

# AREA FORUM (LISCARD AND SEACOMBE)

Monday, 13 October 2008

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	L Fraser (Chair)	
	Councillors	AER Jones J Keeley	D Knowles J Salter
<u>In attendance:</u>	Community Representatives	Margi Allen Joe Lee Carole Thomas	Diane Ledger Fr Leon Ostaszewski
	Lead Officer	Mark Camborne	
	Area Service Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray	
	Street Scene Manager	Chris Jones	
	Community Safety	Mike Walker	
	Wirral Primary Care Trust	Kathy Doran	Tina Long
	Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Jo Goodfellow	
	Merseyside Police	Inspector Julie Fletcher	
	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Tony Mooney	
	Council Officers	Kevin Adderley John Webb	Christina Jones
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	K Hayes  Ken Harrison	

## 1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed forum members and 31 members of the public to the Area Forum. Apologies received from Councillor Karen Hayes and Ken Harrison.

## 2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM

The Chair informed forum that matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting would be dealt with under Item 7. Change to the published agenda, to bring Item 5 Care in the Community forward as Item 4, Central Park Liscard Hall – What Next? following as Item 5.

**Minute Decision: Minutes 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 be confirmed.**

## 3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Michelle Gray, reported that Area Forums are currently advertising for the second round of Area Forum funding, Liscard and Seacombe Area Forum has £6997.40 available from the Community Initiative Fund and £1224.46 available from Primary Care Trust. Application forms were available at the meeting for those from the voluntary or community sector interested in applying. Closing date is 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Nomination forms for any roads or pavements requiring maintenance work were also made available, with a closing date of 14<sup>th</sup> November.

Mark Camborne gave an overview of the You Decide initiative whereby the Council has agreed to allocate £20,000 additional funding to each Area Forum through participatory budgeting, and has conducted a campaign to encourage residents to vote on how this funding is spent. The Area Forum members met last Wednesday to review the results, and agreed that the areas for spending were to be Safety; Sports & Youth Activity; Cleanliness; Transport/Road Signs; and Education/Libraries.

**Minute Decision: Resolved that: Community Engagement Officer and Lead Officer be thanked for their reports.**

## 4 CARE IN THE COMMUNITY - POULTON HOUSE

The Director of Adults Social Services, John Webb, gave a presentation on the use of Poulton House and how its use has changed over time. He reported that it was built as a residential care home and that currently, as well as providing intermediate care, it provides therapy and other medical services. He outlined the previous proposal for its use which was to invest £1.5m in creating a 60 place care centre at Poulton House for use by residents across Wirral. However, John outlined concerns that to borrow this sum of money would increase the cost of placements by £100 per week, and that using Poulton House in this way does not fit with the Intermediate Care Strategy as it only caters for residential needs. At Thursday's Cabinet meeting it will be recommended that this investment is not pursued. It is thought that the building can continue to operate without incurring major expense for three further years.

Meanwhile, the aim is to look to provide more localised services in four locations across Wirral, and to use the next three years to better understand the needs of the community.

The forum were also advised that £8m has been secured for a further development at the former site of Somerville School will create 70 extra care housing units, with scope for expansion in Phase Two of the development.

Kathy Doran added that the PCT has been working for some time to develop more localised services. A review found that Wirral has high levels of hospitalisation and that just over 50% of people cared for in hospital could have been safely maintained at home had the appropriate services been in place. Further funding has been allocated to community nursing, community therapy and technological developments to support people in their own homes. Over the next three years community nursing will be significantly increased to support people outside nursing homes, care homes and hospitals. It is thought that once these changes are in place it will be possible to make an assessment of the need for beds in the community and make a judgment on the future of Poulton House.

Q. Margi Allen – What are the plans for the development at the back of Poulton House?

A. John Webb – This will be used for shared ownership housing. It will be a good quality extra care unit surrounded by other services.

Q. Carole Thomas – Please could you clarify the location of the site?

A. John Webb – It is a four acre site off Gorse Lane.

Q. Joe Lee – How has the amount of years Poulton House can continue to operate for been estimated?

A. John Webb – Poulton House currently meets registration standards, and a building appraisal has found that it should continue to do so for a further three years, or possibly more, with general maintenance.

