

PROTOS

Protos Community Forum Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 9 May 2024

Forum members:

Cllr Graham Heatley, Elton Ward (Chair)
Cllr Chris Copeman, Helsby Ward
Cllr Andrew Eardley, Ince Parish Council
Cllr Tim Lloyd, Ince Parish Council
Cllr Terry O'Neill, Helsby Parish Council
Cllr Mark Parry, Little Stanney Parish Council
Cllr Lizzie Wiffen, Thornton-Le-Moors Parish Council

Advisers:

Richard Barker, Peel NRE
Andy Smith, Encyclis
John Astbury, Encyclis
Lewis Jones, Font

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Summary</u> |
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| 1. Apologies and introductions | Brief introductions were carried out, with Cllr Heatley chairing the meeting. |
| 2. Approval of minutes from last meeting | No comments we received on the minutes from the previous meeting in February, which were approved by forum members. |
| 3. Reports circulated: Encyclis | <p>Andy Smith provided a summary of the report circulated to members (attached to minutes). He set out how the team were approaching the 2 million hours milestone, with around 500 people working on site each day. He noted progress being made, with the next steps being completion of the steel structures and installation of cladding, together with installation of mechanical & electrical equipment.</p> <p>Cllr Heatley asked if there had been any comments or complaints from members of the public recently. Andy explained there hadn't been any public complaints received, for example regarding noise. He said the noisier, external construction work (e.g. piling) had now broadly been completed, with activities now focused on mechanical installation of internal equipment, so it would be surprising if there were noise complaints as a result. Similarly, there had been no complaints received regarding transport.</p> |

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| | <p>Cllr O'Neill asked about instances of lorries getting lost on their way to site. Richard Barker explained that there has been progress on updating local signage since the last meeting. Sharing the proposed signage changes (current/proposed impressions) with members, he explained that he has been liaising with the council and that the authority had put forward proposals to rationalise the signs, making it clearer for those travelling to and from Protos and those travelling to Ince.</p> <p>He said this would be followed up and an update provided to members in due course. In addition, progress is also being on the formal naming of the site roads/streets, to create postal addresses and postcodes. This should also aid in addressing drivers getting lost. Richard will progress this and update members once adopted.</p> <p>Action: Richard to update keep members updated on signage changes and road name adoptions.</p> |
| <p>3. Reports circulated: Peel NRE</p> | <p>Richard Barker provided a summary of the report circulated to members (attached to minutes). It provided an overview on various operational and strategic matters at the Protos site.</p> <p>He revisited the planned changes to the ecological areas, as discussed at the February meeting. Showing the proposed relocations of Area E and B2 on screen, he explained the rationale to relocate these to free up space for proposed carbon capture facilities associated with the ERF and biomass facility.</p> <p>Cllr Wiffen asked whether the change fragmented the areas. She asked whether they would be publicly accessible and observed that the publicly accessible area (Goldfinch Meadows) was frequently flooded and unable to be used. Cllr Eardley asked about drainage measures being explored and whether these were planned to be done annually.</p> <p>Richard said that whilst the changes to the ecological areas would separate Area B1 and B2 pushing this to the east of the ERF access, it created a more linear ecological corridor that would link to tree-planting and woodland. He explained that the areas would be publicly visible for those walking through the site, but they were not intended to be used by the public like Goldfinch Meadows.</p> <p>He said that efforts are being made to understand and address the drainage issues in the publicly accessible areas. He explained dredging had been undertaken to clear drains which it is hoped will improve the situation. It may not fully solve the issue, as it is generally a low lying piece of land, but it's the intention to continue the work as part of an annual maintenance schedule.</p> |

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| | <p>Richard added that he is also exploring getting new benches installed at the site this summer, following a previous Community Forum request.</p> <p>Action: Richard to share report detailing proposed drainage activity.</p> <p>Cllr Heatley asked if it would be possible for the railings over Grinsome Road to be painted. Richard Barker said he would look into ownership of the bridge, which Cllr Heatley said he was happy to assist and forward information from when this was previously considered.</p> <p>Action: Richard and Cllr Heatley to liaise directly re; the bridge.</p> |
| <p>4. Any other business</p> | <p>Cllr Copeman asked about the upcoming application to remove the requirement to deliver the rail link to Protos. He said he'd seen information regarding Biffa intending to move 50% of their waste by rail, and other examples in Europe of transporting waste by rail. He also asked whether Protos could share the rail link with the neighbouring glass facility.</p> <p>Richard said Protos did share the same rail connection as Encirc, but couldn't share a loading facility, due to Encirc's use of a static loading system specific for their requirements.</p> <p>He said it is not that waste can't be transported by rail, but that waste has to be put into containers to be transported. He explained that the reason the team is seeking to remove the rail requirement has been the total lack of interest in using or operating the facility – meaning it is now acting as barrier to further development of Phase Two of Protos.</p> <p>Richard said he was not aware of the Biffa 50% commitment but would look into this, but he was aware of a rail facility Biffa use is to transport soils (not residual waste) from Manchester to Humberside (Roxby Gullet). He recalled another facility the company was looking into located in East London to transport soils, but eventually backed out.</p> <p>Richard said as soon as the application documents are ready, these will be shared as previously committed. This includes studies that demonstrate the current and predicted market and lack of demand for moving residual waste by rail.</p> <p>He said the decision was driven by demand and changing waste infrastructure, explaining that the feasibility of moving materials by rail would require large local authority waste contracts, of which there are only a set amount. At the same time, the number of operational ERFs has risen from 22 to 59, with a further 18 in construction, which has meant waste is now sourced closer to facilities rather than moved over long distances by road or rail. He said waste density at the source of collection was also a factor.</p> |

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| | <p>Andy Smith added that the key issue is rail loading facilities where the waste is collected are few and far between. He said a symptom of scaling back ERFs to more medium-sized facilities (rather than the larger capacity facility originally planned at Protos) meant that the logistics and feasibility of transporting waste by rail were more challenging.</p> <p>He said that, with very few rail loading facilities, the likelihood is that more road miles would be generated with vehicles travelling distances to a centralised location to load the waste onto rail, rather than travelling directly by road to an ERF in the region.</p> <p>Andy agreed with Richard's point regarding density at source. He said the locations of the material for the Protos ERF would be confirmed nearer the time of operation, but it is likely it will be a mix of locations including Liverpool, Manchester, Cheshire and North Wales.</p> <p>Cllr Copeman said it would be helpful to have further discussion, as he was concerned about the 700 vehicle movement figure, based on the intention of the site being multi-modal. Andy Smith noted that this was the overall Protos figure, and the HGV limit for the ERF was 111 movements per day.</p> <p>Cllr Wiffen made the point that there may be a change in Government, which could bring with it different policies and funding for rail, including nationalisation.</p> <p>Action: <i>It was agreed for Peel NRE to circulate the planning documents once available and look at dates for a post-submission briefing to forum members.</i></p> <p>Cllr Eardley commented that he gave the thumbs up to the proposed changes to the signage.</p> |
| 5. Date of next meeting | Action: <i>Proposed dates to be circulated for a post-submission briefing and next formal Community Forum meeting.</i> |