

SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny

DATE: 5 December 2012

SUBJECT: Township Forums - Performance & Engagement

REPORT FROM: Councillor Sandra Walmsley
Executive Member – Communities

CONTACT OFFICER: Cindy Lowthian, Communities Manager

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Township Forum Operating Framework was adopted in August 2011. It shows how the overall purpose of the initiative is to promote better outcomes for the social, health, economic, and environmental wellbeing of each Township Forum area. The emphasis is on Township Forums agreeing and monitoring progress through a set of priorities contained within a Township Plan.
- 1.2 Each Township Forum has undergone eight meetings since the Operating Framework was adopted (up until November 2012); including four meetings since a review of the initiative was completed in May 2012. Each has a Township Plan developed and agreed. The Township Forums are now co-ordinating the effective delivery of actions and projects to support delivery of Township Plans.
- 1.3 This report provides an overview of progress made to date in this work, particularly in relation to performance relating to implementation of the Township Plans. It also provides details of engagement (of the public and community representatives) in the work of the Township Forums. It concludes by outlining future opportunities and challenges for the Township Forums.
- 1.4 Members are asked to share their thoughts on how we can identify further ways to further enhance the operation of the initiative, particularly around public engagement and involvement.

2.0 PERFORMANCE OF TOWNSHIP FORUMS - TOWNSHIP PLANS

- 2.1 The performance of Township Forums should be assessed in relation to the progress they are making in developing and implementing objectives contained within their Township Plan. These Plans not only provide Township Forum members with a work programme of projects and actions to be delivered over the next year, but also ensure that local people have a means of monitoring the progress, performance and impact these make to the quality of life in the area.

- 2.2 Each Township Forum has recently developed and agreed a Township Plan. These Plans identify local issues and priorities where, working together with local councillors, community representatives, groups and residents, they can make a difference. They are three yearly plans which include an annual action plan. This action plan incorporates the key projects and actions which will be delivered over the coming year to contribute towards delivery of the local priority outcomes.
- 2.3 The Township Plans have been developed through active engagement and discussions with Township Forum members - including both councillors and Advisory Group members. Workshops have also been held to provide an opportunity for wider community representatives, partner organisations and residents to get involved. The emerging plans have been presented to public meetings of the Township Forum, providing further opportunities for residents to get involved and shape their local area
- 2.4 The Township Plans were finalised in the summer and shared with Cabinet at their meeting in September 2012. A performance management framework has been developed to ensure that priority outcomes and actions (contained within the Township Plans) will be monitored and managed in line with Bury Council's Performance Management Framework.
- 2.5 This involves updated Action Plans being shared at each Township Forum meeting. Detailed performance reports (relating to each Township Plan) will be shared with Township Forums at the end of the municipal year, giving time for projects within them to be developed and implemented. However, Appendix A provides some examples of the type projects which are being co-ordinated and delivered through the Township Plans.

3.0 ENGAGEMENT & TOWNSHIP FORUMS

Engagement (in the work of the Township Forums) can be assessed in two ways (i) through Advisory Group involvement in the work of the Township Forums and (ii) through public involvement and attendance at meetings.

- (i) **Advisory Group involvement:** Each Township Forum may appoint Advisory Group members who are 'co-opted members' of the Township Forum to contribute and speak on relevant issues. They help to improve the range of knowledge and expertise on the Township Forum and provide an inclusive approach to improving the outcomes for each area. In particular, they champion or lead projects within the Township Plans.

Advisory Group membership (across the six Township Forums) include representatives from a wide variety of groups and backgrounds who represent significant numbers of individuals and groups across the Township Forum areas. Advisory Group members are able to use these networks to communicate important issues about the work of their Township Forum. They include tenants and residents associations, young people groups, Older People Forum, ADAB, Christian and Jewish faith representatives, Rural Equalities Forum, heritage and conservation groups, Homewatch, housing association, business representative and festivals/parks groups.

