

Bidston, St James & Claughton

Area Forum

Area Co-ordinator's Report

18th October 2004

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Section One

Community Initiative Funding 2004/2005

Section 1: Community Initiative Funding 2004/2005

There is £1,259.32 carried forward to this year's CIF.

The CIF allocation for 2004/2005 is £10,000 giving an overall allocation of £11,259.32.

Adverts for CIF will be placed in the Wirral Globe on 10th and 24th November. Flyers and posters will be circulated to groups and organisations as well as libraries, One Stop Shops, council reception areas etc. Individual forum members will also receive publicity information.

The closing date for applications will be Monday 20th December 2004.

It is anticipated that the assessment panel (once establishment) will meet week commencing 10th January 2005 in order for an overall report to go to Cabinet on Thursday 10th February 2005.

The following criteria for funding for this forum has been agreed:

Funding is available for projects within the Bidston, St James and Claughton area that will benefit all sectors of the community. The forum may set specific priorities at the 1st meeting.

We have been asked to bring to your attention that all area forums are made aware that community safety funding might be used to supplement grant applications or as a possible alternative where applications do not meet the criteria for the Community Initiative Fund. For further details contact Andy Dams on 666 5098 or Jim Thompson on 666 5097.

The Community Planning Team receives regular updates from the Charities Information Bureau on a variety of funding opportunities. If you would like a copy of the latest information please contact a member of the team on 691 8266/8069.

Section Two

Developing & Implementing a Local Area Plan

Section 2: Developing & Implementing a Local Area Plan

Area Plans – setting the work programme for area forums

Introduction

This paper seeks to outline the development processes underpinning the production of area plans, their purpose and how they should be used by area forum members to progress the work and added value of the forums.

Background

Wirral Borough Council introduced area forums in the summer of 2001 as part of their drive towards modernising local government and bringing council services, and the services delivered by partner organisations, closer to local people. Area forums are advisory and consultative bodies i.e. they have no delegated decision making powers or budgets and as such the area forums have been used to great effect since their introduction. However, area forums have provided an opportunity for local people to begin to influence the way in which services are delivered and to identify those issues that are important to them.

For example, the forums have been consulted upon the following and their views fed into the decision-making processes of council departments and partner organisations:

1. The Highways Maintenance Programme provided all forums with the opportunity to identify roads for improvement;
2. The Community Strategy;
3. The Schools Term;
4. Specific regeneration developments in areas such as New Brighton and Hoylake

For local councillors, area forums provide an additional opportunity (over and above council surgeries) to engage with local people and, with other service providers, to look at specific issues identified by local communities, which can better be progressed by the joint action of the area forum. Through this community leadership, councillors, through working with local people and organisations can develop a shared vision for the future of their local area, identify immediate priorities for action and then through working together, make a difference in local communities. The production of the area plan supports all councillors' role as community leaders and supports the modernisation agenda through involving local people in service delivery.

Area Plans

The main task for each area forum has been to develop and agree a local area plan, which reflects the needs and priorities of the area, and provides the area forums with a list of priorities from which they can begin to look at how the forum will respond. While the plans will obviously form a major part of the

overall Community Strategy for the borough, perhaps more importantly they are designed to guide the work of the area forums over the coming 12 months.

Area plans bring together a range of identified community needs and priorities from:

- Feedback and views raised at area forums;
- Feedback and views raised at annual ward roadshows;
- Citizens panel questionnaires;
- General consultation activities undertaken by partners around specific issues.

To ensure that area forum plans are aligned with, and make reference to, other supporting plans and strategies prepared by the council and partner organisations, the documents have been rigorously checked against:

- Council departmental plans which set out the priorities and key actions of all sections and departments;
- Other area based plans and strategies such as the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Plans, Pathways Partnerships, Housing Market Renewal Initiative etc;
- The Community Strategy

Consultation

To support the development, relevance of the area plans, a significant consultation process was developed to further ground the priorities and needs identified by the local community. Copies of the area plans have been distributed to:

- Council heads of service;
- Departmental co-ordinators who support area co-ordinators in relation to service delivery elements of area forums;
- Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) members;
- Wirral's Voluntary and Community Sectors' Network;
- Area forum membership;
- Membership of the 8 thematic partnerships supporting the LSP e.g. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Health and Social Care Partnership, Wirral Learning Partnership etc.

Area plans provide the opportunity to:

- Theme future meetings around specific issues identified in the plan;
- Ensure that appropriate council officers and partner organisations are in attendance to support progress against identified issues and needs;
- Convene subgroups (task and finish groups) of the area forums around specific issues to begin to progress ideas, the issues and barriers to addressing the identified needs within the plan;

- Allow councillors to pick up specific issues and priorities and feed these into the political making processes within the council;
- Lobby locally and nationally on issues identified within the area plans and barriers that prevent progress or action;
- Feed local views into the planning and budget setting cycles of the council and partner organisations to ensure that local views and issues are influencing service delivery in positive ways to achieve real and lasting progress against area forum priorities;
- Feed local views into the overarching community strategy for Wirral;
- Align the community initiatives fund grant, where required, with the priorities agreed by the area forum for action within the area plan. The area plan could even provide an opportunity for the area forum to commission specific activity / projects to address identified local needs and priorities.
- Allow area co-ordinators to convene local service co-ordination groups (with key officers from the council and partner organisations) to look at specific service delivery issues, share information and attempt to identify ways of working together in a more co-ordinated fashion to support the achievement of the area forums key priorities;
- Identify the added value of the area forums i.e. those things that have been achieved that would not have been achieved if the area forum did not exist and the council and partners worked individually;
- Undertake specific consultation on the issues identified and the priorities agreed for action by the area forum;
- Report progress to the local community on taking forward the area plans and the issues and priorities they have identified as important to them;

