

# **TODMORDEN PRIDE PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

## **Minutes of Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005 The Old Hall, Todmorden**

### **Attended by:**

James Gregory (Chair)  
Lindsay Smales (Guest)  
Hilary Myers (Guest)  
Sheila Greenwood  
Cllr Margareta Holmstedt  
Sheila Tordoff  
Cynthia Murray  
Anne Lee  
Linda Young

Jennifer Jackson  
David Storah  
Cllr Michael Taylor  
Malcolm Birkett  
Peter Cockcroft  
Alan Darwin  
Gareth Brooks  
Chris Edwards

### **In Attendance:**

Clare Madders  
Mary Clear  
John Bates

### **Apologies:**

Cllr Clare Townley  
Cllr Myra Townley  
Francis Boocock  
Ed Collins

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed Lindsay Smales and Hilary Myers who had been invited to the meeting, at the request of Cllr Taylor, to present some ideas in regard to design for the Halifax Road scheme and the wider Halifax Road area.

### **2. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes from the previous meeting (27.10.05) were agreed as a correct record.

### **3. Matters arising**

It was requested by the Chair that any matters relating to the Halifax Road scheme be discussed following presentation by Lindsay Smales. This presentation is intended to present a complete overview of the wider area □ in order to broaden the Boards thinking, not to specifically change any course of action.

It was therefore agreed to cover some of the shorter items and updates at this point in the meeting.

### 3.1 37-39 Rochdale Road.

The Board were informed that during the planning consultation period concern had been raised by a CMBC conservation officer in regard to the landscaping design. Following discussion this week agreement has now been reached on minor amendments to the design. In essence the areas of granite setts have now been replaced with landscaping and the setts under the seating with a different material, namely yorkstone setts - as this is more in keeping with Todmorden. There had also been concern over the over complication of the site in terms of the additional entrance via steps, but it was agreed to keep these in the design as it was confirmed, from an engineering viewpoint, that these steps are the best way of engineering the site to ensure the road and pavement remain structurally sound.

Amended plans showing the changes to materials and landscaping were shown to the Board and these changes to design were agreed, subject to the proviso of any further structural changes that may be needed but won't be known until after demolition.

The Board were also informed, as has been referred to many times already, that the weakest element of the case for demolition is the fact that the property has not been officially marketed for a period of time prior to seeking demolition. This is one of the main points identified in the relevant planning policy guidance (PPG 15), which is the guidance followed by the planning officer in regard to demolition in a conservation area.

The justification statement submitted with the application has tried to answer the points raised in the guidance and therefore, in terms of marketing, refers to the more unofficial approaches to local developers over the past few years. It also refers to the structural survey; which indicates the cost of basic repair as much higher than cost of purchase and therefore prohibitively unviable to market the building.

Additional comments in regard to this type of marketing have now also been sent to the planning officer, but it is likely he will still recommend refusal of the application because of limited evidence of marketing.

The best course of action is to therefore get the application to committee asap and to then get Todmorden Pride, as the applicant, to argue the case at committee.

If the officer does recommend refusal, then a request from a Councillor is required to get the applications to committee, and this is currently being pursued with the appropriate Ward Councillors.

Agreed that, at committee, there should be representation for the applications from a member of Todmorden Pride (as the promoting organisation), a Ward Councillor and a Town Councillor too if possible.

### 3.2 Environment Agency Flood Alleviation Works

The Chair informed the Board that he was concerned about the next stage in the EA works in Todmorden, which would effectively involve one way/single lane traffic outside Morrisons for a considerable time. Concern is in regard to the impact upon traffic and town centre trade that this might have.

John Bates informed the Board that, at the most recent EA stakeholder meeting, it had been stated that temporary lights would be timed so that they don't cause issue, but the reality will be difficult to determine until works actually start. The EA do intend to undertake public consultation on this stage of the works sometime in the New Year.

Concern was raised about how the EA are going to undertake this and to try and seek a way forward that causes the minimum disruption to the town centre in particular. It was felt that Calderdale's highway engineers should therefore enforce relevant conditions on the EA. It was agreed to arrange a meeting between Calderdale Highways, the EA & local Councillors to try and resolve. Cllr Taylor to arrange meeting and report back to the Board.

