

Minutes of: PRESTWICH TOWNSHIP FORUM

Date of Meeting: 12 November 2014

Venue: Longfield Suite, Prestwich

Present:

Councillors: Councillor P Heneghan (In the Chair)
Councillors N Bayley, J Black, G Campbell, M James, E O'Brien, T Pickstone and A Quinn

Advisory Group

Representatives: Mr D Stanley – Prestwich Clough Centenary Committee
Mr P Gresty – Churches Together Prestwich and Kersal
Mr F Adam – Manchester and District Jewish Representative

Public attendance: 47 members of the public were in attendance

Apologies for absence:

Councillor A Simpson
Mr S A Husain - Simister Village Community Assoc

PTF.423 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

PTF.424 MINUTES

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Township Forum held on 17 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PTF.425 2015/16 BUDGET

Cllr Rishi Shori, Deputy 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:

- Paul Gerrard and Geoff Brown asked when the Council would stop making unsustainable cuts to services that were being forced on them as result of the Governments' austerity programme. The Deputy Leader explained the necessity to set a legal budget and referred to the Fair Deal for Bury campaign which seeks to lobby for a fairer share of Government funding for Bury. With the reduced funding and budgets the Council are looking to protect the most vulnerable.
- In response to a question from Donal O'Hanlon it was reported that views from previous consultations had changed budget proposals, often through amendments submitted at the Budget Council meeting.

- David Stanley highlighted the need for the Council to meet with the voluntary and community groups to plan for how services can be delivered differently in the future.
- In response to a question from Peter Thomson concerning safeguarding children, Councillor Campbell stated that this was a priority area for the Council and referred to the investments made to set up a Child Sexual Exploitation service and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- In response to a question from Yvonne O'Malley, the Deputy Leader reported that although central government funding was currently set for 2015/16, early estimates suggest indicative savings of £16m would be needed for 2016/17.

It was agreed:

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

PTF.426 POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Kenny attended the meeting in order to provide an update on key police issues in Prestwich. 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).

In response to concerns about drug related ASB in the Clough area, Inspector Kenny undertook to look into the matter and report back.

The Chair, Councillor Heneghan, referred to a request at the last meeting and asked if future Police updates could include information relating to detection and conviction rates.

It was agreed:

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

PTF.427 CHILDREN CENTRES

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.

Questions and comments were invited from those present at the meeting and the following issues were raised:

- Sian Crosby expressed concerns that the proposals would mean a reduction in preventative work which will have the result of increasing future overall costs. Further concerns were raised in relation to Prestwich losing 2 of 3 buildings; a halving of current staffing levels; and the fact that Prestwich will have less outreach staff than other areas.
- In response to questions concerning the 2 year old offer, the Assistant Director of Learning reported that discussions were taking place with schools as well as the private and voluntary sector.
- Heather Kerr stated that the consultation document was not fit for purpose and lacked information on community venues. The Assistant Director explained that the forms had been amended to

reflect concerns raised and referred to the different consultation methods that had been employed.

- In response to questions concerning the cuts to funding the Cabinet Member explained that it was not possible to keep all buildings open and the rationale behind the proposals was to target families within the community and support the most deprived areas.
- With regard to the evidence for the need for the 2 year old offer, Councillor Quinn highlighted the need to intervene in families where children arrive at school lacking the most basic skills.
- Jo Bayley referred to the increasing numbers of young families moving into the Carr Clough area that will increase demand for the services offered at Butterstile. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that the lack of a community venue in Butterstile had been raised during the consultation and confirmed that this would be considered as part of the evaluation process.
- A number of concerns were raised in relation to the distance between Butterstile/Rainsough and the Sedgley site.
- Suggestions were made for further examination of potential out of hours use for the existing Children's Centre buildings in order to make them financially viable.
- Suna Telli acknowledged the use of deprivation measures to inform decisions but highlighted that financial deprivation should not be the sole measure. Ms Telli stressed that the isolation encountered by some new parents could be felt across all income groups. It was also stated at the meeting that this point applied to mothers suffering post natal depression.
- Kate Shaw stressed the need for effective outreach work to support families of young children, not just two year olds, across the borough.
- Rebecca Jones commented that the proposals were short-sighted and stressed the importance of investing in early years in order to save money in the future. The Deputy Leader of the Council highlighted the need for targeted intervention and explained that outreach work was the most effective way of reaching those most in need.

It was agreed:

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

PTF.428 PRESTWICH TOWNSHIP FORUM PLAN

It was agreed:

That an update on this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Prestwich Township Forum.

PTF.429 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:-

- Anne Hutchinson requested an update on grot spots in the Rainsough area, namely, the Plough and the old Wesleyan Chapel.
- Sue Dickinson raised a number of concerns in relation to a proposed cycle lane being sited along Whitaker Lane and Rectory Lane. The concerns included potential 24 hour no parking and the knock on effect to nearby properties as a result of these restrictions. It was also asked whether cyclists had been consulted about the need for a cycle lane in this area.
- Anne Hutchinson enquired about whether the Highways Department would be checking on grit levels in bins throughout the Borough before the winter weather arrived.
- A local resident raised concerns about the unsafe state of an exterior wall on the corner of Butterstile Lane and Bury New Road.

PTF.430 COMMUNITY FUNDING REPORT

A copy of the Community Funding report for Prestwich 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 HENEGHAN
(Note: The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 9.20 pm)