

AREA FORUM (NEW BRIGHTON AND WALLASEY)

Monday, 16 February 2009

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| <u>Present:</u> | Councillor | P Hayes (Chair) | |
| <u>In attendance:</u> | Councillors | A Pritchard L Rennie | S Taylor K Wood |
| | <u>Lead Officer</u> | David Green (Director of Technical Services) | |
| | <u>Area Service Co-ordinator</u> | Andy Brannan | |
| | <u>Merseyside Police</u> | Sergeant Justin Diggins | Sergeant Mark Smith |
| | <u>Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service</u> | Tony Mooney | |
| | <u>Primary Care Trust</u> | Shymal Mukherjee | |
| | <u>Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Trust</u> | Rod Jones | |
| | <u>Council Officers</u> | Hazel Edwards (Corporate Services) John Entwistle (Corporate Services) | Bob Little (Community Safety Team) Carol Sharratt (Minute Taker) |
| | <u>Apologies</u> | W Duffey | Inspector Julie Fletcher Barry Humphreys (New Brighton Community Partnership) |
| | | | Inspector Peter Kolokotroni Martin Revans |

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, Councillor Paul Hayes, welcomed the forum members and 16 members of the public to the meeting of the Area Forum at Greenleas Primary School.

Apologies were received from Barry Humphreys, Inspector Julie Fletcher, Inspector Peter Kolokotroni, Councillor W Duffey and Martin Revans.

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM

The Area Co-ordinator, Andy Brannan, gave an overview of his report, copies of which were available for members of the public at the meeting. The minutes of the meeting of the Area Forum on 22 October 2008 were included on pages 3-12 and a written update on all issues raised on pages 13-15 of the report, and asked if anyone wished to raise any issues on these:

The chair raised the following issues:

You Decide – an update on this would be reported at the next meeting, as there had been a delay in receiving information from officers on this.

Strategic Asset Review (SAR) – the review and the closure of Wallasey Village Library and Guinea Gap Baths were strongly opposed. Councillor Bob Moon was asked to attend the meeting to answer questions on the review, but sent his apologies. The chair agreed to pass on any questions relating to the review on to the SAR representatives, and the following were raised:

1. Anne McArdle - what does the local community want to put into Wallasey Village Library and has any consultation been done on what the building could be used for (it would be good to see some community facilities in the area)?

Chair – a meeting was held with the Director of Regeneration on possible uses for the building / community transfer, and are still in contact over the future of the building. Officers are not keen to put in a library service.

Councillor Wood – there has been one bid, from St Georges Primary School for a classroom and local community facility, but this is still open for discussion as it couldn't take place until after Council on 11th February.

Councillor Rennie – informed the forum that she had requested a copy of the policy on this at a meeting with the Director of Regeneration and was informed that it had not been written when the review went out to public consultation. Once the details of what the policy means are received we will be working to get a permanent solution for the future of the building, as don't want this to be mothballed. She had been advised by the Director to talk to the community and try and get people from the business community / solicitors / accountants to see if they will help / get involved in this, and we will be actively seeking those people. There will be a small dowry to help community groups to set up the initiative, but not to continue to run it. We would like to see some sort of library facility in the area as consider Wallasey Village Library to be strategically placed, and feel that the Liscard area is not practical. We will hold public meetings and request that ideas on the use of the building be passed to the forum.

Anne McArdle welcomed the comments as it is important that the community is involved in the future use of the building.

2. Geoff Gorman – has an impact assessment report been done on the outcomes if community facilities are closed?

Chair – confirmed that, to his knowledge a report had not been done, but that he had raised this issue, and not many of the user groups had been consulted with on this.

3. Dave Hanlon – felt that there was limited public consultation on this, that user groups were not consulted, and that a lot of people did not get the chance to have their say at the special area forum meetings. He raised concern over the future of Guinea Gap Baths, a facility that is used by lots of people, and hoped that it would stay open for many years to come and not just the two year stay of execution. He added that the decisions were made in a year when there will be no local elections.

Chair – expressed sympathy for the staff at the baths and the possible loss of the facility that has had much investment put into it (sauna / bikes) over the last two years. Councillor Steve Foulkes arranged the special area forum meetings in the constituent areas and this decision could not be overturned.