For further information on area plans, how they feed into the planning process and community strategy, please contact:

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 Community Planning Co-ordinator
 Wallasey Town Hall
 Brighton Street
 CH44 8ED
 T: 0151 691 8063
 E: rachelflood@wirral.gov.uk

Section Three

Youth Forum Update

- The Birkenhead Youth Forum
- Children's Community Strategy
- Outside Agency Consultation
- Youth Conference

• **Section 3: Youth Forum Update**

YOUTH FORUMS

Since the last Area Forum meeting the Youth Forums met in July 2004.

The Birkenhead Youth Forum - 'Because We Can'

Met on Thursday 15 July at the Viking Youth Club. 28 young people were in attendance from Youth on the Move, The Vikes and Fender Youth Club.

The questions they would like to put to Steve are:

Fender Youth Club

What plans (if any) are there to clean up the estates?

What can you do about there being no public transport on the estate after 6pm?

House prices are too high – are there any plans to provide more affordable housing?

Park on the estate needs to be updated – are there any intentions of this? (needles, broken glass and the safety tarmac often set on fire)

What can you do to reduce drug dealing on the estate?

There are quite a few open spaces on Beechwood where houses have been cleared. What will happen in these areas?

The Vikes

Are there any plans for a MUGA in Meadow Lane? (where the council buildings used to be)

Do you know if there are any plans for more swimming/recreational facilities on Wirral?

Are there any plans for improving the Vikes?

The full group decided that the following are the issues they wish to raise at area forum level;

More facilities (Mersey Park)
Drug use
Vandalism
Feeling safe in your area

Better lighting
Phone boxes that work!
Cages need maintaining
Public transport

Local Issues

- Youth club with darts and pool table, dance mat and tuck shop
- Better cage in park
- Football
- No smack heads
- More trips (not the LSD ones)
- Rock Ferry table
- No bullying
- More football cages
- More speed cameras
- More policing
- Ice rink
- More youth club

Fender Youth Action Project

- *Estate*
- *Vandalism*
- *Drugs*

We Need

- More facilities
- Better parks
- More bins
- More trips
- Funding
- CCTV cams
- More telephone boxes
- Less litter
- More police patrolling the streets
- Bins
- Shatter proof windows in bus stops
- More cameras around the estate
- Phone boxes need fixing
- A lot more lighting, in the woods especially
- More garages to put cars in to stop them getting smashed up
- Block off alley ways
- Clean the estate often
- More workers to deal with drug users
- More fun activities on the top end of the estate (e.g. 1st avenue, 2nd avenue etc.)
- More facilities
- Better and more parks
- Vandalism

Publicity

Other forms of publicity

- Leaflets- More info in leaflets
- Radio- Adverts
- Emails- Send info
- Text messages- To get the info
- Teletext- More info
- Local billboards
- Local paper
- Internet
- Letters
- Radio run by teens
- Message board on the internet and youth forum chat rooms
- Local paper
- Make a magazine/design it

The Posters

- Colourful posters is more appealing
- Plain one had more info
- If I could change plan poster I would make it more colourful
- More likely to read colourful one
- Stands out
- Want to put it in the bin (black writing)
- Pocket cards
- Photographs (of us doing exactly what you have to do)
- Email address - colourful one
- Phone number
- Important details need to stand out
- Where are they going to be (if up in school teacher reads them out or in special fun places)
- Letters/text
- Eye Catching
- Colourful
- 2 mixtures of colours
- Bold/underlined/italic
- Proper pictures/photographs/info

Since the meeting:

Discussions have been taking place with the Police about the items raised at the meeting and PC Paul Lawson will be attending the next meeting to discuss them.

Children's Community Strategy

The Community Strategy has been agreed for everyone, and therefore covers everyone's broad needs. This may mean that smaller group's specific needs or aspirations may be lost in the detail. Therefore a specific document focused on children and young people will be able to explore this.

From the schools Roadshow involvement and the youth forums we have a clear understanding about what children and young people want and need, as well as service levels and what departments plans are. Therefore this provides all the ingredients for a draft strategy sitting under the community strategy BUT highlighting children and young people's issues.

A Children's Community Strategy would be an excellent focus for our work and our partners to ensure that services are delivered which meet the needs of our children and young people. This would ensure a coherent, co-ordinated and sensible approach.

This would also give children and young people a focus to review the work of the council and how well they think their needs and aims are being met.

The Community Planning Team has approached the Local Strategic Partnership for support in this work and they have given broad approval at the June meeting.

The process for consulting young people has already started through citizenship events at local schools and Wirral Play Council's "Play Day". Now the schools have returned they will be involved in other consultation on this, along with the Youth Forums.

Outside Agency Consultation

Wirral Hospital NHS

The Community Planning Team has been approached to assist with the Hospital's plans for a redesign of how Children's health services are delivered.

Mersey Regional Waterfront Park

This group are looking at setting up a Children's Panel from West Wirral to include in the decision making of any projects and schemes the Mersey Regional Waterfront Park undertake. The Community Planning Team and Advisory Teachers will be working together on this.

