

AREA FORUM (LISCARD AND SEACOMBE)

Wednesday, 11 February 2009

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	K Hayes (Chair)	
	Councillors	J Keeley D Knowles	J Salter
<u>In attendance:</u>	Community Representatives	Ken Harrison	Carole Thomas
	Faith Representatives	Fr. Leon Ostaszewski	
	Lead Officer	Mark Camborne	
	Area Service Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray	
	Street Scene Manager	Chris Jones	
	NHS Wirral (formerly PCT)	Dr Shymal Mukerjee	
	Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Jo Goodfellow	
	Merseyside Police	Inspector Julie Fletcher	
	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Tony Mooney	
	Arriva	Simon Finnie	
	Council Officers	Mike Collins (Community Safety)	Carol Sharratt (minute taker)
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillor(s)	Christina Jones L Fraser	AER Jones
		Margi Allen Diane Ledder	Joe Lee

The Chair, Councillor Karen Hayes, welcomed the forum members and four members of the public to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillor Leah Fraser, Councillor Adrian Jones, Diane Ledder, Joe Lee, Margi Allen.

Councillor John Salter informed the forum that the Deaf Society were unable to provide signers for this meeting, as there are only 28 signers for Merseyside, but the Chief Executive of the Society had guaranteed that signers will be available for all future meetings, if enough notice is provided.

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM

The following points / matters arising were raised from the minutes of last meeting held on 13th October 2008:

Page 6 – Dave Hanlon asked for clarification re: meeting of Friends of Liscard Hall. Carole Thomas confirmed that the view was from members of the Central Park Steering group, who are part of the Friends of Liscard Hall. It was agreed that the last paragraph of item 5 in the minutes be amended to read “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.”

Page 8 – Fr. Leon Ostaszewski clarified that question 5 under item 6 was referring to parking problems in Liscard Road by the zebra crossing near the Boot Inn and at the bus stop at the corner of Belvidere Road and Wallasey Road. He added that drama school clients parking cause difficulties for people alighting from the 9 and 409 buses and that both of these sites are major hazards.

Page 8, question 1 under item 7 – Fr. Leon Ostaszewski commented that he had reported the problem of plaster falling off the walls at the Earlston Road Library in June last year but nothing had been done about this.

Chris Jones informed the forum that Belvidere Road had been included in next year's budget for improvement.

Resolved that: The minutes of the last meeting held on 13th October 2008 be agreed, subject to the last paragraph of item 5 being amended to read “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.”

3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

The Community Engagement Co-ordinator gave a brief overview of her report, highlighting the following:

Page 2 - Launch of new Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) website (<http://wirral-lsp.org>). This is in its early stages and will be fully operational by March 2009 and

comments on this would be valued. The contact for the website is Maxine Joynson (0151 691 8266 / maxinejoynson@wirral.gov.uk)

You Decide Results – the reports on the £20,000 allocation had been forwarded to the relevant departments (Technical Services and Regeneration).

The Chair asked if there were any questions on this and none were raised.

Minute decision: Resolved: That the Community Engagement Co-ordinator be thanked for her report.

4 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK FUNDING

Mark Camborne gave an update on the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) Funding.

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 13th February 2009.

The Forum debated this proposal and the following questions / issues were raised:

1. Councillor Keeley – raised concerns over amount of funding available as would not cover the cost of larger schemes and felt that it would be better to leave it in the central pot if want larger schemes to be implemented.
2. Stan Thompson (representative of the Older People's Parliament and the small community at Mariners Park) – asked if there was an avenue of approach to the decision makers, as a pelican crossing is needed in the Mariners Park area as the average age of people crossing the road to the bus stop is 75 years.

The Chair confirmed that this had been on the list for some time and that if forum decide to de-centralise the funding they would get together and discuss how and where it would be allocated. Carole Thomas added that the community representatives can be contacted through the Liscard / Seacombe Partnership and offered to provide further details on this at the end of the meeting.

Chris Jones confirmed that if the other area forums decide to keep their allocation then this comes off the central pot, but that forums could pool funds to carry out a larger scheme in one forum area one year and one in the other forum area the

following year. Mark Camborne added that it may also be able to be added to other funding pots, such as You Decide.

