

## **Council Meeting – 28 January 2015**

### **Questions from Members of the Public**

#### **1. Mr S Mahmood**

On 10 October I asked the question what is being done about the congestion with Croft Lane being closed. Cllr Connolly said "we are working on it". Up to now there seems to have been no change. Also, during peak time which finishes about 9:15am and the bus lane stays in until 10:00 so it does not help the traffic flow and there is congestion all the way back to Pilsworth Junction. In the Evening the peak starts at 4:00pm and finishes at 6:00pm, where the bus lane does not end until 7:00pm so the traffic congestion is way after 7:00pm all the way back to Pilsworth junction. So it seems to me that nothing has been done. Can the Council advise what steps they are taking and advise a clear timeframe for action.

**A. As Croft Lane is a major route between A56 Manchester Rd and the M66 Junction 3 the impact of the closure on the road network of Bury was discussed in advance with discussions between Council officers and Transport for Greater Manchester.**

**The road was closed in both directions for United Utilities works starting in 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014 until February 2015.**

**The planned diversion route was via Manchester Rd, Angouleme Way and Rochdale Rd to M66 junction 2 (and vice versa.)**

**However a high proportion of vehicles are not following the diversion route and, for example, are using Heywood Street as a means to avoid Bury town centre.**

**TfGM Urban Traffic Control amended the signal timings on the diversion route following the closure and have continued to monitor the operation of the junctions throughout the course of the works – as the traffic patterns have settled down following the closure. Signal timings have been changed throughout the day for Heywood Street/Rochdale Road, Rochdale Rd/Wash Lane and the Heap Bridge Roundabout (J2).**

**It should be noted that traffic flows on Croft Lane are high, approximately 760 vehicles in the peak hour, and to accommodate this traffic on the rest of the road network in Bury is difficult because of capacity constraints.**

## 2. Mr R Cahill

Can I ask the Leader of the Council what the problem is when it comes to consultation with the people of Bury?

In an article in the Prestwich & Whitefield Guide on 28th August 2014, regarding a review of adult services in the borough and subsequent consultation, Councillor Shori was quoted as follows, 'no centres would be closed if people opposed the idea... the key aspect is to listen to people,' yet when it came to the review of Sure Start centres, the council have, in effect, only listened to part of peoples' concerns. With regard to the three weekly bin collections however, this was rail roaded through without any consultation, despite 75% of people polled for the Bury Times not being happy with this change in their service. Do you agree with Councillor Shori that the key aspect is to listen to people?

**A. Thank you for your question Mr Cahill. We have extensive experience of consultation on a whole range of services and actively promote people's views and we listen and act, if appropriate, to suggestions and comments from the public. That is what good consultation is, in fact, because we do actively listen to people we have amended many service proposals through consultation processes. We are a listening Council and will continue to be so throughout the coming years. As we all know, the financial challenges this Council faces will mean continuing engagement with the public and seeking their views on how we provide and commission services with a reducing budget.**

## 3. Ms T Kay

I would like to ask why when a tenant improves the quality of their kitchen with Council permission, Six Town Housing then refuses to undertake any further work on the kitchen of the house that is in a state of disrepair. To be clear, there is no expectation for Six Town Housing to maintain the changes the tenant has made, just keep the infrastructure they are responsible for, that the tenant pays rent for, to be maintained. Is this discrimination regular with Six town Housing against tenants that pay their rent and is it approved by the land lord, Bury Council, or is it another cost savings exercise.

What is next, if I paint my bathroom, Will Six Town Housing tell tenants that they are no longer responsible for boiler repairs and providing hot water to the bathroom ?

**A. If a tenant chooses and obtains permission to install their own kitchen, Six Town Housing will continue to maintain the infrastructure of the property.**

**However, there may be circumstances where the nature or design of the works undertaken by the tenant prevent other capital works being carried out. For example, under the current kitchen replacement programme Six Town Housing will consider the layout and configuration of the dwelling, such as removing walls and incorporating former coal scuttles or external storage rooms into the footprint of the new kitchen. Works done independently by tenants often prevent this tasks being carried. Under these circumstances, this capital work would not be undertaken until the replacement of the kitchen was required.**

**Painting of bathrooms would not prevent Six Town Housing undertaking boiler repairs or other works to bathrooms.**

#### **4. Mr I Henderson**

After the Council meeting on 10 December, I reviewed again the recorded events on the debate around Bury Central Library. I noted Councillor Roy Walker advising how he had used reference material with a library to study for his A levels. But then strangely Councillor Campbell responded that most people tend to use IT these days. For reference this can be seen at the 3 hour mark in the recording.

Now, while I realise it could be argued that there may have been a decline in educational standards since I did my A levels some 22 years ago ... I do not believe that you can currently obtain a grade A or B at A level using Wikipedia as a reference source. So perhaps Councillor Campbell can advise me what subjects she checked to ensure that serious academic textbooks were available without charge online suitable to provide the breadth of knowledge required to obtain the higher grades at A level. Obviously she would have not made such a statement without checking so perhaps as I say she could advise which subjects and perhaps the websites where these textbooks are available free of charge?

