

Minutes of: BURY WEST TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 17 January 2017

Present: Councillor J Harris (in the Chair)
Councillors Susan Southworth, R Walker, Kerrison and J Harris

Also in attendance: Mr T Eastland- Tottington and Bury West Rotary Club
Mr P Jones – Brandlesholme Residents Association

Public Attendance: 26 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor S Nuttall and Councillor M Hankey and Reverend K Selby

BWTF.482 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

BWTF.483 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 19 September 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

BWTF.484 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Harris referred to the issue raised by Mrs Marshall at the last meeting regarding Homewatch groups and reported that the issue had been resolved.

Councillor Harris stated that the Bury West Township should be a non political meeting and asked that elected members keep party politics out of the discussions.

Councillor Harris referred to the issue that had been raised regarding the street lighting at Connaught Street and reported that she had been informed that the lighting would be replaced in April.

BWTF.485 BUDGET BRIEFING 2017 - 2020

Councillor Jane Lewis, Deputy Leader of the Council and Chief Executive Mike Owen attended the meeting to consult with those present on the budget options for the coming three years.

It was explained that the main objectives were to lead, shape and maintain a prosperous Bury that was fit for the future.

Bury Council was the biggest employer and provider of services in the town with a £448 million turnover.

Mike Owen set out where the Council's money came from and explained that there had been a reduction of £65 million in Government funding since 2010 with a further £32 million cut up to 2020.

It was explained that if Bury had been funded per head to the same level nationally it would have an extra £9 million and if it had been funded per head to the same level as Greater Manchester there would be £18 million extra.

How the Council spent its money was explained:-

- Adult Social Care £46.8 million
- Looked after Children £10.6 million
- Waste Disposal £12.5 million
- Highways £6.4 million
- Refuse Collection £4.0 million
- Libraries £2.4 million
- Parks & Open Spaces £2.2 million
- Sports & Leisure £1.2 million

It was also explained that there were other demands such as the population living longer but needing added support in later life.

It was also explained that there were unknown variables to consider such as inflation, rises in energy prices and other levies.

The Council were constantly looking for efficiency savings and were planning to transform services across the three Council Departments:-

Resource and Regulation – Proposed cut of £7m

Children, Young People and Culture – Proposed cut of £7.7m

Communities and Wellbeing – Proposed cut of £17.7m

It was explained that for Resource and Regulation there would be more collaborative working with other organisations and providers, further income generation, Investment in the highways network to improve the network and reduce the repair bill, joint enforcement, further treasury management in relation to property investment and back office service reconfiguration

For Children and Young People there will be optimisation of external funding, development of the Early Years Provision, development of the fostering and looked after children service, service reviews, a management restructure and changes to school funding regime.

Communities and Wellbeing were focussing on bringing together health and social care services with joint commissioning, review of operational services, review of leisure and wellbeing services, review of the organisational structure and transport arrangements.

It was explained that the Council will still have to deliver statutory services but would also want to have aspirations to tackle inequalities and support life chances.

It was also explained that the Council could not raise the Council Tax by more than 2% and the Social Care Precept by more than 3%.

It was reported that some Councils had stated that they would be using their reserves to help balance their budgets. Council reserves were there to help out in extreme situations and once they were used they were gone. The Council could use its reserves but wouldn't want to.

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

- A member of the public referred to Looked After Children and asked whether this included children in care as well as children with additional needs.

It was explained that this referred to all children who required any kind of support. The issue was that where there was the demand, the Council was statutorily obliged to offer support in some cases. If demand grew it would cost the Council more and this would mean taking funds away from non statutory services.

- A member of the public asked how the academisation of schools would affect Council finances?

It was explained that the money received from Government for schools was given straight to schools after the Council received it. When a school became an academy they were no longer under the Council's control and were self managed. The Council would offer to provide services to the schools if the schools wanted to buy them.

- A member of the public asked why the Council could not provide services to schools without charging them.

It was explained that this was not financially viable. The Council had to provide a wide range of services so would have to cut other services in order to do that.

- A member of the public referred to SEN and the travel provided during respite and asked why this was excluded.

It was explained that the statutory services that the Council provided would be delivered but not all services were statutory and these would be reviewed.

- It was asked whether borrowing money to repair the highways was the right decision.

Mike Owen explained that if borrowing didn't save money in the long run the Council wouldn't do it.

It was also explained that improving the highways network would make Bury more attractive to businesses and therefore help raise Council income from business rates.

- Councillor Harris referred to the properties that the Council owned and asked how this worked.

It was explained that if the money was sat in the bank it would be earning 0.5% interest but the investments that the Council had were earning 6.5%.

Councillor Harris stated that Bury was a nice place to live and the Council staff worked hard to ensure that this continued and they were a credit to the Council and this should be recognised.

It was reported that comments and suggestions could be submitted in the following ways:-

- Submitting feedback online at www.bury.gov.uk/Budget201720
- Emailing at Budget201720@bury.gov.uk
- Writing to: Budget201720, Bury Council, Knowsley Street, Bury, BL9 OSW
- Telephoning: 0161 253 5696
- Completing a Township Forum Exit Survey

It was agreed:

That Councillor Lewis and Mike be thanked for their presentation.

BWTF.486 PERSONA STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

Eddie Cheung, Quality and Customer Experience Lead at Persona attended the meeting to explain the work of Persona and to ask for local residents to get involved in the way that Persona provides its services.

It was explained that Persona was a local authority trading company providing social care to older people and adults with learning disabilities.

It was explained that Persona operates across a range of community settings including day and residential care centres.

Persona's Purpose was explained:-

Quality - Delivering high quality services.

Involvement - Working with local communities and key partners to think creatively and innovatively.

Listening - Listening to what people have got to say about us and learning.

Responsive - Responding to the needs of local communities.

Communication - Keeping in touch with all our partners and communities

Eddie explained that most people will have an interest in social care at some point in their lives whether it be through a friend or relative or for themselves.

It was reported that Persona currently have an employees forum where employees could raise any issues and make suggestions in relation to the services provided and the way that future services could be provided. It was now hoped that a Stakeholders Forum could be established to allow for current service users and future service users to have an input in service provision.

It was explained that here will be several ways for members to get involved in the stakeholder forum and Persona want to hear from a people who have a passion for making a difference:-

Face-to-Face: meetings, workshops, events, mystery shopping

Virtual: Facebook, twitter, you tube, LinkedIn

Informal: Email, surveys, telephone surveys

If anybody required more information they could contact Persona the following ways:-

- Telephone on 0161 253 6000
- Website at www.personasupport.org
- Email at info@personasupport.org

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

- Yvonne Creswell asked how many staff Persona employed.

It was reported that there were around 350 staff employed by Persona, most of whom had transferred over from the Council when Persona had been established.

- Yvonne Creswell asked whether Persona offered a seven day service.

Eddie explained that some services were 24/7 where as some were 9 – 5 depending on need.

It was agreed:

That Eddie be thanked for the presentation.

BWTF.487 DAISYFIELD CLEAN UP EVENT

Rob Trueblood representing Sustrans attended the meeting to inform those present of the forthcoming clean up day at the Daisyfield area of the route 6 cycle path which runs through Bury.

It was explained that Sustrans is a charity which promoted and enabled people to travel safely and easily by foot, bike and public transport.

Sustrans work with families, communities, policy makers and partner organisations to improve and redesign routes to enable safe access to them.

Rob reported that Sustrans had arranged a clean-up event at the Daisyfield Viaduct area of the route. The event was due to take place on Tuesday 24 January from 10am to 2.30pm and all were welcome to attend. Equipment would be provided and volunteers were asked to meet at the Cygnet Hospital just before 10am.

It was agreed:

That Rob be thanked for his presentation.

BWTF.488 OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- A member of the public referred to the consultation that had been regarding the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework relating to provision of land for houses and employment and the possible infringement on greenbelt land.

It was explained that the consultation had now ended and the comments received would be reviewed. A further consultation would be held once all of the information had been collated and the infrastructure needs had been reviewed.

BWTF.489 HIGHWAYS SUB GROUP

Councillor Harris reported that the Highways sub group had met in October and would meet again in March.

Councillor Harris had attended a site visit with officers at the bus lane at the bottom of Bolton Road near to Lidl. The officers had noted the issues and had stated that the area would be reviewed to see what options were available.

Councillor Southworth reported that the roundabout on Woodhill Road had been inspected and she was waiting to hear whether any work would be undertaken.

Councillor Southworth also reported that Ken Asquith had confirmed the Birks Drive scheme would go ahead once funding was available.

Councillor Walker referred to the proposed scheme on the Seddons Farm estate and asked why the police would not support due to traffic travelling on average at 24 miles per hour or more. Councillor Walker felt that this did not make sense.

BWTF.490 TOWNSHIP PLAN **FOR INFORMATION**

It was agreed:

That the contents of the report be noted.

BWTF.491 TOWNSHIP FORUM FUNDING REPORT **FOR INFORMATION**

It was agreed:

That the contents of the report be noted.

BWTF.492 NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next meeting of the Bury West Township Forum will be held on Thursday 23 March at The Elton Centre from 7pm.

COUNCILLOR J Harris
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 8.40pm)