

## **TWO TOWNS AREA FORUM**

MEETING, 28<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2008

Present – 18 Members of the public attended.

Councillor Rock (Chairman)	-	Horwich North East
Councillor Hollick	-	Horwich and Blackrod
Councillor R. Ronson	-	Horwich North East

### Also in attendance

Mr. S. Arnfield	-	Corporate Resources
Mr. J. Gorton	-	Environmental Services
Mr. C. Bullough	-	Environmental Services
Ms. E. Miller	-	Adult Services
Ms. A. Gorton	-	Children's Services
Mr. T. McKean	-	Bolton at Home
Mr. M. Lee	-	Highways and Engineering Unit
Mr. G. Mitchell	-	Development and Regeneration
Ms. P. Senior	-	PCT
Mr. R. Fulton	-	PCT
Mr. C. Waters	-	Greater Manchester Police
Ms. A. Boles	-	Chief Executive's Department
Ms. V. Cloynes	-	Chief Executive's Department
Mr. A. Ahmed	-	Chief Executive's Department
Mr. J. Kerambrum	-	Legal and Democratic Services

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barrow and Hamilton.

Councillor Rock in the Chair.

### **35. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR**

Councillor Rock welcomed and introduced everybody to the meeting.

### **36. MINUTES**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Forum held on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2007 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

Further to minute 33(e) of the previous meeting a member of the Forum again raised the issue of Dickinson's vehicles travelling along Crown Lane, Horwich.

Mr. G. Mitchell, Group Planning Officer, Enforcement stated that, under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, it was considered that these vehicles were not causing harm to the community. It would therefore not be appropriate to take any further enforcement action against Dickinson's on this matter.

### **37. BUILDING BETTER HEALTH FOR BOLTON**

Mr. T. Evans, Chief Executive Bolton Primary Care Trust (PCT) gave a presentation to the Forum which outlined the proposals which were contained within the Building Better Health for Bolton initiative.

The presentation concentrated on the four reasons to build better health in Bolton which were as follows:-

- Health Inequalities;
- Unequal Services;
- Urgent Care Review; and
- the PCT manifesto.

Information was also provided in relation to the planned health buildings and planned services.

It was also stated that the consultation period on the proposals ran from December, 2007 to March, 2008 and it was intended

that all buildings would be fully operational by 2011.  
Members queried how the people of Blackrod would be consulted on the Building Better Health for Bolton proposals.

Mr Evans explained to the Forum that, in addition to the Area Forums, the PCT had attended a number of public meetings and details of the proposals had been advertised within a variety of local publications appealing for public opinion.

Resolved - That Mr. Evans be thanked for his informative presentation.

### **38. BOLTON COUNCIL BUDGET 2008/2009 - PRESENTATION BY STEVE ARNFIELD, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

Mr. S. Arnfield, Director of Corporate Resources gave a presentation to the Forum which outlined the overall budget position for 2008/2009, the results of last year's consultation and also sought the views of members of the public on the Budget allocation.

The Forum was advised that for 2008/2009 Central Government funding had increased by 5.3% for general services and 4.4% for schools and the major budget changes were summarised as follows:-

	<b>£m</b>	<b>%</b>
Schools Increase Spend	6.4	4.4 (per pupil)
Other Services		
Inflation	6.3	3.0
Capital Financing	2.4	
Waste Disposal/Transport	1.5	
Town Centre Swimming Pool	0.6	
Less Increase Government Grant	6.1	5.3

As a result of the above, the Council needed to identify £5.1 million from savings and Council Tax.

In terms of the current position, the Council was currently looking at making efficiency savings in all services in the region of £4.7 million and looking to set a Council Tax of up to 4.0%.

The Forum was also advised that at the meeting of the Executive on 9th January, 2008 an agreement had been made to allocate additional funding towards the following areas, viz:-

- Area Forums;
- Youth Services/Educational Attainment;
- Road Improvements;
- Building Schools for the Future; and
- Adult Social Care

Furthermore, they also indicated that they would now be looking to set a Council Tax increase between 2.5% - 3.5%.

In conclusion, the Forum was 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.

Following the presentation, Mr. Arnfield invited and responded to questions from the Forum.

Resolved - That Mr. Arnfield be thanked for his informative presentation.

### **39. GREEN SPACE ASSESSMENTS: BROAD RESULTS**

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 and the next steps for Bolton.

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;
- Outdoor sport and recreation facilities; AND
- Strategic options and policies;

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. In addition, the presentation outlined the short, medium and long term priorities that would take forward the key findings of the assessment.

Mr Gorton then listened to and responded to a number of questions. The issues raised included:-

- (a) whether the Council could support an independent project to put a Nature Reserve in the area;
- (b) were there any plans to further improve the public Golf Courses; and

- (c) the enforcement procedures for the prevention of dog fouling, fly tipping and litter dropping;

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

#### **40. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS 2007/2008**

Councillor Rock declared a prejudicial interest in the application from the Horwich Fairtrade Town Group and took no further part in the decision thereof.

The Area Co-ordinator tabled a report which informed members of the Forum that there was currently £1,405.50 remaining to be allocated in the Voluntary Sector Grant Budget for the period March, 2007 to April, 2008.

Members were advised that two applications for Voluntary Sector Grant had been submitted, as follows:-

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Horwich Fairtrade Town Group     | - £300 toward the purchase of Fairtrade items such as tea, coffee and chocolate in order to give them away to the public to encourage them to purchase Fairtrade items in the future. |
| Horwich Carnival Races Committee | - £500 towards the cost of the promotion of community participation in fun runs, athletic and cycling races.  |

Members were advised that if the above applications were approved there would be £605.50 remaining in the Budget.

Members were advised that as a result of Councillor Rock's interest and withdrawal from the decision, the meeting had become inquorate and so was unable to take a decision on the application from the Horwich Fairtrade Town Group. A decision would therefore be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Vice-Chair and Elected Members using

his Emergency Powers, and reported back to the next meeting of the Forum.

Resolved – (i) That the Horwich Fairtrade Town Group application be deferred and that a decision on the application be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Vice-Chair and Elected Members using his Emergency Powers, and reported back to the next meeting of the Forum; and

(i) That the Horwich Carnival Races Committee application, as now submitted, be approved.

#### **46. OPEN FORUM**

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

- a) A member of the public enquired as to whether the land behind Cornerstone, situated on Greenstone Avenue, Horwich could be used more productively.

The Forum was informed that the land was owned by United Utilities who could be contacted on 0800 330033

- b) Concern was raised at the condition of the path which linked Ainsworth Avenue to the car park at Brazley.

The Forum was informed that this was not a Public Right of Way, however, Redrow Homes who owned the path had agreed to investigate the matter.

- c) Residents were dissatisfied at the Horwich Public Hall reception desk arrangement to close for one hour over the lunch time period.

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

Forum.

- d) Would it be possible to have the Royal Bolton Hospital bus service returned to Blackrod?

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

- e) How were the Police coping with the vandalism that existed at Horwich Old Station Park?

The Chairman informed the Forum that following the recent issue of the dispersal order it was reported that anti-social behaviour had been reduced by half.

- f) A member of the public enquired as to whether the Community Services buses could be used to transport the public to the Forum meetings.

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

- g) Residents raised concerns at the poor state of the number 1 allotment on Crown Lane which was frequently being used as a dumping ground.

The Area Co-ordinator agreed to refer this matter to the relevant Council Department and report back to the Forum.

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

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

The Chairman thanked members, officers and the public for their attendance and the views expressed during the course of

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the meeting.

(The meeting started at 3.00 p.m. and finished at 4.15 p.m.)