### 3.3 Ashenhurst Doorstep Green

There have been delays in commencement of the works due to legal agreements between the Countryside agency, CMBC and Pennine Housing - these are now resolved.

Work has progressed with some speed over the Autumn period. Half of the hard landscaping work is now complete - foundations are in place for the path works; steps have been constructed and the fencing is almost complete.

Recycled boards are being introduced to the particular damp areas.

It was intended that grass seed would be set in Oct/Nov but the rain and cold weather have prevented this - topsoil will be spread now with seeding in early Spring.

Orders have been placed for tools, fencing, protective clothing and bare root shrubs for the volunteers to commence works in the New Year. Schools will also be involved.

The contract will be complete by March 2006.

A site visit has been arranged for 12<sup>th</sup> December - anyone interested in attending was requested to contact Hilary.

### 3.4 Town Artist / Fielden Wharf sculptures

The fish sculpture is now complete. It has received wide media coverage.

Post cards are in production to illustrate the development of art in the town - both the sculptures and plaque trail.

Community Services and Todmorden in Bloom will arrange a launch for the sculpture.

### 3.5 Planning Application updates

The Original Factory Shop - the Board were informed that the planning officer has been in discussion with the agent for the applicant and is now awaiting a resubmitted application showing the majority of the signage removed and the

building more along the lines of how it was formerly i.e. when it was the antiques centre. If no application is forthcoming, enforcement procedures will be put in place. The Board agreed that, as this had been an issue for some time without any outcome and the advertising still in place that a letter be sent to the planning officer pressing for enforcement.

Advertising banner, Hollins Mill □ it was noted that this banner, which has not got consent, was still on the frontage of the mill. It was requested that an update be given at the next Board meeting.

### 3.6 Openshaws

The Board were informed that a company called Quadrant, who are a Swiss-based company and new owners of poly-hi solidur, has purchased the former Openshaws site. As such, after refurbishment work has been undertaken, poly-hi solidur will be moving from their Halifax Road site to the former Openshaws site. Additionally there will also be the amalgamation with this of a company currently located in the South of the UK □ which could bring with it up to 50 new jobs for Todmorden. CMBC, via Halifax Works, will be assisting with the recruitment next year.

A local Todmorden firm, HEC, who are electrical contractors, has bought the current poly-hi solidur site on Halifax Road.

### 3.7 Health Centre

Further to the above it therefore seems clear that the health centre will be unable to relocate to the poly-hi solidur site, which is understood to have been their preference. Concurrently the Abraham Ormerod building remains in a bad state and is a constant issue for the people of Todmorden. Agreed that Cllr Taylor will try and arrange a further meeting with Mr Waddingham, representative in regard to health centre, to ascertain their plans. Alan Darwin to join Cllr Taylor in this meeting.

### 3.8 Esso Garage

The Chair informed the Board that he understood that Mr Farooq, owner of the Shell Station, was now also the owner of the Esso garage □ which has subsequently been shut down. The Chair intends to meet with Mr Farooq as this could potentially be an opportunity / of relevance to the Halifax Road plans.

## **4. Ideas from Lindsay Smales in regard to design of Halifax Road sites.**

The Chair introduced Lindsay Smales by stating that his training is in town planning, he is now a resident of Todmorden and that he had offered to draw up a design brief for Halifax Road, and surrounding sites, to present the Board with further ideas for discussion.

Mr Smales informed the Board that he is a senior lecturer in urban planning and design at Leeds Metropolitan University. He also specialises in working with local

communities, particularly in the Leeds area, to produce local vision documents and master plans for the future of their locality.

He stressed to the Board that his ideas are to aid discussion only and are very much an academic based exercise of an "ideal" scenario.

The "ideal" would be pro-active intervention, where local authorities identify sensitive and important sites and intervene by setting out guidelines and principles to maximise the potential of areas – such as that of Halifax Road. He expressed support for the Councils proposals to purchase key sites in this area and that this approach allows control and greater influence.

He added that he was pleased that six members of the regeneration section had recently successfully completed the post-graduate certificate in urban design at Leeds Metropolitan University.