Youth Conference

This year's conference will close the Council's Local Democracy Week celebrations. This event will offer a unique opportunity for pupils at local schools to experience citizenship "for real".

The conference will include stands from local organisations and council departments. A variety of workshops will take place on the day, which will include:

- Connexions
- Youth / Area Forums
- Public Health
- Liverpool Prison
- Merseytravel

And “Hotseating”, which will allow young people to interview key people about issues which have emerged during their debate and discussions. Speakers involved in the hotseating session will include Steve Maddox, Chief Executive WMBC, Howard Cooper, Director of Education, Chief Supt Alan Jones Merseyside Police, Ward Councillors and a number of others representing a diverse group of service providers and organisations.

During lunchtime a buffet will be served providing an opportunity to taste a variety of foods from India, China & the Caribbean. This variety will also be replicated in the entertainment during the break; a steel band will perform.

The purpose of the event is to celebrate young people’s participation and allow them to come “face to face” with key decision-makers to put their point across and have fun.

- If you have any questions about this report please contact Lauren on 691 8213 laurenelliott@wirral.gov.uk

Section Four

Streetscene update

Section 4: Streetscene update

Hitting Highway Targets

Staff in Technical Services (formally Highway & Engineering Services), are working hard to ensure the Council hits performance targets for keeping roads and pavements in a good state of repair.

Here is a chance for you to figure out for yourselves just how well we are all getting along...

- Highway maintenance (Priority I tasks) - damage to roads and pavements made safe within 24 hours is 99.56%, exceeding the target for the department of 99%.
- Highway maintenance (Priority II/III tasks) - the figure for damage to roads and pavements substantially repaired within 28 working days is running at 82% for May 2004. This is an improvement on last year's out-turn, thanks to the help of all involved, however we still have some way to go before we reach our target of 87%.
- Lighting - percentage of faults on streetlights reported and repaired within 20 hours is 98.3%, exceeding our target of 93%. Under Council PIs a total of 1.01% of streetlights are 'allowed' not to be working as planned, this figure is currently running at 0.82%, ahead of even our five-year target.
- Customer satisfaction on vehicular crossings. Target of no more than 3% dis-satisfied, currently at 0%. Year end figure for last year was 1.02%.

Performance Indicators are in place to help us make sure that the department is delivering its services to an acceptable standard within an agreed timescale.

Improving walking and cycling facilities

Wirral Council has been awarded £49,000 in funding to help eight schools improve walking and cycling facilities for pupils.

Bebington High Sports College, Devonshire Park Primary in Birkenhead, Grove Street Primary in New Ferry, Greasby Junior School, Barnston Primary School, Heswall Primary School, Egremont Primary School and Somerville Primary School in Wallasey have been allocated the money from central government.

The schools were selected because they each now have a School Travel Plan in place. These plans outline a package of measures to improve road safety and reduce car use on the school journey.

Teachers and parents will now work together with a specialist Council travel adviser to implement their plans. Local speed restrictions, road crossings, dedicated cycle ways, secure cycle storage, cycle training and developing road safety skills are just some of the ways in which this money could now be spent.

Director of Technical Services Dave Green said: "Twice as many children are driven to school now in comparison with 20 years ago and most of these journeys are less than two miles. We want to work with schools to make walking, cycling and bus travel a safe and realistic options for more pupils. We hope parents will realise that there are alternatives to taking the car and dropping the kids off right outside school everyday."

Spreading Anti-Litter Messages

Anti-litter messages hit home with thousands of Wirral teenagers this summer – as part of an innovative web, radio and live roadshow publicity campaign.

Radio City DJ, Scott Hughes, took to the road with a live stage show, visiting more than 2,500 school pupils as part of Wirral Council's 'X:CELL 4 Wirral' litter campaign.

Earlier this summer young people across the borough were listening to Radio City and logging on to the station's website, to nominate their school for a roadshow tour.

The winning schools selected for the tour were Mosslands, Weatherhead, St Mary's and Woodchurch. Pupils were given the opportunity to swap lessons in the classroom for the chance to take part in games, win prizes and see up and coming girl-band Genie Queen performing live in the school last week.

The campaign, aimed at 11-16 year olds, spread the message – 'Stop the Drop' – pick up litter and help us keep Wirral clean.

Director David Green said: "Wirral Council recognises that there is a problem with litter in the borough. This is a national issue, which our officers are keen to tackle locally. We have been working with the regional station Radio City (96.7fm) to come up with an innovative and effective way of educating young people not to drop rubbish and to take more pride in their local environment.

"Run-of-the-mill educational posters, leaflets and presentations aren't always effective when dealing with teenagers. By using radio, the web and live events we are more able to successfully communicate anti-litter messages to secondary school children. We see these mediums as an acceptable way of reaching a notoriously 'hard to reach' age group."

Making it easier to contact ERIC!

Requests for the ERIC service are now being directed through the Streetscene contact centre. This is the Council service for the collection of bulky household waste.

To find out more information or to request the ERIC service, call 606 2004.

Rummaging through rubbish

Pupils at one Wirral primary school have been rummaging through their rubbish bins... as part of an exercise to examine what they throw away.

Wirral Council recycling officers and representatives from the environmental charity, Global Action Plan, visited Stanton Road Primary School in Bebington to host a waste workshop on Wednesday, July 7.

Children took part in a range of fun educational activities to raise awareness about the three Rs – reduce, re-use, recycle.

