

DUKINFIELD AND STALYBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

23 June 2026

Commenced: 18:30

Terminated: 20:20

Present: Councillors Sharif (Chair), Ardrion-Adams, Barton, Dickinson, Feeley, Rhodes, Lane, Wills, and Tilbrook

In Attendance: Julian Jackson Strategic Director of Housing, Environment and Estates
Zoe Evans Strategic Director of Finance (S151)
Tom Hoghton Policy and Scrutiny Service Manager
Alec Milner Senior Policy Officer

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Beardmore, Duff and Frater

1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND HOUSEKEEPING

The Chair began by welcoming attendees to the meeting and highlighted housekeeping arrangements. The Chair advised that the Community Forums would serve as an important platform for councillors, residents and partner organisations to exchange view and work collaboratively in a constructive manner to achieve positive outcomes for Dukinfield and Stalybridge. The Chair looked forward working to inviting residents to raise comments regarding opportunities for the Council to improve the local area.

2 WELCOME TO YOUR COMMUNITY FORUM

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Chair of the Dukinfield and Stalybridge Community Forum. The presentation introduced the Community Forums and set out the context of how the forums were developed and outlined the Council's approach to community engagement.

The Chair explained that the previous Neighbourhood Forums had primarily been information-sharing meetings, with limited opportunities for residents to participate in discussions. Following feedback received through the Cabinet in the Community programme, 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.

The Chair provided an overview of the arrangements for the Community Forums. It was explained that meeting agendas would have three sections;

- Borough items, discussions that are important to all parts of Tameside or key updates;
- Community items, focusing on local issues or developments. Local partners and community groups were encouraged to submit proposals for any items they wished to present;
- Question time: the formal Q and A session where the Council and partners will answer questions. It was encouraged that questions were submitted in advance of the meeting. All questions and answers would be published online.

It was explained that the Community Forums would meet three times annually, in June, November and March, with meetings rotating between venues across the borough. It was also noted that community groups and partner organisations would be able to propose agenda items for future meetings through Democratic Services.

The Chair then asked both Members of the Forum and residents in attendance to propose items for future agendas.

Residents raised concerns over the choice of venue, its suitability for forum meetings and how widely the forum meeting had been publicised. In response Councillor Wills stated that every online platform the Council was on had been used to publicise the forums further there had been awareness raised through the radio local new outlets and banners had been put up in Town Centres. The Chair encouraged residents to contact Members if they felt there were any areas not covered that the Council could use to raise awareness of the Forum. In regards to the venue, the Chair acknowledged the challenges posed by the poor acoustics and stated that should the venue be used again that microphones would be looked at to mitigate this issue.

In response to questions on the former Neighbourhood Forums and the arrangements of Community Forums it was explained that residents have the right to speak at Community Forums. Residents were encouraged to ask questions on the items on the agenda and raise questions during the Q and A session where the Council and partners would answer questions and where questions could not be answered in the meeting they will be answered following the meeting and published online.

RESOLVED

That the Presentation be noted.

The Policy and Scrutiny Service Manager attended the meeting and delivered a presentation on the Pride in Place Impact Fund.

The Policy and Scrutiny Service Manager advised that the programme was funded by central Government, which allowed residents and community groups to submit proposals for a share of £1.5 million to deliver visible improvements that rebuild community pride. It was explained that all residents and community groups could apply for funding. Funding was focussed on three types of improvements:

- Community spaces, by enhancing local facilities and supporting organisations to restore underused areas
- Public spaces, through upgrades to parks, play areas, lighting and street furniture
- High streets and town centres, by revitalising shopfronts, improvements to markets and enhancing streetscapes.

It was noted that, as separate Pride in Place funding had been secured for Hattersley and Ashton, applications to the Impact Fund would be prioritised for the remaining seven towns and surrounding neighbourhoods not covered by those programmes.

Community groups, residents and partners were encouraged to submit investment proposals for the next round that was taking place between 1 June – 31 July 2026. Details of the application process were provided to the Forum. The Forum were advised that the funding was available only for capital expenditure i.e. for the purchase or improvements of assets.

