

Minutes of: RAMSBOTTOM, TOTTINGTON AND NORTH MANOR TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 3 July 2014

Present: Councillor Y Wright (in the Chair)
Councillors I Bevan, S Carter, J Daly, L Fitzwalter, I Gartside, D Gunther, R Hodgkinson and K Hussain.

Also in attendance: Rev S Openshaw – RETM, CETR
Alistair Waddell - Greenmount Village Community Group

Public Attendance: 45 members of the public were in attendance

Apologies for absence: Councillor L Fitzwalter

RTNM.77 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

RTNM.78 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR/VICE CHAIR

Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor Township Forum for the 2014/2015 Municipal year were requested.

It was agreed:

1. That Councillor Yvonne Wright be appointed as Chair of the Township Forum.
2. That Councillor Robert Hodgkinson be appointed as Vice Chair of the Township Forum.

RTNM.79 WELCOME

Councillor Wright thanked all those present for attending and welcomed them to the meeting.

Councillor Wright also congratulated Councillors Bevan, Daly and Gartside on their recent re-election at the local elections which had been held in May.

RTNM.80 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed:

That the last Meeting of the Township Forum held on 27 March 2014 be approved as a correct record.

RTNM.81 MATTERS ARISING

Further to Minute RTNM.930, Public Question Time, Alistair Waddell asked if there was any information available regarding the 20mph zone that he had referred to at the last meeting.

Dave Thomas stated that he would follow this up and contact Mr Waddell outside of the meeting.

RTNM.82 UPDATE ON ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

Dave Thomas, Township co-ordinator explained the role of the Advisory Group Members and asked that if anybody present at the meeting was interested in becoming a member they contact him for more information and an application form.

RTNM.83 FUTURE OF THE 480 BUS SERVICE TO AFFETSID

Councillor Noel Bayley, the Council's elected representative for transport issues attended the meeting with representatives from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to answer questions in relation to the 480 bus service which was in the process of having its route altered. Councillor Bayley explained that the bus service was currently subsidised by TfGM to service the village of Affetside. Rosso Buses had informed TfGM that they would no longer be providing the service to Affetside and this would commence at the end of July 2014.

Sam Taysoe and James Lewis from TfGM explained that they had been working with Rosso Buses and their providers to try to come up with a solution to the issue as they were aware that by changing the route this would mean that some areas including Tottington Road and Affetside would have no bus service available to them.

TfGM had approached First Bus to ask if they could find a solution by looking at their current bus provision in the area and maybe altering a current service route but they had not been able to come up with a viable solution.

It was explained that the subsidy was £16,500 per year to cover the Affetside route and there were no commercial operators willing to provide the service for this amount.

It was also explained that TfGM were not in a position to force a provider to cover any route, all they could do was ask if an operator was interested. The money available to subsidise the route would not be increased due to budget restrictions within TfGM

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:

- A local resident explained that not all residents of the areas affected had access to transport and asked what their options were once the service stopped.

It was explained that there would still be the Ring and Ride service as well as the local link service.

An Affetside resident explained that they relied on the service to commute to work in Bolton and they would have no other way of getting there once the service ceased to run.

- A member of the public stated that there were a number of young people who relied on the service to get to and from their jobs at local pubs and restaurants.
- College students would need a service to get to and from Bury in order for them to attend college.

It was explained that there would still be the school services into Bury which would not be affected and college students would be able to use these buses to get into Bury.

- A member of the public made reference to the Local Link service and stated that the service was not a reliable one and would not be a good alternative.

It was explained that TfGM would look at ways of making the local link more robust to become a service that local people did want to use.

- Councillor Wright asked whether it was correct that the amount of money Bury Council put into TfGM was £13m.

This figure would have to be confirmed after the meeting.

- A member of the public asked how much funding there was specifically for services to rural areas.

It was explained that all of the funding came out of one budget, there were no specific budgets for certain areas. The money was used to support services across the whole of the Greater Manchester conurbation.

- Councillor Carter reported that he had spoken to First Bus to propose possible options and the response he had received had not been encouraging. Councillor Carter asked whether other operators from further away would be contacted to see if they were interested in providing a service in the area.

It was explained that all possible avenues would be considered but it was difficult to negotiate with providers who are just interested in the commercial side of the service.

- A local resident referred to the fact that the government are promoting the use of public transport and asked how this decision worked alongside that policy.
- Councillor Gartside stated that the residents of the areas affected by the proposed change to the service had come up with a number of different options and asked that all of these options be reviewed and considered as the service was a lifeline to many residents.

It was explained that all feedback would be taken on board and fed back to the operators.

- A member of the public asked whether the community could do anything more to raise funds or find available grants to contribute to the subsidy.