The main focus of the workshop was measuring the different types and amounts of school waste, calculating daily, weekly and annual figures. Teachers and pupils were then encouraged to draw up an action plan to help reduce the amount of rubbish they throw out everyday.

This initiative is part of an ongoing programme of waste workshops across Wirral primary schools.

Recycling reminder to school pupils

WIRRAL students celebrating the end of term and exams have been urged to recycle their unwanted revision notes to help the environment.

The appeal was made as part of national Paper Recycling awareness week, which ran from Monday, July 12 to Friday, July 16. As the school bell rang out to signal the start of the six-week break, scholars across the borough were asked to make sure their papers were recycled and not binned.

In Wirral hundreds of tonnes of paper will needlessly be heading for the wheelie bin over the summer holidays. The Council reminded students to make use of facilities and services that ensure waste paper is recycled for re-use again and again after processing.

More than 70 schools have signed up to the Council's recycling collection service. Containers for recycling paper, cans, foil, fluorescent tubes, cardboard and toner cartridges are collected regularly from these sites. This service will hopefully be extended to cover the remaining schools in the borough later this year.

Thurstaston Roundabout

Scheme history and details:

- Wirral Council first looked at introducing a scheme in the Thurstaston area back in the late 1990s. Following investigations by traffic management officers it became apparent that considerable investment would be needed for any safety scheme in this area. It would involve road widening and land acquisition. In order to secure funding it was submitted to be included as part of a five year programme of work in the Merseyside Local Transport Plan and it has now been prioritised for action.
- The current design involves introducing a medium-sized roundabout (30m long and 20m wide) at the junction where Telegraph road, Station Road and Thurstaston Road meet. It will be slightly larger than the nearby roundabout at Caldby and we will be endeavoring to keep the access to the former Ismay estate as it is at present.

- There are plans to introduce a 30mph speed limit on the approaches to the roundabout.
- The scheme will reduce the speed of traffic along Telegraph Road and help motorists with manoeuvres into Station Road and Thurstaston Road (particularly motorists making right turns).

Why a roundabout?

- Engineers have looked at a range of schemes and designs for the area. This is the final design that the Council will now take forward to seek approval from Councillors.
- A roundabout will physically force motorists to slow down and reduce the risk of high speed side impact crashes.
- Alternatives have previously been considered. A junction improvement scheme with traffic signals would involve more road widening and land acquisition than a roundabout, making the scheme more costly. Safety auditors have also expressed concerns over the visibility of lights to approaching traffic. Reducing the speed limit alone does not guarantee traffic will slow down.
- This location has seen six injury accidents within the last three years.
- Local residents and land owners expressed a preference for a roundabout scheme during the early stages of consultation. A petition of 2,179 names was submitted requesting a roundabout.

Environmental issues:

- We are in consultation with conservation officers about the scheme. We want to preserve the appearance of this conservation area.
- The roundabout will be landscaped in keeping with the surrounding environment.
- There will be noise reduction and spray reduction properties in the surfacing of the road.
- Lighting on the roundabout will be shielded to reduce light pollution.
- The new scheme includes enhanced cycling and pedestrian facilities – to assist people crossing the road.

What happens next?

- Cabinet members have now approved the proposed layout for the junction. We will now seek planning permission from the Council's Planning Committee. At this stage in the process any residents wishing to object will be able to make comments in writing to the Director of Planning and Economic Development.
- Planning officers will make a recommendation either approving or refusing the scheme and it will be for Councillors to decide whether or not it should go ahead. If approved this means that officers will then be authorized to purchase land, finalise plans and start work on the scheme.

- We will then buy the relevant land to enable us to go-ahead with the scheme. This will involve the Council entering into discussions and gaining the support of four different land-owners.
- Land acquisition is a lengthy process – we are hoping it will be completed as soon as possible. Cabinet has authorised the use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire the land, should this be necessary.
- The roundabout scheme itself should take approximately six months to build.

Section Five

Local Updates

Section 5: Local Updates

Future Presentations

There may be requests from Education & Cultural Services to discuss some of the major service changes, with the Area Forums, however once a request is made I will inform the forum.

If there are any matters of priority for forum members please get in touch, to see if it is possible to arrange a presentation / information about the matter.

It may be useful to decide presentations on the basis of priorities identified within the area plan.

We try to have presentations at all our Area Forums. These presentations are informative and interesting to the community within our Ward boundaries.

Community Safety Programme

The Fire Service would like to come along to a future Area Forum and do a presentation about their Community Safety Programme.

- Keith Phillips Community Fire Safety, Wallasey Fire station, Mill Lane, Wallasey 0151 5419/5420

Lottery Funding

Peter Riley who is a Lottery Advisor/Officer in the Special Initiatives Team, Planning & Economic Development. Would like to come along to discuss lottery funding, this would be an interesting topic, especially for us to point people in other directions for funding for when CIF hasn't been successful.

