

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL SOUTH

Thursday, 22 January 2015

Present:

Councillor P Gilchrist (Chair)

| | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Councillors | C Carubia | L Rowlands |
| | A Hodson | W Smith |
| | D Mitchell | A Sykes |
| | C Muspratt | I Williams |
| | S Niblock | KJ Williams |
| | T Pilgrim | |

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Hodson, C Povall and J Walsh and from Mr M Wright and Ms L Longshaw Parr.

28 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors C Muspratt and W Smith declared non pecuniary interests because they were both friends of Mayer Park.

29 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

Further to Minute No. 22 it was reported that Councillor D Mitchell had requested the Neighbourhood Inspector to provide the costs of closing Bromborough Police Station and for refurbishing Bebington Police Station.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Neighbourhood Inspector be requested to ascertain the costs of closing Bromborough Police Station and for refurbishing Bebington Police Station and inform the Constituency Manager accordingly who will in turn ensure that all Members of the Committee are informed of these costs; and**
- (2) the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 October 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.**

30 ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT UPDATE AND FIVE MINUTE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

The Committee had been informed that arrangements had been put in hand for it to receive a presentation by Chris Shaw, an Associate with Nurture Development on the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Public Health funded project's development.

The Constituency Manager reported that the Contractor had also been scheduled to make the same presentation to the Wallasey Constituency Committee which was also meeting this evening and due to unforeseen circumstances it had, unfortunately, not been possible to make both the presentations on the same evening. However, Chris Shaw had promised to attend the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for 16 April 2015 to make the presentation.

31 **WIRRAL SOUTH BUDGET AND SPEND UPDATE 2014/15**

A report by the Constituency Manager provided the Committee with an update on the current allocation of all budgets devolved to the Committee. This included:

- £50,000 Wirral South Health & Wellbeing Fund
- £38,720.50 core budget rolled over from 2013/14 (allocated £10,000 per ward)
- £50,000 Core budget allocated to three main priorities
- £77,750 Road Safety Money
- £35,000 “Your Wirral” funding
- £10,000 “Love Wirral” funding

Members were reminded that 18 projects had been funded from the Wirral South Health and Wellbeing Fund during 2014/15. This had cost £48,118.97 and had left £1,881.03. Many of these projects were at varying stages of completion and updates would be reported at the next meeting of the Committee on 16 April, 2015.

The report also informed that over £38,000 of the Committee’s 2013/14 devolved core budget had remained and had been carried over into 2014/15. Each ward had been allocated £10,000 each and spend continued. Further works had been programmed since the last meeting of the Committee held on 16 October 2014. Consequently the remaining amount had reduced. Although there were a number of projects in development Members were reminded to ensure this allocation was used expediently. Appendix 1 to the report showed the current rate of spend per ward.

The Committee was reminded that currently, its priorities were as follows:

- Improved Open Spaces; to increase the number of green flag parks in Wirral South year on year and ensure accessibility is improved in each chosen location.
- Gaps in Youth Provision; to work with the internal and external partners to identify and rectify any existing gaps in provision of youth services in Wirral South.
- Tackle Social Isolation; Identify the various groups affected by social isolation in Wirral South, establish the evident gaps in provision

throughout the Constituency and aim to either support existing providers or commission a new piece of work.

The Committee was also reminded that it had received £77,750 to address Road Safety issues within the constituency area. Consequently, it was reported that the “Local Transport Capital Funding/Integrated Transport Block (ITB) programme budget Task and Finish Group” for Wirral South had met for the first time on 13 August 2014 and the notes of the meeting were attached to the report as Appendix 2 for Members’ information. The Group had discussed possible options for distributing the relevant budget and had come to the following conclusion to utilise some of the £77,750 (£10,000 had been proposed) to carry out a constituency wide project to future proof a number of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS). The remaining amount of funding would be split evenly between each ward.

Based upon this proposal Members had then been requested to submit a concise ‘wish list’ of schemes they would like to fund from their ward based budget (approximately £13,500) in order of preference. It was noted that these schemes could be programmed in for completion throughout the remainder of 2014/15.

The Constituency Manager reported that following receipt of ward based requests from Members he had been in consultation with the Road Safety and Traffic Sections and appropriate public notices had been released in respect of relevant proposed schemes. The Committee noted that the current projected spend against the overall budget of £77,750 was £76,100.

