

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Council Chamber, Public Hall, Lee Lane, Horwich on Monday 8 August 2022 commencing at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors: D. Grant (in the Chair) M. Baines, J. Bostocksmith, M. Brady, S. Burke, S. Chadwick, C. Rotheram, G. Stone, S. Williamson, P. Wright. C. Hutchinson, Town Clerk.
Ward Councillors Horwich North East: Councillor K. McKeon, Councillor R. Silvester
2 members of the public.

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 7449 Councillor Grant outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

FG 7450 Apologies were accepted from Councillors Aldcroft, Coward and Denton.

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

FG 7451 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 7452 Resolved to move out of Committee.

Comments made by members of the public included a query concerning Bolton Council's plans for the area of land on Telford Street identified under SAMP proposals and a request made that Horwich Town Council formally write to Bolton Council and also raise the issue with Ward Councillors for Horwich North East regarding their actions on this matter.

It was also queried why proposed plans for traffic alleviation measures at the Beehive roundabout and De Havilland Way had changed after public consultation. Also, the validity of the data presented by Highways was challenged, as the plans would shift traffic to nearby residential areas and residents had not been adequately consulted. There had been three public meetings, where the majority who attended were against the proposals presented and it was of some concern that officers accepted the use of outdated data. When the matter M61 J7 was raised, it had been stated that there were no current plans to progress this, but this changed after consultation had finished. A request was made for Horwich Town Council to contact the Levelling Up Committee expressing concern about the inadequacy of the public consultation on these matters.

In response to comments regarding recreational land at Telford Street, Councillor Silvester speaking in his capacity as a Ward Councillor confirmed that these were incorrect as all three Ward Councillors for Horwich North East had raised objections to both SAMP disposal consultations. Through the Area Forum a

number of proposals had been put forward and a response was awaited from Bolton Council, along with other requests such as speed activated signs on Lever Park Avenue.

Another member of the public commented on analysis of the data used in the Beehive/De Havilland Way presentation, stating that traffic numbers would worsen with the proposed changes and also make M61 junction more congested. No new data had been presented to support the reduction of traffic numbers as claimed in the presentation and traffic would be shifted to residential areas off Chorley New Road with exit points not addressed. There had been inadequate consultation with residents with no alternative options presented.

The Chair informed members of the public that requests for Town Council would require specific agenda items which could be requested by Members at a future date, although it was anticipated that some of these issues would be discussed on later in the meeting. Members of the public were thanked for their attendance.

Resolved to move back into Committee.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 JUNE 2022:

FG 7453 Resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 13 June 2022.

TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM COUNCILLOR CHADWICK THAT HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL WRITES TO CHRIS GREEN MP AND SIR LINDSAY HOYLE MP REQUESTING THEY LOBBY THE RELEVANT MINISTER REGARDING THE MISSING M61 JUNCTION 7:

FG 7454 Councillor Chadwick informed Members that the biggest issue in Horwich is lack of infrastructure and the single biggest thing that could be done to alleviate this would be to increase capacity by building the missing M61 J7. It was accepted that this would take time and there would be various options for consideration, however, it was clear that there was a definite demand for J7. Some concern was expressed that the construction of J7 could potentially bring more development to the area and that a lot more could have been done over last 20 years by Planning and Highways and that there was a lack of accurate, up to date traffic analysis available. Members were in general agreement for this request, acknowledging that there was a lot of public support for J7 along with a lack of support for the Beehive/De Havilland Way proposals. Councillor Brady informed Members that it had been confirmed that J7 would be located in Chorley and while there was clear agreement for reducing congestion in Horwich, it needed to be done the right way and there were also possible plans for link road from M61 to M6 at Wigan to further alleviate traffic congestion. It was noted that bids to Highways England can take 10 – 20 years to come to fruition. There were concerns about the location of traffic connectors which did not always capture accurate flow and amount of traffic.

Resolved to approve the request from Councillor Chadwick that Horwich Town Council writes to Chris Green MP and Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP requesting they lobby the relevant Minister regarding the missing M61 Junction 7. Councillor Chadwick confirmed that he would email a draft with bullet points to the Town Clerk.

TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM COUNCILLOR CHADWICK THAT HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL WRITES TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE EXPRESSING ITS THOUGHTS ON PROPOSED PLANS FOR WORKS AT THE BEEHIVE ROUNDABOUT AND DE HAVILLAND WAY:

FG 7455 Concern was raised regarding the lack of consultation and additional information added after public consultation and that there would be negative net gain from the proposals and which would lead to further housing development. Councillor Brady advised Members that any queries regarding data and traffic modelling should be addressed to Bolton Council. It was important to note that the proposals were outline, not a final design, and had been submitted to fulfil the deadline for levelling up funding, and may change with more detail factored in at a later date. It was noted that measures requested for the Loco Works development over four years ago, had never happened, including a slip road to Station Road on to the A6 to disperse traffic, which had been affected by the Network Rail decision during bridge widening work. Some Members expressed the view that a negative attitude exists towards Horwich from certain Bolton Council departments and that Horwich Town Council should voice its concerns on behalf of the residents that it represented. It was also commented that the Dehavilland Way proposals do not just affect residents on that side of Horwich and that residents in other areas of the town may have a different opinion and they were not fully consulted either, in particular regarding the impact of J7.

