

YOUR SAY 

 **WIRRAL**



**Oxton and Prenton
Area Forum**

Papers for the forum meeting

Wednesday 13th June 2007

**Woodchurch Road
Primary School
Woodchurch Road
Birkenhead
CH42 9LJ**

7.00pm – 9.00pm



2002-2003
Community Legal Services
2003-2004
Transforming Secondary Education
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services

www.wirral.gov.uk

Oxton and Prenton Area Forum

Area Co-ordinator's Report

Wednesday 13th June 2007

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Area Co-ordinator

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**Community Engagement Team, Corporate Services,
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Introduction: Membership of the area forum

Area Forums involve your local ward councillors, Merseyside Police, Wirral Primary Care Trust, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service representatives, along with your nominated local community representatives and officers from various departments of the Council, who regularly attend to support the work of the forum.

Oxton and Prenton Councillors all belong to the Liberal Democrat Party

Councillor Simon Holbrook

(Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group)
Prenton Ward
0151 513 5656
simonholbrook@wirral.gov.uk

Councillor Ann Bridson

Prenton Ward
0151 201 7310
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Councillor Frank Doyle (Chair)

Prenton Ward
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Councillor S.E. Kelly

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Councillor Paula Southwood

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Louise Harland-Davies

Area Co-ordinator
Tel 0151 691 8695
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Alan Stennard

Chief Officer Director of Regeneration,
responsible for housing, regeneration,
regulation and cultural services in the
borough. **0151 691 8395**

Rob Beresford

Lead Officer - Robert Beresford is Head of
Regulation and has responsibility for
Licensing, Environmental Health, Trading
Standards and Community Safety in the
borough. **0151 691 8208**

June Foster

Community Representative, Prenton
Mount Estate Residents Association

Patrick Toosey

Community Representative, Oxton
Oxton Society

Alan Dollery

Community Representative, Prenton
Chair of Prenton Tenants & Residents
Association, Chair of the Prenton
Partnership, Member of Wirral Federation of
Tenants & Residents Association

Inspector Paul Harrison (Oxton)

0151 709 6010

Inspector Ian Shaw (Prenton)

0151 709 6010

Merseyside Fire and Rescue

Birkenhead Fire Station
0151 650 0422

**All Ward Councillors can be contacted by
post or via their email. They represent all
residents regardless of political
persuasion. You can write to your local
councillor at Wallasey Town Hall, Brighton
Street, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 8ED**

SECTION ONE

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

Minutes - Area Forum (Oxton and Prenton) - 21 February 2007

Present	
Chair	FM Doyle
Ward Councillors	Mrs F E F Anderson , A Bridson , SA Holbrook
Community Representatives	Alan Dollery (Prenton Tenants & Residents Assoc.) , June Foster , Patrick Toosey (Oxton Society)
Lead Officer	Bob Beresford (Deputy Director of Housing & Environmental Protection)
Area Service Co-ordinator	Louise Harland-Davies , Maxine Joynson
Primary Care Trust(s)	Dr Mantgani
Merseyside Police	Inspector Graham Bell
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service	Myles Platt
Wirral Hospital Trust	Gary Docherty
Council Officers	Gary Cummings (Area Streetscene Manager) , Clare Taylor (Recycling Officer) , Mike Walker (Community Safety Officer)
Apologies	SE Kelly , Reverend Wayne Lautenbach , Alan Stennard (Director of Regeneration) , Mrs P M Williams

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Minute 1 - Welcome

Cllr Doyle opened the meeting at 7.00pm and introduced himself, together with the other members of the table. There were approximately 28 members of the public present. He gave special thanks to Maxine Joynson as this was her last meeting as Area Co-ordinator and introduced Louise Harland-Davies who will be taking over this role. Apologies were received from Cllr Stuart Kelly, Cllr Pat Williams, Alan Stennard and Reverend Lautenbach.

Minute 2 - Public question time

There were several questions in writing to be discussed at public question time. However, Cllr Doyle explained that these questions had been received rather late in the day and requested that people send their questions in earlier in order that a full and proper answer can be prepared.

Mr John Morgan had two questions to raise but had spoken to Sgt Bell prior to the forum who had resolved the first issue. His second question concerned the possible closure of the Woodside Tourist Information Office and it was confirmed that this will close after April of this year due to budget costs. Tourist Information will be available at Council buildings such as One Stop Shops.

Mr Dowling had submitted three written questions but only one could be answered at the meeting. This was regarding Oxton Congregational Church which is an ongoing situation. There were no other written questions received.

Cllr Doyle then invited questions from the floor. Two matters were raised by Ms. Heather Jones; the first concerned public transport and the removal of a bus service which she has regularly used over many years on a Sunday morning. She pointed out that there is now no bus service until after 9.00 am on Sunday mornings which has affected her ability to carry out voluntary work. The second concerned the Ormond allotments and Ms Jones queried whether any money is available for these allotments as they have been trying for 18 months to obtain more money.

Regarding the bus services, Cllr Holbrook explained that public transport is controlled by Merseytravel. However, no representative from Merseytravel has been present at Area Forums which is something which may need to be addressed. Cllr Holbrook explained that since The Deregulation Act 1986, bus companies have only provided services which are profitable. Merseytravel has a modest amount of money which is used to run services at particular times even though they are not profitable; Cllr Holbrook felt that buses before 9.00 am on Sundays were likely to be uneconomic and would not be given high priority in terms of socially useful services. He felt it would be unlikely that the service would be reinstated but did point out that the Government is currently seeking to make changes to the 1986 Act which could result in Merseytravel having more control over its services, however, this will be in the future. To illustrate the financial pressure which Merseytravel is currently under, he highlighted their proposal to save £2.3m by not subsidising half-price for children as from April. Cllr Doyle proposed that we ask Merseytravel to come along to the Forum and asked Louise to try to organise this.

As no representative was able to comment on the issue of funding, Rob Beresford promised to obtain an answer from Cultural Services. There were no further questions from the floor.

Alan Dollery from Prenton Tenants and Residents Association spoke about a new project, "Children's Fitness for the Future", which is to be aimed at children and young people in the Prenton Dell area. The Association has received a £5000 grant to fund exploratory investigations as to the feasibility, the actual facilities to be used, who will be available to help and whether the residents and tenants of the Prenton area will be prepared to give it their backing. They are hoping to start the project in the near future by asking various agencies to give their input and put an information leaflet together. They feel it is important that youngsters in the area have somewhere to go after school – there are currently no facilities for young people and they hope to address this. Healthy eating, fitness and exercise are to be features of the project and Alan appealed for any help which people are able to give. Anybody wishing to volunteer can contact him via the Area Co-ordinator.

Patrick Toosey from Oxton Society apologised for the lack of a written report due to a computer error but reported that the Christmas lights in Oxton Village were a huge success and that the next major event in Oxton will be The Secret Gardens which is to be held on Sunday, 18th May. He announced that Wirral Transport Museum will be supporting the event with their heritage buses and have agreed to run double-decker buses from Woodside to Oxton. He reported that there have been a few unfortunate incidents of violence in Oxton Village recently but following discussions with Graham Bell, it is hoped that this situation will improve.

Minute Decision :

Resolved: That Alan Dollery and Patrick Toosey be thanked for their reports.

(i) Area Co-ordinator to invite a representative from Merseytravel to attend the next Forum.

(ii) Rob Beresford to obtain information from Cultural Services regarding Ormond allotments.

Minute 3 - Introductions/apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Stuart Kelly, Cllr Pat Williams, Alan Stennard and Reverend Lautenbach.

Minute 4 - Minutes of the last meeting / matters arising /Area Co-Ordinator's Report

Maxine presented the Area Co-ordinator's report and wished to raise the issue of the Older People's Parliament. Jack Cuffe was unable to attend this Forum meeting but Maxine reported that the first meeting of the Parliament will be held on 2nd March. She also drew attention to Page 13 of the Update on the PCT and NHS Engagement Strategy and the Integrated Transport block on Page 66. The Forum would also like suggestions submitted regarding the Integrated Transport Block by 9th March so if anyone has any suggestions regarding areas needing traffic calming measures, could they let Louise know by that date.

Cllr Doyle drew attention to page 46 regarding the Community Initiative Fund and reported that there has not been a full uptake of the monies available and there is a balance left over of just over £5000. Letters have been sent to each of our partners, namely the Fire Service, the Police and the PCT to ask what they could do with this money, preferably involving children between ages 5 – 17 in the summer holidays. To date, one reply has been received from the Police with their suggestion as to how the money could be spent and any other suggestions will be reported at the June Forum meeting.

Alan Dollery asked if those candidates who had applied for the Older People's Parliament had been notified and Maxine replied that letters had gone out the previous day however there are still a few vacancies across Wirral.

Minute Decision :

Resolved: That Maxine be thanked for her report.

Minute 7 - Presentation by Merseyside Fire & Rescue

There then followed a presentation by Myles Platt from Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service which covered some of the initiatives in which the Fire Service have become involved. He reported that the Oxton and Prenton areas have had a lower number of house fires, vehicle fires, anti-social behaviour incidents and road traffic accidents in the last three months compared to other areas of the Wirral. They have undertaken over 700 home fire safety checks and are making every effort to reduce fire risks, including the fitting of smoke detectors. He appealed to everyone to help in the community by encouraging those without smoke alarms to get them fitted and asked anyone with details of vulnerable people to contact him so free safety checks could be carried out. He stressed that residents refuse entry to anyone who can't produce any ID.

