

SMITHILLS AREA FORUM

MEETING – 26 February 2015

Present – 10 members of the public attended the meeting

Councillor Hayes	-	Smithills Ward
Councillor Martin	-	Smithills Ward
Councillor Swarbrick	-	Smithills Ward

Also in attendance

John Shannon	-	Area Coordinator
Stephen Rowson	-	Chief Executives Department
John Kelly	-	Environmental Services
Sharon Pendlebury	-	Community Safety Team
Inspector Wayne Readfern	-	Greater Manchester Police
PC John Gregory	-	Greater Manchester Police
PCSO Bav Jhala	-	Greater Manchester Police
PCSO Paul Dootson	-	Greater Manchester Police

Apologies for absence were submitted by Julie Hilling MP

Councillor Martin in the Chair

8. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Martin welcomed everyone and introduced himself, Councillors and other Officers in attendance.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

There were no Declarations of Interest.

10. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 July 2014 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

11. COMMUNITY SAFETY AND POLICING UPDATE

Councillor Martin introduced Inspector Wayne Readfern from Greater Manchester Police who gave an update on Policing and Community Safety in the Smithills Area.

The main points were:

- Introduction of his team present at the meeting who were responsible for the resolution of long term issues
- There was also a response team on call day and night for emergencies and day to day issues
- Smithills had one of the lowest crime rates across the Bolton area
- Crime rates this year compared to last had risen for burglary of dwellings, vehicles and sheds
- Statistics for burglary were on the way down again, in part due to the close monitoring of a small number of known suspects
- Incidents of anti-social behaviour in Smithills were down on last year and twice as low as the wider Bolton area
- Most of the reported crimes were due to lack of security such as doors and windows left unlocked or open
- Following an increase in thefts from vehicles residents were advised not to leave any items on display

A number of questions followed the update and were answered at the meeting.

Resolved – That the update be noted

12. UPDATE ON BUDGETS AND PROJECTS

Area Coordinator John Shannon gave an update on current balances for budgets and grants devolved to the Area Forum for 2013-15 financial years as follows;

Area Forum Flat Rate Budget (AFB)	£1,603.00
Highways Maintenance Budget (HMB)	£0.00

The following points were noted:-

- The Area Forum Budget was available to fund activities which provided a benefit to the ward
- The Highways Maintenance Budget was available to fund asset improvement work covering any of the following activities; Reconstruction, Refurbishment, Patching and Slurry seal works.
- The balance of the Area Forum Flat Rate Budget was to be set aside to support the proposed 20MPH zone at Mornington Road, etc.

Resolved – That the report be noted

13. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

Councillor Martin introduced this item on the agenda and invited residents to ask any questions or put forward any comments they had regarding issues and concerns in the Ward.

The questions were as follows:

- Q1 What were the council doing to protect Bolton's heritage?
A number of recent developments were on green belt land and of a luxury type rather than for essential affordable housing, examples of these were the former Burnthwaite Children's Home, the top of Old Kiln Lane, Smithills Hall and the Garden Centre.
- A The Council were required to provide an adequate number of housing sites to meet projected new build demand, this process was managed through the planning process. As part of this an Allocations Plan had been adopted in 2014 to help control development.
- Q2 Could the Council introduce a "0800" number for telephone inquiries to Access Bolton? The cost of making inquiries was putting pressure on vulnerable people. Could the performance on response times also be made known?

A This would be investigated and a response brought back to the next Area Forum.

Q3 A member of an amateur performance group asked if alternative venues were available for groups not able to use the Albert Halls during its closure for refurbishment.

A The question would be referred to the Albert Halls for response.

Resolved – That the questions be noted and the questions which were not answered be directed to the appropriate departments or partner agencies.

14. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Martin thanked everyone for attending and stated that the date, time and venue of the next Area Forum Meeting was to be confirmed. As and when it was people would be informed through the usual channels.

(The meeting started at 7.05pm and finished at 7.44pm)