

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL SOUTH

Monday, 21 October 2013

Present: Councillors P Gilchrist L Rowlands
T Harney W Smith
A Hodson A Sykes
K Hodson J Walsh
C Muspratt I Williams
S Niblock KJ Williams
C Povall

Apologies Councillors P Kearney D Mitchell

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Councillor W Smith be elected Chair for the meeting; and
- (2) Councillor A Hodson be elected Vice-Chair for the meeting.

2 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of Interest were received.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Head of Legal and Member Services presented a report and appendix by the Head of Neighbourhoods and Engagement informing of amendments to the Council's Constitution in relation to Constituency Committees.

The Committee noted that an amended Article 10 of the Council's Constitution had been approved by the Council at its meeting on 30 April 2013. This had put in place the necessary provision for the appointment of Constituency Committees and for those Committees to discharge such functions as may be delegated to them from time to time by the Executive and/or the Council. It had also set out the scope of the Constituency Committee's role in acting as a voice for the community with respect to a range of matters including the development of an area plan and making recommendations to the Executive on any funding allocated to the Committee.

The Committee also noted that the Council, at its meeting on 14 October 2013, had formally appointed Members to all four Constituency Committees and had made provision for each one to co-opt up to six community representatives.

The report set out considerations and a proposed approach for further developing an individual terms of reference for each Committee and for amending the Council's Constitution to ensure that Article 10 was fit for purpose for the future operation of the constituency working model.

It was proposed that:

- A future review of the Council's Constitution included an updated Article 10 relating to the terms of reference for the Constituency Committees, which both provided further clarity on the decision-making powers of the Committees as services and budgets were devolved, and ensured that all Committees had the scope and flexibility necessary to drive forward the constituency working model and deliver the functions increasingly devolved to them;
- The Committee developed a committee procedure rules 'handbook' which sets out over and above the terms of reference in the Council's Constitution how it would operate. The handbook might include sections on:
 - Aims of the Committee in respect of the role it wishes to take in the local area;
 - Specific committee procedures relating to the operation of meetings;
 - How the Committee would be supported by Council officers;
 - Specific provisions dealing with the role of the Chair, Vice Chair, community representatives;
 - The role of the Committee in influencing the contribution of partners;
 - Meetings;
 - Agreed arrangements/procedures for dealing with budget allocation and expenditure; and
 - The process and criteria for establishing constituency 'Task and Finish' Groups.

The Wirral South Constituency Manager outlined a proposed approach for the Task and Finish Groups and their terms of reference, including the suggestion that they should consist of five Elected Members, one from each ward, together with two community representatives.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) **the proposed approach outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the report be agreed; and**

- (2) an Elected Member led 'Task and Finish' Group be established of five Members, one from each ward (Councillors P Gilchrist, A Hodson, C Muspratt, C Povall and J Williams (Members will send a substitute to meetings if they are unable to attend)), plus two community representatives, to develop the Committee's Handbook and to make recommendations on any amendments required to Article 10.

4 **CONSTITUENCY MANAGER'S UPDATE/PRIORITIES - 'EMERGING ISSUES'**

The Constituency Manager made a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee on 'Evidence Based Priorities in the Wirral South Constituency that the Committee may wish to tackle. He highlighted the following examples based on data provided by the Wirral Performance and Public Health Intelligence Team:

- Hospital Admission Rates for Falls in People aged 65 Years and over 2009/10 to 2011/12;
- Fuel Poverty;
- Wholly Attributable Alcohol Related Mortality: 2007 – 11 (5 years pooled); and
- Life Expectancy at Birth: 2007 – 11 (5 years pooled).

The Constituency Manager proposed the creation of a 'Priority Task and Finish Group' to review data, to propose priorities, to ensure tasks were not duplicated and to report progress made to the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for 16 December 2013.

Members raised concerns about the size of the font used in the presentation which meant that some were unable to read it. The Constituency Manager agreed that he would ensure that any future PowerPoint presentations would be in a font size that was easy to read.

Following the presentations the Constituency Manager answered questions from Members and members of the public as appropriate.

The Committee gave consideration to what the Task and Finish Group should focus on and to agreeing priorities in the short, medium and longer term. Members of the public were also asked for their views. It was proposed that the Task and Finish Group should consider primarily Fuel Poverty but Falls in People aged 65 Years and over, road safety and highways, the changes in Planning laws and greenbelt invasion, Streetscene sweeping schedules, the cleanliness of play areas and a Food Bank in Eastham were also put forward.

