

Minutes of: BURY EAST TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 22 September 2011

Venue: New Kershaw Centre, Deal Street, Bury

Present:

Councillors: Councillor D M Cassidy (In the Chair)
Councillors I Ahmed, J Byrne, M Connolly, T Holt,
K Rothwell, J Smith, T Tariq, S Walmsley

Advisory Group

Representatives: Tan Ahmed - ADAB, Tim Boaden - Seedfield TRA, Anne Clayton - New Springs Community Project Group, Darren Durham - Freedom Church, Bury, Janet Edwards - Older People's Forum, James Hill - Pimhole Residents' Association, Gemma Philburn - Streetwise 2000, Lesley Wildeman - Topping Fold TRA

Public attendance: 20 members of the public were in attendance

Apologies for absence: -

BETF.257 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Cassidy welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Bury East Township Forum.

BETF.258 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.259 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADVISORY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Nicole Tilly, Democratic Services, informed the meeting that there were to be up to nine Advisory Group members on the Township Forums, with one place allocated to a young person via the Youth Cabinet. It was reported that members of the Advisory Group had been chosen by a ballot of the core members on the Forum and following this ballot, the Advisory Group members were nominated as follows:-

- § Tan Ahmed – ADAB
- § Tim Boaden - Seedfield TRA
- § Anne Clayton - New Springs Community Project Group
- § Darren Durham - Freedom Church, Bury
- § Janet Edwards - Older People's Forum
- § James Hill - Pimhole Residents' Association
- § Gemma Philburn - Streetwise 2000
- § Lesley Wildeman - Topping Fold TRA

It was agreed:

That the nominated Advisory Group Members be welcomed to this Forum.

BETF.260 NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIR

Councillor K Rothwell nominated Darren Durham - Freedom Church, Bury, as Chair of the Bury East Township Forum which was seconded by Councillor T Holt.

Councillor M Connolly nominated Lesley Wildeman - Topping Fold TRA, as Chair of the Bury East Township Forum and this was seconded by Councillor J Smith. A secret ballot took place at the meeting.

For the position of Vice Chair, Councillor Connolly nominated Councillor Cassidy which was seconded by Councillor Walmsley.

It was agreed:

1. That Darren Durham – Freedom Church, Bury be appointed Chair of the Bury East Township Forum for the Municipal year 2011 – 2012
2. That Councillor Cassidy be appointed Vice Chair for the Municipal year 2011 – 2012

BETF.261 TOWNSHIP FORUM PRESENTATION/NEXT STEPS AND PRIORITY SETTING

Councillor S Walmsley and The Township Co-ordinator for Bury East, David Thomas, gave a presentation explaining the new Township Forums.

It was explained that six Township Forums had been established across the Borough, Bury East, Bury West, Prestwich, Radcliffe, Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor and Whitefield and Unsworth.

The primary purpose of the Township Forums was to promote better outcomes for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area and will be achieved by:

- Involving local people in shaping priorities and decisions in their area - giving local people a voice
- Developing projects with the public, private or voluntary sector to address important issues in the area
- Influencing the way in which local services are delivered
- Promoting good community relations between people who live and work in the area

The membership of the Township Forums was made up of all local ward Councillors and nine Advisory Group Members and was supported by a Township Co-ordinator. The Forum will meet six times a year in accessible community venues and would usually be held in the evenings. There would be a 30 minute open forum at each meeting to enable members of the public to ask questions relating to the work of the Council.

It was explained that the Township Forums were a Council constituted committee which would set local priorities through an annual action plan. The Forums could 'call-in' the Leader of the Council and also refer matters to the relevant Scrutiny Committee. They would bring people together to tackle key issues and provide a strong voice for the area. Councillor Connolly (Leader of the Council and Councillor for East Ward) stated that as the new Administration for the Borough, he wanted it to be 'open and transparent' and that he, along with Officers of the Council would attend meetings if required by Members of the Public.

It was explained that future Forum meetings will concentrate on setting priorities for the area by discussing with key community groups and partner organisations to agree priorities. An action plan for the coming 12 months will be produced with milestones set out and reported back at each Township Forum Meeting.