A member of the public informed the forum of an incident last night involving 4 HGVs parked outside the building site near Mill Lane with unprotected gas cylinders. Kathy Doran was not aware of the incident, and gave assurance that she would investigate it.

A member of the public gave examples of how difficult it is to move away from residential care such as that at Poulton House and highlighted the need to consider this. John Webb emphasised that there is no suggestion that Poulton House will close, but only a recommendation not to invest in a 60 place care centre for Wirral as it does not fit with the strategic approach planned. He informed the forum that it is recognised that better discharge plans and different services are required and that these will be put in place over the next three years, during which Poulton House will continue to operate.

Q. Leah Fraser [Chair] – Can you give any assurance over the choice to use shared ownership housing in the current financial climate?

A. John Webb – The model has been costed and funding for some of it has been secured. Shared ownership is a model which has worked and no information to the contrary has been received.

**Minute Decision: Resolved that: John Webb and Kathy Doran be thanked for their time.**

## 5 CENTRAL PARK - LISCARD HALL

At the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June an update on Liscard Hall was requested. Kevin Adderley noted that the position stated at this meeting was that two developers had applied to develop the hall, and the council had asked them submit their final plans. He then provided an overview of what has happened regarding Liscard Hall since that meeting, and reported that on 6<sup>th</sup> July Liscard Hall was subject to an arson attack and the council had been forced to demolish the hall.

He reported that the following 5 options for how to take forward the site at Liscard Hall had been agreed at a meeting of the Friends of Liscard Hall to be proposed in a report presented to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> October

1. Leave the site in its current grassed over state as part of central park
2. Leave the site in its current state with the tops of the walls exposed and a plaque identifying the hall
3. Seek interest from developers to build on the site of the hall
4. Promote a new scheme to refurbish the remaining buildings at the site.
5. A combination of options three and four: build on the current site but incorporate the remaining buildings to create a bigger development.

A development brief will be issued giving clear guidance on preferences for the use of the site, but its development will be dependent upon the market and forthcoming opportunities.

A member of the public clarified that the location of Liscard Hall is in Seacombe, and not Liscard, and noted that the only development they considered to be desirable would be something that gave back to the community, rather than something solely commercial in nature. The need for widespread public consultation prior to a decision was also noted.

Q. Member of Public – what would the cost of demolishing the building and clearing the site have been had it not been subject to an arson attack?

A. Kevin Adderley – This is a question that cannot be answered as demolition had not previously been considered. However it cost in the region of £50,000 to pay for the demolition after the fire and the removal of all rubble. Q. Cllr John Salter – Could you give an update on progress with the insurance claim?

A. Kevin Adderley – Discussions regarding the insurance claim are continuing.

Suggestions for the future use of Liscard Hall were made by members of the public. Kevin Adderley advised that developers would be asked to express an interest based upon a development brief. He also advised that proposals would be subject to full internal and external consultation. The Chair urged attendees to respond to the consultation exercise when this was in place. As yet there are no proposed timescales for the consultation.

Q. Joe Lee – Are those developers who were previously interested in developing the site still interested?

A. Kevin Adderley – The simple answer is I believe so. However, the proposal is very different to the previous proposal as there is now no building to develop so it will be necessary to go out to the Market for developers to note their interest in developing the site, rather than the building.

Carole Thomas informed the forum that members of the Central Park Steering Group expressed the view that there should be no residential accommodation in the park.

**Minute Decision: Resolved that: Kevin Adderley be thanked for his time.**

## 6 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS UPDATE

### **NHS Foundation Trust – Jo Goodfellow**

Jo noted that she had no particular issues to raise but would welcome any comments or questions from the forum.

A member of the public advised the forum that it is the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Clatterbridge hospital and that a display has been erected at the hospital. Forum attendees were urged to visit the hospital to see the display or to pick up a form made available at the forum if they are interested in becoming a member.

The chair asked Carole Thomas if her question regarding mixed wards at the last Area Forum meeting had been resolved to her satisfaction, to which Carole replied that it hadn't. Jo Goodfellow responded further to say that they are looking to develop more single sex wards and are trying to secure funding for 50% more rooms but that this is a huge investment and will need to be done gradually over time. She added that separate plans are being developed for children's and maternity wards, but that these are not yet ready for consultation. An update will be forwarded to Michelle Gray for discussion at the next meeting.

