

AREA FORUM (BIDSTON AND CLAUGHTON)

Wednesday, 13 October 2010

Present:

Councillor	D Roberts (Chair)
Councillors	G Davies S Foulkes AR McLachlan H Smith
Lead Officer	Peter Tomlin
Community Engagement Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray
Streetscene Manager	Garry Cummings
Community Safety	Jim Thompson, Stephen Preston
Merseyside Police	Inspector Roy McGregor
Merseyside Fire and Rescue	Dave Watson
NHS Wirral	Dr Abhi Mantgani, Fiona Johnstone (Public Health)
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Joyce Jackson (Public Governor)
Minute Taker	Ema Boddison
In attendance	Phil Cowderoy (Energy Project Plus)
Apologies:	Luke Redman (WUTH), Councillor Jim Crabtree, Pat Landsborough, Jean McIntosh

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES

The Chair, Councillor Denise Roberts, welcomed forum members and 22 members of the public to the Bidston and Claughton Area Forum being held for the first time at the Miriam Medical Practice, Birkenhead Medical Building, Laird Street, Birkenhead.

Councillor Roberts explained that it was the first time a Forum had been held in this location and they were very happy to be here.

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM (JUNE 2010)

Community Engagement Co-ordinator Michelle Gray, explained that at the previous Area Forum in June, there was an opportunity to spend funding of £20,000 whereby members of the public filled out You Decide “activity cards” and list their 5 top priorities. Michelle Gray collated all the results and shared these with the forum, panel agreed to fund the top priorities which includes:

Activities/Opportunities for young people in youth clubs	£4,400
Foot Patrol by Enforcement Officers	£3,750
Household Security	£2,330
Temporary use of CCTV	£2,500
Big Tidy Up with strategic partners and community	£1,200
Community Sports Development Officer (CSDO)	£4,500
Allotment Tenants site cleanup day	£720
Sports Festival Days	£600

Michelle then explained that if anyone wanted to be kept updated and/or to be involved in any of the activities above to contact her direct 0151 691 8213, michellegray@wirral.gov.uk.

Michelle also gave an update on “grit bin suggestions” the following where suggestions made by members of the public and forum members at the last area forum in June.

- Tollemache Road (Dip/traffic lights and Ashburn Road Corner)
- Heather Brow
- Upton Road shop area
- Claughton Village shop area (coffee shop/funeral place)
- Merebank, Noctorum (top of cul-de-sac)
- Hurrell Road
- Hoylake Road (bottom of Lower Arkle Road)
- Manor Hill (junction with Egerton or Grosvenor Road)
- Bassenthwaite Avenue, Noctorum place (top by central reservation/Island)
- Lingdale Road North (where it meets Valerian Road)
- Alderley Avenue (near junction of Valerian Road CH41 near Claughton Village)

Michelle informed the forum that all bins should be in place by mid November 2010, and advised that anyone wanting further information to speak to her at the end of the meeting.

3 **WIRRAL'S FUTURE - BE A PART OF IT**

Lead Officer, Peter Tomlin explained about Wirral’s Future ‘be part of it’ whereby the Council are asking public members to fill out a questionnaire for their input in what needs improving and what is most important in a bid for delivering Council services to make savings of £30 – 40 million over the next 3 years. He also explained how Wirral Council will have a budget gap of £108 million over the next 4 years and action is required.

Peter Tomlin explained that there will be restructure in the Council to reduce duplication and cost. Better use of technology will be in force and cutting down on

the number of Council Buildings and how much is spent on them. All contracts are in the process of being renegotiated and customer service will be improved.

This is the biggest Consultation that the Council have ever undertaken and advised the public that their help was needed to help decide on how their money should be invested in the future.

Peter Tomlin explained that four task forces have been established for this made up of private, public, voluntary and community sector. Each Task Force is considering what the Councils priorities should be. He then proceeded to read over a few of the questions so public members could get an idea of what the questionnaire contained and mentioned that the sections included are:-

- **Living in Wirral**
- **Children and Young Peoples Services**
- **Adult Social Services**
- **Economy and Regeneration**

He advised that copies of the questionnaire are available from all Council buildings and can be accessed on the internet and also staff members have been out in various places such as Asda, Libraries, Leisure Centres and Schools handing out and advising public members of the process.

Q – Public Member – I attended a local partnership assembly as an elected member and this item was on the agenda. I received a copy in the post and filled it in and took it to a one stop shop. I felt that the opposition party had a problem with the questionnaire. If people have concerns then it is clarity that they need!

