressed support for the project. They requested that a further update be provided in due course.

Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Councillor Alyson Barnes declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item No 10 (Help Direct Gateways and Improving Well-Being in Districts of Lancashire) and left the meeting during discussion on the item.
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9th June 2008

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th June 2008 were presented.

19. Resolved:- That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th June 2008, be accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Lancashire Locals Climate Change Fund
Approval of Projects to Support Climate Change in Lancashire

It was reported that 3 applications had been received from organisations in the Rossendale District for grant from the Lancashire Locals Climate Change Fund in respect of community projects to support climate change. Details of the applications were set out in Appendix A to the report and the Lancashire Local was requested to consider the applications and allocate grants within the £40,496 provided to the Lancaster District for 2008/09. The three applications requested, in total, £42,500 as follows:-

- St Anne’s Church, Edgeside - £14,000
- 2nd Rossendale Scout Group, incorporating Rossendale Scout Band - £15,000
- St Peter’s Church, Haslingden - £13,000

20. Resolved:- That, having considered the 3 applications from organisations for grant from the Lancashire Local Climate Change Fund and the supporting information presented, Lancashire Local – Rossendale agrees as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Funding Requested</th>
<th>Approved/not Approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Anne’s Church, Edgeside</td>
<td>Church/community building refurbishment</td>
<td>£14,500</td>
<td>Approved in full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Rossendale Scout Group,</td>
<td>Wholesale refurbishment of Scout/community</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
<td>Approved in full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incorporating Rossendale Scout Band</td>
<td>building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter’s Church, Haslingden</td>
<td>Refurbishment of community hall heating system</td>
<td>£13,000</td>
<td>Approved grant of £10,996, being the balance of the Lancashire Local’s Climate Change Fund for 2008/09.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annual Allocation of Highways Funding  
Amendment to Agreed Programme of Works

A report was presented suggesting amendments to the Programme of Works agreed by the Lancashire Local at its June meeting to be funded from its Standard Allocation Budget and Additional Highway Maintenance Budget. The amended Programme was presented at Appendix A to the report.

Following an assessment of a scheme included in Programme for the provision of a lighting column on Moss Side Street, Whitworth, the cost was estimated to be £3,500. A scheme for a lighting column at Woodlands Close, Newchurch was recommended for deletion from the 2008/09 Programme as the road was on a new development which was subject to agreement with the developers and which had not been adopted by the Highway Authority. Members noted the probability of additional funding being made available by the County Council for highways related works and agreed that the scheme for Woodlands Close, Newchurch be deferred and that that in the light of the probability that additional monies would be had available by the County Council for highways related works, in order to be in a position to act quickly in respect of the 2008/09 Programme, a Sub-Committee comprising the Chair, Deputy Chair, County Councillor Hazel Harding and Councillor Tony Swain, be established, with power to act, in considering supplementary schemes for inclusion in 2008/09 Programme and that the Sub-Committee be requested, also, to consider further the inclusion of the scheme for an additional lighting column on Woodlands Close, Newchurch.

21. Resolved:- That,

(a) That, the amended programme of highways schemes to be funded from the Standard Allocation Budget and the Additional Highway Maintenance Budget for 2008/09 as set out in Appendix A to the report now presented be approved subject to the proposed scheme for an additional lighting column on Woodlands Close, Newchurch being deferred;

(b) that in the light of the probability that additional monies would be had available by the County Council for highways related works, in order to be in a position to act quickly in respect of the 2008/09 Programme, a Sub-Committee comprising the Chair, Deputy Chair, County Councillor Hazel Harding and Councillor Tony Swain, be established, with power to act, in considering supplementary schemes for inclusion in 2008/09 Programme and that the Sub-Committee be requested, also, to consider further the inclusion of the scheme for an additional lighting column on Woodlands Close, Newchurch.

Item of Urgent Business  
Haslingden Street Fair

(With the agreement of the Chair the following report was considered as an item of Urgent Business at the meeting as the event described in the report}
was to take place on the 6th September and could not await the next meeting of the Lancashire Local on the 15th September)

It was reported that Haslingden Street Fair was an annual event arranged by the Community Action for Rossendale Group. The Group had submitted a request for assistance with the costs of arranging the necessary temporary road closure to enable the event to take place. The costs involved totalled £700. The County Council’s Cabinet Member for Highways and Planning had referred the request to the Lancashire Local for consideration for funding through its budget allocation.