He described the "Dig It" project which is currently being undertaken to work with young people

to learn life skills and thanked the forum for funding this project. There are plans to have an old fire engine in Wallasey restored by young people and he explained about the Fire Support Network, a voluntary service which will come in to clean fire-damaged houses. These volunteers will also clean older persons' cookers which can be a potential fire hazard. The fire station in Upton has a community garden for general public use. He explained that the fire station in Birkenhead is to be replaced in 2010/2011 with a new station, hopefully on the same site. As young people view firefighters as role models, they hope to play a part in combating anti-social behaviour by engaging with young people.

At the end of this verbal presentation, Myles invited questions from the floor. Mr Walter Chapman complained about the anti-social behaviour of gangs of youths on the Holmlands Estate; Myles felt unable to respond to this and suggested the matter be directed to the Outreach Team in this area. Cllr Southwood asked Myles how she could become more involved with this initiative and he replied they could look to see what they can do to involve young people in this area, possibly involving Youth Services. Cllr Southwood is to contact Myles regarding this matter.

Minute Decision :

Resolved: That Myles Platt be thanked for an informative presentation.

(i) Cllr Southwood to contact Myles regarding anti-social behaviour on the Holmlands Estate.

Minute 8 - PCT update and Public Health Annual Report

Dr Mantgani explained that the two Wirral PCT's have now merged into one single organisation and they wish to actively encourage the people of Wirral in a significant way and on an ongoing basis to give feedback. The PCT wish to engage with the public on a higher level in order to obtain the public's views on any services which may be changed. Regarding the 18 week waiting time target the PCT, along with Wirral Hospital Trust, are working to ensure that Wirral is able to meet these targets; however, this is a very challenging task and they are working hard to achieve this. He stated that issues of public health are highly important and that the Public Health Report is available in both paper and electronic format. He introduced his colleague from the PCT who had the Report available on computer and invited anyone present to view the report if they wished. He acknowledged that whilst the PCT is tackling the problem of obesity, the problem of childhood obesity needs to be improved and there are currently community projects to try to address this.

Cllr Holbrook raised the issue of the planned relocation of the GP surgery near the Halfway House, Townfield Clinic and Prenton Clinic to the same facility. There may be practical difficulties, one of which is the absence of a public transport link, i.e. for people without their own transport, a journey to the GP could involve two buses. Although the project is approximately 18 months off, better public transport links need to be encouraged between the new clinic location and the areas which they service.

Dr Mantgani agreed with Cllr Holbrook's comments and confirmed that they have already started doing this. The practice has made every effort to find a suitable location in Prenton as they cannot continue in their current premises and this was the only potential site; he reiterated that the question of transport is very important. He confirmed that an analysis of people who attend the GP surgery has been carried out and that the distance will have a negative impact on some people but hope that by working with local councillors, services for the public will be improved.

Alan Dollery raised the question of people smoking outside the entrance of Arrowe Park Hospital and how the Trust plans to enforce the smoking ban in public buildings which comes into force on 1st July. Dr Mantgani felt unable to comment on this and agreed the situation

needs addressing; he pointed out that although the hospital try to educate people regarding smoking on the hospital site, it is very difficult to enforce. However, a lot of work is being done to promote no smoking in public places. Gary Doherty from Wirral Hospital Trust added that it is a difficult situation for every hospital, particularly with patients who smoke and are in hospital for some time.

There followed a brief discussion from members of the floor on the possible effects the smoking ban will have, such as cigarette ends on the floor outside public buildings and what has already happened in Scotland and Ireland where smoking in public places has been banned for some time. Rob Beresford stated that there may be a proposal to request businesses to clean up the litter outside their own premises. Cllr Holbrook informed the forum that he has viewed planning applications from pubs to build conservatories without windows for people to smoke in. He feels this will encourage outdoor drinking which will in turn cause nuisance to local residents. The situation will have to be closely monitored to minimise problems.

Minute Decision :

Resolved: That Dr Mantgani be thanked for his report.

Minute 9 - Partner updates (Community Safety Initiatives) - Fire Service, Police and Community Safety

Cllr Doyle introduced the next two updates, namely Inspector Graham Bell from the Police and Mike Walker from Community Safety.

Police

Inspector Graham Bell began by informing the forum that Inspector Mark Smith has now been promoted to Chief Inspector and transferred to the Liverpool Anti-Social Behaviour Team and hopefully the Forum can call on his expertise when required. He has now been replaced by Inspector Paul Harrison who will be attending the next Forum meeting. He agreed that disturbances caused by youths on the Holmlands Estate is an ongoing problem and that there is very little in the way of preventative old-fashioned police patrolling; however, he would like to see this returning. He stated that their statistics do not highlight the Holmlands Estate as being a hot-spot area as not many calls have been made to highlight problems in the area, therefore cover is deployed elsewhere. However, if more calls were made highlighting the problem then it would be more obvious and they can then do something about it. He called for more people to complain about incidents and confirmed that there is a Section 30 Order in place on the bottom part of the Holmlands Estate. However, there was a negative response to this comment from members of the floor who stated they have called the Police many times in the past but have had problems getting through on phone lines and feel they have had poor support from the Police. It was suggested there should be better prevention by confronting the youths who are causing the problems which has worked in other areas of the Wirral. Graham Bell sympathised with the problems in this area, highlighting the difficulties posed by the decision to create policing areas based on boundaries together with the fact that the Community Support Officers are not allowed to drive police vehicles.

A female member of the public complained of making frequent calls to the Police concerning youths drinking in The Arno on Friday nights but receiving no satisfaction from the Police. She has asked the youths to move away but would like to see more of a police presence and support, particularly between the times of 8.00 – 8.30 pm on Friday evenings in this area. Graham Bell was unable to fully answer her question as did not know the staffing levels off hand, however stressed that this time in the evening is especially busy for police across the Borough. Cllr Doyle described a similar situation in Prenton however the situation had been resolved by local councillors, the Police, community representatives and the general public by all working together; he suggested she have a chat with the Oxtou Councillors to see what can

be done similarly.

Cllr Southwood acknowledged that there are a lot of children and young people in Oxton, together with a lot of green spaces, and we need to try and find other things to occupy them. Involving the Youth Service could be one way forward. Andrew Taylor advised how Prenton residents had got together, circulated a letter to all residents, involved the Police and the local councillors and identified the youths responsible. Alan Dollery offered his help should she need any advice on organising something similar, useful phone contacts, etc. Cllr Doyle acknowledged that this is a serious issue which needs to be addressed and proposed that we invite the Chief Superintendent, Colin Matthews to a future Forum meeting to give a presentation.

Graham Bell continued his update by informing that the Section 30 Order in Borough Road has been successful in reducing many of the problems and the mobile police station had been very effective. There is currently a burglary initiative running in Oxton this week, there are uniformed patrols in the Village and he proposed to ask them to visit the Arno.

He also reported that the Police are currently working with Merseytravel regarding damage to bus shelters and hope to install CCTV cameras in problem areas. There is funding for an Outreach worker at Christ The King Church and Community Support Officers are being trained as football coaches, thereby providing diversionary tactics. If anyone wished to speak to him privately, he would meet them at the end of the meeting.

Community Safety

Mike Walker from Community Safety gave an update on the alleygating in Oxton and Prenton, informing that 98% of gates are up and they are trying to gain full consent of the all residents regarding alleygates. Returning to the problems of youths in the Arno and the Holmlands Estate already discussed, he agreed to take this back to the Community Safety Team and the Anti Social Behaviour Team. He also offered to take names and phone numbers from individuals at the end of the meeting.

Minute Decision :

Resolved: That Inspector Bell and Mike Walker be thanked for their reports.

(i) Area Co-ordinator to invite Colin Matthews to attend the next Area Forum.

(ii) Mike Walker to raise concerns with the Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Team regarding youths in The Arno and on the Holmlands Estate.

Minute 10 - Streetscene - Recycling update by Tara Dumas

Cllr Doyle introduced an update on recycling by Claire Taylor. Her report confirmed that 11,000 homes have now received garden waste bins with a further 3,000 properties to be included onto the service. They are currently looking for a new composting site. The alternate weekly collections with grey bins has been going well with 250 tonnes of waste being recycled. An independent survey is shortly to be carried out to confirm these figures are correct. They are now rolling out to the rest of the Wirral and everybody will have received a grey bin by the beginning of June. They are currently meeting targets and an additional £150,000 for communication will see the creation of two recycling posts whose job it will be to raise awareness and improve knowledge of recycling for the general public through door-to-door campaigns. There have been some problems with plastic bags going into grey bins and people will be given more information regarding this. An enforcement policy is currently going through to prevent people from leaving bins out for lengthy periods and causing obstructions to pavements. Food waste has been approved for use for agricultural purposes and it will be monitored to see how cost-effective it is. Ms Taylor invited questions from the floor.

Andrew Taylor said that a lot of residents are complaining about different types of plastic and

feels that this should be made clearer. He also asked about people putting bins out the night before collection day and hopes that tolerance will be shown towards this. Ms Taylor acknowledged that the point about different plastics is a valid one and has caused a lot of confusion; she stated it should be plastic bottles only. She also acknowledged that many people leave bins out overnight and enforcement action will not include taking a hard line, rather speaking to people first and discussing any problems with them. Action will only be taken if people continuously contaminate their bins; she proposed that wording in any letters will reflect this. Following a query about shredded paper, she confirmed that shredded paper should not be placed in bins as it is difficult to recycle and stressed care must be taken with names and addresses to prevent identity theft.

Cllr Southwood commented that she has received complaints regarding refuse collectors leaving bins where they obstruct pavements and Ms Taylor confirmed that this will be checked on to ensure this does not happen. June Foster reported refuse collectors causing damage to narrow roads and driving over grassed areas and Ms Taylor confirmed this will also be looked at. Andrew Taylor wished to see an announcement made in the Press telling people not to put dog mess into people's bins.