Councillor Steve Foulkes – We all found out about this through a press release. The Task Forces created the questions, we did not know who the Task Force were and how they were chosen. The length and style of the questionnaire is why the response is low. Up to now we have given out over 30,000 and had had 2,500 back to date. It seems that all Council services hope that when the budget is set that people's comments are considered. Use the 'other comments' box wisely at the back of the questionnaire and say what you actually want to. All comments that are made on the questionnaire are being collated.

Jim Thompson – The most important part of the whole survey is the comments box where you can enter free text. Also include suggestions and ideas.

Q – Public Member – Who is the Task Force?

Councillor Steve Foulkes – Those people that are on the task force, some of them I know. Some of them may have an interest in that particular service that is mentioned in the questionnaire, if they do they should not have been allowed to be in the Task Force as they have an interest. They should have stepped down.

Q – Public Member – Can I find list of those Task Force names on the website?

Councillor Steve Foulkes – All this information can be found on the website including minutes of their meetings etc.

Q – Public Member – The scale of cuts is so high, whatever consultation is done would be criticised.

Councillor Ann McLachlan – The Task Force Members are not elected representatives like Councillors that the public elect!

Councillor Steve Foulkes – Task Force Members are people who do not have to declare an interest!

The Chair, Councillor Denise Roberts introduced Phil Cowderoy from Energy Projects Plus and apologises for not introducing him earlier. Cllr Roberts then went on to say he would be available at the end for people to talk to.

4 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

NHS Wirral – Dr Abhi Mantgani – Introduced Fiona Johnstone, Public Health. Welcomed everyone to the Medical Centre and thanks them for coming. He went on to explain about the Practice Based Commission which consists of Consortiums who have worked together now for 4 years. 23 practices across Wirral are involved and they want to form a Patient Council whereby the patients will be able to vote and will be responsible for public money. He urged the public to be more proactive as it would be for the benefit of the patients. GP surgeries will get money and they are trying to meet with Councillors as they want to share their ideas with them to provide a better healthcare.

Q – Cllr George Davies – I have just come back from London and one thing we discussed was budgets held by GPs. How do we narrow that gap between East and West. Council and NHS need to come together and sit down and discuss how we can prolong life expectancy for those areas.

Councillor Harry Smith – There is an 11 year gap between East and West.

Dr Abhi Mantgani – we have targeted resources for example Cardiovascular disease is the worse and we are asking patients to come in for checks. People are asking why do we need different Consortiums, why not just one? But our patients needs are different. We are sensitive to people in the North End of Birkenhead. The budget is not to benefit GPs and I fully agree that we need to sit down and talk. Increasing lifetime expectancy is a long process.

Q – Public Member – How many Consortiums will there be?

Dr Abhi Mantgani – technically it will not come into force until 2013 as the PCT are still there. The estimation is that there will be 3 Consortiums.

Q – Public Member – will it be North, South, West?

Dr Abhi Mantgani – I don't think it will be split by Geography

Q – Public Member – how do we become part of the Patient Council?

Dr Abhi Mantgani – we are asking practices to nominate or give ideas at the Area Forums.

Q – Public Member – what is aimed at the younger generation?

Fiona Johnston – Public Health – I live on the Wirral so I am keen to serve the community that I am part of. There is a lot of work to link with young people. We are looking to invest in health services in Schools i.e smoking and sexual health – I serve this Borough.

Dr Abhi Mantgani – there are a lot of services being promoted for young people.

Q – Public Member – when will Woodchurch Road Surgery be complete?

Dr Abhi Mantgani – December time. They will most probably shift Christmas week and open New Year. It is an excellent practice and I would like to thank all the Councillors here who have been involved.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue - Dave Watson – A full update was given on pages 19 – 22. ‘Watch what you Heat’ campaign was highlighted whereby the Fire Service visited over 22,000 homes delivering home fire safety checks as part of a comprehensive accidental dwelling fire strategy. Also highlighted was the Bonfire Strategy 2010 which includes bonfire removal. This initiative is to commence on Monday 18th October until approximately 1 week after bonfire night. Went on to say that they will be working closely with Wirral Partnership Homes and hoping to run ‘waste stations’. WPH will leaflet their properties advising when their waste removal vehicles will be in the area for any unwanted items.

Q – Public Member – Lots of rubbish on Bidston Hill – are you removing that?

