

Bidston & Claughton

Area Forum

Area Co-ordinator's Report

Thursday 2nd February 2006

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Section 1**Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising****Minutes - Area Forum (Bidston and Claughton)
Meeting - 3 October 2005**

Present	
Chair	Cllr Denise Roberts
Ward Councillors	JR Cocker , Cllr George Davies , Cllr Steve Foulkes , Ann McLachlan , Cllr Harry Smith
Community Representatives	Rev. Pat Billsborrow (Prenton Churches Together) , Jean McIntosh , Alison Moulder (Bidston Community representative)
Lead Officer	Kevin Miller (Director of Social Services)
Area Service Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray
Birkenhead & Wallasey PCT	Ms C Maddaford (Director of Nursing and Quality)
Merseyside Police	Inspector Mark Smith
Council Officers	Gary Cummings (Area Streetscene Manager) , Rosemary Curtis (Education and Cultural Services) , David Griffith (Senior Inspector, Pupil & Student Support Services) , Jan Johnson (Minute Taker) , Tracey Smith , Jim Thompson (Crime and Disorder Project Officer) , Carol Williams (Endeavour)
In attendance:	Stuart Crompton (Merseyside Fire Service)
Apologies	Graham Cole (Business representative) , Pat Landsborough (Claughton Community Group) , Collette McDonagh (Slatey Road Area Residents Association) , Ray Rowland (Noctorum Residents Association)

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Minute 1 - WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

	The Chair, Councillor Denise Roberts, welcomed forum members and 23 members of the public to the Area Forum for Bidston and Claughton, being held for the first time in the St James' Centre. The Chair informed people that there was a loop system available for anyone with sensory impairment. The meeting would include time for questions and if not able to provide an answer this evening, the Area Co-ordinator Michelle Gray would follow this up and feedback the information to the relevant individual. A round table introduction was held to ensure members of the public were aware who was present.
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Minute 2 - MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

	Minute 3 referred to the Chair of Bidston Rise's Tenants Association's concerns re 'non policing' of their area. As Lead Officer, Kevin Miller had sought clarity on the Forum's behalf and invited Inspector Mark Smith to comment. Inspector Smith clarified that there are six community safety officers that work out of Laird Street. Two cover the Oxton/Claughton area, two cover the Beechwood area and two cover the Noctorum area.
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	<p>Their pattern of working is 8.00 a.m. until midnight. Neighbourhood police officers work until 4.00 a.m. and normal response police officers cover a 24 hour period. Operation Leopard is an initiative currently running aimed at increasing visibility and community involvement. Inspector Smith was invited to attend the next meeting of the Tenants Association on Monday 10 October in the Narrowgate Centre for an exchange of ideas.</p> <p>Peter Crawford reported that he had received useful information from Area Co-ordinator on Electric and Magnetic Fields/pylons and there is ongoing research in this area.</p>
Minute 3 - PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	<p>Councillor Foulkes raised an issue on behalf of a young person regarding the Wreck (Recreation /Playground Tollemache Rd, close to Flaybrick Cemetery). She is very pleased with the layout of this but wanted to know why is it aimed only at a very young age group? Councillor Foulkes asked whether the forum had any thought about the issue of teen shelters?</p> <p>Frank Harrison commented that it did appear to be targeted towards younger children and that it would be useful to try and involve children in Area Forums. It was acknowledged that there is a Youth Forum for each area of the Wirral and work is going on to strengthen their links with the Area Forums. The Area Co-ordinator refers to this on page 38 of her report explaining how we are trying to engage with Youth Forums.</p>
	<p>Minute Decision : Resolved that the Area Co-ordinator to find out further information on Teen Shelters and how they work.</p>
Minute 4 - AREA CO-ORDINATORS REPORT / AREA PLAN UPDATE	
	<p>Michelle Gray, Area Co-ordinator gave an overview of her report, covering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Minutes from the last meeting held on 6 June 2005 and matters arising.- Local updates, including press releases and information relevant to the forum area.- Community Initiative Funding, including a progress report from organisations funded previously; a summary of funding allocated for 2005-6, which was approved by Cabinet on 22nd September. The successful groups should receive the funding at the beginning of October. <p>The Area Co-ordinator informed the forum that a late application had been received from the North Birkenhead Neighbourhood Forum (NBNF), requesting £500 for their Good Food Project, to cover a variety of equipment and materials. There is just over £500 left in the funding budget and the Forum were asked if wished to support this project, or carry over the remaining fund into 2006-7.</p> <p>Pat Billsborrow declared an interest in this. Councillor Smith and Pat Billsborrow commented on the value of projects, such as this that involve young people and encourage healthy eating. The Forum were in favour of supporting this application, but reminded people of the importance of adhering to the deadline in future.</p> <p>Councillor Foulkes observed that communications were improving, with the message getting through about applications to the point where we are</p>

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	<p>fully subscribed and congratulated all involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- An update of progress made in relation to the development of the areas plan, identifying the needs and aspirations of local communities, which is available on the internet. The area plan subgroup, made up of Councillors, Police, Primary Care Trust, Community Reps and other Council Officers, met on 13 September. The group reviewed the plan and decided to concentrate on two themes - Safer Communities and A Healthy and High Quality Environment. If anyone has any comments or feedback please pass these to the Area Co-ordinator by the end of October 2005.- An update on Youth participation work on Wirral over the past six months.- An update on Streetscene.
	<p>Minute Decision :</p> <p>Resolved that a recommendation to approve the application from the NBNF be referred to Cabinet with the next round of funding applications.</p>
Minute 5 - PRESENTATION: BIDSTON AND NORTH BIRKENHEAD ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GROUP	
	<p>Jean McIntosh, Community Representative for Bidston, gave a presentation on the work of the Bidston and North Birkenhead Environmental Action Group (BNBEAG) which aims to provide for a cleaner, better life. The group is a unique partnership between the community, local authority, agencies and 'Partners in Grime'. The partnership includes Wirral Partnership Homes, Groundwork Wirral, Merseyside Police, Wirral Voluntary & Community Sector Network, Wirral Council, Wirral Community Safety Partners, Radio Merseyside, A1 Clearance Company. Jean briefed on work carried out, improvements that have been made and future plans. Actions already undertaken include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Massive Community Clean Ups- Children's Litter Picks- Leaflet and Poster Campaigns- Awareness Presentations- Environmental Awareness Open Days <p>Engaging the community is a top priority and the group encourage people of all ages to contribute.</p> <p>Average expenditure by Birkenhead North Area Housing Office annually reaches £18-22k, however, since June last year, with the end of the BNBEAG Clean Up and start of a poster and leaflet campaign, this figure had dropped to £11,300.</p> <p>Future plans are to continue with tried and tested projects, to introduce new projects and to develop further links and partnerships.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Jean for her interesting and informative presentation and asked if there were any questions from the audience.</p> <p>Q – Member of the public commented on no longer having the free ERIC service. Noted that a lot of household rubbish is accumulating in preparation for 5th November. The arrangement last year was to try and remove as much of this as possible before the event, and asked whether there is anything in place for this year?</p>

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	<p>A – Stuart Crompton, Merseyside Fire Service said there will be a scheme run by the Police and Fire Services within the next week or so to remove as much of this rubbish as possible. The Fire Service policy is that, until 4 November, any rubbish fire reported will be attended to by an appliance. Councillor Davies also confirmed that Area Housing Officers have instructions that, over the next 2 weeks, there would be a blitz. Councillor Smith commented that all dumped rubbish was investigated for evidence and people were regularly fined under a programme of removing rubbish established on a fortnightly basis.</p> <p>Q - Member of public had contacted Streetscene re: rubbish being dumped by contractors at the bottom of Lansdown Road. Could this be removed and the contractors fined?</p> <p>A – Garry Cummings commented that this should have been actioned by now.</p> <p>Jean McIntosh commented that Wirral covers 60 sq miles, with a team of just 58 people from Streetscene and Technical Services. Jean stressed the importance of local communities starting to help themselves in looking after their own areas to make them places to take pride in.</p> <p>Councillor Foulkes briefed that, further to the previous debate about charging for the ERIC service, tipping had increased by 20%, however, that tipping was not bulky items that would have been removed by ERIC, it was mostly builders' rubble. There were issues about people charging to take rubbish away and then just tipping. One encouraging sign this week is the launching of a voluntary organisation called WIRE that will offer a free service to take items and recycle them.</p> <p>Q – A member of the public commented on an individual in Station Road who regularly dumps rubbish.</p> <p>A – Councillor Smith agreed to discuss this matter further following the meeting.</p> <p>Tracey Smith informed the Forum that a representative from WIRE would like to come to all 11 Area Forums to do presentations.</p>
	<p>Minute Decision : Resolved that WIRE be invited to give a presentation at the next meeting of this area forum.</p>
Minute 6 - PRESENTATION: WORKING TOGETHER FOR WIRRAL'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	
	<p>David Griffith, Children's Service Development Manager, Education & Cultural Services gave a presentation on the proposed changes in the way services for children will be organised in Wirral. There is ongoing consultation with groups, organisations, and young people. He would look at proposals, particularly as they would affect Forum areas, and would be happy to answer any questions about any aspect of the consultation over the next 2 months.</p> <p>'Every Child Matters' is the Government document set up following the death of Victoria Climbié. The Childrens Act 2004 instructed all services to work together to deliver the following five key outcomes for children in Wirral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Being Healthy