4. Member of the public – was the SAR a central government requirement?

Chair – it was not a statutory requirement, but was part of a comment by the Audit Commission.

5. Joan Roberts – the Pacific Road Theatre is a busy venue, and many groups make use it as a base. It hosts many different shows, concerts are usually sold out and a lot of people from the Wallasey area visit it. The decision to close this would be understandable if it was empty / under used. The only other theatre is the Gladstone, but this is not local.

Chair – confirmed that he had corresponded with Joan on this matter and added that the Floral Pavilion was a good asset, but that were given something in one hand only to have it taken away with another.

6. John Timms – lost of money has been spent on Wallasey Village library / Guinea Gap Baths / Pacific Road Theatre, and felt that the decision to close them should be audited.

Chair – there is no one available at the meeting to answer this.

Resolved that:

- (i) **the minutes of the last meeting held on 22nd October 2008 be approved**
- (ii) **the chair to forward questions / issues raised re: the SAR to the SAR representatives**

3 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

John Entwistle (Corporate Services) gave a presentation on the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The LDF is a new style development plan that will replace Wirral's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and be used alongside the Regional Spatial Strategy, covering the North West of England, issued by the Secretary of State. The LDF will be a key legal document covering 15-20 years and will consist of a Core Strategy and a spatial plan, and there are opportunities to consult on this at each stage of a long process until its submission to the Secretary of State. The proposed adoption date for the LDF is 2011.

Forum members had already received a copy of the Issues, Vision and Objectives consultation document, covering issues, vision (to 2025 with 15 main elements linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy) and 29 objectives. Anyone wishing to get involved can request a copy of the consultation document by adding their details to the list available at the meeting or by contacting Hazel Edwards (0151 691 8225 / hazeledwards@wirral.gov.uk). The deadline for comments is **5pm on 27 March 2009**. Anyone wishing to be kept involved in the LDF process can request to be added to our contact database again by contacting Hazel Edwards.

The Chair thanked John Entwistle for his presentation and the following questions / issues were raised:

1. Geoff Gorman - is this new planning system/strategy capable of changing planning decisions that have already been made?
A. - The new Development Plan has no weight as yet and the Unitary Development Plan will continue to be the plan that all planning applications are determined against, until such time as the Core Strategy for the Borough is adopted, which is anticipated to be in 2011.
2. Geoff Gorman - how have the issues of the flood land at New Brighton been taken into account with regard to the new Morrisons supermarket?
A. - The planning application for the Neptune development was subject to a Flood Risk Assessment. Wirral Council has also commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which will consider and assess all aspects of flood risk around the coastal areas of the borough and in respect of Climate Change.
3. Geoff Gorman - new statistics on Climate Change have been released and in particular about the risk from flooding – will this be taken into account at New Brighton? Why is Neptune building another 'sea defence' wall in front of their development if the coastal defences are adequate? There is evidence that there is erosion of land in the area around the application site. What will be done about this?
A. - The planning application for the Neptune development has already been determined and was subject to a flood risk assessment, which formed part of the application, that included looking at the existing sea defences and coastal protection and will have taken issues on Climate Change into account. There are some reserved matters still to be implemented as part of that application; however there will not be any fundamental change to the original application or plan.
4. Mrs Hall – what exactly is being monitored and by whom and can anyone access this information?
A. - The monitoring of the Core Strategy is required by Government Office for the North West. The Council produces an Annual monitoring Report, which contains all the National Indicators that the Council is being measured against, the targets and how well the Council is doing in respect of those targets. This report is publicly available and a copy of this will be sent to Mrs Hall, as requested.
5. Member of the public - what is the advantage of the new planning system over the UDP?

A. - The new system is a series or portfolio of documents that are able to be changed individually and this should mean that the new system is more flexible. The criticism of the old style plan is that it is inflexible, as once it has been produced there is no way to make changes without reviewing the whole document, which is costly and time consuming.

6. Member of the public - does the new system have any 'teeth'? (Concerns were raised that planning applications across the borough were being determined to the detriment of the area).