Dave Watson – can be reported and will be risk assessed and then would be dealt with either by us or the local authority.

Councillor Harry Smith – thanked the Fire Service for the excellent PR job in Beechwood.

Q – Public Member – the Fire Service has a brilliant initiative working with WPH but is there any way of linking it to Wirral Homes as well to get them to use the initiative?

Wirral Partnership Homes Officer – I work for Wirral partnership Homes and I will take that back with me and report back to forum members.

Cllr Steve Foulkes – Informed the forum that about two years ago the crime/callout statistics for Bonfire nights they were the worst on Merseyside. A group involving Ridgeway High School, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Local Residents, and Local Ward Councillors got together and organised a safe and supervised event, last year the statistics were the best. It is being repeated this year with the School providing a community bonfire night event. Councillor Steve Foulkes wanted to congratulate all those involved and hopes for a safe trouble free Bonfire night this year.

Merseyside Police – Inspector Roy McGregor – Went over extensive report contained in the forum papers and highlighted the fact that they will be making visits to local schools and writing to local retailers with regards to the sale of flour and eggs

around Halloween. Inspector Roy McGregor also explained what the 'have your say' cards were about and how important they are. Members of the public can fill them out with regards to anything criminal that they witness but urges people to be specific i.e if you are reporting youths drinking then please state times and places. 'These cards are useful as this is how it came to our attention about the 'flasher' on Bidston Hill, who was arrested and charged.

Cllr Ann McLachlan – Thanked the Police for their help on the Ballantyne Estate which is a good example of how everyone comes together and works on improving areas it shows partnership working with organisations and residents.

Community Safety – Jim Thompson – a full update was given across pages 7-11 in the area forum papers. Jim Thompson asked public members that there is a form for them to fill out with regards to what they consider to be their community safety priorities, he welcomed everyone to complete one.

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Q – Public Member – I live on the Noctorum and there is a circular of bungalows in Needham Crescent. There is no access for fire and disabled people live there. Can Sorrell Close be opened up for this?

Cllr George Davies – You would have to speak to Wirral Partnership Homes.

Public Member – I have spoken to them and the Council and I am getting nowhere.

Cllr George Davies – I will co-ordinate this for you. Give me the details at the end of the meeting.

Q – Public Member – Have you been to Grange Road recently? There is an increase in pigeons and sparrows as there is a lady feeding them?

Cllr George Davies – I can help with that – it might be the same lady who was removed from Liscard. I will deal with this.

Cllr Steve Foulkes – It needs to stop as if it gets too bad would have to go to harsh measures to get rid of them.

Public Member – I had baby in the pram and a sparrow just missed her eye!! It is a hazard. Also another important issue is that I thought all dogs are to be kept on leads – especially in shopping areas and parks where children are? It is dangerous and something should be done.

Cllr Harry Smith – With regards to dogs kept on leads, Wirral does not seem to have a byelaw to keep dogs on leads just a requirement. Why do we not consider one particularly in shopping areas.

Insp Roy McGregor – Dogs dangerously out of control is a criminal offence it can also just be that you believe the dog is dangerous or is to do something dangerous.

Dr Abhi Mantgani – I support this lady – it is inappropriate. If other Councils have a byelaw then we should be able to have one.

Steve Preston/Jim Thompson - From a community safety point of view, will look into this and report back to Michelle Gray the area co-ordinator. Officers to keep members up to date to feedback to residents.

The Chair Denise Roberts closed the meeting and invited people to talk to Phil Cowderoy with regards to Energy Projects Plus

Phil Cowderoy – Mentioned that this was a scheme to promote a warmer Wirral that is funded by Wirral Council. Anyone is eligible and do not have to be on a low income.

Cllr George Davies – It is a fantastic scheme and in-fact I am getting my loft insulation done next week.

Phil Cowderoy – It is free to anybody and you can get a free electricity monitor. There is targeted areas but anyone can apply.

6 **REFRESHMENTS/OPEN FORUM**

- This is an opportunity for members of the community to network with any of the forum members

7 **ENERGY PROJECTS PLUS**

- Energy Projects Plus (EPP) – “working towards a sustainable future”

Phil Cowderoy attended the forum to promote the Warmer Wirral project that is managed by EPP and funded by Wirral Council, he was available at the end of the meeting for anyone who wanted any advice on this project.

The Chair Denise Roberts thanked Phil and all who attended and closed the meeting.

The next area forum would take place on Wednesday 2nd February 2011.