- Peter Riley Corporate Services (previously Planning & Economic Development), SIT, Wallasey - 0151 691 8112

Overview of the Authorities Emergency Planning Procedures

- Rod Tan Corporate Services, (previously Personnel & Policy) Wallasey Town Hall – 0151 691 8295

Future Dates

- February – venue and date to be confirmed
- June/July – venue and date to be confirmed

• **Appendices**

- Minutes Bidston, Oxton & Claughton 30th March 04
- Feedback from Tranmere & Wirral Show
- Community Initiatives Fund – progress report
- General Forum update

Appendix 1

Minutes from the Bidston, Oxton & Claughton Area Forum 30th March 2004

Minutes - Area Forum (Bidston, Claughton & Oxton) Meeting - 30 March 2004

Present	
Chair	Cllr Denise Roberts
Ward Councillors	Mrs F E F Anderson , S Foulkes , SE Kelly , Mrs P M Williams
Community Representatives	Graham Cole (Business representative) , Alison Moulder (Bidston Community representative) , Marj Young (Townfield/Oxton Residents Assoc.)
Lead Officer	Bob Williams (Director of Personnel & Policy)
Area Service Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray
Merseyside Police	Ch. Insp. Mick Bleaze , PC Tony Buckman , Inspector Mark Smith
Council Officers	Gary Cummings (Area Streetscene Manager) , Stephen Maddox (Chief Executive) , Andy McCartan (Highways) , Tracey Smith (Acting Community Planning Officer) , Mike Withy (Active Communities)
Apologies	Cllr Jim Crabtree , Cllr George Davies , Lyn Derham (Head of Pathways) , Jane Gilbert (Oxton residents) , Frank Harrison (Bidston Neighbourhood Forum) , John Hinchcliffe (Business representative) , Pat Landsborough (Claughton Community Group) , Jane Lunt , Collette McDonagh (Slatey Road Area Residents Association) , Kevin Miller (Director of Social Services) , Cllr Bill Nock , Cllr Harry Smith , Susan Withers (Noctorum Residents Assoc.)

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- Minute 4 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ MATTERS ARISING
- Minute 5 - REVIEW OF AREA FORUMS
- Minute 6 - PUBLIC QUESTION TIME
- Minute 7 - CLOSE OF MEETING

Minute 1 - WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Denise Roberts, welcomed everyone to the second Area Forum to be held in the Williamson Art Gallery and gave notice of apologies received (see above). 19 members of the public attended the meeting.

Minute 2 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

As the Chair had not attended the previous meeting, Councillor Steve Foulkes moved that the minutes be accepted.

Minute Decision :

Resolved - That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 5th January 2004, be agreed as a correct record.

Minute 3 - AREA CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

The Area Co-ordinator provided information on a variety of issues: the Youth Engagement Shelter situated on a site by Guinea Gap Baths, Egremont, and how this is used; an update on Youth Forums, including a schedule of planned meetings.

Michelle also briefed on:

* Wirral Council's first spring clean up campaign and the involvement of local primary schools, and

* provided information about residents in Oxton coming together to work on improving the gateway to Oxton. Meeting to be held at St Winifred Welsh Church, Westbourne Road, Birkenhead, 7.00 pm. For further information contact either Michelle Gray on 691 8593 or Hazel Edwards on 691 8225

Minute 4 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ MATTERS ARISING

§ New Tug Boats in Merseyside

On agenda for general information. Michelle briefed that local schools and the Mayor to be involved in the launch of the Svitzer Bidston at Holyhead. Details would be in the local press.

§ The Area Co-ordinator invited initial questions from the audience.

A member of the audience asked if a presentation could be given from one of the successful projects of the Communities Initiative Fund and the Chair confirmed that an update on bids would be one of the future Area Forum presentations.

Another question asked was on the new round for the Fund. Area Co-ordinator reported that the new round should commence in April. Criteria would be known following the election but may depend on boundary changes. It would be advertised in July, with closing date for applications in September. £15k would be available for each area forum to award, any carry over would be added to this amount.

A question on how soon would the Area Plan be finished was responded to by the Area Co-ordinator. Aiming for June/July completion and then for publication. This will be a working document for the Forum.

A member of the audience raised a local issue of dereliction, with particular reference to the old church at the top of Balls Road and asked if there was any information the Forum could provide on the situation.

Councillor Foulkes confirmed there had been Cabinet/Select reports on this and a sub-group trying to co-ordinate actions between local residents, councillors etc. Monthly meetings were being held.

Councillor Kelly informed of a meeting to be held at St Winifred's on 7th April at which the improvement plan for the area will be presented. He briefed that the Church had changed ownership. Approximately 12 months ago The Council granted planning permission for conversion into flats; however the property has since changed hands twice. Planning Department have made contact with the new owners.

Councillor Williams commented that it was very encouraging to know there were a number of people willing to invest substantial amounts of money in the area.

A question was asked about whether any rates were paid on empty buildings. Councillor Foulkes responded that the Council would board windows up, etc., if dilapidated, then chase the owner, but that was difficult when properties can change hands a number of times. Council was currently working with MPs to get legislation in Parliament because it affects quality of life. The Council was also aware that it needs to invest more in terms of conservation and a report was in process of being prepared at the moment to that effect.

Minute 5 - REVIEW OF AREA FORUMS

The Chair welcomed Steve Maddox, the Council's Chief Executive. He was attending all eight Area Forums to consult with members on progress and future development.

The Area Forum structure has been established for about 2 years, since summer 2003. The Chief Executive had produced a progress report, looking at what was good, what was bad and what needed to change. Some changes had been introduced in publicising the forums and also the system of ward roadshows. However it was felt that a review should not be done in isolation, hence the presentations at all forums. He asked for general observations/comments from both members and the public. In the report, views of area forum members are requested by 16 April 2004 on the following issues:

§ voting rights

§ recruitment and selection of non-Council members on area forums and their length of tenure.

