

## Saddleworth & Lees Community Council

Date: Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Civic Hall, Lee Street, Uppermill

Present: Mr D Makin (in the Chair)  
Councillor Beeley – Community Council Champion  
Councillor Buckley, Heffernan, Knowles, Lord, McCann, Roughley,  
Sedgwick and Wheeler.

Co-opted Members – Mr K. Begley, Ms J. Daubney, Mr R. Franklin, Mrs  
E Firth, Mrs P Lord, Mr D. Makin, Mrs A. McInnes, Mrs P. Shipp and Mrs  
J Wresdell

Also in Attendance:-

Jan Joshi – Neighbourhood Manager  
Paul Davies, Service Director, Adult and Community Services Directorate  
Karen Mellor – Head of Constitutional Services  
Sergeant Johnson – Greater Manchester Police  
Inspector Milovanovicz - Greater Manchester Police

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Wheeler and Co-opted  
Members:- Parish Councillor Hudson, Mr P Davenport and Mr C Hare

### 2. Chair/Champion Urgent Business

The Community Champion reported with sadness the recent death of Co-opted  
Member Mrs Jean Bradley and the Community Council paused to remember  
Jean and her contributions to the work of the area.

The Community Council noted that this would be the last meeting supported by  
Jan Joshi as Neighbourhood Manager before she moved to Shaw and Royton  
and expressed thanks to Jan for all of her hard work. Members also thanked  
Councillor Heffernan for his work as the previous Community Champion.

The Community Council sent its best wishes to Councillor Wheeler who was  
unwell.

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### 3. Notes of the Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008

**AGREED:** That the Notes of the Community Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008, be noted.

Mr Begley advised that he had spoken to Mr C Jackson, Environmental Services regarding the bad state of repair of Holland Close and Little Road. Whilst blocked drains had been cleared there were still pot holes in the roads. It was **AGREED** that Mr Begley would continue to pursue this matter.

The Community Council noted that the Saddleworth and Lees Area Health Development Group had met twice, with a further meeting scheduled later this month and work was ongoing.

Councillor Heffernan reported that the Marketing Sub-Group had now allocated and spent all of its funds according to the wishes of its Members.

### 4. Youth Services Presentation

Catherine Lingard, Children, Young People and Families was in attendance for this item and gave a presentation to the Community Council and circulated a report on the leisure and information education opportunities available for young people across the Borough, and, in particular, in the Saddleworth and Lees Area.

Ms Lingard explained that due to budget cuts to the service the team were currently assessing options on the best way to continue providing the service. However, youth services would still be working with young people out in the communities.

A Member asked whether there were any plans to provide a bus service from Saddleworth into Oldham after 6.00 pm to enable young people from Saddleworth to use the town centre and Canon Street facilities. Ms Lingard undertook to report this back to the team for consideration.

A Member asked whether there any plans to extend the Canon Street model to the suburbs. Ms Lingard reported that budget cuts may affect youth service provision and she was unable to advise on what the future provision would look like.

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Councillor Lord asked what numbers of young people were accessing youth service provision in percentage terms each month per area. Ms Lingard advised that 25% of young people in the Saddleworth and Lees Areas were accessing the service. Performance was measured on meaningful contact and a minimum of three attendances. Ms Lingard further advised that a survey had been undertaken at Saddleworth High School and with young people out in the community. Mr Franklin asked whether the whole school had embraced the survey. He also suggested that young people attending youth services could be encouraged to bid for funding from other sources. Ms Lingard explained that the Youth Sub-Group was being re-established at which such ideas could be addressed.

**AGREED:** That the presentation and comments be noted.

### 5. Police Update – Sergeant Johnson

Sergeant Johnson and Inspector Milovanovicz were in attendance and provided the Community Council with an update on the Crime Statistics within the Saddleworth North, Saddleworth South and Saddleworth West and Lees Wards for the period 1 May to 30 June 2008.

Members were informed of the initiatives the Police had put in place to reduce crime within the area and provided an update on arrests that had been made in and around the area. Members of the public were reminded not to leave windows and doors open when not at home, particularly during the summer months.

