

# AREA FORUM (LEASOWE, MORETON AND SAUGHALL MASSIE)

Wednesday, 25 February 2009

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Mountney (Chair)	
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	RL Abbey C Blakeley IO Coates	I Lewis S Moseley
	<u>Community Representatives</u>	Bruce Martin (Faith Representative) Mrs J McLear	B Seddon
	<u>Lead Officer</u>	Russ Glennon (Head of Corporate Policy)	
	Area Service Co-ordinator	Tracey Smith	
	Merseyside Police	Inspector Peter Kolokotroni	
	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Lyndsey Kevan	
	Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Alistair Bardsley	
	NHS Wirral	No representation	
	Council Officers	David Green, Director of Technical Services	Andrew Fraser, Forward Planning Section, Corporate Services Department
<u>Apologies</u>		Jason Borlase	

## 1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed Forum members and 20 members of the public to the meeting of the Leasowe, Moreton and Saughall Massie Area Forum in Moreton. Apologies for absence were received from Jason Borlase, Faith representative.

Two weeks ago, Councillor Moon, Cabinet member, had accepted an invitation to attend this evening to discuss the Strategic Asset Review. He had given two hours' notice that he was unable to attend.

**Councillor Blakeley expressed his extreme displeasure that Councillor Moon had not fulfilled the commitment to this area forum; the short notice was outrageous and did not allow time for a substitute Cabinet member to be invited.**

The Chair invited Forum members to introduce themselves.

## 2 **AREA CO-ORDINATORS REPORT**

The minutes of the last meeting were incorporated into the Area Co-ordinator's report. Inspector Kolokotroni requested an amendment to the second sentence of the first paragraph of the Police update, to read that there has been a slight increase of one offence to nine offences, instead of nine offences this year compared with one offence for the same period last year.

There were no matters arising.

### **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 amendment highlighted.;**
- (ii) **the Area Co-ordinator be thanked for her report.**

## 3 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

Andrew Fraser, Strategic Development Department, Corporate Services, gave a presentation on the Local Development Framework.

He explained the new style Development Plan is a single document that replaces the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral dated February 2000, and will operate alongside the Regional Spatial Strategy. The framework provides guidance for assessing planning applications and allocating land for new developments for the next 15-20 years.

Consultation has just begun on the core strategy and Wirral Council will be pleased to receive comments on the various parts of the document.

The next stage will be to translate the objectives into spatial policy options and identify the preferred options. The draft core strategy will be compiled and after examination by an independent inspector will be submitted for approval by the Secretary of State. The aim is to adopt the Core Strategy in 2011.

Members of the public can become involved in the consultation by asking for a copy of the Plan, by adding their names to the contact database, or by submitting comments by letter, email or fax. The deadline for comments is 5 pm, on 27 March 2009. The contact details are: Strategic Development, Corporate Services, Town

Hall, Wallasey. CH44 8ED. Email [hazeledwards@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:hazeledwards@wirral.gov.uk), phone: 691 8225 or fax 691 8188.

A report will be presented to Cabinet that summaries all the comments received and will explain how those comments have been taken into account for the next stage. At the end of the process, the document will go to full Council for final approval and adoption.

Councillor Blakely stressed the importance of the document that will shape the future of Wirral, and urged members of the public to respond to the consultation and have their say.

Andrew Fraser gave reassurance that the documents are straight-forward and easily understood, so people can grasp the principles quite quickly and respond.

Bob Seddon replied that he did not find the documents to be straight-forward. It is difficult to understand on first reading, but becomes easier as the information is absorbed. Most members of the public are not familiar with 'Council speak', it should be written in plain English and the language needs to be simplified.

**Minute decision:**

**Resolved: That Andrew Fraser be thanked for the presentation.**

**4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Q [Margaret] It's consultation, consultation, consultation at the moment. There needs to be better ways of keeping the people of Wirral informed on what is going on. The people sitting round the top table tonight almost exceeds the number in the audience. There needs to be less consultation and more publicity and notice about meetings

Q The state of the pavements in Moreton. Iceland have done a very good job outside the store, but who is responsible for the rest?

