

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL WEST

Thursday, 16 October 2014

Present: Councillor JE Green (Chair)

Councillors J Hale M Hornby
T Anderson M Patrick
E Boulton L Reecejones
P Brightmore Tony Smith
W Clements M Sullivan
D Elderton G Watt
G Ellis S Whittingham

Community Lynn Collier
Representatives: Jackie Hall MBE
John Smith
David Wade
Elise Wong

Twenty three members of the public were in attendance, with the percentage attendance by ward as follows:

- Greasby, Frankby and Irby 26%
- Hoylake and Meols 22%
- Pensby and Thingwall 13%
- Upton 22%
- West Kirby and Thurstaston 8.5%
- Other 8.5%

12 MARK DELAP - PRINCIPAL COMMITTEE OFFICER

Members stood in silence for one minute in tribute to Mark Delap, Principal Committee Officer who had died suddenly on 29 September 2014.

13 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any items on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Councillor S Whittingham and Councillor J Green declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 – Your Wirral Grants Programme (see minute 19 post), by virtue of their membership of the Magenta Living Board.

14 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2014 be approved.

15 **MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CONSULTATION**

Dan Stephens, Chief Fire Officer, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services, gave a presentation on the proposed fire station merger.

The Chief Fire Officer provided the details regarding the consultation process of the proposed fire station merger in Greasby. The presentation highlighted the details of the core functions under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue National Framework. Mr Stephens reported upon the financial challenge of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority and advised that there had been a 35% Government grant reduction since 2010. He informed Members that the Authority had recognised that cuts had to be made across the whole service, that it would not be possible to protect front line jobs and that there would be a significant impact on organisational capacity. He reported that engagement forums had been held earlier in the year which had considered a range of options for delivering savings which included:

- i) Outright station closures
- ii) Station mergers
- iii) Day only crewing
- iv) Community retained firefighters

Mr Stephens advised that the outcome of the consultation was that station mergers were the most popular option and that three possible merger options had been identified which were:

- i) Upton/West Kirby at Greasby
- ii) Huyton/Whiston at Prescot
- iii) Eccleston/St Helens at St Helens Town Centre

Mr Stephens further advised that the proposal in Liverpool was the outright closure of Allerton Station. He reported that all mergers were subject to a twelve week consultation process and that the Authority was bidding for capital funding from the Government for the Greasby and St Helens mergers.

Mr Stephens provided details of the Greasby merger option. He advised that the new station was proposed to be sited on Frankby Road, that the station would be designed to fit the area, there would be two fire engines and included on the site there would be training facilities, community facilities and an integrated library and children's centre. He advised that the sites at Upton and West Kirby would be sold and that the move to one station would provide

significant savings in the region of £900,000. He reported that the alternative to the Greasby merger would be the outright closure of the West Kirby Station.

Mr Stephens advised that the number of incidents across Merseyside had reduced by 55% during the last ten years which was due to an extensive proactive intervention campaign. He provided figures detailing the average response times and advised that the move to Greasby would result in an average response time of 6 minutes 18 seconds which would be significantly quicker than the 10 minute standard response and the national average response time of 7 minutes 24 seconds.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Stephens advised that the Upton Station would be developed in the event that the Greasby merger could not be delivered. He advised that bids had had to be submitted in June and therefore were submitted on the basis of assumptions as no funding may be provided.

Mr Stephens indicated that Members and Council Officers had been briefed as to the intentions of the Authority regarding the site once it had been confirmed the site was an option. He also advised that the public consultation process was now underway.

The Chair reiterated that there would be a full consultation and public question time in due course and expressed gratitude for the work undertaken by the Fire Authority.

Resolved – That the Chief Fire Officer be thanked for his presentation.

16 THE OPEN

Mr Mark Camborne, Senior Manager, Health, Safety and Resilience, provided a verbal update regarding 'The Open'. He advised Members that he had been the lead officer for The Open and that the event had provided fantastic coverage for Wirral.

He reported that the event had attracted 60,000 more visitors than the Open Championship in 2013 and that 202,000 visitors had attended the event, which demonstrated a positive reflection of its popularity.

Mr Camborne informed Members that an office had been opened in Hoylake to support residents and that between 25-30 residents per day had visited the office during the period 2 June to 16 July. He advised that some remediation works had been necessary after the event and that every effort was being made to ensure that the land was restored to its former state.