A resident of the Holmlands Estate complained about dog fouling and requested that signs be erected. Cllr Southwood promised to raise this as an issue. Cllr Holbrook stated that presently only dog wardens can enforce dog fouling laws, however there are plans to extend that to other officers. Environmental health officers will be given the same power as dog wardens, as will Community Support Officers, so more people can serve a Fixed Penalty Notice on people who allow their dogs to foul and receive an instant fine. Rob Beresford confirmed that he is hoping to start a new campaign against dog fouling during the year, looking at particular problem areas. Problems arise in areas leading up to green spaces as well as actually on green spaces and would like to know of any specific areas.

Minute Decision :
Resolved:

That Claire Taylor be thanked for this update.

(i) Claire Taylor to monitor situation regarding bins obstructing pavements and damage to narrow roads and grassy areas.

Minute 11 - Future meetings / Presentations

It has been proposed that future Forum meetings alternate between Woodchurch Road Primary School and Tranmere Rovers F.C. so that there will be one in Oxtun and one in Prenton. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 13th June at Woodchurch Road Primary School at 7.00 pm with a drop-in session half an hour before the meeting. Finally Cllr Doyle thanked Maxine Joynson for all her hard work as Area Co-ordinator and drew the meeting to a close at 8.30 pm.

Matters arising from 21 February 2007

Funding for Ormond allotments Awaiting update from Cultural Services.

Merseytravel: Chair asked Louise to invite a representative from Merseytravel to attend the next forum. Letter sent however still awaiting reply.

Youth disturbances at the Arno, Oxtun; Inspector Harrison confirmed that a small operation

has been put together to tackle the problem and a few arrests have been made however, still an ongoing situation.

Community Safety, Police: Chair asked Louise to invite Colin Matthews, Area Commander, to attend the forum however received a personal response from him saying Inspector Shaw represents him at the forum and is the first point of contact.

SECTION TWO

Safer & Stronger Communities

Unlicensed landlords urged to contact council

WIRRAL Council is calling for all owners and managing agents of large rented properties to contact them before the end of the month or risk prosecution.

From last summer, large houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) have been required to be licensed by the council to comply with new housing laws. If a property is three storeys or more in height, occupied by five persons or more or forming more than one household sharing some facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom, then it will require a license. Without one, the owner or managing agent will face prosecution and a fine of up to £20,000.

Alan Stennard, Director of Regeneration at Wirral Council, said: "Houses in multiple occupation present some of the biggest health and safety risks for residents, especially with the risk of fire. To protect residents' well-being we urge landlords and managing agents of HMOs in Wirral to contact the council immediately. "So far we have issued licenses to 35 owners and managing agents but we know there are far more properties that should be licensed. By the end of March, we will have allowed 10 months for landlords and agents to contact the council. From April 2007 we will begin to prosecute those who have failed to apply for this compulsory scheme."

If you own or manage a HMO you should contact the Private Sector Housing team on 0151 691 8118 now. After March 31st it will be an offence to run or manage unlicensed premises and after that date the council will increase the level of license fees to be charged to cover its enforcement costs.

Recycling Champions walking the streets of Wirral

WIRRAL Council has four new recycling champions to help residents really get to grips with what they can and can't recycle. David Green, Director of Technical Services said: 'Incorrect use, or contamination of recycling can cause a lot of problems. Heavy items like alloy wheels have been recovered from bins which could have caused serious damage to the materials recovery facility (MRF) if not spotted. We also have a problem if people dispose of plastic film and plastic bags with their waste paper - the companies that buy the waste paper for recycling don't want it as it's full of plastic and useless.'

Residents who use their recycling bin incorrectly receive a note with their bin from the collection crews, explaining why the bin was not emptied. This is followed up with a visit from one of Wirral's new officers to help the householder with their recycling.

Said David Green: 'We appreciate that this is a new process for people to understand and follow, our Recycling Champions are here to help and provide alternative solutions if residents cannot cope with managing their waste.' The officers are out and about in Wirral all week including

Saturdays and all will be carrying official Council identification. Anyone who fails to produce official Council ID is not a bona fide representative. You should refuse to deal with them and report them to the police.

Any Wirral resident is also welcome to request a visit from a recycling champion if they are unsure about the new scheme, by calling Streetscene on 0151 606 2004.

Wirral Federation of Tenants and Residents Association

The Wirral Federation of Tenants and Residents Association would like to hear from anyone worried about anti-social behaviour in their community.

Representing around 50 tenant and resident associations in Wirral, the Federation of Tenants and Residents Association sees first hand the effect anti social behaviour has. Anti social behaviour affects people's lives in so many ways. To help address this issue, Wirral Federation of Tenants and Residents Association is organising an anti social behaviour conference in September at Tranmere Rovers FC.



The conference will provide an ideal opportunity for tenants and residents to meet and speak to the people whose jobs it is to reduce anti social behaviour in Wirral.

If you are interested in attending please contact Wirral Federation of Tenants and Residents Association on 0151 666 1770 or email wirralfed@hotmail.com

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

Service Plans Each year each fire station produces a service plan setting key objectives for that station to focus its activities on during that financial year. The objectives are agreed and are set in line with the Integrated Risk Management Plan for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service which can be viewed on our website merseyfire.gov.uk

Key objectives for all Wirral stations include:

- Use of local intelligence to access the "hard to reach" in the community to deliver Home Fire safety Checks.
- Affect a strategy to reduce fires in derelict properties.
- Continue to work with community partners to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Work with partner agencies to reduce the number of Road Traffic Collisions.
- Devise a strategy to reduce small fires in grasslands and open spaces with the Arson Reduction Advocate.
- Introduce a specialist Hazardous Materials response vehicle at Bromborough.

Home Fire Safety Checks The number of home fire safety checks including the free fitting of smoke detectors carried out by operational crews in peoples homes in Wirral has increased by over 20% with 1700 carried out in April alone.

To get your free home fire safety check call 0800 731 5958.

Station Contact Numbers Ask for the Watch Manager

<u>Birkenhead</u>	0151 650 0422
<u>Bromborough</u>	0151 548 9258
<u>Heswall</u>	0151 342 4510
<u>Upton</u>	0151 678 0819

Wallasey 0151 630 3040
West Kirby 0151 625 1157

Information and details relating to particular areas will be available from the Wirral Management Team at the Forums.

Paul Gibson Wirral District Manager

Wirral Joint Community Safety Team Area Forum Update June & July 07

All Wirral

- 3G cameras now available and in use in Tranmere and soon to be in Woodchurch
- The Home Office Minister Louise Casey has identified Wirral as one of the England's 'Respect Action Areas'. The 'Respect Housing Standard' an agreement with Registered Social Landlords will start in early June. Wirral's largest registered social Landlords are signed up to this initiative and will be meeting on a monthly basis to ensure standards are maintained.
- Police and Wirral Partnership Homes are working with the Wirral Joint Community Safety Team to reduce Criminal Damage to properties. This will act as a pilot project to be taken up by other registered social landlords.

Birkenhead and Tranmere The much publicised 'talking CCTVs' are now being deployed starting with Charing Cross, Birkenhead.

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas An initiative to provide computers to pupils has worked with Wirral Joint Community Safety Team to ensure they are delivered and used in safety. Specialist Brigadoon Stealth software was deployed which disables and locates computers if stolen.

Healthier Communities & Older People

Wirral Hospital 
NHS Trust

Engagement Strategy - The aim of this report is to 'set the scene' for presentations by the Trust at future forums, as part of our ongoing engagement strategy, at which more detail will be communicated about the Trust's plans for the next five years.

Wirral Hospital: into a new era - The development of our Engagement Strategy marks the second phase in meeting our commitment to engage more closely with the communities we serve.

The first phase of this ongoing process came in February 2006 when we undertook a massive consultation programme in relation to our application for Foundation Trust Status "A Change for the Better". This consultation laid out our service plans for the next five years, which were then published as a formal part of our application to become a Foundation Trust. We are now half way through our application to become a Foundation Trust and feel that this is the right time to again engage with the communities we serve.

In the coming months, we will be talking – and listening – to people like you about our plans for the future. Hospital services are changing right across the country and it is important that we keep you up to date on developments. At future presentations we will be in a position to tell you more about our plans.

Agenda - Our aim for this brief report is to set the scene and remind you about:

- **who we are**, because sometimes there is confusion about who provides which health service
- **why we are changing** – we have to move with the times and respond to changing needs and demands, which I want to talk about
- and finally, **how we are changing**.

Who we are - Wirral Hospital NHS Trust manages two hospitals, providing services for approximately 320,000 people. Arrowe Park Hospital in Upton has around 900 beds and provides a complete range of acute health services. Clatterbridge Hospital in Bebington has around 200 beds for elective surgery (planned operations), rehabilitation services and care of older people. The Trust also manages the X-ray facilities, outpatient services and day hospital at Victoria Central Hospital and the Radiography Department at St Catherine's Hospital. The Trust budget is c£220m and we employ around 6,000 staff across all our sites.

NHS Foundation Trust - All hospitals have to become FTs by 2008. NHS FTs are a new kind of NHS organisation. They are accountable to their Membership and to Parliament, rather than to the Department of Health. An independent regulator, Monitor, makes sure they meet requirements and reports on this to Parliament. FTs have Members and Governors – unlike current NHS trusts. Members elect Governors to represent them and to set direction for the organisation. The establishment of a membership and Assembly of Governors is a key part of our ongoing engagement strategy. We are aiming for at least 13,000 public members – currently we have 6,000.

