

Minutes of:	BURY EAST TOWNSHIP FORUM
Date of Meeting:	24 November 2014
Venue:	Mosses Centre, Cecil Street, Bury
Present:	
Councillors:	Councillors: D M Cassidy, M Connolly, S Haroon, T Holt, J Smith, S Smith, T Tariq, S Walmsley
Advisory Group Representatives:	Tan Ahmed (ADAB), 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, Chair)
Public attendance:	There were 13 members of the public in attendance
Apologies for absence:	Councillor K Rothwell

At the start of the meeting, the Chair, Lesley Wildeman, asked that best wishes be sent to Councillor Rothwell for a speedy recovery.

BETF.459 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Connolly declared an interest as his partner was an employee at Bury Council.

BETF.460 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

Delegated decision:

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 18 September 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

BETF.461 PROPOSED NEW DELIVERY MODEL FOR CHILDREN'S CENTRES

Ian Chambers, Assistant Director of Learning, attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the proposed new delivery model for Children's Centres in Bury.

The meeting was informed of the key objectives for Bury Children's Centres, which were:

- § To improve the health for under 5's – measured by higher rates of breast feeding, reduced obesity and improved dental hygiene.
- § To improve child development – measured by improved school readiness and an increasing proportion of children achieving a good level of development.
- § 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.
- § Improving families' economic prospects – measured by reduced numbers of under 5's in households that are 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's 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's 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 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 1,177 children in Bury). There was a current forecast of a shortage of 638 places as at October 2014. The Council propose that Children's 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 the total expenditure on Children's Centres in 2013/14 was £2.875 m. The Council had seen a reduction of the Government's Early Intervention Grant of over £2.8 m since 2012/13. The new proposed model of delivery will cost £1.949 m which will deliver a proposed savings target for the service of £820 k.

Cabinet considered the proposal on 3 September 2014 and agreed that there will be a full 12 week consultation on the proposals with all Children's Centres leaders, staff, users and stakeholders; this has now been extended to 15 December 2014 and a report back to Cabinet in January 2015 with proposals for implementation. If agreed, there will then be a full 30 day consultation with staff and the implementation would begin from 1 April 2015.

Questions and comments were invited from those present at the meeting and the following issues were raised:

- Councillor Cassidy asked what the response to the consultation had been and whether it was correct that Chesham Fold would stay open in Moorside Ward?

Ian explained there had been a good response. He had been to all the Township Forums, which had been well attended and had received plenty of feedback regarding the proposals. In relation to Chesham Fold, it could be converted to the 2 year old offer.

- Peter Firth, Chief Officer from the Mosses Centre, explained that they have a pre-school at the Centre which is full with 2 year olds which is cost effective. Is this an area that has been considered?

Ian explained that following the Township Forums, alternative venues have been offered, such as Church Halls. Some schools have nurseries but others don't which is more costly and consultations are taking place with the voluntary and private sectors over this.

- Sue Arnall explained that she has already contributed to the consultation but wanted to express that the Children's Centres met the needs of Parents, especially new Mothers and it was a great shame to lose them. Although the number of outreach workers would increase there would be a reduction of support staff which could prove challenging if there was not the professional support available.
- Tan Ahmed (ADAB) asked about the Universal Provision and if there was any information available on the pilot which had taken place in Radcliffe.

Ian reported that the Hubs will co-ordinate the delivery of targeted services across their area and provide some Universal Provision, eg stay and play and host universal services from other partners and sign post where activities are taking place for families to access these services. In relation to the pilot in Radcliffe, Ian stated that he would make the information available.

It was agreed:

That Ian Chambers be thanked for his presentation.

BETF.462 PLAN FOR CHANGE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2015/16

Councillor Mike Connolly, Leader of the Council and Mike Owen, Director of Resources and Regulation, 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. Councillor Connolly explained that the scale of the cuts and the impact on the Council was an incredibly challenging task and paid

tribute to the Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet Members and Officers for their assistance in helping to provide a balanced, legal budget.

The following key facts were presented:

- § For 2015/16, £16 million will be cut from budgets. This equates to a loss of £54m (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 1 year's funding settlement information from the Government, which has yet to be confirmed.
- § The Council's core funding from the Government is likely to be cut by 13%, which is 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 7 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.