The Constituency Manager reported progress in respect of the Your Wirral funding that had been devolved to the Constituency Committees during 2014/15. This was a small grants programme that had been in operation since 2007. To be eligible for funding, applications had to fit within one or more of the following seven themes which had been agreed by the Joint Working Group in line with the charitable objectives of the Community Fund Deed:

- Creating an attractive and safe environment.
- Contributing to community economic regeneration.
- Preventing crime or reducing the fear of crime.
- Providing employment and training for local people.
- Benefiting local people who face discrimination.
- Improving community facilities.
- Engaging communities to improve quality of life.

The Constituency Manager also reported that the first tranche of the “Your Wirral Fund” for Wirral South had closed and it was reported that on 1 October 2014 a representative Task and Finish Group had met to assess the application received against an agreed criteria.

Following allocation based upon the recommendations of the task and finish group there was £11,886.28 left. The fund had reopened until 28 November 2014. The Task and Finish Group had met again on 7 January 2015 to assess one application which had been received. The Group had consisted of:

Councillor Phil Gilchrist (Chair)
Councillor Jerry Williams (Vice Chair)
Councillor Christina Muspratt (Bebington)
Councillor Irene Williams (Bromborough)
Councillor Tracey Pilgrim (Clatterbridge)
Councillor Les Rowlands (Heswall)
Ms Paula McGlynn (Magenta Living Rep)

Although a number of clarification questions had been requested of the applicant, the Task and Finish Group had agreed that the project should be funded on receipt of acceptable responses to the questions asked.

The Task and Finish Group had also proposed that the Wirral South “Your Wirral” fund be reopened on 23 January 2015 and closed at noon on 6 March 2015.

The Constituency Manager also reported that £10,000 had been devolved to the Committee in the form of “Love Wirral” funding. He informed that he was currently seeking clarification on whether this funding could be carried forward into 2015/16. Unlike previous “Love Wirral” allocations the Committee had complete control over how this funding was allocated, provided its use was linked to environmental quality. It was recommended that a “Love Wirral” Task and Finish Group be established to discuss the project and report back to the next meeting on 16 April 2015.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Members be requested to work closely with the Constituency Manager and other officers to ensure the remaining under spend from 2013/14 is allocated by the end of 2014/15;**
- (2) the Committee notes the progress in relation to spend of the “Local Transport Capital Funding/Integrated Transport Block (ITB) programme funding for 2014/15.**
- (3) the Committee notes the progress made in relation to further allocation of “Your Wirral” funding;**
- (4) the “Your Wirral” fund for Wirral South be reopened on 23 January 2015 for a six week period and close at noon on 6 March 2015; and**

- (5) a “Love Wirral” task and finish group be set up of the following Members:

Councillors P Gilchrist, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T Pilgrim and L Rowlands

to develop proposals in respect of the devolved £10,000 “Love Wirral” funding and report them to the Committee at its meeting on 16 April 2015.

32 WIRRAL SOUTH PRIORITIES UPDATE

A report by the Constituency Manager set out the progress on the Committee’s priorities for 2014/15 and beyond. The Committee’s three priorities were as set out in Minute No. 31 above. Each priority had been allocated £15,000 which left a core budget of £5,000 to support various engagement initiatives. Appended to the report were:

- Appendix 1 - ‘Parks Priority Task and Finish Group’ 11 Dec, 2014
- Appendix 2 - Projected Spend Against Parks Priority (as of Jan 2015)
- Appendix 3 - Update Spend Re. Gaps In Youth Provision
- Appendix 4 - Dementia Friendly Communities

In respect of the Improved Open Space priority the Committee was informed that the Parks Priority Task and Finish Group had met on two occasions to consider where to focus its efforts during 2015/16. The Committee noted that progress in Mayer Park included the following:

- A brand new entrance sign erected.
- Lines of sight improved by reducing height of existing hedges.
- New flower beds dug and planted up.
- Dead trees removed.
- New litter bins throughout.
- Work carried out on offending vegetation in roof of Mayer Hall/Pennant House.
- Stonework repaired on Mayer Hall/Pennant House Stumps removed.
- A fence at Ellen’s lane.
- Replacement of rose bed in Ormerod Gardens.
- Edging of all paths throughout.
- Disabled access swing installed.

