

Minutes of: RADCLIFFE TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 9 January 2014

Present: Councillor Colin Jones (in the Chair)
Councillors D Bailey, M Bailey, P Bury, A Cummings,
T Isherwood, J Lewis and R Shori

Advisory Group Colette Jones, Friends of Close Park Roy Vevers, Radcliffe
Representatives Carnival Committee Andy Miller, Youth Cabinet, David
Lewis, Chapelfield Residents Association

Public Attendance: 40 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor S Briggs, Councillor N Parnell and Gill
Stainthorpe

RTF662 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

RTF663 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER, 2013

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Township Forum held on 7 November, 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment to Minute RTF.410, to read:-

"Barbara Law from Chapelfield Village Association informed the meeting of the new Community Choir which meets weekly at Chapelfield United Reform Church, Stand Lane. Along with Abbey Close and Redbank, Chapelfield "Grow Your Own" had been recognised at the North West "In Bloom" competition, where it was also announced that Radcliffe had won a Gold Medal".

RTF664 PLAN FOR CHANGE 3

The Township Forum received a presentation from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Connolly and the Executive Director of Resources setting out the details of revised financial savings requirements for 2014/15 along with details of how the proposed savings would be met. The presentation provided a breakdown of internal savings that would contribute towards the additional £2.2m savings target for 2014/15.

With regard to 2015/16, the Leader of the Council outlined the scale of the challenge facing the Council that would mean £16m 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 be explored, including:-

- Service Changes – closures and/or a reduced range of services
- Explore alternative ways of delivering services

- Increased waiting times and/or reduce quality of services
- Severe limits to what the Council can afford to do
- Review how the Council is structured

The Chair invited questions, comments and representations from members of the Township Forum and from members of the public present at the meeting:-

- A question from a member of the public as to whether or not the 2014 budget was still intact? The Leader explained that the 2014 budget would meet all of the commitments agreed by the Authority when the budget was set, this included commitments agreed in relation to the refurbishment of Radcliffe Market.
- A member of the public asked for clarification on the timescales for the Radcliffe Market improvements, the Executive Director of Resources explained the planning issues arising from the initial planning application for the scheme, in particular the highways issues which had led to a slight delay in the initial planning application being considered by the Planning Control Committee. These issues had now been addressed and the application would be considered at a meeting of the Committee in February 2014.
- A member of the public asked for clarification in relation to proposals for the reduction of grounds maintenance standards, as part of the internal efficiency savings. It was reported that some sites would not be cut/trimmed as regularly as they had been in the past.
- Another resident suggested that residents of Six Town Housing properties be given the responsibility for the maintenance of not only the rear outside areas to their properties, but also to front garden areas? In response, the Executive Director of Resources explained that whilst this would be a good idea in principle, it would be impossible to enforce residents to maintain front garden areas to a required standard, within the law.
- A member of the public enquired as to whether or not Council vehicles were all fitted with tracker systems as they had witnessed Council personnel in charge of Council vehicles taking unofficial extended breaks in these vehicles in a particular area of Radcliffe. It was reported that not all vehicles were fitted with trackers, however the information provided at this meeting would be passed on to the relevant department for further investigation.
- A member of the public asked if people in receipt of Aid and Adaptation Grants would be affected by the spending cuts? It was explained that this funding would not be affected as it came from a separate funding source.
- Cllr Bury commented on a recent article published by The Guardian newspaper stating that, in relation to the 2015/16 Local Authority funding settlements from Central Government, the 10 most deprived Authority's in the country were in a far worse position than the 10 most affluent Local Authority's.
- In terms of the formula used to calculate the Authority's financial settlement from Central Government, a member of the public asked if unemployment was a factor which helped determine the figures? It was reported that Job Seeker Allowance claimants are factored into the formula.
- A member of the public asked if successful schemes run by the Council such as "Operation Springclean" would be affected by the cuts. The Leader reiterated the severity of the Council's financial situation and explained that since the Council's resources had been depleted by 40% within the last 4 years then it was highly likely that such schemes would not be invested in for the foreseeable future. Following on from this discussion, a member of the public enquired as to the

possibility of a tip Amnesty being introduced? The Leader gave an assurance that this idea would be fed into the Plan for Change 3 consultation.

- A local shop owner raised concerns relating to the rubbish dumped at empty shop premises in Radcliffe.
- A resident asked for clarification as to the Council's plans for a high school in Radcliffe given the amount of money needed to be saved by the Authority? The Leader of the Council explained that, given the financial plight of the Authority, it would not be possible to commit to any proposals to fund a High School in Radcliffe for the foreseeable future, however, Councillor Connolly gave his assurance that the Labour administration were committed to supporting a High School in Radcliffe, as stated in their manifesto and would not renege on that commitment. The Council were investigating all options in relation to this particular issue. It was reported that Ivan Lewis, MP had written to the Leader of the Council seeking clarification from the Council in relation to their current position on this issue. The Council were in the process of drafting a response to Mr Lewis and would be happy to provide all of the information requested. Members of the public present commented that Radcliffe not only deserved a high school but needed a high school.
- Colette Jones asked if the spending cuts would, in the long-term have an adverse impact on schools in terms of forcing them to acquire Academy status? The Executive Director of Resources explained that school budgets had been ring-fenced and therefore protected in terms of Council spending reviews. This was a political issue. There were a number of issues which would need to be addressed by Government such as meeting the cost of schools' Capital expenditure requirements and the need to address the issue of school place shortages.
- Colette Jones asked how much the Council were looking to save in terms of reducing the number of Council departments from four to three departments. The Executive Director of Resources explained that there would be savings as a result of a review of the Council department structure, however exact figures in terms of these savings were currently unavailable.
- A member of the public commented on the need to encourage growth in the local economy. Would the Council be prioritising this need to develop the local economy in Bury as part of the Plan for Change 3 proposals? The Leader of the Council explained that the Council were looking at all options available in terms of encouraging investment into Bury such as approaching local businesses and larger national company's to invest in Bury. The Council were also looking at possible investment in the Bradley Fold depot to attract businesses in the area. There were wider consultations ongoing across Greater Manchester. Apprenticeship opportunities were also being encouraged for local young people.
- A resident of Radcliffe suggested the possibility of introducing a local voluntary skills swap scheme. Derek Burke from the Bury 3rd Sector explained that there is a national "Community Assets" skills bank scheme in place but welcomed ideas from local residents who could get support from the organisation.

