

Minutes of: PRESTWICH TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 13 November 2013

Present: Councillor (in the Chair)
Councillors J Black, G Campbell, P Heneghan, M James,
D O'Hanlon, T Pickstone, A Quinn and A Simpson

Also in attendance: Mr D Stanley - Prestwich Clough Centenary Group
Mr C Millington - Young Persons Representative
Mr P Gresty - Churches Together Prestwich and Kersal
Mr F Adam - Manchester and District Jewish Representative
Council
Mr A Smith - Patients Council

Public Attendance: 21 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor N Bayley and Husain

496 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

497 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last meeting, held on 12 September 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

498 MATTERS ARISING

A copy of the Action Checklist was submitted. Further to Minute PTF.352 the Chair, Councillor Heneghan provided a response on behalf of Councillor Bayley to questions raised about the redevelopment of Victoria Station. It was explained that the works will commence early in the new year and last for approximately 9 months. A publicity campaign will be launched by TfGM outlining interim arrangements during completion of the works.

With regard to Minute PTF.355, Community Funding, Mr David Stanley expressed disappointment that funding was only available for projects within the current financial year.

In respect of Minute PTF.350, Members of the Township Forum re-iterated their disappointment that PACT meetings had been discontinued in the Sedgley Ward. Inspector Kenny explained the reasons for meetings being discontinued and stated that the decision would be kept under review.

499 PLAN FOR CHANGE 3

The Township Forum received a presentation from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Connolly, and the Assistant Director of Resources setting out details of revised financial savings requirements for 2014/2015 along with details of how the proposed savings will be met. The presentation provided a breakdown of internal savings that would contribute towards the additional £2.2m savings target for 2014/2015.

With regard to 2015/2016, the Leader of the Council outlined the scale of the challenge facing the Council that would mean £16m being cut from the budget. In planning for this, the Leader explained that the aim would be to minimise the effect on residents and employees but stressed that all options would need to be explored, including:

- Service Changes – closures and/or a reduced range of services
- Explore alternative ways of delivering services
- Increased waiting times and/or reduced quality of service
- Severe limits to what the Council can afford to do
- Review how the Council is structured.

Questions and comments were invited from the Township Forum and members of the public present at the meeting and the following issues were raised:

- In response to a question from Hannah Cropper, the Leader of the Council stated that it was mainly Councils in the north and the midlands who were bearing the brunt of the largest budget cuts.
- Frank Shatcliffe stressed the importance of cross party support in order to press the case better funding for Bury. The Leader of the Council reported that the Fair Deal for Bury campaign would be re-launched to highlight Bury's plight.
- Councillor Black expressed concern that services to support vulnerable people, who had been further affected by the impact of welfare reforms, could be in jeopardy as a result of the budget cuts.
- In response to a question from Councillor O'Hanlon, the Leader of the Council explained that all options would be looked at including shared services, where it can be demonstrated that it would be of benefit to Bury.
- Members of the Township Forum highlighted the rise in demand for services as a result of an ageing population, increased projections of child poverty and higher levels of public expectation.
- In response to a question from Adrian Smith concerning the Public Health budget, the Assistant Director of Resources explained that funding for Public Health had transferred to the Council from April 2013, with the monies being ring fenced. It was explained that it was too early to gauge the level of future funding allocations.

- In response to a question from Frank Adam, concerning Council Tax collection rates, the Leader of the Council reported that Bury, with a rate of 97%, was towards the top of the table of neighbouring authorities.

It was agreed:

That the Leader of the Council and Assistant Director of Resources be thanked for their presentation.

500 PRESTWICH WORKS

Isaac Ginsbury, of Prestwich Works, attended the meeting to inform the Forum about the work of the organisation. Prestwich Works is working in partnership with the Council to help unemployed residents improve their employment prospects and ultimately find work. Help is provided with CV's, computer training and job search skills.

In response to a question from the Chair, Councillor Heneghan, it was reported that since it was established in February 2013, 875 residents had used the service, with 34 people being helped into sustainable employment and 65 into training.

During discussion of this item, Councillor Black suggested there may be scope to develop work experience placements with some of the independent traders in Prestwich.

It was agreed:

That Isaac Ginsbury be thanked for his presentation.

501 POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Kenny provided an update on policing matters in respect of Prestwich and referred to the different processes used to engage and work with the public. The importance of getting initial customer contact right in the first instance was highlighted as being of paramount importance to the Police.

During discussion of local crime figures it was reported that there had been a recent increase in the number of burglaries in the Prestwich area.

In response to issues raised in relation to a recent burglary by a local business owner, Inspector Kenny undertook to ensure that officers re-visited the business to offer advice about security and prevention measures.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

502 PRESTWICH REGENERATION GROUP - UPDATE

Councillor Black, Chair of the Prestwich Regeneration Group, submitted an interim report setting out an update on the work of the Group. The report identified the following big issues to be tackled:

- Improvements to the Longfield Centre
- Improvements to the environmental quality of Bury New Road
- Creation of an 'anchor development'
- Work focussing on the potential for Prestwich's many green spaces to create new jobs, training and business opportunities

The report also referred to the importance of existing smaller projects and set out a number of proposed next steps as part of the work of the Group.

During discussion of this item, Jack Barratt highlighted the poor condition of shop frontages in Prestwich. Frank Adam referred to possible measures available through legislation to require landlords to improve the condition of their properties and suggested an update be provided through the Planning Department.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

503 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair, Councillor Heneghan, invited questions, comments and representations from members of the public present at the meeting. Questions were asked and comments made on the issues detailed below. The Township Forum Co-ordinator undertook to obtain a reply to matters which could not be dealt with at the meeting.

- Ann Hutchinson highlighted sites in Rainsough area that were in need of a clean up, namely the old Cussons site; the old Staff of Life site; The Plough pub; and the old Wesleyan Chapel.
- In response to a question from Jay Lieberman, Councillor Quinn reported that he had contacted the developers about progress on the retirement homes development at Park View/Bury New Road without success and would follow up with the Planning Department.
- Catherine Weston requested an update on the progress of the road works being undertaken on Bury New Road
- David Stanley expressed concern about vehicular access to the Clough being restricted as a result of the Eruv boundary which had been erected. The Chair, Councillor Heneghan undertook to ensure the matter was looked into.

504 COMMUNITY FUNDING REPORT (FOR INFORMATION)

A copy of the Community Funding report for Prestwich was submitted, setting out details of funding allocations to date in support of the work of local voluntary and community groups.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

505 PARKING IN PRESTWICH

Councillor Quinn reported that a request had been made to limit car parking within the town centre to 2 hours in order to discourage long term business parking.

**COUNCILLOR
Chair**

(Note: The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 9.20 pm)