

Minutes of: RADCLIFFE TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 10 January, 2017

Venue: Radcliffe United Reform Church, Blackburn St, Radcliffe

Present:

Councillors: Councillors C Preston, R Cathcart, S Briggs, R Skillen, J Walker, J Lewis

Advisory Group

Representatives: Colin Jones (Chair) - Radcliffe Girls and Boys Club
David Lewis - Chapelfield Village Association
Colette Jones - Friends of Close Park
Gill Stainthorpe - Withins Residents Association

Public attendance: 20 members of the public were in attendance

Apologies for

absence: Councillors Shori, Cummings and Parnell
Carol Kemp

RTF.432 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

RTF.433 MINUTES

It was agreed:

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

Matters Arising

Minute RTF.245 Inspector Jones had agreed to email a list of agencies and partnerships to Councillor Cathcart following the discussions relating to the restorative justice initiative and the number of other local projects involved in this work. Councillor Cathcart reported that he had yet to receive this information.

RTF.434 BUDGET CONSULTATION 2017 - 2020

Councillor Lewis, Deputy Leader of the Council and Steve Kenyon, Interim Executive Director for Resource and Regulation gave a presentation on the Budget Consultation 2017 – 2020.

It was reported that Bury Council is currently in the process of setting its Budget for the 2017/18 financial year and were wishing to seek the views of the local community on the draft budget proposals and the proposed increase in the Council Tax. The meeting was informed that whilst the Council have a balanced budget, the Council's finances are under a great deal of pressure. When compared with many Councils across the country,

Bury has been relatively underfunded by central government for many years. When combined with the austerity cuts of recent years, Bury has been particularly hard hit. The Authority have had to make cuts of £65 million since 2010, from a budget of £125 million and will need to cut a further £32 million over the next three years. As a consequence, many services will be affected, with the need to focus on essential service provision. The Council will need to cut back on non-essential services to absorb the cuts to funding and to address the increases in social care costs faced over the longer term. The implementation of the proposals outlined would involve a fundamental redesign of services via a number key service reviews and would involve more collaborative working with key partner agencies, particularly with regards to health service provision.

The presentation covered the following key issues :-

- Detailed overview of Council funding for 2016/2017
- A breakdown of the current costs of key services to residents
- A breakdown of Bury Council financial cuts since 2010
- A comparison of Bury's Settlement Funding Assessment per head of population with that of Greater Manchester and England
- A list of other key issues that the Authority must factor cost changes into the budget forecasts
- The cost of cuts anticipated for the next three years
- A summary of the planned financial cuts to each Department
- Details of the next steps needed to be taken in to move the Budget Proposals forward
- Details of how the public can view the proposals and provide any feedback as part of the consultation process

The Chair invited questions/comments and representations from members of the public present at the meeting, as follows :-

- Would the cuts affect recent plans to upgrade the leisure provision in Radcliffe?
It was reported that these plans would be considered as part of the budget proposals. Some of the funding streams available at the planning stages for the proposed new leisure building in Radcliffe were now no longer available to the Council. The Council were pleased with the temporary leisure facilities in Radcliffe and had seen an increase in usage since it was installed.
- What will the proposals mean for the voluntary sector agencies in Bury?
It was reported that consideration of voluntary sector funding would be part of one of the key service reviews to be undertaken.
- The provision of a multi-functional building in Radcliffe was something promised by the Council and it now feels like the area is being blundered.
In response, Councillor Lewis reiterated the issues around the loss of Civic Hall and Leisure Centre and commented on the positive re-developments that have taken place in Radcliffe in the last 12 months such as the improvement to the bus station/market, the investment in the extra care scheme at Redbank and the proposals for the new Supermarket which would help in the regeneration of the Town Centre.

The meeting continued with a discussion on the number of private leisure facilities available in the area.

- Would the money from the Devolution in Greater Manchester address some of the funding issues in Bury?

It was reported that the Council would be restricted on how it allocated the additional funding over the three year period.

- Concerns raised that the CCG had received additional funding for mental health services but were channeling the funding into other services.

Councillor Lewis explained that more joined up work with the CCG would mean that it would become more accountable in the future and would ensure more streamlined services.

- Why would it have cost so much to update the Civic Suite?

Councillor Lewis reported that the fabric of the building had been disintegrating – all of the internal plants had not been upgraded since it had been built and the building had been subsidized for many years. The building averaged a usage of only 18 %.

- A member of the public commented that this budget proposal was just another example of the working class paying for the economic crisis and that the Council were acting as an agent of the Government in cutting its services.

It was reported that the Council had a statutory duty to bring in a balanced budget – if the Council did not do this then the Government would do it and do it their way.

- Had Bury been in receipt of any money from the Manchester Airport Dividend? If so, how much?

Steve Kenyon reported that the Council had been in receipt of approximately £2.9 million. In response to a question as to why there were such diverse amounts received amongst the Greater Manchester Authorities - the meeting was informed that the amounts received were dependent upon local authority Shareholder percentages.

- Gill Stainthorpe raised concerns relating to the numbers of pupils being educated in Bury who lived out of the Borough and that the pupil funding was not transferred to Bury.

It was reported that the Schools funding formula was being reviewed for 2017 but this funding was ringfenced so would not affect the budget proposals.

- How much money did the Council have in their 'Reserves'?

The meeting was informed that the Council had approximately £4 million in their reserves.

