

Ashton and Mossley Community Forum

22 June 2026

Commenced: 6.30pm

Terminated: 8.00pm

Present: Councillors J Homer (Chair), S Homer, Bowerman, Carr, Choksi, Drennan, Dunning, Glover, Karim, Khan, Lawrence, Patel, Roylance and Ul-Rasool.

In Attendance:

Nicola Elsworth	Strategic Growth Director
Amy Foots	Assistant Director of Policy, Strategy and Change
Damien Cutting	Major Projects Manager
Phill Brown MBE	Chair of the Neighbourhood Board

Apologies for Absence: Councillor McLaren

1 Introductory Remarks and Housekeeping

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and outlined the housekeeping arrangements. It was highlighted to attendees that the Community Forum provided a valuable opportunity for councillors, residents and partner organisations to engage constructively and respectfully, working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for Ashton and Mossley.

2 Welcome to Your Community Forum

The Chair of the Community Forum presented an introduction to the new Community Forum model and the Council's approach to community engagement.

Attendees of the meeting were informed that the previous Neighbourhood Forums had primarily been information-sharing meetings, with limited opportunities for residents to participate in discussions. The presentation outlined feedback received through the Cabinet in the Community programme, which had involved meetings across Tameside's nine towns. Residents had expressed a desire for greater local access, information relevant to their communities, opportunities to ask questions, and ongoing engagement that resulted in visible change.

Residents were advised of the implications of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act and were informed that forthcoming guidance would provide further detail on the devolution of certain Council powers to local

communities. It was noted that Community Forums would continue to evolve in response to future legislative developments.

It was advised that Community Forums would meet three times annually, in June, November and March, with meetings rotating between venues across the borough to maximise accessibility. The next meeting for this Community Forum would be held in Mossley.

Attendees were informed that future agendas would comprise three sections: borough-wide strategic issues, community-focused local matters and updates, and a dedicated question-and-answer session. It was also noted that community groups and partner organisations would be able to propose agenda items for future meetings through Democratic Services.

A discussion ensued amongst residents, Members and officers on the suitability of the venue and the formality of the layout for a community-based meeting. Concerns were further raised regarding the decision to group together Ashton and Mossley and whether alternative groupings may have been more appropriate and reflective of local communities.

Residents further noted the low level of community attendance and suggested that the Council reviewed its engagement methods to ensure they were accessible to residents who did not regularly use online platforms.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted.

3 Pride in Place Impact Fund

The Forum received a presentation from the Major Projects Manager on the Ashton Pride in Place Programme. Attendees were informed that Ashton been allocated £20 million of Government funding over a ten-year period and that a Neighbourhood Board had been established to work in partnership with the Council to determine how the funding would be invested.

The Forum heard that extensive engagement had been undertaken with stakeholders and local communities, the feedback from which had informed the preparation of the Ashton Regeneration Plan. It was noted that the Plan had received strong endorsement from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and that community engagement would continue throughout the programme to ensure local residents had opportunities to influence future investment priorities.

Attendees were informed that the Neighbourhood Board was chaired by Phill Brown MBE and included representatives from a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. Phill Brown MBE addressed the Forum and advised that a review of the Board's membership was currently underway. He noted that this presented opportunities to increase community representation and encouraged interested residents to make contact if they wished to become involved. He further advised that the Board was seeking community champions to join and help represent local interests.

The Major Projects Manager explained that the Ashton Regeneration Plan set out a ten-year vision for the town and a four-year investment programme focused on creating a proud, inclusive, skilled, innovative, green and connected place. Attendees were informed that the Board had approved an initial programme of investment which included proposals for the redevelopment of Ashton Market Hall, feasibility work for the Tameside Hippodrome, the establishment of an Adult Support Hub, support for community development activity, initiatives for local businesses, and investment in facilities at Tameside College.

Further projects included community and sports facilities grant schemes, cultural events and activities, support for local organisations, and public art and environmental improvement projects across the town centre.

The Forum was advised that work was underway to develop a communications strategy, including new branding, a dedicated website and regular updates for residents. Opportunities for local people to contribute to future funding decisions would be provided through engagement activities, Community Champions, public events and direct contact with the Neighbourhood Board.