Although no vote had yet been taken at an area forum, currently only Councillors have voting rights.

There were 2 Community reps from each Ward, so at this forum there were 6. Potential representatives expressed their interest after attending ward-based roadshows and subsequently completing an application form. Elected members in each of the area forum groupings decided which applicants would afford the most appropriate representation for their area.

Is the Area Forum still in agreement with that process, or did they feel there was a better way of getting community representatives on each of the area forums? Linked to that, once community representatives were elected, did they have a view how long they should serve. If so, what sort of period?

The Chief Executive had now attended all area forums and would produce a report expressing views from each of the forums to the Local Democracy Working Party (comprising the three party leaders and deputy leaders). They would then formulate a view for the Council about whether we need to change any part of the process.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his presentation and invited questions/comments from the Forum (see minute 6 below).

Minute 6 - PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Councillor Foulkes commented that area forums, in varying degrees, have now taken off and the level of audience participation was encouraging and felt that £15k was a worthwhile sum to offer the community. Noted that some areas are richly served with community groups, but in other areas they were scarce and consideration should be given on how to address this. Councillor Foulkes agreed that all representatives should have a vote, with a tenure of 2-3 years.

A member of the audience queried the forum membership number and felt that members should not be allowed to miss a meeting and that they should only have a 12-months term of office.

Councillor Anderson commented on the roadshows, especially the involvement/contribution of local schoolchildren. Feedback shows the interest they are taking in their communities. The Area Co-ordinator confirmed that the Roadshow for Bidston, Oxtun, Claughton would be held in June/July. Councillor

Anderson also highlighted the importance of communication and queried whether we advertise sufficiently well to the public. She agreed with a 2-year tenure.

A member of the audience from Bidston Rise stated that free papers are not received in her area and so people don't know about the area forums. She commented that she enjoyed the forums and the opportunity they presented to meet and question Councillors, Council Officers, Police etc.

A question was asked about how Wirral-wide organisations fit in with area forums. Bob Williams responded that the forum for East Wallasey has representatives from Health and the Church, as do other wards. The Chief Executive had just attended Bromborough forum where a CVS representative was a member, because it was their local area. It was acknowledged that area forums would be an opportunity for Wirral-wide organisations to sell themselves and Councillor Kelly confirmed that organisations would need to apply to the forum they would like to become involved with and the forum would then need to agree that this would be an asset in taking forward their priorities.

An audience member, from the Bidston area, queried whether there was a conservation representative for each forum and spoke about the lack of knowledge about Wirral's heritage. The Chief Executive responded that there wasn't a mandate for each area forum to have a conservation representative on them, but in at least 3 there was one. He confirmed that the Council was trying to reinvigorate a forum of conservation societies so they could meet on a regular basis to discuss Wirral-wide heritage issues. He also informed on action to get together a group of people in order to bring the Tourism Strategy to life in which history/heritage will be an important part. This led to a discussion about funding and the Chief Executive stated that, as part of the capital programme, the Council was trying to identify a sum of money as a resource to address some of the issues. Work had begun on trying to begin to identify those properties which actually spoil the street-scene environment in the borough. The Chair confirmed that one of representatives from Oxton, on this area forum, represented conservation interests.

John Cocker, Claughton resident, thought Area Forums were a good idea but raised several issues that he felt needed clarifying:

§ what actually is the Forum, the group of people at the top table or the whole room?

§ clarity around raising of issues and decision making;

§ clarity around allocation of money from the Community Initiatives Fund.

It was confirmed that the Fund allocations were decided by a sub-committee, consisting of ward councillors and community representatives and decisions were ratified by the full Forum and the Council's Cabinet. The Director of Finance's audit staff had commented on the robustness of the process.

Councillor Kelly felt that it was now a question of evolution and the pace at which this happens and is taken forward in partnership with the community. An example was given of one of the roads in Noctorum which got a new surface last year because it was brought up at the area forum.

A member of the audience commented that she had been aware of the Forum through an article 'Have Your Say' in her local paper. She enjoyed the forum and the opportunity to meet and ask questions of local councillors, etc but thought it was important to advertise more broadly to include everyone.

Councillor Anderson suggested using a special edition of Wirral Now to raise

public awareness. The Chief Executive reported that the Community Planning Team was currently producing an annual report highlighting area forum achievements and details of projects that the Fund has helped. The difficulty of publicising to ensure being fully inclusive was acknowledged.

A member of the audience was unaware of forum boundaries and asked how many there were. It was confirmed there were eight in total. That evening's meeting covered the Bidston, Oxton and Claughton wards. She suggested issuing a map so people would know which area they could attend. It was confirmed that there had been a big launch with illustrating map and that, to raise the profile in the future, we should look to do this again. For the benefit of people who don't feel they could speak out, but have a genuine request or idea to put forward, she recommended slips of paper for suggestions. The Area Co-ordinator confirmed these were available on the information desk, but in future they would be specifically mentioned. Another suggestion of introductions round the table was also noted.

A question was raised on the issue of Bidston Observatory and whether this could be revisited. Councillor Foulkes highlighted that the process had been followed in full consultation with the people involved and the decision made based on facts.

A question was raised from the audience on fund allocation for a project in Claughton Village, and Councillor Foulkes provided details of links to the aims of this particular forum.

A member of the audience from Bidston Rise talked about the children in her area who have been helped by money allocated for their local football team and thanked the Area Forum.

