

# AREA FORUM (WEST WIRRAL)

Wednesday, 20 June 2012

## In attendance:

Councillors	E Boulton D Elderton G Ellis JE Green G Watt
Lead Officer	Kevin Adderley - Director of Regeneration Housing and Planning
Consultation Manager	Tracey Smith
Streetscene Manager	Mark Traynor
Community Safety	Mike Collins
Merseyside Fire Service	Sarah Patterson
Merseyside Police	Inspector Mick Blease
Council Officers	Mark Camborne, Mike Peet

## Apologies

Councillors	J Hale
In Attendance	Jayne Robinson (Minute Taker) Ben Freeman IMG

## 1 **WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair, Councillor Jeff Green welcomed the Forum members and 67 members of the public to the West Wirral Area Forum held at Melrose Hall, Melrose Avenue, Hoylake.

Councillor Jeff Green thanked Jackie Hall for the use of Melrose Hall, which is run voluntary and with contributions

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Tracey Smith requested that a representative from the Youth Service to attend this evening, but no-one was available. A representative will attend the next Area Forum.

Parks & Gardens – Allotment Waiting List – There are 750 people on the waiting list.

## 2 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE ON YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR ECONOMY

Tracey Smith gave an update and feedback on the Neighbourhood Plans.

The areas in the consultation process included:

**Your Economy**

**Your Health**

**Your Family**

**Your Neighbourhood**

Tracey's update focused on 'Your Family' and 'Your Economy'. An information handout was available for people to read.

Some of the points raised were:

### **Services for Children and Young People**

- More activities for teenagers especially in the evening, at weekends and during the summer holidays.
- More Youth Clubs, and free activities and taster sessions for young children, or a subsidised scheme for those unable to pay for activities.
- A skate park in Greenbank Road and more play equipment in local parks.
- More should be done to clean up beaches and parks of litter and dog fouling.

### **What is the Council doing to help?**

- Wirral Council manages Youth Hubs and Clubs throughout the borough, as well as supporting privately owned youth clubs and activities. The Council will make sure these activities and centres are promoted much more widely and effectively. This is to ensure that young people in the area are aware of what is available in the area.
- Extra funding will be put in this year for the Sure Start Centres. The Council has a target to make sure at least 80% of children aged 5 and under are registered with their local centre.
- There is extra funding to continue the work of our anti-social behaviour team. Targets have also been set to make sure many of the children and young people take part in organised positive activities outside of school.
- There is also extra money in the budget for the maintenance and clean up of play areas throughout the borough.
- The dog fouling enforcement team has also been doubled this year.

### **Services for Older People**

- More social activities for people over 50, which could be held in the local community centres.
- More support for vulnerable people in the community and help for older people to stay in their own homes.
- An improvement on the work of Adult Social Services so that it is co-ordinated effectively, this will make things simpler when people need to contact them.

- Better communication and flow of information on where services are available, and where to go for information, clearer and simpler advice on support for older people.
- Help for carers and encourage mentors or volunteers for older people who need them.

### **What is the Council doing to help?**

- There are hundreds of excellent services around the Borough for residents, particularly those who are more vulnerable, but more advertising of these services is required.
- The Council is working with colleagues in the public sector and have launched a new website [www.wirralwell.org](http://www.wirralwell.org) . This gives information on the many services available within Wirral and outside Wirral.
- The Council is also redeveloping all of the promotional information on social care services provided. This will be launched in July of this year.
- The assistive technology service provides fantastic support to people who stay independent of their own homes.
- The Council is also working closely with our Carers Development Group, looking for ways to provide more help to carers, both financially and socially.
- The Older People's Parliament is working together with the council to promote activities.

### **Housing**

- More affordable housing as there is a lack of adequate housing within this area.

### **What is the Council doing to help?**

- The Council are working hard to improve the housing offer within Wirral, particularly first time buyers and young people. During this financial year the council will bring back into use 250 homes as well as giving quality accreditations to a further 200 rented properties.
- The launch of the new regional letting scheme during 2012.
- The Council will concentrate on providing new and affordable homes throughout Wirral.