Attendees also received a brief update on the Pride in Place Impact Fund, which provided capital funding for community spaces, public spaces, and high street and town centre improvements across other areas of the borough. Although not applicable to Ashton and Hattersley, the funding would be accessible to Mossley. Community groups, residents and partner organisations were encouraged to submit applications.

Following the presentation, questions were raised by attendees as follows:

Q. Are there plans to build a cinema on the upper floor of the Arcades?

A. This was included in the Masterplan as an example of what the space could lend itself to, not necessarily what would happen to the space.

Q. Is there a time limit on when the money needs to be spent by?

A. The Pride in Place funding is available for 10 years and the Pride in Place impact fund is available for 1 year

Q. What happens if the funds are not spent?

A. Any unspent funds will need to be returned. However, the Council will make every effort to ensure that all funding is used appropriately and in line with the approved objectives.

Q. Do you have a breakdown of what £3m of the funding has already been committed to?

A. A report has been published online which includes a full breakdown of spending

Q. The Neighbourhood Board Membership does not seem representative of residents. It looks to be made up of Statutory agencies. How many members of the Board live in Ashton?

A. Statutory agencies were highlighted to provide an idea on the Board Membership, but many local business owners are members and 75% of the Board are from Ashton.

Q. Is the funding available to improve local parks?

A. £120k of grant funding has been allocated to the improvement of Parks, but the more may be allocated by the Board.

Q. Will we be getting a pool back in Ashton?

A. The lack of a leisure facility in Ashton is actively being looked at.

A detailed discussion ensued between attendees of the meeting on the general overall appearance of Ashton and the negative first impressions it could create. Concerns were raised about several issues, including the condition of car parks, railings, empty planters, and inaccurate or outdated signage.

Officers and Members noted that work to address some of these issues had already commenced, including the installation of new planters around Tameside One and the planting of trees in Market Square. It was also noted that the Pride in Place funding would support further improvements and ongoing maintenance to enhance the appearance of the town centre.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted.

4 Civic Pride, Clean Streets, Local Heritage and Leisure Provision

The Chair of the Community Forum addressed attendees and provided some details about recent successes around Ashton and Mossley including the Town Centre Improvements, planting around the Town Hall and Victoria Park and the recent planting of 31 highway trees.

The Executive Member for Towns Transport and Connectivity provided an update on upcoming events around Ashton and Mossley. Attendees heard that the responsibility for facilities management had been brought back in-house and that the George Lawton Hall (Mossley) was now being managed internally, with a focus on increasing community group usage and improving the efficiency of the venue.

An update was provided on the War Memorial and forthcoming activity in Ashton, including the completion of works at the Market Ground and the planned programme of events. Details of upcoming events were noted, and these events were intended to increase footfall and encourage more visitors into the town centres. Members noted the update and requested the full schedule be published and shared with ward councillors and community groups.

The Chair of the Community Forum explained that the Civic Pride, Clean Streets, Local Heritage and Leisure Provision was a standing agenda item and in addition to local updates, it would be an opportunity for residents to share their thoughts and concerns on issues around Ashton and Mossley.

A lengthy discussion ensued between Members, officers and residents regarding litter, fly-tipping and the general appearance of Ashton town centre. Residents commented on the poor condition of some litter bins and the negative impression that litter created for visitors. In response, it was reported that improvements were being progressed, including the installation of additional bins in the Market Square and plans for new facilities to accommodate town centre waste bins. The importance of community involvement was highlighted, with references made to previous town centre clean-up initiatives and litter-picking activities involving schools, colleges and local volunteers.

Questions were raised about education, enforcement and accountability in relation to littering and fly-tipping. Officers and Members advised that wardens with enforcement powers were operating in the area, Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued, and residents were encouraged to report incidents to the Council.

Concerns were also raised regarding the disposal of gas canisters, delays in removing fly-tipped waste, and overflowing commercial bins. Officers undertook to seek clarification on disposal guidance and noted that reports of fly-tipping would be investigated, with consideration given to measures such as CCTV in identified hotspot locations. Overall, it was acknowledged that addressing these

issues would require a combination of enforcement, education and community action.

RESOLVED

That the updates be noted.

5 Question Time

Q. A question was received prior to the meeting on Suicide Prevention work.

A. A full written response to be provided.

6 AOB

There were no areas of other business to consider.