

**Minutes of: WHITEFIELD AND UNSWORTH TOWNSHIP FORUM**

**Date of Meeting:** 18 November 2014

**Present:** Councillor J Grimshaw (in the Chair)  
Councillors P Adams, R Caserta, E Fitzgerald, D Jones,  
J Mallon, A Matthews and M Whitby

**Also in attendance:** 52 members of the public were in attendance

**Public Attendance:** No members of the public were present at the meeting

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors D Jones, M Wiseman and Marlene Dawson (Victoria Estate TRA)

#### **WUTF.439 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made in relation to any items to be considered.

#### **WUTF.440 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2014 were submitted. An update on those matters raised at the meeting was circulated.

##### **Delegated decisions:**

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
2. That the matters arising in the update be noted.

#### **WUTF.441 BUDGET 2015/2016**

Cllr Rishi Shori, Deputy Leader of the Council and Mike Owen, Executive Assistant Director of Resources, gave a presentation detailing the key financial issues facing the Authority and subsequent efficiency savings to be made for Bury Council's 2015/16 budget.

The following key facts were presented:-

- For 2015/16, £16 million will be cut from budgets. This equates to a loss of £54 m (50%) of the budget in 5 years.
- This means the Council will need to prioritise key services at a time when residents' needs and expectations are changing and demand for services is increasing.
- In order to do this the Council are exploring alternative ways of delivering services and reviewing organisational structures.
- For 2015/16 the Council have received only 1 year's funding settlement information from the Government, which has yet to be confirmed.

- The Council's core funding from Government is likely to be cut by 13% (to be confirmed).
- The Council will also face cuts to a number of grants received from the Government, for example Early Intervention and Education Services grants. This is in addition to pressures from levies from other bodies and uncertainty following the localisation of Business Rates.

The meeting was informed of the following key measures to address the cuts:-

- Alternative Service Delivery Models - £3.420m
- Third Sector - £0.200m
- Income Generations - £2.012m
- Better use of External Funding - £3.376m
- Savings from the way the Council buys things - £1.320m
- Managing Assets - £0.726m
- T & C's, Restructuring and vacant posts - £3.229m
- Improved Recycling - £0.862m
- Reduction in provision of services - £0.662m

Bury Residents were being informed of the financial issues facing the Authority as part of a consultation process for the 2015/16 budget and were being asked to consider changing expectations about service delivery; working more closely with individuals and communities to deliver services ie. volunteering/self management; a stronger focus on demand reduction such as self care/early intervention/personal responsibility; examining alternative ways of delivering remaining Council services and changing the way residents access services – "digital by default".

In terms of the next steps, it was reported that from 6 November 2014 to 9 January 2015 the Council will be consulting residents and stakeholders on the package of cuts needed for 2015/16. This will be followed by a review of the consultation feedback which will be fed into the budget setting process for 2015/16. The Council will debate the 2015/16 budget and formally approve a package of cuts. Residents were informed of the various ways they can contact the consultation team and leave comments by 9 January 2015.

The Chair invited questions and comments from those present at the meeting and the following issues were raised:

- What PFIs are there in Bury which the Council pays for? – The Council does not pay for any PFIs directly.
- Will the Council sell off the public land at Higher Lane (Hamilton Park) which was left to the Council 95 years ago? Since then some of the land was sold to a private owner. – There are no plans at this time to sell off the land. The Council is selling Council owned assets in order to promote more housing development.
- In response to the Government's decision to introduce a 'Bedroom Tax' and the Council's acceptance of the Government's ongoing cuts to local services. Isn't it time to petition and lobby more and demonstrate to show our resistance to these cuts? – Bury has not evicted anyone as a result of the bedroom tax. The Council is legally obliged to set a budget and if it does not the Executive Director of Resources will have to or the Government will step in

and take over. The budget needs to be consulted on and set in accordance with the views of Bury people.