An NHS FT:

- provides free NHS services on the basis of individual need and not ability to pay
- has to meet NHS standards in everything that it does and will be inspected by the Healthcare Commission and other national bodies
- employs NHS staff on their current terms and conditions of employment
- is accountable to local people through a Council of Governors elected by its members
- has Members who provide a strong link between the services it provides and the local communities it serves
- has to provide real opportunities for staff, service users and carers to influence decision making
- is part of the NHS and cannot be privatised - the level of money it can earn by doing private health work is capped by law
- has to maintain good working relationships with other health and social care organisations

Changes in NHS nationally - The NHS has seen a massive increase in funding in recent years, which has brought significant improvements to the way in which patients receive their care and treatment. The dramatic reduction in the maximum waiting times for planned operations (18 months to 6 months) is just one example. As well as improving services for patients the increase in funding has also enabled significant increases in salaries for doctors and nurses both in hospitals and in primary care.

The Government has introduced a number of strategies to enable the NHS to maintain its progress and achieve further improvements both in terms of services to patients but also in terms of the efficiency with which these services are provided. These include:

- changing the way in which NHS trusts are funded. No longer do they receive an annual allocation at the start of the year, but instead are paid according to the number and type of patients they treat (Payment by Results)
- giving patients a choice of which hospital to attend, encouraging trusts to raise standards in order to attract patients through their doors

- offering services, which traditionally were provided in hospitals, closer to people's homes in community settings and developing community services to avoid some patients having to go into hospital
- ensuring NHS trusts become more efficient by requiring them to meet a 2.5% efficiency target by matching the best national or international levels of performance

Five year plan - Over the last 10 years Wirral Hospital NHS Trust has become one of the most successful NHS trusts in the country. It has a tremendously strong track record of robust financial management that has enabled the expansion of the range, quality and availability of services to patients. As well as reducing waiting times and balancing our books we have also been able to develop services locally that previously had only been provided in Liverpool. We need to make sure we keep improving and developing services while making realistic financial assumptions and meeting national efficiency requirements. To do this we have developed a five year plan which includes:

- Our plans to treat many more patients and so reduce waiting times to 18 weeks from GP referral to treatment by December 2008
- Our plans to spend over £10M a year on better equipment and facilities such as more single rooms and ward upgrades, parents accommodation and a new heart treatment laboratory
- Our plans to develop more specialist services locally to avoid patients having to travel to Liverpool

Achieving our plans will cost a lot of money and will require us to improve the way we provide services. Treating additional patients will bring more money into the Trust (our income is forecast to go up by around £40M over the five years) but this will not cover all of the extra costs we will face. Comparing ourselves to other hospitals suggests we can do things more efficiently. We have developed plans to improve the way we provide services by reducing the need for patients to come into hospital the night before their operation and making sure they can go home the day they have their operation. We are also planning to improve our elderly care and rehabilitation services, alongside developments in services in primary care, so that patients can be discharged earlier than they are now. We are also looking at the possibility of providing some services in partnership with other NHS organisations or other public sector providers.

Our proposals aim to treat many more patients but to reduce the Trust's running costs by just over £20 million over the next five years by providing services more efficiently for example by:

- Reducing our numbers of surgical beds by admitting patients on the day of their operation and converting beds into day-case beds so that more patients to go home the same day
- Reducing the number of beds we need for patients who do need to stay overnight, by working with primary care services to develop community services and by improving our discharge procedures

Moving forward together - The Trust has engaged with the local community regarding its application to become a Foundation Trust but clearly this has to be an ongoing process. As we are now half way through our Foundation Trust application it seems appropriate to undertake further engagement, which will then feed into and hopefully our ongoing strategy and the establishment of a membership and Assembly of Governors. Over the coming months and at future meetings we will be talking in more detail about our plans.

Wirral headteacher leads the way for healthy schools

A Wirral headteacher was keynote speaker at a regional conference on healthy schools.

Pat Stewart OBE, headteacher at The Lyndale school in Eastham, spoke at the National Healthy Schools Programme Northern Conference in Leeds. She talked about turning around a school using the principles of Healthy Schools. Lyndale has recently won glowing praise from Ofsted achieving a Grade 1 in all areas of assessment and being judged as 'outstanding'.

Ms Stewart said: "The Healthy Schools themes and criteria are the building blocks that contribute to significant change in a school. We are delighted to be part of such an excellent initiative."

The purpose of the event is to inform teachers and other delegates of current priorities and to share effective practice through workshops and presentations as well as showcase support materials for schools

Technology to help vulnerable people in Wirral to live at home

Wirral's Department of Adult Social Services, in partnership with Wirral Partnership Homes and Wirral Primary Care Trust is setting up a new, technology-based service that will help disabled and older people to live at home more safely.

The Assistive Technology Project was launched officially by Wirral's Mayor, Cllr Peter Johnson, at the 'Smart House' on the Woodchurch Estate in Birkenhead on Monday, April 30.

The 'Smart House' will showcase equipment to support people who have difficulty due to age or disability in carrying out everyday tasks.

Nationally, the benefits of assistive technology have been well researched. They include enabling people to live more safely at home, assisting with hospital discharges, supporting falls or accident prevention and reassurance for carers.

Wirral has concentrated on two areas of assistive technology; Telecare and Telemedicine

Telecare means supporting and reassuring service-users from a distance with the help of technology. A range of smart sensors and detectors designed to improve safety in the home connect users by telephone to a monitoring centre via a Lifeline base unit, which is provided by Wirral Partnership Homes.

In the case of an incident or a request for help, the sensors will activate and alert the monitoring centre within seconds. Trained operators will promptly respond to the call.

In many cases, operators will contact a key-holder nominated by the client, for example a relative or neighbour. In other cases this will be a back-up response service.

Wirral's Director of Adult Social Services, Kevin Miller, said: "This is a genuinely exciting project that will enable vulnerable people to live safely and independently in their own homes.

Kevin added: "The extent to which this project can make a difference to the lives of older people and their carers is staggering; The range of sensors that Wirral will be providing in the initial phase of the project include fall, flood and gas detectors, emergency pull-cord, movement and wandering detectors, bed occupancy sensors and a medication reminder."

The equipment can be commissioned by occupational therapists and social workers working in hospitals, community teams and Adult Social Services.

In the longer term, the Assistive Technology Team will be exploring the role of Registered Social Landlords and other service-providers in the provision of assistive technology.

Telemedicine will come on stream in the coming months. It is designed to compliment traditional health care and will not replace face-to-face contact with older and disabled people. Telemedicine

works by monitoring vital signs such as blood pressure, blood sugars, pulse etc. The data is then transmitted to the clinician's computer where it is closely monitored ensuring a constant picture of a person's health and well being and alerting clinicians to problems

Bidston boasts top wheelchair tennis talent

The breeding ground for the next generation of Paralympians in wheelchair tennis is right here in Wirral. Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre currently has more wheelchair tennis players attending training sessions than any other sports centre in the country. And the quality of the facilities and coaching on offer at Bidston is attracting players from far and wide.

There are 15 adults and seven junior players regularly attending the Tennis Centre's sessions coming, not just from Wirral, but from elsewhere on Merseyside and even from Staffordshire and Derbyshire.

The centre currently has five players who have represented Great Britain in international competition, including the coach Mark Ecclestone, who won the silver medal in the Athens Paralympics in 2004, while another – Carl Hird – is in the GB Development Squad.

Three players – Debbie Thomas from Prenton, Jamie Burdekin and Anthony Cotterill – have just been selected for the British squad that will compete in the World Team Cup, the Davis Cup of wheelchair tennis, and all three will be attempting to qualify for the Paralympics in Beijing next year.

Coach Mark is justifiably proud of the achievements of his charges, saying: "Over the past month Carl, Jamie, Debbie and Anthony have all won tournaments in Sunderland, Glasgow, Preston and Florida respectively. Alex Kroll from Aintree also reached his first ever singles final last week in Glasgow.

"Because of the success of the programme we have players attend the sessions from all over the region, including Macclesfield, Congleton, Stockport, Stoke on Trent, Preston, Southport - we even have a junior player travel over from as far as Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire!"

One of the reasons why the sessions at Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre have proved so popular might be because of the 'outreach' work that Mark undertakes to promote the sport in the area.

He adds: "We have an agreement with the spinal injuries unit in Southport to bring patients over to look at the coaching and facilities and I have also done presentations at limb centres at Clatterbridge and Aintree Hospitals to show them what can be achieved."

Children & Young People

Wirral Youth Service

Introduction Wirral Youth Service provides opportunities, which are open to all Wirral young people. The Service's age range is 13-25 years; prioritising young people aged 13-19 years. Youth work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society, through informal educational activities which combine fun, challenge and learning.

The Youth Service in Wirral works with many young people in a variety of different settings, these include:

- Youth clubs
- Street work projects
- “Kontaktabuses”
- “Wirral Youth Theatre” and Youth Arts
- “Response” – Advice, support, advocacy and information service and Substance Misuse Service
- International exchanges
- Duke of Edinburgh’s Award
- Outdoor activities
- Projects in schools

The Service is flexible and able to respond to the needs of young people and offers opportunities that are both universal and targeted. Youth work on Wirral is delivered through joint working between the Local Authority, voluntary organisations and other agencies.

Youth workers work with young people in many different localities in Wirral. Having a variety of youth clubs and street work projects allows youth workers to work with young people in their neighbourhoods, meet their specific needs and respond to issues that are important to them.

