

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL WEST

Thursday, 12 November 2015

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	JE Green (Chair)	
	Councillors	J Hale T Anderson P Brightmore W Clements D Elderton G Ellis	M Patrick L Reecejones T Smith M Sullivan G Watt
<u>Also Present</u>		J Hall MBE	J Smith
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	E Boulton D Burgess-Joyce	S Whittingham

Councillor M Sullivan sent his apologies in advance of the meeting stating that due to unforeseen circumstances he would be arriving late.

Twenty three members of the public were in attendance, with percentage attendance by ward of those who had signed in being as follows:

- Greasby, Frankby and Irby 17%
- Hoylake & Meols 13%
- Pensby & Thingwall 22%
- West Kirby & Thurstaston 26%
- Upton 22%

15 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

By virtue of his being a Board Member of Magenta Living, Councillor Jeff Green declared a personal interest in Agenda item 7 – 'Your Wirral Funding Allocation' (see Minute No 20 post).

16 MINUTES

Councillor Mathew Patrick asked that reference Minute No 10(1) on page 7 of the agenda the minute be amended to read "...recommendations about the use of the Committee's budget, *and that the £15,000 ASB funding be split - £10,000 to Upton ward and the remaining £5,000 being split between the other four wards* and that it is used to augment services not replace them."

Resolved – That subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2015 be approved.

17 CONSTITUENCY MANAGER'S PROGRESS REPORT

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) presented her report on:

- Progress in relation to activities which are being delivered using the Committee's budget for 2015-16;
- Progress in relation to other activities being undertaken by the Wirral West constituency team;
- Items for noting in respect of local issues / consultations.

The report also set out the status of outstanding actions raised by Committee Services as a result of previous Constituency Committee meetings.

The Constituency Manager provided specific information on progress made on the Committee's 2015-16 budget allocations, and further informed the Committee that following its July meeting of the Committee, a request for representation on the ASB Panel had been actioned and membership had been agreed as follows:

- West Kirby and Thurstaston – Cllr Green (Chair);
- Hoylake and Meols Ward – Cllr Boulton;
- Greasby, Frankby and Irby Ward – Cllr Burgess-Joyce;
- Pensby and Thingwall Ward – Cllr Brightmore;
- Upton Ward – Cllr Patrick.

Members were informed that a detailed report on this expenditure, e.g. the development of a Neighbourhood Watch campaign to increase the number of new schemes and reinvigorate existing ones, was scheduled for the February 2016 meeting of the Committee.

Referring to a minor correction to the report, the Constituency Manager confirmed the proposed timetable for the Community Fund grants programme as follows:

- Community Fund opens for applications – Monday 11 January 2016;
- Deadline for applications – Friday 26 February 2016;
- Networking event(s) and community voting – March 2016;
- Consideration by the Committee – Thursday 21 April 2016.

The Committee were also apprised of the following key point of note, and that:

- Plans are now in place for the use of the remaining carried forward Public Health Grants Programme funds to secure further equipment for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service for allocation to vulnerable residents in the constituency and to deliver additional engagement activities in partnership with other agencies.
- The Big Picnic event had taken place in July 2015 (funded by 2014-15 Love Wirral allocation) and had been warmly received by the schools and community groups who attended.
- The Special Places Project aimed at celebrating places that are special to local people via the installation of benches was now being launched – utilising the remaining £5,000 of the Love Wirral Fund.

The Chair thanked the Officer for her report, and commented that the Wirral West Constituency Committee had demonstrated a maturity in respect of discussions about local devolution of powers and that this had been recognised. The Chair also commented that he hoped and believed that the 2020 Wirral Plan would provide further opportunities to take forward the desires, willingness and enthusiasm of the Committee in respect of devolution.

Resolved – That the progress and updates set out in the report be noted.

18 BUSINESS CASE UPDATE

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) provided a short verbal update on the latest position regarding the developing business case as previously reported to the Committee (Minute No 11, 16 July 2015 refers).

Members were informed that the West Wirral Business Case document was now progressing through consideration by the Council's new Chief Executive, the Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet in respect of the approach to developing the constituency working model i.e.

- Use of devolved budgets to deliver improved outcomes for local people set out in a Constituency Plan, with a focus on increasing the role played by communities in delivering the outcomes.

- Devolving aspects of decision-making where this affects the constituency area, which would, through the development of a 3 year Constituency Plan, allow Members to set priorities and identify activities of relevance to the area.
- Influencing the day-to-day delivery of services at the neighbourhood level to solve problems and targeting resources as effectively as possible.

The Constituency Manager further informed that an update on progression of the business case would be presented to the next Constituency Committee meeting.

The Chair thanked the Officer for her report, and commented that the Wirral West Constituency Committee had been seen to be a trail blazer in respect of the devolution of powers, and hoped that the 2020 Wirral Plan would further bolster the desires, willingness and enthusiasm of the Committee and Constituency Manager Team to take on the responsibilities afforded through greater devolution.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

19 **BUILDING ON OUR LOCAL ASSETS AND THE WORK OF FAITH ORGANISATIONS**

The Constituency Committee received a presentation on the subject of the work being undertaken by faith groups to reduce social isolation and loneliness via utilising Places of Welcome and efforts to address the issue of poverty and life expectancy through Church Pairing.

