

MINUTES OF THE FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 8PM ON MONDAY 23rd JULY 2012 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr Alex Smith

Cllrs G Bartos, Ms R Horsman, Mrs S Horsman, B Lewis, G Smith

Attending under SO53: P Hoyland, H Murray, R E West

PART A

Questions from Members of the Public

Chris Halsall of Chandypore, Woodford Road, was present, and explained that Graham O'Connell of Cheshire East Highways had raised an objection in writing to three planters placed by Mr Halsall at the junction of Woodford Road and Chester Road, and have given him 28 days to remove them. Cllr Lewis felt this was wholly unreasonable. The officer had provided an alternative solution, which involved the Town Council indemnifying Cheshire East for the placement and retention of the planters.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk notifies Cheshire East Council that the Town Council will indemnify Cheshire East for the placement and retention of the planters (4 - 2abs)

Ian Evans of Pickwick Road was also present. He is a local builder, and wanted to bring to the Committee's attention the poor condition of Poynton's sewers which, according to an assessment of NW Water back in 1989, were either Victorian or even Edwardian, and were in poor condition, and unable to be upgraded. This was particularly true of the sewer that goes down Dickens Lane, across London Road and through the Queensway estate – this was at capacity. The public sewer was simply not big enough, and larger pipes were required.

There followed some debate about this issue, with Councillors suggesting that United Utilities should be funding a major overhaul of the sewers, and encouraging Cheshire East Council to liaise with UU on a forward plan for the next 20 years. Councillors concluded by suggesting that the inadequate sewerage system was a constraint on development, and needed to be taken into account in the current discussions on the Town Strategy.

11. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs N Cowan and G King

12. Declarations of interest

None declared

13. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2012

Page 19 – Cllr Lewis asked why the Town Council had approved expenditure of £300 to provide material for the repair of a road/track owned by Cheshire East. This served both the scout hut and the Coppice Road allotments. The Clerk explained that this expenditure had been properly approved at the previous meeting, and he assumed that every effort had been made by our former Operations Officer to get Cheshire East to fund the repair. As it was, the Town Council only agreed to purchase the material, with the scouts agreeing to carry out the repair itself. Cllr Murray said that we had taken advantage of some free labour, while Cllr Hoyland said he agreed in principle that Cheshire East should have accepted responsibility, but that in reality some £100m was required to bring all the roads within Cheshire East up to standard – only a fraction of that amount was available in the Cheshire East budget.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2012 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman (NC)

14. School Lane Revitalisation Working Group

Cllr Alex Smith spoke to his written update, with the only revision being that the new combined planter/bike rack being trialled at School Lane was found to be too small and not sufficiently robust – alternative planters and bike racks would need to be sourced. He was asking Councillors to receive his report, approve the expenditure, and give the Group delegated authority to move forward on this revitalisation project.

Cllr West said that this retail complex was private property, and that it was difficult to get landlords to do anything. The large Co-op delivery trucks had caused a disproportionate amount of damage to the car park, but would not contribute to repairs. Cllr Lewis said that the Co-op artics no longer accessed the rear car park, but parked in front of the store. He went on to suggest that Environmental Health look at the car park under Health and Safety regulations. He was adamant that Town Council funds should not be used on private property, or at least only as a last resort.

Cllr West said that we perhaps need to look at the legal aspects of back charging for repairs. Cllr Alex Smith explained that we were only looking at improving the frontage – landlords will be making improvements to the façade of the buildings. While he was happy to take Councillors' comments on board he was asking for approval to move forward on other areas, as a carrot to the

owners. Cllr Murray suggested that Cllrs West and Alex Smith investigate legal ways of enforcement.

Cllr Alex Smith said he had meetings with Cheshire East about this project and, while they would not agree to pay for e.g. bollard replacement, they were supportive in terms of design, with assistance coming from the CE Highways Officer Graham O'Connell.

RESOLVED: That the report be received, and that the recommendations contained in it be approved, including the release of funding up to £3,000 to effect the various improvements outlined in the report (5 – 1 against)

15. Queensway Revitalisation Working Group

Cllr Graham Smith spoke to his report, and circulated maps indicating the three zones in the Queensway area being considered by the Group. He said the whole area was in a bad state, and that his Group was concentrating on Zones 2 and 3, and wanted to canvas the views of retailers and residents.

Cllr West said the picture was changing at Queensway. Morrison's had expanded considerably, and that limited car parking was now more of an issue than before. Wetherspoons has submitted a planning application to start refurbishing the former Kings public house – the Town Council had recommended refusal due their plans for a large outside terrace close to residential property. Cllr Hoyland informed the meeting that he and Cllr Mrs Saunders are due to meet with the Wetherspoons Regional Manager.

Councillors then debated the nature of the questions due to be asked of retailers and residents, the lack of parking at both School Lane and Queensway, while Cllr Murray mentioned a possible conflict of interest for Queensway owners, inasmuch as if the area is improved then business rates, which are due for review in 2013, could increase.

Cllr West said that improved parking facilities generally should feature in the draft Town Strategy. Cllr Alex Smith said he had made that point, while Cllr Lewis suggested that the large empty area of the Brookfield Hydro could be used for parking, at say 20p per hour. He went on to ask if the owners of the old cinema could be forced to make improvements to that property, which was becoming increasingly dilapidated. Cllr Murray said that Cllr Clarke had previously investigated this with Cheshire East, but without success.

RESOLVED: That the report be received; that Cheshire East Council be approached to improve the footpaths in Zone 3 (London Road South, opposite the old cinema and the Texaco site); that the questionnaires be reviewed as the Group see fit; and that the recommendations at the conclusion of the report be approved (NC)

16. Recruitment of an Operations and Events Manager

The Clerk provided Councillors with a verbal update on this. Seven shortlisted candidates had been selected by the Clerk, Cllr Mrs Sewart and Cllr Alex Smith. They had interviewed six of them earlier that day, while the interview of the seventh candidate will take place on Friday 3rd August. While three showed promise, three had been ruled out. Nothing further could be reported until the last interview had happened.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk's verbal update be received (NC)

17. Poynton Show: Easement of the Byelaws

RESOLVED: That action taken under SO 48 on 25th June 2012 concerning a request for an easement of Poynton's Byelaws for the 112th Poynton Show on 25th August 2012 be noted (NC)

18. Cheshire East consultation on Public Transport

RESOLVED: That the Town Council's response to the above consultation be noted (NC)

PART B (Removed)

**The public and media are not admitted to PART B of this meeting –
Standing Order 69(b)(iv) refers**

The meeting concluded at 9.30m