

Minutes of: RADCLIFFE TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 11 September 2012

Venue: Radcliffe Civic Suite, Thomas St, Radcliffe

Present:

Councillors: Councillors M Bailey, P Bury, A J Cummings, A Isherwood, J Lewis, N Parnell

**Advisory Group
Representatives:**

Colin Jones – Radcliffe Boys and Girls Club (Chair)
Colette Jones – Friends of Close Park
Yvonne Shawcross – Bolton Rd Tenants & Residents
Association
Gordon Hartley – Ainsworth Community Association
Roy Vevers – Radcliffe Carnival Committee
Andy Miller – Youth Cabinet

Public attendance: 9 members of the public were in attendance

**Apologies for
absence:**

Councillors D Bailey, S Briggs and R Shori
Tony Taylor – Groundwork Bury

RTF.294 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

RTF.295 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Township Forum held on 10 July, 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

RTF.296 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Councillor Tony Isherwood, Executive Member for Finance and Resource, gave a presentation on the Localisation of Council Tax support.

The meeting was informed of the current Council Tax Benefit scheme administered by the Authority on behalf of the Government, a scheme for providing support with Council Tax costs, to people on low incomes. It was reported that the Government is now legislating to 'localise' the scheme, whilst at the same time imposing a 10% reduction in the amount of funding provided. The Council would lose funding of around £1.4 million a year. The main elements of the new scheme were explained and it was also reported that the Government had stipulated that pensioners would be protected by the new Council Tax support legislation and that any cuts in funding would have to be concentrated on the remainder of the caseload.

Details of the timescales involved were provided. It was reported that the

scheme would be operational by 1st April 2013 and the final scheme would need full Council approval by 31st January 2013. Public Consultation would take place between 4th September and 31st October 2012.

It was reported that, in addition to the Council tax freeze and the cost of the cut to the Council Tax Support, the Council would need to find an additional £9.8 million of savings. As such, the funding options open to the Council for addressing the funding shortfall were also provided at the meeting. Any funding shortfall should be addressed by raising additional Council Tax from empty properties and changing discounts.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted and Cllr Isherwood be thanked for his presentation.

RTF.297 LOCAL CRIME COMMUNITY SENTENCE (LCCS)

Trudi Brown, Probation Operations Manager for the Greater Manchester Probation Trust attended the meeting in order to provide an overview of the Local Crime Community Sentence initiative, established in 2001 and the framework of the interactive presentation available to community groups. It was reported that the presentation would provide the community with the opportunity to find out more about the Sentencing process in Court and Community Sentences, which would involve a Magistrate and a Probation Officer leading the group through a case in terms of how it came to Court; the circumstances involved; information about the victim; information about the offender and what the law says. Each group would then be given the opportunity to say what they would do given all of the information, and not just the headline.

Members of the Township Forum expressed an interest in finding out more about the enterprise and it was suggested that a scheduled meeting of the Forum could be dedicated to the presentation, which would take about 90 minutes, other community groups could also be invited to attend this event.

The Chair thanked Trudi for her attendance at the meeting.

RTF.298 RADCLIFFE EMPTY PROPERTY PILOT PROJECT

Sharon Hanbury, Head of Urban Renewal and Liz Gudgeon, Unit Manager (Regeneration and Housing) gave a presentation on the Radcliffe Empty Properties Initiative, a pilot project to provide training opportunities, address unemployment issues and tackle the problem of empty private sector properties in Radcliffe. The pilot project would be supported and part funded by £617,000 accumulated commuted sums from the Council's Affordable Housing Planning Policy.

In response to a number of questions, it was reported that there were just over 1100 private sector empty properties in Bury with the greatest concentration of private sector empty properties in Radcliffe. The funding available would enable the Authority to bring at least 20 private sector

empty properties back into use with the possibility of increasing the numbers through the other options. In terms of positive outcomes for Radcliffe, it was hoped that the scheme would help meet housing need and improve housing offer; would deal with the significant negative impacts of empty properties; would help to deliver local economic benefit and would contribute to housing, planning, regeneration and economic strategies in the Borough.