3. Fr. Leon Ostaszewski – could the fund be used in conjunction with Merseytravel, as it would be beneficial to have an rendezvous point for buses in the Liscard area with an information kiosk (as at Heswall bus station) to make the area safer?

Mark Camborne – the fund would probably not be enough to cover such a scheme.

4. Dave Hanlon – £36,000 for a crossing is a drop in the ocean from the streetscene budget.

Mark Camborne – the £18,000 is in addition to the normal funding for the structural maintenance programme and the local transport plan. Chris Jones added that streetscene has a budget to maintain what is already in place and would use this budget to maintain structure of works funded under the ITB funding.

5. Tony Ford – would ramps for prams / wheelchairs need to come from this budget, as a ramp disappeared following a road re-surface 18 months ago (this was reported 12 months ago but the ramp has not been re-instated)? Also what is the position re: inadequate ramps?

Chris Jones – confirmed if something is taken away following works then this would be replaced out of the streetscene budget, but that he was not aware of this issue and agreed to take more details at the end of the meeting and look into this. Mark Camborne added that any dropped crossings already in place would be covered by the streetscene budget, but that is the fund is de-centralised it could be used to put in more dropped crossings and the forum would have more control as to where they would be placed.

6. Carole Thomas – raised reservations re: use of You Decide as matched funding, as this was a great success with a high level of public input.

Mark Camborne – this is only one option and it would be for the forum to decide, some of the You Decide funding was used on road safety schemes.

The Chair deferred the decision and requested that the members of the forum submit their recommendations and any further questions to the Community Engagement Co-ordinator by 12th February 2009. Mark Camborne confirmed that if the forum do not put forward a recommendation then it is likely that the fund will remain in the central pot.

Minute decision: Resolved that:

- (i) **Chris Jones look into issue of reinstatement of ramp that disappeared following a road re-surface**
- (ii) **The members of the forum pass recommendations re: the allocation of the ITB fund to Michelle Gray by Thursday 12th February 2009 for forwarding to Technical Services by Friday 13th February 2009**

Simon Finnie, general manager at Arriva buses on Wirral introduced himself to the forum and agreed to answer any questions in relation to this. The following questions / issues were raised:

1. Councillor Keeley – has there been any progress on the provision of numbers on the back of the buses (this issue was raised at a previous forum meeting)?

A - all new buses have the number on the back, side and front and it is automatically updated. The capital expenditure being allocated will result in 60% of buses at Laird Street having the number on the back, side and front.

2. Fr. Leon Ostaszewski – confirmed that he had raised the issue of the number on the back of the buses with Neil Scales and was told that the numbers should always be on the back of the buses as the drivers are responsible for changing the indicators.

A. 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.

3. Ken Harrison and Stan Thompson – welcomed the new buses and congratulated Arriva.

4. Dave Hanlon – can anything be done about the following:

- the chaos of the number of buses stopping at Sir Thomas Street between 4 - 6.30pm
- provision of more buses from Wallasey to Liverpool in the evening (since the removal of the First Bus 32 /33 services buses are only every 20 minutes and sometimes the buses don't stop at Scotland Road)

A –

- 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.

5. Tony Ford

- The 413 route from Liscard to Seacombe is poor, I wanted to travel here by public transport, but at this time of the evening it can mean a wait of an hour between buses. This is an important route for those wishing to get places such as the Town Hall, Guinea Gap Baths, Seacombe Ferry and Liscard. Dave Hanlon added that he got the bus at 6.20pm and the next bus wasn't due until 7.25pm so had to get on the 409 and walk down.

- The Government has been proposing to give more local control to bus services, but this has still not come into force. This forum should take up this issue with Central Government and put objections to the delays in writing.
- In past years when complaints have been made to Merseytravel the response has been that complaints could only be dealt with by the bus companies.