A question of 'What is a Roadshow' was asked. The Area Co-ordinator confirmed that it was an event including representatives from Health, Police, Emergency Services, etc. The roadshow for Bidston, Oxton, Claughton would probably be held at Birkenhead 6th Form College. Co-ordinators try and link in to another event in order to attract more people. For example, Birkenhead's was held in the Pyramids and Heswall's on a Saturday afternoon at the Fire Station.

A member of the audience drew attention to Police Officer, George Thomas, who had done good work on the Beechwood, resulting in children having respect for their area. He suggested that George be used as a role model to enable other people to see what he has done there and his approach to the kids.

The Chair also praised the Friday night sessions held at the local Sports Centre in Grange Road West which had done a lot to keep youths off the streets.

Minute 7 - CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the Williamson Art Gallery for the use of the building for the meeting.

Appendix 2

Feedback from:

Tranmere Show 27th June 2004

Wirral Show 10th – 11th July 2004

Results from consultations carried out at Shows in 2004

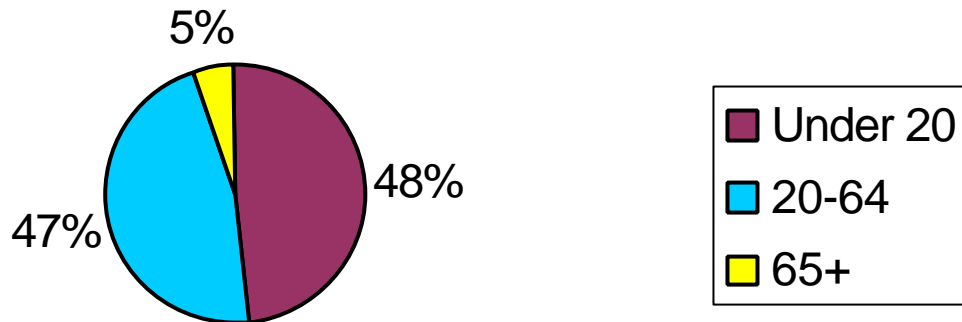
The Community Planning Team produced a questionnaire for the Tranmere and Wirral Shows held in 2004 to find out people's views on the local area where they live, together with a questionnaire to find out the views of visitors to Wirral (for the Wirral Show).

We received 625 completed questionnaires, 140 from the Tranmere Show and 485 from the Wirral Show. 48% of these were completed by Under 20's, 46% were completed by 20-64 year olds and 6% were completed by over 64 year olds.

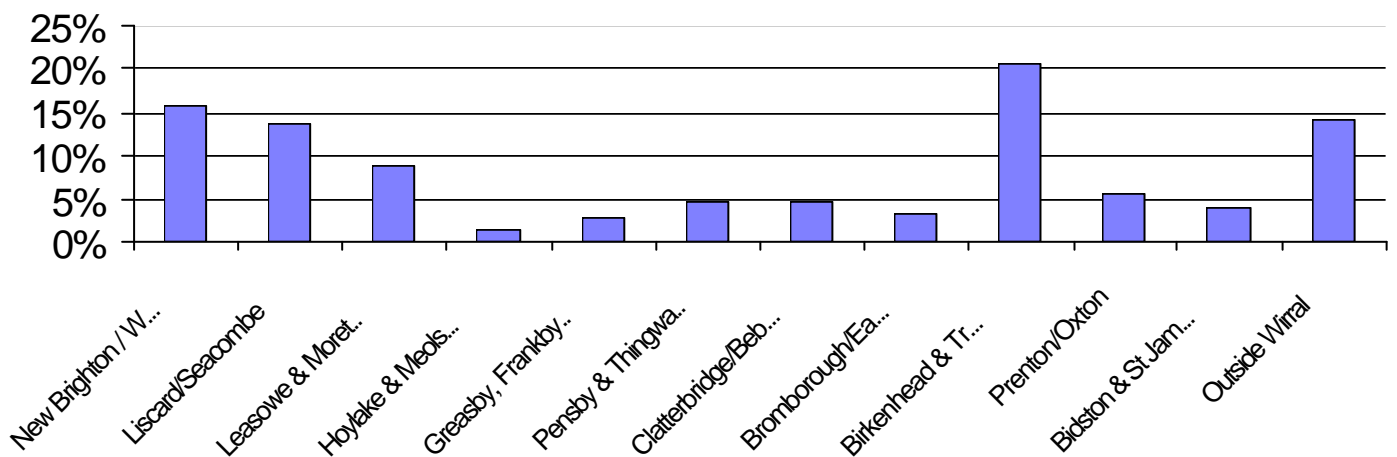
8% of those completing the questionnaires requested further information on community representatives, and 14% requested information on area forums.

The results from these questionnaires show that overall most people consider Wirral in a favourable light. Further detailed results are attached.