Mr Begley expressed concerns about the service at Uppermill Station and asked Sergeant Johnson to look into phone answering at the Station. Inspector Milovanovicz explained that staffing was decided centrally and as Uppermill Station was covered by a job-share post, there were often times when it was not staffed, however, an answer phone service was available. Members of the Community Council still felt more could be done, for example, automatic transfer of calls to the answer phone.

Councillor Roughley asked whether PCSOs could have their own email addresses. Inspector Milovanovicz advised that generic addresses for Saddleworth and Lees PCSOs would be distributed imminently.

**AGREED:** That the report and comments be noted.

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### Future of Community Council's

Councillor Blyth presented a report of the Chief Executive regarding the Establishment of Area Committees. The report went before Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 to seek approval from Council to develop proposal for the establishment of Area Committee with clear decision making powers including the option of powers for taking local planning decisions, to consider the resource implications of the changes and the level of budget, to consult existing Community Councils and partner organisations about the proposals and in the light of consultation bring a report to July Council with proposal to implement the changes in September this year.

Councillor Blyth explained that the ultimate aim was to follow the Rochdale and Tameside models of devolved budgets to Area Committees, and that any savings from streamlining the process and savings in administrative costs would be put back into the community. He also advised of the need to reduce the number of Co-opted Members which at present was 56.

Councillor Lord reminded the Community Council that when the Saddleworth and Lees Area Committee previously had planning powers there had been no appeals. Councillor Blyth advised that no more appeals were lost at local level under the previous Area Committee model than at central level. The recommendation would be to have an Area Planning Sub-Committee.

Councillor Buckley commented that the main problem previously with local planning decisions was the delay, but that this was due to understaffing in the planning department.

On a vote being taken, the Community Council voted **in favour** of returning to an Area Committee structure with planning powers:

Community Council Members	16 in favour 1 against 0 abstentions
Residents	5 in favour 0 against 2 abstentions

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### 6. LDF Sub-Group Findings

Councillor Buckley presented a set of recommendations arising from the LDF Sub-Group in respect of Oldham's LDF allocation of sites.

Members questioned the position for Scouthead and Austerlands which was not included under separate heading in the recommendations. Councillor Buckley explained that no sites had been allocated in these areas which were in the greenbelt. Nonetheless, the Community Council **AGREED** that these areas should be reflected under separate heading.

The Community Council also **AGREED** that an officer representative should be invited to a future meeting to explain the allocations.

**AGREED:** That the presentation and comments be noted and actioned as indicated.

### 7. Post Office Closures

Bruce Penhale, Assistant Director, Communities was in attendance and presented an update to the Community Council on proposed Post Office closures within the Borough. He explained that nationally 2500 of 14000 Post Offices were to be closed: 67 of 380 in the Greater Manchester and High Peak Areas: 8 in Oldham: and 3 in Saddleworth and Lees (Lees, Grasscroft and Scouthead). The consultation period was due to end on 21 July 2008. Mr Penhale further advised that there was no question of the closures happening, and that if one Post Office was kept open, another would have to be closed in its place.

Mr Penhale informed the Community Council of the types of grounds on which an argument to retain a Post Office could be lodged, for example, factual inaccuracies, access, capacity, needs or local economic impact. A questionnaire was available to the Community Council and residents to complete, and a report was being considered by the Council on 16 July 2008.

Councillor Knowles commented on the lack of banking facilities in Saddleworth and the impact of utility services continuing to withdraw free payment facilities at Post Offices.

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Councillor Buckley commented that many Council payments could be done through Post Offices with the potential to link access points and he highlighted the need for the Council to consider options over the next three years to make Post Offices more viable to prevent further closures in the future.

**AGREED:** That the following resolution be reported to Council:-

"This Community Council is against the closure of any Post Offices as these are seen as vital community services and these closures hit the most vulnerable in our society and local businesses".

### 8. Public Questions

The following Public Questions were raised:-

- a) S106 traffic calming in Friezland – Councillor Beeley explained that due to long term sickness the report had been delayed and would be available at the next meeting;
- b) Flawed housebuilding figures in Saddleworth – it was **AGREED** that Phil Jobling be requested to attend the next meeting;

**AGREED:** That the questions and proposed actions be noted.