

Minutes of: RAMSBOTTOM, TOTTINGTON AND NORTH MANOR TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 6 July 2016

Present: Councillor D Gunther (in the Chair)
Councillors I Bevan, J Daly, I Gartside, R Hodgkinson,
K Hussain, G Keeley, Schofield and Y Wright

Also in attendance: Elizabeth Binns - Head of Libraries
Crispian Logue - Head of Strategic Planning and Economic
Development
Steve Kenyon – Interim Executive Director of Resource and
Regulation
Klare Rufo - Assistant Director – Learning and Culture
Councillor S Walmsley – Cabinet Member – Strategic
Housing and Support Services

Public Attendance: 52 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence:

RTNM.106 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

RTNM.107 NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Nominations were requested for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of the Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor Township Forum for the 2016/2017 Municipal Year.

It was agreed:

1. That Councillor Gunther be nominated Chair to the Township Forum for the 2016/2017 Municipal Year.
2. That Councillor Gartside be nominated as Vice Chair to the Township Forum for the 2016/2017 Municipal Year.

RTNM.108 LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW

Councillor Sandra Walmsley, Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing and Support Services, Elizabeth Binns, Head of Libraries and Klare Rufo, Assistant Director – Learning and Culture introduced the Library Service Review.

It was explained that the Library Review report had been considered by Scrutiny and the Cabinet.

Statistics were set out in the presentation:

Bury Libraries had 55,388 adult members and 15,496 junior members who carried out 795,200 visits a year.

Per year there were 487,199 book issues, 149,000 enquiries and 71,800 council specific enquiries. Libraries also took £529,994 of council payments.

Bury Libraries held 6,253 events per year with 65,000 adults and children attending. The libraries provided 433 IT training sessions and 185 PCs available across all libraries which adds up to 325,462 hours of free IT access and 853,956 virtual visits.

The libraries worked with over 130 volunteers and 100 partner organisations including tenants and residents associations, community groups, charities, schools and colleges, health providers and housing, advice and welfare agencies.

Statistics specific to Ramsbottom and Tottington libraries were reported:

Ramsbottom Library had 7038 members who carried out 70,750 visits and were issued 77,559 books. 8187 IT sessions were undertaken and there had been 1017 events with 10,692 people attending.

Tottington Library had 3405 members who carried out 26,450 visits and were issued 33,035 books. 3937 IT sessions were undertaken and there had been 563 events with 2164 people attending.

It was explained that the Council had a statutory duty to provide a library service to the public and it was hoped that this review would help to develop a resilient service to take it forward.

The service needs to build on its strengths, plan for developing areas of need and consider savings.

The review will take a year to complete and will be carried out in 3 stages.

This first stage will look at key principles and ask initially whether the 6 principles set out are the right ones. The consultation is asking for residents' input on the principles to ensure that these are in line with service requirements.

Principle 1 – To provide a Library Service across the borough which provides all residents with access to libraries and electronic services sufficient in number, range and quality to support reading for pleasure, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and the effective use of information.

Principle 2 – To ensure that the needs of more vulnerable residents and groups protected by Equalities legislation are taken fully into account in the provision of these services.

Principle 3 – To ensure that the resources committed to the library service are used as efficiently as possible by exploring options to reduce running and maintenance costs and to share premises with other Council services.

Principle 4 – To explore options for investing in technology to improve access to the library service for example, by extending opening hours , increasing digital services and enhancing provision for those with sensory impairments.

Principle 5 – To welcome the contribution that members of the community can make to the borough’s library service as volunteers, supporting both traditional and digital services, including training to promote digital inclusion.

Principle 6 - To meet local aspirations for a network of community spaces across the borough in which the council and local communities can work together as partners in meeting local needs.

It was explained that this first stage of the consultation would take 3 months. The survey was available online as well as paper form and would take around 3 minutes to complete.

There had been 2 thousand completed survey received to date and it was hoped that many more residents would contribute.

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

A member of the public referred to people who were losing their literacy due to sensory impairment or dementia and asked what work was being done around this.

It was explained that the library service offered a number of different services in this area provided both by the Council and volunteers. The Council was working with age UK and provided dementia cafe's at libraries as well as other venues.

The library service also provided audio books and mobile libraries to ensure that all residents could access the services.

It was agreed:

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

RTNM.109 GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

Crispian Logue, Head of Strategic Planning and Economic Development attended the meeting to report on the current consultation that was being carried out in relation to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Development Plan.

It was explained that the consultation was being carried out across the whole of Greater Manchester and would identify areas of land suitable for development as well as areas land suitable for protection.

The plans would cover the whole of Greater Manchester and would identify sites across boundaries but there would also be local plans in each of the 10 local authorities sitting underneath these.

It was explained that there was a need for a further 230,000 new homes across Greater Manchester with a current shortfall of 70, 000 and 3.5m sq metres of employment land of which there was a current 1m sq metre shortfall.

A 'call for sites' had been requested and 650 sites had been submitted by land owners and developers.

The sites were in the process of being assessed by a centrally established team made up of representatives of the 10 GM local authorities. The team would consider issues such as Planning Policy Restrictions, Environmental Issues, Ecological Issues, Accessibility etc and were working alongside other organisations such as Transport for Greater Manchester.