### **Health Care**

- Easier Access to appointments for people who work full time.
- The Concourse Health Centre is overcrowded, outdated and is difficult to the old and infirm

### **What is the Council doing to help?**

- The NHS is going through some changes in the way it is run.
- The Council will make sure that they work with the GP practices in West Wirral and ensure all views are taken into account when planning for the next year.

## **Finding Employment**

- There is a need for better access to jobs, more promotion and advertising of jobs locally.
- To help residents fill in applications, provide training and support for young people and people who have recently come out of work.
- To help people to recognise what they are good at and so they can reach their potential.
- Encourage businesses to set up in the area and encourage the use of empty shops.

## **What is the Council doing to help?**

- The Economic Development Team at the Council is constantly looking at new ways of helping local businesses to create jobs.
- The Council has invested in the Connexions service this year, meaning young people can visit a range of One Stop Shops and community centres to get free, impartial advice on training, education and employment.
- There is funding for traders groups to make improvements to their shopping areas.
- The council also provides help with childcare, our Family Information Service ([www.wirral.gov.uk/fis](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/fis) or 0800 085 8743) can help parents find affordable, local childcare and can provide advice on getting financial assistance.

## **Training and Skills**

- There should be more education available to everyone, encourage schools, colleges and places that provide adult education to foster basic literacy and numeracy as a key to gaining further qualifications.
- Identify current opportunities and slant training and education in those areas. Eg: Constructions and industries
- Encourage work experience and volunteering by asking local companies and businesses to take on apprentices and ask for volunteers.
- The Council should promote apprenticeships and provide realistic schemes which have a prospect of secure employment

## **What is the Council doing to help?**

- The Council has funded over 200 apprentice places in the private sector and a further 100+ places within the public sector over the past 2 years.
- The Council invests in improving people's skills all the time, including the Wirral Apprentice programme, which so far has supported well in excess of 300 local people.
- The Life Long Learning service offers a variety of free courses. There are specific courses on CV writing and interview skills. These courses are open to all Wirral residents. For more information visit website [www.wirral.gov.uk/lifelonglearning](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/lifelonglearning) or call 0151 630 3486.

The next stage is to draw up an Action Plan with the top priorities and tackle each issue. Tracey Smith will report and feedback at each Forum.

This Area Forum has funding of £78,321 and £23,496 is allocated to road safety. Funding can be applied for from 2<sup>nd</sup> July – 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012. Application forms are available from this meeting or contact Tracey Smith.

The criteria for the funding are:

- **Improve Community Safety**
- **Improve Community Life**
- **Improving Skills**
- **Regeneration**

All applications for funding will be considered.

Q. Do the Area Forums endorse each application?

A. The applications are received and each Forum will vote for the appropriate project for funding.

Q. Is there a booklet with all the findings from the Neighbourhood Plan?

A. There isn't a booklet, but Tracey will send out the details to you.

Q. You state that the Council will be working together with Connexions, but the West Kirby branch has closed down. Learn Direct which was in the library at West Kirby has also closed. How will this work?

A. There is money in the budget to help with funding. Connexions have offices around Wirral.

Q. There are plenty of jobs within the Maritime Sector. If a company wants to put in for a bid, does it have to be to each Forum?

A. Yes, all applications are treated the same and have to be submitted to each Forum. Speak to Tracey Smith and Kevin Adderley at the end of the meeting for some more information.

Q. A member of the public's son has had a poor experience at the local job centre. The staff had poor communication skills and did not relate well to young people.

A. Kevin Adderley expressed his apologies for this experience and he will take this information back to the staff. He explained how appalling it is to hear this.

The Chair, Councillor Jeff Green reiterated that if anyone has any good ideas, then they should apply for the funding. Also, if there are any Community Events taking place, then pass the information on and we will find a way to promote these events.

### 3 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Q. Did Wirral Council's planning department have any part in Aldi's car park plans regarding time limits?

A. The application from Aldi was for the whole of the site. There were no conditions regarding parking. Aldi are operating free car parking for customers for up to 90 minutes. People have been abusing this and parking their cars all day and not even shopping at Aldi. Wirral Council have no authorisation over the parking regulations at Aldi.

