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## FARNWORTH & KEARSLEY AREA FORUM

15TH JANUARY 2007

Councillor Lord (Chairman) - Farnworth Ward  
Councillor A.N Spencer - Farnworth Ward  
Councillor Burrows (Vice Chairman) - Kearsley Ward  
Councillor Rothwell - Kearsley Ward  
Councillor Mrs. Rothwell - Kearsley Ward

### In Attendance

Councillor Hornby - Little Lever and Darcy Lever  
Guy Harkin - Kearsley Labour Party  
Alan Garner - Corporate Resources  
Susan Curran - Corporate Resources  
John Norris - Environmental Services  
David Doherty - Environmental Services  
Jon Gorton - Environmental Services  
Ros Baxter - Environmental Services  
Isobel Southern - Adult Services  
Geoff Tyson - Bolton at Home  
Dee Luczka - Children's Services  
Helen Williams - Development and Regeneration  
Bernadette Tither and - New Bury Community

## LearningCentre

Jo Pitchford Centre	-	The Greater Farnworth Children's
Nigel Palmer	-	Royal Bolton Hospital
Andrew Lyon	-	Royal Bolton Hospital
Adrian Wolstenholme	-	Area Co-ordinator
Liz Whitworth	-	Area Co-ordinator
Carolyn Lucas	-	Area Co-ordinator
Kate Treadwell	-	Democratic Services

Councillor Lord in the Chair

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Stones and Brian Iddon MP.

### **25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Forum held on 30th October, 2006 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

### **26. PRESENTATION: COUNCIL BUDGET 2007/08**

Mr. Steve Arnfield of the Corporate Resources Department, gave a presentation to the Forum which outlined the overall budget position for 2007/08, the impact of Council Tax and also sought the views of Members of the Public on the budget allocation.

The Forum was advised that for 2007/08 central Government Funding had increased by 3.2% for general services and 6% for schools. The funding for schools was by way of a direct grant. The Government had also indicated a wish for Council Tax rises to be below 5%.

Mr. Arnfield also mentioned that as per last year the Council was losing Government grants monies to protect other Council's in England.

Mr. Arnfield went onto explain that the budget for 2007/08 would be about £352 million.

The increase in the direct grant for schools would be approximately £10 million,

Capital Projects including road schemes would receive an extra £1 million, inflation would result in an increase of £12 million, waste collection and recycling would increase by £1.5 million all other charges including the Passenger Transport Authority and Waste Disposal Authority would require an extra £2 million.

The Forum was advised that if Council Tax was set at 4% then there would be a budget shortfall of £10.8 million.

Mr. Arnfield explained that Departments of the Council had been asked to identify savings of 7% which amounted to £11.3 million, compared to £10.8 million pounds was required to balance the budget.

The Forum was advised that Council Tax was likely to be around 4% or below, but the Council now needed to consider its options including the level of Council Tax for 2007/08.

In conclusion, the Forum were encouraged to complete and return a questionnaire which had been circulated, principally seeking views on how the Council's budget should be allocated and what level the Council tax should be.

Various comments and questions were responded to which related to the following:-

- why Bolton Council did not run its own buses;
- stationary Council vehicles wasting fuel by running engines for long periods;
- how services would be affected by cuts;
- whether the Council contributed any funding to London Transport; and
- the spending of monies on road schemes that did not require any attention.

**Resolved - That the position be noted.**

## **27 PRESENTATION: ROYAL BOLTON HOSPITAL TRUST FOUNDATION STATUS BID**

Mr. A. Lyon of the Royal Bolton Hospital gave a presentation which advised the Forum of a consultation exercise undertaken by the Bolton Hospital Trust prior to the submission of an application to the Government for Foundation Trust Status.

Mr. A Lyon advised the Forum of the reasons for the application for Foundation Status, which were as follows, viz:-

- more of co-operative;
- more interested in the views of local people;
- focus on local need; and
- additional freedom to innovate and improve services and patients and carers would receive greater choice; and greater financial flexibilities.

The Forum was informed that the securing of Foundation Status would mean that accountability switched from Whitehall to the appointed Foundation Trust Governors.

It was explained that there would be a Foundation Trust Board, the Membership of which would be drawn from the public, patients and staff. The Governing Council would be elected by the Members. A Board of Directors would also be appointed by the Governors.

Mr. Lyon also explained that the current consultation exercise being undertaken ended on 2nd February, 2007. Following this a formal application would be made to the Secretary of State, the result of which would be known by 31st March, 2007. Should the application be successful then this would be implemented by July, 2007. In conclusion, Mr. Lyon encouraged Members of the Public to submit comments for inclusion in the consultation exercise.