22. Resolved:- That, an initial allocation of £500 be made to the Community Action for Rossendale Group towards the costs of arranging the temporary closure to allow the Haslingden Street Fair to take place, the allocation to be met from the balance available in the highways budget allocation and that the allocation of the remaining £200 to the Community Action for Rossendale Group be referred to the Sub-Committee established previously to consider supplementary highway schemes for inclusion in the 2008/09 highways programme.

Primary Capital Programme

The Lancashire Local received a report which set out at, Appendix A, the Strategy for Change which was to be submitted by the County Council to the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required by national guidelines issued in relation to the Primary Capital Programme. Appendix B to the report outlined priorities for investment covering the period 2009/10 to 2013/14 and had involved an analysis of all primary schools in the County. It was noted that a further report would be presented following the response of the Government Department to the Authority’s submission.

Comments expressed by Members were as follows:-

• Concern was expressed that the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative should not create a backlog by generating slippage. It was explained that the Primary Capital Programme was separate from BSF and related to the primary phase. County Councillor Hazel Harding commented that a priority for Rossendale was the replacement of Waterfoot Primary School.

• The availability of reception year places was of concern, given that applications exceeded places available. It was noted that forecast pupil numbers were based on birth rates and housing development approvals. It was proposed to undertake more extensive forecasts. Councillor Alyson Barnes was particularly interested in projections for her own area and it was agreed that this information should be provided to her direct.

• Concern was expressed about the future of schools in rural areas. It was noted that Government policy included a presumption against
closure of rural schools and it was the intention to consider how such schools could benefit from the Primary Capital Programme.

23. **Resolved:** That the report be received and that the comments of the Lancashire Local be taken into consideration as part on the on-going process of review of the Programme’s aims and objectives.

**Childcare Sufficiency Assessments in Lancashire – Sub Local Authority Area Report – Rossendale**

A report was presented which analysed the supply of childcare available in the Rossendale District, demand from parents and potential gaps in childcare provision as a first step in developing a strategy for securing sufficient childcare places. This would be done by working with local providers and tailoring services to the particular needs of children and families. This exercise was being carried out in each if the twelve districts in Lancashire, for which purpose each District has been divided into two or three Sub Local Authority Areas. The Rossendale District had been divided into two such areas – Rossendale East and Rossendale West. Comprehensive reports were provided in respect of each area in Appendices A and B.

The key issues arising from the report were:

- work with Jobcentre Plus to ensure sufficient childcare was available for lone parents moving from Income Support to Job Seekers Allowance, initially for the 11-14 year age group;
- work with providers to meet the needs of disabled children and their families.

Members enquired if, as part of the on-going assessment of population and need, account was taken of the numbers of children arriving in Rossendale from Rochdale and other locations outside the District. It was confirmed that work was being done on this aspect.

24. **Resolved:** That the report be received and that a report be presented to a future meeting to provide an update on the work taking place to ensure the childcare welfare of children arriving in the District from cross-border locations.

**Rawtenstall Bus Station – Update**

A report was presented to update the Lancashire Local on proposals for the provision of a new bus station in Rawtenstall. Extensive discussions had been taking place with Rossendale Transport and LIDL who proposed to open a new store on the bus depot site. Rossendale transport had recently secured Planning permission for a new bus depot in Haslingden, which had allowed LIDL to progress its own Planning permission for a new store on the bus depot site. LIDL had agreed to transfer a small strip of land on the bus station site to the County Council for bus station purposes and, subject to the County Council acquiring the site of the Employment Exchange and
necessary statutory procedures the way would be clear to begin construction of the new Bus Station. Given the timescales for this and securing of full funding, it was intended that the bus station construction would begin in 2011/12. It had been necessary to fully allocate funding from the current Local Transport Plan (LTP) and 2011/12 would be the start of the next Transport Plan.

Concern was expressed by the Borough council members that funding for the Bus Station no longer featured in the County Council’s LTP. Assurances were given on behalf of the County Council that there remained a strong commitment to the project and that the necessary provision would be made in the budget to ensure that funding was in place at the start of the next LTP.

Enquiries were made about use by the X43 Service of the new Bus Station. It was confirmed that the operator, Transdev, had indicated that the service would use the bus station, but that factors such as delays to the service through traffic congestion might influence that decision; this was, however, a matter for the operator.

It was asked if the acquisition of the Employment Exchange, building was crucial to the provision of the bus station. It was confirmed that this would be necessary if the project was to proceed.