Much of the work of the Youth Service takes place in one of sixteen open access youth clubs located across the Borough from Wallasey to Eastham and Birkenhead to West Kirby. Street work teams of youth workers make contact with young people who do not access the service elsewhere, build relationships with them and in negotiation with the young people, develop programmes which address their specific needs. This work is delivered on the streets, through project work and on mobile Kontaktabus.

Response Response is a Borough wide Youth Service provision, providing counselling, support, advocacy and information for young people. Many of these young people have complex needs requiring intensive support from the service including homelessness, abuse, poor health and poverty.

The agency also has a team of specialist workers providing support to young people who have drug and alcohol problems. The team work with those individuals in a variety of settings including outreach street work and one to one work in their homes or wherever young people feel safe. The team also deliver educational programmes within schools and other youth settings on the risk, consequence and health implications of substance misuse. Partnership work plays an important role in targeting vulnerable, hard to reach groups of young people. Service level agreements and regular joint working ensures the needs of young people are met.

International Work Each year the Youth Service runs a comprehensive programme of International Youth Exchanges. Young people from Wirral take part in a number of international opportunities including, Hong Kong and Italy, Germany and the Azores.

Duke of Edinburgh’s Award The Youth Service is the Licensed Operating Authority for the whole of Wirral. Awards can be gained through a variety of approved operating units and access organisations made up of a combination of youth centres, schools, an open award centre and a selection of voluntary groups. Young people in Wirral consistently gain over 500 awards per year at bronze, silver and gold levels.

The Award is available to all young people aged between 14 and 25 with the emphasis being the development of young people’s leisure time. By taking part in the Award, participants are able to increase their own self confidence and self esteem, make new relationships and develop fresh skills.

Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts Wirral Youth Theatre operates across the Borough to enable young people to access a wide range of performing arts related activities. Art forms such as drama, dance, music, technical theatre and new media are used to help young people to develop personally and socially as well as developing theatre and media related skills. .

Oxton and Prenton.

Shaftsbury Youth Club Shaftsbury continues to provide exemplary facilities and resources for young people. With an outstanding sporting record and broad based programme it is one of the busiest units on the Wirral

The Noctorum Young People's Project The Noctorum Young People's Project arranged an alcohol awareness workshop for young people from Noctorum. Outreach work is undertaken in the area and on a Friday night, young men are encouraged to attend a football session at the tennis centre.

Celebrations as Wirral school named in top 100 most improved

Pupils, staff, parents and Governors at Wallasey School are celebrating today after receiving a letter from Government putting them in the top 100 most improved schools in the entire country.

The letter from Jim Knight MP came in response to the school's excellent Key Stage three test results.

Headteacher Phil Duffy said: "These results at Key Stage 3 show the fantastic work that goes on in the school by both students and staff. Together, working closely with parents, we can see at first hand the outcomes of real partnership. We are thrilled and delighted that the skills, talents and commitment of the whole school and community are recognised nationally and publicly by the minister for School Standards Jim Knight MP.

"We will continue to realise our missions of 'a caring and achieving community'.

Mr Knight MP says in his letter: "There is a lot to celebrate with these results as we know that young people who reach Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 3 are better prepared for their GCSEs and have better life chances, so pupils and teachers should be extremely proud of their performance."

The results at Wallasey show that over the period 2003-2006 they are among the top performing schools based on sustained improvement in the aggregate of pupils achieving Level 5+ in English, Maths and Science.

Wirral school children win recycling challenge

Schoolchildren across Wirral have scored a double jackpot simply by recycling old Yellow Pages directories - winning hundreds of pounds for their schools and raising enough money to plant and care for 70 native trees.

Twenty schools recently took on the Yellow Woods Challenge – the simple, educational and fun environmental campaign for schools run by Yellow Pages, working with the Woodland Trust – the UK's leading woodland conservation charity - and Wirral Council.

The schools had fun competing against each other, recycling over 6000 old Yellow Pages directories. Clare Mount Specialist Sports College beat off fierce competition, recycling an impressive 12.53 old Yellow Pages directories per pupil to take the 'Gold Oak' title and win £300. Kilgarth School has been named the 'Silver Birch' winner and receives £200, while Orretts Meadow School has been rewarded with £100 and the 'Bronze Beech' title.

Stanley Special School will also receive a £100 bonus prize from Yellow Pages for the school that builds the best giant sculpture using old Yellow Pages directories.

Richard Duggleby, head of external relations at Yell – the publisher of Yellow Pages directories, said: "For every pound we award to schools for recycling old Yellow Pages directories, we give a matching pound to the Woodland Trust. Thanks to the recycling efforts of residents and schools in Wirral, that's another £700 raised for the Trust."*

The Woodland Trust will use the money to support its 'Tree For All' campaign – the most ambitious children's tree-planting project ever launched in the UK.

Janice Hix, corporate partnerships manager with the Woodland Trust, said: "This is a very valuable contribution towards our goal. We're hoping to raise enough money through the Yellow Woods Challenge this year to plant and care for more than five hectares of native woodland – an area as big as 13 football pitches. "Woodland is the UK's richest wildlife habitat and offers benefits for the environment, for people and for communities. Tree planting is really important as we are one of the least wooded countries in Europe."

The local competition has now closed, but the schools have several more chances to win thousands of pounds in the national competition for their recycling, environmental education, community involvement and sculpture building efforts.

David Green, Wirral Council's Director of Technical Services added: "This has been a fantastic competition with over 5 tonnes of old directories diverted from landfill and recycled into cardboard. I congratulate our schools for their achievements locally and wish them all the best of luck in the national competition."

For more information about the local and national Yellow Woods Challenge competition, please visit www.yellow-woods.co.uk

Thousands of Pounds available for Wirral Teenagers

Wirral's teenagers will soon get the chance to bid for a share of hundreds of thousands of pounds to pay for projects and equipment to improve their lives.

A total of £377, 513 is available from the Youth Capital Fund and the Youth Opportunity Fund this year in the borough.

Application forms are available from April 2 – and must be submitted by midday on June 25. Wirral's new grant panel of young people aged 13-19 will decide which projects are successful.

Youth Capital Fund money is for capital projects – ie buying equipment, new builds or refurbishments.

Youth Opportunity Fund money is for places to go and things to do – ie projects, residential stays, trips which support young people's personal development.

Applications should be made from groups or young people aged 13-19. Individuals can't apply.

Last year the funds were oversubscribed by almost £1 million. Successful applications included a new minibus for a youth club, new equipment for parks and clubs, support for homeless young people, a booklet written by young carers to help others in their situation, residentials and trips.

Maureen McDaid, Head of Wirral's Youth and Play Service, said: "Last year's money has paid for some wonderful projects and broadened opportunities for Wirral's young people. This year's grant panel will have to make some tough decisions – they will be paying close attention to the benefits each application represents."

To request an application pack or find out more about serving on this year's grant panel please contact Youth and Play Service on 637 6370.

First school in Wirral to pioneer grey bin recycling

WIRRAL Council and St Anselm's College have joined together to introduce Wirral's paper and packaging recycling collection to the school.

New grey bins have been delivered to match every regular bin to encourage students to recycle everything they can. The school is leading the way with innovative ideas to help the environment and reduce the amount of waste they produce.

David Green, Director of Technical Services said, "St Anselm's was chosen to pilot the paper and packaging collection due to their forward thinking in many areas of environment protection. We were also very impressed that it's the students that are pushing for the recycling, not just the teachers.

"It's essential that we think about schools as well as households in Wirral in order to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and recycle as much as possible."

St Anselms students created an eco-group the self-named 'Plastic Scousers' who have accepted the task of getting all students to use the grey bins recycling plastic bottles, cans and tins, card and glass by holding assemblies for all students. The paper has already been collected out of every classroom and recycled for some time.

Mr A Rumsby, Deputy Headmaster commented; "When I joined the college in September there was some recycling happening but the systems were not in place for it to be expanded. It took very little to spark the boys into action and the whole initiative is now being driven by our Eco Committee. They have been given the brief to investigate and promote recycling options within our community. They have just found a source for stationery manufactured from recycled materials; the possibilities for continual improvement seem to be endless!"

The school also recycles mobile phones, ink cartridges, CDs and another student group called 'Organic Youth' care and attend to the school's new vegetable garden with a school composter recycling kitchen waste.

The school is appealing for any help to continue to set up the new vegetable garden so any cash, seeds, plants or compost would be greatly appreciated.

Authors vie for votes from young Wirral readers



Nearly 100 young people from 12 Wirral secondary schools were lucky enough to meet four of their favourite authors recently.

Bernard Ashley, well-known for his novel 'Smokescreen', Sandra Glover (Spiked!), Paul Magrs (Exchange) and Theresa Breslin (Divided City) spent all day with the pupils at Bebington Civic Centre, talking to them as a group and on a one-to-one basis, as well as signing copies of their books.

The event was organised by Wirral Schools' Library Service as part of the "Paperback of the Year" award, a project aimed at promoting reading which has run annually in Wirral since 1995.

Every year, 20 of the newest and best paperbacks written for teenagers are sent to participating schools. In each school over the next few months the books are read and a shortlist of favourites produced - after much discussion and debate.

Four of the authors nominated have, for the last few years, been invited to talk to the pupils explaining how they write and where they get their ideas from, and this year the libraries were delighted that those four authors were all able to come along to Bebington this year to meet their readers.

In July, representatives from each school will attend a final judging meeting to choose an overall winner.

One of the pupils who took part this year said: "It's excellent because I got to read loads of different books. I can't wait for the next one!"