A [Cllr Blakeley} We are informed by the manager that the whole area is under the control of Iceland stores. Iceland have said they will repair the whole area of 20 sq metres. We are finally getting the Council to take some action as a duty of care to make the area safe. Put a bollard in to stop people riding on the pavement.

Q Dangerous Parking. Most people are willing to pay 50p for Iceland's car park but there is parking on Borrowdale Road, including the pavements. The vision of motorists is obscured on both sides by parked vehicles. We have not got sufficient parking facilities in Moreton.

A [Cllr Blakely]: I agree all the roads are insufficient. All the roads are protected by waiting restrictions. The problem we have is that the Council will not act on dangerous parking unless you have an accident record, and whilst it is an offence to drive on pavements it has to be witnessed by eye witnesses.

A [David Green] In terms of double yellow lines or parking restrictions, we have to work within the financial resources we have. In terms of parking which causes obstructions, my parking wardens have no powers. The Police take action against people who are causing an obstruction. There is no law to stop people parking on pavements as long as they are not causing obstructions. We have implemented six regulation orders in specific areas, which prevent people parking on pavements, particularly on roads with terraced housing.

Q Parking on the pavements and also double-banking, especially in one-way streets.

Q The parking scheme the Council brought out about two years when the Council was offering to put carports in Council housing for a fee was very good. Most residents at the Lingham end of the estate took up that option. The offer was £140 when they were doing repairs to the pavements. There is also a danger of double parking or triple parking.

A [David Green]: We do offer a reduced rate whilst we are re-constructing the pavements, but if it is not part of re-construction, we have to charge the actual cost. The Council do not make a profit and cannot offer a subsidy, it is the actual cost of doing the job.

Q The pavements around Moreton are a disgrace.

Q Consultation. Why have I never been consulted, and never been told when this building is going to close? Where will we be, how big an area will be given? What are we talking about? 28 days notice to get out? Where will the new building be built? Will it include the Youth Club? In the meantime, who will respond to all the people who want to use the building, including yourselves? Even people like you who use the building are not prepared to give any information on the timescale for closure. When is the Council going to get in touch with people who are renting the building?

A [Police] Parking on the pavement can cause an obstruction and people can be prosecuted. We targeted Borrowdale Road about 12 months ago and a number of motorists were given fixed penalties. We need a note of what you are saying and we will look into it. Damage is caused to cars by double parking and it is a safety hazard. Let me know and we will target the area.

Q Can the Police and other authorities be around at school pick up and drop off times. In some roads you can't get between the cars parked and people have to walk in the middle of the road, which causes inconvenience to parents taking and picking up their children from school.

A [Police] A number of issues were raised in Wallasey Village area and the Police, local authority, schools and residents were all involved. It is a major problem throughout Wirral and we are looking at it.

A [David Green] We accept that parking outside schools is a major problem. We have a car fitted with a camera and the Secretary of State has given powers to base prosecutions on video evidence. We hope the use of CCTV cameras will encourage people to park correctly outside schools. We are trying to modify people's behaviour by that means.

[Cllr Moseley] The 20 is Plenty pilot. Are there any in Moreton?

[David Green] The six areas in the pilot have been a success and we are seeking suggestions to place the signs in another 14 areas.

Q [Cllr Blackeley] Who controls the CCTV?

A [David Green] There is a contract with a company and their job is to enforce and issue tickets based on the evidence they receive.

Q Can I have an answer to my question about the closure of this building?

A [Cllr Blakeley]: Councillor Moon has not attended. He is a Cabinet member and the Cabinet has responsibility for the closures under the Strategy Asset review. Russ Glennon, Lead Officer, will take back and ask the people responsible for implementation.

