

PROTOS

Protos Community Forum Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 15th November 2023

Forum members:

Cllr Graham Heatley, Elton Ward (Chair)
Cllr Sarah Temple, Helsby Parish Council
Cllr Christine Jackson, Ince Parish Council
Cllr Mark Parry, Little Stanney Parish Council

Advisers:

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

<u>Item</u>	<u>Summary</u>
1. Apologies and introductions	<p>Apologies were noted from:</p> <p>Cllr Andrew Eardley, Ince Parish Council Cllr Tim Lloyd, Ince Parish Council Cllr Lizzie Wiffen, Thornton Le Moors Parish Council Cllr Chris Copeman, Helsby Ward Cllr Andy Canham, Elton Parish Council</p> <p>Brief introductions were carried out, noting Richard Barker now being the key contact at Peel NRE following personnel change and the departure of both Jane Gaston and Lois Kay.</p>
2. Approval of minutes from last meeting	<p>No comments we received on the minutes from the previous AGM meeting in July.</p> <p>Action: It was agreed to provide members who attended the AGM an opportunity at the next meeting to comment/agree the draft.</p>
3. Reports circulated: Encyclis	<p>Andy Smith provided a summary of the report circulated to members (attached to minutes), detailing key updates on the construction of the Protos Energy Recovery Facility as well as plans to submit a planning application for an associated carbon capture facility. A consultation event for the latter had taken place on the day of the forum meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Heatley asked how the jobs were being promoted to residents in the surrounding communities and if there had been much interest via the established channels.</p> <p>Andy Smith explained that, due to the nature of the construction, many of the positions had been filled via associated subcontractors, but that recruitment for the operation phase roles was currently underway and this was seeing a good response from the local area. He explained that the team had been working with Job Centre Plus and attending local recruitment fairs to raise awareness of the positions. He said he would</p>

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	<p>expect the permanent, operations roles at the site to be drawn from the surrounding area.</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>Cllr Jackson asked whether an issue previously raised regarding increased signage to avoid HGVs getting lost trying to locate the site could be looked into. Richard said that discussions around new signage had taken place in the past with Cheshire West and Chester Council, but that he would have to look into this as this was being undertaken by former colleagues.</p> <p>It was noted that, whilst Richard has been involved in Protos for several years, there may be specific items or issues that members had raised with former colleagues that he was unaware of.</p> <p>Action: It was agreed for forum members to be asked via email to raise any matters that have been raised directly with former colleagues where actions are still outstanding.</p> <p>Cllr Heatley asked about raised water levels on site. Richard Barker said that has been an issue that had affected ENCIRC's railhead. He advised that a contract has been instructed to clear ditches on the site to improve drainage and further planned work, including clearance works at key plots, should further improve site drainage to the ecological areas.</p> <p>He also explained that the flooding could have been exacerbated by one of the on-site pumps not functioning correctly, which has subsequently been addressed with the Environment Agency who operate them.</p> <p>Cllr Jackson asked about the proposed HyNet CO2 pipeline, and whether above ground infrastructure would impact Ince village. Richard Barker explained the above ground infrastructure associated with carbon capture at Protos would be within the land boundary of Protos and would not affect Ince village. He directed Cllr Jackson to online materials published by HyNet as part of communications on its DCO application that outline their proposed infrastructure, noting this was separate to what was being proposed/applied for at Protos.</p> <p>Richard Barker noted in his update that the police had recently been called to the site due to ongoing issues with motorbikes and quadbikes congregating around the site, with new surveillance cameras installed to try to help the issue. Cllr Parry offered to pass on to the local motorcycle club to raise awareness of the problem among the community with the aim of seeking assistance on tackling the issue.</p> <p>Members also discussed Richard Barker's update that Peel NRE intends at some point in the new year to seek removal of the</p>

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	<p>requirement to deliver the railhead at Protos before plots can be developed. He noted that a planning application will be required and that there is a lot of work that needs to be done on this, so more detail could be provided to members in due course on the approach being taken. He provided the context that Peel NRE had explored the use of the facility with several potential operators over the years but the demand requirement was not there in the market.</p> <p>Cllr Temple asked several questions about the rationale and use of rail on site, including use of rail in the waste industry; whether the biomass or ERF could use rail; and why the shift away from multi-modal.</p> <p>Richard Barker and Andy Smith explained how the commercial arrangements of collection, transfer and movement of waste means that it is less likely to travel to the site by rail. In terms of ERF, it's planned for materials to be brought to site by road, partly driven by the locations and proximity of where the material is being collected from would not make it economically viable to transfer via rail. Andy explained how the challenge for the industry would not necessarily be unloading at Protos, but loading waste onto trains at different locations to be transported to site.</p> <p>Richard Barker also noted that Peel NRE do not intend to seek to amend the road vehicle limits associated with the original consent, which among other matters, accounted for a much larger tonnage ERF.</p> <p>Cllr Parry said he understood the various complexities owing to his professional experience at Network Rail.</p> <p>Richard Barker confirmed that investment had been made into the canal berth and there have been early discussions with a potential future operator about its use to transport products to and from site.</p> <p>Action: To keep forum members updated as further preparation work is carried out on the proposed rail application.</p>
4. Future charring arrangements	<p>Cllr Heatley recognised that he was continuing to chair the meeting in an interim capacity, but said it was appropriate to discuss future charring arrangements.</p> <p>No further expressions of interest in being a permanent chair were voiced by those on the call.</p> <p>Cllr Heatley explained that he was willing to continue to the chair the forum, but that his job means he may be called away at short noticed. It was proposed that in such an eventuality, Lewis Jones (or a representative of Font) who is now acting as secretariat for the forum could step in and chair to ensure the meeting still went ahead. This was agreed by members present.</p>

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5. Any other business	No further business was raised.
6. Date of next meeting	It was agreed that the next Community Forum meeting would take place in February 2024, with proposed dates to be circulated on email to members.

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