Sue Powell, Head of Libraries and Halls at Wirral Council, said: "The Paperback of the Year award is a brilliant way to get pupils, as well as librarians and teachers, to discover new authors and different genres from the diverse and stimulating selection. It is an excellent way of promoting reading for pleasure

Space-themed reading project ready for lift-off

Pupils from four local primary schools and staff from nearby libraries are on final countdown ahead of the launch of this year's "Reach For The Stars" reading project.

The project, which first took place 10 years ago in Wirral, involves children from the schools being split into teams then reading as many books with a space theme as they can over a six-week period.

They report into their local libraries on a weekly basis to provide an update on their progress and select more books to borrow.

At the end of the project, everyone who takes part will be invited to a celebration event where the Mayor will present them with a certificate and badges in recognition of their achievements.

The Mayor, along with popular Liverpool poet, Levi Tafari and the project's very own spaceman, will be on hand to launch this year's project on Thursday and Friday this week. Levi has written a special "Reach for the Stars" rap, which he will perform at the launch and at the celebration finale.

On Thursday 3rd, it is all systems go at Leasowe Library at 10.30am with children from Leasowe Primary school. Then on Friday 4th, pupils from Portland Primary will be at St. James' Library at 9.15am for their launch, followed by similar events in the children's section at Birkenhead Central library with pupils from Cathcart Street school (10.30am) and at Ridgeway Library with St. Peter's primary at 1.15pm. The Mayor, Levi and the project's astronaut will be present at all four launches.

Sue Powell, Head of Libraries and Halls for Wirral Council, said: "This project has proved massively popular with children for a decade now and goes from strength to strength. It aims to

promote reading for pleasure among pupils, at levels above and beyond what they might do anyway and we are delighted to have the backing of the Mayor and Levi once again this year.”

Economic Development and Enterprise

Fairtrade Guide available

A new Fairtrade Guide to Wirral is now available with details of local shops and cafes, more about the local campaign and about why it's important to support farmers in the developing world.

Wirral officially became a Fairtrade Borough in April 2006. In partnership with Wirral Council, the campaign has been led by the Fairworld Group – part of Wirral Local Agenda 21 Network – which includes representatives from many local churches, environmental and social justice groups.

The Guide lists dozens of local shops and cafés that stock products with the distinctive Fairtrade Mark on them. It also highlights the work local schools have done to spread the message.

It will be widely available at local libraries, One Stop Shops, Fairtrade shops and cafes, or by calling 0151 639 2121

Cross Cutting (across all themes)

Latest news on changes to Wirral's waste and recycling collections

Residents urged to read their information packs as changes to Wirral's waste and recycling collections get underway. Wirral's new waste and recycling collections have begun, with residents being asked to use different types of bin for their waste and recyclable materials.

As the new collections roll out across Wirral, homes will use:

A brown bin, for garden waste only (with the exception of a limited number of homes who are taking part in a trial combined food and garden waste scheme). A grey bin, for 'dry' recyclables such as plastic bottles, glass bottles and jars, paper, cardboard, tins and cans. Their usual green wheelie bin for all other waste that can not be recycled.

The new service is being delivered area by area, and as each phase begins, residents in that area will receive an information pack and collections' calendar so everyone will know which bin is being collected when, and what to put in it.

The information you receive is specific and targeted to the street you live in, and is not applicable to a friend or neighbour, even one living nearby. You should ensure you read the instructions delivered to your home carefully and keep them in a safe place. We know that some residents are apprehensive about the new scheme, but this is one of the most convenient schemes around the country; instead of a number of different bins, bags and boxes for different types of waste, this gives residents the chance to use the minimum of means to recycle the maximum amount of waste - with no need for sorting. We do it for you.

Help is available from a number of sources: If you have access to the internet, use our [collection day search engine](#) for a road-by-road breakdown of latest collection information for your street.

Alternatively you can call into any of Wirral's One Stop Shops, or to your local library, who will be able to access the internet for you for free.

The council call centre, Streetscene on- 606 2004 - will also be able to help, but please be aware that it is experiencing a high volume of calls at the moment and you may have to wait for assistance. We're sorry for any inconvenience you may be experiencing due to this.

These collections are being introduced to help the Council meet new recycling targets to cut down on the amount of waste it sends to landfill. In the long run, it will not only save precious resources for future generations, but will save council taxpayers money as it reduces the amount of landfill tax we have to pay.

Please bear with us while these changes settle down; as with any major change, it takes time for people to get used to new processes and new systems. We appreciate your patience and apologise for any inconvenience suffered while the service is established

New Services at your local One Stop Shops

Since February this year the following services have been made newly available via your local One Stop Shop:

Licensing The main change is that the Licensing Reception point at Wallasey Town Hall has closed to the public and therefore you are able to pick up and drop off forms plus get advice and information at any One Stop Shop on the following areas:

- Licenses for airport/chauffeur services
- New and renewal licence applications for Hackney/Private hire drivers
- Permits for house to house collections
- Lottery licences
- Personal licenses for the supply of alcohol at licensed premises
- New licenses or requests for variation of existing licenses for premises or club premises
- Review requests for premises or club premises licenses
- New and renewal license applications for private hire operators
- Applications for Street Collection licenses
- Temporary Event notices
- New and renewal licence applications for Hackney/Private hire vehicles

We will also check any proofs that you supply, take payments where necessary and book any relevant tests/courses you will need to go on

Council job vacancies If you see a vacancy you want to apply for, you can now go to any One Stop Shop and get an application pack for that job. You can also contact our Call Centre and a recruitment pack will be sent to you within a few days.

Also when you come to return the form you can take it back to any One Stop Shop and they will record that they have received it from you and give you a receipt. This means that you no longer have to go to Wallasey Town Hall to hand job applications in, and you can be guaranteed that the form is in before the closing date.

Streetscene You can also access more Streetscene services at your local One Stop Shop so you can now request:

- Removal of any fly tipping
- To go on the Help List for bin collection

- Help following a missed bin collection
- Street cleaning
- A replacement bin following damage etc

Also don't forget if you have a query about when your bins are due to be collected you can do this via your local One Stop Shop, Streetscene on 0151 606 2004 or at www.wirral.gov.uk/recycling/

Tourism One Stop Shops can now give information and advice on Wirral's tourist attractions and events on Wirral.

Pest Control It is planned that from the end of June you will be able to request the Pest Control Service from your local One Stop Shop as well as being able to phone our Call Centre. We will be able to make the appointment for you there and then whilst you wait.

New Advice Surgeries

Bebington One Stop Shop There is now a Police Surgery being held at Bebington One Stop Shop on the first Tuesday of each month. The times and dates for 2007 are as follows:

1pm-3pm 5th June 2007
 1pm-3pm 3rd July 2007
 1pm-3pm 7th August 2007
 1pm-3pm 4th September 2007
 1pm-3pm 2nd October 2007
 1pm-3pm 6th November 2007
 1pm-3pm 4th December 2007

Police and Community Support Officers will staff the surgery and will be there to discuss neighbourhood concerns of local residents.

Eastham One Stop Shop There is a Police Surgery being held at Eastham One Stop Shop (next to the Library). The surgeries are held between 10.00am and 12 noon with the next one on the 18th June. They are then every 3 week after that. Officers will be handing out crime prevention materials to encourage local people to improve their personal, home and car security

So pop into your One Stop Shop for further information on any council service – everything you could ask for under one roof.

For details of where your nearest One Stop Shop is please contact 0151 606 2000 or go to http://www.wirral.gov.uk/fn/one_stop_shops.htm

SECTION THREE

Oxton and Prenton Area Forum Funding Progress Report *(previously awarded monies)*

Received From	Project Details	Decision	Progress Report
Wirral Women & Childrens Aid	To help run the youth club for the next 12 months	Panel considered this to be a good project and agreed to contribute £500.00 towards this from the Community Initiatives Fund.	<p>The children who attend our weekly run youth club have all experienced / witnessed domestic abuse. Most of them have lived in the refuge for part of their young lives.</p> <p>The youth club provides weekly activities for them, enabling them to be children and giving them, and their mums, respite for a short period of time on an ongoing basis.</p>
Fire Support Network	To provide an after-fire care service in Wirral.	Panel considered this to be a Good project and agreed to award £209.00 from the Community Initiatives Fund.	<p>The funding received from the forums was extremely appreciated as it helped the project to continue whilst additional funding was being Sought. The after fire care project has taken off considerably since 2006, and has been funded for the next five years from the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>We have helped victims of fire who found the project most helpful at a very difficult time in their lives.</p>
Wirral Holistic Care Services	To replace patio area and provide wheelchair access and handrails.	Panel considered this to be a good project and agreed to Contribute £500.00 towards this from the Community Initiatives Fund	The patio are has been completely renovated, re-paved and made safe. Patients and volunteers are now able to make use of the lovely garden at the charity's premises with the help of your funding.

Received From	Project Details	Decision	Progress Report
Christ Church Birkenhead	To contribute towards refurbishment works to the kitchen.	Panel considered this to be a good project and agreed to Award £1,000.00 from the Community Initiatives Fund.	We have worked almost every Wednesday evening and Saturday from July to January renovating the kitchen and have finally got our Certificates both for the installation work and for Health and Hygiene so that we could actually use the kitchen. We look forward to offering our regular Sunday lunches again, and introducing Saturday breakfasts.
Prenton Tenants and Residents Association	To purchase four computers, two playstation 2 consoles, Various board games, garden equipment and to install CCTV in order to set up a centre for youngsters in the Prenton area.	Panel considered this to be a good project and agreed to award £2,300.00 from the Community Initiatives Fund and £1,200.00 from Community Safety Fund on condition that advice is taken from Ian Lowrie (tel: 0151 606 5493) from the Community Safety Team with	The computers, playstations and games have been purchased and the club is going very well and the youngsters are enjoying it.
64 th Birkenhead Sea Scout Group	To contribute towards cost of re-roofing single Storey extension to the group Headquarters.	Panel considered this to be a good project and agreed to award £700.00 from the Community Initiatives Fund.	The project has now been completed, many thanks.
Tall Ships Youth Trust - Merseyside and Deeside Branch	To contribute towards the cost of sending over 100 young people from Merseyside (aged 16-25) Annually on voyages.	Panel considered this to be a good project and agreed to award £1,000.00 from the Community Initiatives Fund.	We have sponsored two young people from the forum area on voyages in July and September 06, and three young people on the Young Explorer Voyage for 14 – 15 year olds in February 2007.