A [David Green] I am not responsible for buildings and asset management – I deal with roads and carriageways and with issues to do with Streetscene. I want to help and accept that people want to know what the Asset Management Review means to them. I cannot give answers to specific questions, but I can confirm that a report is being prepared and will be considered by the Cabinet in March. The Cabinet will consider the detail and how it will be implemented at that meeting.

Q People have been phoning wanting to use this hall. I am taking bookings [for children's parties etc], and the luncheon club is continuing etc., but I don't want to disappoint people and cancel bookings at the last moment.

Why did we find out about this through the local newspaper, without being properly consulted? I have been doing this for 30 years because we love helping people, but I am not getting any help from you. There will be a lot more young people on the streets causing trouble and older people who are not getting a hot meal. You don't think what the public want.

Q I have heard that part of the plan is to close the youth club. I actually work as a youth club worker, and I think they are vital to the community, and provide a vital service in addressing drugs and alcohol use.

A [Chair] The answer is no-one knows. The information is not in the public domain. Whether someone has made a decision, I don't know, it is not in the public domain as to when things will happen. It will go to Cabinet, and I don't know if the information is available now.

A [Cllr Blakely] A decision was made to close buildings, but not decided what will replace them. It would seem more sensible to determine how you will provide the provision before you take it away.

Q There has to be adequate means for us to go somewhere and provide the same service as we do now – a service to the community.

Q Is everything signed and sealed from the asset review? Is everything finalised as far as the asset review is concerned, or is there any scope for changes etc.?

Q I can answer that. I am a resident of the area and on Hoylake Library Action Group and involved in an organisation set up by Wirral TUC to fight the entire review. One of the things we have done is to engage a barrister and we are looking at pursuing action on the lines of a judicial review. Stephen Hesford presented a report to the Local Government Ombudsman in York on Friday, and I gather that the Ombudsman has promised a reply within a month. It is the right of everyone who doesn't want the review to go through to complain to the Council.

Q [Cllr Blakeley]: The Ombudsman cannot change a Council decision but he can ask the Council to look at it again. The Culture Secretary has said it is up to individual Councils to function as they want. If we get the Ombudsman's decision in our favour, we can take to the Council and say, 'You have the power to call in the decision'.

As a party, we have given a commitment to re-open everything that Labour closes, if and when we take over control the Council.

Q We will help you with that.

Bob Seddon: I raise an objection. This is a non-political meeting.

## 5 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS UPDATE

### **Streetscene – Integrated Transport Block Funding.**

David Green, Director of Technical Services, explained that in the 2007/08 financial year, two of the eleven Area Forums have already opted to have a share of the Integrated Transport Block at their disposal to fund local schemes. The delegation of the funding gives area forums the opportunity to think creatively of the improvements they would like to see introduced in their areas.

The Council's Cabinet had received very positive feedback on the success of the scheme in the two areas involved, and is now inviting each area forum to consider whether it wishes to receive de-centralised funding in 2009/10. The money can be used to provide lowered kerb crossings, modest local signposting and road lining schemes. Officer input will be available to all area forums to guide them in the decision-making process. The total budget for the Integrated Transport block is now £200,000 which, apportioned across the eleven Area Forums, would equate to around £18,000 per Area Forum. The alternative would be to administer the funding centrally.

The Council's Cabinet wishes to receive feedback on the consultation at its meeting on 19 March.

The 20's Plenty Initiative is related matter and the views of area forums are being sought on areas for inclusion in next year's programme. The pilot has operated successfully in other areas, and suggestions are invited for roads in this locality that would be suitable for the scheme.

Members of the Area Forum expressed their views on the proposal, but did not reach a consensus view. Members of the public contributed to the debate.

The Chair advised that only Councillors and Community Representatives on the Area Forum are entitled to vote. He agreed that it would be useful to ask members of the public to express their views informally on whether the money should be delegated, before a formal vote is taken.

Members of the public demonstrated by a show of hands that they were all in favour of the proposal to de-centralise the funding.

Minute decision: Resolved: That this Area Forum is in favour of receiving an equal share of the Integrated Transport Block.