Various comments and questions were responded to.

**Resolved - That the position be noted.**

## **28. PRESENTATION - GREEN SPACE**

Mr. Jon Gorton, Sport and Recreation Asset Manager, gave a presentation which explained the review being undertaken and forthcoming consultation exercise in relation to the location of play areas in the Borough.

The Forum was advised that, at present, there were approximately 130 play areas

in Bolton all of which were regularly inspected. There was currently a large backlog of necessary maintenance repairs.

Mr. Gorton explained that locations and designs of the play areas used to be driven by planning policy with little consideration to actual need.

Furthermore, it was highlighted that capital funding from Section 106 Agreements, for play sites, arising out of developments was often in the wrong area. There was also a huge range of equipment used at all the various sites which often meant that it was difficult to easily obtain spare parts.

Mr. Gorton went on to explain that the way forward was the adoption of a strategy that influenced:-

- local ownership;
- planning policy;
- investment programme;
- secured funding; and
- supported Members of Council and officers.

In conclusion, Mr. Gorton explained that public consultation would shortly be undertaken on proposals for the future of play areas in the Borough.

Various comments and queries were responded to.

**Resolved -That the presentation be noted.**

## **29. OPEN FORUM**

Verbal and written questions were received which detailed the following issues:-

(a) In December, 2006 there was an incident in which a Pitbull Terrier savaged an elderly lady's dog. Since that time there had been other such incidents. What was being done to combat this problem?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that this matter would be looked into and reported back to a future meeting.

(b) In 2005, no. 87 Cawdor Street was reported to the Area Forum. Since that time there have been other areas around Cawdor Street such as the nearby

dilapidated mills that are in need of regeneration. What was being done around the Cawdor Street area?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that he would approach representatives from Bolton at Home and the Development and Regeneration Department and co-ordinate a response to bring back to the next meeting of the Forum.

(c) Could developers building new developments in Farnworth not be approached to put back something that would benefit the community? Particularly the new flats that were being built in the Farnworth area.

A representative from the Planning Department stated that the particular flats being referred to did not come under Section 106 agreement which obligated developers to contribute something to the community in which they were building. However, planning permission had not, as of yet, been granted to the development in question.

(d) Could the Chairman use his good officers to arrange a meeting between the Area Co-ordinator and the Kearsley Labour Party to discuss the 81 issues which have been reported to Kearsley Labour Party as a result of its recent newsletter?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that, as his post was politically restricted, he would be unable to meet with a political party. The Area Co-ordinator advised that he was there to support the elected members that made up the Forum and stated that he would be happy to advise the current Labour member for Kearsley which Council Officer he should contact.

(e) When would something be done regarding the broken paving around Cawdor Drive and the nearby Shopping Precinct which was rundown?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that work was planned to restore the broken paving. However, the Shopping Precinct was privately owned and so could not be regenerated by the Council.

(f) What was being done to tackle the amount of shops shutting down in Farnworth at the moment?

The Chair stated that the regeneration of Radcliffe Street was underway. These plans included regeneration of the Market and big retailers coming to Farnworth. The Chair sympathised with residents' frustrations regarding the amount of time this had taken and stated that he would investigate further into the progress of Farnworth's regeneration.

(g) Could the Forum find out who was responsible for clearing the litter from Bolton Road near the White Horse Pub?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that they were currently trying to ascertain who was responsible for the area of land near the pub. Once this had been done

Environmental Services would be approached. Feedback regarding any progress made would be brought to a future meeting.

(h) Were the bollards on Market Street working yet?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that as of yet they were not working. The bollards had been in operation until they were hit by a van which damaged the Control Panel. The Area Co-ordinator stated that he would look further into this matter.

(i) What was being done to combat the double parking and speeding on Campbell Street near the Elderly People's Home?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that this matter would be looked into and reported back to a future meetings.

(j) Why were there roadworks on Bolton Road in the direction of Moses Gate for eight weeks?

Area Co-ordinator stated that he would investigate why these roadworks were necessary and report back to the next meeting of the Forum.

(k) What was being done regarding the bins on Bolton Road which were cluttering the road?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that he would look into this matter and report back to the next meeting.

(l) Was the Council aware of the problems in Prestolee Village regarding potholes and HGVs passing through the village. These problems were increasing all the time. Please could someone come out and visit the road?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that Wayne Waring had been to look at the site but that another visit would be arranged.

**Resolved - That the questions be noted and that the questions that had not been answered at the meeting be directed at the meeting be directed to the appropriate Council Department or external agency.**

### **30. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS**

Councillor Lord then closed the meeting and thanked Council Members, Officers and Members of the public for their attendance.