

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WALLASEY - WORKING GROUP

Wednesday, 6 August 2014

Present: Councillors B Berry AER Jones
C Blakeley C Jones
M Daniel A Leech
L Fraser B Mooney
R Gregson J Williamson
P Hayes

Community
Representatives K Harrison T Jones
B Higgins

Apologies Councillors RL Abbey L Rennie
P Hackett C Spriggs
T Johnson S Williams

Mr K Raybould

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Head of Legal and Member Services' representative invited nominations for the Chair.

On a motion by Councillor Williamson, seconded by Councillor Chris Jones, it was -

Resolved (6:3) – That Councillor R Gregson be appointed Chair of this meeting.

2 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair, having welcomed everybody to the meeting, then asked if Members had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

3 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK CAPITAL PROGRAMME FUNDING 2014/15

David Rees, Road Safety Manager, introduced a report which set out details of the Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme (2014/15) funding

available to Wallasey Constituency Committee and the criteria for spend. The report also set out officer proposals which the Working Group could take into account when considering the allocation of the funding.

The Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme for 2014/15 agreed by Cabinet on 13 March 2014 (minute 178 refers) provided an allocation of £77,750 to each Constituency Committee to be distributed in relation to two objectives:

- (a) Improving Road Safety (£38,875)
- (b) Promoting Active Travel and Health (£38,875).

A number of initiatives were likely to have some cross over benefits between these threads and when the Working Group made its decisions / recommendations to the Wallasey Constituency Committee, it was important to give consideration to schemes which contributed to these outcomes so that the Council fulfilled the terms of the Local Transport Plan and continued to attract similar funding streams in the future.

With regard to those suggestions put forward by Members, Mr Rees suggested that officers would need to undertake investigative work and provide costings.

The report also referred to a number of vehicle activated speed warning signs which were introduced to make drivers more aware of excess speed. These signs were capable of collecting additional speed data which could be forwarded to the police to assist them in targeting increasingly scarce enforcement resources to those sites and times where speed was evidenced. The signs manufacturer was now in a position to modify such vehicle activated signs to collate the data. It was estimated that a programme to update the 20 signs within the Constituency would cost in the region of £20,000. Members might wish to consider upgrading signs within this constituency area over a 2 year programme.

Mr Rees also circulated a list of new requests for dropped crossings.

In response to comments from Members, Mr Rees made the following comments:

- The list of new requests for dropped crossings he would ensure was up to date for the next meeting.
- He would take away the range of ideas before the Working Group and report back with a list of those which fell within the remit of the funding streams and their costings.
- The department was keen to implement the pothole repairs programme and he would ensure that those suggestions on the list for pothole repairs weren't duplicated in the separate potholes repairs programme.

- He apologised that some data had not appeared on the agenda which had been included in spreadsheets of Members' suggestions.
- There were certain criteria to be met in terms of numbers of road safety casualties before a crossing could be considered as a priority and there was no requirement to record 'near misses' at junctions. The Department of Transport did produce guidance as to how the need for road safety measures should be assessed.
- In 2000, there were 1379 crashes in Wirral involving injuries or fatalities, this figure had been reduced by 62 per cent since then.

Members concurred that although they would be aware of the issues within their own wards, it was difficult to make decisions on what priorities existed in other wards in the constituency.

To progress the matter, Members made a number of suggestions including;

- The need for a definitive future work programme so that instances of requests for roads / pavements repairs could be seen in context.
- Council departments to talk to each other so that a list of all Members' requests could be provided for the Working Group.
- The need for some direct professional guidance in prioritising suggestions.
- The need to ensure the £77,750 available was not spent on schemes for which funding was already available.

It was then moved by Councillor Blakeley and seconded by Councillor Fraser, that –

“The £77,750 allocation be split equally between the six wards within the Constituency.”

The motion was put and lost (4:6).

By a general consensus it was then –

Resolved – That an updated list of requests for schemes for funding under the Integrated Transport Block objectives of 'improving road safety' and 'promoting active travel and health' be brought to a future meeting of the Wallasey Constituency Committee Working Group.

4 REQUEST FOR PROBLEM SOLVING FUNDING: ENGAGEMENT AND MARKETING ACTIVITY

The Constituency Manager introduced a report on a proposed allocation of £1,000 from the Problem Solving Funding budget to help deliver engagement and marketing activity within the Constituency's six wards.

Marketing activity undertaken within the Constituency which had had a cost implication (such as the production of leaflets advertising the Committee and 'Have Your Say' meetings) was met during the last financial year through using unspent allocations of the central marketing budget, on an ad hoc basis. This budget for the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 financial years was fully allocated to deliver campaigns related to corporate priorities and to support the Future Council consultation project and was therefore not available to support activity and projects specific to the Committee. Therefore, to ensure the Committee was able to resource print, advertising and other costs associated with the Community Engagement Strategy and Communication Plan it was necessary to allocate funding from the Constituency budget to support this activity.

Responding to Members' comments, the Constituency Manager stated that the money would not just be used for marketing activity but for a whole range of additional measures for community engagement. Nil cost methods were also used with bulletins being emailed to individuals on a Council 'database' (who had requested to receive information from the Council) and also groups on a Constituency 'database'.

Some Members expressed reservations that the Working Group was being asked to allocate this funding without being provided with a breakdown of what the money would be spent on. It was possible to freely advertise events in a number of locations, including leisure centres, libraries, one stop shops and churches. Previous Area Forums had not been expected to fund their own publicity and a lot more people had attended those.

Other Members expressed the view that officers should be trusted to spend this small pot of money, which might or might not all be used and that they would inform the Working Group what the money had been spent on. The money would be used to help the Committee in engaging with the public and if it did encourage that then it would be money well spent.

It was moved by Councillor Blakeley and seconded by Councillor Fraser, that –

“The Constituency Manager approaches the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, Merseyside Police and NHS Wirral and requests that they help with a contribution of £250 each towards engagement and marketing activity.”

The motion was put and lost (4:7).

A Member suggested that the allocation of £1,000 be made but that the Constituency Manager could also request partners to make a contribution.

On a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, it was –

Resolved (7:4) (Councillors Blakeley and Fraser voting against) -

That the Wallasey Constituency Committee Working Group agrees an allocation of £1,000 from its Problem Solving Fund for marketing and engagement activity, to be delivered by Wallasey Constituency Team.