

NOTES OF THE NORTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE ONLINE CONSULTATION EVENT HELD 27 JANUARY, 2022

Councillor Alan Hooper, Chair of the North Local Area Committee, welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the procedure for how the meeting was to run and the housekeeping arrangements to help the meeting run as smoothly as possible. The Chair then invited Members and Officers to introduce themselves.

The Chair displayed onscreen the agenda for the meeting and explained the format for the meeting. He also noted that an item on a road safety scheme in Oughtibridge had been added to the agenda.

Report back on the public consultation on the Local Area Community Plan

David Luck, Area Manager, gave a presentation on the public consultation on the Local Area Plan.

Breakout Sessions

Members, officers, and members of the public were then placed into breakout sessions lasting approximately 40 minutes.

Feedback from breakout sessions

1. Transport and Highways

Lindsey Hill reported back to the group.

Most of the issues raised were around public transport, in particular reaching Stannington, Oughtibridge, Stocksbridge and rural areas. Concern was noted about changing and withdrawal of services, and lack of communication with these. Long journey times were an issue, and it was felt important to join up with Central LAC due to transport links with Hillsborough Interchange.

The following suggestions were made:

- Important to know that people's opinions had been listened to during public transport consultations that were held by the Mayor of South Yorkshire.
- Bus operators could look at routes that people wanted and could even take that journey so they can have experience of what it is like.
- Free or accessible travel was suggested. Adopting an Oyster card system or equivalent might encourage people to use public transport.
- The importance of linking up bus routes and providing timetables was noted.

- Investigations around rail link to Stocksbridge and the city centre was suggested.
- Personal experience from residents could be used rather than relying on statistical information when positioning of crossings is decided.
- Review of positioning of crossings to ensure safer roads. Also, the impact of new developments on existing crossings should be considered.
- Active travel – it was important to ensure developers fulfilled their promises, for example cycle routes.

2. Environment

Jason Siddall reported back to the meeting. In the discussion group they had talked about David's presentation and felt the feedback from the consultation process had been accurate. The main subject areas discussed were around cleanliness, dog fouling, over-development and parking issues.

- Important to preserve parks for the community and invest in equipment in parks to make them better places. Improving the local environment around parks might help local businesses and attract more into the area.
- Community groups were an asset and should be tapped into to help provide a sense of community involvement. Often people wanted to get involved but needed to be empowered in order to give up their time and invest in the local community.
- In terms of flytipping, graffiti and general cleanliness, current initiatives were working well in removing waste quickly, but also needed to be proactive in order to sustain this work and instil a sense of community pride.

3. Community life – group 1

David Luck outlined three main areas of discussion:

- Activities for young people - these were currently minimal but linking up with other providers in the area might help to bring this together.
- Communication – it was important to let people know what was going on and how this could be done – via website or a directory. Any information provided to communities needed to be up-to-date.
- Volunteering – how could this be developed? It was suggested that volunteers could be shared across different projects. Working together and building partnerships was considered important.

4. Community life - group 2

Anabela Araujo summarised the group's main discussions points:

- It was felt that there were not enough youth services on offer, and that young people in the community should be consulted in an informal way, not an official way.
- The North LAC area was made up of small, isolated groups, not helped by Covid restrictions. Some facilities were disappearing, eg post offices, phone boxes. Small community shops could benefit the community. Volunteers might be needed in order to help innovate. People who felt isolated could be encouraged to volunteer and might make friends.
- Digital provision in some rural areas was noted as being an issue.

Public questions

The Chair invited questions from members of the public.

Louis Farrington (read out by Councillor Hooper):

- When and how much will we see spent in improvements to Rivelin Park and Rivelin Water Park which are tired and degenerating or in disrepair.

The Chair noted that Rivelin park and Rivelin Water Park were great assets to the city, particularly in the summer months, and it was important to make sure they were improved and had money invested in them, in line with other parks across the city.

Councillor Baker added that she had spoken to Mr Farrington during the breakout session. There had been joint funding of around £30,000 and a consultation exercise had taken place that concluded in September. A final plan was expected to be available shortly. Rivelin Park had some good facilities and was a 'destination' park, but parking was limited. Councillor Baker said she would share further information with Mr Farrington once it was available.

The Chair added that some monies might be set aside for maintenance in parks, for example getting unsafe equipment back into service more quickly.

Ian McHugh:

- Mr McHugh raised concerns about the choice of Stannington Community Centre as a venue for a public LAC meeting. He felt the venue wasn't ideal in terms of tram and bus connections and also had dark and secluded access for pedestrians. He noted that his concerns had been discussed thoroughly

during the breakout session and asked that safe pedestrian access was considered when booking future meetings.

The Chair agreed and noted the difficulties that had been experienced in contacting and booking venues during the pandemic, and in Stannington there had been no other options available. He hoped that more facilities would become available when Covid restrictions allowed.