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

- How much funding would be available?

Councillor Walmsley explained that there was Community funding and that small grants in each ward was available to support local groups - up to £250 per project in a single ward and £750 for cross ward projects. The funding decisions would be made by the Small Grants Panel and reported to each Township Forum. There was also support through Community Foundation Greater Manchester and Bury 3rd Sector Development Agency of up to £12,000

- How were the Advisory Group Members able to partake in decision making?

The Township Co-ordinator explained that the members were not just attending on the evening but would be actively involved in the whole initiative.

- Clarification on who the Township Forums would be accountable to

Councillor Connolly replied that the New Township Forums would be accountable to full Council. The meetings would be serviced by Democratic Services as a Committee Meeting, with the minutes of the meeting available for Executive and Council and with direct links to Scrutiny Panels.

- Previous consultations have disregarded people's wishes, can it be guaranteed that this won't happen again?

Councillor Connolly explained that it was approaching the end of the biggest consultation process with over 3,000 contributors, to engage with members of the public, 3rd sector people and businesses to find out what the priorities are within the Borough.

It was agreed:

That the presentation be noted.

BETF.262 WASTE MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION

The Township Forum received a presentation from Neil Long, Assistant Director (Operations), Environment and Development Services, on the key changes to be made to the way the Council collects household waste. The changes would take place from 4 October 2011 and would include a grey bin collection every 2 weeks. At the moment Bury had the second lowest recycling rate in Greater Manchester at 28%. Under the new system it was anticipated that this would be increased to a 50% recycling rate with a potential of a 75% recycling rate of items taken from the kerbside. The cost of waste collection and disposal to the Council was £14 million, which over the next few years could rise to £21 million in 2015.

In order to promote and encourage recycling in Bury it was proposed that a green bin for paper and card would replace the use of green bin bags and these would be distributed during September. From October, both cooked and uncooked food waste could be placed the brown bin. A small kitchen caddy would be provided with a role of 52 biodegradable liner bags and instructions to use to wrap the food waste when it is placed in the brown bin.

The collection of bins would be as follows:

- Green bins – every 4 weeks
- Blue bins – every 4 weeks
- Brown bins – every 2 weeks
- Grey bins – every 2 weeks

In addition new technology would be used in refuse collection vehicles to increase efficiency through communication between the public and the service call centre.

The use of new collection regimes has proved to be very successful within other local authorities and there had been no problems regarding odours or pests. Families with six or more members would be provided with an extra grey bin with a red lid and smaller bins could be provided where necessary. Work was ongoing within communities to raise awareness through advice sessions and the issue of information leaflets on the new collection regime.

Several issues were raised at the meeting including:

- Were there no other means of getting rid of waste such as burning or a digester?
Alternative means were not available currently, Neil Long stated that all of the local authorities were working closely together, to try and solve the issues regarding waste management which is why re-cycling is so important.
- Certain plastics could not be re-cycled, could something be done regarding the type of packaging used?
It was reported that non-recyclable waste currently goes to landfill as certain types could not be re-cycled. Neil Long acknowledged that this was very frustrating for the Council also.
- What will happen if people refuse to split their waste for re-cycling, would people be fined?
Although the Council do have the authority to fine individuals, there is evidence that the move to fortnightly collections would encourage an increase in recycling.
- What if the bins are over full or if the amounts of paper and card board were so excessive that it couldn't all be fitted into the green bin, would it still be taken?
Neil Long stated that there was no reason, if households re-cycled correctly, that they could not last for two weeks.

Other issues included:

- Problems for the elderly in Housing Association accommodation putting each of the bins out as many were infirm.
- One resident was the only person on that street to receive a brown bin.
- Could there be extra collections for the Elderly living in sheltered accommodation as every week the bins were full.

Neil Long reported that further information was available on the Bury Council web site which included a frequently asked questions page and there was a 24 hour information line and a help line. He suggested that the residents put forward contact details to the area co-ordinator or phone the contact team and the issues raised could be addressed.