A. - The timescale for anticipated adoption of the new plan is some time away, in the meantime it is important that people make these representations to the Council and tell us what they think of the new system, its advantages and disadvantages. Anyone wishing to be included in the consultation can leave their details and we will contact them.

7. Member of the public – the Core Strategy should include community assets.

A. – recommendations, such as this, can be made on the strategy and considered as part of the consultation.

Resolved that:

- (i) John Entwistle be thanked for his presentation**
- (ii) the forward planning team send a copy of the annual monitoring report to Mrs Hall**

4 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK

Dave Green gave an update on the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) Funding (detailed on page 23 of the Area Co-ordinators report).

In Autumn 2006 the forums were consulted on how this funding would be allocated. Nine of the forums requested that the funding remain in a central pot for funding larger schemes. Two of the forums (Heswall/Pensby/Thingwall and Bromborough/Eastham) requested that the funding be allocated by the forums. The success of this initiative piloted in 2007/08 in these two Area Forums, has led to continued de-centralisation of funds for 2008/09 for the two forums and officers being requested to consult with the remaining nine Forums to determine if they wish to receive de-centralised funding (this will be approximately £18,000 per area forum) for allocation on traffic schemes. If the forums decide to opt for this the funding they will be supported by an officer from Technical Services, who will offer guidance, advice, ideas and information on costs, risks, pitfalls etc. The funding would have to be spent within the financial year it is allocated. A report on the forums' recommendations will be taken to Cabinet on 19th March 2009, so the decision needs to be made by 20th February 2009.

Community Speed Watch Areas – there are seven pilot areas currently in place and these are successful. Members of the forum are being requested to put forward suggestions for additional community speed watch areas for consideration as the scheme is being expanded. Suggestions are required by 20th February 2009.

The Chair thanked Dave Green for his update, the Forum debated this proposal and the following questions / issues were raised:

1. Member of the public - what is the 20 is plenty scheme?
- A. Seven areas were identified to take part in a pilot voluntary speed reduction scheme aiming to bring accidents down to zero by reducing the speed of traffic in the area using signage rather than traffic calming measures, such as speed humps, by engaging with the areas and carrying out consultation to get motorists to reduce their speed.

The following suggestions were put forward:

- Rowson Street (by Stoneacres)
- Grove Road, Wallasey Village
- Mount Pleasant Road
- St Georges primary school area
- Greenleas primary school area
- Mount primary school area
- Mariners Park / Seabank Road / Manor Road (it is dangerous crossing the road to get to the bus stops)

Councillor Wood added that the primary school areas are to be targeted by the Police from 23rd February, but could be considered for this scheme.

The Chair mentioned that there had been an accident at Seabank Road / Manor Road recently.

2. Councillor Pritchard asked if the scheme was aimed at side roads rather than main roads.
 - A. All suggestions should be put through, as this is only one aspect of what we can do. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) could be used for putting in a pedestrian refuge or extra lineage. The two schemes are complementary to each other. The 20 is plenty scheme has been successful in changing the behaviour of drivers.
3. Geoff Gorman – how much do the Police make from motorists?
 - A. The Police do not get paid from the revenue raised from tickets.
4. Dave Hanlon – the problems at Mariners Park were raised at the Liscard and Seacombe area forum, would it be possible to have a zebra crossing there and would the cost of this be covered if this forum linked with that forum?
 - A. The cost for a zebra crossing is about £50,000, but officers would advise on this and there may be scope to be creative and link into other funding, such as the central pot.

Members of the public

5. How much could be achieved with £18,000?

- A. A pedestrian refuge or road signage cost around £4,000. The £18,000 is provided on a recurring basis and is an opportunity for local people to take responsibility on what happens in their local area.

The Chair added that only small schemes could be carried out with this amount of funding and would not be of much benefit for the area, particularly if further issues came up.

- 6. What would happen to the funding if the forum decides that it does not wish to allocate this?

- A. It will remain in the central pot.

- 7. Are the public being given a choice on how this is allocated?

- A. It is for the area forum to make the ultimate decision, but your input is wanted. Once the decision has been delegated it will be up to the forum to decide how it is spent.