Copies of the discussion brief were distributed and it was reiterated that this is an academic brief intended to aid discussion on the wider site. The main points of the brief were detailed by Mr Smales and comments from each Board member, as sought by the Chair, followed.

In particular Cllr Taylor commented that if we are able to bring on board the owners of the Derdale Street site (which already has planning permission) and the new owners of the poly-hi solidur site, it could be possible to bring forward a comprehensive scheme for the whole wider area; incorporating a substantial amount of employment land.

It was noted however that, in reality, it will be very difficult to get all the separate owners to work together and it won't happen overnight but will take a number of years; but that it should certainly be something that is aspired to.

There was some confusion about Yorkshire Forward's involvement in purchasing land for housing. It was reiterated that the ideas presented by Mr Smales are an "ideal" scenario incorporating the surrounding sites owned by other parties. The areas of Halifax Road which require Yorkshire Forward funding to purchase will not be for housing. Yorkshire Forward could be party to the employment element of an overall scheme. Mr Smales gave the example of YF's involvement in just the media centre element of the Round Foundry development in Leeds.

There was also some concern with the concept of "sheds" being the main focus of the site. The discussion brief included ideas about different types of employment units and potential different designs. Clare also reiterated to the Board that the detailed nature and design of the sites would be something for further discussion at a later stage and the only agreement at this point was in terms of YF purchasing the land for employment use. Cllr Holmstedt reaffirmed this and also added that, at the time of more detailed discussion on design, layout etc, the space needs for existing businesses and larger units will also

need to be considered; and this does not mean these have to be unattractive buildings.

It was also acknowledged that whilst a design concept/working framework will be useful, at the appropriate time, that this will then be shaped by market forces at the time of development.

The chair concluded the discussion by thanking Lindsay Smales for the work put into this aspirational document; and reiterated the views that the ideas presented are an academic exercise but are something that can be aspired to. He added that this does not contradict the previous agreement of the Board to seek purchase of specific sites for employment use in order to bring about control of development within the area.

In the short term it was agreed to ask Regeneration Section to press YF to seek to acquire the Esso garage as well, if the opportunity arises, as this would greatly aid all aspirations for the area.

Mr Smales also requested to come back to the Board at a future meeting with a proposal for 12 of his post-graduate students to come into the town to work with Todmorden Pride and the Council to develop ideas for key sites. It was noted that this could make a useful contribution to the Action Plan that Todmorden Pride is currently developing with support from Council officers. This academic exercise could also provide useful ideas to complement the work that will be undertaken by the Bramsche Square project worker, who is to be appointed soon (subject to YF funding approval).

The chair stated that the Board has wanted planning briefs developed in the past and that this offer of assistance to the Board and the Council officers working in the town is a good way forward.

#### **5. Constitution & Membership of Todmorden Pride Partnership Board**

Further to discussion and points raised at the Board meeting on 8.9.05, the Chair stated that there seemed to be some consensus on having an annual open public meeting. This should be in a prominent, easily accessible location such as the town hall and be well advertised. A report should also be presented as well as the opportunity for people to ask questions.

This was agreed and a date around Easter 2006 was recommended.

The chair also raised the idea of a few additional Board members, who could add value to the complement of skills and representation already on the Board. The chair suggested two people:

Simon Brearley □ Chartered Surveyor, formerly of the land & property department at CMBC and now at private agents Brearley Green. Simon is also a resident of Todmorden.

Alan Fidling □ President of the Cricket Club, to alleviate under representation on the Board in terms of sport.

It was agreed to invite both to become members and to therefore add strength to the Board.

It was also agreed that this would be an opportune time to implement a document in regard to □declarations of interest□

Mary Clear offered to produce a document.

## **6. Board meeting dates for 2006**

A list of dates for next year was distributed to Board members.

## **7. A.O.B.**

7.1 Mary informed the Board that Todmorden Together has successfully been granted funding from the Big Lottery Fund. This will be £140k for the next 3 years.

7.2 A few small items could not be reported, due to time, and so will be added on to next meetings agenda.

**Date of next Board meeting: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2006**