Dennis Paton (read out by the Chair):

- Blackburn Valley Cycleway is a well-established route for cyclists, walkers, and runners. There is one section off Cowley Way Chapelton that is not finished and no immediate prospect of it being finished. The existing entrances are inadequate for wheelchair or mobility scooter users, or people with other mobility or sensory impairments, due to the dreadful quality of the paths and lack of safe crossings. In short it is currently a mud heap and unusable because of damage by contractors and quad bikes.
 1. Given the acknowledged strategic importance of the Greenway, why has this project not been finished?
 2. SCC has received millions to promote and construct cycle routes, but this Greenway was not included in any bids since 2013. Why?
 3. The completion of the Greenway is now relegated from strategic to being developed as part of the planning obligations for the Smithy Wood development, which states that a new section of cycle lane must be built with every new phase of the development. Why the relegation to a piecemeal approach?
 4. The Duke of Norfolk agents Fowler Sanderson have promised to “repair” the mudheap but have not committed to finishing the surface to acceptable standards.
 5. The agents for the Duke of Norfolk would do better to use the resources to finish the Greenway properly
 6. SCC should explore matched funding and other partners to complete the Greenway.

The Chair advised that although he had some understanding of the issues raised, he would need to seek further information from officers before providing a full written response.

Mike Frizelle:

1. Can the Committee comment on issues relating to poor access to GP surgeries and let us know if, as a committee there is anything they can do within the Council to seek ways of making clear what expectations people in the area can have of their GPs in terms of appointments and ability to talk to a GP at a specific time. Many working people are not contacting GPs because the wait times to get through and non-specific appointment times offered cannot fit in with their work obligations.

In response, the Chair noted the pressure that GP services had been under during the pandemic. From his own experience, he felt that there had been improvement over the last 6 months.

Councillor Whittaker advised that she had spoken to the practice manager at High Green Health Centre due to several complaints that she had received. The practice manager advised her that they had been receiving over 2,000 phone calls each week. Staff had come under a lot of abuse, and some had left their roles, along with retirement, maternity leave and long-term sick leave positions which needed cover. Locums had provided some relief but not enough to fill the gap. Funding had been requested but had not been available. Burncross Surgery had been designated as a vaccination centre and some criticism had been received about this.

These concerns had been referred to the Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group and they were working with the surgery to help to improve the situation.

Councillor Grocutt added that she had been in contact with a Woodhouse GP, who was also part of the Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group, for general feedback.

She noted that traditional appointments were changing and that phone calls were becoming more routine. She had regular meetings with the Clinical Commissioning Group and had asked to be kept updated by them.

2. Can the Committee confirm whether an undertaking was made when Thorncliffe Leisure Centre was built that the Council would (although the road is unadopted) resurface the road in return for the damage caused by its use for construction traffic when the centre was being built.

The Chair confirmed that Mortomley Close was unadopted and that access to the site for construction vehicles was via Packhorse Lane. He agreed to investigate the undertaking that was made and would provide a full written response in due course.

Sue Morton:

- Mrs Morton commented that this felt like an unrepresentative group and hoped that there would be a wider input into the community plan for the North LAC area.

Sue Orr (read out by Councillor Woodcock):

- I have worshipped regularly at St Paul's church, Wordsworth Avenue, Parson Cross since 1984. Since 1984 I have regularly, weekly, dropped people off at the church, generally older people with mobility issues. I also now drop people off and pick them up from outside the church hall which is on the main road, Wordsworth Avenue. Both these things can be difficult at times.
- We requested many years ago to have parking spaces on Wordsworth Avenue outside the church and church hall. The pavement and large grass

verge is expansive enough to accommodate this but I appreciate that it would be too expensive. Would it be possible to put mesh over the grass strengthening and preventing it turning to mud. I'm sure this was done on parts of Wordsworth Avenue before the new parking bays were created. I feel some sort of facility to park outside the church is a necessity for funeral cars especially as the only other road next to the church is taken up by vehicles from the health centre across the road. During covid most funerals have gone straight to the crematorium, but as we come out of restrictions I'm sure there will be more demand.

The Chair advised that as this question had been received late, he couldn't provide an immediate answer but would provide a full written answer in due course.

Oughtibridge Road Safety Scheme

Councillor Grocutt had been notified earlier in the week that a proposed Bridge Hill Road Safety Scheme would shortly be going out for consultation. This was to address serious road safety issues at the road junction. The proposed scheme was for a 'Dutch style' footway across the bottom of Bridge Hill with a raised footway, and vehicles approaching the junction would be required to stop for pedestrians, who would have the right of way.

She noted that more information would be available shortly and asked that people engage with the consultation on this important scheme.

She also explained that an experimental temporary Traffic Order was being considered to make the bottom of Bridge Hill a right turn only. Again, more consultation would take place on this.

Chair's Summary and Next Steps

The Chair summarised by thanking all those who had joined the event and had contributed. He felt all contributions had been useful in helping to 'tweak' the LAC Community Plan. He looked forward to working with contributors on the agreed plan in future months.

The next meeting of the North Local Area Committee was due to take place on Wednesday, 9 March 2022 at 6.00 p.m. at High Green Miners Welfare.