- (ii) **Public Attendance (at meetings of the Forums)**

The table below details the numbers of public attending each Township Forum over the past year.

	Nov 2011	Jan/Feb 2012	Mar 2012	May/Jun 2012	July 2012	Sep 2012	Nov 2012
Bury East	17	13	10	4	16	8	26.11.12
Bury West	5	5	8	15	8	13	7
Prest- wich	23	40	21	20	28	39	17
Rad- cliffe	15	20 (jan)	15 feb	6	7	9	7
RTNM	25	15	9	16	5	8	28
W&U	40	35	27	22	33	50	45

- 3.1 The Review of the Township Forum initiative (see report to Council 16.05.12) outlined a commitment to explore ways to promote the opportunities to get involved.
- 3.2 Actions taken to date include the following:
- Promotion of meetings through extensive data base of local community groups and organisations (1,400 listed)
 - Posters (disseminated through Forum members)
 - Press release issued prior to each Township Forum meeting
 - Three 'tweets' prior to each Township Forum meeting (three weeks prior, two weeks prior and same day)
 - Promotion through meetings/groups (i.e. Bury College, Children Centres, Bury Employment and Skills task group, discussions at Youth Cabinet, Circles of Influence event, Rainbow March)
 - Targeted emails (through LGBT network and Staff Employee groups)
 - Targeted emails through Sports Club Development Officer (for young people)
 - Article in B3SDA weekly bulletin
 - Other press releases (i.e. in relation to Township Plans and Young People engagement).
- 3.3 In addition to the above, each Township Forum has explored opportunities to encourage attendance at meetings.
- 3.4 The importance of identifying agenda items that resonate with local people is demonstrated through the increased attendance at Whitefield Township Forum and Prestwich Township Forums (local bus issues and concert issues attracted increased numbers to the meetings).
- 3.5 The Township Forum in Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor is beginning to explore 'themed meetings' linked to their Township Plan. Their last meeting had a 'business theme' and included presentations linked to promoting economic wellbeing within the Township Plan. This meeting attracted more attendees than previous meetings.
- 3.6 The Bury West Township Forum has now agreed to hold Police 'PACT' meetings prior to the Township Forum to encourage attendance.

- 3.7 Bury East Township Forum is undertaking work through ADAB and the Asian Women's Forum to encourage attendance within the South Asian community in Bury East.
- 3.8 The value of the Township Forums is also recognised in major public consultation exercises – for example budget setting, Council Tax Support Scheme, Core Strategy Consultation. The Forums will be used to raise awareness of Welfare reforms at the next round of Township Forum meetings.
- 3.9 In addition to this, the Forums provide an opportunity for residents to discuss important local issues pertinent to their Township. This includes local events, concerts and other projects. An example of this is the Radcliffe Township Forum in September where details of the Radcliffe Empty Property Pilot Project were shared and included in the Township Plan.

4.0 **FUNDING**

- 4.1 The Council continues to allocate funds through the Community Fund and Small Grants Fund across the Township Forums. Funding reports are a regular item on Township Forum agendas, providing the opportunity for Township Forums to consider how funding decisions relate to the priorities and actions agreed within their Township Plan. Examples of the type of community projects and activities funded include local youth projects, heritage projects, support for community sports organisations and community facilities.

5.0 **FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

5.1 **Communities Thematic Group – Team Bury**

- 5.2 The Team Bury Communities group has recently been re-formed to develop the refreshed community cohesion plan for the borough. This group comprises of representatives from across the equality strands (LGBT, faith groups, disability groups, third sector groups, young and older people representatives, health representatives, Greater Manchester Police and Fire Service amongst others).
- 5.3 A key theme within the refreshed Community Cohesion Plan is to 'Encourage active engagement by communities in the Borough'. The group is facilitating a partnership approach to deliver this priority. The Group will help to streamline engagement approaches across the Team Bury partnership, utilising existing engagement structures including Township Forums. The group have agreed a shared set of principles to underpin approaches to community engagement including recognition of the importance of community asset approaches when working with communities. This recognises that as well as 'needs' and 'problems', local communities have knowledge, skills and networks that can be mobilised to improve community wellbeing.