- 8. The exact cost of schemes would be needed before a decision could be made on this. Councillor Taylor added that more information on the cost of items would be needed to enable the value to the forum area to be determined.

- A. The forum are being asked to decide how to allocate the £18,000 which the Cabinet has decided to split equally between the forums. The mechanics of how to spend the funding and detailed costs of schemes can be provided over the 14 months during which the funding will need to be spent.

Councillor Wood clarified that the £18,000 was separate to the funding for the 20 is plenty scheme.

- 9. Are details of how the £6.5m is allocated available, and does the £18,000 come from this pot?

- A. The LTP has a budget of £6.5m a year and a large proportion of this is spent on formal traffic calming measures (such as road humps). The areas are chosen by looking at set criteria, including the areas with the highest accident rates, and are allocated on a borough wide needs basis. The information is a matter of public record. All accidents resulting in people being killed or seriously injured (KSI) are recorded by the police. A prioritised list (showing areas with 4+ KSI over the last four years where engineering measures can improve this) is worked through. The £18,000 comes from this pot and there is discretion on how it can be allocated, as no criteria has to be applied or satisfied, enabling the option of decisions being determined locally.

Councillor Rennie recommended that the allocation should be taken, on the understanding that the forum area won't be penalised on other schemes we may put forward for allocation from the larger pot. The Chair agreed with this recommendation, he felt that £18,000 was not enough, but that it should be taken and allocated locally.

Councillor Wood added that traffic officers visited a site at Wallasey Village that was subject to a planning application and reported that there were no traffic problems relating to the proposal and it was recommended for approval.

A member of the public added that another application for Harrison Park Nursery to increase its numbers, and bring even more cars into the area, was also approved despite the difficulties of getting into Grove Road at most times of the day.

Dave Green agreed to consider all of the suggestions / points raised.

Resolved that:

- (i) **Dave Green be thanked for his update**
- (ii) **Dave Green to report the forum recommendation to receive the de-centralised funding to Cabinet and to consider all of the suggestions / points raised re: traffic schemes**

5 PARTNER ORGANISATION UPDATES / PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Police

Sergeant Mark Smith informed the forum that he was based at Moreton Police Station and provided the following information:

- Crime figures had been reduced by 13% in the past 12 months (compared to the same period in the previous year) with 250 less crimes in the Wallasey area.
- There will be an open day at Moreton Police Station on the 7th March 2009, anyone wishing to attend should contact the station.
- Monthly newsletters are now being produced by each neighbourhood inspector, anyone wishing to receive regular updates can receive this via e-mail or post if they let us have their details.
- All police officers have been issued with a blackberry to enable them to get information and carry out spot checks without having to go back to the station, allowing them to spend more time on the beat.

Sergeant Justin Higgins informed the forum that he was based at Manor Road Police Station and provided the following information:

- There was an open day at Manor Road Police Station yesterday, which was very successful with nearly 100 visitors. The tours last around two hours and includes looking at fingerprinting facilities and work with police dogs. A further open weekend has been arranged for 9th -10th May 2009; anyone wishing to attend should contact me as the tours are very popular and get booked up quickly.

- Seabank Road – we are familiar with the problems in this area and conduct regular enforcement campaigns. Rowson Street and Grove Road are also monitored.
- An initiative targeting diversionary activity, for young people responsible for anti-social behaviour (ASB), in an appropriate way is being piloted in this area. It involves sending the young people on training courses with the Army, and linking in with vocational colleges at the end of the course to ensure it is an evolving process. The project is to be rolled out to the Merseyside area.
- An initiative targeting drug dealers / unlawful activities, to try and recover unlawful drugs / stolen property has resulted in 23 search warrants and 24 arrests.
- A five year anti-social behaviour order (most are normally only issued for two years) was secured for 19 year old Daniel Berry, following a long history of anti-social and criminal behaviour, he was banned from entering the Sherlock Lane area of Poulton. This is a useful tool to correct behaviour.
- Hamilton Road / Mount Road area – youths causing disturbance, please let me know of any incidents in the area as will look into this, but it takes time to put corrective actions into place.