The Chair thanked the staff who had been involved in The Open and announced that Mr Camborne would respond to questions during Public Question Time.

Resolved – That a presentation in respect of The Open be given to the next meeting of this Committee.

17 **UPDATE FROM COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

The Chair invited the Community Representatives to provide a brief update in relation to local issues.

Upton Ward

Elise Wong reported that the lights at Salacre Lane were working well despite some build up of traffic due to the lights further down and referred to a Facebook page set up by the Upton Regeneration group to promote the area.

Hoylake and Meols Ward

Jackie Hall MBE raised concerns regarding placement of the bins in Hoylake since The Open event had ended. She advised that the majority of residents in Hoylake were proud of the area and had concerns regarding the budget cuts, in particular the fear of the library being under threat and were extremely concerned that services would not be maintained. She highlighted the fact that many residents were not able to go 'on line' and believed there must be an alternative way for residents to respond to the consultation document.

West Kirby and Thurstaston Ward

David Wade pointed out that residents were more concerned that they had not been consulted in respect of the fire station proposals than the loss of the fire station. On a positive note he reported that new toilets had been installed in Ashton Park and that Westbourne Hall would be hosting an Oktoberfest beer festival from 17 to 19 October.

Pensby and Thingwall Ward

Lynn Collier referred to ongoing parking problems which had been highlighted at the previous meeting.

Greasby, Frankby and Irby Ward

John Smith referred to the retail development underway in Greasby and expressed concern regarding the library and children's centre being under threat and the proposed fire station. He was pleased to announce that funding was in place for Christmas lighting.

Resolved –

- (1) That the comments be noted.**
- (2) That the social media site set up by Upton Regeneration be publicised as appropriate.**
- (3) That an actions list be included as an item on the agenda of forthcoming meetings in order that the progression of matters raised could be evaluated.**
- (4) That residents be encouraged to participate in the consultation exercise in respect of Future Council.**

18 CONSTITUENCY MANAGER'S REPORT

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) presented her report which provided an update in relation to the ongoing work programme being undertaken in support of the Committee, which was set out in an 'action tracker' appended to the report.

The Constituency Manager advised that particular items for noting had been highlighted within the report. She provided a proposed timetable for the Community Fund and informed Members that the application and voting process was currently being refined to reflect the suggestions from community groups who had responded to the evaluation questionnaire and that it had been proposed the terms and conditions of the Community Fund be refreshed. She reported that the maximum grant would remain at the £1,000 threshold but that applications for funding above this amount would be considered in order to encourage exceptional projects which would have a significant impact on local areas or the constituency as a whole.

The Constituency Manager referred to the second 'have your say' marketplace event that had taken place on 18 September and confirmed the scheduled dates for future marketplace engagement events. She reported that the constituency team were working proactively to support projects funded by the Committee in March 2014 and provided details regarding some of the project highlights.

The Constituency Manager reported that she had been given delegated authority to use the Committee's Public Health Outcomes Fund underspend from 2013-14 and advised that a partnership project to support older people was now being taken forward and that Members of the Committee would be regularly updated on the project as it developed.

In response to questions from Members, the Constituency Manager advised that funding was to be allocated by the end of the financial year and that the deadline could be extended to January.

The Chair expressed his gratitude in respect of the work undertaken to develop the business case and the ability of the Committee to influence services and projects.

Resolved –

- (1) That the progress in relation to the work being undertaken in support of the Committee and in respect of the constituency working approach be noted.**
- (2) That the Constituency Manager be thanked for the excellent work she had undertaken.**

19 **YOUR WIRRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME**

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) reported upon the recommendations of the Your Wirral Panel in respect of the Constituency Committee's Your Wirral funding allocation.

It was reported that 31 applications for a Your Wirral grant from the Wirral West funding allocation had been received by the deadline of 12 September 2014 and the applications had been considered by the Members of the Your Wirral Panel. The recommendations of the Panel were appended to the report and Members were advised that seven applications which were not being recommended for a grant award were not included within the appendix.