- Will the Council need to invest in the 2014 Care Act? – Yes approximately £3.4million will be required. Carers are vital to Bury to maintain the high levels of care. The investment now will save the Council money in the longer term.
- Will the Elmhurst facility remain in the control of the local authority or farmed out to 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector or private sector control? – The Council is looking at different models of control for Elmhurst such as an arm's length organisation or a social enterprise. The Council wants to develop and build on the quality of the services provided at Elmhurst and make it an attractive and competitive option for those people who may not be in receipt or entitled to benefits and want to buy care services of a high standard.
- Would the introduction of an elected Mayor for Greater Manchester have any impact on the finances of local councils? – No there would be no additional funding available. What is on offer is more control at a local level for investment and finance. There would also be a lot less competition in going to Westminster and trying to lobby Government Ministers for more money. An elected Mayor would be a lot more approachable for AGMA Councils.

**It was agreed:**

That the information and responses provided be noted and Councillor Shori and Mike Owen be thanked for their presentation.

**WUTF.442 CHILDREN'S CENTRES CONSULTATION**

Councillor Gill Campbell, Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) and Ian Chambers, Assistant Director of Learning, gave a presentation on the proposed new delivery model for Children Centres in Bury.

The meeting was informed of the key objectives for Bury Children Centres:-

1. To improve health for under 5's – measured by higher rates of breast feeding, reduced obesity and improved dental hygiene.
2. To improve child development – measured by improved school readiness and an increasing proportion of children achieving a good level of development.
3. Reducing the risk of mistreatment or abuse of under 5's – measured by reductions in the rate of family needs escalating to a level requiring family intervention.
4. Improving families' economic prospects measured by reduced numbers of under 5's in households on benefits.

It was reported that these objectives will be used to drive resource allocation to specific centre activities. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) rankings will be used to directly allocate overall resources – funding being directly linked to deprivation. The driver will be the number of children within a reach area for a Children Centre who are under 5 and living in a Lower Super Output Area. These are among the 40% most deprived nationally.

The presentation provided detailed information of the targeted support on offer as part of the objectives in relation to health, school readiness, Early Help and job readiness. Specific detail was also provided in relation to the proposed Children Centre Hubs across Bury. The meeting was informed as to how each Hub would work, the staffing changes involved, outreach deployment and of the necessary steps required in order to convert the other sites in order to deliver the 2 year old offer in Bury. It was reported that from September 2014, 40% of 2 year olds should have access to free nursery places (a total of 1177 children in Bury). There was a current forecast of a shortage of 638 places (October 2014). The Council propose that Children Centres which are no longer required as Hubs will be offered as centres for the 2 year old offer.

In relation to service costs it was reported that total expenditure on Children's Centres in 2013/14 was £2.875m. The Council had seen a reduction of the Government's Early Intervention Grant of over £2.8m since 2012/13 and that the new proposed model of delivery will cost £1.949m which will deliver a proposed savings target for the service of £820k. The consultation period had been extended to 15 December, 2014 and following an analysis of feedback received and subsequent consideration by Cabinet, implementation of the proposals would begin from 1 April, 2015.

The Chair invited questions and comments from those present at the meeting and the following issues were raised:

- Mrs Marshall stated that she supported the outreach work in the proposal to help those in most need in the community that may not have the confidence to attend at a centre. She also recognised the value of Children's Centres because they provide a place for children to socialise and develop their skills but also a place for parents to meet and talk to other parents. – The Council values the responses given. The services will still be available to help parents as well as stay and play for children. Details of activities and local venues will also be circulated.

**It was agreed:**

That the presentation and information provided be noted and Cllr Campbell and Ian Chambers be thanked for their contribution to the

**WUTF.443 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair invited questions from the members of the public present about the work or performance of the Council or Council's services relevant to the Whitefield and Unsworth area.

**Aldi Store car park** – has anything been done following the suggestion made that the separate smaller car parks be amalgamated for the safety of pedestrians and drivers. Can the Council approach the store owners to raise this issue? The road marking needs to be amended to divert traffic to go from a double to a single lane on to Higher Lane – It was reported that a similar request had been made in 2004 without success. Councillor Mallon reported that he had spoken to a store owner about a broken flag stone but there was no interest from the owner about maintaining the footway.

