

AREA FORUM (LEASOWE, MORETON AND SAUGHALL MASSIE)

Thursday, 16 October 2008

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Mountney (Chair)	
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	C Blakeley IO Coates	I Lewis S Moseley
	<u>Community Representatives</u>	Mrs J McLear	B Seddon
	<u>Lead Officer</u>	Russ Glennon (Head of Corporate Policy)	
	Streetscene Manager	Chris Jones	
	Area Service Co-ordinator	Tracey Smith	
	Merseyside Police	Inspector Peter Kolokotroni	
	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Tony Mooney	
	Wirral Primary Care Trust	Dr Mantgani	
	Council Officers	Phil Dixon (Environmental Health Officer)	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	RL Abbey	
		J Borlase (Faith Representative)	Bruce Martin (Faith Representative)

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed Forum members and 8 members of the public to the meeting of the Leasowe, Moreton and Saughall Massie Area Forum in Moreton. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Abbey, Jason Borlase and Bruce Martin.

The Chair invited Forum members to introduce themselves.

2 AREA CO-ORDINATORS REPORT

The format of the Area Co-ordinator's report had been changed to incorporate updates under the relevant section on projects funded by CIF and the PCT in 2007/08.

There is a balance of unallocated funding of £19,878.86 available for projects in Leasowe, Moreton and Saughall Massie. Voluntary and Community Sector groups are invited to submit applications by the closing date of 12 noon on Monday, 10th November 2008.

The minutes of the meeting of the Area Forum on 2 July 2008 were included on pages 4-10 of the Area Co-ordinator's report. It was pointed out that the contribution by the PCT to a new Health Park in Pasture Road should read £150,000, not £150 as stated in the minutes [page 7, 4th paragraph under Public Question Time].

Mrs McLear pointed out that the Leasowe Estates Tenants' Association, not the PCT, had started a new community garden in Twickenham Drive. Community health workers provided by Wirral PCT Health and Wellbeing Team have become involved.

Matter arising:

Large Gardens Register: Roger Calvert had been asked to investigate a proposal by Councillor Moseley for the Council to maintain a Large Gardens' Register for people to use to grow produce.

A suggestion was made that property owners would be likely to want reassurance that the individuals who come on to their property are trustworthy, and the Council would be unable to give that reassurance. Funding has been made available to employ a part-time Development Officer for two years. A person has been appointed and will take up the post in November.

Councillor Moseley advised that Large Garden schemes have been trialled and have worked well in other areas. She made a formal request for the proposal to be taken forward and investigated.

Minute decision:

Resolved: That –

- i the minutes of the Area Forum meeting of 2 July 2008 be confirmed as a true record, subject to the amendments highlighted;**
- ii the proposal by Councillor Moseley for the development of a Large Gardens Register be taken forward and investigated;**
- iii the Area Co-ordinator be thanked for her report.**

3 "YOU DECIDE"

The Chair reported that in December 2007, Wirral was one of 12 authorities that became involved in a pilot scheme for a new project called 'You Decide'. Wirral Council has allocated £250,000 new money to be spent on extra council services in Wirral's 11 area forums. Following a marketing campaign in September 2008, a

Borough-wide survey was conducted in October asking residents which additional council services they would most like to spend the money on.

Each area forum has been given an allocation £20,000 of new money to spend on extra council services. 239 residents in this area had responded to the survey.

The Chair added that the feedback from members of the public has been collated. The priorities for this area are concerned with cleanliness, additional litter bins, sport and youth activities for young people, and road safety issues. For Moreton West and Saughall Massie, an additional four benches and four associated litter bins and community sports officer to work with young people. For Leasowe and Moreton East two benches, a community sports officer to work with both boys and girls, and a solar panelled road sign to show the speeds of vehicles.

A member of the public referred to a reference in the Older People's Parliament report to an event at the Arena for Olympics 2012, and the pots of funding available to support young people. He suggested that the balance of funding is used as match funding to support the initiative.

A technical and financial appraisal of the viability of the proposals put forward by each Area Forum will be undertaken, and a report will be presented to Cabinet in December outlining how best to use the money that is available.

The results of 'You Decide' will be published for all eleven area forums in January 2009, with a Press release and detailed presentations at area forum meetings.

The Chair apologised to the member of the public who did not know about the survey, explaining that the scheme had been publicised in the local Press.