Members were asked to note that £50,000 of the £250,000 available for Your Wirral grants had been 'ringfenced' for Wirral wide projects and that these applications would be considered by a Panel comprising of the Chair/Vice Chair (or nominated representative) of each of the four Constituency Committees with grant awards to be approved by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Engagement. Members were advised that they would be notified of these projects in due course.

In response to a Members' question, the Constituency Manager reported that that the Community Fund was due to be spent by December of this year and that she was confident all projects were underway. She also advised that new grants were to be spent within a year.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Your Wirral grants be awarded to the local organisations as set out within Appendix 1 of the report.**

(2) That the Constituency Manager and Members of the Your Wirral Panel be thanked for their work.

20 **ROAD SAFETY BUDGET 2014-15**

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) presented the recommendations of the Road Safety Panel in respect of the Constituency Committee's 2014-15 Integrated Transport Block (road safety) budget allocation.

The recommendations of the Panel in relation to each proposal were appended to the report and the Panel's recommendations as to which proposals should be prioritised for funding were included within the report.

It was reported that two options were considered in respect of the remaining budget of £8,900:

- A proposal made by the Road Safety Manager that consideration is given to upgrading existing Vehicle Activated Signs in the constituency. This would provide the Council with intelligence to work with Merseyside Police to target enforcement more effectively in the constituency where and when speeding hotspots / peaks are identified;
- Utilising the funding for dropped kerbs in the constituency, with reference to the list of existing requests held by the Traffic and Transportation team and with due regard to the need to allocate the funding equitably across the five wards.

The Constituency Manager reported that further to the Panel's deliberations, the Chair of the Committee raised a view that as the Road Safety Manager's proposal had been made as a result of the borough-wide contract / warranty relating to existing Vehicle Activated Signs coming to an end, it was preferable that this matter be considered on a borough-wide basis in the first instance. Taking this into account, the Panel recommended that the remaining budget, and any slippage from other schemes, be used for dropped kerbs in the constituency, again with due regard to the need to allocate the funding equitably across the five wards.

Members were asked to note that all proposals recommended for funding meet the criteria for road safety and/or active travel improvements in line with the requirements of the Integrated Transport Block (road safety) budget allocation.

Resolved –

- (1) That the local proposals set out within paragraph 2.4 of the report be agreed to be funded thereby allocating £68,850 of the constituency budget for road safety and active travel.**
- (2) That the £8,900 remaining budget allocation, and any slippage from other schemes, be used for dropped kerbs in the constituency with due regard to the need to allocate the funding equitably across the five wards.**
- (3) That delegated authority be given to the Road Safety Panel to identify appropriate locations.**
- (4) That any proposals which had not been recommended as a priority for funding at this time be noted by officers in respect of ongoing monitoring of road safety issues.**
- (5) That the Constituency Manager and Members of the Road Safety Panel be thanked for their work.**

21 **FUTURE COUNCIL**

Kevin MacCallum, Corporate Marketing Officer gave a presentation on Future Council and Members were provided with a copy of a report of the Chief Executive entitled Future Council: Chief Executive's Budget Proposals.

Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to provide Members of the Wirral West Constituency Committee with the opportunity to provide feedback on the Chief Executive's Budget Proposals which were currently out for public consultation.

Members were advised that the Future Council project had completed a full review process across every Council service. The information gathered had been used to redesign the Council through merging similar services, streamlining senior management and getting better value for contracts and goods purchased. This work had resulted in proposals being developed which would reduce the budget gap for 2015/16 from £18 million to £2.5 million as well as achieve the already agreed savings of £9.4 million through remodelling the Council.

Mr MacCallum reported that the options to bridge the remaining budget deficit of £2.5 million had been published for public consultation on 8 September 2014 and that detailed scrutiny work through focussed task and finish groups had been ongoing across all Policy and Performance Committees.

He advised that the consultation period ended on 31 October 2014 and that to date just over 6,200 responses had been received. The report provided Constituency Committees with a reminder of the options which were out for

public consultation and gave more detailed information as to the direct impact on the Wirral West constituency area should the option be accepted.

The Chair encouraged members of the public to take part in the consultation.

In response to questions from Members, Mr MacCallum provided further details in respect of 'Cold Calling Zones'. He advised that an interest had been expressed by residents to pay for this facility and that the option proposed that a charge of £10 per household be implemented where a community wished to implement a 'No Cold Calling Zone' in their street or area. He advised that residents would benefit from rapid response to reported instances of 'cold caller' activity.