SECTION FOUR

Local area plan update

Background The area plans were developed during 2004 to 2006 and launched in May 2006. In order to align them to Wirral's local area agreement, the area plans will be refreshed and reviewed on an annual basis to reflect Wirral and area forum priorities, and will follow the same delivery timeframe as the agreement.

Purpose The purpose of the area plans is to identify local issues, priorities and needs and to support and guide the forums in working towards addressing these throughout the year. The area plans are a development that will evolve over time as issues are addressed and new priorities emerge. The area plans aim to give an understanding of the local area in which residents live through the provision of information about what is in the area and statistical information about the needs of the local population. It also identifies local issues that have been raised through the forums and contributes towards achieving local area agreement priorities and outcomes.

The purpose of refreshing the plans is to standardise the 11 area plans ensuring they are easy to use and useful to residents. The proposed new structure will enable local issues and priorities to be identified and included in the area plans, this will ensure that through regular monitoring, Wirral Council and its partners are providing a dynamic and responsive approach to local issues.

Proposals for new look area plans It is proposed that the area plans will feature three main sections;

- Introduction
- Statistical Information
- Local priority action plan

Introduction This section will set out the purpose of the plans and introduce the members of the area forum.

Contextual information about the area will still feature in this section, however in order to make these plans as user friendly and accessible as possible, this section will look to signpost to other websites and contact details for further information where appropriate.

Statistical Information In order to provide a standard approach to all of the area forum plans, the statistical information for each of the area plans will follow the same format and include the same content, adapted to show highlighted information for each of the forum areas. The section will focus on the individual area forum and also provide comparative information for Wirral to provide context.

Local priority action plan As part of the review of the existing area plans, each area coordinator will address the issues which feature in the local issues section of each plan and identify outstanding issues. These issues will transfer into the refreshed area plans to ensure they remain a key focus for the area forum. The owner of each action will be a named partner who will have responsibility to tackle this issue.

Issues that have been resolved will not be taken forward into refreshed area plans. This will ensure that there is a clear focus on the key outstanding priorities and issues that are identified at a local level for each area forum. As new priorities are identified, they will also form part of the local priority action plan to be addressed at each area forums and progressed through the responsible partner.

SECTION FIVE

Streetscene and Waste Update: Area Forum Report May 2007

Birkenhead Parking New parking regulations came into force in Birkenhead Town Centre in April, which replaced the existing Disc Zone with a new Controlled Parking Zone.

Motorists now have to pay to park in the new parking zone, between the hours of 8:00am and 6:30pm. Wirral Council did allow for people to become accustomed to the new charges, by offering a few weeks 'grace period' where no parking fines were issued.

The charges have been introduced to reduce congestion and accidents, encourage people to use public transport, free up more parking spaces, and improve access for emergency vehicles and disabled drivers.

Changes to Speed Restrictions Wirral Council received a number of enquiries and petitions expressing concern about the speed of traffic in sections of Telegraph Road, Column Road and Thurstaston Road. As part of a scheme to improve road safety it is proposed to reduce the speed limit along sections of these roads.

Consultation letters have been sent out to residents in the area, notices have been placed on site and the proposed orders appeared in the local press.

The proposed speed reductions are as follows:

- Telegraph Road and Column Road from Church Lane to Grange Cross Lane will be reduced from 50mph to 40mph.
- Drivers travelling along Column Road from Grange Cross Lane to Croome Drive will be forced to slow from 40mph to 30mph.
- The existing 50mph speed limit in Thurstaston Road from Telegraph Road to reduced to 40mph.

Residents Parking Zones After many requests and complaints from residents about the lack of parking facilities outside their homes due to non-residents (students, shoppers, commuters) using the spaces, Wirral Council are running a **consultation** about possible Residents' Parking Zones. The consultation is in the very early stages and will be carried out in seven pilot areas across the borough.

The Council have no budget set aside for creating Residents' Parking Zones so are suggesting that all residents' who opt for a zone pay an approximate £75 set up charge per household. This funding would then go to signing, road markings, permit issuing and enforcement.

Residents in the seven pilot areas will be receiving a letter, leaflet and questionnaire. We urge everyone who receives this correspondence to state their views via the feedback questionnaire and return it. No charges will be incurred by residents within existing zones.

The seven pilot areas are:

- **Atherton Street area, New Brighton** – near to New Brighton train station and a small number of businesses.
- **Alexandra Road area, West Kirby** – Near to boating lake, beach, shops and Coronation Gardens.
- **Grasmere Drive area, Wallasey** – Just outside of Liscard resident parking scheme. Near to local shops.

- **Barnston Lane area, Moreton** – To the north of an existing small scheme. Within Moreton town centre where there is generally low provision for commercial off-street parking.
- **Probyn Road/Ponsonby Road, Wallasey Village** – Near to train station.
- **Acacia Grove area, West Kirby** – Mixed residential/commercial use, close to train station, shopping centre and leisure areas.
- **Brookfield Road/Brookfield Gardens, West Kirby** – primarily residential with displaced parking related to nearby businesses and train station.

Road Safety Campaigns - Young pedestrians, young drivers and young passengers Wirral Road Safety Partnership (Wirral Council & Merseyside Police) commissioned a radio advertisement campaign aimed at teenagers and young people. A series of three hard-hitting adverts were aired daily on Radio City 96.7 throughout March and April, urging young people to belt up when in car, and to take care as a pedestrian.

In addition to the air-time campaign, Wirral Road Safety and Radio City are hosting a competition between four Wirral high schools - Woodchurch, Park High, Rock Ferry High and The Wallasey School. This competition asks for students to compile a short road safety advert film, and spread the film to friends and other young people, via mobile phone and the internet etc. The winners will be announced in June.

Port Sunlight/Clatterbridge Cycle Route Wirral Council is committed to promoting cycling as a healthy, sustainable mode of transport. The cycle route between Port Sunlight Railway Station and Clatterbridge Hospital is nearing completion and will increase road safety for cyclists who currently experience difficulties on main roads and at junctions. It will also encourage workers, visitors and residents of the area to take up cycling as a form of transport. To benefit pedestrians and cyclists, three toucan crossings have been installed in Brimstage Road, Church Road and Bromborough Road to enable them to cross the road safely. The route will also enable thousands of local schoolchildren to get out on their bikes and into the fresh air by providing safe routes for them to cycle.

Traffic Safety Schemes Since the last update at the beginning of the year, we have implemented the following traffic safety schemes:

Conway Street / Exmouth Street	Signal Improvement
Hoylake Road / Reeds Lane	Signal Improvement
Duke Street	New Puffin Crossing
Port Sunlight Station	New Refuge
Bebington Station	New Refuge
Greenfield Avenue / Dawpool Drive	20mph zone / Traffic Calming
Dock Road	Traffic Improvement
Birkenhead Park Station Crossing	Convert Zebra to Puffin
Manor Lane, Liscard	20mph zone / Traffic Calming
St. Georges Way, Thornton Hough	20mph zone / Traffic Calming
M53 exit slip road (Toyota Dealership)	Speed limit reduction / New Carriageway and markings / New signs

Highway Maintenance Contracts

The extensive procurement exercise for the future provision of all Highway Maintenance works continues. Consultants, Capita Symonds, are currently preparing options and reports to be put to Members. The contract will cover maintenance works such as footway and carriageway works, traffic signals, gully cleansing and street lighting.

Wirral on the Road to Recycling Working alongside Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority, Wirral Council is encouraging local companies to use recycled materials and where possible use them within Council business.

One example of this is how we are using 100% recycled plastic kerb stones for pavements around the borough. The kerbs are light, very hard wearing and are reducing the length of time it takes to repair roads. This ultimately will save the Council money and provide us with a more effective material for road reconstruction.

The kerbs mean the use of technical lifting equipment is unnecessary due to their light weight and it's therefore much safer for staff to use. All the pilot schemes have also shown us how hard wearing the material is.

Cigarette / Smoking-related Litter Wirral Council are aware that when Wirral goes 'smokefree' on July 1st, there will be a backlash of cigarette litter.

In preparation for this, the installation of 50 cigarette bins is imminent in the Birkenhead and Liscard town centre areas. Discarding cigarette butts is an offence, as is dropping any litter, and is subject to a £75 fine.

To deter Wirral residents from committing the offence, we are warning them of the £75 fine. We are heading up an extensive advertising campaign, including adverts on billboards, bus stops, phone boxes and bus rears. Will also be hosting events to give away portable ashtrays (Stubbi pouches) and communicate the fact that people will be given £75 fines if they are caught dropping a cigarette stub, or any form of litter.