It was proposed for the church to contact management of Aldi to arrange a deal with parking for the church goers.

Q. With the departure of Mary Bagley from Parks and Gardens will it now be poorly maintained?

A. The post will be advertised and a new officer will be put in place and hopefully get someone equally as good.

Q. There is the opportunity for Meols to get more allotments and the local allotment association has raised funds to get these allotments. However, now the association has been informed by planning that the football pitches have to be made to a better condition, which could cost up to £6k. Why should we have to pay out more when we have already raised money?

A. Kevin Adderley explained that Sports England have made this condition to improve the football pitches. There is funding available for allotments. He will look into this and report back.

Q. Could the Council speak to Sport England and negotiate the price down?

A. Sport England have not quoted £6k, they have requested that the football pitches be improved. They will not change their mind. If the football pitches are not improved then the allotments won't go ahead.

Q. There have been discussions to demolish the toilets on the promenade at Hoylake. The planning permission was to turn it into a café, however these plans have not gone ahead and the toilets are still an eyesore. Would it be possible to demolish these toilets and just have the empty space?

A. Kevin Adderley will find out about the plans and report back.

Q. Are the discounts for Council Tax for over 70's advertised?

A. There are discounts available for people aged 70 and over; there is also the option to pay over 12 months instead of 10 to reduce monthly outgoings. Thanks to the Older People's Parliament this is advertised. The information is also available in the Council Tax packs each year.

Q. An enquiry was made as to why certain Councillors and local officers visited China recently. He expressed his concerns.

A. Councillor Jeff Green explained that his visit to China was for opportunities for future investments for Wirral. The International Trade Centre could bring up to 3000 jobs to this area and bring future investment too. It was a successful visit.

Q. With the Open coming to Hoylake again in 2014, has the planning stage started?

A. Kevin Adderley explained that in the previous Open, planning started early as it had been 39 years since the last one. The planning will be based on the 2006 Open. The Women's Open is taking place in Hoylake in September, so the major planning for 2014 will start after that. We will engage with the Community regarding any plans.

- Q. Could you give some indication as the Phase 2 of the improvements around Hoylake Station?
- A. It is still in the planning process, residents are being consulted for their views. It should be in place in time for the 2014 Open.
- Q. This is very encouraging to hear, but could something be done about the eyesore of the Euro-Bins in that area? They also obstruct the pavements.
- A. Kevin Adderley will look into this and follow up at the next meeting.
- Q. With regards to the re-furbishment of Hoylake Station, residents don't want to see the 'Hut' go as it is part of the history.
- A. The local shop and 'Butty Bar' will be contacted for their feedback on proposals as well as the local residents.
- Q. Cyclists have been riding their cycles the wrong way up the one-way section of the promenade.
- A. This is quite difficult to control. Officers patrol this area more when the weather is hot. Officers will work with Community Patrol to educate the cyclists. The problem area is on the road. Cyclists are able to cycle in 2 directions on the promenade.
- Q. There are also a number of cars that go the wrong way down the one-way section.
- A. By working together with road safety and community patrol, a solution will be found.
- Q. There are no markings on the promenade for pedestrians and cyclists. It would be safer if this was the case.
- A. Noted.

#### 4 **ROAD SAFETY UPDATE - 20 MILE PER HOUR ZONES**

There is a new initiative of introducing 20mph zones in residential areas around Wirral. A map is available to view this evening and there are also cards with the plans on. The cards ask for any comments regarding this.

There is £1.1m funding which was agreed at Cabinet in April 2012. This will be spent over a 2 year process. The area will be split into 132 zones. The traffic department are assessing where the 20mph will be. Signs will be placed at the end of the residential roads. The first stage will be implemented this autumn and the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage next year.

- Q. Is the 20mph legally enforceable?
- A. Yes – there is a traffic regulation order which will be consulted on before the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the process.
- Q. Is there a 'Plan B' for strengthening this 20mph limit?
- A. There are going to be over 10k signs put up around the area. The traffic section will be working together to ensure this limit is kept.

Q. What about the visual impact, there are too many signs and they will be ignored?

A. Views are appreciated.

Q. Councillor Geoffrey Watt expressed his concerns over too many signs and also some of the boundaries run along semi major roads.

