

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held remotely on Monday 11 January 2021 commencing at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors: M. Brady (in the Chair) I. Aldcroft, M. Baines, J. Bostocksmith, S. Burke, S. Chadwick, A. Coward, S. Denton, D. Grant, S. Rock, C. Rotheram, G. Stone, P. Wright.
C. Morris, Deputy Town Clerk.

Councillor R. Silvester, Ward Councillor Horwich North East
Councillor K. McKeon, Ward Councillor Horwich North East
2 members of the public.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 7222 None.

TO REMIND MEMBERS TO MAKE A DECLARATION CONCERNING ANY MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE MEETING OF WHICH THEY HAVE AN INTEREST:

FG 7223 None.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT MAY PUT QUESTIONS OR MAKE OBSERVATIONS REGARDING MATTERS IN RELATION TO WHICH THE TOWN COUNCIL HAS POWERS OR DUTIES OR WHICH AFFECT THE PARISH. MAXIMUM PERIOD 15 MINUTES:

FG 7224 None.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2020:

FG 7225 Resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 7 December 2020.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE REVIEW SUB COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY ON 7 JANUARY 2021:

FG 7226 Resolved to approve the minutes of the Community Centre Sub Committee held on 7 January 2021 with an amendment made to the meeting finishing time to read 11.38am.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR BRADY TO CONSIDER SAMP PROPOSALS FOR LAND WITHIN HORWICH, TO DISCUSS EXISTING AND FUTURE PURPOSE AND TO DISCUSS FUNDING AND OTHER COSTS:

FG 7227 Bolton Council had developed a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) 2020-2025 and operating framework within each section E7 (Estates Optimisation) provided for the disposal of surplus land following a review of the Council's land holdings, that would contribute capital receipts and land for housing, education purposes and other strategic and non-strategic purposes. The SAMP was approved at Bolton Council Cabinet on 5th October 2020. The first realise was SAMP1 which included 3 pieces of land. The first piece of land was the car park behind Longworth road which was deferred from SAMP on 29th December 2020, the next piece of land was between Telford Street and Thirlmere Avenue was also deferred from SAMP on the same date.

Councillor Brady requested if Telford street could be deferred to allow Horwich Town Council to discuss future purpose should the Town Council wish to acquire the land.

Land between Telford St and Thirlmere venue – deferred from SAMP1 on 29 December

At present, the land at Telford street is a field which currently doesn't have planning permission and was not included within the 2014 allocations plan. At the current time, the land is used for informal play and dog walking. The land had been independently valued in the region of £150k. The Council could consider purchasing the land either through raising the precept or acquiring a bank loan but the Town Council would need to ensure viability and feasibility of purchasing the land. Ideas that the Town Council could consider are:

- to apply to the Woodland Trust for free trees (the number of trees available would be dependant on the size of the land).
- to create a children's adventure playground,
- nature reserve or a community planting event.

A member suggested that the land would be an ideal opportunity to create a junior playing field as part of the 'Playing Pitch Strategy' due to the loss of other land within Horwich. If Horwich Town Council decided they didn't want to obtain the land; a request could be put forward to place a caveat on the land to stop developers building residential homes due to the increased amount of development currently in Horwich. Another approach could be to set up a not-for-profit trust for recreational and sporting use as then the Council would be able to apply for grants.

Concerns were raised that residents could be disgruntled if Horwich Town Council were expected to raise the precept to purchase the land that is within Horwich from Bolton Town Council as the cost of the land was two-thirds of the precept. Members pointed out that the Town Council couldn't save all pieces of land or purchase all available land. Members also considered that although initially the land would be £150k, additionally, maintenance costs would need to be considered annually.

Land adj. 244 Chorley New Road – disposal under SAMP1 on 29th December

This land was approved on 29th December and as the land did not fall within the Horwich North East Ward, representation was not put in by Councillor Brady although Councillor Baines put in representation but learnt that residents wouldn't be begrudged by the sale of the land. Councillor Chadwick informed members that he had spoken with Councillor Cunliffe who had also put in representation. Councillor Wright was unsure whether he had raised an objection and would have to check. He was aware that Bolton Council needed to raise funds and was aware the piece of land was prime for development but felt Horwich shouldn't lose out on anymore land to build more houses on.

Councillor Brady stated that the area was a tiny site and had visited there with Charlene Bessell who was a member of 'Clean up Brigade which had all cleared up the site after having a skip put at the location, only for the land to be included within SAMP. Sale has been approved for the land so unless a 'Friends of Horwich

Green Spaces' had been established for community use and then could have asked Bolton Council for a community asset transfer, there is lack of provision of what could be done.