Q. Joe Lee commented that he had spent 1 ½ hours trying to park at Arrowe Park hospital and members of the public noted that they had experienced similar problems.

A. Jo Goodfellow had not been aware of the problem and resolved to obtain full details after the meeting and to discuss the matter with the Director of Facilities.

Q. Member of Public – what is the current position on respite care and what will future provision be?

A. Tina Long – work is progressing to provide better support for carers and to work with those in the Council and the Mental Health Trust to consider care for those with dementia. Work is also progressing to assess the availability of places for carers to go for a break from providing care and to fill any gaps within this.

### **Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service – Tony Mooney**

Tony Mooney drew forum attendees attention to a note he had placed on seats giving details of current fire and safety campaigns. He outlined details of the Winter Warm campaign where electric blankets are being tested and replaced free of charge where they are found to be unsafe. He also gave details of the Bonfire Night campaign and previous years' success, noting that this year the campaign has been extended to schools and problematic areas such as allotments, and a more targeted approach has been taken. The Fire & Rescue service are also working with retailers to clarify the terms of the relevant licensing legislation and regulations and to ensure enforcement. The Fire & Rescue service are also investigating key areas for nuisance fires and targeting inspection activity accordingly.

Q. Joe Lee – What can be done to reduce the problem of gas bottles being left and causing a hazard? Can we work with retailers to resolve this?

Q. Diane Ledder – This can be particularly difficult where gas providers have gone out of business.

A. Tony Mooney – There is no easy answer to this as it is difficult to enforce their return.

Q. Carole Thomas – Where in Wheatland Lane are electric blanket tests being carried out?

A. The Housing Association have arranged the site. Further details will be passed to Michelle for communication to the Forum.

A member of the public queried the regulations around timescales for return, but Tony Mooney was unable to comment as the timescales are set within the legislation.

Q. Member of Public – Will there be a bonfire in Central Park this year?

A. Chris Jones – There will be a bonfire in Leasowe Park but not in Central Park due to health and safety and due to the costs involved. Firework displays will be put on across the Borough.

A. Mark Camborne – Locations of firework displays and bonfires will be sought and passed to Michelle Gray for circulation to the Forum.

A. Michelle Gray – Any attendees who would also like to receive these details should sign the book of attendance so they can be circulated.

A member of the public informed the forum that a function is being organised to recognise the achievements of those involved in the recent World Fire Games. An invitation was extended to forum attendees to attend the function.

### **Merseyside Police – Inspector Julie Fletcher**

Julie Fletcher drew forum members attention to the closure of a crack-house which highlighted issues previously discussed and was particularly significant as it was an owner-occupied house where sufficient evidence had been secured to prove the supply of drugs on the premises. The owner has been evicted for 3 months. Julie reminded all in attendance to pass any evidence regarding drugs supply or anti-social behaviour to police as this is vital to secure closures such as this.

Julie also highlighted successful recoveries of drugs and weapons following information received from the community through Crimestoppers. She reminded attendees that anyone reporting crime in this way will remain anonymous and that information received will be acted upon.

Julie reported that the Bonfire Night operation had been launched today and that arrangements had been made for extra officers to be out in the Wallasey area. The police are visiting schools, writing to parents and liaising with retailers to discuss the responsible sale of fireworks and materials used to cause nuisance such as flour and eggs.

Q. A member of the public raised the issue of anti-social behaviour and reported that they had been unhappy with the response they were given when they phoned to complain about anti-social behaviour at their place of work.

A. Julie Fletcher – All calls are graded according to their severity with targets for response times set accordingly. The person reporting an incident will often get a call back to check that attendance is still required. As the response provided to this query by email was not considered adequate, a visit will be arranged.

Q. Member of Public – What is the usual response to an incident being reported in terms of obtaining a description of the suspect?

A. Julie Fletcher – The Police staff are advised to just ask for a description, without asking leading questions.

Q. Chris Jones – Was the delivery of services affected for the person issued with an anti-social behaviour order in relation to drugs?