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- Staying Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Wellbeing

There is also concern in social care circles that many children don't achieve their potential and that better support is necessary between agencies that work with children. The Education & Cultural Services and Children's Services within Social Services are to be combined to form a Children & Young People Department. David reported that the Children and Young People's Plan would be available by the end of this month. It would work in partnership with universal services, such as teachers and GP's and targeted/specialised services such as Youth Offending workers, Paediatricians, etc. The Plan would be to form multi-disciplinary Children's Services Teams of 11 areas in 4 districts. Bidston/Claughton would be one area.

The development team want to know what people think of the proposals, and there is a comments form at the back of the consultation paper, which is also available online. It is important that people should be aware and provide feedback.

Q – Why do actions happen after an event?

A – Lead Officer, Kevin Miller, responded as the existing accountable officer around child protection. It is recognised that the best system in the world cannot accommodate for the fact that there are people who do harm to children. But we all need to work together to try to protect children. David Griffith reported that approximately 80% of children will have no contact with social services, but there are a minority for whom that won't be the case. This could be for a variety of reasons, such as disability or parents have difficulty in looking after them. Advice and parenting skills offered by Sure Start is one form of help that is available.

Councillor Cocker noted that play workers had not been included in the universal services slide and a member of the public stated that it was covering the 0-19 age group.

Q - Teachers having to deal with very large classes mean some children don't get the necessary attention. Have we determined the right class size and can't they be maintained at a lower level?

A – David Griffith confirmed that there were very few classes of more than 30, with many having much smaller numbers. He also pointed out the large group of support available in classrooms with learning mentors, classroom assistants etc. They make a tremendous difference to relationships within the school and to the rate at which some children can learn. He also reported on a protocol that has been devised with the Police to assign a police constable to every school to enable them to get to know school and children in the school.

Q – Would it not be a good idea to teach good citizenship in schools to instil in children a better attitude to society.

A – Citizenship has been included in the Children and Young People's Plan.

Q - How can community members themselves help?

A – Teams would be created at a local level because we want areas to feel a responsibility for the children in that area and be supported by the

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	<p>teams of professionals that are available to them. There will be 19 Children's Centres in Wirral, 10 are planned at the moment and arrangements are being put in place for the other nine. At the end of the process, in 10 years time, we may have 22 centres in Wirral, which would be 1 per ward.</p> <p>The Chair thanked David for his informative presentation.</p>
Minute 7 - PRIMARY CARE TRUST UPDATE	
	<p>Cathy Maddaford, Director of Nursing & Equality at Birkenhead & Wallasey Primary Care Trust (PCT) informed the forum on developments within the PCTs. She reported on two main issues.</p> <p>i. The Department of a Health paper, 'Commissioning a Patient Led NHS' that outlines proposals for the future of the PCT on Wirral. There are currently two PCTs, Birkenhead / Wallasey and Bebington / West Wirral. Their main function is to commission the health needs of the population and to provide services such as health visitors, district nurses, etc. The proposal is combine these and have one Trust covering Wirral. There will be a public consultation and the PCTs will be seeking your views on that.</p> <p>ii. A public consultation on an initiative called 'Your health, Your Care, Your Say'. Cathy made copies of this available for feedback and comment. Following the consultation the Government would produce the new legislation on integrated health and social care.</p> <p>The Lead Officer confirmed that, over the next few months, the title would become familiar and the more comments people can provide to feedback as part of the consultation the better.</p> <p>Frank Harrison commented that strategic agencies should be thanked for involving and seeking the views of the communities.</p>
Minute 8 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<p>The Chair thanked everyone for coming, the speakers for their presentations, and the St James' Centre for the use of the building. If anyone wants a brief word with members of the Forum they would be available directly following the meeting.</p> <p>Q – Does anyone know anything about a major development in Bidston Village, around Lennox Lane? A – Councillor Cocker responded that he was not aware of this, but would ask through the planning system. Councillor Foulkes informed of the update on the local development framework available on the website.</p> <p>Q – Is there any news on Housing Market Renewal (HMR)? A – Councillor Davies confirmed that HMR would be available in November. Fiveways Tranmere, Crossways, Tranmere and North End being the three priorities.</p> <p>Q – Would there be an archeological survey on site of the proposed new houses by St James Church? A – Please speak to Councillor Cocker after the meeting.</p> <p>Michelle raised a question on behalf of a Noctorum resident on the issue of an unadopted footway on Noctorum Road that is in need of some attention and agreed to forward this to David Green for action to be</p>

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	taken. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 2 February at the Discovery Centre, Noctorum. There will be a presentation from WIRE and if anybody has any suggestions for further presentations please get in touch with Michelle Gray, on 0151 691 8213 or michellegray@wirral.gov.uk
	Minute Decision : Resolved that: i. Councillor Cocker to check the planning system re: major development in Bidston Village ii the Area Co-ordinator to forward a request for action on Noctorum Road footway to David Green.

Matters arising/additional information;

Area Forum October, Minute 3 – Public Question Time/matters arising

Teen Shelters

- Mention of “Teen Shelters” – for further information the contact is Mr Roger Calvert, Client Services Manager, Education & Cultural Services, Parks and Open Spaces Division. Tel 0151 637 6008 or email at rogercalvert@wirral.gov.uk. Roger will be happy to speak to any individual or groups about “Teen Shelters”.

Noctorum Road

- I’ve been informed that money has been made available to bring the few remaining "Full Cost" Footways up to adoption standard and NOCTORUM ROAD is one of them. However 1st course of action would be to liaise with all the residents to see if an upgrade is wanted by everybody effected. Then if agreed by all we would then look into the practicalities of the works such as surface/water/drainage etc. Further advice or information is available from Mr Shaun Brady, Technical Services, Highway Maintenance Division. Tel 0151 606 2429 or email at shaunbrady@wirral.gov.uk.

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Local Updates

Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership (a partnership of key members from the council, police, health, private and voluntary and community sectors) has a lead role to play in supporting the delivery of the themes listed below and in planning existing services better to deliver their vision for the people of Wirral.

They have undertaken a lot of work over the last 12 months to ensure that they are focusing on those areas that matter most to local people. They have updated their first community strategy to keep it in line with the views and priorities of local people, focusing on those issues that you have said will make Wirral a better place both now and in the future.

Wirral's second community strategy "*Getting Better Together 2005 - 2008*", sets out all that they will be doing over the next three years to make Wirral a better place where people will want to live, work, visit and invest.

Based on your views they have agreed to focus on the following four main themes, and these will be adopted by the area forums to enable them to link into the community strategy:

- ◆ **Worklessness** – *We want all residents of Wirral to have access to well paid jobs. We want to ensure a range of opportunities and training are open to all of our communities, supporting work as an option and the development of an enterprise culture where local businesses are supported and entrepreneurship is encouraged.*
- ◆ **Cohesive and Sustainable Communities** – *We want to make Wirral a place that people are proud of, where all of our communities are safe and supported and where our young people are given the best possible start in life to achieve their potential and secure their futures.*
- ◆ **A Quality Environment** – *We want to make Wirral a clean, green, attractive borough, and through working with, and supporting our local communities, we will protect and improve the built environment, ensuring Wirral is a place where people want to live, work and visit.*
- ◆ **Access and Equity** – *We want to make Wirral a place where all people can easily access services and local facilities such as shops and healthcare. We want our communities to be empowered and involved in local decisions affecting local services and where all people in all areas have similar life chances.*

Wirralbiz - Open for Everyone

BUDDING entrepreneurs throughout Wirral will gain a helping hand in setting up their own business as a new start-up service was officially opened on 20th September.