Councillor Stone said it was a very small area and remembers doing a litter pick at the location and recalls that the area did attract a lot of litter and was generally against anything on Chorley New Road due to the amount of traffic there is but the land is so small and felt this was one of the trade off's. Councillor Brady reiterated that the land had already been signed off and agreed.

Councillor Chadwick felt very strongly about this piece of land being signed off and had contacted Councillor Cox to discuss this as there is a similar piece of land within Blackrod although the one in Blackrod is well utilised. Councillor Chadwick informed members that this was the only green space on that side to sit down between the Crown pub and Queens park on Chorley New Road. £10k would be negligible and although the site would require maintenance, he felt these costs would be fairly minimal. Councillor Chadwick said he foresaw a scenario where the Town Council could take on relatively easily and cheaply as wouldn't be that much maintenance and it had not been maintained for years. If the Town Council was to employ additional roles in the future such as a Ranger or Lengths man then that could be within their role or alternatively community groups could maintain it but if it's not there to be maintained then it is gone. Cllr Chadwick had requested an agenda item but as the current motion was similar in its request, it would negate the previous email agenda item requested. He wanted to see Horwich Town Council investigate ways of taking on this specific piece of land and was aware that not all pieces of land could be saved and nor should the Council do this as some may not be useful and Bolton need to offload what's either costing them money or no longer required. Councillor Chadwick asked the question whether Horwich Town Council wished to step up and obtain the land.

Councillor Rotheram said this parcel was prime development land as either side of the blocks were houses. His relative used to live directly across from Kildonan house near Stephenson's Street and the land was in disrepair in 1988 and that was down to Bolton Council not maintaining it and it has always been an eyesore. If it was sold then it would be for potential development as its similar on the left and right side of the land. Councillor Rotheram said it was a shame that the piece of land has been recently been brought back to life but it still has to be maintained and that Councillor Chadwick underestimates the cost of maintenance including liability in case a member of the public was to have an incident and claim.

Councillor Brady highlighted that there was a piece of large grassed land at the side of this on the bottom of Fairbairn Street which would be a better location for children as it was off the main road. If the council were to do anything, this would be the piece of land requiring TLC. This could be done through the 'Friends of Horwich Green Spaces' which has already been discussed and look at other green areas that could possibly be included in future SAMPS and start putting something in place to protect them as with land adj. to 244 Chorley New Road, Councillor Brady felt that the horse had already bolted.

Councillor Chadwick proposed a motion to contact Bolton Council to investigate if Horwich Town Council could take it on. Councillor Brady said in principle she would ask at Bolton whether the land could be transferred to Horwich Town

Council rather than be purchased. Councillor Grant informed members that Councillor Brady was only reporting to the Council on information she had received and that the Council was unable to make any decision regarding the piece of land due to not being a motion on the agenda and that Councillor Brady could ask the query regarding the land at Bolton Council and then have an agenda item regarding this as items not on the agenda could not be discussed due to be unlawful.

Cllr Grant wanted to point out that Bolton Council weren't going to transfer the funds to Horwich from any of the land sales within Horwich.

Cedar Avenue, Consultation opened 4th January for 20 working days – SAMP3

Councillor Brady informed members that consultation for the land opened on 4th January for 20 working days and the value of the land was currently unknown. The land is an infill site with buildings either side and was previously part of the Brazley library site. The trees on the land could have TPO's placed on them if requested. There was a dedicated SAMP email address to allow individuals to put forward their views or objections and would distribute this information.

The land is split into 3 parcels of land which Councillor Brady was going to clarify the boundary outline at Bolton.

Councillor Chadwick enquired as to whether the other Ward Councillors or Horwich North East had any further information regarding the parcel of land.

Resolved to move out of committee to allow members of the public to speak.

Councillor Silvester had advised the church of the parcel of land at the front as it goes across the driveway. The Reverends were going to put this forward to the church PCC however, Councillor Silvester had raised this at Bolton requesting that the land be issued to St Elizabeth's Church. If the church doesn't wish to take it over then that piece of land should not be sold. Councillor Silvester also questioned Bolton as to whether the boundary outline was correct. If the large piece of land is sold, then a condition should be placed to ensure a footpath is built between St Elizabeth's, Cedar Avenue and Chorley New Road.

Councillor McKeon informed members that he had agreed with Councillor Silvester's proposals. There had been a campaign to protect Cedar Avenue field to make a Village Green and there was an understanding to save the Village Green that surrounding parcels of land may not be able to be saved from development in the future. Councillor McKeon said he would rather see the likes of land at Telford Street and Longworth Road to be saved.

