

Buxton Area Forum
Questions and Answers

Wednesday 13th February 2008

Pre-Forum questions

Question

There are problems with contractor vehicles at the entrance to the Otterhole development in Buxton, which are overflowing from the contractor car park on site onto the road and parking area opposite the site. Can anything be done to alleviate this problem?

Answer from Adrian Fisher, Head of Planning and Development Services, High Peak Borough Council

The Council is aware of the problem of vehicles parking on St John's Road – and have raised this with the developer. Since Christmas, the situation appeared to have improved – but we are keeping the site under review.

Question

A large hole has been opened up at the end of the Otterhole development entrance road in front of the farmhouse where the road will divide into the separate parts of the site. It spans the divide between the limestone and grit stone rocks. It had been partly in-filled but there was still sufficient space for an excavator to be virtually lost in the hole. This hole is not consistent with anything on the plans, e.g. the attenuation tanks. Why has this hole appeared?

Answer from Adrian Fisher, Head of Planning and Development Services, High Peak Borough Council

The excavations are for the water storage tanks that will serve the new houses. The Environment Agency has concerns about the effect of storm water from the site on the river Wye. Accordingly, they imposed a condition on the planning application, strictly limiting the rate of discharge from the development so it reflected levels not dissimilar from a greenfield site. The means by which this is achieved is via underground storage tanks, which accommodate surface water during heavy rain and then release it gradually into the River.

These drains are very sizeable constructions and require deep excavations to accommodate them.

Question

St John's Road continues to be a racetrack, if not more so, and it is some time since I noted a police surveillance van there. What is being done to combat this?

Answer from Insp. Colledge, Derbyshire Police

St John's Road is a designated Casualty prevention site and, as such, is subject to scheduled visits from the camera safety partnership. For details, please refer to the partnership website, www.slowitdown.co.uk .

Question

There are several locations in town where pedestrians are at risk because of the speed of traffic coming round corners. Although the police dismissed earlier comments about traffic moving quickly on the grounds that they were not exceeding the speed limit, there are many places where an accident is waiting to happen. I would list these as:

1. Many parts of the market place;
2. Around the entrance to the Opera House;
3. The turnings into Water Street and into George Street;
4. Many road junctions where the turning can be taken at speed because the kerb has a wide turning on it.

Can anything be done on these issues?

Answer from Inspector. Colledge, Derbyshire Police

Speed enforcement is not an issue in these areas, as the vehicles usually do not exceed the 30mph limit, due to road conditions. However, where vehicles are driving too fast for the prevailing conditions, there may be an offence of driving without due care and attention, although this would need other aggravating circumstances to consider any prosecution and would be difficult to prove.

The best form of prevention is through traffic calming measures, such as on The Crescent, to slow traffic down, and also the provision of pedestrian crossings, if appropriate. These are matters to be considered by the District Council, in conjunction with Derbyshire County Council Highways Department.

Questions asked at the forum**Policing and safer neighbourhood teams****Question**

To what extent does noise constitute a crime?

For example, loud music – the Police can't do anything about it?

Answer

Noise pollution constitutes anti-social behaviour. This is monitored through the Borough Council Environmental Health Team.

There are no distinct powers for the Police to deal with noise. When noise is a regular issue, the Police are more able to get involved. The Police would normally visit the premises if the problem persists.

Question

Why weren't schools mentioned in the presentation [on Safer Neighbourhood Teams]?
What's being done to curtail the consumption of alcohol and drugs at source?

Answer

The Police do a lot of work with schools, that wasn't mentioned in the presentation. For drugs, there is positive action taken against drug users. The Police are dealing with that issue. The Police are involved in partnership working with local councils and, as part of this, there are particular 'theme groups' that look at particular issues. These groups include a drug and alcohol theme group and they discuss ways to tackle these sorts of issues.

Question

There is an experimental case in the South of England, of street lighting being cut off from 12 midnight to 5am – has any thought been given to this by the Police?

Answer

There are other issues here, e.g. environmental and energy saving issues, which need to be taken into consideration. There are no plans for this at present. It is worth noting that High Peak is a very safe area, comparatively speaking.

Question

It was announced earlier that there are 28 Police Community Support Officers in the Borough. They currently don't have powers of arrest – are they being trained to have more powers?

Answer

The powers of the Police Community Support Officers are decided by the Home Office, and passed down to the Police Authorities. The Police Community Support Officers are not Police Officers and have different duties. They are there to concentrate on lower level anti-social behaviour issues generally.

Question

Ashwood Park in Buxton is an issue. Police in Fairfield don't have a police vehicle anymore. Ashwood Park is infested with rats and this creates problems in the park. The steps are a danger and haven't been resurfaced. Lighting is a problem on this access route. There are problems in this area with drugs and litter, etc.

