

Minutes of: WHITEFIELD AND UNSWORTH TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 19 November 2013

Present: Councillor (in the Chair)
Councillors A Audin, K Audin, R Caserta, D Jones,
A Matthews, B Vincent and M Wiseman

Also in attendance:

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor E Fitzgerald and Councillor J Grimshaw

WUTF .526 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were made in respect of any of the items to be considered at the meeting.

WUTF .527 MINUTES AND UPDATE FROM OPEN FORUM

Delegated decision:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

WUTF .528 PLAN FOR CHANGE

The Township Forum received a presentation from the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor John Smith, and the Assistant Director of Resources setting out details of revised financial savings requirements for 2014/2015 along with details of how the proposed savings will be met. The presentation provided a breakdown of internal savings that would contribute towards the additional £2.2m savings target for 2014/2015.

With regard to 2015/2016, 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 need to be explored, including:

- Service Changes – closures and/or a reduced range of services
- Explore alternative ways of delivering services
- Increased waiting times and/or reduced quality of service
- Severe limits to what the Council can afford to do
- Review how the Council is structured.

Questions and comments were invited from the Township Forum and members of the public present at the meeting and the following issues were raised:

- Councillor Vincent referred to the removal of the Council Tax discount for over 65's which had resulted in an overall 6.8% rise in council tax for this group of

residents. The Deputy Leader explained that with such a large scale reductions in Government grant, the Council were unable to continue with the discount. It was further explained that the scale of the cuts would mean wholesale changes in how the Council will be able to deliver services.

- In response to a question from Sharon Bannister relating to the Carelink Service, the Deputy Leader recognised the value of the service but explained that it would be required to be self financing. An undertaking was given to provide further details to Mrs Bannister.
- Mr Marshall sought assurances that the Council would still meet the necessary statutory requirements in terms of service delivery. The Assistant Director explained that the requirement to fulfil certain statutory functions would remain and it was necessary to look at the most efficient way of delivering these services.
- In response to a question from Pam Taylor concerning the Manchester Airport dividend, the Assistant Director reported that assumptions were factored into the budget setting process.
- John Mallon enquired about how the funding formula from central government was applied in respect of Bury. The Deputy Leader explained that historically Bury had always been disadvantaged by the way the formula was applied. The Deputy Leader reported that the Council would continue to lobby for a fairer allocation of funding and referred to the Fair Deal for Bury Campaign.
- Derek Boden highlighted the negative effect on staff morale of the cuts being imposed ideologically from central government.

It was agreed:

That the Deputy Leader and Assistant Director of Finance and Resources be thanked for their attendance.

**WUTF
.529**

"I WILL IF YOU WILL" IMPROVING WOMEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

Jenny Welsby, Community Activator, introduced details of the "I Will if you Will" initiative to encourage women in Bury to become more physically active. An outline of the events in place and contact details (jenny.welsby@bury.gov.uk – 0161 253 6660) was given.

During discussion of this item Pam Taylor highlighted the importance of the funding being used in a sustainable way.

In response to a question about outdoor gym equipment it was explained that this would be rolled out across 6 different parks within the borough. An undertaking was given to provide details of the proposed locations for the outdoor equipment.

It was agreed:

That Jenny Welsby be thanked for her attendance.

**WUTF
.530**

POLICE UPDATE

An update was given by Inspector Mark Kenny (GMP) on Policing issues within Whitefield and Unsworth. The meeting was informed of the organisational changes to the Police which had resulted in 2 Inspectors covering the north and south of the borough.

In relation to crime figures it was reported that from April 2013 there had been 58 less victims of crime, although challenges were faced in respect of the particular crimes of house burglary and vehicle crime.

During discussion of this item, members of the public highlighted the importance of youth engagement to prevent anti social behaviour and the need for police patrols on Metrolink to prevent criminal and anti social behaviour.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

**WUTF
.531**

FIRST BUS UPDATE

Paul Turner of First Buses attended the meeting to provide an update in respect of bus services, with particular reference to the changes which had taken place on the 92 and 93 service.

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

- In response to a question from Councillor Vincent about the lack of buses on Bury Old Road, Mr Turner explained that the 135 service provided 8 buses an hour on this road.
- Concerns were raised about buses bunching together and going through lights as they turn red.
- Problems encountered in using the buses by Melissa Rawbotham were highlighted in relation to accessibility and the poor behaviour of individual drivers. Mr Turner undertook to meet with staff managers to address the issues being faced by Melissa.
- Pam Taylor expressed concern about the withdrawal of the 154 service. An undertaking was given to get a representative from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to update the Forum on this matter.
- In response to a request for the 93 to return to its original route to allow better access from Sunnybank estate to Blackford House Medical Centre, Mr Turner explained that the changes to the route had happened as a means of meeting the demands of the public following a detailed consultation.
- Concerns were raised about the need to improve customer liaison, particularly with regard to the recognition of customer complaints. Mr Turner explained that all drivers and managers had one to one meetings to discuss operational and customer issues.
- With regard to the need for more clarity in respect of the complaints procedures, Mr Turner undertook to raise the issue with TfGM.

It was agreed:

That Mr Paul Turner be thanked for his attendance.

**WUTF
.532** **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair invited the members of the public present to ask questions or raise items of concern relating to the provision of local services.

John Mallon enquired about the level of enforcement applied to 20mph zones and referred particularly to Hamilton Road. An undertaking was given by the Police to raise the issue with the relevant local officers who cover the Hamilton Road area.

**WUTF
.533** **COMMUNITY FUNDING REPORT**

A report from the Programme Support Officer was submitted providing details of ward funding for 2013/2014 was submitted.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

**WUTF
.534** **COMMUNITY NOTICES**

The Chair gave notices of forthcoming events that would be taking place within Whitefield and Unsworth.

COUNCILLOR A AUDIN
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 1:00pm and ended at 3:15pm)