

Minutes of:	BURY EAST TOWNSHIP FORUM
Date of Meeting:	25 November 2013
Venue:	Redvales Children's Centre, Dorset Drive, Bury
Present:	
Councillors:	Councillors: D M Cassidy, M Connolly, S Haroon, T Holt, K Rothwell, J Smith, S Smith, T Tariq and S Walmsley
Advisory Group Representatives:	Tan Ahmed (ADAB - Chair), Tim Boaden (Seedfield TRA), Janet Edwards (Older People's Forum), Gemma Philburn (Streetwise 2000), Harry Reed (Pimhole Residents' Association) and Lesley Wildeman (Topping Fold TRA)
Public attendance:	28 members of the public were in attendance
Apologies for absence:	Darren Durham – Freedom Church, Bury

Tan Ahmed (ADAB), Chair of Bury East Township Forum, thanked Kim Griffiths, Township Co-ordinator for attending the meeting on behalf of Dave Thomas this evening, following the birth of his baby. Tan offered congratulations to Dave and his family.

BETF.549 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Connolly declared an interest in any item which related to staffing as his partner is an employee of Bury Council.

BETF.550 FOSTERING - BURY HOMES FOR BURY CHILDREN

Emma Newey from Social Care and Safeguarding, attended the meeting to explain the current drive for recruitment of foster carers within Bury.

Emma explained that the Authority had to use external agencies to place some children as there weren't enough foster carers in Bury for the number of children needing a placement. If a placement wasn't available through the Council approved foster carers within Bury, then Social Services would have to place a child with a private agency. This could mean that they were far away from their friends and family.

This would also have cost implications to the Council as the agency placements were more expensive.

Emma left information on how people could contact Bury Family Placement Team and urged anyone interested in fostering to get in touch.

BETF.551

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

Delegated decision:

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 19 September 2013, be approved as a correct record, with the amendment that under minute no. BETF. 407, Bury East Township Plan Update, Councillor Walmsley stated that it had been agreed to set up a task and finish group to look at involvement of young people at the Township Forum or a setting up of a meeting with young people prior to the Township Forum so that any issues from young people can then be brought to and addressed by the Forum and that an update be reported at the next meeting.

Following the last meeting of Bury East Township Forum, it had been requested by the Members of the Forum that a representative from Highways be present at this meeting in order to address certain issues. Ian Lord, Engineering Manager (Traffic Management Services), Tina Glover, Group Leader for Traffic and Road Safety and John Foudy, Car Park Manager attended the meeting and various questions were raised from the Members of the Township forum:

- § Tim Boaden (Seedfiled TRA), referred to the bus lane at the bottom of Bolton Road and highlighted a number of issues relating to the location of the bottom section of this bus lane. Tim explained that this was raising a number of concerns with residents who had received enforcement penalties and had trouble manoeuvring their vehicles due to other vehicles blocking their way.

Tina explained that it was not Bury Council that had funded the introduction of the bus lanes but the Department for Transport. It had cost £2 million for a 10 year period and if the bus lane was removed the Council would have to pay back this amount. Tina reported that the bus lane in fact runs from Bolton through to Littleborough and although there are 3 sections on Bolton Road it is looked at as a whole route not separately. Motorists were able to use the bus lanes within the unrestricted time periods and enforcement was carried out only within the restricted time periods, which were clearly sign posted along the route.

John Foudy explained to the Township Forum how the traffic

penalties were enforced within the 275 metre flow of the bus lane in this area and he stated that if the traffic flowed within the correct lanes there should be no reason that motorists should ride within the bus lane, incurring a penalty charge.

Various other issues were raised from the Members of the Forum to the Highways officers:

- § Harry Reed reported that there has been, for some time, a problem on Rochdale Road, entering Bury, near St. Thomas's Primary, with grids flooding and if pedestrians are standing at the crossing in this area, they are in danger of getting sprayed with water. Harry stated that he had reported this problem a number of times and it really needed addressing.

Ian Lord said that he would pass this on to the relevant Officer.

- § Councillor Cassidy raised concerns regarding Womersley Road at the junction on Peel Way, with people parking on double yellow lines to enter the takeaways and vans delivering goods. Councillor Cassidy stated that Traffic Enforcement Officers don't want to target this area as they are often abused and yet this issue was a real problem that needed addressing.

Councillor Connolly stated there was a similar problem on Rochdale Road and asked that this area be investigated also.