A –

- Simon Finnie - the new buses will be allocated to the 413 service so should resolve some of the issues by improving reliability. We are reviewing all service frequencies and demand for people wishing to travel to places such as Liverpool One and the Floral Hall in the evenings and on Sundays. The car is our biggest competition so we need to make buses more competitive.
 - Councillor Knowles – the Local Transport Act 2008 gave local partnership arrangements, and this has led to Arriva, Stage Coach and First bus companies becoming more responsive to work in partnership with the authority to make buses work for the benefit of the public and make the service the best it can be. The Government wants local authorities to regulate buses not to re-nationalise them. The authority could take over the running of the buses, but this would be a last resort. In the last ten years Merseytravel have gone from putting £7m to £25m for subsidising services. A subsidised service should never cost more than £1 per journey. If the number of users of public transport increases then some of the subsidy could be given back to Merseytravel. Bus companies are doing their best to make their service work for older people and it is free for the over 60's, and are working on a scheme to offer the same service for young people.
 - Councillor Knowles – the Transport Act gives us more power and there is now a committee which includes the bus companies and Merseytravel where issues and problems can be dealt with, so please inform us / Merseytravel of problems so that we can build up evidence sheets and raise these at the committee meetings. He agreed to discuss this in more detail at the end of the meeting.
 - Chair – the Older Peoples Parliament and the Youth Parliament wrote to Merseytravel and their views were taken on board.
6. Carole Thomas – buses need to stop outside Lime Street Station if they are to compete with cars. If you have cases you have to get a taxi as the nearest bus stop is at Queens Square.

A. – this issue has been raised previously, the cross river service used to stop at Lime Street but this was stopped to improve punctuality. Some buses have a layover of 10-15 minutes in the city centre, so will look at the possibility of sending these on a loop system and report back on this at the next meeting.

7. Carole Thomas – don't all of the buses stopping in Lime Street have the same punctuality problem?

A. – many of the Liverpool buses go along Lime Street or the top end of Central Station, so the problem is more for Wirral routes with concerns re: hold ups knocking the bus timetable.

Chair thanked Simon Finnie for attending the meeting and apologised for the poor public attendance at the meeting. She invited Simon to come along to the next meeting.

Minute decision: Resolved that:

- (i) **Simon Finnie be thanked for attending and be invited to the next forum meeting.**
- (ii) **Simon Finnie to report back at the next meeting on the possibility of sending buses on a loop system to stop at Lime Street.**

6 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS UPDATE

Merseyside Police – Inspector Julie Fletcher

Inspector Julie Fletcher informed the forum that there had been lots of enforcement action taken in the last quarter. A total of 23 warrants had been executed in the forum area, leading to 24 arrests and the discovery of a cannabis farm. In January two S30 dispersal orders were obtained for Brougham Road and Percy Road / Palatine Road area (maps detailing the areas covered were available at the meeting). The orders allow groups of 3 or more young people to be directed to leave and can be arrested if they return within 24 hours. Section 27 dispersal orders can be applied for to deal with people over the age of 16.

Action to tackle anti-social behaviour has led to 13 arrests, 10 fixed penalty notices being issued, 3 summonses and 98 dispersal notices being given out. The action has dramatically reduced calls reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Monthly newsletters are now being produced by each neighbourhood inspector, only 500 of these are being printed at present (copies were available at the meeting). Anyone wishing to receive regular updates can receive this via e-mail if they let us have their details. (Dave Hanlon added that copies of the newsletter were being handed out at Asda a few weeks ago).

On Friday 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. We worked closely with Caroline Laing, Manager of Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, to secure this. Inspector Fletcher thanked Councillor Salter for his support on this. The residents of the area had been intimidated by this young person for a number of years. Press notices will be going out this week showing the boundaries and details of the order and posters (with photo) will be placed in the area by the Anti-social Behaviour Team.

Last Sunday there was an open day at Wallasey Police Station, including a guided tour and history of the station along with a demonstration of the technology used. 90 people wanted to visit so a further open weekend has been arranged for 9th -10th May 2009, anyone wishing to attend should telephone 0151 777 2052/2053 to arrange this.