5.4 **Bury Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) & Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board (sHWB)**

- 5.5 The CCG is the new NHS organisation for Bury, made up of local GPs and other local healthcare practitioners. It will plan and purchase the health services of Bury patients. The Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board is a partnership including representatives from health, Bury Council, Bury's third Sector and the Bury LINK. They set the direction for the future design and delivery of local health care, social care and public health. These bodies will become formally

established on April 1st 2013 (the sHWB will become a committee of Bury Council).

- 5.6 It is recognised that the health and behaviours of an individual are influenced more widely by the communities in which they live: their social networks, perception of safety and ability to contribute to the local neighbourhood. Colleagues from the sHWB and CCG recognise this and are keen to work through the local Township Forums to help deliver health and wellbeing priorities within the borough. Each of the Township Plans includes a priority around improving health and wellbeing; this will provide an opportunity for the Township Forums to work with health colleagues to address this priority at a local level.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report shows that Township Forums have facilitated positive community involvement in each of the six Township areas. Working together through local community organisations (Advisory Group members), local councillors and members of the public, each Township Forum has agreed a set of local priorities contained within a Township Plan. These Plans provide Township Forum members with a work programme of projects and actions to be delivered over the next year. They also give local people a means of monitoring the progress, performance and impact the Township Forums are making to the quality of life in the area.
- 6.2 Each Township Forum continues to encourage involvement from the public in their work.
- 6.3 The meetings that have attracted larger numbers of the public are those which have agenda items which are relevant to local people. Opportunities to work with health colleagues to deliver the borough's health and wellbeing priorities at a local level have the potential to do this.
- 6.4 A key theme running throughout this report is the importance of Township Forum members (particularly local councillors) pro-actively working together to agree agendas that are based around local issues and which speak out to, and are relevant to local communities.

List of Background Papers:-

Review – Township Forums, 16 May 2012.

Contact Details:-

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Appendix A – Township Plans - Examples

Township Forum	Priority Outcome (in Township Plan)	Actions Agreed	Progress
Bury West	Improved Road Safety & Public Transport	To address issues of the availability and frequency of bus services within bury West	<p>First Bus attended meeting in September 2012 Worked with First Bus who have agreed the following: Additional 98 bus on route to alleviate lateness 472/474 – First Bus agreed to put low level entry buses on route to accommodate pushchairs</p> <p>PACT meetings to take place prior to each Township Forum</p>
	Improved Community Safety	Reduce anti-social behaviour by early intervention and prevention.	
Radcliffe	Improved Community Safety	Reduce anti-social behaviour; this to include setting up regular partnership meetings with Police/Youth services to address issues.	<p>Regular partnership meetings now being held, supporting 'Make Radcliffe Safer' campaign. Actions and successes reported to Township Forum.</p> <p>A heritage group was formed to highlight what Radcliffe has to offer.</p> <p>A major archaeological dig took place supported by residents, Manchester University, University students and schools in Radcliffe. This was partly funded through the Township Forum. A further two digs will be taking place next year.</p>
	Community Pride and Belonging	Promote Radcliffe as a positive place to	

		live, work and visit through a range of positive activities.	
Bury East	Improved Employment activities	Support actions to help get young people into work. Engage with local businesses to sponsor and support employment programmes such as 'Backing Young Bury'	2 new apprenticeships agreed in joinery and bricklaying on the Pimhole development. Positions filled by local 16-24 year olds
	Improved Community Safety	Develop Alcohol Prospectus programme with Bury East Township Forum	<p>Funding Bid successful. £90k allocated for Bury East. Township Forum held a Participatory Budgeting event held on 06 September 2012</p> <p>Six projects supported through this funding including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assertive Outreach - Alcohol Early Break: A street based assertive outreach service for young people aged under 19 years ○ Operation Henbury II ASB - Police and partners: a front line, welfare driven operation to address the risk of harm to people who are vulnerable through drinking alcohol. They could be at risk of perpetrating or becoming a victim of anti-social behaviour or crime, sexual exploitation or an accident. Children at risk will be taken by Police to a place of safety where their parents will be called and steps taken to ensure they do not place themselves in such situations again. ○ Alcohol: Lessons for Life - Coram Life Education: A multi-component programme working with local schools in which the key messages around alcohol related harm are shared. ○ Streets of Community Spirit, Groundwork: The aim is to give young people the confidence and knowledge to be able to recognise in themselves

