

AREA FORUM (BIDSTON AND CLAUGHTON)

Thursday, 12 February 2009

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	D Roberts (Chair)	
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	G Davies S Foulkes	H Smith
	Community Representatives	Jean McIntosh	
	Lead Officer	John Webb, Director of Adult Social Services	
	Council Officers	John Entwistle, Corporate Services Jan Johnson, Adult Social Services (minute taker) Mark Smith, Technical Services	Jim Thompson, Community Safety Team Faye Williams, Corporate Services
	Area Service Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray	
	Merseyside Police	Inspector Paul Harrison	
	Merseyside Fire and Rescue	Ben Ryder	
	Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Marie Armitage, Joint Director of Public Health	Joyce Jackson, Public Governor Laura Quigley, Public Governor
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	A. McLachlan	
		Ian Jones, NHS Wirral	Pat Landsborough Dr Abhi Mantgani

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, Councillor Denise Roberts, welcomed forum members and 8 members of the public to the Bidston & Claughton Area Forum meeting being held at Birkenhead Sixth Form College, Claughton, Birkenhead. A loop system was installed for anyone with a hearing impairment.

Apologies noted from Councillor Ann McLachlan, Dr Abhi Mantgani and Community Rep Pat Landsborough

2 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM**

The minutes of the Area Forum meeting of 24 October 2008 were agreed.

Under Item 4 – You Decide Results – a member of the public asked if all sites had been identified for litter bins, he suggested one be sited on the corner of Hoylake Road and Challis Street. Councillor Smith responded that this had already been actioned.

Minute Decision

Resolved that: Minutes of the Forum held on 24 October 2008 be agreed.

3 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

Michelle Gray briefed on issues from her Area Co-ordinator's report:

LSP website was up and running. This was still in the operational stage and people were encouraged to look at this website and give their views.

You Decide, each Area Forum had been allocated £20k to spend on additional services. The Panel, consisting of councillors and community reps met and the money had been divided into provision for Litter Bins, Safety/Sport and Youth Activity/Environment/Road Safety. Departments have produced reports on decisions from all Area Forums. Work was ongoing and we would have a clearer idea of progress by June.

Money was also available through the Your Wirral fund and contact details were available at the Forum. This was a funding initiative for communities for activities and services in the local area.

In relation to You Decide, Councillor Foulkes encouraged people to feedback on whether they thought it a good idea. He thought more progress would have been made by now on timescales. The Council wanted to ensure resources were allocated to things that people considered imaginative and engaging.

In response Mark Smith from Department of Technical Services, confirmed timescale was to feedback specific plan before the next cycle of Forums in June/July.

Minute Decision

Resolved: To thank the Area Co-ordinator for the report.

4 **INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK FUNDING**

Mark Smith, Head of Service Streetscene and Waste, Department of Technical Services attended the Forum to present on the Integrated Transport Block Funding. All 11 Area Forums had been consulted on their allocation of the fund and whether

they would like their own 11th share of the money or whether to have this held centrally. During 2007-2008 two of the Area Forums decided to have their own share whereas others decided would like to continue with having the money held centrally. Activities were highlighted in the report to Cabinet. Neighbouring Area Forums could combine together to fund a larger scheme, if they chose to. Area Forums were now been asked if want to reconsider that decision or not. Money had been used on a variety of items, including kerb crossing and tactile paving, vehicle activation signs, slow road markings and drop crossings.

Claughton/Bidston had made the decision last time to keep as a central pot and the Forum discussed whether this had been beneficial.

Mark confirmed that there was a priority list around road safety concerns and funds kept in the central pot would go to priority locations. Responses were needed from forums to feedback to Cabinet report for 19 March.

Q - why are pedestrian crossings silent?

MS – very often noise can affect residential properties. Under each crossing there is a spinning tone

Q – where does it tell you that?

MS – this was a national UK standard and anyone with a hearing impairment would be made aware.

Jean – who decides where new crossings go?

MS - factors are taken into account and money spent in the best places to help with those problems. Sites have worked their way up to the top because those sites are based on problem areas.

Q – If this forum decides to go for its own funding our own, one place for a crossing would be Gautby Road by the school's entrance and play scheme.

Councillor Foulkes informed that the cost for a pedestrian crossing was in the region of £50k.

MS also confirmed that cost for traffic markings in general was high as need to also include cost of infrastructure, design etc.

Councillor Foulkes where people felt they had enough information to make the decision? Area Forum Councillors present would not take part in the vote as they would be making the ultimate decision.

The Chair moved to take the vote and thanked Mark for his presentation.

Vote carried in favour of centralisation, (cabinet members did not take part in the vote).