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment further advised that 'No Cold Calling Zones' would not be enforced upon people who did not wish to pay for this service.

Resolved –

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.**
- (2) That Kevin MacCallum be thanked for his presentation.**

22 WIRRAL WEST PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions from members of the public upon matters that were relevant to the Wirral West Constituency –

- A resident from Woodchurch asked whether there were there any figures on the profits of the R&A?
 - In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment advised that this was not a question for the Council.
- A resident requested whether the proposals submitted by the Chief Executive in respect of Future Council still existed in view of his imminent retirement.
 - In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment advised that the recommendations of the Chief Executive would be submitted in December when he would still be in post.
- A resident asked whether the Council had directly received any of the economic benefits from The Open.

- In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment advised that the economic benefit referred to was the amount it would have cost the Council to provide media coverage should the Council have had to pay for it.

The Chair commented upon the success of The Open.

- A resident from Greasby suggested that it would be helpful to residents if figures could be provided as to the impact of the proposed fire station merger particularly in respect of the Children's Centre. She expressed concern that this would be at the expense of services currently provided.
 - In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment advised that he would request for this information to be provided. Councillor T Smith (Cabinet Member, Children and Family Services) agreed that this information be provided.
- A resident from Greasby expressed concern regarding residents not having access to computers and therefore not having access to the proposals put forward in the Consultation and confusion in respect of the proposed fire station merger. Also that residents may have mobility problems and therefore would not be able to attend public meetings.
 - In response, a Fire Officer announced that he had delivered hundreds of leaflets to the immediate area and that any particular groups could be targeted.

The Chair commented that Ward Councillors were determined that the Consultation should be open and honest and that no-one should be excluded.

- A resident referred to the Inquiry into the Public Library Services that had been carried out by Sue Charteris as the independent person to lead the Inquiry. She advised that local residents had fought hard to save Woodchurch Library five years ago and that Sue Charteris had said that library services were vital to the elderly of Wirral. She asked what had changed and queried the exercise of the Consultation.
 - In response, the Chair stated that decisions would be made upon the results of the consultation and again urged members of the public to respond to the Consultation in order that rational decisions could be made.
- The resident then asked whether another enquiry by Sue Charteris would be required to be undertaken.

- The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment advised that a significant number of staff had been put at risk and that £9.5 million would be saved from staffing costs, however staff had not been advised that their jobs were at risk at any particular location. He stated that officer's proposals did not include the closure of libraries and decisions would be taken to Cabinet and Council. He advised that the overwhelming opposition to the closure of libraries had been taken into consideration by Members at the time.
- A resident indicated that he was told there would be a decision made regarding the golf resort proposals.
 - In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment advised that final negotiations were underway prior to a report being provided to Members.
- A resident referred to the option in respect of pest control and expressed concerns that people would not pay for this service (for example a £25 charge to remove rats) which would result in public health implications. She asked what criteria were used to make decisions.
 - In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment reported that equality impacts had been undertaken to mitigate against this.
- Mr Brace, resident, asked whether Members should have declared a personal interest in respect of the fire station merger.
 - Mr C Hughes, Solicitor, advised that Members were not affected personally and therefore were not required to declare an interest.
- A resident referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2014. He advised that he had requested a copy of the Constitution of this Committee, not the Constitution of the Council. He asked for an update on road repairs and that a presentation be given in respect of the golf.
 - The Constituency Manager responded in respect of the Constitution. She advised that she had provided a full copy of the Constitution and that Article 10 relates to Constituency Committees.
 - The Chair advised that a presentation would be given in respect of the golf.

- A resident expressed concern regarding the future viability of Constituency Committees and the possibility that money could be better spent elsewhere, for example, play facilities could be provided for disadvantaged areas.
 - In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment referred to the options available in the Consultation.
 - The Chair reiterated that comments could be made in the Consultation and stated that the Committee took a fair approach in supporting projects.

- A resident asked what the cost of hosting The Open was.
 - In response, Mr Mark Camborne, Senior Manager, Health, Safety and Resilience advised that a presentation would be given, providing details of costing involved.

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking members of the public for their contribution and attendance.

23 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for 5 February 2015 in the Hoylake and Meols Ward.