Councillor Brady informed members that she had not put in any objections regarding the carpark at Longworth Road as the road leading to it is currently unadopted and didn't think it was suitable for parking. The land is currently informally used as a car park but Councillor McKeon expressed how the land should not be sold and to be used more formally as a car park and to have a proper layout as more parking is required within Horwich Centre.

Councillor McKeon was attracted to the idea of informal space and development of trees for the land at Telford street and was aware £100k was coming from Bolton Council which could be used to purchase the land. He also informed members that

although the 'Playing Pitch Strategy' sounded enticing, it would be worth contacting Malcolm Russell at Bolton Council to enquire the need for that provision as anecdotally, people would say there is a requirement but there needs to be an objective look at the current situation and how many teams there are and if they require a pitch. Pitches require maintenance and to be cautious not to over provide.

Resolved to move back into committee

Resolved to contact Joanne Ivison – Head of Services and Councillor Cox regarding the Land at Telford Street and to approve the formation of a working party which consists of Councillor Grant, Chadwick, Rotheram and Stone to write a report on initiatives for Telford Street to then be put before Bolton Council. Councillor Brady to enquire at Bolton Council to request in principle a transfer of land at Fairbairn Street to Horwich Town Council and to distribute the SAMP email address for members to put forward their views. Councillor Brady to enquire at Bolton Council regarding the land adj. to 244 Chorley New Road and report back to Council and to include a motion at the next Finance and General Purposes meeting to state 'Horwich Town Council to contact Bolton Council to investigate the possibility of acquiring the land adj. 244 Chorley New Road.'

TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM COUNCILLOR CHADWICK THAT HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL WRITE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO REQUEST A PRINCIPAL AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW OF HORWICH:

FG 7228 Councillor Chadwick circulated a report to outline the reasonings behind the request. There is currently a Boundary review being undertaken which looks at the size and number of wards within Bolton. The Boundary Commission review doesn't take into account external boundaries of Bolton therefore this requires a separate request to the Secretary of State. As per Section 8(1) Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 states 'The Boundary Commission may look either at their own initiative or at the request of the local authority or at the request of the Secretary of State conduct a review on one or more government areas.' The Boundary Commission will review the area if there is an anomaly or would only review if a district asked for a review. Councillor Chadwick said it would make sense to contact the Secretary of State as to whether a review could be done. A review would allow for public consultation where residents views and opinions could be put forward which would be the first time in 49 years. However, a review may not be granted which would mean the boundaries would remain unchanged. The request is not asking for a particular outcome other than to ask whether a review could be carried out. Members expressed other matters to consider such as if Horwich was to leave Bolton Authority, it would also no longer be under Greater Manchester depending on which Authority it merged with.

Resolved to consider a request from Councillor Chadwick that Horwich Town Council write to the Secretary of State to request a principal area boundary review of Horwich. It was also resolved for Councillor Chadwick to draft the letter on behalf of Horwich Town Council and will forward to the Clerks for approval.

TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM COUNCILLOR CHADWICK THAT HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL WRITE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO REQUEST A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF THE HORWICH PARISH BOUNDARY:

FG 7229 Councillor Chadwick informed members that a review of the parish boundary is required to include all of Middlebrook Retail Park, Horwich Parkway Train Station (the triangle of land bordering the Red Moss, M61 and De Havilland Way) and to also include the Parklands in addition to the land behind the Parklands. It was felt that if the boundary was amended to reflect these changes that in future if any of this land was developed on, it would allow Horwich Town Council to be consulted and make representation. If houses were built, this would increase the number of residents contributing to the precept which could ideally keep low but also allow the Town Council to provide more services. A precedent in amending parish boundaries has been set with the creation of Westhoughton Town Council in 1985 as Bolton Council requested a review in 1983. The M61 was taken to be the boundary between Horwich and Blackrod, meaning land near Blackrod Railway Station was transferred to Blackrod, whilst land near Red Moss was transferred to Horwich. This motion believes that further rationalisation makes sense.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 “devolves” the power to principal authority. Devolution is the delegation of power to a lower level, especially by central government to local or regional administration. Bearing this in mind, it may be appropriate to also write to Bolton Council. The request to write to the Secretary of State regarding this motion in conjunction with the previous motion is to provide the opportunity to review the Horwich local governance arrangements in a holistic way.

There is currently an internal boundary review of Bolton Council being undertaken to look at the borough wards, however this will not focus on the Horwich Parish boundary.

