

Minutes of: RADCLIFFE TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 6 November 2014

Venue: Radcliffe Civic Suite, Thomas St, Radcliffe

Present:

Councillors: Councillor S Briggs (In the Chair)
Councillors M Bailey, D Bailey, P Bury, A J Cummings,
N Parnell and R Shori

**Advisory Group
Representatives:** Colette Jones – Friends of Close Park
Gill Stainthorpe – Withins Community Association
Barbara Law – Chapelfield Village Association

Public attendance: 35 members of the public were in attendance

**Apologies for
absence:** Councillors A Isherwood and J Lewis
Colin Jones - Radcliffe Boys & Girls Club
David Lewis – Chapelfield Village Association

RTF.413 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

RTF.414 MINUTES

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Township Forum held on 18 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

RTF.415 2015/16 BUDGET

Cllr Rishi Shori – Deputy Leader of the Council and Steve Kenyon – Assistant Director of Resources gave a presentation detailing the key financial issues facing the Authority and subsequent efficiency savings to be made for Bury Council's 2015/16 budget.

The following key facts were presented:-

- For 2015/16, £16 million will be cut from budgets. This equates to a loss of £54 m (50%) of the budget in 5 years.
- This means the Council will need to prioritise key services at a time when residents' needs and expectations are changing and demand for services is increasing.
- In order to do this the Council are exploring alternative ways of delivering services and reviewing organisational structures.
- For 2015/16 the Council have only received 1 year's funding settlement information from the Government, which has yet to be confirmed.
- The Council's core funding from Government is likely to be cut by 13% (to be confirmed).
- The Council will also face cuts to a number of grants received from the Government, for example Early Intervention and Education Services

grants. This is in addition to pressures from levies from other bodies and uncertainty following the localisation of Business Rates.

The meeting was informed of the following key measures to address the cuts:-

- Alternative Service Delivery Models - £3.420m
- Third Sector - £0.200m
- Income Generations - £2.012m
- Better use of External Funding - £3.376m
- Savings from the way the Council buys things - £1.320m
- Managing Assets - £0.726m
- T & C's, Restructuring and vacant posts - £3.229m
- Improved Recycling - £0.862m
- Reduction in provision of services - £0.662m

Bury Residents were being informed of the financial issues facing the Authority as part of a consultation process for the 2015/16 budget and were being asked to consider changing expectations about service delivery; working more closely with individuals and communities to deliver services ie. volunteering/self management; a stronger focus on demand reduction such as self care/early intervention/personal responsibility; examining alternative ways of delivering remaining Council services and changing the way residents access services – "digital by default".

In terms of the next steps, it was reported that from 6 November 2014 to 9 January 2015 the Council will be consulting residents and stakeholders on the package of cuts needed for 2015/16. This will be followed by a review of the consultation feedback which will be fed into the budget setting process for 2015/16. The Council will debate the 2015/16 budget and formally approve a package of cuts. Residents were informed of the various ways they can contact the consultation team and leave comments by 9 January 2015.

The Chair invited questions/comments from the audience:-

- Community pay-back (CPB) – could Bury not make further good use of this?
The Council were looking into all alternative means of service delivery. CPB had been used in an ad-hoc way previously. If there is further scope for this then this will be considered.
- Council Staffing issues – would the Council be willing to cut the number of higher paid senior officer posts as part of cuts?
The number of Directorships had been considered and reduced. The Council hoped to avoid compulsory redundancies.
- Cuts in Manchester City Council had affected services in Manchester – concerns raised that this would happen to Children's Services in Bury. Manchester City Council had not seen as big a reduction in income as Bury over 5 years. The Council would be looking at social enterprise initiatives – there was the need to keep the public sector ethos.
- Close Park had received funding which had had to be returned due to the lack of staff/resources to initiate this funding received – concerns raised as to how much cutting back would be taking place.
- Would the Council look at reducing the Council member allowances?

Councillors had already reduced their allowance and the number of Cabinet posts had also been reduced.

- Had the Council an estimate for the number of compulsory redundancy which may be necessary?

No such figures were available, the Council were hoping to avoid compulsory redundancies through a programme of voluntary redundancies, flexible retirement and redeployment.

- When the settlement figure for 2015/16 is finally made available from the Government, had the Council factored in a worse case scenario in terms of forecasted figures?

This had been considered and factored in to the proposals.

The Chair, Cllr Briggs concluded the debate by explaining that these were unprecedented times for the Council and that any changes would be made in consultation with Bury communities. Members of the public were asked to read the proposals and to get involved in the process.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted and Cllr Shori and Steve Kenyon be thanked for their contribution to the meeting.