The public consultation would close on 31 January, 2017 and until then, members of the public were invited to comment on the proposals in a number of ways – online at www.bury.gov.uk/Budget201720; via email at Budget201720@bury.gov.uk; in writing - Budget201720, Bury Council, Knowsley St, Bury, BL9 0SW; by telephone - 0161 2535696 and by completing a Township Forum Exit Survey.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted, with thanks.

RTF.435 PERSONA CARE AND SUPPORT

Kat Sowden, Manager of Persona Care and Support gave a presentation on the plans to develop the Persona Stakeholder Forum, inviting anyone with an interest in helping to develop the changing provision of social care in the area to get involved by becoming a member of the Persona Stakeholder Forum.

The meeting was informed that Persona Care and Support had been established 12 months ago as a Local Authority trading company for Bury's Social Care provision. Demand for services had continued to grow and Persona wanted to utilise the feedback it receives from current service users and from members of the local community as a whole in order to develop future service provision. This feedback will help the company be more responsive to the changing social care needs of the local community. The meeting was informed of the ways to get involved; expectations on member involvement and on what to do next if you are interested in joining the Stakeholder Forum.

The Chair invited questions/comments and representations from members of the public present at the meeting :-

- Would Persona take on board feedback from Healthwatch and Penine Care Trust?
It was reported that Persona would be interested in receiving feedback relating to healthcare provision in the area.
- Councillor Cathcart asked about links with voluntary organisations in the area such as 'Friendly Faces' project and that any opportunities for information sharing with community groups would be useful.
Kat informed the meeting that Persona were planning for the next generation of social care service users in the future and of the importance of sharing information in developing future services – the Stakeholder Forum was an ideal opportunity to share information, Social media will also play an important role in sharing information as well as tackling issues such as social isolation.
- Would Persona be interested in making links with the Ex-Service Personnel Breakfast Club at the Mosses Centre held every Friday 10 am – 11 am?
- Who funds Persona Care and Support?
The meeting was informed that Persona have Contracts with the Local Authority and service users can pay for services privately.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted, with thanks.

RTF.436 OPEN FORUM

The Chair invited questions/comments and representations from members of the public present at the meeting. The Township Co-ordinator undertook to obtain a reply to matters that could not be dealt with directly at the meeting :-

- Colette Jones commented on her concern and disappointment on the recent Planning Committee decision taken to approve a planning application to build new houses on the side of the river despite the devastation caused by the flooding 12 months ago. Residents were still under the impression that the Environment Agency were still investigating the causes of the flooding in Radcliffe yet this development had still been approved. Colette had emailed the Council and in response had been informed that following the resubmission of improved plans in relation to the development, the Authority had recommended that the Planning Application be approved. In response, Councillor Skillen reported on the need for Planning Control Committee members to follow the statutory planning laws when consideration is given to a planning application that is delegated to the Committee to determine. A member of the public present commented that the situation on the flooding issues in the area would only get worse unless the issue of climate change is addressed by the Government.
- A resident raised concerns relating to the speed of traffic at Bury St/Cross Lane. Councillors would raise this concern with the Highways Officers. Councillor Preston reported that the traffic concerns in Radcliffe and parking issues at Church St West would be raised at Question Time at the next Council meeting and a traffic officer had agreed to attend a future meeting of the Township Forum to discuss resident's concerns.
- Would the Council be prioritizing brownfield sites over the greenbelt following the implementation of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Strategy?
The Township Co-ordinator reported that consultation on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Strategy was still taking place and informed the meeting of the information available at the market place sessions taking place prior to all of this months scheduled Township Forum meetings and on the Council's website. Councillor Preston explained that there were a number of websites offering information of the proposals and was happy to discuss these with residents after the meeting.

RTF.437 COMMUNITY FUNDING REPORT

A copy of the Community Funding Report for Radcliffe was submitted setting out details of the funding allocations to date in support of the work of local, community and voluntary groups. The Township Co-ordinated informed the meeting that there was still money available and encouraged constituted community groups to apply for funding.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

RTF.438 COMMUNITY FUNDING PANEL

The Township Forum Funding Panel had considered applications for grants from the Community Fund from the following organisations :-

Radcliffe Business Group - £500 awarded towards maintenance of lights

It was agreed:

That the application for funding be approved by members of Radcliffe Township Forum.

RTF.439 ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS – UPDATE

Colette Jones, representing Friends of Close Park, provided the following update:-

- From May 2017, 10 training sessions towards the 5k run were being held in the Park.
- The Friends of members were regularly checking on the Park and reporting back to the Council.
- The Friends of Close Park and Radcliffe Tower Heritage Group were considering proposals to merge the two groups to become one group.
- The Heritage Group were hoping to undertake another dig but these plans were dependent upon securing necessary funding.
- The Flood Forum had held a number of meetings with the Council, the Environment Agency and Canal Trust. The group were concerned that the £5,000 funding, whilst being secured immediately following the floods by some residents was now harder to come by for other residents who were having to put down £1,500 of their own money now as part of the application process to receive the £5,000 promised to affected residents. Residents raised concerns regarding the lack of communication from Caribou and that the deadline set by Caribou for repairs was March 2017. Time was running out for many residents who had not heard back from K. Councillor Lewis asked that Colette forward the details for further investigation.
- Councillor Walker provided details or Councillor surgeries.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted, with thanks.

RTF.440 DATE & VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed:

That the next meeting of Radcliffe Township Forum would take place on Monday 20 March, 2017 at 6 pm, at Radcliffe United Reform Church.

In the Chair – Colin Jones

(Note: The meeting started at 6.05pm and ended at 8.05 pm)