It was explained that as yet no decisions had been made and a draft plan would be drawn up which would be consulted on from October 2016. Identified sites would fall off the plan and new ones would be added and assessed. All stakeholders would be consulted on the revised plan after the initial consultation and the Government would examine the Plan following the consultation.

It was explained that all residents could sign up to the consultation and become stakeholders which would give them the opportunity to comment on proposed sites and suggest their own.

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

Councillor Gartside referred to a letter that had recently been sent by Brandon Lewis MP asking that the Government put in place the strongest protection for greenbelt land only adjust this in exceptional circumstances.

Crispian explained that all options would be considered but it was always the case that greenbelt land would only be released under exceptional circumstances.

Councillor Gartside asked what the Council was doing to unlock brown-field sites.

Crispian explained that the Council was in the process of unlocking as many brown-field sites as possible to enable development.

A member of the public referred to a site in Hawkshaw that had recently been advertised for sale and he asked how he would be able to identify whether it was greenbelt.

Crispian explained that pretty much the whole of the Hawkshaw area was greenbelt and that the resident could contact him to identify the site further.

Councillor Gunther referred to the 3000 empty properties in Bury and asked what was being done to bring these back into use.

It was explained that Bury had an empty property strategy which it did use but it did take a while to get the work done. The council were committed to bring as many empty properties back into use as possible.

Councillor Daly referred to the local plan which would sit under the Greater Manchester one and asked if Bury could identify in their plan a policy around protecting greenbelt land.

It was explained that the greenbelt policy locally would replicate the national one.

All those present were invited to sign up to the consultation in order that their comments and suggestions be considered.

It was agreed:

That Crispian be thanked for his presentation

RTNM.110 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 7 March 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

RTNM.111 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME/OPEN FORUM

- Mr Graham, a resident of Bury Road reported that there had, over a number of years been a series of accidents at the junction of Bury Road and Scobell Street. Residents had been asking for some sort of measures to be put in place such as a mini roundabout but this had never been done. Mr Graham explained that a traffic count had been carried out but the results had shown no significant rise in vehicles using the road. Mr Graham did not believe this to be the case and asked that the situation be reviewed again.
- Mrs Taylor reported that the bus service around the Greenmount area was currently the worst it had ever been and that the 481 service would be stopping from the end of July which would make it worse.

Mrs Taylor asked what could be done about this as there were suggestions regarding provision that the providers should consider.

It was stated that representatives from the bus providers would be invited to attend a future meeting of the forum.

- Mr Waddell explained that there had, over the past few months, constantly been water on Turton Road just past the Affetside turn off near to the Junction at the India Gate and he stated that this needed to be fixed before winter.
- Ms Badjie referred to the work that had been carried out by the Council with regards to the flooding at Manchester Road. Underground investigations had been carried out on one side of the road which showed a collapsed drain. The other side had not been investigated as yet though and she hoped that this would be done.

Councillor Bevan stated that he would contact Ms Badjie to discuss how to move this issue forward.

- Janet Smith, Secretary of the Friends of Ramsbottom Civic Hall referred to the renegotiation that being done by the Council with regards to the car park at the rear of the Grant Arms. It was suggested that the bowling green site should also be considered as a potential development opportunity for extended gardens and a possible play area. Mrs Smith asked whether the Council would consider this.

Dave Thomas explained that there were currently no plans to consider this option.

A resident referred to the lack of maintenance being carried out at Old Kays Park in Tottington and asked if this could be dealt with. The bins were overflowing and the grass was not being cut. It was explained that the park was becoming unusable.

A resident reported that the hedges on Lower Turton Road were so overgrown that the pavement could no longer be used.

Mr Waddell asked what was happening with the 20mph scheme in Greenmount.

A resident asked whether there was any information on the situation with the Waterside site in Summerseat.

Councillor Gunther explained that she had written to the Chief Executive in relation to the site and also the issue of the rubble in the river and the car park.

RTNM.112 POLICE INTRODUCTION

Inspector Russell Magnall introduced himself to the Forum. Inspector Magnall explained that he was the new Inspector for the area and was very excited to be taking up the role. He had lived in Bury for over 30 years and was very familiar with Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor.

Inspector Magnall reported that there had been a change in which policing across the three areas which would see a stronger police presence on the streets.

Councillor Daly stated that that there had not been a beat officer for a long time in North Manor but this has now changed which was a very positive move.

Inspector Magnall reported that 3 known offenders had recently been detained. They had been responsible for a number of house burglaries in the area.

It was agreed:

That Inspector Magnall be welcomed to the Township Forum and thanked for his presentation.

RTNM.113 FUTURE TOWNSHIP FORUM PRIORITIES - ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Dave Thomas gave a presentation explaining the future role of the Council and the Township Forums. He asked those present to think about what they considered to be positive about the three wards in which they lived and how these could be improved on and promoted. He also asked what areas could be improved. How could residents become more involved in the areas in which they lived.

Dave stated that work would be carried out to produce a Township Plan which would highlight priorities for the Township Forums.

Those present were asked to contact Dave with their thoughts on what should be included within the Plan.

RTNM.114 TOWNSHIP FORUM FUNDING UPDATE

A report was presented to the Forum for information.

RTNM.115 NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next meeting of the Township Forum would be held on Tuesday 13 September at Ramsbottom Fire Station Community Room at 7pm.

COUNCILLOR D GUNTHER
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 9.40pm)