The land that is being sought to be reviewed to be included within the parish boundary is already included within the Horwich and Blackrod Ward and would only require this to be aligned with what is already represented at Bolton Council and feels the request isn't too controversial which is another reason to include Bolton Council in the Secretary of State's correspondence.

Resolved to consider a request from Councillor Chadwick that Horwich Town Council write to the Secretary of State to request a Community Governance review of the Horwich Parish boundary and to also send the letter to Bolton Council. It was also resolved to agree that Councillor Chadwick would draft this letter on behalf of the Town Council and will forward it to the Clerks for approval.

TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 7230 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment amounting to £1,370.59.

C. Hutchinson – direct debit (Re-imburement for purchase Of McAfee anti-virus software for 12 months)	£ 22.99
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HR Solutions – direct debit payment (HR Retainer – January 2021)	£ 165.60
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Franking Sense

(Quarterly rental for Xerox 7200i With finisher – period 13/01/21 – 12/04/21)	£ 450.00
Leach Briely Accountants (Completion of payroll from 1 September 2020 To 30 November 2020 inc. auto enrolment and real time)	£ 222.00
Craftprint (10 shop local wraps and 50 shop local signs)	£ 510.00

TOWN CLERKS REPORT (EMAILED TO MEMBERS) – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 7231
- a. Bolton West Neighbourhood: Newsletter Oct-Dec 2020
 - b. Bolton and South Lancashire Community Rail Partnership:12-month overview
 - c. NALC: Coronavirus updates
 - d. NALC: Chief executives' bulletin
 - e. NALC: Standards Matter 2: Public Consultation and public sector surveys

The Town Clerk's report was noted.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 7232
- a. Town Mayor – The Mayoral Ball which was to be held in 2019 had been postponed until a later date but due to continual restrictions and national lockdowns, it was looking highly unlikely that it can go ahead, Refunds will be being issued.

b. Horwich Ward Councillors – Councillor Wright informed members that he was continuing with case work and had been contacted by a resident regarding the multiple accidents occurring on Winter Hey Lane/Lee Lane Junction.

Councillor Brady informed members that there had been 3 road traffic accidents at the Winterhey/Lee Lane junction was going to write to Highways and Engineering to contact TfGM as they operate the lights. Since the accidents have occurred within a short period, there could have been an issue with the phasing of the lights although aware that drivers do jump red lights but won't know any further information until it's been investigated.

Regarding Medway Drive, Councillor Brady contacted the Borough Solicitor to request a list of assets which had gone to PSP LLP. Councillor Brady already had information on land up to 2018 but required the more up to date information. Councillor Brady was informed that Bolton Council were the leaseholder and freeholder for the land at Medway Drive until October 2018 when it was transferred to PSP LLP. The leasehold was then sold to Greenmount Securities Landmark Collections in 2020. If the trees had been planted before 1801, these would belong to the freeholder. Those planted after 1801 would belong to the leaseholder.

With regards to prosecutions, The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protects listed species and the habitat. The Borough Solicitor is looking into this in regards to bats residing and their habitat. This is a police matter but it is unsure

whether it would be instigated by the Council as the landowner or residents. Bolton Council will be addressing this under representation at Planning. Anything over 5m³ requires a felling licence issued by the forestry commission. The residents calculated the felled tree area at 15 m³. The Forestry Commission attended and assessed the site but still awaiting information from this. As this has happened, Councillor Brady is ensuring there are orders on other pieces of land to avoid this from occurring again.

Councillor Brady informed members that Bolton Council do not put TPO's on their own trees.

Horwich and Blackrod still had no venue determined for being a COVID-19 vaccination hub for 2 GP's. Market Surgery (Bolton Community Practice) patients will attend Water Meetings Road. Patients from Unsworth Surgery, Blackrod will attend Westhoughton. Pike Moor and Kildonan House have still not been able to secure a venue. A team's meeting between Cllr Brady, McKeon and Baines will be being held on 12th January to try and progress this along. The Horwich Community Centre has been contacted to be a potential venue but was still awaiting a response on whether it had passed the criteria to be a vaccine hub.

Councillor Brady informed members that a Licencing application for Chicco's to sell alcohol had been put in if members wanted to make comments.

c. Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies as per the approved list- Councillor Denton informed members that she had a meeting on Thursday with Horwich Angels and would report at the next meeting.

Reports from Representatives were noted.

TO APPROVE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AS 11 JANUARY 2021:

FG 7233 Resolved to approve the date of the next meeting as 11 January 2021. The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Chair.....

Date.....