Resolved to approve the request from Councillor Chadwick that Horwich Town Council writes to the Secretary of State expressing its thoughts on proposed plans for works at the Beehive roundabout and de Havilland Way. Councillor Chadwick confirmed that he would email a draft with bullet points to the Town Clerk.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE TELFORD STREET STEERING GROUP AND TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MOTION AND APPROVE FURTHER ACTION: 'THAT COUNCIL REQUESTS A COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER FROM BOLTON COUNCIL FOR LAND AT TELFORD STREET AND DEPENDING ON THE RESPONSE ALLOWS COUNCIL TIME TO LIAISE AND PRESENT POTENTIAL PLANS TO RESIDENTS FOR USE OF THE SITE AS MIXED MULTI-USE WITH DIFFERENT ZONES, TO INCLUDE A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY AND GIVE CONSIDERATION TO WAYS OF FUNDING THE PROJECT ONCE COSTS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED:

FG 7456 Councillor Grant informed Members that there had been a meeting of the Working Party where options for moving forward with the recreational land on Telford Street had been discussed. These included requesting a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) from Bolton Council and, subject to the response, consulting with local residents on potential plans. Proposals were for a mixed multi use area with zones including a pet park, a children's park, community orchard, and a small multi use grass playing area for use by local primary schools. Cllr Rotheram had agreed to create an artist's impression, and a community engagement survey would be required to bring residents along with the Town Council's vision for this valuable remaining green space in Horwich. This would require the Council to review its precept and consideration could be given to applying for grant funding and sponsorship from private companies, bringing forward the question of future investments in Horwich, including the employment of a Town Ranger to look after and maintain community space, or the creation of a similar group to Friends of Horwich Green Spaces for this purpose.

It was confirmed that this land came under SAMP in 2020 and in January 2021 Horwich Town Council resolved to agreed to set up a Working Party which had not met until this land came back under SAMP for the second time time in May 2022. The three Ward Councillors for Horwich North East had objected again and discussed various proposals under the Area Forum. The Executive Member for Regeneration had confirmed that it had been deferred once more, on the understanding this would be the last time, and reasonable propositions must be put forward. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the location was not of sufficient size for a 'pump park', which would cost approximately £250k to construct plus maintenance costs and would take up the majority of green space. Bolton Council had mentioned plans for planting trees around perimeter, and it was anticipated that dogs would be banned unless on the lead, with a fenced area and dog waste bins installed. An adult outdoor gym with 7 – 8 items of equipment would cost approximately £10k plus regular safety check costs could be a welcome addition.

There was agreement that it should be taken forward by the whole council and not individual Members or organisations and it was important to take it forward as Bolton Council's policy was for no new parks, due to maintenance costs. The Town Council as an independent body could undertake that responsibility and manage it. The three Ward Councillors for Horwich North East were also prepared to help. In response to a query the Town Clerk confirmed the resolution to form a Working Party had been included in the approved minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 11 January 2021, although had not yet been included on the website. It was noted that the LGA recommends more councils should take on assets transferred via CATs. There was agreement to include Ward Councillors to work with the Working Party to prevent the disposal of this land for the benefit of local residents.

Resolved that Council requests a Community Asset Transfer from Bolton Council for land at Telford Street and depending on the response allows Council time to liaise and present potential plans to residents for use of the site as mixed multi-use with different zones, to include a community engagement survey and give consideration to ways of funding the project once costs have been identified.

TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 7457 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment amounting to £ 6,659.20

Pixelcreated (Website updates)	41.00
Transfer to Mayor's Charity Account (Mayoral Allowance 2022 – 23)	1,000.00
Bolton Council (Town centre summer planting)	1,417.20
Hardman and Cain Ltd (Completion of works at Green Lane playing fields)	4,140.00

Payment to Pixelcreated was made in accordance with LGA 1972 s142 and to Bolton Council in accordance with LGA 1972 s144.

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

- FG 7458
- a. Horwich Ride Social: monitoring/feedback form for £500 grant awarded in October 2021.
 - b. Financial Report on Jubilee events 2/3/4 June 2022.
 - c. Bolton Community First Responders: thank you letter to Councillor Sue Denton for Mayoral donation of £2,000.
 - d. Summary of Town Councillors' casework.

The Town Clerk's report was noted.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 7459
- a. Town Mayor of Horwich

The Town Mayor informed Members that he had enjoyed an extremely busy few weeks and listed all engagements undertaken, including several Platinum Jubilee events, neighbouring Civic Sundays, concerts, new Heritage exhibition and graduation ceremonies at University of Bolton. The Deputy Town Mayor had also undertaken a couple of events on behalf of the Mayor.

- b. Horwich Ward Councillors

Councillor Grant – update on ongoing leaseholder issues.

Councillor Brady – aware of multiple complaints from the public regarding the closure of the children's play area on Old Station Park for 10 months during flood alleviation works. This was badly timed, starting during the school summer holidays and while aware the site would be dangerous for children queried why the new play area was not installed before closure.

Councillor Wright – attended Bolton Pride Festival; liaised with different parties regarding the rusting 'Ghost Train' at the roundabout near Tesco and possibility noted that Northstone developers may be able to assist with s106 funding for public art; confirmed children's playground on Old Station Park would be closed off for 10 months for health and safety reasons during flood alleviation works and in response to a query from Councillor Brady confirmed he would ask Bolton Council to address this matter

- c. Representatives on Outside Bodies

None.

TO CONFIRM THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AS 12 SEPTEMBER 2022:

- FG 7460 Resolved to confirm the date of the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee as 12 September 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.47 pm.

Chair..... Date.....