The chair thanked Sergeant Smith and Sergeant Higgins and the following questions / issues were raised:

1. Barbara Hardcastle – there was a meeting at the Town Hall re: the sale of drugs paraphernalia, do you know anything about this and does it stop the sale of goods (such as seeds being sold as souvenirs)?
 - A. Sergeant Smith – this would depend on the bye-law in place.
 - Sergeant Higgins – it is what is done with the seeds rather than the sale of these.

The Chair confirmed that the meeting took place on 15th December 2008 and requested that more information to be provided on the particular issue raised at the end of the meeting, and agreed to arrange for an update to be provided at the next meeting.
2. Dave Hanlon – who was responsible for the police surgery at Asda and has there been any feedback from this?
 - A. Sergeant Smith – details of the police surgeries are included in our newsletters. We try to hold as many surgeries as possible, subject to staffing availability.
3. Member of the public – the community patrol vans have not been seen in the Wallasey Village area recently.
 - A. Chair – confirmed that the Council were responsible for this and agreed to ask why the area was not being patrolled.
4. Councillor Taylor – could the sportsmobile be brought to the Wallasey area?
 - A. Chair – requested that the area co-ordinator look into this.

Dave Hanlon added that the Community Safety Team provided information on the community patrol at the Liscard and Seacombe area forum.

Fire Service

Tony Mooney informed the forum that there was a detailed update on pages 16-18 of the Community Engagement Report, and highlighted the following:

Integrated Risk Management Plan, he thanked everyone who had an input into the service's draft plan, which will be considered before the final draft is published.

The service has managed to continue to exceed its challenging performance targets.

The service is trying to visit all schools within the borough, making young people aware of the impact of ASB on communities and what can happen if things are taken too far.

The Asda police surgeries are useful, there was a meeting held at Manor Road police station to look at holding an integrated day to maximise input. He agreed to provide further details on this once a date has been set.

The Chair thanked Tony Mooney for his update, no questions / issues were raised:

NHS Wirral (formerly PCT)

Dr Shyamal Mukherjee informed the forum that the Victoria Central Hospital (VCH) walk in centre at Wallasey is now open from 8am – 9pm Monday to Fridays and 8am – 7pm at weekends and Bank Holidays. There is a doctor on site, and the centre and deal with minor injuries and has x-ray facilities. The new build at the VCH site houses NHS wirral activities. The centre can now deliver more services in the area and will take the pressure from Arrowe Park. Other centres will be introduced around Wallasey to get services in the community.

A patients group has been set up across Wallasey, called the Voice of Wallasey, which has had an input on service development and commissioning.

Access – the waiting time for hip and knee appointments is now 2-3 weeks.

The PCT has changed its name to NHS Wirral to assist in the promotion of working relationships.

NHS Wirral was assessed and received the highest score in three areas:

- Strategic planning
- Financial planning
- Governance

The Chair thanked Dr Shyamal Mukherjee for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

5. Member of the public – is oncology moving from Clatterbridge to the Royal?
Councillor Wood added that this had been in the Globe and requested a full report for the next forum.
A. I am not aware of this, but will report back at the next meeting.

6. Member of the public – has a restriction been placed on the number of scans carried out, as my appointment for an MRI scan has been put back 12 months.
- A. There is no waiting list, so may be for a medical reason. He agreed to take further details and report back personally.

NHS University Teaching hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Rod Jones informed the forum that there was a detailed update on pages 27-28 of the Community Engagement Report, and highlighted the following:

We are working together with our partners to control infections and improve standards. The Trust was awarded best district hospital in England in the Dr Foster Good Hospital Guide last year, which compares services and treatment outcomes at all hospitals across the country.

The chair thanked Rod Jones for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

7. Councillor Wood – do you have any information on the move of oncology from Clatterbridge?
- A. No, as this is part of a separate trust, but I am not aware of any radical changes proposed.