Questions and comments were invited and the following issues were raised:

- Mick Ainsworth asked about the cost of Unions to residents and the Council?
Councillor Connolly explained that Unions serve the work force and the facilities time was in line with the National average and that Union representatives were given time off work to undertake Union duties.
- Andy Lyons asked about 'digital by default' and if some services were only available online? In some deprived areas this could create problems. Mike Owen stated that it was recognised that some residents can't access online facilities and it was acknowledged that it could never be 100% digital by default.
Councillor Holt stated that as digital champion, he noted it was a huge task to get all people to use online facilities but there were such benefits in doing so. Mike Owen stated that Hubs were available for the public to use the internet.
- Tim Boaden (Seedfield TRA) asked about the economy in Bury and also devolution since the Scottish referendum.
Councillor Connolly stated he met regularly and worked very closely with Bury businesses and had recently attended Bury business awards where the president of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce was a guest. Bury business was booming.

In relation to devolution, Councillor Connolly stated that the 10 Councils, including Bury, that make up the Association of Greater Manchester Councils (AGMA) have now all agreed to a devolution deal with George Osborne to get its own directly elected Mayor with new powers and funding for transport, housing, planning etc. which should be used to benefit everybody right across the Greater Manchester area.
- Tan Ahmed (ADAB) asked how Bury compared to other authorities in the amount of grant funding received.
Mike Owen explained Bury doesn't receive as much grant funding as it is not considered to have the same levels of deprivation as other authorities, however, issues around deprivation are passed over to Bury from other authorities with no additional or following funding.

It was agreed:

That the information be noted and Councillor Connolly and Mike Owen be thanked for their presentation.

BETF.463 BURY EAST TOWNSHIP PLAN

Bury East Township Co-ordinator, Dave Thomas, had submitted the Town Plan to members for information which provided an update on the progress of the themes contained within the Action Plan for 2012 -15.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

BETF.464 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- Jimmy Hill highlighted previous concerns in relation to parking on pavements dating back to 2013 around Cook Street and Heywood Street and that he felt that nothing was being done to address these issues by the Police. Lesley Wildeman stated that it would be requested for the Police to attend the next meeting of the Township Forum.
- A local resident stated that the 494 bus service has been stopped due to the bus being unable to access certain streets due to the parked vehicles. This was very disappointing as a lot of vulnerable people used this bus service.
Councillor Walmsley explained that with the number of terraced houses in these areas of Bury and with many houses having more than one vehicle, the Police did tend to turn a blind eye over residents and the public parking on pavements as it allowed the traffic to still flow. Councillor Walmsley acknowledged that this was not ideal but it was a difficult issue to address. Andy Lyons stated that he had complained to the Police of a similar problem and they had acted by issuing parking tickets.
- Victor Hagan stated that with a number of Children's Centres closing, this would affect many vulnerable people.
Councillor Connolly stated that as had been explained in the presentations this evening in relation to the Children's Centres and the Budget Proposals, the Council had seen a reduction of the Government's Early Intervention Grant of over £2.8m and the proposed new model of delivery would save the service £820k and would provide targeted services to those most vulnerable and in the most deprived areas.
- Victor Hagan stated that Six Town Housing was 'not fit for purpose' and that vulnerable people were living in squalor. Mr Hagan reported that there were 65 outstanding cases of people living in houses of disrepair, which were currently being investigated by Solicitors.
Councillor Connolly stated that if Mr Hagan could provide this information then he would personally liaise with Six Town Housing and investigate this matter.

Councillor Walmsley explained that the Ward Councillors spend a lot of time visiting residents in all areas of Bury East including those in deprived areas and living in Six Town Housing accommodation. Councillor Walmsley stated that she was not aware of any such complaints and would be greatly concerned if this information from Mr Hagan was factually correct.

- Mick Ainsworth asked if information he had heard recently on the news about Bury being in the frame for covering up grooming of children was correct.
Councillor Connolly stated that Bury was part of Greater Manchester and there was a lot of work taking place with the Police currently over this and Bury was absolutely not involved in any kind of cover up.
- Mick Ainsworth asked about whether the Council had a mobile air quality monitor.
Councillor Connolly informed Mr Ainsworth that there was a mobile monitor.

BETF.465 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tim Boaden wished to pass on thanks from the Street Pastors after they received the Best of Bury Community Impact Award, which was awarded for the recognition of the hard work they carried out at night in Bury Town Centre.

BETF.466 FUNDING REPORT

Harry Reed (Pimhole Residents' Association) informed the Township Forum that Openshaw Management had received a grant of £250 for equipment to landscape a small plot inside Openshaw Park, which had now been completed and also a grant towards the Maintenance of the Bowling Greens.

BETF.467 VENUE, DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Bury East Township Forum would be held at St. Paul's Primary School, Porritt Street on Tuesday 3 February 2015.

LESLEY WILDEMAN
(Chair)

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and finished at 9.05pm)