Wirralbiz developed from a Business Start programme last year by Wirral Waterfront, with funding from the Northwest Development Agency, has proved so successful that it has been extended throughout Wirral, after attracting further support from Merseyside's Objective One Programme and Wirral Council.

The Wirralbiz programme is provided free-of-charge to anyone who wants to start their own business in Wirral, regardless of their employment status, age, sex, disability or ethnic origin, and will be delivered from the new Wirralbiz centre at Egerton House in Tower Road, Birkenhead.

The service provides full support beginning with awareness events for those with no experience of running their own business. This is followed by informal workshops and one-to-one advice to build business skills.

Based on an individual's specific needs and the proposed location of the new business, grants of between £500 and £2000 are also available. After the business has started trading, further mentoring and monitoring is provided, to help it develop as planned for the first 18 months.

Wirral's Mayor, Councillor Chris Meaden, is looking forward to officially opening the service. She said: "Wirral has always been a hotbed of new business ideas, and Wirralbiz is just what is needed to help our next generation of entrepreneurs onto the road to success. I am delighted to have been invited to open such an exciting initiative."

Mike Raworth, who will be leading the delivery of the wirralbiz programme, added: "This is a great opportunity for anyone in Wirral with a business idea to turn their dream into reality."

And Phil Smith, General Manager of Egerton House, described the new wirralbiz centre "as an exciting time for Egerton House to again be the centre for Wirral business development."

The office alterations and the opening event have been sponsored by Egerton House (Wirral) Limited.

- **For more information, telephone Wirralbiz on 0845 456 1796 or call in to Egerton House, Wirral**

Neighbourhood Project Update

Introduction

The Chief Constable, Bernard Hogan Howe, has called for a review of Merseyside Police's current Neighbourhood Policing model in order that we develop it to meet the needs of the community, and ultimately become the best police force in the country.

In 2001 Merseyside first started to adopt a Neighbourhood model of policing with the aim of putting local, identifiable communities at the heart of our business. We now need to take this philosophy a step further. The review has been asked to pay particular attention to the following-

Project Objectives

- Deliver Neighbourhood Policing through values, citizen focus, standards and performance
- Rewrite the Force Crime and Anti Social Behaviour Strategy (Can Do) to encompass appropriate standards for service delivery
- Deliver on our calls for service through a clearer call grading policy and a Neighbourhood aligned response function
- Ensure every community of Merseyside has an identifiable officer who is contactable, locally knowledgeable and accountable

National Drivers

Nationally the Home Secretary Charles Clarke MP has stated that the country needs "a much more responsive police service with neighbourhood policing at the centre". Merseyside is committed to becoming a more responsive police force and already has Neighbourhood Policing at the heart of our business.

To improve our responsiveness to citizen and community needs the review will also involve Implementing the Home Offices Quality of Service commitment that sets out five key goals

1. Making it easy to contact the police
2. Providing a professional and high quality service
3. Dealing with initial enquiries from the public
4. Keeping people informed
5. Ensuring the public voice counts

Benefits to Public and Partners

The current plans involve developing the following improvements to our service-

- Police Officers will be dedicated to each electoral ward of Merseyside. This will give the public and local partners a greater level of service and contact than at present.
- Greater number of officers dedicated to responding to emergency and non-emergency calls for service.
- A police service that is based on values, performance, communities and standards that is meaningful to the public because they help set them and hold us to account.
- The policing of Merseyside will centre on achieving a professional service that promotes and builds public confidence and satisfaction.

The review is currently consulting with groups across Merseyside in order that we capture opinion from all communities. We will update you in the near future about the findings of this consultation and go into greater detail about how Merseyside Police is changing to improve its service

Section 2

Local Updates

It's Your Call – More Power in the Wirral's Hands to Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour

A new, dedicated actionline was launched today by the Home Office and Wirral Council to help local residents tackle anti-social behaviour and create a safer community.

The area is one of 47 specially appointed action zones around the country to offer the It's Your Call actionline. The new service will make it easier for local people to report anti-social behaviour and aims to increase access to council services, tackling problems such as nuisance neighbours, vandalism or graffiti.

Wirral Council has made a commitment to step up its response to anti-social behaviour by taking part in the Home Office initiative.

Home Office Minister Hazel Blears said:

"What we're saying today is simple – It's Your Call. Pick up the phone and make a difference. Together we can tackle anti-social behaviour. We have made good progress in tackling the unacceptable behaviour of the minority of people and reclaiming our communities for the law-abiding majority. We have brought in whole range of tools that are aimed at improving and modifying anti-social behaviour from acceptable behaviour contracts to parenting orders - providing the means and the expertise for police and local agencies to improve our communities and the lives of the people in them".

"But there is still more to do. We need the people of the Wirral to play their part too and take some responsibility for where they live. Engaging local people is vital to create strong communities and tackle unacceptable behaviour which can destroy people's quality of life and ruin neighbourhoods.

"It's Your Call is a new drive to bring public services and local people closer together, putting power in the hands of local people to get things done. The Wirral has made a clear commitment to step up their response to anti-social behaviour and I want people in these areas to come forward and report what is bothering them, make a call that makes a difference, and help make our communities better places to live."

Steve Maddox, Chief Executive of Wirral Council, said:

"By being part of It's Your Call, we are bringing the services that we as a local authority offer and the people of the Wirral closer together in a bid to tackle anti-social behaviour. The actionline enables residents to play their part and have a greater say in how they are governed and policed, and we are very proud to be involved in the scheme."

Advertising promoting the actionline number – 0151 606 2020 – will be displayed throughout the Wirral and residents will receive flyers through their letterboxes. Follow-up cards that explain what action has been taken on specific issues will be delivered.

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Recycling Update

Helplist - Assistance to elderly/disabled people who are unable to carry their full recycle bags? Streetscene do offer a service to register you need to contact Streetscene and ask to be put on the "help list" 0151 606 2004 or email streetscene@wirral.gov.uk

Collection Days - The following link provides an online database of collection days, simply enter the road name and it will give the option of paper, garden waste or refuse collection days. It will show a collection calendar for the particular service which can then be printed out by clicking the print button to the top right of the calendar. www.wirral.gov.uk/be/recycling or 0151 606 2004 or streetscene@wirral.gov.uk Cheshire Lines Building Canning Street, Birkenhead CH41 1ND

Wirral Council - has expanded its kerbside collection services over recent years with the introduction of the Garden Waste Collection Service and the Tranmere/Rock Ferry Box Scheme. In the next 12 months things are set to be further improved with the construction of a new integrated waste facility being developed by Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority on the former incinerator site at Bidston. The facility is set to transform the way in which residents in the area dispose of their waste. The new integrated the facility will be the first of its kind for domestics waste on Merseyside and will comprise of the following:

Materials Recycling Facility - A new facility that will be able to sort and separate dry recyclable materials (paper, cardboard, plastics, cans, glass etc..) The separated streams of materials can then be further processed into recycled products.

In-vessel Composting Facility - In-vessel composting takes place in sealed vessels where the temperature and humidity are controlled to produce compost from garden waste. The vessels will also be able to process unwanted kitchen food waste.

Household Waste Recycling Centre - a new centre will provide the public with access to recycle a range of household items. This facility is already available to the public.

Visitor Centre - A centre that will provide educational and awareness programmes for local schools colleges and the local community. The new facility should allow Wirral Council to collect recyclable materials from Wirral residents 'co mingled' in one container. The materials that will be included for kerbside collections are likely to be glass, cans, paper, card and plastic.

Section 2

Local Updates

Wirral Independent Re-cycling Enterprise Furnishing Lives...

WIRE - Wirral Independent Recycling Enterprise - based in Wallasey, is a new and exciting social enterprise which aims to use unwanted furniture for the benefit of people across Wirral.

WIRE works by collecting items of unwanted furniture, free of charge, from any residence in the Wirral. The items are then taken to the WIRE warehouse in Kelvinside where their condition is assessed and any items that need it are repaired or restored. This work is undertaken by furniture restoration experts who are also qualified trainers. They lead a team of trainees – many of whom are long-term unemployed - who benefit by learning valuable, new skills and getting crucial work experience. Together, the team brings items up to a usable standard.

