

Minutes of: BURY EAST TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 21 January 2016

Present: Councillor (in the Chair)
Councillors D Cassidy, S Haroon, T Holt, J Kelly, S Smith,
Sarah Southworth, T Tariq and S Walmsley

Also in attendance:

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor M C Connolly

645 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

646 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

In relation to the absence of Lesley Wildeman, Chair for the Bury East Township Forum 2015/2016, Councillor Holt, informed the Forum that due to ill health, Lesley would not be returning as Chair and if it was agreed he would Chair this and the last meeting of the Municipal year. Councillor Holt also passed on the very best wishes of the Forum to Lesley.

In respect of Minute BETF.492, Jimmy Hill (Pimhole Residents' Association), reported that there were still no name plates on Oxford Street and off Heywood Street on to Oxford Mews. The emergency services were wasting valuable time in trying to locate particular addresses because it was so unclear. Councillor Holt reported that both he and The Township Co-ordinator had been in contact with the Developer over this issue but that they would pursue the matter.

In respect of Minute BETF.494, Highways Update, Dave Thomas, Township Co-ordinator, informed the Forum that it has been agreed that a representative from Highways will be in attendance at the meeting on Monday 14 March 2016.

Delegated decision:

That Councillor Holt would be Chair of the Forum for the rest of the Municipal year.

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 19 November 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

647 POLICE UPDATE

Prior to the start of the meeting, Sergeant Abed Hussain, PC Greg Scott, PC Pete Eccleston and PCSO Talha Sange were in attendance in order to give advice on a 1 – 1 basis to members of the Public. An update was then

provided to members of the Township Forum in respect of Policing issues within Bury East. The following information was reported:

- PC Eccleston reported that in relation to East Ward and parking issues around Church Street Mosque, an area Officer will be joint patrolling with Mr Ali, the Mosque leader and these issues will be raised at Prayer.
- Antisocial behaviour on the Townside Estate, the local area Officers, PC Heap, PCSO Bigland and PCSO Broughton are heavily involved with this along with local Councillors, to hopefully bring the Offenders to task.
- In relation to Redvales Ward and the shooting that took place on 12 January 2016 on Alfred Street, there are currently Community Officers patrolling within this area.
- Sporadic theft of fuel from cars, with the offender cutting fuel lines. Any public information on this matter would be greatly appreciated.
- A man has been knocking on doors and begging for money, giving a variety of reasons why he needs it. Local Officers believe they know the identity of the man and he is to be contacted.
- Antisocial behaviour around Valley Mill Road, residents are asked to report any issues to local Officer, PC Ransom.
- PC Scott reported that in relation to Moorside Ward, Antisocial behaviour was reported on Clarence Close and the Derby Court area. These issues were being addressed and family members were being contacted.
- PC Scott explained that outside Greater Manchester, Bury was the biggest shopping area and prior to Christmas there had been a spate of shop lifting. However, following Operation Advent, this had been massively reduced. On Market days, mobile Police centres were positioned in order to offer advice, particularly to the elderly on keeping safe and on non Market days, the centre was positioned on the Rock, near Barclays bank.
- There had been issues with people begging within the Town Centre and youths smoking drugs and Officers have visited the Colleges to try and educate students on the dangers of drugs.

In response to a question from Melanie Waters, a local resident, on where the youths causing antisocial behaviour around the Chesham area were supposed to go if not outside their own homes, PC Scott reported that Chesham Park, which was a large recreational area, was available and it wasn't appropriate for youths to be smoking drugs and drinking alcohol in residential areas, upsetting residents, particularly the elderly.

In response to a question asked by Councillor Cassidy in relation to people begging, and if they were in fact homeless. PC Scott replied that he had been working with the appropriate agencies and he passed her details on to anyone who appeared homeless and caught begging within the Town Centre. Also, every Friday between 8 am and lunch time, the Mosses Centre offered food for those who needed it.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted and the Police Officers thanked for their time and attendance at the meeting.

648

COUNCIL BUDGET 2016/2017 CONSULTATION

Councillor Rishi Shori (Deputy Leader of the Council) and Stephen Kenyon (Interim Executive Director of Resources and Regulations) gave a presentation setting out the budget consultation for 2016/2017.

Tan Ahmed (ADAB) explained that he heads an organisation that benefits from funding from the Council but Councillor Holt stated he did not need to declare an interest under this item.

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

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

Steve also introduced a slide setting out 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 £331pp compared to the national average of £387pp.

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 2016. 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:-

- Tim Boaden (Seedfield TRA) expressed concern that Bury received a poor settlement compared to other Authorities, receiving under the National average per head from central Government and how the Council had lobbied the Government to address this shortfall and what effect the Greater Manchester devolution deal would have?

Councillor Rishi explained that Bury has been under funded for years and the Fair Deal for Bury had been started in order to lobby the Government. In relation to devolution and the impact on the budget, the combined Authority, with all 10 Councils working together, still need to provide Services to the residents of the Borough and it should bring the 10 Councils closer together.

- Melanie Waters asked if the Alternative Service Delivery Models would be run privately or through the Council.

Councillor Shori explained it was a Local Authority Trading Company for Services that were charged for. Social care was means tested and some residents had to pay for all their own Services. The Trading Company would provide good quality Services to people who were not entitled to State support, to bridge this gap.

- Tan Ahmed (ADAB) asked about Income Generation and Grant Optimisation and if this was an opportunity to look at new areas to generate money and what is Bury's position in respect of local businesses if the Government grant is cut.

Councillor Shori explained the uncertainty following the localisation of business rates and instead of sharing income and losses with the Government of 50% it is now suggested that this will move to Bury keeping 100% which could be an opportunity to seize. It was important to ensure businesses stayed in Bury and promote new ones. The leader of the Council meets regularly with local businesses and there is a Summer Fair to encourage this.

