

**Minutes of:** **WHITEFIELD AND UNSWORTH TOWNSHIP FORUM**

**Date of Meeting:** 5 January 2016

**Present:** Councillor D Jones (in the Chair)  
Councillors R Caserta, E Fitzgerald, J Grimshaw, J Mallon and  
A Matthews

**Advisory Group**

**Representatives:** Leonard Lott – Whitefield and Unsworth Homewatch Assn  
Marlene Dawson - Victoria Estate TRA  
Pamela Taylor - Hollins Village Community Assn  
Yvonne Moore - Old Hall Park Residents Assn  
Mrs S Bannister – Jewish Representative Council  
Mrs T Heyworth – ELMS TRA

**Public Attendance:** 45 members of the public were present at the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Whitby and Councillor M Wiseman and Rev C Greenwood (Hillock and Oakgate Community Assn)

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**WUTF.576 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made in relation to any items to be considered.

**WUTF.577 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 November 2015 were submitted. The following amendments were made:

- Councillor A Matthews to be added to the list of those present.

WUTF.462 Update - Hickory Grange – an update had been received since the meeting regarding the owner of the Hickory Grange site. Councillor Caserta reported that he had spoken to the site owner on the matter and had been informed that the company Stewart Milne Builders was not bankrupt.

Matters Raised - From the paper submitted providing an update on the matters raised at the meeting on 17 November 2015 the following issues were raised:

- Item 4 – Parking at Porada Restaurant - Christine North confirmed that she did not say that she would prefer the car park be owned by the Council.
- Item 13 – Mr Knight stated that the response to his two questions was still outstanding
- Item 12 – Ivan Lewis had been involved with the matter of illegal parking.
- Item 11 - Hickory Grange - Mr Marshall stated that had not mentioned a Compulsory Purchase Order as referred to in the Issues Update. The issue had related to the serving of an enforcement notice 215 relating to action required on untidy land or the completion of development.

**Delegated decision:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 17 November 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **WUTF.578 COUNCIL BUDGET 2016/2017 CONSULTATION**

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mike Connolly) and the Chief Executive (Mike Owen) gave a presentation on the 2016/2017 Council Budget.

Councillor Connolly outlined the position the Council faces over the next four years. The Government has indicated that the settlement the Council will receive will be reduced and working on from this it is important for the residents of Bury to recognise this. It is also noted that the public's demands and expectations of the Council will continue to increase. In order to meet these expectations the Council and in particular its employees will need to work differently in the future.

It was reported that for 2016/17, there would be an estimated cut of £11.6 million from the Councils budgets due to a reduction in core funding of which was to be in the region of 10.75%. Funding over the next four years was estimated to be cut by more than 30%.

Since 2010 the Council has lost £54 million of funding for services and will need to prioritise services covering its legal obligations and its priorities set out in the "Vision, Purpose & Values" document. The Council priorities for Bury are to look after the vulnerable; promote a strong local economy and be a good place to live and invest.

The Council was in the process of holding a consultation with all residents to seek views and suggestions on what was important in view of the cuts to be made. The deadline for input is 9 February 2016 with the Council meeting to set a budget for 2016/17 on 24 February.

Councillor Connolly also drew attention to the positives of Bury including the high standards of High School education and adult care services. In particular it was noted that public sector staff had provided excellent standards of service to Bury residents during the recent flooding over the Christmas period. Many members of staff had come into work during their leave to work many hours, without pay, to ensure Bury and its residents were made safe.

Bury residents were also being asked to help tackle the challenges the Council faced ahead which included a renegotiation of the 'contract' on standards of service that in the future would not be of the standard currently enjoyed.

Residents were invited to submit their suggestions for the budget and were welcome to ring, email the Council or if they see him around Bury, speak face to face with the Leader.

The Chair invited questions.

How will people be contacted about the consultation process? Members of organisations will take back the message from this meeting but there are sections of the local community that are not directly represented.

The Council will use different methods to reach as many members of the public as possible, such as local press, online and through local organisations.

Who decides what cuts are made?

Your local councillors will make the decisions. This will be done by going through the feedback of Bury residents and the priorities that have been highlighted. The budget will then be decided on 24 February at the Budget Council.

What is the collection percentage of Council tax?

The Council has a 99.5% collection rate which is the second highest in Greater Manchester.

What impact has the flooding had on business rates collection?

It is difficult to identify the impact at this point. There has been damage to local infrastructure and the Council is trying to recover costs from the Government but is using finance reserves in the mean time.

Will there be a rise in Council Tax this year?

The decisions on the budget will be made on 24 February 2015.

What proposals are in place for derelict sites on St Peters Road, the business park at Pilsworth and the former Millwood School site? These are opportunities for development and would produce finance for the Council through business rates.

It was reported that the former Millwood School site is to be marketed for sale. The Council is in negotiation with the owner of the Pilsworth site on future usage. The development of St Peters Road site is being considered on the same lines as the development of Red Bank.

The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive were thanked for their attendance.

#### **WUTF.579 UPDATES - UPLANDS, FORMER WHITEFIELD TOWN HALL, HICKORY GRANGE, PORADA**

- Porada Restaurant car park – Neil Long (Assistant Director – Operations) and Councillor Isherwood attended the meeting to provide an update on the car park on the site of the Porada Restaurant. The meeting was informed that an area had been turned into a car park by the restaurant owners because they believed that the area concerned was also part of the land footprint they owned. The Council took legal action to confirm that the Council is the lease owner of the area of land which is now a car park.
- Councillor Isherwood reported that the future finances of the Council could result in the Council being unable to undertake grounds maintenance such as grass cutting to grassed areas across the borough. The Council did not have the financial resources to commit to bring the piece of land concerned back to its original condition.
- Mr Marshall stated that he was not aware of any planning application for the use of the land as a car park and asked if one was submitted would the Council favour it. Mr Marshall offered to act as a professional witness if the Council wished to pursue a course of action to reclaim the site.