The furniture is then made available to individuals and families who are referred via Social Services, Sure Start, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic Children's Society, the Ark Homeless project, the Citizen's Advice Bureau and up to sixteen other agencies that are in touch with socially and economically excluded people right across Wirral.

Providing this furniture has a remarkable impact on the quality of life of Wirral residents who would not otherwise be able to acquire decent furniture. For them, it turns a flat, room or house into a real home.

Laurence McIver, Operations Manager for WIRE said: 'With WIRE everyone wins - Wirral residents who have no further use for their furniture but have limited options as to how to dispose of it, disadvantaged people who have similarly limited options for creating a comfortable home and those looking for a way back into work whose options are limited due to lack of experience, illness or disability. WIRE helps to tackle all these issues in one project – it is joined-up thinking in action!'

WIRE is aiming to become integrated with Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council's ERIC service, which is the Council's own Bulky Household Waste collection service, in order to help meet the recycling targets set by European and National directives. This integration will mean an estimated increase of up to 30% in the amount of bulky household waste being diverted away from landfill – making a significant improvement in the protection of our local environmental resources.

In order to help to raise funds, items of furniture are offered for sale to members of the public at a very reasonable cost, which aids families and individuals on low or fixed incomes but who are not eligible for support by Social Services or the charitable sector to gain access to quality furniture which would otherwise be out of their reach

For more information regarding the activity of WIRE, then please contact WIRE on: 0151 638 6691. You can also e-mail: info@wire-ltd.com or visit the organisation at Units 12 – 14 Kelvinside, Wallasey CH44 7JY.



Make a Promise for World Environment Day

Last year, over 3,000 Action Earth volunteers made pledges for World Environment Day. They were joined by thousands of other supporters in England and Wales who together have made real environmental changes.

As well as registering for Environment Agency Action Earth, why not make a “promise” to do something practical for World Environment Day 2006. Held on 5th June each year, World Environment Day is a people’s event with global participation. All over the world the day is celebrated with activities including street rallies, recycling and clean-up campaigns, concerts and tree planting.

The Environment Agency will be asking businesses and individuals to make an environmental promise and they want your help. Details about how ‘you can promise the earth’ will be sent to you soon so please pass the message on and together we can make a difference!

So what are you waiting for?

Fill in your project registration form and return it as soon as possible. You will be notified if your application for a grant has been successful within 3 weeks of receiving your application. The aim is to provide grants to all Action Earth projects but if response is high, grants will be allocated on a first come first serve basis, so please register your project quickly. (This letter and Project Registration Form can be photocopied and passed onto another group).

Please ensure that the Project Registration Form is completed fully.

If you do not get a response within 3 weeks of sending your registration form then please call 0121 328 7455. If you have any questions or wish to discuss project ideas then please contact me on 0121 328 7455.

Naseem Akhtar - Action Earth Co-ordinator, Environment Agency Action Earth
Tele: 0121 328 7455 Email: naseem@csvgenvironment.org.uk

Organised by

Supported by



Letssalvageit.com

DON'T TRAVEL TO TIP – SURF TO SALVAGE!

LETSSALVAGEIT.COM SAVES UNWANTED ITEMS FROM BECOMING UNNECESSARY LANDFILL

letssalvageit.com, a website which advertises unwanted items for free for others to pick up and re-use has proved a hit with the environmentally-conscious, just one week after its launch. So attractive is this alternative to paying the council for removal, taking the items to the municipal dump or trying to sell them for a minimal return that nearly 100 people registered on the site within two days of it going live. The first item was salvaged within an hour of it being added to the site's inventory.

Elaine Clark, founder and director of Letsdev Limited who set up the site, believes that letssalvageit.com provides a welcome solution to a common problem. "Whether as a result of moving house, fitting a new kitchen, clearing out the loft, buying new furniture or treating yourself to a new television, there are always items that become unwanted or unnecessary. "At this time of year especially, with Christmas on the way, people often get new furniture delivered or need to clear some clutter to make space for all the presents that they and their family will receive.

"More often than not, all of these items still have life left in them, or would at least be good for parts. And more often than not, they end up as landfill – with their owners having paid the council to take them away.

"letssalvageit.com is a greener, cheaper and hassle-free solution – advertise items for free and let someone take them away, perhaps for re-use, perhaps for re-invention. And, of course, while people are visiting our site, they might find something they need or could put to good use."

In its first week the site was responsible for helping a disabled lady find a washing machine. Her machine had just broken down and, with a large family and Christmas coming, she just couldn't afford to buy another one.

Any item can be advertised on the site from toasters, kettles and curtains to white goods, brown goods and interiors, such as doors, windows and fire surrounds.

Because letssalvageit.com is internet based, its audience is national, providing for a wide variety of items and a massive amount of potential salvagers. The site is not an internet messageboard, and protects its users' privacy, ensuring that only the potential salvager contacts the advertiser.

Visit www.letssalvageit.com For further Information contact: Elaine Clark, Letsdev Limited, 07840 755258 or mail elaineclark@letsdev.com



The Access to Learning & Employment Project

A4e have recently secured ESF Funding to provide training in the pathways areas – these include: NVQs in : Business Admin, Elderly Care, Retail, Customer Service, Horticulture, Warehousing & Distribution and Childcare. We also offer Health & Safety Training and IT Training. We offer practical work experience in numerous locations including private, public and voluntary sector.

The programme is aimed at any unemployed person aged between 16 and 63 whether or not they are in receipt of benefits : persons who are already volunteering could benefit from NVQ to prove their competence. Anyone who has been long term unemployed could build up their confidence and motivation by learning new skills and meeting people in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. They could be placed on work experience close to their home in the heart of the community. If successful in obtaining employment the training does not stop until they achieve their goals. This is a two year programme, purely voluntary and last a minimum of 6 hours and maximum of 15 hours.

We are able to pay expenses for travel and childcare if appropriate

For more information call ESF Project Team on 0151 652 8373

(some eligibility restrictions may apply)

'PlayLikeBrazil'

'PlayLikeBrazil' is Wirral's first Brazillian Soccer School and Coaching Academy. The idea is the brainchild of two local Wirral businessmen, Allan Maldon and John MacCarfrae, who have devised an ingenious way to help develop the education, skills and talents of local youngsters. Along with their team of professionally qualified coaches and training team, they offer a soccer-themed educational programme designed to build strong and positive relationships and promote good citizenship in the local community.

The exciting and flamboyant Brazilian style of football is embodied in the art of Futebol de Salão and this forms the basis for their innovative, soccer-themed educational package that is designed to engage young people aged between 5 and 15. By taking part in a programme of activities, boys and girls not only have the opportunity to develop their soccer skills, but also to attain Key Stage & Key Skill units linked into the UK National Curriculum that can be delivered in curriculum or non-curriculum time.

'PlaylikeBrazil' are collaborating with local schools and community groups across Wirral to help build strong and positive relationships and promote a sense of belonging, including Wirral Wardens, Beechwood Community Centre and representatives from Wirral Borough Council, Community Sports Development Unit.

For further information about the PLAYLIKEBRAZIL product offer, go to their website at

www.playlikebrazil.com or contact Allan Maldon on 0151 630 2368 or John MacCarfrae on 07939 201206.

Vital transport funding is announced for Wirral

Press Release 14 Dec 2005

VITAL funding has been secured by Wirral Council to support transport improvement schemes across the borough over the next 12 months.

More than £5m has been awarded to the local authority from central government following a successful bid from the Merseyside Local Transport Plan which covers the period from 2006 to 2011. The annual settlement pays for schemes aimed at improving transport and supporting the economic regeneration of Wirral.

A total of £3.215m will enable junction and traffic management improvements and enhanced facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. An additional £2.5m has also been allocated to Wirral for the resurfacing and upgrading of roads, pavements and bridges as part of the borough's annual structural maintenance programme for next year.

Last year's funding has already seen a number of key schemes, including the signalling of Arrowe Park roundabout, being given the go-ahead in the borough. In addition the completion of Saughall Massie Bypass and improvements to the junction of Thornton Common Road and Clatterbridge Road, were among recent work carried out by Council highway engineers.

Director of Technical Services at Wirral Council, David Green said: "The Local Transport Plan is already bringing about improvements to our transport network. This money will now provide us with a guaranteed income to continue the good work over the next twelve months.