Councillor Connolly stated that all the local authorities were working closely together regarding waste management. It was an important issue and as areas were running out of landfill something had to be done to reduce the amount of waste. He informed members of the Forum that the Borough would receive 1.4 million if it reached a 40% re-cycling target and an extra 1.5 million if 50% is reached, which was an enormous amount of savings for the Borough.

It was agreed:

That Neil Long be thanked for his presentation.

BETF.263 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME/OPEN FORUM

The Chair, Councillor Cassidy, 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.

- A local resident asked for clarification regarding the Youth Service budget cuts.
Councillor Rothwell explained that certain areas had been targeted but not the whole of the Youth Service. Councillor Tariq also stated that it was difficult times but he was involved in a steering group to do with youth issues with members of youth cabinet. A report was due by November and he could report back on this issue.
- A local resident stated that he had children at Holy Trinity and St. Marie's Primary schools. He was concerned that the local fair was situated in between these two schools. He stated that the Charter Fayre dated back to 1467 for the Fayre to be held on certain dates. He was concerned the Council did not have a copy of this Charter.

Councillor Connolly informed the local resident and members of the Forum that the fair was held in March and September and there had been several sites discussed. The Council had negotiated with the Showman's Guild over the issue and it was agreed that the car park would be the most suitable site on this occasion. There was then a period of consultation and both the two schools and market traders were approached. Following the consultation, the advantages, disadvantages and any objections were evaluated. He stated that all concerns would be taken into consideration and it was a trial that the fair was held on the car park site this time and the situation would be monitored for future sites.

Councillor Connolly felt that the fair was a valued and integral part of Bury to be enjoyed by the Town's people.

- A local resident asked what the policy was for people serving as a member of the Council that don't actually live in the Borough. Councillor Connolly replied that members of the Council must either live or own a property or business within the Borough.
- A member of the public requested that an Officer from Highways could be present at the next meeting
Councillor Connolly stated that he would ensure an Officer attended the next meeting of Bury East Township Forum. Neil Long stated that he was the Assistant Director for Operations and Highways and resources were not available for someone to attend every meeting. He stated that if there were any issues residents were also able to contact customer services.

- A local resident stated that properties on Hurst Street were unable to be accessed by emergency vehicles and he had asked for a Ward site meeting.
Councillor Connolly confirmed that members of East Ward had agreed to meet with the local resident at 10.00 am that Saturday morning to assess the situation.

BETF. 264 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to be discussed at the meeting.

BETF.265 PLAN FOR CHANGE

Bury East Township Forum considered a presentation on the Council's Plan for Change consultation exercise, from Dionne Brandon, Head of Policy and Improvement. The purpose of the consultation exercise was to engage with people who live, work or study in the Borough to identify the Council's key priorities.

The 'Council choices' exercise was taking place during August and September and asks participants to pick which priorities they see as most important by placing tokens numbered 1 to 10 into 10 boxes.

A copy of the list of priorities and priority tokens was circulated to those present and each person was asked to indicate which of the choices they considered to be important. The Plan for Change was also available on the Council web site and members of the public could also write or send an email to be involved.

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

- A local resident stated that she did not feel able to take part in the consultation exercise as the Council should be sending a strong message to the Government that they did not want to make any cuts in any of the Services.
Councillor Connolly replied that the fifty one members of the Council had to set a legal budget and they needed to know the priorities of Council tax payers, businesses and the 3rd sector. He stated it was important to consult and engage with the public as budget cuts were such a serious issue.
Councillor Connolly informed the meeting that this was the largest consultation ever to be held in Bury and it was vital that the people who live, work or study in Bury give their opinions. This would help to make better informed choices on budget decisions.
- A local resident could not understand the grouping of the consultation exercise.
Dionne Brandon explained that there were in total one hundred and twenty services which had to be put into groups. It was a

Bury East Township Forum, 22 September 2011

difficult exercise but all comments were welcome and would be fed into the consultation. The outcome of which would be written into a final report.

It was agreed:

That the outcome of the "Council's choices" exercise be fed into the Council's wider "Plan for Change" consultation.

BETF.266 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next meeting of the Bury East Township Forum would take place on Monday 28 November at 7.00 pm at The Mosses Centre, Cecil Street, Bury.

COUNCILLOR D M CASSIDY
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.10 pm)