**NHS Wirral:** Councillor Blakely expressed dissatisfaction that there is no representative present from the Primary Care Trust, despite it being a huge organisation with ample personnel and resources.

**NHS Foundation Trust:** Alistair Bardsley advised that literature was available to the public at the back of the room. There is information on what is happening in terms of new buildings and improvements in facilities. The Trust is working very hard to reduce the number of 'super bugs'. For the three months July – September 2008 the number of Clostridium difficile cases reduced by 37% - from 124 cases to 78.

The Foundation Trust is keen to involve public members in helping it shape future services, and to recruit more members. Application forms and more information were available at the back of the room. Public Members for this area can take any issues members of the public wish to raise to the Governing Body.

Members of the public raised the issues: -

Uniform policy for staff: control of patients' who smoke; a suggestion to create a smokers' room; Clatterbridge Oncology Unit – and the lack of control over smoking; any plans to abolish parking charges; the lack of attendants in car parks; charging people to use prime locations in the hospital grounds; insufficient parking spaces.

Alistair Bardley stated that he had noted the issues and would he would take them back.

**Police:**

Inspector Peter Kolokotroni reported that Anti social behaviour continues to reduce in the neighbourhood and across Wirral as a whole. All crime has reduced across the board compared with the same period last year by 250 incidents, violence by 72, robbery is exactly the same with 14 for both years, burglary of a dwelling is down by 9, theft of motor vehicles down by 33, criminal damage down by 182 offences.

Theft from motor vehicles has increased by 25. Car crime is mainly theft from inside vehicles, where items are taken from unlocked vehicles etc. The Police have introduced a number of initiatives to tackle thefts. As a result a male was arrested and charged with four offences and a young male has been arrested for theft from motor vehicles.

Nationally, there is a Government drive to reduce knife crime. No weapons or knives were identified in a knife arch operation in Moreton in November. Future operations will be more co-ordinated and focus on railway stations, football matches etc.

Several drug raids have taken place in the area, one of which resulted in a crack house closure at an address in Curlew Way. Alcohol has been confiscated from youths and the licensee of a local pub has been prosecuted for the sale of alcohol to three, 15-year-old females. Police Officers and Education Welfare Officers carried out joint truancy sweeps in January and February. Seven young people were returned to school in January and 24 in February.

The Police provide a range of diversionary activities for young people. The young people sign a code of conduct, which means that they behave themselves, both in and outside school. If they breach the Code, they are not allowed to take part in the diversionary activities.

The neighbourhood team is trying to be more accessible to the public. There is a web site and monthly newsletters give email addresses, names and telephone numbers. In each ward, there will be a day each month when officers will vacate the station and go and knock on doors, give out short questionnaires, issue copies of the latest newsletter and ask people what their priorities are.

Moreton Police Station will have an Open Day from 12 to 4 pm, on Saturday 7 March 2009, when people can meet their local officers and see the latest technology used to fight crime.

Inspector Kolokotroni responded to issues raised by members of the public on – the action taken to remove racist graffiti; the grading system when incidents are reported and Police; and the reasons Moreton Police Station is closed at weekends.

#### **Fire and Rescue Service:**

Lyndsey Kevan drew attention to the report in the Area Co-ordinator's Report.

She explained she was new in post and was unable to answer questions, but she would report back at a later date to any questions raised.

#### **Older People's Parliament:**

Margaret, Public Member for this area, drew attention to the information on the Older People's Parliament at the back of the room. The Annual General Meeting will be on Thursday, 6 March 2009. She explained the committee system and reported on the topics discussed at meetings of the various committees and groups.

#### **Minute decision:**

**Resolved: That David Green, Alistair Bardsley, Inspector Kolokotroni, Lyndsey Kevan, and Margaret be thanked for the updates.**



**Minute decision: Resolved: That the next meeting be held on 10 June 2009 at St Mary's Centre, Saughall Massie Road.**

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