			<p>and their friends the danger signs of drinking to excess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ POG Group - Youth Support Services: This project is a specific youth work project based in East Bury to provide information, advice, guidance and support to young people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, transgender or who are questioning their sexuality. This specific project is around alcohol awareness – providing information and advice as well as, diversionary activities. With an element of training, the young people to then act as peer educators or mentors. ○ Bury Street Pastors - Bury Street Pastors: engaging with people on the streets and in night-time venues to care, list and offer practical help. Trained volunteers offer a visible uniformed presence engaging holistically with all people, especially young people, signposting to service providers, reducing tension on the street through their non-confrontational but caring role.
RTNM	<p>Improved Employment Opportunities</p> <p>Community Cohesion & Integration</p>	<p>An increase in number of apprenticeships for Young People in Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor</p> <p>Develop links between local businesses and the 'Backing Yong Bury' scheme.</p> <p>Foster cohesion within targeted areas</p>	<p>A new initiative has been launched by the Eagle and Child in Ramsbottom to train and employ local young people aged 14-25 to build the skills and experience to pursue a career in the food sector. The initiative has been promoted through the Township Forum and links have now been established with the Backing Young Bury Scheme. So far 16 young people under 25 have found employment.</p> <p>Partnership project between the Township Forum and Groundwork (Streets of Community Spirit) working within neighbourhoods/streets in RTNM to set up community groups and joint interest groups to help foster belonging. Mini Olympics event took place in Fir Street Series of non –accredited First Aid sessions delivered at Peel Brow School</p>

Whitefield & Unsworth	Improved health and wellbeing & Improved Employment Opportunities	<p>Sustainable travel plans and regular and reliable bus service to Pilsworth</p> <p>Work with First Bus to explore opportunities to improve bus services to Blackford House Health Centre</p>	<p>Successful engagement with First Bus who have attended Township Forum meetings</p> <p>First Bus agreed to re-instate 93 and 94 bus routes back to Whitefield Centre and Pilsworth by end of January 2013.</p> <p>First Bus agreed to look at other changes including environment around the bus interchange at Besses and re-routing of other services to be explored.</p>
	Improved community Safety	Pro-active work around children and young people. In particular, introduce youth facilities for the Victoria Estate	Youth clubs and community hub operating on Victoria Estate through partnership working with Six Town Housing, Police and Tenant & residents association. Over 50 young people attend each youth club session.
Prestwich	Community Pride and Belonging	Support Park events and ensure effective delivery of key events	<p>Township Forum provided an important vehicle for local people to give their views on local concerts and events</p> <p>Township Forum influenced the establishment of a local group to advise and give local views on Heaton Park events – especially future concerts.</p>
	Town Centre Regeneration	<p>Support for Local in Prestwich</p> <p>Support for Portas bid to encourage</p>	<p>Prestwich Works to be opened in new few weeks – based in Sedgley area to get local people into training and employment. Working with the Jewish community, but also open to everyone.</p> <p>Local in Prestwich opened a year ago and despite the unsuccessful Portas</p>

		investment and interest in Prestwich	bid, they are still moving forward initiatives including local merchandise, local loyalty card scheme and website. Also organising Winter Wonderland festival and tree switch on event. LIP represented on Advisory Group of the Township Forum. Regular updates shared with the Forum to help promote the work of LIP.
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