

# **Councillor Adrian Pearce**

## **Stalybridge North Ward**

### **Annual Report of Activities 2020/21**

#### **Participation at Council Meetings and Panels**

From March 2020, virtually all meetings were conducted by Zoom or Skype. I think that along with other Councillors and people across the country, I found this challenging and less satisfactory, but it provided an avenue for Ward Councillors to express a view and represent constituents. I look forward to the resumption of “real” meetings.

During 2019-2021, I attending most Council Meetings.

I am the Chair of the East Area Strategic Neighbourhood Forum, one of 4 set up to inform local Councillors of important new initiatives planned or being implemented in Tameside. It also enables local people to attend to view presentations and ask questions about specific issues being discussed. As the Chair of this Forum, I also attend the Events Panel, which helps to inform the planning of upcoming events. I have also been a member of Scrutiny Panel (Place) which holds the Council to account for issues affecting the physical environment including waste collection, highway drainage, planning and flooding.

As part of the Scrutiny Panel, I joined a Working Group to consider the impacts of Coronavirus upon the local economy and also scrutinise the “Inclusive Growth Strategy”. A formal representation was made by the Scrutiny Panel and in addition, I drafted my own response, as part of the consultation exercise, to ensure that the regeneration issues affecting the Town Centres were given the priority necessary to engender economic recovery.

I have also been a member of the Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel.

Beside this, I am also a member of the Inequalities Reference Group which was set up in November 2020 to review the impact of the NHS/Council’s policies, and those of other partners, upon the whole community.

#### **Participation on Outside Bodies and Partnerships**

I am one of the substitute Members of the Greater Manchester Planning and Housing Commission.

Meetings of the Greater Manchester Forest Partnership have been curtailed this year but I have supported their work to promote greening in Stalybridge as part of the GM Town Challenge, as well as increasing tree planting in Tameside. In Tameside this year, it is planned to plant 16,000 trees to improve the environment and reduce flood risk which is a good return for the partnership between the City of Trees and the Council. I have also sought their advice, along with that of TMBC Officers, to try and tackle the intrusive problem of Japanese Knotweed.

I have remained a Board Member on the Ridgehill Big Local. We have helped to support the local community during the pandemic by providing support through the local primary schools, a local entertainment for the children of Ridgehill at Christmas and continued to

fund the Holiday Club based at Silver Springs for vulnerable children and those of key workers. In the last six months, the Board has supported Stalybridge Celtic Juniors to provide free meals to vulnerable people, given a grant to the Baptist Church to create a community garden and growing plots for local people and funded the refurbishment of St. George's Church kitchen to provide a meal service for older people in the area.

I have worked with the Ridgehill social enterprise, set up as a legacy project to continue the good work of the Big Local, to provide services and facilities in Ridgehill. The closures caused by the Lockdown restrictions have meant that Chaddy Dam and the Boating Lake have not been able to be fully used, but as a Board Member of the Big Local, I worked to ensure that the Social Enterprise has a solid financial basis from which to move forward in 2021 and beyond.

The Big Local has a broad remit and I have promoted joint working with the Council and other agencies to support local initiatives, including ideas to develop youth services and protect existing community facilities.

I have also continued to represent the Council upon the Stalybridge Town Team, the operations of which have been limited in 2021; however, I was able to secure a grant from Action Together to provide a solar Panel for the newly constructed hub and monies to promote the Town Team after Lockdown.

I am also a Board member of the Carrbrook Conservation Group, which has met irregularly this year.

Beside this, I have attended Labour Group meetings as part of my Council work.

I am a director of The New Stalybridge Labour Club. We are determined that this will become an increasingly important community asset for Stalybridge. This year, we welcomed a food bank to the site to support local people in Stalybridge, which was of particular value during the pandemic.

## **Constituency Work and Local Issues**

Some of the work I have undertaken in the local constituency includes:

- Helped to organise campaigns to reinstate bus services and bus stops on Ridgehill
- Started a campaign to reverse the changes to the 389 bus service
- Continued to support local residents on Churchfields to reduce anti-social behaviour and the use of off-road vehicles
- Worked with local people, TMBC fellow Ward Councillors and Officers, in discussions with the local community and the Casey Group regarding future plans being considered for their land and the old Hartshead Power Station
- Represented local people in a successful campaign to retain shops at Rydall Walk
- Resolved problems for local people including bin collections, fly tipping, highways maintenance and lighting, dog fouling, crime and housing.

## **Training and Development**

I have attended training events, when appropriate, organised for Members of the Council. This has included topics such as the Census 2021, ward boundary changes, coronavirus, GMSF and walking and cycling.

## **Achievements during the Year**

Despite various emergency funding to cover some of the costs of the pandemic, the relentless cuts year on year by the Tory Government to Council funding, have meant services have continued to be reduced. Despite this, I have supported the local community to obtain the services they deserve by providing advice, information and access to officers from the Council and other organisations to resolve local issues and promote local initiatives.

For example, we continue to try and tackle fly tipping and traffic issues, which are hazardous to local residents. On a more positive note, Ward Councillors, including myself, supported a scheme to prevent rat running on Stamford Drive and have engaged with local residents to identify ways to tackle parking problems.

Working with the local community, we were successful in getting reinstated bus stops in Ridgehill for the 387, and retaining the local shops at Rydal Walk as part of a redevelopment of the area.

As stated previously in my Annual reports, I am committed to the regeneration of Stalybridge Town Centre. The Leader of the Council, Brenda Warrington, chairs the initiative to regenerate Stalybridge. As Chair of the Advisory Group, which seeks to influence regeneration proposals, my role is to engage local businesses, individuals and other partners to invest and support the renewal of the Town. Progress on this work has been delayed during the pandemic, as officers were redeployed providing emergency help to businesses and local people. Despite this an initial plan was developed containing ideas for regeneration and this has been used as a successful tool to bid for resources from the Heritage Action Zone funding operated by the Lottery and Central Government as well as other funding from the Evergreen Fund (GMCA) to continue site investigation work. However, we still need to develop a clear investment Strategy with the full involvement of local people.

## **Any other comments**

It has been a difficult year for everyone and it is important as hopefully we come out of the pandemic that the voice of the local community is heard, particularly in the way in which services are delivered and major developments such as the regeneration of Stalybridge. This I will endeavour to facilitate.

Finally, I wish to thank all those people who volunteered over the last year, Council Officers and other workers of partner agencies, for their hard work in such difficult circumstances.