John Foudy explained that restriction and enforcement was the Council's responsibility and acknowledged there was a history of complaints in these areas and on Heywood Street. However, vehicles needed to stop to load and unload. NSL were the contractors for Bury Council and Health and Safety of the Officers was paramount and it was difficult to place them in the 'firing line' to be abused and harassed. There was no easy solution to these problems as consideration has to be given to the shop owners also.

Councillor Walmsley stated that the problem seemed to lie with there being no visible signs of any Enforcement Officers. Local residents used the takeaways, parked on the double yellow lines and then stayed in the shop for periods of time. A local resident agreed with Councillor Walmsley, stating that to drive in peak times into Bury on Womersley Road, negotiating these vehicles was horrendous.

- § A local resident complained that grids were also blocked in other areas such as Heywood Street, Cross Street and Fletcher Street.

- § A resident asked when the 'no entry' sign would be erected on Yarwood Street?
- § Jimmy Hill, Chair of Pimhole Residents' Association stated that he had complained on a number of occasions about vehicles being parked on double yellow lines on Market days at the top of Heywood Street and Cook Street.
- § Kath Bond asked about a 20 mph speed limit on Willow Street and Councillor Connolly replied that the 20 mph zones were a part of the StreetSafe Initiative.
- § A resident from Wellington Road complained that leaves were not being cleared properly from the local area.

Tina Glover pointed out that Highways was constituted of a number of individual teams but that the Officers present this evening would take back the complaints from residents on the issues raised at the meeting. However, John Foudy explained that, under the current climate and financial budget restrictions and with the sheer volume of issues throughout the Borough, there were not the resources available to deal with every one promptly.

BETF.552

I WILL IF YOU WILL - IMPROVING WOMEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

Jordan Riley from the Community Activator Team was introduced to the meeting and explained about the 'I will if you will' initiative which was being carried out across the Borough.

Jordan explained that Bury had secured a substantial amount of National Lottery funding to support a programme aimed at encouraging local women and girls aged 14 + to take up some form of exercise with the aim to motivate them to being more active. A wide range of activities would be offered to assist this, such as jog groups, walks, burlesque, total body workout and many others. Also

a mobile pool was available at Broad Oak high School for water based activities.

Further details on applying for funding to support sports activities and information on finding out what events were being held locally were available on the Council's website.

The following questions were asked by local residents:

- How was the Community Activator Team reaching out to

people?

Jordan explained he personally would be out talking to different Communities and also the Team had now visited all of the Township Forums to promote the programme.

- Sakina, a freelance trainer, explained that currently she works at a Women's only gym and in the last 6 weeks had noticed an increase in South East Asian Women who weren't aware of this scheme. Sakina stated that a lot of Asian ladies needed to be encouraged and that rather than just putting up posters maybe someone could actually meet with different groups.

Jordan explained that he had already visited ADAB about the scheme and the Jinnah Centre and that much more promotion would be taking place.

- Sakina stated that unfortunately the gym may be facing closure and asked about funding for existing provisions.

Jordan stated that he would take this back and report back.

It was agreed:

That the information be noted and thanks to Jordan and other members of the Team for attending the meeting.

BETF.553

PLAN FOR CHANGE

The Township forum received a presentation from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Connolly and the Assistant Director of resources, Steve Kenyon, 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 £2.2 million savings target for 2014/2015.

The Plan for Change had first been consulted on in 2011. Since then there had been a number of different policy announcements and changes to local Government funding and budgets which had seen the need to consult on more and more proposals in relation to the services provided by the Council.

It was reported that the Council Tax had been raised for the 2013/2014 financial year by 3.5% and there was no information available to date as to whether the Government would impose

sanctions on the Council because of this raise even though all rules and regulations had been complied with. It was also too early to know what the Council situation would be for 2014/2015 as final grant figures weren't available until mid January 2014.

It was explained that this was now the time that residents and stakeholders could have input into how the additional £2.2 million could be saved and which areas should be considered and what the Council Services should look like from 2014/2015.

With regard to 2015/2016, Councillor Connolly outlined the scale of the challenge facing the Council that would mean £16 million 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 - closure 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:

- Kath Bond asked about fuel costs for Council vehicles and couldn't the refuse collection vehicles turn off their engines when not moving?

Steve explained that the vehicles were fit for purpose and it was in fact cheaper to leave them running than keep turning them on and off.

- Janet Edwards (Older People's Forum) asked what was happening to Athenaeum House and Castle Buildings as all staff had now moved into the Town Hall and Knowsley Place?

It was explained that the buildings were leased and that the remainder of the lease would be sold.