Councillor Holt asked the local Councillors if they would like to ask questions in relation to the presentation.

Councillor Walmsley stated that Bury East had one of the highest areas of deprivation in the Country, not just Greater Manchester. The Conservative MP for Bury North supports the Government formula of allocating money to Authorities and it was important if residents were unhappy that they contacted him, as the elected MP.

- Councillor Walmsley asked what the cost was in respect of the recent floods across the Borough.

Councillor Shori stated the costs to the Council would be in the region of £250,000. It was difficult to assess the impact but that central Government would be lobbied in relation to the lack of investment in flood defences in the Borough.

- Councillor Southworth stated that the information about the 2016/2017 budget was being presented to all of the Township Forums. As Bury East TF consisted of all Labour Councillors, Councillor Southworth asked what the response of the Conservative Ward Councillors was at other Township Forums.

Councillor Shori explained that this was not Political and other Forums believed people should pay more Council Tax in order to help the vulnerable with Social care. Overall Councillors were complimentary but they believe that people should take more personal responsibility. One third of every £ goes to adult Social care. George Osborne wants another 2% added on to Council Tax to address this and Councillor Shori was interested to see what the response from local residents was over this issue.

Tan Ahmed asked if the 2% rise in April would be the same the year after and Councillor Smith asked if it was ring fenced. Councillor Shori replied that it would be 2% year on year until 2020. Council Tax can't be increased by more than 2%, however the 2% for Social care would be in addition.

Jimmy Hill asked how much was owed in general rates and Steve Kenyon replied that Bury was the strongest in the whole of Greater Manchester at 97.05 % in relation to rates collection.

Councillor Holt asked for the view of local residents present at the Township Forum on an increase to the Council Tax of a further 2% in order to provide for Social care and the majority decision was in favour of the increase.

It was agreed:

That Councillor Rishi Shori and Steve Kenyon be thanked for their presentation.

649 BURY EAST TOWNSHIP PLAN 2015 - 2016

The Township Co-ordinator, Dave Thomas, submitted a copy of the Bury East Township Plan setting out the key priorities and actions for the Township.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

650 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair, Councillor Holt, 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.

- Melanie Waters stated there have been a number of sightings of rats within Moorside Ward, in particular Chaffinch Drive and the Fern Grove areas. Melanie explained that a number of trees had been chopped down and also that there were issues with refuse and recycling and it would be more helpful for the residents if there were hard standing areas to put their bins rather than just grass areas.

Councillor Cassidy asked if this issue had been reported and Councillor Walmsley stated that 3 subways were flooded near Fern Grove on Boxing Day which could have disturbed the rats. Councillor Tariq explained that he had dealt with a similar problem in Redvales Ward and the information he had received from pest control was that they would deal with issues within someone's property but not on public property or in back streets or on highways.

Councillor Holt stated that if you should find a dead rat you were advised to put on protective gloves to pick it up and then wrap it well and put it in the grey bin.

- Melanie reported that there was a lot of fly tipping in the area of Chesham and Chesham Fold Estate and nearly every cut through is full of rubbish which is particularly hazardous to the elderly and children.

Councillor Cassidy stated that this should be reported to Six Town Housing and Councillor Walmsley said this was a habitual problem, although there was a difference between bulky waste and people just not re-cycling properly, however the local Councillors would look into this issue.

Jimmy Hill reported that the issue of fly tipping and the problem of rats was something he has been fighting for over 5 years. It was reported in the minutes of the last meeting of the cost to the Council of £135,000 for the 3061 incidents of fly tipping. This was a serious problem.

Councillor Smith stated there were certain areas such as Craven Street where there was private land. Although people got a derisory fine, for fly tipping, it cost the Council a fortune to take them to Court.

- Tim Boaden explained that he had been absent from a number of previous meetings of the Township Forum as he felt that he raised issues that had not been addressed, including the bus lane on Bolton Road and the double yellow parking on Walmersley Road. Tim said he had attended the Bury East Locality Workshop in the Peel room of the Town Hall the day before and it was reported that the Township Forums would be changing and he asked what those changes would be made.

Dave Thomas, the Township Co-ordinator, explained that all Services would be delivered at a neighbourhood level but it was hard to say at this time what the changes will be over the next 18 months. In terms of the Forums, there would be participating budgeting in trying to get local communities involved on how money is spent and delivering projects. In relation to the issues not being addressed, it was important for the public to raise issues, although a satisfactory conclusion could not always be reached, all members of the public are

encouraged to attend the Forums to raise any problems they may have.

- Kath Bond stated that she had been attending the Forum meetings for a long time but was never satisfied with the answers she was given. Kath asked that Highways would definitely be present at the next meeting of the Forum and the Township Co-ordinator confirmed they had agreed to attend the March meeting.
- Melanie stated that she used to live on the Littlewood Estate some years ago and the Council used to provide a couple of skips in order for people to get rid of large unwanted items. Could money within the Community funding not be used for this again.

Councillor Cassidy stated that it should be Six Town Housing that were contacted in relation to skips, however, they too had budget cuts. Councillor Kelly stated that she had been involved in local community clear ups in the past. Dave Thomas informed the Forum that the Township Funding had strict criteria and constituted groups would need to make an application for funding which would be considered at a Panel.

651 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business raised under this item.

652 FUNDING REPORT

It was agreed:

The report be noted

653 VENUE, DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Bury East Township Forum would be held on Monday 14 March 2016 at the Mosses Centre. The Chair, Councillor Holt, thanked everyone for their attendance.

**COUNCILLOR
Chair**

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