FARNWORTH AND KEARSLEY AREA FORUM

MEETING, 5th NOVEMBER, 2007

Present – 29 Members of the Public attended the meeting.

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

Also in Attendance

Isabel Southern	-	Adult Services
Jo Pitchford	-	Children's Services
Gemma Pearson	-	Bolton at Home
Robert Woods	-	Environmental Services
Dave Doherty	-	Environmental Services
Nick Fisher	-	Environmental Services
Andrew McGlone	-	Planning Control
Adrian Wolstenholme	-	Area Co-ordinator
Altaf Ahmed	-	Area Co-ordinator
Jennifer Roe	-	Area Co-ordinator
John Kerambrum	-	Democratic Services

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Brian Iddon M.P.

Councillor Lord in the Chair

21. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Councillor Lord welcomed and introduced everybody to the meeting.

22. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Forum held on 10 th September, 2007 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

23. PRESENTATION: GREEN SPACE ASSESSMENTS

Mr. J. Gorton, Sport and Recreation Asset Manager, gave a presentation that informed the Forum of the findings of the Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Assessment.

The presentation provided the Forum with a breakdown of the assessment methodology from the initial meetings and aspirations through to the strategy and action plan production.

Members were informed of the consultation process that had been undertaken to identify the needs of local people. The process included consultation with local community groups with over 200 face to face and telephone interviews completed as well as a street survey with over 800 responses across the Borough.

The presentation highlighted that 88% of those surveyed valued open space as quite or very important.

The presentation provided members with the highlights and key findings of the assessment under the following headings:-

- Parks and Gardens;
- Natural and semi-natural Greenspaces;
- Green corridors;
- Amenity greenspace;
- Allotments and community gardens;
- Cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds;
- Civic spaces; and
- Outdoor sport and recreation facilities.

In terms of the next steps for Bolton the presentation explained that the findings of the assessment would feed into the development of future policies and the revision of local strategies.

Various questions and comments were responded to. Issues raised included:-

- had the views of disabled people been taken into consideration;

- were school playing fields included in the assessment.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

24. OPEN FORUM

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

(a) Would there be a significant increase in the Council Tax rates this year.

The Forum was assured that there would be no significant increase and explained that representatives from the Corporate Resources Department would attend a future meeting of this Forum to give a presentation on the Council Tax rates for 2008.

(b) Concerns were raised at the continued roadworks on Market and Higher Market Street which had been a constant inconvenience for residents.

It was agreed that this matter be referred to the Highways Department and reported back to the Forum.

(c) Concerns were raised at the amount of pigeons on Brackley Street which had become a nuisance and a health hazard;

It was agreed that this matter be referred to the relevant department and reported back to the Forum;

(d) Residents raised concerns at a number of burglaries that had taken place in the alley way on Lord Street and requested that CCTV and alley gating be put in place to combat the problem;

Members were informed of the programme of alley gating that the Community Safety team were currently working on. It was agreed that this matter be referred to the Community Safety team and reported back to the Forum.

(e) The bollards positioned on Brackley Street were a potential road hazard and residents queried whether taxi drivers had fobs which allowed them access to Brackley Street.

It was stated that no taxi companies had been issued with fobs and it was agreed that this matter would be referred to the Highways Department and reported back to the Forum.

(f) The traffic lights outside ASDA on Manchester Road were causing unnecessary traffic on the A666.

Members were informed that that this issue did not fall within the Forum area but it was agreed that the matter would be referred to the Highways Department and reported back to the Forum.

(g) The bollards at the bottom of Frederick Street were diverting traffic off the main road and on to nearby side streets which had now caused traffic problems.

The Area Co-ordinator stated that this matter would be looked into by the Highways department and reported back to the Forum.

(h) Concerns were raised at the accessibility of Market place for disabled users.

It was stated that shop owners under the Disability Discrimination Act had a responsibility to ensure that there shop was accessible for disabled users. There would also be a meeting on the regeneration of Farnworth Town Centre in the near future after which the Forum would be better informed as to future plans.

(i) Would it be possible to get astroturf football pitches for the benefit of youths in the Moses Gate area.

Members were informed of the full size astroturf football pitch at Harper Green High School which the Council were

trying to make available for local football teams. There was also the work of the Farnworth Management Board that would attempt to assist with projects of this type.

(j) When would the flashing speed signs be going up in the Farnworth area and would there be one positioned on Bolton Road?

Councillor Lord explained that members of the Forum had worked with the Highways Department in consultation with residence associations over the past 6-9 months to identify a timetable as to where these signs would be positioned around the Forum area.

As yet there were no plans to position a flashing speed sign on Bolton Road.

(k) Concerns were raised at the Long Causeway on Albert Road being too narrow for Heavy Goods Vehicles to pass through safely.

It was agreed that this matter be referred to the Highways Department and reported back to the Forum.

(l) Concern was raised at the untidy state of the bus stop outside the Four Winds Hotel which had been caused by the bins not being regularly emptied.

It was agreed that this matter be referred to the relevant department and reported back to the Forum.

(m) Residents again raised concerns at the consultation that took place regarding parking arrangements on Market Street, Farnworth. Particular reference was made to statistics printed which did not give a true reflection of the amount of people consulted.

The Area Co-ordinator agreed to investigate the matter further and report back to the Forum.

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

25. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

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

26. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Farnworth and Kearsley Area Forum would be 7.00pm, 14th January, 2008 at Trinity Church.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 8.05pm)