4 COUNCIL POLICY ON FERAL PIGEONS

Phil Dixon, Environmental Health Officer, gave a presentation on Pigeons. He showed photographs of the birds and commented that in the right location they can be an attractive and appealing bird; adding that an urban environment is precisely the wrong location. Using pictorial illustrations he showed ways in which flocks of pigeons can cause significant problems because they are in the wrong location. Apart from droppings deposited on properties, people can be quite frightened by large flocks of birds. He gave the following information:

- Lethal methods of controlling these birds are trapping, baiting, and shooting.
- Non-lethal methods are dovecotes and feeding control.
- The most effective and humane way of controlling the local populations is to remove the food sources.
- Any method used to control the flocks must be sustained. Adult birds produce two young birds every seven weeks, and the flocks will quickly re-establish.
- Wirral Council does not have a Control Strategy. To be effective any strategy that is introduced would have to be comprehensive, sustained, Borough-wide, and expensive. Preliminary costings indicate that such a scheme would cost anything between £70,000 to £120,000 a year to implement. The control methods introduced in Trafalgar Square in London costs in the region of £250,000 to maintain.

Councillor Coates commented that she would prefer to see the idea of dovecotes being used.

Questions from members of the public:

Q I live in a block of flats and another resident regularly feeds the birds. The influx of birds is affecting other residents' way of life. Can any action can be taken to discourage the person from feeding the birds?

A There are a lot of complex issues that need to be taken into account before you serve notice on that person. As an alternative, the person could be approached informally to explain the problem and the damage that can be caused. There is the potential to apply legislation under the Litter Act, but you have to decide how far you proceed with the prosecution against people who feed birds and there are people in the Borough who will continue to feed birds.

Q What would the cost savings be if you introduced this measure? If the birds are damaging buildings. If you control it, you would have cost savings by introducing these measures.

A I'm not sure that it would be possibly to identify or recover that. Droppings affect buildings, but whether you can make an assessment of the economic viability of that, I don't know. Cleaning up after the birds is actually the responsibility of the owner of the premises and it is to their advantage to protect their property from the birds.

Minute decision: Resolved: That Phil Dixon be thanked for the presentation.

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Issues raised by members of the public –

Q Last year, the Council commissioned a study and report on the Cultural Services Department. Is it complete yet? Is it going to be publicised and if not, can it be presented at this and other Area Forums so that people have an opportunity to see the results?

A [Cllr Blakeley]: The study has been completed and a report is being presented to Cabinet this evening. The report, which has several attachments, is in the public domain and is on the Council website. The changes relate to public libraries and nothing else.

Russ Glennon offered to pursue the suggestion that something is taken to Area Forums.

Q There has been an increase in the number of youths climbing on the roofs of buildings. Last week, children were seen climbing on the roof of the Police Station. Has any action been taken to discourage this?

A [Insp. Kolokotroni] Young people do climb on the roofs of buildings around the area of Moreton Cross. It started with one and now there are about 14 individuals who climb buildings and jump from one to another. They say it is a sport and a way of expressing themselves and they are not doing anything wrong. We have set up a meeting with agencies on 4 November to look at those individuals and see what we can do. Damage has been caused to some of the buildings and it is a problem for the area. We are trying to bring in some diversionary activities that will help in solving the problem.

Q United Utilities are refusing to bring forward plans to increase the capacity of the drainage system in Leasowe. One family is living in a caravan in Meols.

A We are hoping to have a meeting with United Utilities. We had to go to the Wirral Globe to highlight the problem. There have been a couple of meetings at Clare Mount School. We invited them to come along and explain to the residents what they are doing. They refused that request. Reeds Lane is a bad area and is susceptible to flooding. The water tables are rising and the flood levels are higher.

Chris Jones reported that in an effort to alleviate the flooding problem, from 1 October anyone who wants to change their garden to hard standing for vehicle parking has to apply for planning approval.

6 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS UPDATE

Police:

Inspector Peter Kolokotroni, Neighbourhood Inspector for Moreton and West Wallasey, reported that figures to the end of September 2008, compared with the same period last year, show a reduction of 257 offences. There has been a slight increase of one offence to nine offences. Theft from parked unattended vehicles increased slightly in the Moreton East and Leasowe ward. Contributory factors were vehicles left insecure overnight and vehicles with personal property and Sat. Navs. left on display. In August, three males were arrested for robbery from business premises and a male was arrested and charged with an offence of threatening people with a blank pistol near Moreton Shore. Last night, a male was arrested in Hoylake after entering a property carrying an axe and demanding money. The modus operandi was similar to that used in a previous incident. Two males are being held in custody and they will be interviewed concerning both incidents.

Wirral's performance is judged against 15 similar areas in the country. Wirral has come out top for reducing all crime, and fourth for reducing incidents of robbery. Anti social behaviour is the lowest in Wirral in the past four years.

There have been several successful drug seizures over recent months as a result of information received from the public. Three cannabis factories were discovered in the Moreton and Leasowe area. Several people have been arrested and a further person has been arrested at an address in Moreton.