It was reported that the current operators had decided that the service needed to change and there was nothing that TfGM could do about this. All that could be done was to look for an alternative option to plug the gap left. TfGM could not force a commercial operation to provide a service if they did not want to.

- Councillor Wright reported that she had been contacted by a large number of concerned residents of Affetside who would be directly affected and asked that their concerns be noted.

RTNM.84 POLICE UPDATE

Sergeant Terry Dunning introduced himself and thanked the Forum for the invitation to attend.

Sergeant Dunning explained that this was the first Township Forum he had attended.

It was reported that the Police had been contacted regarding concerns of residents in relation to the speed of vehicles driving along Turton Road. Sergeant Dunning explained that this was an ongoing issue that Inspector Eddison was reviewing.

Those present were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions and the following points were raised:-

- A member of the public stated that he was concerned about the traffic speeds on Holcombe Road between the Bulls Head and the T Junction in Holcombe Brook. It was explained that he had witnessed vehicles travelling up to 60mph on a 30mph road.

Sergeant Dunning stated that he would take this matter back to Inspector Eddison and request that it be reviewed for possible solutions.

- A resident of Turton Road referred to the statement that had been made in respect of the speed limit on Turton Road and asked that all those present support the campaign to have it reduced. She explained that the Council and the Police were aware of the issues and a visit by a highways officer had taken place. A petition had been produced and those present were invited to sign it if they hadn't already done so.

Councillor Gartside stated that as long as the petition had more than 50 signatures it would be presented to the Mayor at the next Council meeting.

- Councillor Bevan referred to the recent spate of thefts from sheds and asked whether the number had reduced.

It was explained that there had been a number of thefts from sheds around Ramsbottom and work had been carried out by the police to tackle this issue. Residents were being asked to more aware of the risks and some undercover work had taken place. The number of thefts of that type was reducing.

Sergeant Dunning was thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

RTNM.85 ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

David Thomas, Township Forum Manager, gave a presentation setting out the 2013/104 Township Plan and how work had been carried across Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor to meet the ambitions within the Plan.

The Plan contained the following key themes :-

- Employment / Worklessness / Training
- Crime & Perceptions of Crime
- Health & Wellbeing

- Rural Issues / Promoting Outlying Areas
- Community Cohesion & Integration
- New Priorities

Current issues relating to each theme were highlighted and those present were asked to split into groups to discuss further work required to achieve the ambitions set out and any other areas of concern that should be included within the Plan.

Dave explained that he would take away the information that was gathered from the discussions to assess the data. The previous years' action plan would be reviewed and any outstanding priorities would be carried forward. New priorities from the session will be identified and Members of the Township Forum will meet to discuss those priorities and identify key themes.

The 2014/2015 Plan will be presented to the Forum at its next meeting in September.

RTNM.86 OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair, Councillor Wright invited those present to ask questions or raise issues of concern relating to the provision of local services:-

- Mr Ronald Schwarz explained that at the beginning of June he had reported a large pot hole in the road in Greenmount outside the Bulls Head and the pharmacy. Mr Schwarz explained that the hole was still there and was dangerous. He was aware of at least one person that had fallen into it.
- A member of the public asked if it would be possible to give an indication of the estimated timing of agenda items on the papers for the meeting. This practice had been done at the area board meetings and had worked well.
- Mr Green referred to the recent announcement that Bury Met had been awarded a £3m grant to refurbish the building and facilities and asked if this money was ring-fenced.
- Mr Green also referred to the recent closure of Castle Leisure centre to re-carpet certain areas and repaint some of the walls. Mr Green asked why this was deemed necessary as the carpet and walls could just have been cleaned at much less cost.

Mr Green asked that the responses to these questions be forwarded to Councillor Daly in writing.

- Mr Booth explained that he had recently been in inpatient at Fairfield Hospital. Following this he had major concerns as to the future of the A & E Department at the hospital and the hospital as a whole. Mr Booth explained that he had been told that a number of wards had closed and services relocated to North Manchester General Hospital.
- Mr Booth asked what the future was for Fairfield General Hospital.

Councillor Wright explained that the Healthier Together review of Health and Care in Greater Manchester was due to start a 90 day consultation on 9th July 2014. Councillor Wright asked that all areas of concern in relation to the future of services across Greater Manchester are submitted to the consultation.

RTNM.87 COUNCILLOR CONTACT

Councillor Gunther reported that the next Councillors surgery and Coffee Morning for North Manor was due to be held on 12 July at Hawkshaw Methodist Church from 10am.

Councillor Wright stated that she and Councillor Gartside were contactable via e-mail and telephone and would visit as soon as was possible after a resident contacted them.

Councillor Bevan stated that this was the same for Ramsbottom Councillors.

RTNM.88 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next meeting of the Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor Township Forum would be held on 17 September 2014 at Ramsbottom Civic Hall.

COUNCILLOR Y WRIGHT
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 9.00pm)