5 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

John Entwistle, Principal Planning Officer, Corporate Services, attended to provide a draft update on the Local Development Framework for Wirral. This was a new style Development Plan which replaced the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral (February 2000). This was a key document with a spatial plan covering 15-20 years. John went through the Core Strategy, Consultation and Next Stages. This would produce a series of options which would then go out to consultation. The Draft Core Strategy would then be submitted to the Secretary of State aiming for adoption by 2011. How could people get involved? There were copies available tonight, there was a contact database and copies could be posted, faxed or emailed. Deadline for comments was 27 March.

Q – is there any way we can make it easy-read?

A - As we progress we would be producing a high quality document. Summary would be in non-technical language.

Q – even at this stage, it would be better to make it more user-friendly to encourage people to be involved.

A – we would do our best to take that on board.

Councillor Foulkes briefed that he had worked on the team that had created the Unitary Development Plan. That plan had been in a user-friendly format, however this document was broken up into policy areas so was not as readable. It would however have significant impact on the local environment so the more people that engage with it the better.

A member of the audience had been asked to take part in the consultation and had eventually received his copy. He confirmed that it was heavy, but it was readable.

Another member of the audience suggested giving presentations to community and voluntary groups, places where members of the public were already interested and involved in their local communities and may, therefore, be more responsive.

A – we would be giving presentations to all Area Forums and would be happy to give presentations to other groups

Councillor Foulkes commented that this would be an agenda item at Local Strategic Partnership and all sub divisions. The voluntary sector and Equality and Diversity were represented so this would raise awareness in trying to get as many people engaged as possible.

John reported that some workshops had been run at Wallasey Town Hall. They had analysed geographically groups that had attended and proactively identified gaps and now contacting groups and individuals in those areas. This was the starting point in a 2 year consultation.

The Chair thanked John for his presentation.

6 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS UPDATE

Police

Inspector Paul Harrison attended to update the forum on recent activity. The Police always wanted to improve services to communities and rely on local communities to tell us when we get it wrong, to enable us to put it right.

Alpha 5 had seen a reduction in every crime area in the last 6 months through the hard work of every police officer and partners that work in this area. We are the best performing of all areas in Merseyside Police, however would always be striving to improve.

There were areas of concern and using problem solving groups to help achieve progress. We need to try and improve attendance at these groups, so if you can tell us what you need we can try and adapt our services to fit. We have produced a

Newsletter, so if you can let us have addresses of neighbours, friends let me know and we can email or post.

Activities include a Respect Week planned for end of month in Noctorum to deal with anti social behaviour and would involve truancy sweep/search warrants/high visibility patrols. Results would be circulated. There would be an operation running to end March to tackle increase in robberies at off licenses etc.

Councillor George Davies asked for an update on investigation around the missing offender within the Claughton Village area.

A – understand people’s anxiety, done utmost to find and kept search up for length of time, however not able to sustain that level in a particular area as need to move on. Forensic team were working hard on investigation and work is still progressing. Condolences to family of the victims and people who live around this location.

Q – Jean raised the following queries:

- Newsletter referring to the ASBO meeting on 3 Feb went out too late
- Respect scheme at Bidston Rise, was to run for 12 months although we had wanted it for 2 years. Would like that issue taken up and reported back please.
- Community mobile police station. Sounds good, however it has been on Hoylake Road 6 months and I have not seen it open.

Inspector Harrison responded:

- the late notice was raised at the meeting so they are aware of it. Meeting had been called by Wirral Anti Social Behaviour Team.
- Understanding was the scheme was for 12 months but would find out for you.
- Police have part in staffing the mobile station, don’t have resources to staff all the time, however it has been open. It is also staffed by other partner agencies to want to use it.

Councillor Davies asked when the next meeting was due to take place.

Inspector Harrison did not think it had been scheduled yet. Michelle would check and circulate date to Forum members.

Inspector Harrison concluded by saying that there were a lot of activities going on around Respect and the partnership between all agencies in that area was starting to work.

Wirral University Teaching Hospital

Laura Quigley attended from WUTH and the community rep was also present.

Highlights included:

- Control infection was a high priority, now have an 8-bedded isolation unit. Recently launched publicity campaign ‘Working Together to Keep it Clean’ campaign.
- Trust had been awarded Best Hospital in Dr Foster Good Hospital Guide.
- A major capital build was starting in May this year, bringing together women’s and children’s services.
- Urological ward just had an upgrade and achieved specialized status for cancer.
- New web site email for patients.
- Foundation Trust seeking public members, if anyone was interested in becoming a member please let me know.

Councillor Davies had been on the website and confirmed it was easy to navigate. He asked the question why the blood service had been stopped at Clatterbridge. He also raised concern about the oncology unit at Clatterbridge and possible transfer of some facilities to Royal in Liverpool.