The Chair thanked Inspector Fletcher for her update and congratulated the Police on the success of the action taken within the Poulton area. The following questions / issues were raised:

1. Carole Thomas – what is a fixed penalty notice?

A. – it is an on the spot fine given for criminal damage, minor crimes and traffic offences.

2. Fr. Leon Ostaszewski – are you based at the Courthouse with the Community Safety Team and is this due to close at the end of March?

A. – Inspector Fletcher confirmed that the Inspectors are not based at the Courthouse. Councillor Keeley confirmed that the Courthouse is earmarked for closure but that a date has not been confirmed for this. Mike Collins added that the Community Safety Team facility will be available at the new offices.

3. Christina Jones – what impact has the Section 30 order had on neighbouring areas?

A. – no displacement problems have been noticed, but the neighbouring areas have been leafleted and we are monitoring these areas.

4. Dave Hanlon – did Daniel Berry live in Sherlock Lane?

A. no, he has no fixed address.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service – Tony Mooney

Tony Mooney informed the forum that there was a detailed update on pages 13-14 of the Community Engagement Report.

The service has a list of companies storing gas bottles that are still in business and contacts for the companies that are no longer in business, if anyone has any concerns over the storage of gas bottles please call the fire station or email lowellwilliams@merseyfire.gov.uk and this will be looked into.

An anti-social behaviour exercise held in the Borough Road area was successful with many positive outcomes.

The Chair thanked Tony Mooney for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

5. Fr. Leon Ostaszewski – what progress has been made on the community room?

A. – the lifestyle section should be ready by the end of March 2009, providing increased and improved facilities, such as improved shower / toilet facilities and disabled access.

6. Carole Thomas – what is happening in the Fire Service re: youth provision?

A. – the Service is building on this provision by offering activities such as cycling from the fire station base. The Service is also working with the Council, as part of the Aiming High Initiative, and capital monies are available for this. Council officers will

co-ordinate the activities, but this is still in its early stages, and he agreed to provide further details on this at the next forum.

Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – Jo Goodfellow

Jo Goodfellow informed the forum that an update was available at the meeting. The Trust has been very busy over the last few months due to flu outbreaks and sickness bugs, leading to an increase in waiting times, but the situation is settling down. The Trust has been working hard to ensure that no-one has been turned away and avoiding the cancellation of planned operations.

The Trust is putting a lot of effort into tackling infections and has opened an isolation ward.

£1.4m was spent on Ward 14. The ward has been renovated and is now a state of the art ward with self-contained en-suite bays.

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 congratulated the Trust and thanked Jo Goodfellow for her update, there were no questions raised.

NHS Wirral (formerly PCT) – Dr Shyamal Mukherjee

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.

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:

7. Carole Thomas – will patients from other practices be able to use the new facilities at the Manor practice?

A. – patients will be able to access the services nearest to them e.g. phlebotomy – a patient can ring and choose an appointment at any clinic within Wallasey.

8. Councillor Knowles – will there be a directory advertising these services?

A. – the GP practices are the cornerstone of the NHS and patients need to keep up relationships with their own doctor.

Older People's Parliament – Stan Thompson

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.

John Thompson apologised for the lack of support from the public at this meeting.

The Chair congratulated the Parliament on its success, hoped that this would continue and thanked Stan Thompson for his update. He received a round of applause from the forum. The following questions / issues were raised:

9. Carole Thomas – there are many grandparents in the Seacombe area who have been left to look after their grandchildren, are they receiving any additional

benefits for this (on top of the family allowance), if not can the forum try and take this issue forward?

A. – no, the situation is still the same. The Chair agreed to look into this.

10. Dave Hanlon – applauded Stan for his update, confirmed that he had joined the Parliament, and asked how many members were on the Parliament.

A. - I do not have the number of members with me, and we are still recruiting associate members, but will report back on this at the next meeting.

Minute decision: Resolved that:

- (i) The partners be thanked for their updates**
- (ii) Tony Mooney to provide an update on the Aiming High Initiative for the next forum meeting**
- (iii) Stan Thompson to report back on membership of the Older Peoples Parliament**
- (iv) Councillor Karen Hayes to look into possibility of the forum taking forward issue of financial assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren**

7 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th June 2009, at a venue to be confirmed.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.40pm