It was agreed:

1. That the questions and comments raised at the meeting would be included as part of the Plan for Change 3 consultation process. Any other comments and views would be welcome, to be submitted to the Council by 17 January, 2014.
2. That the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Connolly and the Executive Director of Resources be thanked for their presentation.

RTF665 POLICE UPDATE

Sergeant Ian Campbell, on behalf of Inspector Mark Kenny attended the meeting to provide an update on local police issues since the last meeting of the Township Forum. The meeting was informed of the following issues in Radcliffe:-

- There has been a slight reduction in overall crime in Radcliffe
- Violent Crime – 20 less victims
- Burglary – 10 less victims
- Vehicle Crime – 14 more victims – risk area
- Robbery – 1 more crime
- The key threats at this time are House Burglary, Shed Burglary and Vehicle Crime

Sergeant Campbell provided residents with some general crime prevention advice as part of the presentation.

The Chair invited questions, comments and representations from members of the Township Forum and from members of the public present at the meeting:-

- Concerns relating to the increase in anti-social behaviour at Mulberry Close/Hutchinson Way.
It was reported that more police resources had been placed in this area.
- Greater clarification was requested in relation to the crime figures provided as part of the presentation.
It was reported that the figures were compiled on a month-by-month basis. Future presentations to the Township Forum would incorporate the request for more detailed information in relation to the crime figures.
- A question regarding the local police's use of social media.
- Were Neighbourhood Watch schemes still in operation?
Yes, residents interested in finding out further information regarding local schemes in operation were asked to provide an email address.
- Concerns raised regarding localised graffiti.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted and Sergeant Campbell be thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

RTF666 CARERS

The Chair introduced Claire Rodgers from the Bury Carers Service, based on Silver Street in Bury. Claire gave a presentation on the services and support offered to carers within Bury. The presentation covered the following areas:

- What is a Carer
- What a Carer is entitled to
- Who we are
- What we do
- How we can help

- Our aim for Carers of Bury
- How you can help

Information packs were circulated for anyone interested in the Carers Service. The Chair invited questions, comments and representations from members of the Township Forum and from members of the public present at the meeting:-

- Is there a transition pathway for young carers who then become adult carers? Clare informed the meeting that there was support for young carers in Bury and that this is an area currently being looked at within the Bury Carers Service. Cllr Shori reported that there were, at present, 18,000 carers in Bury and only 3,000 carers that access local support services.

- Was there support available for carers to receive appropriate aids and adaptations?

Yes, the Bury Carers can refer you to the relevant contacts.

The Chair, Colin Jones welcomed Derek Burke Chief Officer from Bury 3rd Sector to the meeting to raise awareness of "Healthwatch Bury", the new independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public. It was reported that Healthwatch will play a role at both national and local level and will make sure that the views of the public and people who use services are taken into account. A major part of the role of Healthwatch Bury will involve volunteers taking on a range of roles, roles the organisation is keen to involve local people in. Anyone interested in becoming a member of Healthwatch Bury was asked to please contact the organisation at healthwatchbury.co.uk.

The Chief Officer reported that additional funding had been made available for Bury residents via the Forever Manchester initiative. The funding is available for small locally led organisations based in Bury (the Streets Ahead scheme) and the Cash4graft scheme which is designed to release small amounts of funding (between £50 and £250) for community groups of local people and neighbours who want to run local projects for the wider community benefit.

It was agreed:

That the information be noted and Claire be thanked for her presentation. The Chair also thanked Derek Burke for his update.

RTF667 RADCLIFFE TOWNSHIP FORUM PLAN 2012-2015

It was agreed:

That this report be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Township Forum, to be held on 26 February, 2014.

RTF668 ADVISORY GROUP UPDATE

Colette Jones provided an update on the work of Friends of Close Park since the last meeting of the Forum, as follows:-

- Radcliffe Tower Dig – two reports had been compiled following the dig. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the reports were provide an email address.
- The Vicar at St Mary’s was trying to locate the Old Cross from Radcliffe – this was supposed to be being re-erected in Close Park. Did anyone have any ideas as to its whereabouts?
- Wishing Well project – designs are being been sort in relation to plans to build a wishing stone in the park, proceeds would be donated to the Children’s Hospice.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted.

RTF669 OPEN FORUM

The Chair 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.

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- Concerns raised regarding highways issues for Morris Street residents.
- An update requested regarding the development of the East Lancs Papermill site. It was reported that the gates had been removed but the pillars were still on site.
- A request for an update regarding Church Street West and concerns raised regarding traffic disruption. It was reported that a Traffic Management Scheme would need to be in place prior to any works commencing.
- Stand Lane - what was happening to the stone sets when the highways works were being undertaken?
- Township Forum Plan – Inter-Faith update requested. An interfaith group had been set up in Bury East and it was hoped that it would cover the Radcliffe area in the near future.
- East Lancs Gates – contact name requested. Christine has enquired as to whether the gates can be incorporated somewhere within the Town Centre Regeneration. Please contact Paul Cooke, Children’s Services for further information.

COUNCILLOR COLIN JONES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm)