

Minutes of: BURY WEST TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 23 March 2017

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

Also in attendance: T Eastland – Tottington and Bury West Rotary Club
P Jones – Brandlesholme Resident’s Association
Reverend K Selby – Bolton Road Methodist Church

Public Attendance: 12 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Kerrison and Councillor S Nuttall

BWTF.641 WELCOME

Councillor Harris welcomed those present to the meeting.

BWTF.642 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

BWTF.643 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Township Forum held on 17 January 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

BWTF.644 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Walker referred to the clean up that had been held at the Daisyfield area of the route 6 cycle path and organised by Sustrans. Councillor Walker stated that he had been very impressed with the way that the event had been organised. Councillor Walker reported that Greenmount Village Community Group had attended to assist with the clean up and asked whether there would be to possibility of Bury West Township Forum making a donation to the group from the Township Forum funding that was still available.

It was stated that this would be unlikely as the Greenmount Village Community Group was located within a different Township.

A member of the public referred to the clean up event and explained that there had been an awful lot of dog mess at the site. Would it be possible to have a dog waste bin installed in the area.

Councillor Walker also stated that Wellington Square would benefit from a dog bin.

BWTF.645 LIBRARY REVIEW UPDATE

Elizabeth Binns, Head of Libraries and Councillor Sandra Walmsley, Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing and Support Services attended the meeting to report on the consultation that was being undertaken in relation to the future of the library service across Bury.

Elizabeth explained the financial position of the Council and the decisions required to ensure that a comprehensive Library Service continued to be provided within Bury. In making the decisions the Council was aware of the value the people of Bury have for Libraries through the services they provide. The consultation process started last Summer and was considering the following six principles:

- Library services across the borough
- Protecting the vulnerable
- Cost effective
- Technology
- Volunteers
- Communities

The following key issues are what have come to the forefront of what is important to people in what the libraries can provide; books and reading, community, staff, volunteers, children, access, technology and learning and from the first two consultations it was important to provide for the people of Bury the core offer of reading and literacy, digital inclusion, information and learning and community support and development in order to provide a service to meet the needs and aspirations of residents of the Borough.

However, there have been financial losses to the Council and the Government expect all Councils to be self sufficient by 2020. The Libraries budget is currently 2.4 million but deducted from that must be resources including HR, IT and Payroll Services, therefore, effectively making the budget 2 million and this will be cut by a half by 2020, meaning that the Council will not be able to continue to provide the buildings, staff and resources it does currently.

There are two options being considered, which are; to retain Bury, Ramsbottom and Prestwich Libraries plus a service wide team, or, option two which is; to retain Bury, Ramsbottom, Prestwich and Radcliffe Libraries plus a smaller service wide team.

Elizabeth explained that it was important for all residents to have their say and take part in the survey. The consultation ends on 27 April and the final report will be put to cabinet on 18 May with a view to implementing the agreed decision by August 2017.

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

- A member of the public asked what would happen to the stock of books from each of the libraries?

Elizabeth explained that all stock would be sorted and the best resources would be kept for the library service. If surplus to requirements the remaining stock would be offered to other Council services, schools and community groups.

There would be a possibility of volunteers/community groups being given a book collection to enable them to run a small library offer. These collections could then be rotated with other groups.

- A member of the public asked what would happen to the buildings.

Elizabeth explained that some of the buildings were rented, some of the libraries were located in other buildings such as churches or the leisure centre and these would be handed back. Some of the buildings could be taken on by community groups who would take over and manage the buildings and some may be sold. Whatever happened with the buildings it would have to be at no cost to the Council.

- Councillor Hankey asked whether it would be possible for a community group to run a library.

Elizabeth stated that this would be possible but would have to be an informal library provision.

Councillor Walmsley explained that some groups are more interested in the buildings as a community facility rather than a library. The Council were talking to these groups and trying to offer support through the transition period.

- A member of the public asked whether any IT resources would be available if community groups took over the buildings.

Elizabeth explained that all of the resources would be removed from the buildings. All library buildings currently had wifi available and this would be the case as long as the new tenants took over payment. Whichever groups took over the buildings they would have to provide their own IT facilities.

- Councillor Walker referred to the Central Library reducing in size due to the introduction of the sculpture centre and asked whether the original footprint should be reinstated if the Central Library would now be the main library in the borough.

Elizabeth explained that the sculpture centre would not be closing. The space in the Library has been reviewed to see what could be brought into public use. It was hoped that a reading area and community space could be identified.

- A member of the public stated that the GMSF had highlighted the need for new houses and the people moving into those houses would need facilities such as libraries.

Councillor Walmsley explained that the GMSF would be looking at infrastructure as the next part of its consultation. The Library consultation was being undertaken as a need to reduce costs across the Council and this would have to be done over the next 3 years by which time the Council would have to be self sufficient. The GMSF was looking ahead to 2030.

- Councillor Harris referred to the option of having 4 library sites and the fact that this would have to be run on the same budget as the other option of 3 sites and asked how this would affect the service.

Elizabeth explained that there would still be the same amount of money and the same amount of staff whichever option was chosen. The review that was carried out asked what kind of a service was required at the different locations. This showed that some of the libraries were better utilised in the evenings so could open later in the day and some were used more in the mornings. Whichever option was decided on community time would be built in.

It was agreed:

That Elizabeth Binns and Councillor Walmsley be thanked for their presentation.

BWTF.646 OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions asked under this item.

BWTF.647 HIGHWAYS SUB GROUP

Councillor Harris reported that the Highways Sub Group had met on 13 March 2017.

At the meeting Ken Asquith had reported that as far as engineers were aware all 20mph schemes had now been put on hold. Councillor Southworth stated that she had been informed that the schemes on Lomond Drive, Horridge Street, Hunstanton Drive, Brandlesholme West (Birks Drive) and Goodlad Street schemes would be going ahead. This had been confirmed outside of the meeting.

Councillor Southworth reported that she had attended a site visit at the Brandlesholme Road shopping precinct with officers and shopkeepers to discuss the parking issues. It had been stated that some of the staff at Tesco were parking in the restricted bays for all of their shifts. Councillor Southworth explained that she had agreed to speak with the Manager at the Tesco with a view to coming up with a solution.

BWTF.648 ADVISORY GROUP UPDATE

Mr Jones reported that the AGM of Brandlesholme Residents' Association would be taking place on Wednesday 24 May at 7.30pm at St Francis House.

BWTF.649 TOWNSHIP FORUM FUNDING REPORT

The Township Forum Funding Report was submitted for information.

COUNCILLOR
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.15 pm)