Major schemes under consideration for development over coming years include the electrification of the Bidston to Wrexham Borderlands railway line. A road safety scheme is also being drawn up for the introduction of a roundabout at Thurstaston crossroads.

Equally as important as these large schemes are the smaller projects. Future LTP projects in the region will put an even greater emphasis on helping people make everyday journeys more easily – whether by bus, train, car, bike or on foot. Work is also anticipated to start in 2006/07 to improve the management of traffic at the junction of Gorse Lane and Dock Road in Wallasey."

Results from consultations carried out in 2005

The Community Planning Team produced a questionnaire for the Tranmere Show, Wirral Show and the Wirral Voluntary & Community Sectors Network (WVCSN) Annual Conference held in 2005, 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).

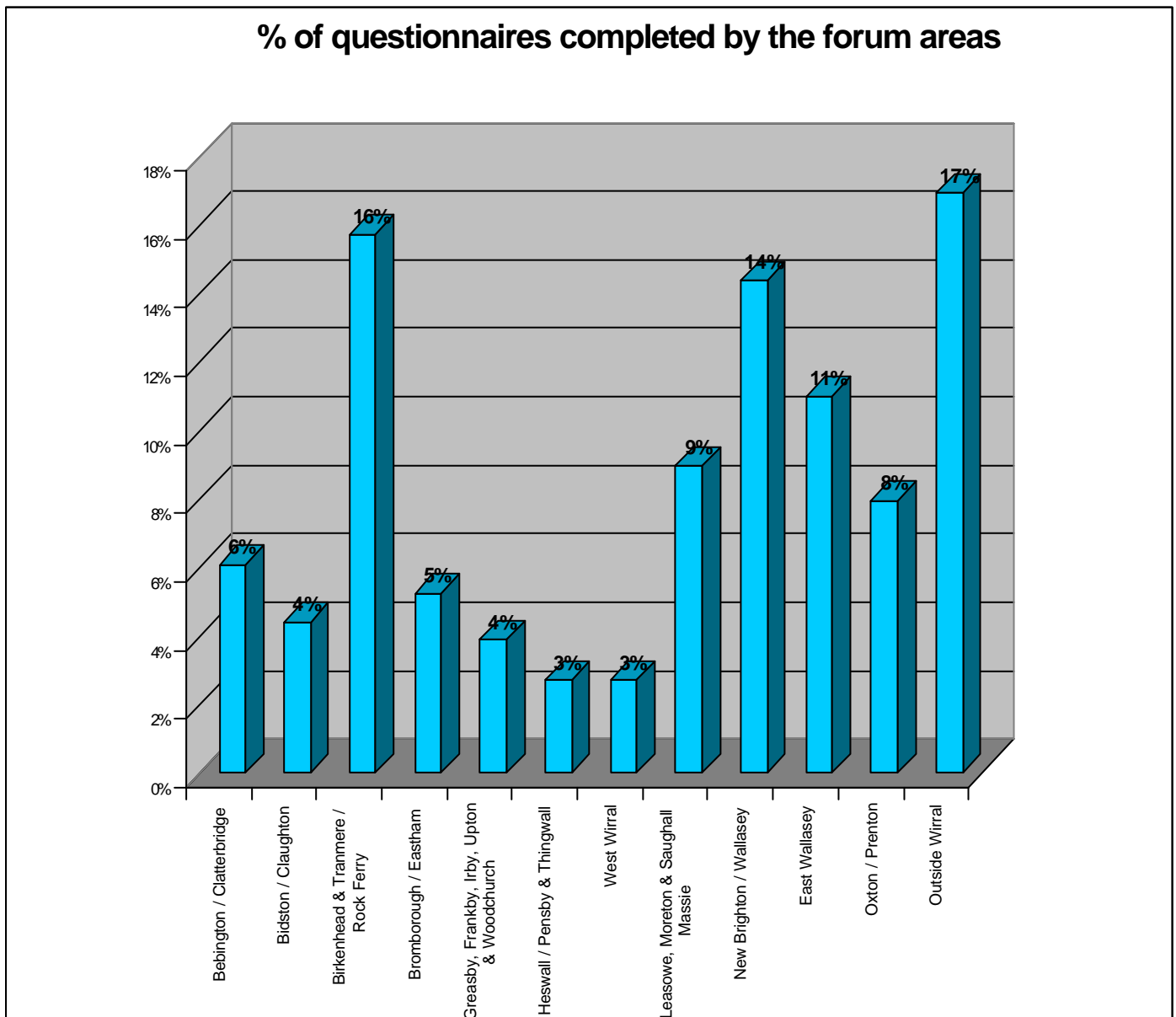
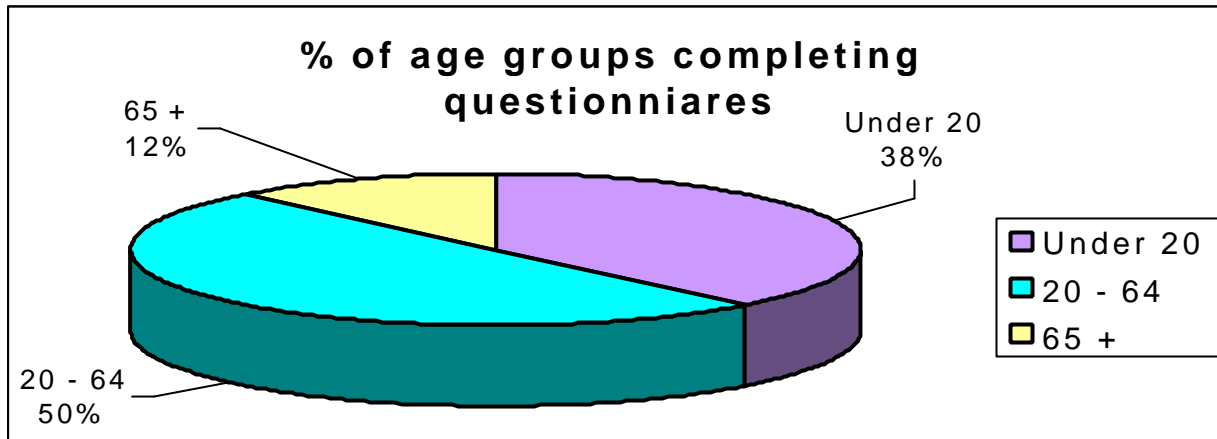
We received 611 completed questionnaires, 116 from the Tranmere Show, 451 from the Wirral Show, and 44 from the WVCSN Conference. 36% of these were completed by Under 20's, 53% were completed by 20-64 year olds and 11% were completed by over 64 year olds.

9% of those completing the questionnaires requested further information on community representatives, and 20% 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.

Section 2

Local Updates



Section 2

Local Updates

Results of questionnaires, for all age groups, to the following:

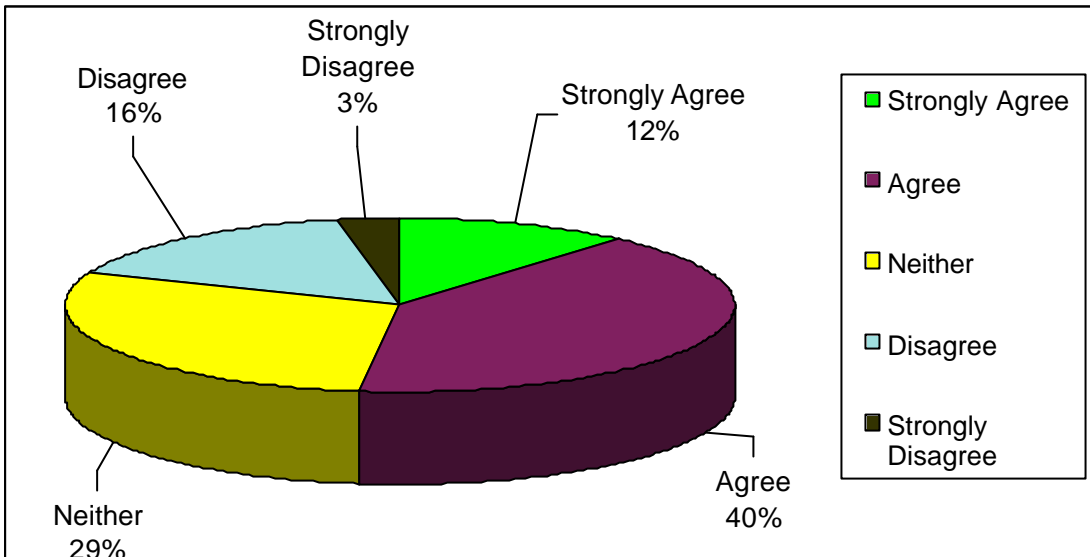
How well do you think the area where you live (within 10 minutes walk of your home) is for....