The Committee was reminded that the Parks Priority Task and Finish Group had been given delegated authority to “...ensure budgetary spend can be agreed and improvements made as expediently as possible, thus maximising the potential for applying for the Green Flag Award within 2014/15” (Minute No. 21 refers). Consequently, the Task and Finish Group had been presented with the following two main improvement options for Mayer Park:

- the refurbishment of decorative gates and railings (at a cost of £5,400); and
- the installation of a round top, metal fence along the (currently open) grassed area on Ellen's Lane (at a cost of £3,700).

Following responses from a clarification question (relating to guarantee of work on gates and railings) the Task and Finish Group had approved both options.

It was reported that the Group had also considered the possible geographical location of focus for the Committee in 2015/16. This discussion not only considered the existing distribution of Green Flag Awards throughout Wirral South per ward but also the level of involvement of community/friends groups in relation to their local park. Based on this discussion it had been proposed that Dawstone Park in Heswall be recommended as the area of focus for 2015/16.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the current projected spend against the Parks Priority for 2014/15. The Committee noted that if it agreed the recommendations set out in the report there would be £2496.10 remaining to spend in 2014/15. It was recommended that the Parks Priority Task and Finish Group should consider the views of both Parks' staff and the existing "Friends" Group for Mayer Park and expedite the spend of the remaining budget where necessary.

In respect of Gaps in Youth Provision the Committee was reminded of the proposals presented to it at its last meeting. (Minute No. 21 refers.) It noted that further work would be carried out with Youth Services to develop recommendations for the remaining budgetary spend and they would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting on 16 April 2015.

In respect of Social Isolation the Committee was informed that the Public Service Board had met on 4 September 2014 to discuss the opportunity of setting up "Dementia Friendly Communities" in Wirral South. Utilising existing evidence from the Wirral South Profile (produced by Public Health) and with support from the Alzheimer's Society, it had been agreed at the last meeting of the Committee on 16 October 2014 that Heswall be recommended as a pilot location for this initiative.

Consequently, an open meeting had been held in Heswall Library on 27 November 2014. This open meeting (entitled "Making Heswall a Dementia Friendly Community") had been well attended by a variety of community and partnering organisations. Initial pledges had been made by many organisations in attendance and a plan for action in 2015 was being developed. The Committee noted that a second meeting was scheduled to be held at the Church of the Good Shepherd (188 Telegraph Road, Heswall), at 6pm on 29 January 2015.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made by the Committee's Parks Priority Task and Finish Group be noted;**
- (2) Dawstone Park in Heswall be agreed as the location of focus in relation to the parks priority for 2015/16;**
- (3) the progress made in relation to the Youth Priority and that previously identified gaps in youth provision in Wirral South are now being addressed be noted; and**
- (4) the progress made in relation to the "Dementia Friendly Communities" project in Heswall be noted.**

33 UPDATE FROM MERSEYSIDE POLICE

Ross Meredith, Neighbourhood Inspector, Wirral South introduced Sergeant Jim Steel and Kim Dawson, Community Engagement Officer – Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside's Office.

The Neighbourhood Inspector was in attendance to provide an oral report on crimes and anti-social behaviour that had taken place in Wirral South during December 2014 and January 2015. This included providing data particularly on auto crime, theft from vehicles, burglaries from, shops, sheds, houses, industrial premises etc. and comparing it with previous months and the same period a year earlier.

The Neighbourhood Inspector also reported on a planned major operation being run by Cheshire Police on Wirral's border with Ellesmere Port and Neston involving automatic number plate recognition. He invited Members to come along on the day and agreed to provide them with all of the details nearer the time.

Of particular concern was the number of thefts reported from unlocked vehicles. Surprisingly, some people tended to not lock the doors leaving their vehicles insecure. It was also noted that the current neighbourhood policing priorities were all associated with anti-social behaviour.

The Neighbourhood Inspector informed the Committee that in future it was the Police's intention to use Mayer Hall as the venue for 'Have Your Say' meetings.

Following the presentation the Inspector answered questions put by the Committee and it was noted that:

- Most auto crime occurred at night outside residents addresses.