In response to resident questions it was explained that should cabinet approve the proposals in the round 1 pride in place report then there would be 860k left for the following round of funding. It was also explained that officers were available to support with bids, on the first round a number of ideas were put forward which required further development. Councillor Wills highlighted that over previous years the local authority had seen their budgets cut and now there was a pot of money available which the VCSE sector had available to make bids which would support them in delivering in the community.

A resident questioned the metric used to assess bids for pride in place funding. It was explained by the Policy and Scrutiny Service Manager that there is a criteria which had been provided by Government. There were a number of criteria's used to assess bids and these would be made available on the Councils website.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted.

4 CIVIC PRIDE, CLEAN STREETS, LOCAL HERITAGE AND LEISURE PROVISION

The Chair explained that the purpose of this item was to allow residents to have the opportunity to tell the Forum their concerns and thoughts about where they lived. The Chair provided an update on recent successes around Dukinfield and Stalybridge undertaken by the housing, Environment and Estates Service, including work undertaken by the waste and

fleet services, preventative measures taken to prevent fly tipping and recent fly tipping prosecutions.

An update was then provided on the Strategic Growth Service, it was reported that Phase 1 of new heritage street lighting were installed and public realm improvements underway at Old Town Hall gardens and Armentieres Square. The programme to deliver Street Fest every month had continued during delivery of improvement works. Further public realm works planned for Market Street Phase 2 and the next phase of heritage street lighting. The main hall in Victoria Market Hall had been refurbished and delivery of cultural programme was underway further work was completing shortly on the remainder of the building. The Construction of a new ramp and accessible entrance to the Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and Library was on site with the main internal restoration works to commence in the Autumn. Councillor Feeley commented on the Art Gallery stating that it was a fantastic building and part of the heritage of Stalybridge, which is being brought back to life. The Forum discussed the performances that had taken place in the building and future performances that were planned and had sold well.

Attendees were then invited to share their thoughts and concerns about their local area.

A question was asked on the multistorey car park being built in Stalybridge and the forum were asked whether four charging points was seen as sufficient with increasing EV usage and whether when designed these car parks were considered for solar panels. The Strategic Director of Housing, Environment and Estates stated that there was a piece of work taking place with GMCA on charging infrastructure across the Borough with opportunities in particular with on street parking and that additional EV charging points in car parks is something that is considered when designed.

In response to a question on the future of regeneration and public realm investment in Dukinfield and investment that had been received for other towns in the Borough. The Councillor Wills explained that Ashton had received significant investment in public realm through Levelling Up Funding and also Pride in Place. Dukinfield Town Hall had received significant investment from the Council and this was during a time when the Council has had budgets cut. Further it was stated that Dukinfield was complex in that it doesn't have a centre in the same way Ashton does. The Council was building back pride in place and members wanted to work with residents to achieve this.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

No questions were received in advance of the meeting. The following questions were received at the meeting.

"Why has Armentieres Square not got dropped kerbs that are not a trip hazard?"

In response the Chair said that a response would be provided following the meeting with more details on the designs however the designs did meet the safety standards and were finalised following consultation with residents.

"Why was the gas works not planned properly and work carried out with 24 hour working, as it has closed the town for more than two weeks?"

The Chair explained that the emergency road works were carried out by the utility provider and needed to be completed immediately. Unfortunately, these works overlapped with planned roadworks being conducted by the Council which were already underway.

"Could the Cllrs please articulate the vision for investments and improvements for the town of Dukinfield? Are monies spent in other towns equitable?"

In response the Chair stated that the Council was working to support growth and regeneration in all nine towns, and Dukinfield was benefiting from funding such as the Pride in Place Impact Fund, with improvements to Dukinfield Park and the public realm around the Town Hall. If residents were interested in more information about the Council's plans for Dukinfield, this was something we could look to bring to the next meeting, which would be held in Dukinfield.

"Who approves the opening of barbers shops and kebab shops?"

The Chair advised that businesses are generally not required to apply for permission to open unless they require planning permission or alcohol licensing. These issues were outside the remit of the committee but if residents had concerns about any specific businesses they were encouraged to speak to officers after the meeting and they could raise them with the relevant teams.