It was agreed:

1. That Sharon and Liz be thanked for their presentation.
2. That this issue be added to the Local Area Plan for regular progress reports.

RTF.299 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions, comments and representations from members of the public present at the meeting. A resident asked when the proposed work on the refurbishment of the Bury/Bolton canal in Radcliffe was due to begin as the development seemed to have fallen short of the original timescales? Councillor Bury informed the meeting that there had been a delay in work starting on the scheme due to legal matters but he had been informed that work was due to start in the near future. Councillor Bury gave an assurance to provide an update on this at the next meeting.

RTF.300 RADCLIFFE TOWNSHIP AREA PLAN - UPDATE

The Township Co-ordinator submitted the Radcliffe Township Area Plan, the working document adopted by the Township Forum which detailed the key achievable priorities as identified by members of the Forum. The report included an update on the priorities since the last meeting of the Township Forum on the 10 July, 2012, as follows:-

- O2 work experience – positive feedback received from O2 in relation to the recent work placements. O2 to provide 2 additional weeks of paid employment to local young people. If anyone knows of any young person in Radcliffe who may be interested, please contact Christine. Councillor Bury reported that the Radcliffe Empty Property strategy would hopefully provide young people in Radcliffe with employment opportunities.
- Work with police on tackling Anti-Social Behaviour – looking into the idea of themed days at ROC Centre.
- Portas Pilot scheme – although the bids had been unsuccessful, £10,000 had been awarded to develop the ideas put forward in the original bids.

It was agreed:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That further ideas/comments on the Plan be forwarded to Christine Maksymowski, Township Co-ordinator.

RTF.301 ADVISORY GROUP UPDATE

Keren Murphy, Democratic Services informed the meeting that there were currently three vacancies on the Township Forum and reported that an application had been received from Louise Williams, representing ROC which had been considered by Core Members of the Forum who welcomed the application. Core Members were requested to formally approve this application at the meeting. Another application, from Gill Stainthorpe, representing the Withins Community Association had been received and was currently being processed.

The Chair, Colin Jones invited Advisory Group members to inform the Township Forum of events or news relating to the work of their group and the following information was provided:-

(a) Friends of Close Park – “Fun Active Bury” weekly event at Close Park from 14 September to 8 December, Fridays 6 pm to 8 pm.

100 gardening hampers available for 1 hours volunteering in the park on 16 September, 1 – 4 pm. Please contact Amy Leach on 724 8173 for more information.

Positive feedback from the first phase of the archaeological dig at Close Park on 14 July.

30 residents attended a meeting following the recent flooding in Radcliffe which was also attended by a representative from the Environment Agency, Cllr Lewis and Head of Parks, BMBC – aiming for another meeting on 28 September, please contact Colette for further information.

(b) Lisa Harvey-Nebil, new Youth Work Manager for Bury South introduced to the meeting. Lisa would be happy to give feedback and discuss youth issues at future Township Forum meetings.

(c) Bolton Rd TRA – Bolton Rd Park meeting on 18 September. A number of ferrets and rabbits will be attending – children welcome!

(d) Outwood TRA – first residents meeting on 1 October at 6.30 pm. Please email details of this meeting to the local PCSO.

It was agreed:

1. That the Advisory Group members be thanked for their information.
2. That the Council and local emergency services be thanked on behalf of the Township Forum for the support provided to Radcliffe residents during the local floods.

RTF.302 COMMUNITY FUNDING REPORT

A report from the Programme Support Officer was submitted providing an update on Council funding to support the work of voluntary and community groups in Radcliffe, since the last meeting of the Township Forum. The Township Co-ordinator informed the meeting that available

funds needed to be allocated to groups or the funding would be lost. Radcliffe West still had the largest amount of funding available.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

**CHAIR
COLIN JONES**

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.35 pm)