The Police have responded to reports from residents of youths causing annoyance and under age drinking in the Moreton West and Saughall Massie areas.

Acting on information received from members of the public, and working with local councillors and partner agencies, an operation was set up on licensed premises in Pasture Road. The outcome had been that the licence had been revoked.

PCO's have been involved in truancy sweeps with the LA, which have resulted in a number of young people being returned to their schools. The PCO's are also involved in providing diversionary activities for young people in the area, and that will continue.

Inspector Kolokotroni urged members of the public to continue to report information to the Police. The emergency number '999' should be used if there is a threat to life or a crime is in progress. Information about a crime can be reported anonymously to Crimestoppers by calling the Freephone number 0800 555 111.

A member of the public raised a question about dangerous dogs. He stated that dogs can be quite frightening to people and every dog should be kept on a lead, particularly in busy areas.

Inspector Kolokotroni replied that the Police work with the RSPCA and take action in instances where it is believed that a prohibited breed of dog is being kept and used for fighting purposes. The Police rely on receiving information about where these dogs are kept.

PCT:

Dr Mantgani reported that in the 2006/07 Healthcare Commission Annual Health Check, Wirral Primary Care Trust and the NHS Foundation Trust both earned the maximum score of 'excellent' for quality of services and 'good' for use of resources. Wirral PCT is rated in the top nine out of 152 PCTs across the country; only one PCT scored higher in assessments on almost 100 key health standards.

The only area where the PCT is not meeting its targets is in relation to pre-bookable appointments. GP Practices are doing well with telephoned access, appointments and enabling patients to speak to a doctor, but they are not meeting national targets in pre-bookable appointments. The PCT is working with GPs to ensure they reach the targets of 40% of all appointments being pre-bookable, and that patients can get access to a GP within 48 hours. The PCT is also working with GPs to extend surgery hours in the evening. Currently, each GP has to offer half-an-hour evening opening for every 1,000 patient population. The PCT is initiating a scheme that will double that figure so that surgeries will remain open on an increased number of evenings in the week.

The consultation on proposals for St Catherine's Hospital has ended and a report has been submitted. The early indications are that there has been overwhelming support for the proposals.

The PCT is working with the Hospital Trust to improve the stroke service so that people can access treatment within four hours, and to provide a local service within Wirral so that people do not have to access services in other areas.

Older People's Parliament:

Roger Cliff Thompson, OPP representative for the Liscard area, reported that the Parliament has 44 members. Associate members are being sought to join the Parliament. Anyone over the age of 50 is eligible to become an Associate Member. Copies of a report on the Parliament's activities for the period June to October 2008 were available at the area forum.

Mr Thompson described a situation where a person was employed by a school as an invigilator. When the person reached the age of 70, the school told them that they could not continue because they no longer complied with insurance requirements. The Parliament had challenged the decision on the grounds of ageism, and the school has reinstated the person.

Jack Cuffe, the Chair of the Parliament, has written to the Home Office about Pensions, but it appears that the Home Office has lost his letter.

Fire and Rescue Service:

Tony Mooney drew attention to the report on pages 16-18 of the Area Co-ordinator's report. He highlighted the initiatives –

Winter Warm Campaign - The Charity arm of the Fire Service has secured funding to PAT test electric blankets and to replace those that are condemned, free of charge. Events will take place between 10 am and 2 pm, on Thursday, 16 October at Rock Ferry Library, and on Friday, 17 October, at Wheatland Lane, Seacombe.

The Bonfire Strategy introduced in 2007 had resulted in a 70% reduction in the number of bonfires requiring attendance by the Fire Service, and a decrease in the illegal sale and storage of fireworks. The Fire Service is working with its partners in the Police, Trading Standards, the Probation Service and the Community Safety Team to implement the strategy again this year. Operational fire crews are visiting all the schools and talking to targeted age groups about the dangers of fireworks and inviting them to take part in a poster competition. An iPod will be offered as a prize for the winning poster and the posters will be used in next year's campaign. The crews will also be visiting places where there are reports of an accumulation of combustible materials in the run up to bonfire night, and they will remove materials where there is a danger to life or property. The crews are also visiting premises that are licensed to sell fireworks to give advice on safe storage.

Minute decision:

Resolved: That Inspector Kolokotroni, Dr Mantgani, Roger Cliff Thompson and Tony Mooney be thanked for the updates.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2009, at a venue in Leasowe.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Letter of appreciation: The Chair read out a letter received from The Observatory School to thank the Area Forum for the CIF grant. The funding had enabled the students to access a wide range of activities they would not normally have the opportunity to participate in due to the costs involved. The funding and the opportunity to take part in activities had been a huge incentive to the students.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution and closed the meeting of the Area Forum.