- Tim Boaden asked if front line staff that have local knowledge be kept rather than Managers?

It was explained that Managers were needed but that front line staff would be kept. It was also pointed out that in the last 3 years 350 staff had left the Council and of those, 100 were in fact Managers.

- Tim stated that Highways issues, such as roads and pavements maintenance was important and would these areas be made a priority?

Councillor Connolly explained that there just weren't the resources weren't available for every issue; however, it was a priority of the Council to provide statutory duties in areas such as looked after children and vulnerable adults.

- Tim asked about the Central Government Formula and if it was true that Bury receives less per head than other Authorities?

Councillor Connolly explained that the average amount per head nationally was £386.84, Bury receives £327.85 per head and were definitely disadvantaged by the Formula Funding. Councillor Connolly explained to the Forum about the Fair Funding Campaign for Bury until this Formula was changed.

- Harry Reed asked about free bus passes and whether it would be more financially beneficial if Pensioners had to pay, for instance, £5.00. This could generate some money.

It was explained that the Council collected for Greater Manchester Transport but that currently all avenues were being scrutinised including concessionary fares.

- A resident stated that the Council would reduce from 4 departments to 3 and asked which one would be disestablished?

Councillor Connolly explained currently there was Chief Executives, Neighbourhoods and Communities, Children's Services and Adult Services but they were to become 3 departments with completely new titles.

- Tan Ahmed asked about the number of residents involved in the consultation from 2011 and out of the Borough population of £189,000 only 400 responded.

Councillor Connolly explained that this was in fact the best response for a Consultation there had been. There was so much promotion for the consultation already, it was difficult to know what else to do.

Councillor Walmsley stated that herself, Councillor Cassidy and Councillor Rothwell had attended the Islamic centre with copies of the consultation and it was important to reach people who had no access to the internet and all the Communities in the Borough, by delivering hard copies of information through

Tennants' Residents' Association etc.

- Jimmy Hill asked how much was owed in Council Tax?

Councillor Connolly reported that Bury had one of the highest collection rates in the North West for Council Tax, around 97%.

It was agreed:

That Councillor Mike Connolly and the Assistant Director of Finance be thanked for their presentation.

BETF.554

POLICE UPDATE

Sergeant Mark Livesey attended the meeting and gave a presentation on statistics on Anti Social Behaviour and firework incidents within Bury East. Mark also explained about various successful Youth Projects within Moorside, East and Redvales Wards and informed the Township Forum of the Local Officers within each of the Wards and their contact details.

Various questions were asked by local residents:

- Within the Asian Community many houses had been targeted and burgled. The women were afraid to go out, especially now when it was dark so early. It was felt that CCTV and more lighting should be provided in the areas.

Sergeant Livesey explained that a number of notice boards had been put up within the Community with contact details of local Officers to report any incidents.

Councillor Walmsley stated that at this time, financially, CCTV and further street lighting would not be possible. However, solutions to these problems could come via home watch schemes and working together within the local Community, setting up further TRA's etc. to try and tackle these issues.

- Councillor Walmsley asked about the PACT meetings and whether these were due to end as a number of residents had raised concerns over this?

Sergeant Livesey stated that Officers will still be attending these meetings.

Jimmy Hill reported that following on from the Youth Projects mentioned in Sergeant Livesey's presentation, a number of youngsters from Mosses would be receiving certificates at the Ukranian Club on Monday 2nd December at 7.15 pm and invited members of the forum to

attend. Jimmy also stated that a Home Watch scheme had been set up in Pimhole.

Councillor Holt stated how important it was to work with young people also, rather than target them as a nuisance and that a number of youths had formed their own youth club in the Mosses area and now had their own in door activities. Bury East also had a dedicated Team of Police and PCSO's working with the residents and youths in the Community.

It was agreed:

That Sergeant Mark Livesey be thanked for his presentation.

BETF.556

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Harry Reed asked the Ward Councillors for advice regarding Openshaw Park Veterans' Bowling Club. He stated that the members of the bowling club had maintained the green and the Pavillion over the years and estimated they had saved the Council almost £70,000 but had now been refused any further funding to cover the cost of the materials to continue to maintain the green. Harry asked if there was anything that the Ward Councillors could put forward on their behalf to help in this matter.

BETF.557

VENUE, DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Bury East Township Forum would be held on Tuesday 4 February 2014 at St. Paul's Primary School on Porritt Street, Bury.

TAN AHMED (ADAB)

Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and finished at 9.55 pm)