

Minutes of: PRESTWICH TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 25 January 2016

Present: Councillor J Black (in the Chair)
Councillors M D'Albert, P Heneghan, M James, E O'Brien,
A Quinn and A Simpson

**Also in
attendance:**

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

Apologies for Absence:

PTF.654 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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Councillor Connolly, Leader of the Council, in attendance to report on the Budget consultation, declared a personal interest in any matters relating to staffing as his partner is an employee of the Local Authority Trading Company, Persona

PTF.655 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last meeting, held on 12 November 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PTF.656 MATTERS ARISING

In respect of item 2 on the Action Checklist, Councillor Heneghan reported that he had responded to an email relating to concerns about Children's Centres.

PTF.657 2016/2017 BUDGET CONSULTATION

Councillor Mike Connolly, Leader of the Council and Mike Owen, Chief Executive gave a presentation setting out the budget consultation for 2016/2017.

It was explained that funding received from central government would continue to reduce. It was reported that for 2016/2017 it was estimated that the Council will have to cut £11.6 million from its budget as core funding was being reduced by 10.75%. It was anticipated that the Council's funding would be cut by over 30% in the coming 4 years. This is in top of the £54million lost since 2010.

This is happening at a time when residents' needs are changing, demands are increasing and expectations are high. The Council and its partners will have to work differently to deliver the best outcomes with the resources available.

The Council will need to prioritise services covering its legal obligations and its priorities to look after the vulnerable; promote a strong local economy and be a good place to live and invest.

The impact of the reduction in budget was set out:-

- Service changes – can't rule out service closures and/or a reduced range of services in future years.
- Explore different ways of delivering services and greater use of partnership working.
- Increased waiting times and /or reduced quality of service
- Limits to what the Council can afford to provide and carry out
- A different relationship with residents – understanding what the Council can and can't do
- Greater use of technology

The Chief Executive set out the cuts that the Council had experienced since 2011 and explained that these added up to £53.561million.

The presentation outlined where the Council spent its money with the top three areas being Older People – 30p per £1, Children's Services (non schools) – 24p per £1 and Cleansing, Refuse Collection and Disposal – 13p per £1.

It was explained that the way that the funding was allocated was based on a formula which looked at specific areas such as levels of deprivation and other demographics. This meant that Bury received £331per head compared to the national average of £387per head.

It was reported that there would also be cuts to a number of grants that the Council receives as well as new concerns such as Apprenticeship Levy, Employers National Insurance and the Living Wage. It was also explained that there was uncertainty around the localisation of business rates and how this would impact on the Council.

Work had been carried out to address the cuts and the following measures had been or would be carried out :-

- Alternative Service Delivery Models
- Grant Optimisation
- Grants to Voluntary Sector
- Income generation
- Better use of buildings and Assets
- Procurement saving
- Service Redesign
- Staff Restructuring
- Use of new technology

The consultation had been launched on 10 December 2015 and was asking residents to consider how savings could be made and suggest new ways of working.

The consultation was due to close on 9 February 2016 and all findings would be fed into the budget setting process. The budget was due to be debated at the full Council Meeting on 24 February.

Comments could be sent via e-mail, letter or to a dedicated telephone number.

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

- In response to a question from Jay Lieberman, the Chief Executive explained that Central Government grant funding was being used to fund developments in Radcliffe following the closure of the Civic Centre.
- In response to a question from Donal O'Hanlon the Chief Executive explained that any voluntary early retirements from workforce planning must be supported by a business case that demonstrates a saving to the Authority.
- Valerie Moon questioned the value of continuingly lobbying government if proving unsuccessful. The Leader of the Council explained that he would continue to lobby for a fair deal for Bury whilst attempting to protect frontline services.
- In response to a question concerning the sale of greenbelt land for development, the Leader of the council confirmed that Council policy was to protect the greenbelt.
- With regard to the effect of devolution, the Chief Executive highlighted the potential for more local decisions in relation to housing, transport and health.
- In response to a question from Peter Thompson concerning the setting of the Council tax, the Leader outlined the options available including the possibility of a precept specifically to pay for adult social care.

It was agreed:

That the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive be thanked for their attendance.

PTF.658 TOWNSHIP FORUM UPDATES

Police – Sergeant Wightman-Love reported on Policing matters in the Prestwich area. An update was provided in respect of the restructuring of local policing teams, use of new technology and preventative work within the community.

In response to a question concerning inconsiderate parking outside schools, it was reported that plans were in place to increase PCSO presence

Discussions took place concerning ongoing work to combat crime in the Barn Hill area.

Prestwich Parking Strategy – The Chair, Councillor Black, reported that work was ongoing on the Strategy with a view to it being presented as an agenda item at a future meeting of the Forum.

Prestwich High Street Improvement Scheme - The Chair, Councillor Black, reported that 594 completed questionnaires had been received. A final report would be submitted to Cabinet on 2 March 2016.

Township Plan – Ruth Shedwick, Township Co-ordinator, gave a verbal update of the Township Plan. During discussion of this item a representative from Village Greens requested recognition of the Group, reporting that they had raised £98k as a local organisation.

Funding Update – The Chair provided an update of Groups that had recently been awarded funding through the Township Forum

It was agreed:

That the updates be noted.

PTF.659 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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.

- Michael Slater requested sufficient notice be given to residents of Simister Green in advance of planned resurfacing works

COUNCILLOR J BLACK
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at Time Not Specified and ended at Time Not Specified)