	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor
Transport (buses and trains etc.)?	39%	47%	5%	7%	2%
Local Services (shops, libraries, doctors etc.)?	36%	50%	8%	4%	1%
Jobs and Training (access to local jobs, variety of training courses available etc.)?	14%	39%	33%	12%	2%
The Environment (parks, open spaces, clean streets etc.)?	26%	43%	12%	15%	3%
Your Safety (crime levels, anti-social behaviour, road safety etc.)?	17%	42%	17%	17%	7%
Community Facilities (playschemes, youth clubs, luncheon clubs etc.)?	16%	37%	23%	16%	8%

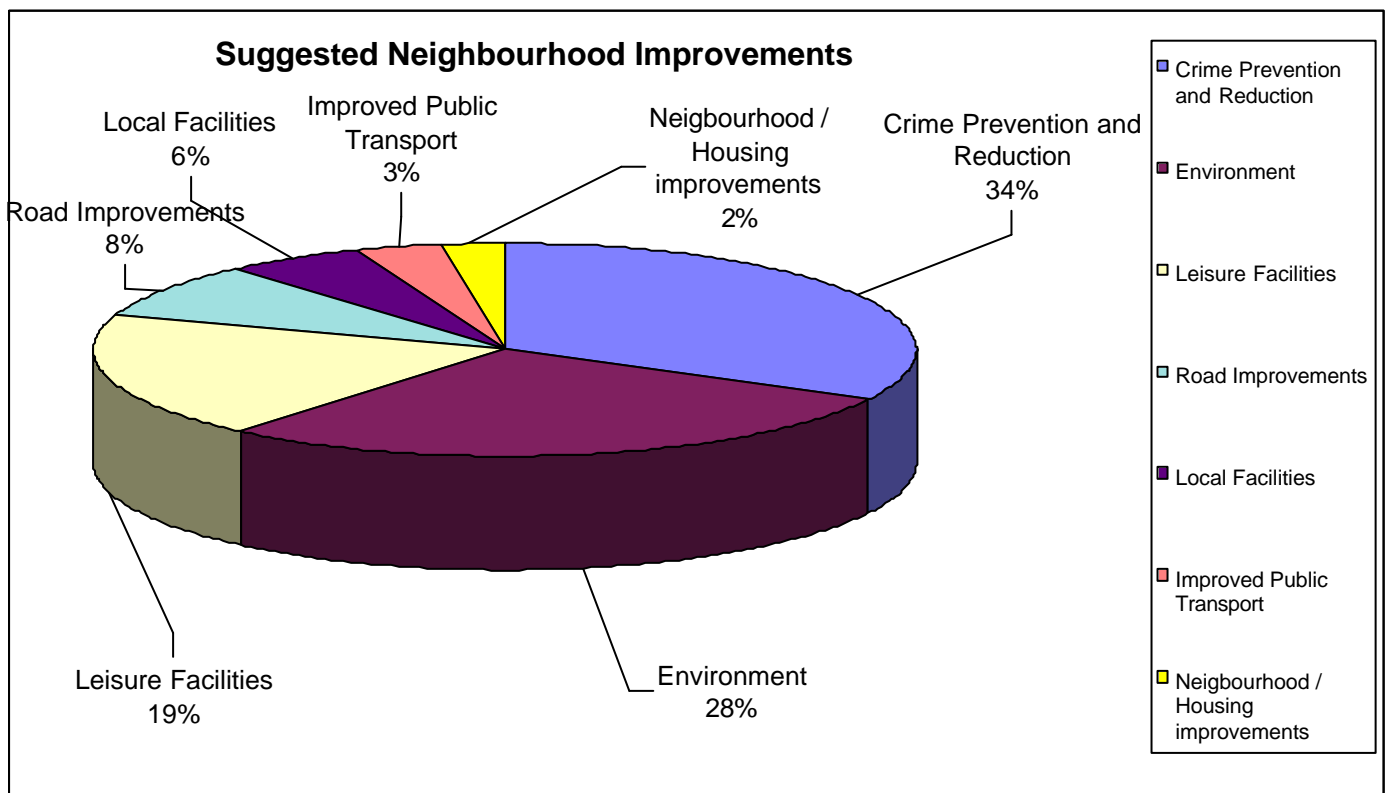
Section 2

Local Updates

Would you say that your neighbourhood has improved as a place to live over the past two years?



What do you think would be the best improvement to make your neighbourhood a better place to live?



Section 2

Local Updates

Results of questionnaires from the Bidston & Claughton Forum area to the following:
How well do you think the area where you live (within 10 minutes walk of your home) is for....

<i>Under 20 year olds</i>	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor
Transport (buses and trains etc.)	27%	47%	0%	13%	13%
Local Services (shops, libraries, doctors etc.)	25%	67%	8%	0%	0%
Jobs and Training (access to local jobs, variety of training courses available etc.)	43%	43%	14%	0%	0%
The Environment (parks, open spaces, clean streets etc.)	30%	20%	15%	10%	25%
Your Safety (crime levels, anti-social behaviour, road safety etc.)	33%	50%	8%	8%	0%
Community Facilities (playschemes, youth clubs, luncheon clubs etc.)	40%	33%	7%	20%	0%

20 – 64 year olds	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor
Transport (buses and trains etc.)	31%	38%	6%	13%	13%
Local Services (shops, libraries, doctors etc.)	20%	50%	20%	10%	0%
Jobs and Training (access to local jobs, variety of training courses available etc.)	6%	44%	38%	6%	6%
The Environment (parks, open spaces, clean streets etc.)	31%	23%	23%	15%	8%
Your Safety (crime levels, anti-social behaviour, road safety etc.)	0%	69%	8%	8%	15%
Community Facilities (playschemes, youth clubs, luncheon clubs etc.)	25%	6%	38%	31%	0%

Over 64 year olds	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor
Your Safety (crime levels, anti-social behaviour, road safety etc.)	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%

Section 2

Local Updates

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

February 2006

Area Forum

Proposed Supplementary Planning Document **Designing for Development by Mobile Phone Operators**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) can provide advice on adopted planning policies in the Unitary Development Plan and the emerging Local Development Framework. Once adopted it would be a material consideration when determining planning applications.
- 1.2 Following initial consultation during November and December 2005, the Council is now in the process of preparing a draft Supplementary Planning Document to provide guidance on how policy for mobile phone masts and other telecommunications apparatus will be implemented.

2. The Proposed Supplementary Planning Document

- 2.1 It is intended that the draft SPD will be structured to provide advice under six main topics:
- Legal Background;
 - Policy Context & Objectives
 - Siting, Appearance & Design;
 - Health Issues;
 - Pre-Application Discussions & Consultation; and
 - Information to be submitted with Applications.
- 2.2 The first two sections would identify the legal parameters, the policy context and local objectives that would be relevant for determining proposals by mobile phone operators.
- 2.3 The section on siting, appearance and design would provide advice on how the policy requirement for keeping the environmental impact to a minimum would be implemented.

Section 2

Local Updates

- 2.4 National planning policy in relation to health issues is outlined. The Government's firm view is that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. Nevertheless, applicants will be expected to certify that all new base stations would comply with guidelines set by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection.
- 2.5 The SPD would also identify information that should be produced by operators for pre-application consultation and when an application is made.

3. Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 3.1 This appraises the potential effects of introducing the proposed SPD on the social, economic and environmental objectives.

4. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 4.1 A more intensive check on the environmental consequences that may arise from introducing the proposed SPD has been undertaken, in consultation with English Heritage, English Nature, the Environment Agency and the Countryside Agency.
- 4.2 Following advice from the Countryside Agency, the Council has determined that a full environmental report is required into the effect on the SPD on the Borough's Landscape.

5. Consultation Arrangements

- 5.1 When the draft SPD has been prepared, all addresses on the Council's Local Development Framework data base will be contacted, along with members of the Area Forums, local amenity societies and the telecommunications operators.
- 5.2 There will be a local press advertisement and a six week period will be given for public comment in writing.