- Mrs Marshall commented that allowing the business to change the use of land in this manner without permission was setting a dangerous precedent.
- Councillor Isherwood stated that it was not possible to discuss or comment on potential planning applications because this could undermine the planning decision process.
- Councillor Mallon addressed the meeting and made the point that the Council's finances had decreased by 50% with further cuts to come. Using pieces of land for Incredible Edibles was a possible solution but the Council must be mindful of maintaining business in areas by providing parking.
- The suggestion was made that private business be invited to sponsor grassed areas in order to provide funding to maintain them.
- Councillor Isherwood stated that this was a possible way forward for the Council to provide a grounds maintenance service in the future.
- The meeting was informed that if an application was made for the change of use of the area now being used as a car park the Township Co-ordinator would notify those people who are listed on the database of emails.
- Whitefield Town Hall and Hickory Grange – there were no updates to report.

#### **WUTF.580 FIRST BUS - UPDATE**

The meeting was attended by Dave Brotheridge, Dwayne Wells and Steve Shaw from First Bus to provide an update on bus services in the Whitefield and Unsworth area.

It was reported that the highway improvements to Corporation Street in Manchester City Centre had been completed and this had improved the vehicular access in and out of Manchester. Services 97 and 98 had seen an improvement and a decrease in cancelled journeys.

The 95 service that now returns direct from Pendleton to Bury had received a positive response from passengers.

The 94 service proposed loop of Sunnybank and Hollins Brow had been put forward to Transport for Greater Manchester and a response had not yet been received.

Phase 4 of the highway improvements in Manchester City Centre would be starting shortly but would not directly impact on First Bus services. The only new proposal that could impact on services in the city centre involved the construction of a new hotel on the junction of Corporation Street and Todd Street.

The meeting was informed that arrangements had been made to hold a First Bus Customer Day to provide help and advice to bus service users. A stand would be

set up in the Bury Interchange on Wednesday 27 January 2016 between 11:00am and 1:00pm.

Mr Haigh thanked First Bus for taking on board the suggestion to run a service on Croft Lane and Sunnybank.

Mrs Taylor made the point that confidence from the First Bus was needed in order to build up bus service usage to Pilsworth. The future development of the area would require good public transport services for people commuting to work. It was requested that this issue be retained on the agenda.

The First Bus representatives were thanked for their attendance.

**It was agreed:**

That First Bus representatives be invited to the next meeting of the Township Forum on 8 March 2016.

**WUTF.581 POLICE UPDATE**

Inspector Victoria Shaw and Sergeant Richard Garland attended the meeting to provide an update on Policing matters in Whitefield and Unsworth.

It was reported that there had been 18 burglaries since the last meeting of the Forum and residents were reminded of the importance of ensuring thieves were deterred from attempting break-ins. Using light timer switches help make a property look occupied if the lights are on. Residents were reminded to ensure that doors were locked for the reason that many of the burglaries to homes resulted from thefts gaining access from unlocked doors. Thefts of car keys from homes are common had took place during the evening.

Statistics of thefts were provided as follows:

- Theft from vehicles - 24. Vehicle owners were reminded to make sure their cars were locked because many thefts occur when vehicles are left with doors unlocked.
- Theft of vehicles – 6.
- Robberies -3.

The meeting was informed that Whitefield Police Station would in future be used as a base for police officers operating in the south of the area and could see up to 80+ officers at one time.

Mrs Bannister asked for statistics to be presented to the next meeting on levels of hate crime.

The Chair thanked Inspector Shaw and Sergeant Garland for their attendance.

**It was agreed**

That the update be noted.

### **WUTF.582 TOWN PLAN UPDATE**

An updated Township Plan was submitted.

#### **It was agreed:**

That the updated Township Plan be noted.

### **WUTF.583 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Litter in Besses area – could action be taken to clear litter, in particular, the area around the McDonalds restaurant and Clegg Street. Volunteers are needed to undertake litter picks and educate the public to through away their litter in the proper place.

Gully cleaning – there are gullies that have not been cleared. The Council sometimes cannot clear every gully because of vehicle parking. The Council website has a complaints page where details can be left of where the blocked gully is located.

Fly Tipping – bags of rubbish are being left on the passage way close the shops on Rufford Drive. Also there is a garage that appears to have a lot of refuse bags stored inside. The police undertook to will investigate the matter.

Street lighting – the street lighting in Bury appears to be dimmer than street lights in other areas of Greater Manchester. It was reported that this would be difficult to monitor.

Can the warning marking on the edge of the speed cushion located on Sunnybank Road be replaced because it no longer visible and vehicles are hitting it?

Can action be taken to repair the potholes on Croft Lane up to Milton Drive and Blackford Drive.

It was reported that an inspection would be made of the road surface which will be analysed. If the test produces sufficient evidence then the road will be resurfaced.

Can the directional road markings on the A56 /Junction 17 be replaced.

Whitefield Parking consultation – what is the timescale for the consultation. No timescale has yet been set. Residents will be informed of when the consultation is taking place.

Can the Council inform residents what is the future use of the Wheatfield Centre.

### **WUTF.584 FUNDING REPORT**

A copy of the funding report was submitted on decisions taken to fund requests from local groups.

#### **It was agreed:**

That the Funding report be noted.

**COUNCILLOR D JONES**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 1:00pm and ended at 3:30pm)**