A – Blood sample services had been run in hospital and one run in the community. However, Trust no longer provide community phlebotomy services, this service is now with GPs. Secondly in relation to oncology unit, would transfer some service to Liverpool as majority of cancer patients from that area. However, the Clatterbridge site would still remain as centre for oncology, with radio therapy and chemotherapy inpatient services. Process would commence from April.

Suggestion from member of the audience re a recording around MRSA at hospital in Walton entrance and whether the Trust could adopt that.

A – not heard that suggestion before. I am part of Infection Control Committee would feed that back. Thank you for raising it.

NHS Wirral

The name had recently been changed as not everyone understands what a PCT is, however calling it NHS Wirral recognised the PCT's role as local leader of the NHS

NHS Wirral has received an initial assessment of our progress, accompanied by detailed guidance and recommendations on areas we must address to evolve into a world class organization. The report notes our strengths and PCT received a "green" highest scoring assessment in respect of its draft strategic plan, financial plan and governance arrangements.

Over this winter NHS has faced an unprecedented level of admission, ambulance call outs. There are a large number of people who go to A&E unnecessarily. We were extending hours that GPs are open and ensuring some appointments are bookable in advance.

The Chair asked whether people going to A&E were referred to the walk in centre?
A - yes we have developed a single tier system

Q - is there any truth in rumour that certain GPs practices are going to be identified as minor injuries units?

A - a minor injury unit has opened at Clatterbridge and we are developing another at St Cath's similar to VCH. GPs are on those sites, however not aware of anything in practices. MA would check and feedback.

Q when does the new health centre Laird Street open?

A - October

Q – re the consultation exercise - are there any other GPs moving to St Cath's

A – the consultation with patients/practices resulted in Devaney Practice not wanting to move, so that practice has stayed. Victoria Practice is moving to St Cath's and one other. Would check which and feedback.

Wirral Community Safety Team

Jim Thompson from Wirral Community Safety Team briefed that Wirral has developed a nationally recognised system of working through partnership and within

the multi-agency team are reps from Acute Trust/GP/Police/Fire Service/:Probation/Children's services/Youth Offending Service. Wirral leads the way with comparators and continues to be a very safe place to live.

There was no rep today from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, however they are concerned about fire safety and issue free home fire safety checks which they would encourage you take up

Q - How long would the community police station be in that location for?

A – it is there to analyse data from police community patrols, looking at high spots for anti social behaviour in Wirral. From this we would develop a plan. It has been put in there for a period of time and we would review as it proceeds. There isn't a specific time, we would follow up and continue to monitor what is happening in that area. It is a focal point to give various agencies a place to work.

A member of the audience congratulated on domestic violence figures which were very good. It showed that if you had an LAA target and put some resource into that work as a multi agency, it does work. The Race Hate Task Group was a similar group, of families suffering from racial violence and currently in the process of looking how that can be addressed. I would ask for some commitment from all the agencies to work together to try and put a similar support into Race Hate because it is going to increase.

Police confirmed that Domestic Violence issues had historically been given high priority and it had now become a very successful unit. We are now working closely with other agencies and have a strategy in place to improve confidence of people from minorities who have been a victim of crime.

The Police are doing good work, would want other agencies to join in.

The Lead Officer confirmed that there was now a joint strategy - indicator NI115 Wirral looking together at how we take these things forward.

Fire Service

Pages 11/12 of the Community Engagement Co-ordinator's report contained a comprehensive update on the Service in Wirral, and highlighted the following:

Risk Management Plan – copies of the latest plan are available at libraries, one stop shops and can be viewed on line at www.merseyfire.gov.uk. The comments received during the consultation undertaken over the last three months will be taken into consideration before the final draft is published.

Fire Safety Checks – free safety checks are still available, the area around Brackenwood golf course was targeted last week and we achieved 30 checks. During the last quarter the Fire Service visited nearly 6,000 homes on Wirral to complete home fire safety checks. This scheme has been running for ten years and comments on how this service could be improved would be welcomed along with details of any home that may need a safety check.

Don Charlton representing Thornton Allotment Plot Holders, raised a public meeting that had been held and the promise made of investment around site clearance. Further additional funding had also been committed via the CIF. He said that he had found out recently that no investment had been provided. A Development Officer had been employed whose main task would be to identify problems on allotments and look for funding. Said I would raise this and ask for continued support from the Area Forum.

Councillor Foulkes queried the amount of funding promised. Councillor Smith had attended the public meeting and confirmed that no money was promised, the commitment had been for appointment of a Development Officer.

Following this lively discussion, Councillor Foulkes suggested altering future agendas to accommodate more time at the end for Public Question Time. Agreed and MG and the Chair would look at this prior to the next meeting.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair thanked people for attending and Sixth Form College for the use of the venue.

The next Area Forum would take place Monday 8 June in Bidston ward.