**25. Resolved:-** That the report be noted and that a further report be requested to a future meeting on the progress being made on site acquisition issues and on the design for the bus station.

**Highways Overview**

In the absence of a formal report, it was agreed that a report be presented to the September meeting of the Lancashire Local on highways issues in the District.

In response to a request made from the floor by Councillor Alan Neal, it was further agreed that a report be presented to the next meeting on local safety issues relating to speeding on Market Street, Whitworth.

From the floor, a representative from the Chamber of Commerce asked if the County Council had any plans to upgrade the pedestrian crossing adjacent to the market in Rawtenstall. It was confirmed that no funding was available at present, but that the issue be referred to the Sub-Committee established by the Lancashire Local earlier in the meeting, for consideration.

The Area Manager (East) updated Members on progress on maintenance work on Grane Road, Haslingden. The advance signage of road closure had proven effective and surface dressing on the first phase of the work would be completed at the weekend. A further closure of the road would take place for the week commencing 11th August for the final phase of the works.
County Council Issues Raised at Neighbourhood Forums

The Assistant District Partnership Officer presented a report on matters raised at recent meetings of the Rossendale Neighbourhood Forums. A list of the issues raised and a note of the action was presented as Appendix A.

Comments were made in relation to four of the issues as follows:-

Whitworth – request for speed restrictions on Tonnacliffe Road: it was reported by County Councillor Serridge that Whitworth Town Council might be prepared to assist with funding for signage.

Haslingden – request for warning sign to be erected near riding stables on Chatterton Road: Clarification was sought about who was investigating the matter – the Assistant District Partnership Officer undertook to follow up the enquiry.

Haslingden – overgrown and untidy roundabout on Bolton Road North: clarification was provided that the funding referred to in the report had been agreed on the basis that over the five year period the funding would be agreed in each of the five years, ie annually.

Rawtenstall – comments were made from the floor on behalf of local parents by Councillor J Gledhill regarding admissions to Crawshawbooth Primary School in 2008. The reference in Appendix A to the report to the school having been undersubscribed in 2007 was challenged and information was given that the school had been fully subscribed initially and numbers had only fallen because of the departure of some pupils. It was also commented that it was incorrect that applications for places at the school had been rejected on grounds of lack of space; it was contended that the rejections had been necessary as a result of a decision of the school governors to adhere strictly to the admissions policy and not exercise discretion to admit. It was agreed that the issues be looked into by the officers and a response provided to Councillor Gledhill as quickly as possible.

26. Resolved:- That the report be noted.

Help Direct Gateways and Improving Well-Being in Districts of Lancashire

(Councillor Alyson Barnes declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter and left the room during discussion of item).

It was reported that in April, 2008, the Lancashire local had received a report outlining the development of Help Direct Gateways. It had been proposed to establish Steering Groups in each District to help develop the emerging Help Direct Gateways and to include a member of each the Lancashire Locals.
In April, the Lancashire Local had deferred making an appointment to the Steering Group for Rossendale pending the Annual Meeting. The Lancashire local was now asked to consider making such an appointment.

27. Resolved:- That Councillor June Forshaw be appointed to the Help Direct Gateway Steering Group for Rossendale as the representative of Lancashire Local – Rossendale.

Future Business

A report was presented setting out, at the Appendix, a schedule of main agenda items identified for consideration at future meetings of the Lancashire Local as an aid to planning agendas for these meetings.

The Business Plan would be supplemented by the addition of items requested by Members of the Lancashire Local and report brought forward from time to time requiring the attention of the Lancashire Local. There would also be items for decision under delegated powers, which could not at this stage be foreseen.

28. Resolved:- That the Future Business Plan as now presented be agreed, subject to appropriate amendment to reflect requests for reports to future meetings from this meeting and that a report on the outcome of the recent Joint Area Review be included in the Programme for submission to a future meeting.

Urgent Business Procedure

A report was presented explaining the use of the Urgent Business Procedure for dealing with business deemed to be sufficiently urgent as to be unable to be held over until a scheduled meeting of the Lancashire Local. The report described the practice which would be followed for the future.

29. Resolved:- That the report be noted.

Urgent Business

No further Urgent Business was reported.

Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of Lancashire Local – Rossendale would be held on Monday, 15th September, 2008 at 6.30 p.m. at Haslingden High School, Broadway, Haslingden.

IM Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor
County Hall,
Preston