RTF.416 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:-

- Concerns regarding pressures faced by local businesses whilst Church Street was blocked off by the United Utilities works. It was reported that United Utilities would be liable for fines if the work ran over the agreed time period set within the original permit. Cllr Matt Bailey commented that the Council would need to keep a check on the work schedule given that the closure order was for a period of 42 weeks and the date the work actually started.
- An offer to help raise funds/support local heritage of East Lancs Papermill Gates. The resident was informed that Radcliffe Library had set up a Heritage Group and the next meeting of the Group would be taking place on 17 November, at 6 pm at Radcliffe Library. Cllr Shori agreed to look into this and report back at a future meeting. Cllr Bury informed the meeting that the Council had secured ownership of the gates and that this was an ongoing issue.
- Abbey Court – 50 flats desperately needed a supply of dustbins. Beige bins and food caddy's had been promised to residents and the Council had now stopped delivering black bins. Also lights needed repairing in communal areas.
- Radcliffe Christmas Lights would be put up this year. The official switch on would take place on 29 November, hopefully to coincide with the re-launch of Radcliffe market.
- Concerns regarding the loss of trees on the boundary of Banana Walk from a local resident and privacy issues for existing residents if the proposals for the new housing development goes ahead.

RTF.417 LOCAL POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Kenny attended the meeting in order to provide an update on key police issues in Bury, as follows:-

- Bryn Williams, an Officer with over 30 years experience had recently retired. Inspector Kenny, on behalf of all members of the Township Forum wished Bryn a long, healthy and happy retirement.
- Burglary Team – the changes to the remit of the team had now taken effect. These changes now meant that the team would be more proactive in the area.
- The Dark Nights initiative was now in effect which would mean an increase in police foot patrols.
- Operation Treacle had been a success.
- Crime prevention surgeries would be taking place over Autumn/Winter.
- The key threats in Bury remained burglary, vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Crime preventions advice – leave lights on at home if you are going out, take part in neighbourhood watch schemes, look out for your neighbours – be vigilant and report anything suspicious.

The Chair invited questions/comments from the audience:-

- Concerns raised regarding a number of high profile crimes reported in recent weeks including the theft of Mayoral chains in Radcliffe and the serious sexual assault at Banana Walk. Are these crimes on the increase? Inspector Kenny reported that although these crimes were obviously a concern they did not represent an overall increase in violent crimes in Radcliffe. These crimes were the exception rather than the norm and Bury remained a relatively safe place to live. Inspector Kenny reiterated the need for residents to remain vigilant and report anything of concern.
- Chapelfield residents were concerned about recent crime in the area but thanked the police who, through the work of local PCSO's had helped residents giving advice and distributing crime prevention items such as the timing lights and the recent bike marking event. Inspector Kenny reported that the PACT meetings were being prioritised by the police and it was hoped that partner agencies would be willing to prioritise these meetings with the support of the police.
- What were the plans for the Town Centre police station in Radcliffe? It was reported that local police still use the building as a base, however there could be other plans to utilise the building for community use, or as suggested as a one-stop shop for local residents.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted and Inspector Kenny be thanked for his contribution to the meeting.

RTF.418 CHILDREN CENTRES

Councillor Gill Campbell, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People and Ian Chambers, Assistant Director (Learning) gave a presentation on the proposed new delivery model for Children Centres in Bury.

The meeting was informed of the key objectives for Bury Children Centres:-

1. To improve health for under 5's – measured by higher rates of breast feeding, reduced obesity and improved dental hygiene.
2. To improve child development – measured by improved school readiness and an increasing proportion of children achieving a good level of development.
3. Reducing the risk of mistreatment or abuse of under 5's – measured by reductions in the rate of family needs escalating to a level requiring family intervention.
4. Improving families' economic prospects measured by reduced numbers of under 5's in households on benefits.

It was reported that these objectives will be used to drive resource allocation to specific centre activities. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) rankings will be used to directly allocate overall resources – funding being directly linked to deprivation. The driver will be the number of children within a reach area for a Children Centre who are under 5 and living in a Lower Super Output Area. These are among the 40% most deprived nationally.