The Committee had a budget of £50,000 but it had not yet had time to consider how it should be spent. It was not known whether this funding had to

be spent within the 2013/14 financial year or whether it could be rolled over into the 2014/15 financial year.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the presentation be noted;**
- (2) the creation of a 'Priority Setting Task and Finish Group' to agree key priorities for the remainder of 2013/14 and to begin to establish priorities for 2014, be agreed;**
- (3) the Task and Finish Group at (2) above be comprised of five Members, one from each ward, (Councillors P Gilchrist, L Rowlands, J Williams, I Williams and one name to be supplied) (Members will send a substitute to meetings if they are unable to attend), plus two community representatives; and**
- (4) the Head of Legal and Member Services be requested to ascertain from the Director of Finance whether the Committee can roll any of its budget over into the next financial year and inform its Members accordingly.**

{Further to (2) and (3) above, following the meeting Councillor A Syke's name was put forward as the fifth Member who will sit on the Priority Setting Task and Finish Group.}

5 FINANCIAL PROTOCOL

The Constituency Manager, made a presentation to the Committee on the Constituency Committee budget and financial protocols. The Committee had a budget of £50,000 for 2013/14. A recently announced 'Love Wirral' grant of £10,000 had been allocated to the Wirral South Constituency footprint. Each of the Borough's four constituency areas had been allocated this amount of funding which local groups could apply for to help them bring to life projects that aimed to spruce up a particular area, encouraging others to take pride in how their community looked and to show a commitment to keeping things clean and tidy. The Constituency Manager reported that funding applications could be made via the Council website (<https://wirral.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=JTeR5nF7Hsr&HideToolbar=1>) from the 28 of October 2013. It was intended that there would be a public voting process on each one. Applications would close at noon on 6 December 2013.

A member of the public informed that she had been campaigning for a grit bin in her local area for five years. As a Group had not been formed in respect of her campaign and she did not have a computer she was aware that she would not be able to access this funding.

Another member of the public asked about individual requests for funding. She informed that she lived on a bend on Poulton Road and vehicles had crashed into her fence six times. Consequently, she now considered it to be unsafe to sit in her garden.

Members considered that the timescale for applying for a Love Wirral grant was too short, applications for grants should not be restricted to organised groups, hard copy applications should be accepted as well as online ones and they objected to a public voting system as they were of the view that it would be widely open to abuse. They proposed that funding applications for the Wirral South Constituency area be collated and presented to the Committee for consideration and decision. The Constituency Manager informed that the decision on this had already been taken by the Cabinet Member - Environment and Sustainability under delegated authority.

The Assistant Chief Executive was in attendance at the meeting. He felt that further information was needed and agreed to report the comments Members and the public had made in respect of the arrangements made in respect of this initiative to the Chief Executive. They would also discuss the possibility of rolling this funding, if it was not spent, over into the next financial year. The Assistant Chief Executive also outlined three access points to attract funding for a grit bin.

The Committee noted that a further £25,000 would be made available from Public Health funding. How this money would be distributed would be a decision for the Committee and recommendations from the Task and Finish Group would come back to the Committee in February, 2014. The Constituency Manager suggested that a Small Grants Fund and a Problem Solving Fund could be established.

In respect of the Small Grants Fund, the process would be agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 16 December, 2013 and decisions on the awarding of grants would be made at its meeting on 26 February, 2014.

In respect of the Problem Solving Fund, the Committee could devolve a small budget to the 'Priorities and Spend Task and Finish Group', recommendations would be made via the Constituency Manager and spend agreed would be reported for information to each Constituency Committee. This would ensure a quick response to be made to neighbourhood issues and test innovative responses.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the presentation be noted; and**

- (2) **a Sub-Committee be established (Members names to be supplied) to develop a spending framework against which to allocate total, allocated budget for 2013/14.**

6 COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The Constituency Manager made a presentation to the Committee on the selection of Community Representatives. He highlighted the limitations of the recruitment process and outlined the need to review recruitment of the next cohort of Community Representatives. Interest had been limited and there were no female applicants. Consideration could be given to a possible borough-wide event to generate interest and help with recruitment not just of Community Representatives but also interested individuals. This event could also be used to facilitate networking and skill building.

The Constituency Manager also reported upon the idea of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) as an approach for work in the Constituency and elaborated upon the idea of 'community connectors' and 'pioneers'.

Concerns were expressed because Members had already informally agreed that representatives would come from the community and be from organisations. They had asked for Community Groups to be informed that they could make nominations to represent their interests on the Committee. It was the intention that Members would then go through an interview process before making decisions on who to co-opt onto the Committee. It was proposed that those who had put their names forward for co-option would also be considered during this process. It was hoped that it would be completed so that the co-options could be made at the next meeting of the Committee on 16 December 2013.

Members also made it clear that they were interested in co-opt people onto the Committee with expertise. The Committee had a general priority to tackle deprivation and it was considered important to involve people who had expertise in this field.

A member of the public asked the Committee to give consideration to sending out, to those nominated, a structure and a list of the interview questions.

RESOLVED:

- (1) **the contents of the presentation be noted;**
- (2) **the Constituency Manager be requested to write to Community Groups asking for nominations to be considered for co-option onto the Committee; and**

- (3) the previously cancelled, Community Representative Selection Group, be convened prior to the next meeting of the Committee, to allow any appointments to be co-opted onto the Committee at the Committee's next meeting on 16 December 2013.

7 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR THE NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Councillor A Hodson be elected Chair for the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 16 December 2013; and
- (2) Councillor P Gilchrist be elected Vice-Chair for the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 16 December 2013.