

FARNWORTH AND KEARSLEY AREA FORUM

MEETING, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2006

TRINITY CHURCH, HIGHER MARKET STREET

Present – 17 Members of the public attended the meeting.

Councillor Lord (Chairman)	-	Farnworth Ward
Councillor Stones	-	Farnworth Ward
Councillor A.N Spencer	-	Farnworth Ward
Councillor J. Rothwell	-	Kearsley Ward
Councillor Mrs. Rothwell	-	Kearsley Ward

Also in Attendance

Stephen Maslivec	-	Environmental Services
Dave Doherty	-	Environmental Services
Judith Thorpe	-	Adult Services
Isobel Southern	-	Adult Services
Liz Dearden	-	Children's Services
Denise Keohe	-	Bolton At Home
Phil Lamb	-	Development and Regeneration
Wendy Dickinson	-	Development and Regeneration

Sharon Seddon	-	New Bury Community and Learning Centre
Bernadette Tither	-	New Bury Community and Learning Centre
John Graham	-	Bolton, Salford and Trafford Mental Health NHS Trust
Shane O'Neill	-	GM Police
Chris Makin	-	GM Police
Adrian Wolstenholme	-	Area Co-ordinator
Altaf Ahmed	-	Area Co-ordinator
Liz Whitworth	-	Area Co-ordinator
Kate Treadwell	-	Democratic Services

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Burrows and Brian Iddon MP

Councillor Lord in the Chair

8. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Councillor Lord welcomed and introduced everybody to the meeting.

9. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Forum held on 12th June, 2006 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

10. OPEN FORUM FEEDBACK

Mr. A. Wolstenholme, Area Co-ordinator, tabled a paper which provided an update on responses to questions which were raised at the last meeting of the Forum.

Resolved – That the feedback be noted.

11. PRESENTATION: BOLTON COMMUNITY HOUSING

Mr. Jon Lord, Head of Community Housing Services, gave an verbal report on the effect of Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrant Workers on Housing in Bolton and, in particular, the Farnworth and Kearsley area.

Mr. J. Lord informed the Forum that Bolton had seen a 50% drop in Asylum Seekers since 2002. Currently, 750 people were seeking Asylum in Bolton.

The majority of Asylum Seekers were housed across urban centres by Local Authorities. However, whilst Local Authorities tried to ensure that any Asylum Seekers were spread across the area evenly, the same control could not be put upon Landlords with private properties.

The Forum was advised that, within the Farnworth and Kearsley area, there were fewer Asylum Seekers than elsewhere in the Borough and that the majority of Asylum Seekers were situated in Moses Gate area.

Mr Lord went on to explain that there were approximately 200 refugees that settled in Bolton every year. However, the number of Migrant Workers in the Borough was much more difficult to quantify as a significant number were not thought to have a National Insurance Number. Mr. Lord went on to add that the amount of Migrant Workers which resided in Bolton was not thought to be higher than other similar status towns in the UK.

Various comments and questions were responded to.

Resolved - That Mr. Lord be thanked for his presentation.

12. PRESENTATION: FARNWORTH TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

Mr. Phil Lamb, Senior Project Officer, Development and Regeneration Department gave a presentation which updated the Forum on progress with the Town Centre Action Plan.

Mr Lamb reminded the Forum that they had been consulted in March, 2006 to ascertain what their priorities for change were in the Town Centre. This Action Plan had later been amended after further consultation within Farnworth with Market Traders and other members of the public. It was subsequently approved by Bolton Council in September, 2006.

The Forum were informed that the main priorities for Market Traders and non Traders was as follows:-

- anti-social behaviour;
- enhancement of cleansing and litter patrols;
- promotion of anti- litter initiatives;
- dereliction and grot spots addressed;
- CCTV throughout the Town Centre;
- development of a 'Safer Farnworth Action Plan'; and
- redevelopment of the Market and precinct area.

Mr Lamb advised that the Action Plan would look at the wider and long term picture for Farnworth Town Centre. It was also stated that the plan would be flexible and should evolve over time.

Mr Lamb concluded by stating that such improvements through the Action Plan would be achieved through the following measures:-

- partnership working with all Council Departments and external agencies, such as, Greater Manchester Police;
- joining of budgets and mainstream resources; and

- changes to the District Centres Improvement Fund allocated to Farnworth Town Centre which resulted in £50,000 Capital Funding for 2006/07 financial year.

Various comments and questions were responded to.

Resolved – That Mr. Lamb be thanked for his presentation.

13. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

Ms. Whitworth, Area Co-ordinator, reported that three applications had been received for Voluntary Sector Grant monies for the Farnworth Area, as follows:-

- Extra Care Housing - £400;
- Trinity Fun Zone - £200; and
- Trinity Church – £500.

Resolved – That grants be awarded to the Groups, as detailed in the report.

14. OPEN FORUM

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

- (a) When was Bolton going to have a Floral Tribute Policy as they often could be distracting to motorists?

The Chair agreed to look into this matter as sensitively as possible and report back to a future meeting.

- (b) What were the current plans regarding parking on Market Street?

Mr. P. Lamb stated that he was aware that the matter was being looked into by Development and Regeneration Officers and that the arguments for and against parking on both sides of the road was being examined.

- (c) What progress had been made regarding the issue of Scrapyards by Buckley Lane and the Black Horse Pub?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that evidence was being compiled by the Council's Legal Department. All this evidence would then be forwarded to the Environment Agency. The Area Co-ordinator further stated that contact would be made with MP Brian Iddon's Office to see if any further progress had been made on his part.

- (d) What was the Council's policy on Knot Weed and could anything be done to tackle the Knot Weed problem at the back of the properties on Grosvenor Street?

The Area Co-ordinator stated that contact details would be taken down and that Knot Weed could be removed via the Council or the Environment Agency.

- (e) Was there a Planning Application for the Baptist Church to be converted into Flats?

Councillors confirmed that there was a Planning Application for that particular site but were not able to comment any further.

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

15. FEEDBACK REGARDING THE BEAT SWEEP AND COP SHOP DURING JULY, 2006

Inspector C. Makin requested feedback from the Forum concerning the success of the Cop Shop and Beat Sweep initiatives.

Inspector Makin was informed by residents in Stoneclough that the Cop Shop had been of particular use but that it would be useful to have the cop shop as a permanent fixture in the Stoneclough or Kearsley area.

Inspector Makin informed residents that there were only two Cop Shops for all of Bolton which were put into priority areas.

Residents informed Inspector Makin that they felt the Beat Sweep had been a huge success mainly due to the variety of agencies working together on the initiative.

Residents also thanked the Police for the Fun Day which was well attended.

16. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair thanked the public for attending the Forum and for the views expressed at the meeting and thanked the officers for their assistance.

(The meeting started at 7.00 p.m. and finished at 8.30 p.m.)