The presentation provided detailed information of the targeted support on offer as part of the objectives in relation to health, school readiness, early help and job readiness. Specific detail was also provided in relation to the proposed Children Centre Hubs across Bury. In Radcliffe, the Coronation Road site would cover the reach areas of the current Radcliffe cluster. The meeting was informed as to how each Hub would work, the staffing changes involved, outreach deployment and of the necessary steps required in order to convert the other sites in order to deliver the 2 year old offer in Bury. It was reported that from September 2014, 40% of 2 year olds should have access to free nursery places (a total of 1177 children in Bury). There was a current forecast of a shortage of 638 places (October 2014). The Council propose that Children Centres which are no longer required as Hubs will be offered as centres for the 2 year old offer.

In relation to service costs it was reported that total expenditure on Children's Centres in 2013/14 was £2.875m. The Council had seen a reduction of the Government's Early Intervention Grant of over £2.8m since 2012/13 and that the new proposed model of delivery will cost £1.949m which will deliver a proposed savings target for the service of £820k. The consultation period had been extended to 15 December, 2014 and following an analysis of feedback received and subsequent consideration by Cabinet, implementation of the proposals would begin from 1 April, 2015.

The Chair invited questions/comments from the audience:-

- Would some of the existing Children Centre buildings be sold?

It was reported that these buildings would still need to be used for children's services or the Council would be liable for a pay-back levy.

- Would private nursery providers be able to make a viable service under the terms of the 2 year old offer?

It was reported that some private providers had expressed an interest in the tender process to provide the 2 year old offer.

- How will the tender process work?
Tenders would be open to any provider. Inspections would take place before and after the nursery provision was open. Schools could tender for the services and become 2-11 year providers.

- There was compelling evidence that there was a higher need for children at Radcliffe Hall in terms of "school readiness". It is misleading to suggest that Radcliffe Hall did not have a business model in terms of 2 year old offer provision.

This is the Consultation stage and there were persuasive arguments from all interested parties. The levels of social care referrals would be an important consideration as was the need to balance this with levels of deprivation within an area.

- If the 2 year old funding offer is to be means tested, how can existing primary school provision be from 2 – 11 years?
Schools would be able to tender for the 2 year old offer places in conjunction with other children they currently provide services for.
- Surplus Children Centre buildings – are these separate to the Education budget?

It was confirmed that these were separate budgets.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted and Cllr Campbell and Ian Chambers be thanked for their contribution to the meeting.

RTF.419 RADCLIFFE TOWNSHIP FORUM PLAN/OUR PLACE

Christine Maksymowski, Township Co-ordinator submitted the draft Township Forum Plan which provided an update on the progress of the themes contained within the Action Plan for 2013/14. As this is a working document all comments/ideas were welcomed. The meeting was informed of the "Our Place" initiative and of the £20,000 funding secured since March towards improving the health of Radcliffe residents. The working group set up as part of the initiative were currently looking at health related themes in Radcliffe with the support of the Director of Public Health in Bury and it was reported that the overall plan would be submitted at the end of November. Anyone interested in getting involved in the project were asked to contact Christine.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

RTF.420 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 voluntary and community groups.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

RTF.421 ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS - UPDATE

Colette Jones representing the Friends of Close Park reported that the Friends hope to launch all of the Heritage work at a big event at the next Bank Holiday. Christine Maksymowski reported that the "Our Place" initiative included a participatory budget of £7,000 which could be used in support of the proposed event.

Barbara Law representing Chapelfield Residents Association reported on the following:-

- Saturday 15 November – Craft and Gift Fair at United Reform Church, 10 am – 4 pm.
- Thursday 20 November – Fracking talk from representative from "Frack Free" in Stockport
- Stand United Reform Church would be celebrating their 350 year centenary in 2015. The church would be looking at a programme of activities – further information to come.
- The Village Association had won an award from the Radcliffe in Bloom "It's Your Neighbourhood" competition. The RHS had given a discretionary award to Chapelfield – the first time such a group had been in receipt of this award. The Chair, Cllr Briggs congratulated the group on behalf of membership of the Township Forum.
- Dog Training Scheme had been a success – 6 dogs had received awards.

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted, with thanks.

RTF.422 OTHER BUSINESS

Radcliffe Pool Update – Cllr Shori reported that funding had now been secured for a temporary pool in Radcliffe. The gym and leisure facilities would be provided at the site of Radcliffe Riverside school. The pool would be open by end of January 2015.

Radcliffe Town Team Forward Workshop/Town Team meeting - 12 November, at Radcliffe Civic Suite, at 6pm - to deliver a workshop providing businesses and stakeholders with information and guidance on how to establish and maintain a Town Team. The session will look at how to take forward an action plan to ensure that any funding available, ie. Portas funding, makes a real difference to the town centre.

**In the Chair - Cllr S Briggs (Deputy Chair)
(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm)**