A. Any bus routes won't be included and there is a consultation process to take place before the roads are assigned. If any objections are raised, then these roads will go into phase 2 of the process. Funding has been agreed by Cabinet and it now needs to be put into place. It has been proved that by reducing speed limits stopping distances are reduced, so giving the best possible way for survival in the event of an accident.

Q. Is the road plan on display in the Community Shop in Hoylake?

A. It will be on display after this evening.

## **5 TRAFFIC & TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS FOR HOSTING THE RICOH WOMEN'S BRITISH OPEN 13+16 SEPTEMBER 2012**

Mark Cambourne, Technical Services explained that the Ricoh Women's British Open will be taking place in Hoylake from 13 – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and about the impact it will have on the local area during this event.

- The event is not as big as the Male British Open as in 2006, so are only expecting minimum impact.
- The qualifier event will be held at Caldy Golf Club on 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> September. This is a smaller event and the spectators are usually just family and friends, so again not expecting too much impact to the roads.
- AA signs will be erected around the area directing people to the event.
- The trains will finish at Hoylake (as per 2006).
- There will be the Pedestrian Bridge erected on Meols Drive.
- Contingency plans are in place if the crowd size increases.
- Residents will be consulted in July and August.
- It will be encouraged that spectators use public transport and also to walk.
- Disability access is arranged
- There will be no disruption to council services. Bin collection times may change.
- For information contact Street Scene on 606 2004.
- Any questions regarding this event can be asked at the end of the meeting.
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Ben Freeman from IMG also spoke about the up and coming British Open in 2014 and how by working together with the communities it will be a successful event.

These events that are taking place in Hoylake over the next few years and continuing are fantastic for the community. The area is viewed on TV all over the world and is such a boost to the area. Congratulations were given to the events and event organisers.

## **6 PARTNER UPDATES**



## **Merseyside Police**

Inspector Mick Blease reported on the following:

- The next 'Have your Say' meeting will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012, at 6pm in Melrose Hall, Hoylake.
- There has been a 40% reduction in crime from last year.
- Fraud and Forgery has increased. Amongst these crimes include Petrol Station drive offs and there are also forged £20 notes around this area. The notes from Cash points will be fine, please ensure that you check your notes when in shops.
- Violent crimes have reduced
- Motor vehicle thefts have also reduced. 23 in this period last year, and only 7 this year.
- There will be no reduction in Neighbourhood Policing during the Olympics. No courses will be running, so nothing will take away police officers from the area.

## **Fire Service**

Sarah Patterson reported on the following:

- There has been a reduction of 77.7% in ASB fires. Only 5 in this area this year.
- The Fire Service is committed to maintain standards.
- There is a targeted approach for the vulnerable.
- To date there has been 1300 fire safety checks
- Fire Crews engage with the local communities and regularly attend local events.
- The Fire Service continues to work with partners, including Wirral Council's Road Safety Team.
- The Fire Service also is engaging with the local schools.
- Plans have begun in the lead up to Bon Fire Night in November.
- The Community Dig event to remove the Spartina Grass from the beach was a good event and everyone enjoyed it.

The Chair, Councillor Jeff Green praised the Fire Service and expressed his appreciation for the hard work that they do.

## **Western Link**

The representative from Western Link introduced himself and briefly explained about the renewable electricity cable which is to be routed through Wirral from Scotland to Wales. There has been a consultation process with residents over the last year discussing the route. A newsletter is available for people to see the route of the cable and plans for the area. These newsletters will be posted out to residents affected by the cable route.

Anyone with any questions can speak to him at the end of the meeting

Councillor Eddie Boulton asked that if there is to be any disruption to roads, then could this disruption not affect the Open Golf Tournament.

7 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Community Representatives – The Forums are advertising for Community Representatives. Applications and Job descriptions are available from each forum. If anyone is interested in applying, complete an application form and return it by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012.

Q. What is the role of the Community Representative? Will they help in the decisions of funding?

A. A job description is available to view. The role is to represent a group and feed issues to the forums and then report back with the findings. It is a role to interact with the community.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Date: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012  
Venue: West Kirby Concourse – Function Room