Having worked in the IT industry for the last 20 years, I like to believe I can use a computer ... but I confess I struggled to find somewhere that didn't require me inputting credit card details when I checked those subjects I got higher grades in some 22 years ago.

**A. A Level text book publishers now publish also a wide range of on-line resources which go with the text books and there are also many additional websites that can support A level study rather than just Wikipedia.**

**5. Mr M Harling**

Further to my previous question to you Cllr Connolly, could you please enlighten me as to what steps or progress you have attained with regard to the illegal and inconsiderate parking on Cornwall Drive during home match days at Bury FC. At the last meeting on the 10 December 2014 you did suggest that you were considering instigating permanent parking restrictions at this junction is this your priority or is there another method such as traffic wardens that could be used?

**A. Officers have considered this in more detail, and I can inform Mr Harling that at yesterday's meeting of the Traffic Management Unit, which involves Council officers and external agencies, it was agreed to promote some permanent waiting restrictions around the Market Street/Cornwall Drive junction.**

**6. Mr W Southworth**

A number of residents have raised concerns about the risk presented by very large trees on Moyse Avenue, Tottington. Can the council advise if risk has been assessed and what steps have been taken to ensure that high winds will not cause potential damage to property or residents or vehicles?

**A. The trees growing within the grassed area on Moyse Avenue are subject to a survey/inspection by the Council's Tree Officer on a 12 monthly basis. The trees were last inspected in Autumn 2014. At the time of the last inspection the trees were in reasonable health and condition and did not require any immediate action. Following the recent enquiry from Mr Southworth we will carry out another inspection and appropriate action will be taken if any irregularities are discovered.**

**7. Mr B Hagan**

PRELIMINARY NOTICE OF VARIATION TO BURY COUNCIL TEANACY AGREEMENT.

WHAT WILL THE LANDLORD DO ABOUT THIS FRIGHENING LETTER TO DECENT TENANTS IN BURY MBC?? facebook.

**A. The wording of the response is taken from Section 103 of the Housing Act, which we are legally obliged to comply with and states that all tenants must be notified of any proposed changes. The changes made to the tenancy agreement mostly address the new anti social behaviour powers available to landlords. By amending the tenancy agreement, the Council and Six Town Housing will be better placed to support the good tenants, which represent the majority of tenants, and take action against the minority whose lifestyles adversely affect those people living around them. Other changes also address the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit.**

**For good tenants, these changes should be seen as a positive thing.**

**The last twenty years has also seen considerable investment in the Council housing stock, and as a result in December 2010, all Council housing met the national 'Decent Homes Standard'. In 2014, the Labour Cabinet approved an additional £12million investment in the Council's dwelling stock, exceeding the decent homes standard. This investment to the 'Bury Standard' clearly demonstrates the Council's commitment to provide a quality housing stock in the Borough.**

#### **8. Mr R Taylor**

Will the Council Leader please tell the public now, how much operational expenditure will be cut in the Budget and WHERE?

**A. Can I thank Mr Taylor for his question although in his e mail he referred to opx which in my answer I'm assuming means operational expenditure...I hope I'm correct with this but I'm sure he'll tell me if not! As a result of the swinging and unfair cuts in public spending made by this Government since 2011 the Council has had to cut £53.7m out of its budget. This is nearly half of our controllable budget.**

**Of this, some £15.8m will be cut in the coming year.**

**The Plan for Change consultation set out in detail where the cuts will be made and all the information is available on the Council's web-site. However to help Mr Taylor I can tell him that included in this figure are cuts of £3.4m from alternative ways of delivering**

**services, £3.4m from maximising the use of external funding and £3.3m from staff restructuring.**

**I'm sure that Mr Taylor will agree with me that the best way to bring about a fairer deal for Bury will be to vote Labour in the forthcoming General Election.**

**9. Mr A Miller**

At the last Council meeting on 10 December, I asked the Leader of the Council if the Public Gallery can be made more Disabled Accessible. Can I ask the Leader for an update on what progress has been made?

**A. An assessment has been carried out by BADDAC and some proposals put forward. We will now examine those in detail and produce costings with a view to securing some improvements to access.**

**10. Ms S Smith**

Residents in Redvales currently pay £25 for a residents' parking permit. Residents near to Fairfield Hospital have half the cost of their permit supplemented by the NHS.

As the permits in Redvales are required through no fault of the residents' own but largely due to lack of dedicated parking facilities for local students, would the council be willing to look at ways of supplementing the cost of these permits and perhaps consider opening a dialogue with nearby colleges?

**A. The supplemented permit scheme in the Rochdale Old Road area formed part of a planning approval condition when the hospital was being extended. The Council is happy to consider the possibility of similar actions on future developments. Unfortunately we do not have any resources available to dedicate to discussions with Colleges regarding schemes that are already in existence. The current charge of £25 per permit equates to just 7p a day and, all residents parking schemes within the borough have been introduced as a result of requests from local residents rather than the Councils imposition.**