

Minutes of: BURY WEST TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 19 November 2014

Venue: Bolton Rd Methodist Church

Present:

Councillors: Councillor S Nuttall (In the Chair)
Councillors S Southworth and R E Walker

**Advisory Group
Representatives:**

Public attendance: 16 members of the public were in attendance

**Apologies for
absence:** Councillor J Frith, Councillor S Kerrison and Councillor J
Walton

BWTF.449 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Connolly, Leader of the Council, declared a personal interest in matters relating to the budget as his partner is employed by the Council.

BWTF.450 MINUTES

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Township Forum held on 24 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

BWTF.451 POLICE UPDATE

PC Eccleston GMP, attended the meeting in order to provide an update on key police issues in Bury West. Halloween and Bonfire night had passed with little incident. It was reported that darker winter nights brought increased pressures on the Police particularly in respect of burglary, vehicle crime, and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Crime statistics for Bury West were reported at the meeting which highlighted a decrease in thefts from vehicles, with an increase in burglary and robbery. Since April 2013 it was explained that criminal damage statistics had doubled.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

BWTF.452 2015/16 BUDGET

Cllr Mike Connolly, Leader of the Council and Steve Kenyon, Assistant Director of Resources & Regulation (Finance), 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 received only 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.

Questions and comments were invited and the following issues were raised:

- In response to a question from Councillor Walker, the Assistant Director explained that recent legislation, in terms of the Council

Tax cap imposed by Central Government, meant that it was unlikely to be relaxed in the near future.

- The Assistant Director confirmed that the cuts needed for 2014/15 were all new cuts and not carried forward from previous budgets.
- In response to a request from Councillor Walker, the Assistant Director undertook to provide figures in relation to the number of redundancies in 2013/2014

It was agreed:

That the information provided be noted and Councillor Connolly and Steve Kenyon be thanked for their presentation.

BWTF.453 CHILDREN'S CENTRE CONSULTATION

Councillor Gill Campbell, Cabinet Member of Children and Young People and Ian Chambers , Assistant Director of 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. 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.

With regard to the provision within Bury West it was explained that it was more appropriate for Woodbank to be the Hub, with increased outreach work taking place in the community.

In response to a question about St Stephen's, the Assistant Director reported that Governors were keen to explore age 2-11 provision which could link in with the current nursery provision, though potential business models would need to be examined.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker concerning the 2 year old provision, the Assistant Director explained that a play related active curriculum would be offered.

It was agreed:

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

BWTF.454 MILE LANE UPDATE

Further to Minute BWTF.309 of the last meeting of the Township Forum, Councillor Walker provided a verbal update in respect of the situation at Mile Lane shops.

Councillor Walker reported that the shops were not to be demolished and that 2 of the 3 flats located above the shops had been refurbished

The leaseholder of the newsagents and Post Office was due to leave in December 2014. Following this a consultation will take place on the issue of whether to retain the Post Office.

With regard to the current situation Councillor Walker stated that he felt the concerns of the local community had lessened since the last meeting of the Township Forum.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

BWTF.455 BURY WEST TOWNSHIP FORUM PLAN

Christine Maksymowski, Township Manager, submitted a copy of the latest Bury West Township Plan for information.

It was agreed:

That the Plan be noted.

BWTF.456 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:-

- Rita McKimm enquired about progress in relation to the proposed 20mph scheme for Grange Road.
- A local resident expressed concerns in relation to the derelict site of the former Indian Restaurant at the bottom of Mile Lane. Councillor Walker explained that current work had been stopped by Planning Enforcement and referred to the historic planning permission for housing that existed for the site. An undertaking was given to find out whether this permission had lapsed.

BWTF.457 COMMUNITY FUNDING REPORT

A copy of the Community Funding report for Bury West 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.

CHAIR – COUNCILLOR NUTTALL

(Note: The meeting started at 7pm and ended at 8.40pm)