% of age groups completing questionnaires at Wirral and Tranmere Shows - 2004



% of questionnaires completed from different areas



Results of questionnaire for all age groups

How Good do you think your local area (Wirral in general for visitors) is:	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor
As a place to live	31%	53%	8%	6%	2%
As a place to shop	20%	46%	15%	14%	5%
As a place for travelling on public transport	28%	48%	11%	10%	3%
As a place for leisure activities / sport and culture	21%	33%	15%	23%	8%
As a safe place to live, work or visit	22%	45%	16%	13%	4%
As a place for education and learning	31%	44%	14%	9%	2%
As a place where there is a good choice of affordable local housing	22%	41%	19%	13%	5%
As a place for good quality, accessible health care	29%	50%	12%	6%	3%

Results of questionnaire for Under 20 Year Olds

How Good do you think your local area (Wirral in general for visitors) is:	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor
As a place to live	28%	55%	8%	6%	3%
As a place to shop	23%	47%	14%	12%	4%
As a place for travelling on public transport	29%	49%	12%	7%	3%
As a place for leisure activities / sport and culture	26%	28%	16%	21%	9%
As a safe place to live, work or visit	26%	40%	19%	11%	4%
As a place for education and learning	39%	40%	13%	6%	2%
As a place where there is a good choice of affordable local housing	31%	40%	18%	6%	5%
As a place for good quality, accessible health care	32%	47%	12%	6%	3%

Results of questionnaire for 20 - 64 Year Olds

How Good do you think your local area (Wirral in general for visitors) is:	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor
As a place to live	29%	53%	8%	6%	4%
As a place to shop	24%	49%	13%	10%	4%
As a place for travelling on public transport	29%	50%	12%	6%	3%
As a place for leisure activities / sport and culture	28%	29%	15%	19%	9%
As a safe place to live, work or visit	26%	39%	19%	11%	5%
As a place for education and learning	41%	39%	11%	6%	3%
As a place where there is a good choice of affordable local housing	33%	39%	18%	6%	4%
As a place for good quality, accessible health care	33%	45%	11%	7%	4%

Results of questionnaire for people aged over 64 Years

How Good do you think your local area (Wirral in general for visitors) is:	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor
As a place to live	48%	33%	4%	15%	0%
As a place to shop	17%	46%	8%	20%	9%
As a place for travelling on public transport	30%	46%	9%	9%	6%
As a place for leisure activities / sport and culture	18%	35%	12%	20%	15%
As a safe place to live, work or visit	29%	35%	12%	15%	9%
As a place for education and learning	31%	50%	6%	13%	0%
As a place where there is a good choice of affordable local housing	9%	47%	13%	25%	6%
As a place for good quality, accessible health care	29%	53%	6%	9%	3%

Appendix 3

Progress reports from Community Initiatives Fund for Bidston, Oxtun & Claughton Area Forum

Bidston / Claughton / Oxton

ID	Bid No	Amount Awarded	Received From	Bid Details	Progress Report
213	2	£1,500.00	North Birkenhead Neighbourhood Forum	To purchase/build side stall equipment for community fund raising.	Report received from North Birkenhead Neighbourhood Forum - August 2004: The funding has been used to purchase side stalls and equipment for use at community fund raising events.
245	8	£1,500.00	Laird Street Family Support Centre	To refurbish and redecorate hall to enable the running of extra sessions and possible expansion of project to work with older children.	Report received from Laird Street Family Support Centre, March 2004: The funding has been used to help complete the first stage of the refurbishment of the church hall, which has been to create a kitchenette.
293	9	£2,000.00	Crossways Homework Club	To purchase stationery, computer inks, books and to help towards educational outings and field trips.	Report received from Crossways Homework Club, Mar 2004: The funding has enabled us to give children many opportunities they normally would not have enjoyed. The homework club is used by up to 16-20 children per night using computer facilities, with internet access, reference books, and also books to assist those children with reading difficulties.

ID	Bid No	Amount Awarded	Received From	Bid Details	Progress Report
299	15	£909.00	Birkenhead Woodcraft Folk	To purchase craft materials, equipment hire and to cover some publicity costs for Play Out Project.	Report received from The Birkenhead Woodcraft Folk, Mar 2004: The funding has greatly supported our work, and has meant we could offer the opportunity of outside co-operative play activities to over 1500 children last year.
301	17	£950.00	Beechwood Community Association	To replace obsolete equipment to enable the sewing group classes to continue, and to set up training sessions in needlecraft for young people. Further information on the project included in the bid.	Report received from Beechwood Play and Community Centre, Mar 2004: The funding has been used to purchase sewing equipment. This is an asset to the centre and is enjoyed by both the young and old user groups.
166	22	£1,000.00	St Pauls Womens Groups	To renew equipment and furnishings and meet costs for transport for cultural visits and personal development courses.	The funding was much appreciated and valued by the group.
304	23	£300.00	Birkenhead District Explorer Scouts	To run a basic first aid course, purchase resource material and first aid equipment, as part of training in leadership skills for young people.	Report from Birkenhead District Explorer Scouts - April 2004: The funding has enabled 22 young people to be trained in helping out anyone they may come across in a dangerous or emergency situation.

Appendix 4

General Forum Update

UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2004

Area Forum Attendance

In 2002/3 the average public attendance at a forum meeting was 32, this increased to 37 in 2003/4 - a 15.6% increase.

Community Planning Website

The Council recognises the growth of the number of people who have access to and use the internet, and the importance of e-government. This offers an additional way for people to access information and communicate with the Council, and may attract interest from different client groups, such as young people or people with disabilities.

Therefore we have developed community issues pages on the Council's website, with a link to these on the home page, to enable people to find out more about the services mentioned below. This went "live" in December 2003.

The pages include information on the area forums, roadshows, community initiatives fund, local strategic partnership, local area plans and youth forums
It is also possible to put forward questions for consideration/discussion at the forum meetings.

The community Issues Homepage has been accessed 2777 for the period January – August 2004.

The site address www.wirral.gov.uk/community