The results of the public consultation will be used to inform the process of preparing the final document and reported to the Council before adoption of the SPD is approved.

Section 3**Area Forum Funding**

Bidston and Claughton

Amount Awarded	Received From	Bid Details	Progress Report
£100.00	Wirral Family Friends	To purchase a laptop and TV/Video/DVD player.	Report received from Wirral Family Friends - September 2005: The funding was used to purchase a tv/dvd/vcr that has been put to great use in training sessions with our volunteers. The remainder was used towards the purchase of a laptop, and has been used to deliver PowerPoint presentations which were well received.
£1,000.00	Groundwork Wirral	To help towards the cost of engaging an artist to work on Brassey Gardens, a new and exciting recreational space for children to play in.	Report received from Groundwork Wirral - September 2005: The art work will be carried out by Rebecca Ball-Bryson and will consist of six panels to be viewed from two windows, thus screening an otherwise unattractive view.
£700.00	Power House Youth Centre (Beechwood)	To employ a learning mentor to assist the IT facilitator in creating a Homework Club.	Report received from Power House Youth Centre (Beechwood Community Trust) - September 2005: The Homework club has been created and has 35 members.
£1,500.00	Claughton Community	To contribute to advertising, setting up and administrative costs and equipment for a summer camp.	Report received from Claughton Community Group - September 2005: The scheme attracted well in excess of 200 registrations and ran throughout August and targeted 8-12 year olds. Most sessions accommodated around 40 children.

General Information**Area Forums**

One of the main tasks of the area forum has been to produce an area plan that reflects the needs and issues of local people. The Plan has been in circulation for some time. The boundary changes that took place meant the information contained in the core section of the plan was not complete and truly reflective of the new forum areas. In addition to this, a review of the Community Strategy produced a refreshed version that changed their eight themes into four revised crosscutting themes.

These 'refreshed' themes are now included in the Area Co-ordinator's reports under local issues. The next steps were to then 'merge' the issues section of the area plan to reflect the new themes within the Community Strategy.

However, with Wirral's involvement in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) pilot, the Local Strategic Partnership has agreed to merge its Community Strategy with the themes of the LAA (which are very similar in nature to the LAA and the LAA will now in effect become the delivery plan of the community strategy) and we will work towards aligning the area plans with this.

As part of the Government's drive to increase Vibrant Local Leadership, Citizen Engagement and Public Services, we are continuously looking for ways in which we can improve area forums, how they operate, the outcomes they deliver and the number of people involved in local decision making.

Ideas/suggestions

- Identify 2 or 3 groups within each ward and visit them to promote the work of the area forums (parents & tots groups, schools/colleges, disabled groups etc) via Councillors and WVCSN
- Promote area forums more effectively including area plans (libraries, One Stop Shops, estate agents, Woodside Tourist Centre, doctors etc)
- Community Planning to be included in Councillors mailing list (ie: newsletters) so that they are more aware of the issues local people are raising with their ward councillors and feeding this information into the area plans
- More involvement in the Police Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAG) and assessing how these can be effectively linked to the area forums

Local Area Agreements

Wirral has been chosen as a pilot area for the next round of LAA's. The purpose is to build much stronger links between central government and local partners with outcomes, objectives and targets set for the next 3 years. Key priorities for Wirral have already been established within the Community Strategy and partners own plans and strategies such as the Council's Corporate Plan, and the task now is to

Section 4

Local Area Plan

draw these priorities together and establish if there are any gaps and include some new additions if necessary.

The aim is to bring together LAA's and Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) to deliver local solutions to local issues. There is NO additional money with the LAA (apart from a reward grant for delivering 'stretch' on certain targets which replaces the previous LPSA regime) but this is an opportunity for Wirral to achieve more with given/current resources. Basically, the aim is to 'pool' or align current resources across partner organisations. Within the LAA, Government have identified four 'Blocks' as priority areas, and the Council – with their partners in the LSP – have identified key officers to lead on each one, they are:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| • Safer and Stronger Communities | Alan Stennard |
| • Healthier Communities and Older People | John Webb |
| • Children and Young People | Chris Batman |
| • Economic Development and Enterprise | Kevin Adderley |

Area Plan

By modifying the area plan to include the LAA themes it will become in effect a 'mini LAA' and it is anticipated from April 2007 this will be used in the Council's planning process and work will be undertaken to ensure that they influence the plans and strategies of partner organisations. The aim is for the priorities within the area plan to 'influence' key decision makers when they are planning budgets for the coming year. It will also feed into the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) overarching Community Strategy/LAA.

Ideas/suggestions for inclusion in the plan

- Info on ward based CCTV
- Updated recycling info
- Safer Wirral update (Sept 05)
- Census info, need to specify/include more about sample 2007 and 2009
- Include relevant CIF applications in issues section showing how funding has contributed to priority areas
- Full profile of ward members / key partners of the forum
- Include feedback from Councillors surgeries in area plan

Community Initiatives Fund

Once the area plan is complete, and following further work and gaining Cabinet approval, it could be that a proportion of CIF is allocated to 'target' areas / projects that the forum feel would contribute to progress and improve the quality of life for local people. Another way to support groups could be by 'goodwill / in kind' gestures which would further support the achievement of priorities identified within the area plan. For example, if the forum identified areas where trees, benches, bins etc were needed and could then obtain these by way of 'donations' from Technical Services - we could then commission a local group in that area to place / plant them. Once again, this idea will require further work, particularly through liaising with departments and partner organisations to put this into effect, but the area forums thoughts on these proposals is sought prior to advancing this further.

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CRIME

• **Victim Inclusion Project**

Are you a parent of or do you work with children / young people that have been affected by crime aged 8-13? If so the VIP may be able to offer support. This is a voluntary project, that has been set up to support young people affected by anti social behaviour, crime, domestic violence & bullying among other issues. Any one involved with the young person who feels they would benefit from this service can refer to us.

If the service is accepted the young person will be allocated a Victim Inclusion Worker. The young person will receive one on one support, with a individual programme designed to meet their needs.

If you would like more information or a referral form please contact Eddie Patterson on 929 7756

This service is offered through Wirral Youth Offending Service and the Children's Fund.

• **Youth Inclusion Support Project**

Are you a parent of or do you work with children / young people that may get involved with crime or anti social behaviour aged 5-13? If so YISP may be able to offer some support.

This is a voluntary project, set up with Wirral YOS and the Children's Fund. It has been set up to prevent young people getting involved in crime / anti social behaviour. Anyone living or working with a child / young person who feels this service would benefit them can make a referral.

If the service is accepted by the family / young person, they will be allocated a YISP key Worker who will see the young person once a fortnight, and offer support. The young person will have an individual programme designed for individual needs. The support on offer is time scaled to fit their needs.

If you would like any more information or a referral form please contact Eddie Patterson on 0151 929 7756

Section 6

Streetscene Update

- **Arrowe Park roundabout scheme**

Reasons behind the scheme

- An independent traffic study carried out in 1999 identified concerns about the capacity of Arrowe Park Roundabout.
- The location has experienced significant peak hour traffic congestion.
- This has had a detrimental effect on emergency vehicles going to and from Arrowe Park Hospital.
- Pedestrians, particularly the elderly and those with limited mobility, have had difficulty crossing nearby roads.
- The Council has received many requests for controlled crossing facilities in this area.
- The scheme will be completed before The Open golf championship comes to Hoylake in July 2006. However it must be stressed that this event is not the justification for the scheme. It is being introduced in the interests of road safety and reducing congestion.

Why does the roundabout need to be replaced?

- This scheme has not been considered in isolation. It will also address road safety and traffic congestion issues at the nearby Landican cemetery entrance, the Cherry Orchard and Arrowe Park Hospital.
- Accident records show there have been 23 incidents in which people have been injured within the last three years. Studies show 14 of these might have been prevented if traffic signals were in place at the roundabout.
- Improvements to the existing roundabout were ruled out because it would increase the speed of traffic through the junction and worsen pedestrian access.
- Signalising the existing roundabout is not possible as there is insufficient land to accommodate a safe and reasonable design.

Benefits of a signal controlled junction

- A signal controlled junction improves traffic flow and offers enhanced facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.
- Timings of the traffic signals can be controlled and adjusted from a computer system to meet the demands of the traffic.

Section 6

Streetscene Update

- This is the most cost effective means of reducing peak time traffic congestion.
- There are no issues regarding the purchasing of land.