A. Julie Fletcher – The police have no power to permanently evict the homeowner but can restart the process after any subsequent incidents and this can often be a much quicker process.

Q. Diane Ledger - Did the person own his home or was it mortgaged?

A. Julie Fletcher – His house was mortgaged but the police have no way to take this forward with the mortgage provider.

Q. Diane Ledger informed the forum of good practice employed by Sunderland Police to deal with handbag thefts whereby a bell gives an alert to the incident.

A. Julie Fletcher – This method was used in Birkenhead but hasn't been extended to Liscard as the issue is not as common.

Q. Fr Leon Ostaszewski – Is it true that Wirral is the lowest area in the country for burglary.

A. Julie Fletcher – It is the second lowest area. Fr Leon Ostaszewski gave credit to the police for this achievement.

Q. Fr Leon Ostaszewski reported parking problems on Wallasey Road near the zig-zag lines and highlighted that this prevents busses passing and presents a hazard with people to have to alight in the street.

A. The police have responsibility for the enforcement of parking rules regarding zig-zag lines and will get someone to investigate this.

A. Chris Jones – Anyone who notices a problem can call 606 2004 to report this and an attendant will be sent to issue a fixed-term penalty notice.

A. Michelle Gray – For those wanting to use Minicom, the number is 0151 697 8481.

A. Carole Thomas confirmed that problems reported are dealt with.

Q. A member of the public raised a similar issue regarding taxis parking on the Wallasey Road junction and informed the forum on behalf of Moseley Avenue residents that a meeting is being held with all concerned parties, including a representative for the taxi drivers and enforcement officers. He asked whether a representative from Street Scene could join the meeting.

A. Leah Fraser [Chair] informed the forum that this was being looked into by Sergeant Diggins

Q. Denis Knowles – Following the reduction of anti-social behaviour in Central Park due to police and community police safety officers patrolling the area, where do these people now congregate and is it possible to use a section 30 order to control the sale of alcohol to underage people in this area?

A. Julie Fletcher – A meeting is due to take place on Friday to discuss any displacement and where this is occurring. Evidence is being gathered and considered. If anyone has information on the sale of alcohol to underage people they should report it to the police.

Adrian Jones congratulated Wirral's Police OCU on their achievements and reported that rumours of imminent police station closures in the area are not true. Leah Fraser [Chair] informed the group that she is awaiting an email to confirm this situation.

The chair then thanked Julie Fletcher for both the success and the approachable nature of the police.

**Minute Decision: Resolved that: All contributors be thanked for their updates and question responses.**

## 7 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Older people's parliament Rep Stan Thompson informed the group that the number of parliament members continues to grow and encouraged attendees over 50 to join as a member using forms made available at the meeting. An overview of recent conferences and issues raised was provided.

Diane Ledder - parking problems outside the allotments had been resolved and thanked those relevant.

Q. Fr Leon Ostaszewski raised the issue of the poor condition of paper at Earlston Road Library.

A. Dennis Knowles – A visit to the library will be arranged.

Q. Member of Public – What is the latest regarding the demolition of Charter House in Seacombe.

A. James Keeley – This will take place over the next 3-5 years but the decommissioning will be carefully managed to ensure the safety of those moved at a later date. Reassurance has been sought that residents will be prioritised in terms of allocation of Wirral Partnership homes.

Q. Member of Public – Can the lack of busses on the 432 service be investigated as there are not enough busses between the hours of 4-6pm.

A. Leah Fraser – As Mersey Travel will be in attendance at the next meeting it would be useful to raise this issue then.

A. Denis Knowles – A meeting is taking place on Monday and this issue will be raised there.

Q. Member of Public – Gave appreciation for the street scene improvements on the promenade from Seacombe to New Brighton and the newly refurbished area to play football. Also complemented the police on dealing with anti-social behaviour issues within the local parks. Appreciation was also given for the opportunity to meet forum members and to discuss current issues with them.



Fr Leon Ostaszewski noted that the quality of roads in Wallasey is in need of attention.

**Minute Decision: Resolved that: The Chair thanked the interpreters, members of the public and Area Forum members for attending the meeting.**

**8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held at Wallasey Town Hall, Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009