- Members were interested to receive anonymised reports and statistics in respect of numbers of arrests made, crimes solved, what was being done to tackle crime and how successful the Police were with this.
- The Police had not received reports about anti-social behaviour in Mayer Park but they had in respect of New Ferry Park and the Oval.
- Members were interested in speeding statistics and actions taken against those who were caught speeding.
- PCSOs were able to carry out speed checks and advise motorists but were unable to be involved with enforcement. There was very little local enforcement with sanctions in Wirral compared with the rest of Merseyside.
- Traffic Police chose locations to target based on the statistics supplied by the five Merseyside local authorities.
- The Police monitored crime patterns having regard to prison releases.
- It was expected that the Police would move from Bromborough to Bebington Police Station once all the building work required had been completed. The timescale for this was one year.

RESOLVED:

That the Neighbourhood Inspector be thanked for his report.

34

UPDATE FROM THE MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Heswall and Bromborough Fire Station Manager, Andy Forshaw provided the Committee with statistical information on nuisance type fires, deliberate vehicle fires, malicious false alarms, calls not to do with fire etc. and informed that after drilling down the data the figures were refreshingly reassuring.

The Station Manager also informed that the Fire and Rescue Service had been carrying out a significant amount of preventative work. His Service was also working with Wirral Metropolitan College on rural traffic awareness for youth and was involved in the Fire Fit Programme with Youth, the Mountain Bike Programme, Mental Health Awareness and was encouraging wellbeing.

The Station Manager then answered questions put by the Committee and it was noted that:

- There had been a serious incident in Eastham that had resulted in a fatality recently and the Fire and Rescue Service had carried out excellent work throughout. The post incident work had been well received in the local community and the family had been proactive in getting the message out to ensure this didn't happen to anyone else's family.
- The Fire and Rescue Service was currently working through a close familiarisation exercise with COMAH sites, it was in their interests to be

good partners with the Service and their emergency planning arrangements were excellent.

RESOLVED:

That the Station Manager be thanked for his report.

35 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION (APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES)**

Committee Members and members of the public in attendance at the meeting raised the following questions, issues and requests.

Number 1

A member of the public referred to anti-social behaviour and dog dirt in Mayer Park and to the sign on the beautiful gates and asked if Members knew what the sign said. He also referred to the Butterfly Park in New Ferry and to allotments in a very negative way.

A Member informed that dog fouling enforcement was a total priority for the Council and the Park was patrolled. Unfortunately, the Council had to make £27m worth of cuts this year and this had meant reduced funding for its Parks. The answer was to form partnerships and Friends Groups to help fill the gap in provision. A lot of good work had been carried out by the Friends of Mayer Park.

The allotments had closed in 1992 because of vandalism and it would seem that there was always going to be problems there. The Friends Group had carried out some good work and the Council wanted to work with it to bring about more improvements.

The Member did not know what the wording was on the sign on Mayer Park's gates but did inform that the refurbishment of the Park was important and a high priority for the Council and that the results would not be seen over night. People needed to feel safe in the Park.

Another Member informed that he had taken exception to the comment made about the Butterfly Park. He asked that it be withdrawn and informed that the Butterfly Park had received a Green Flag Award last year.

A Member made reference to inconsiderate dog owners and to the problem of dog fouling which was Borough wide. He considered that the introduction of a policy to keep dogs on leads in Parks with designated areas to let them off was the way forward.

Number 2

A written question had been received about the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Programme. A training and development session on this for Elected Members had been held on 10 November 2014 and the questioner wanted to know how many had attended.

The answer to the question was that two Elected Members had received the training. However, Members had asked if the session could be repeated for those who had been unable to attend on 10 November 2014 as they were aware that it was important that they received this training. Unfortunately, they had not yet received a reply.

It was **agreed** that the Constituency Manager would convey the Committee's request that the ABCD Programme training be repeated for those Members who had been unable to attend the previous event.

Number 3

There were concerns about Library opening hours being reduced to 18 hours per week and Members' support was canvassed. Reference was made to Bromborough Library that was well used by children, older people etc. and it was considered that help was required to get as much as possible out of the 18 hours it was proposed that it would be open. It was five weeks since the Cabinet had made this recommendation and Friends Groups were only now being told. There was no information about it on the Council's website and it was queried when people who went to libraries that did not have Friends Groups would find out about the reduced hours proposal.