Landscaping

- We appreciate that members of the public remain concerned about the removal of the roundabout and the perceived loss of what is considered to be an attractive local feature. However the proposed scheme does include larger areas for potential landscaping, in excess of those currently present. We aim to make the best use of these areas to compensate for the loss of the existing planted roundabout feature.
- Wirral Council has consulted widely on these plans throughout June and July. This consultation included extensive coverage in regional and local press, a mobile 'roadshow' visited by more than 600 people, presentations at community meetings including Area Forums, a letter drop to over 200 community representatives in the immediate area and displays within the hospital.
- Plans were well received during the consultation period. Just 26 comment forms and two letters were returned – 17 of these expressed support for the scheme, four requesting more information and five objecting.
- The proposed scheme was approved by the Council's Environment and Transport Select Committee on August 1, 2005 and Cabinet on September 22, 2005.

Traffic management

- The road and roundabout will remain open to traffic at all times during the work. There will be some disruption, but traffic management plans have been put in place to advise motorists about alternative routes. Access to and from the motorway network is recommended either via Clatterbridge or Moreton Spur whenever possible.

Scheme costs

- The Arrowe Park Roundabout improvement scheme will cost an estimated £1.1m. The project is being financed from central Government funding allocated as part of Wirral's Local Transport Plan settlement.
- *New powers to tackle street trading*

Enforcement officers have announced new plans to stop goods being sold illegally at the roadside.

The Council is seeking powers that could see all roads designated as needing consent from the local authority for street trading. Certain areas in central Birkenhead

Section 6

Streetscene Update

are already designated prohibited streets, from legislation approved back in the 1980s. Enforcement officers now hope to extend these powers to cover all streets across the borough under Schedule 4 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982.

Street trading covers a variety of activities – including cars for sale at the roadside, the sale of cooked food and drinks from mobile catering units the sale of meat, dairy products, household goods, flowers, plants, Christmas trees, etc. from vehicles parked on the road.

These problems are ones that the Council has been trying to address for a number of years. If approved, the new system will see the introduction of a street trading policy and businesses operating in a road without Council consent will face enforcement action and be liable to a fine up to £1,000.

The move comes after a review into the enforcement service, carried out by highway officers and Council solicitors. Proposals are now due to be considered by Members at the next meeting of the Environmental and Transportation Select Committee.

Shaun Brady from Highway Maintenance is currently working on a wider enforcement strategy for the Council. He said: “We share the concerns of Wirral residents over cars for sale on the road and other street trading activities.

We have a responsibility to keep our roads clean, safe and well maintained – and cars for sale have proved an environmental nuisance that we are not prepared to tolerate.

“Previously the Council has been limited in its powers to take action against offending car owners. We have looked long and hard at the legislation we already have in place.

The authority is within its rights to prohibit the sale of any goods on the public highway without Council consent.”

- ***‘Zero tolerance’ approach to litter dropping***

Wirral Council has issued approximately £13,700 in fines for 274 litter dropping offences within the last 12 months.

A further £1,850 in fines have been handed out by the courts for a combination of fly-tipping offences and failing to pay the Fixed Penalty Notices for litter dropping.

The latest fines to be handed out by the courts were issued on October 13. George Booth from Harrowby Road, Birkenhead was fined £500 plus £150 costs at a hearing before Birkenhead Magistrates. The court heard how Mr Booth had been caught on CCTV fly-tipping at Old Gorsey Lane in Wallasey last January 31, 2005. Natalie Hyland from Bedford Road in Rock Ferry was also fined £100 plus costs, after leaving a box of rubbish in an entry by Corinthian Street and Bedford Road on June 7 this year.

Section 6

Streetscene Update

Director David Green said: 'We have adopted a 'zero tolerance' approach to litter louts and have a team of enforcement officers patrolling the borough's streets in a bid to catch and fine those responsible for such behaviour.

'Our officers will use the full weight of the law to stop people dumping rubbish, and would-be perpetrators should be warned that we have a variety of tools at our disposal to stop the culprits, including surveillance equipment in known hotspots for litter louts and illegal dumping. Anyone who has dropped or dumped rubbish in the past should think very carefully about doing it again.

It will only be a matter of time before they are caught out by our enforcement officers,' he added.

The Council is considering plans to further expand its enforcement team, giving more of its patrol staff powers to issue FPNs.

- **Cycle network expands**

More commuters can cycle to work thanks to the launch of two new cycle routes in Wirral.

The new signed routes run between Wirral International Business Park in Bromborough and the Merseyrail stations at Eastham Rake and Port Sunlight. Primarily designed to link commuters with their places of work, they will also link in with routes to Eastham Country Park for leisure use. A third route running from Bromborough Rake station is also nearing completion.

Dave Green said: "These routes are another step towards integrated transport on Wirral, helping to provide real alternatives to the car and improve safety for cyclists."

The new routes have been welcomed by the Wirral branch of Merseyside Cycling Campaign which has congratulated the council on the new signage in particular. Engineers worked in consultation with Eastham Village Conservation Trust, using cast iron finger posts signs to fit in with the historical local character. Recycled materials were used for parts of the route.

For more information about this, or other cycle routes in the borough, please contact Wirral Council's cycling officer Cathy McNulty on 0151 606 2368.

- **Plans to remove footbridges**

Wirral Council is starting work on a £1m package of environmental improvements for the A41 corridor, including major schemes in the Eastham and New Ferry areas.

The project includes proposals to remove two steel footbridges in Mill Road, Bromborough and Carlett Park, Eastham. Built in the 1960s, the Council faces costs of up to £70,000 to repair the two structures.

Section 6

Streetscene Update

Officers have been monitoring the two bridges and have determined that both now have low pedestrian usage. A recent traffic study has shown nearby pedestrian crossing facilities are being used in preference to the footbridges.

The structures are also perceived by some people to be unsightly and may have the potential for attracting anti-social behaviour.

- **Vital funding is secured for transport schemes**

Vital funding has been secured by Wirral Council to support transport improvement schemes across the borough over the next 12 months.

More than £5m has been awarded to the local authority from central government following a successful bid from the Merseyside Local Transport Plan which covers the period from 2006 to 2011. The annual settlement pays for schemes aimed at improving transport and supporting the economic regeneration of Wirral.

A total of £3.215m will enable junction and traffic management improvements and enhanced facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. An additional £2.5m has also been allocated to Wirral for the resurfacing and upgrading of roads, pavements and bridges as part of the borough's annual structural maintenance programme for next year.

Last year's funding has already seen a number of key schemes, including the signalling of Arrowe Park roundabout, being given the go-ahead in the borough. In addition the completion of Saughall Massie Bypass and improvements to the junction of Thornton Common Road and Clatterbridge Road, were among recent work carried out by Council highway engineers.

Director David Green said: "The Local Transport Plan is already bringing about improvements to our transport network. This money will now provide us with a guaranteed income to continue the good work over the next twelve months.

"Major schemes under consideration for development over coming years include the electrification of the Borderlands Bidston to Wrexham railway line. A road safety scheme is also being drawn up for the introduction of a roundabout at Thurstaston crossroads.

"Equally as important as these large schemes are the smaller projects. Future LTP projects in the region will put an even greater emphasis on helping people make everyday journeys more easily – whether by bus, train, car, bike or on foot.

Work is also anticipated to start in 2006/07 on improvements to the junction of Gorsey Lane and Dock Road in Wallasey."

- **Having a say on Rights of Way in Wirral.....**

Technical Services is encouraging more residents to 'have a say' about the Rights of Way network in the borough.

Section 6

Streetscene Update

Walkers have access to more than 70 miles of public footpath in Wirral. A Merseyside-wide forum has now been established to help make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable. The Local Access Forum meets every three months and includes representatives from the local authority, land managers and user groups.

Jim Donaldson from Highway Maintenance division explained: "Together, with land owners, the Council shares a joint responsibility to look after Wirral's Rights of Way network.

"We already have good contacts with the Ramblers Association and the British Horse Society - and through this new Forum we hope to reach wider audiences and encourage more people to make use of the many countryside footpaths we have here in Wirral.

We welcome feedback from members of the public to register concerns over surface conditions, overhanging trees and hedges, mud and water problems, blocked ditches or obstructions.

This helps our Rights of Way officer to identify if we need to take enforcement action or include a maintenance scheme in our improvement plan.