Older People's Parliament

Stan Thompson informed the forum that a newsletter was available at the meeting. An annual report to the Parliament gave details of the achievements and activities over the last 12 months, including the following:

- An increased local input and credibility linked to an increased membership.
- Running three themed day-conferences, which were successful with very positive feedback:
 - Crime and Respect, this was successful and was attended by a Judge, a Police Inspector and representatives from various local agencies, covering what is being done to help keep us safe and listening to our concerns
 - Housing, covering an overview on retirement villages, sustainable housing and a discussion with local planners on what older residents want in Wirral
 - Waste Collection, covering what is involved in waste collection services, how it is dealt with and how we can assist the local authority in recycling / disposing of the waste
- Monthly Active Health and Social Care Group meetings, resulting in a big survey of peoples' experiences about going home from hospital. We are pleased that that our findings are being taken very seriously and changes being made, the hospital has already taken steps to have a short stay area at the side of the hospital, near the discharge lounge, for patients to be collected.

- Having Parliament representatives on many policy forming boards.
- Lifelong Learning; crime and Respect; Housing and Supporting Grandparents groups that all meet regularly.
- Appointment of a member to lead our input on national issues, we are affiliated to the National Pensioners Convention and Better Government for Older People.
- The work carried out by Brian Christian, based at Age Concern, who has produced two excellent newsletters and tries to keep us in some sort of order!

As our second year comes to an end we must thank Wirral Borough Council (in particular Steve Maddox, Tracey Smith and John Webb); NHS Wirral (in particular Kathy Doran and Tina Long); The Hospital Trust; Riverside Housing (in particular Jayne Branch Murray) and Age Concern (in particular Jamie Anderson).

If anyone is interested in joining the Parliament please complete application form (copies available at the meeting) and help us to ensure our third year is even more successful.

The chair congratulated the Parliament on its success and thanked Stan Thompson for his update and he received a round of applause from the forum.

The following questions / issues were raised:

Dave Hanlon

8. What was happening re: hole in the road by the bus stop in New Brighton, previously reported to Chris Jones?
 - A. Councillor Taylor confirmed that photographs of this had been sent in to Streetscene.
9. Issues around the problems with the buses service to / from Wallasey were raised with Simon Finnie from Arriva, at the Liscard and Seacombe area forum. Stan Thompson added that the problem re: signage on the buses was also raised. Simon's response was as follows:
 - Since Liverpool One opened the bus stop has become more congested as the buses to Bootle also go from here. When Liverpool City Council deal with the issues in the City Centre there will be a stop just for Wirral services that will be nearer to Liverpool One, but this will not be in place until towards the end of the year.
 - The competition from the introduction of the 32/33 service generated extra passengers. Now that First Bus has withdrawn the service we have been left with more passengers. We recognise that something needs to be done and the new vehicles are being introduced to generate more passengers and from the end of May 2009 we will be sending three buses back out during the evening peak from 3.30 – 6.30pm. It is not in our interest not to stop and collect passengers.
 - All new buses have the number on the back, side and front and it is automatically updated. The older buses have had so many destinations added that it can be difficult to find the correct destination. This is much easier on the new buses, and 15 new single decker buses are due to be introduced in March 2009. The capital expenditure being allocated will

result in 60% of buses at Laird Street having the number on the back, side and front.

10. Geoff Gorman – what has happened re: issue of transporters parking on the hill at Stoneacres?
A. Chair – the answer to this was included on page 13 of the area co-ordinators report. Dave Green agreed to discuss this in more detail at the end of the meeting.

Resolved that:

- (i) **the partners be thanked for their updates**
- (ii) **the chair to look into issue re: sale of paraphernalia and arrange for an update on this for the next meeting**
- (iii) **the chair to contact community patrol re: lack of patrols in Wallasey Village**
- (iv) **the area co-ordinator to look into the possibility of arranging for the sportsmobile to be brought to Wallasey**
- (v) **Tony Mooney to provide further information on an integrated surgery at Asda once a date has been set**
- (vi) **Dr Mukherjee to report back on situation re: oncology moving to the Royal**
- (vii) **Dr Mukherjee to take details re: scan and report back directly to the individual concerned**

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 23rd June 2009, at a venue to be confirmed.

A member of the public asked if the next meeting could be held at the Floral Pavilion and the chair requested that the area co-ordinator check its availability.

Resolved that: The area co-ordinator to look into the availability of the Floral Pavilion for the next forum meeting

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.45pm