A Member informed that the Council had been faced with unprecedented budgetary cuts of £27m. A Working Group had been set up to look at each and every library, obtain pen pictures and then send recommendations to the Cabinet. The Cabinet had made recommendations to the Council which it would consider at the Budget Council meeting on 10 February 2015. Members would then be able to propose amendments.

It was reported that the Director of Transformation and Resources had been in contact with Friends Groups and had provided a slide presentation that set out the proposed arrangements in respect of library openings but it was noted that other arrangements would need to be made in respect of those libraries that did not have Friends Groups.

It was reported that not all Members were in favour of the broad brush approach to reducing library hours and some considered the proposal neither appropriate nor acceptable.

When libraries were closed people who relied on using computers accessed via libraries to make payments etc. were unable to do so. A lot of people used libraries for this purpose and a Member considered that more thought should be given to this.

A Member informed that following consultation, opening hours of libraries should reflect their usage but instead opening hours depended on whether there was a one stop shop located in the library.

Another Member informed that the Council was trying to keep libraries open on reduced hours so that when austerity was over the libraries would still be there and their opening hours could be increased.

The Acting Chief Executive was in attendance at the meeting and informed that officers implemented the decisions that members made. There was a budget of a set amount and an instruction from Members to keep all libraries open. The best way to get this to work was to do what had been proposed. Personally, he hoped that this was a starting point and that the new arrangement would encourage people to step forward and support their libraries. The proposal was to run the libraries on set hours for a period of time and then review the arrangements. There needed to be tight timescales in relation to this so that library staff could deploy themselves between the libraries and help keep all 24 open.

The Acting Chief Executive informed that he had made a note about updating the Council's website and to publicise how people could feed in views in by emailing chiefexecutive@wirral.gov.uk

Number 4

A member of the public drew attention to the fact that there was very little privacy being afforded customers in the one stop shop in Bebington and described the situation as appalling and inappropriate, particularly as there were other rooms that could be used by the one stop shop.

The Acting Chief Executive informed the meeting that he had made a note of this unsatisfactory arrangement and would see what could be done to rectify it by identifying space in which to hold private conversations. He **agreed** to let the Constituency Manager know the outcome so that he could inform Members of the Committee.

Number 5

Concerns were raised over the future of Bebington Town Hall by a member of the public who lived in close proximity to it. She asked whether any proposals put forward would be subject to public consultation.

It was noted that the Town Hall was not in the conservation area.

The Acting Chief Executive informed that the lease for the Cheshire Lines building still had ten years left to run and it was possible to get a lot of staff in there. The Council needed to get the best it could out of it and relocating staff there freed up other building that it could make savings on.

It was noted that the Constituency Manager would be relocating to Pennant House and the Annexe would be emptied.

The Acting Chief Executive also informed that the Town Hall complex was not currently up for sale/disposal and a decision would need to be taken on whether to demolish it or sell it. He requested the member of the public's email address so that he could keep her informed. He considered that a view should be taken on the whole area, the Town Hall and its environs.

36 **UPDATES ON QUESTIONS ASKED PREVIOUSLY BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (MINUTE NO. 24 REFERS)**

(a) Question about the location of problem tenants in New Ferry

The Constituency Manager informed that he had dealt with this issue in a meeting focusing on the New Ferry Area.

(b) Question about Parking Enforcement Close to Schools

The Constituency Manager informed that he had spoken to colleagues in the Parking Enforcement Section particularly about Cross lane in Bebington and reported that it was already on its list of "hotspots". Since September 2014 there had been 68 visits and ten parking control notices had been given out.

Delavor Road in Heswall, near St Peter's C of E Primary School was not on the list. Two parking control notices had been issued for pulling up on double yellow lines in order to take children to school

Well Lane was not on the list. There had been three visits and four parking control notices had been issued for dropping off passengers at the bus stop.

In respect of Ascot Drive/Close, Bebington there had been three visits and four parking control notices had been issued.

(c) Question about Isolation and Loneliness of Elderly Men and Grit Bins

The Constituency Manager reported that a bin and grit had been purchased in the Clatterbridge ward. It had been delivered to the Church. Local people had been spreading the grit and were committed to refilling the bin.

37 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting had been advertised as taking place at 6pm on Thursday, 16 April 2015 at Mayer Hall, The Village, Bebington.