**Rufford Drive** – cars parking on pavement causing a hazard. Councillor Grimshaw suggested local residents approach the shop owners to raise the matter and work towards co-operating.

**Ringley Road Trees** – Can the Council take action to reduce the size of the trees along Ringley Road which have become potentially dangerous to pedestrians and road users if one should fall? Street lighting has become impaired. – This will be reported to the department responsible.

**Bank Street Tipping** – There has been tipping taking place on Bank Street in the area behind the Garrick Theatre.

**Sunnybank Road** – Action is needed to reduce the speed of vehicles on Sunnybank Road which has become worse since the Croft Lane closure. Residents have received abuse as they have challenged drivers and the noise has been going in to the early hours of the morning. There have been a lot of near miss accidents. There are schools and a playground nearby. – This should be raised with Inspector Kenny (GMP).

**South Close** – Drivers are ignoring the roundabout and driving straight over it because it flat. Could the roundabout be raised to make vehicles slow down? – This will be passed for the attention of the Highways officer.

**Croft Lane** – The meeting was attended by Lesley and Simon from United Utilities. It was reported that Croft lane would be opened to traffic from 19 December until 5 January 2015. There had been no changes to the design of the works taking place. There was an issue regarding services that had been uncovered.

The Chair invited questions.

Will United Utilities reimburse me for my taxi fare from home to the Blackford Place? - Yes.

There has been no work on site for some time when will work restart? There is a ten mile detour to get to Pilsworth by – It was anticipated that work would start on the services on 19 November for around 5-10 days. It was anticipated that Balfour Beattie would restart work the following week. It is accepted that there is frustration for local residents and information would be circulated as soon as possible.

In view of the change to the design and that a single pipe to be installed during the works, could the road be opened up on one side? Also will further work be likely in the future? – The diameter of the pipe is now larger because it will take in two inputs it would not be possible to open the road. It is not anticipated that further work will be required once this has been completed.

Will service user bills see an increase due to the investment being made in these works? – No United Utilities will be working to make services more efficient.

Could more be done to remind residents that there is a shuttle bus available travelling to Pilsworth? Yes, information will be circulated.

#### **WUTF.444 TOWNSHIP PLAN UPDATE**

It was reported that an update will be provided at the next meeting.

#### **WUTF.445 POLICE UPDATE**

Inspector Mark Kenny addressed the meeting on the work of the Police in the Whitefield and Unsworth area. A reminder was given on the importance on ensuring property was made secure now that the darker evenings has started. Remembering to lock doors and windows and cars were simple but effective ways to deter criminals. Helping older neighbours by checking their property and making sure that house lights are turned on are other useful ways to reduce crime. Personal safety was also important and making sure that you are aware of your location and ensuring you avoid badly lit areas.

The Chair invited questions.

Why don't the police blitz areas to catch out drivers with tax or insurance? Road safety is a priority and the police have technology to monitor areas and take retrospective action to prosecute and in some cases seize a vehicle for non payment of tax or having no insurance.

Mr Lott referred to an idea being introduced in where vitals details were available in the event of an emergency on a 'contact disc' which was kept in the car windscreen. It was reported that the idea was being considered although the level of detail provided would need to be determined.

Mrs Bannister referred a system which was run by the Red Cross in Bolton where people's medical details were stored and a contact number was kept on display in their vehicle or on their person.

#### **WUTF.446 COMMUNITY FUNDING REPORT**

Consideration was given to a Community Funding report which provided an update on the levels of funding available in the Whitefield and Unsworth wards for 2014/15.

#### **It was agreed:**

That the report be noted.

#### **WUTF.447 COMMUNITY NOTICES**

The Chair invited attendees to give any dates of events taking place in the Whitefield and Unsworth area.

**WUTF.448 ROOM LAYOUT**

It was requested that the room layout be altered to enable more people to be able to see the screen for presentations given at meetings. The room will be altered accordingly for future meetings.

**COUNCILLOR  
Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 1.00 pm and ended at 3.30 pm)**