Answer

On vehicle allocation in Fairfield, it is worth pointing out that this is mainly a foot-based service. The safer neighbourhood teams do not use vehicles, as they are based only in that area but can have access to vehicles if needed.

The Ashwood Park issues are being addressed but maybe not all of them. A clean up day has been undertaken recently to tackle litter, but this may need to be undertaken more frequently. Please speak to the Police Officers present and they can take this issue forward.

Also, these issues can be raised with the Council. They can be put forward as 'Going Local' projects, as they are environmental improvements.

In terms of drugs in the Ashwood Park area, the Police want to know who these people are and when it is happening.

Question

Fairfield ginnels. Nothing has been done to tackle problems in these areas?

Answer

There are still a lot of on-going issues in these areas. The issue that prevents blocking them off is around rights of way – only one person needs to state that they use the ginnels to prevent this happening. Dave Longbone (neighbourhood co-ordinator for High Peak community Housing) is looking at funding lighting in this area. The Police Community Support Officers regularly patrols these areas.

'This is me' campaign presentation

Question

In the past, there were more youth clubs but these have declined. The groups that are around are good but we need more places for young people to go.

Answer

We completely agree. It is a local council issue to tackle the lack of things to do.

Buxton for Youth provides good facilities for young people (based on Market Street, Buxton). There are places in the town where young people can go.

Question

What exactly is the pledge?

(Post meeting note: This was mentioned in the 'This is me' presentation. All people can go onto the Derbyshire County Council website at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/thisisme and pledge their support to recognise young people as individuals and challenge stereotypes)

Answer

It is a notice of support that is put on the website, basically saying you agree with the campaign and back the idea that all young people aren't what the stereotypes say.

Question

The campaign is doing a wonderful job – I just feel that young people in Buxton have nothing to do. The leisure facilities are vital.

Answer

There are a lot of facilities for young people in the town, e.g. sports clubs, cadets, scouts, guides, boxing, etc. There is more for young people to do than you might think.

Comment

It needs to be easier for young people to find out what is going on, maybe a link on the local council website would be of value? (Councillor Barbara Wilson said she would follow this up)

Question

The intimidating thing about young people is not the way they act, but the way they dress. Society makes them dress the way they do, e.g. in hoodies, etc. The pledge should be for young people to be recognised and not hide under clothing.

Answer

At the end of the day, hoodies are just an item of clothing and don't necessarily identify the nature of the person wearing them.

In general everybody should be more tolerant all round.

General questions session

Comment

Would like to thank the Borough Council and local Councillors for assisting a member of the public with accessibility issues. They produced information in the required format within a week of the request.

Comment

Would like to thank the Police for the letters sent to households on how they are dealing with drugs in the area. This was really useful and reassuring.

Comment

There are more Police officers here tonight than I've seen on the streets in years. In fact, I have only probably seen 3 on foot patrol in Buxton the whole time I've lived here. Also, I don't know how to contact Police if something goes wrong.

Response

The area in question is a low crime area, although the Police do patrol it regularly.

Response

Contacting the Police. The Police will let you know of the local contacts in your area. The non-emergency number is 0845 123 3333 and for emergencies it should always be 999.

Question

There are more bins being put around Buxton and Buxton looks tidier. The problem now is that there are large areas of pavement, in higher Buxton especially, that are covered in chewing gum. Can a campaign be run to encourage people to put chewing gum in bins?

Answer

Councillor Bill Fiddy is trying to tackle this issue. Chewing gum costs a lot of money to clear up, roughly £1.50 per piece. We hope to re-educate the public on this issue and do something positive.

Question

Ashwood Dale. The handrail on the path up to Fairfield from Ashwood Park is badly bent and pushed aside. The security railings on the Morrison's side have been taken off and this needs proper tools to do, can these be replaced? Also, the gradient of the steps to Fairfield need looking at, as this is uncomfortable to walk down.

Answer (added following the meeting)

The County Council will be looking at who has ownership of this path, as well as the issues raised at the meeting with regards to lighting of this area at night.

Question

Parking in Buxton. Who is responsible for traffic enforcement and parking in Buxton?

Answer

Parking is an issue and the Police currently have primary responsibility for this. This will pass to the County Council soon. Due to this period of change, the Police have stopped recruitment to the parking enforcement post – which is why the level of enforcement has dropped.

When the County Council takes over enforcement, a partnership will be formed between the Borough and County Council. This will be roughly in the autumn. Targets for the number of enforcement tickets given will not be part of the contract to provide parking enforcement.

As there are not enough traffic wardens to cover Buxton, you can flag any issues up at or after the meeting. The Police will target what resources they currently do have to problem areas.

Question

There are too many cars are parked on the pavement. There is a grey area on who is responsible for this?

Answer

Parking on the pavement is a Police issue and the Police need to be phoned if there is a problem. The County Council is responsible for on-street parking.