Major Surfacing Schemes The Highway Maintenance Division has been very busy since the last review with the following surfacing schemes undertaken:

Footway works completed

Heswall Mount, Thingwall	Cestrian Drive, Thingwall
Rullerton Road, Wallasey (part)	Birchway, Gayton
Downham Road, Tranmere (part)	Aysgarth Road, Wallasey
Orchard Road, Moreton	Craigeigh Grove, Eastham
Parkway/Parkway Close, Irby	Holmlands Drive (Part) Oxton
Moseley Avenue, Wallasey	Haydock Road, New Brighton
135 -157 Thingwall Road Irby	Darmonds Green, West Kirby

Future footway works planned

Wakefield Drive, Leasowe	Devonshire Road, West Kirby
Caldwell Drive, Upton	Bassenthwaite Avene, Claughton
Burlingham Avenue, West Kirby (part)	Upton Road (part) Claughton
The Laund, Wallasey	Nursury Close, Oxton
Derwent Drive, Liscard	Grafton Street (part) Birkenhead
Dalmorton Road (part) New Brighton	Well Lane, Bebington
Croxteth Avenue, Liscard	Fieldway, Bebington
Hawarden Avenue, Liscard	

Carriageway resurfacing completed

Trinity/Eddisbury/Kingswood/Berwyn Roads, Wallasey	Gorsedale Road (part) Seacombe
Wright Street, Wallasey	Beryl Road, Claughton
Kinglake Road, Wallasey (part)	St Elmo Road, Liscard
Lingdale Road North, Claughton	Hoscote Park, West Kirby
Adelaide Road, Birkenhead	Elm Grove, Hoylake
Byron Close, Prenton	Orchard Grange, Moreton
Redcar Road, Wallasey	Twickenham Drive (part) Leasowe
Moseley Avenue, Liscard	Darmonds Green, West Kirby
Palmerston Road, Wallasey	Redhouse Lane, West Kirby

Carriageway resurfacing planned

Sherlock Lane, Poulton	Neville Road, Bromborough
Brompton Avenue, Wallasey	Dibbins Hey (part), Clatterbridge
Haydock Road, New Brighton	Wirral Mount, Clatterbridge
Chadwick Street, Moreton	Patterdale Road, Clatterbridge
Raby Mere Road (part) Clatterbridge	Devonshire Road (part) Birkenhead
Derwent Drive, Liscard	Townsend/Challis/Curlender Roads, Bidston
Hawarden Avenue, Liscard	Bedford Road (part) Rock Ferry
Wharfedale Road, Wallasey	New Chester Road (part) Rock Ferry
Aysgarth Road, Wallasey	Bridge Street, (part) Birkenhead
The Laund, Wallasey	Argyle Street,(part) Birkenhead
Perrin Road. Wallasey	Mount Road (part) Bebington
Acres Road, Bebington	
Richmond Close, Bebington	

Tall Ships 2008 Plans are already underway to manage the huge amount of traffic that the Tall Ships 2008 event will attract. The event is set to take place between 18-21 July NEXT YEAR (2008). We are working with Merseytravel, Culture Company and Liverpool Council to create a suitable park and ride site on Wirral and to ensure East Wirral's streets are not gridlocked when the event is taking place.

Walk to School Week 2007 Wirral Council have been working hard to ensure as many schools as possible encourage their students to walk to school by setting up 'walking bus' programmes throughout the year. Walk to School Week is Monday 21 – Friday 25 May 2007. The Mayor of Wirral, Phil Gilchrist will be joining a walking bus to Woodchurch Primary School on Wednesday May 23 at 8.30am and then St Joseph's Primary School, Seacombe on Friday May 25 8.30am.

Garden Recycling Garden waste brown bins have now been delivered to most homes that have a garden. This includes an extra 11,500 households previously without a garden collection scheme and brings the total to approximately 85,000 households.

Collection calendars have been delivered to all households with a brown bin. Collection days have been changed in order to provide greater balance of collection rounds and more logical route plans. Unfortunately, after being considerably let down by the distribution company some households did not receive their calendars. Wirral Council is now collating this information and arranging for calendars to be delivered as quickly as possible.

There have been some teething problems getting residents on to the new collection days, however the contractor are now catching up with collections and bins are being presented with lots of garden recycling.

Paper and Packaging Recycling The new paper and packaging scheme has now been extended to more residents bringing the total households to 110,000. Plastic bottles, glass, paper, cardboard, tins and cans are being collected, combined, from the kerb-side and taken to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Bidston where they are separated and sent to local processors for turning into new products.

The final phase (excluding flats) is beginning with the grey wheelie bins being distributed currently. All residents will be on the scheme by 11 June, this includes a further 33,000 properties.

Comprehensive information and advertising for the scheme has been provided to all residents. The Council applied for funding from the Waste Resource Action Program (WRAP) for the communications activities and this was awarded providing Wirral with an extensive marketing campaign. The marketing literature was used as good-practice by WRAP. Wirral's website has been updated and provides all the most recent information for residents.

Some problems occurred at the beginning of the recent roll-out of the bins. This was mainly due to the contractor playing catch up after the Easter Bank Holiday's as residents were unaware collections would take place. This led to a back-log of bins to collect and caused some problems with delayed collections. The Council did experience high volumes of calls to Streetscene and negative press coverage, however since the scheme has begun, residents have presented huge amounts of recycling and have really taken ownership of the scheme.

Wirral saw almost treble the volume of recycling within the first four weeks on the paper and packaging scheme with a 95% participation rate. It is anticipated that Wirral will exceed our recycling target of 23% next year. Wirral is very encouraged about the standard of recycling with very few bins having to be rejected for contamination, i.e. wrong items presented for collection in a recycling bin.

Home Composting WRAP (Waste Resource Action Program) are funding a home compost incentive scheme for Wirral residents throughout 2007. Residents can purchase home composters for as little as £8 including free delivery. The scheme also provides residents with an information starter kit, access to a compost help line and regular newsletters with helpful hints. Details of the scheme are posted on the Council's website. In addition Wrap will carry out several borough wide leaflet drops promoting the scheme to every household in the borough.

**INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK (CAPITAL PROGRAMME)
2007/08 – UPDATE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES TO
STREETSCENE & TRANSPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –23 MAY 2007**

Update on Integrated Transport Block

Senior officers from my Department have engaged with each of the eleven Area Forums in the June 2006 cycle of meetings.

Nine out of the eleven Area Forums had decided that the whole of the Integrated Transport Block allocation remains at the centre for use on a borough wide basis. Bromborough and Eastham and Heswall, Pensby & Thingwall Area Forums expressed a desire to have a share of the budget allocated locally.

It was noted that this would mean that the two Area Forums would receive 1/11th each of the Integrated Transport Block for local allocation and that any projects within those areas above that level of funding would not be able to proceed. I am expecting suggestions at the June 2007 cycle of Area Forums, which will be considered, where appropriate.

Suggestions already received from some of the Area Forums have already been considered along with all other requests received for Speed Reduction and Aids to Movement schemes. Requests for Speed Reduction schemes are included within a separate report to this Committee. The remaining initiatives within the Aids to Movement programme are considered below.

I do, however, propose to bring a separate report to your Committee following the next cycle of Area Forum meetings and report on the requests made within the Bromborough and Eastham, and Heswall, Pensby & Thingwall Area Forums, identifying Aids to Movement schemes to be implemented from the allocated share of the Integrated Transport Block.

SECTION SIX

Equality and Diversity

Introduction Welcome to this new section of the forum's report! This will be a regular feature in future and if anyone has any comments, ideas or items they would like to see included in this section, they will be most welcome.

What is Equality and Diversity? The ESLG (Equality Standard for Local Government) assesses how we are performing in respect of gender, race and disability. The standard provides a framework for delivering continuous improvement in relation to fair employment and equal access to services.

There are 6 strands/pillars of the Equality Standard:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or belief

We currently have a statutory duty to produce schemes which address any negative impact in respect of race, disability and gender, all of which can be found on the Council's website.

http://10.107.1.50/Personnel/EO_Policy.htm

The Equality Standard has 5 levels, Wirral is aiming to achieve level 2 by December 2007. A validation exercise took place recently where 'critical friends' were invited to help assess us informally as an Authority in order for us to reach level 2. The process for level 2 is self assessment and includes colleagues from other local authorities, Age Concern, Youth Service, Jigsaw, Wirral Change, WIRED and Women's Enterprise Breakthrough.

The Council has mechanisms to ensure all departments regularly discuss equalities. There is also a Corporate Group which meets bi-monthly to assess the progress of departments through the equality agenda. In this way we hope to address any areas of weaknesses in our employment practice or service delivery.

If you are interested to find out more please visit our website and your views/comments would be appreciated and fed back to the Corporate Group.

Useful groups/contacts

Clint Agard, Wirral Change - Wirral Change is a Black and Racial Minority Outreach Service which offers information, advice and guidance on jobs, education, training, self-employment and signposting to other services for Racial Minority people on the Wirral. We offer drop-in sessions for internet access/job search. We also now have a new service which provides immigration advice.

For further information please contact Clint on 0151 650 5428

Margaret Jones, Chair - Wirral Disabled People's Forum - The Wirral Disabled People's Forum meets four times a year at different accessible venues across the Wirral. The Forum exists to discuss issues that are of importance to disabled people and their carers and to ensure that their views are taken forward to the relevant bodies where decisions are being made. By doing this disabled people in Wirral have the opportunity to influence services in the area.

For further information please contact Margaret on 0151 327 5508

Peter Barnett, Wirral LGB&T Forum (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) - A forum for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender community has been set up; this has been done with the support of the NETWORK (WVCSN), Wirral Borough Council and Merseyside Police. At this moment in time we are setting up the core group to assess the policy's and aims of the forum, if any one is interested in joining the core group please email us at wirralgbt_forum@yahoo.co.uk

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