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) introduced the presentation, informing the Committee regarding Places of Welcome, a network of small community organisations, including faith communities, who offer an unconditional welcome to local people for at least a few hours a week.

She informed that Places of Welcome developed out of the Birmingham Social Inclusion process 'Giving Hope Changing Lives', as a response to the question - Is Birmingham a welcoming city? Members were told that whilst Places of Welcome began in Birmingham, it was now developing further afield, as people responded to the challenge to make cities and neighbourhoods more welcoming.

The Committee was told that the network had developed a set of guiding principles, key elements of a Place of Welcome which were known as the 5P's, ultimately sharing experiences, resources and training via:

- Place: An accessible and hospitable building, open at the same time every week.
- People: Open to everyone regardless of their circumstances or situation, and staffed by volunteers.
- Presence: A place where people actively listen to one another.
- Provision: Offering free refreshments (at least a cup of tea and a biscuit) and basic local information.
- Participation: Recognising that every person coming to a Place of Welcome will bring talents, experiences and skills that they might be willing to share locally.

The presentation continued, led by Wendy Robertson, Project Co-ordinator Life Expectancy Wirral, who informed that the project had been developed by the Church of England Diocese of Chester in response to the fact that people living on the Dee side of the Wirral live, on average, nearly 12 years longer than those living on the Mersey side.

She informed that in 2009 the pilot brought together church communities from the two sides of the Wirral; Christ the King in Birkenhead and Church of the Good Shepherd in Heswall. This and other groups had been guided by a facilitator through a five stage programme in which issues of poverty and life expectancy were examined. As a result, the Churches had developed 8 key pledges to help address the issue of poverty, i.e.

- Make prayer central to all work in tackling poverty
- Share resources in a way that benefits the local community
- Be outward focused in a way that improves health, wellbeing and quality of life within communities
- Work together with other churches, creating opportunities to share with and encourage each other
- Keep poverty, health and inequality in heart and mind
- Engage with the political process and policy makers to promote God's justice and righteousness
- Work together with the Local Authority, NHS and community partners to develop mutual trust to better support communities
- Celebrate success

A Member questioned how individual organisations could register as a Place of Welcome. The Constituency Manager asked that all such registration requests be forwarded via the Constituency Office.

The Chair thanked both speakers for their informative presentation.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

20 **ACTION PLANS FOR RETAIL AREAS**

The Head of Regeneration and Planning provided an update on the action plan work undertaken within four retail areas within the Wirral West constituency - Hoylake, Irby, Upton and West Kirby.

He informed that the action plans addressed a wide range of issues pertinent to each area's individual circumstances and included matters such as; traffic management and parking, potential environmental improvements and options for local marketing of retail centres. He explained that the work had been led by a team of officers within the Council drawing on expertise in retail planning, transport and regeneration who had met with Members and local businesses to identify priorities. In addition to the action planning, a trader's online toolkit was developed, providing practical advice on how traders can support their local retail centre.

The Head of Regeneration and Planning advised that a further six retail areas within the constituency boundary were still work in progress, and that Members had identified other areas that might benefit from the action plan process. He pointed out that the plan template was available for use in further locations, finance permitting.

A Member informed that locations such as Greasby and Irby were already thriving, but suffered from parking problems as a result.

The Chair commented on the success of the project work, stating that people were keen to see the roll out in other areas. He thanked the officer for his report, and offered his help in promoting the activity.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

21 **YOUR WIRRAL FUNDING ALLOCATION**

By virtue of his being a Board Member of Magenta Living, Councillor Jeff Green declared a personal interest in Agenda item 7 – 'Your Wirral Funding Allocation'

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) introduced her report that presented recommendations to the Committee in respect of the Constituency Committee's Your Wirral funding allocation for 2015-16.

Further to her report to the Committee on the 16 July 2015 (Minute No 10 refers), the Constituency Manager informed that the Wirral West Constituency Committee had been allocated £40,000 to award Your Wirral grants up to a

maximum of £2,500 to individual local voluntary and community sector (not for profit) groups. Members were informed that 36 applications for a Your Wirral grant from the Wirral West funding allocation were received by the deadline of 14 September 2015. Applications were shared in full with members of the Your Wirral Panel who met on Friday 9 October for consideration. Details of the

The Constituency Committee we advised that, taking into account the quality and diversity of the remaining applications received, the Panel had recommended that all eligible applications were at least part funded - equating to 32 of the 36 applications received (3 were deemed ineligible and 1 application was withdrawn).

Members considered the recommended grant awards at Appendix 1 to the report. The Chair noted that in terms of successful bids, all wards had been represented. A Member requested that for future reports the Ward be identified along with a short description and reference to the Council Plan priorities.

The Committee recorded their approval, noting that the entire funding allocation for 2015-16 would now be spent.

Resolved - That the award Your Wirral grants to local organisations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed.

22 ROAD SAFETY BUDGET 2015-16

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) introduced her report that presented recommendations to the Committee in respect of the process for the allocation of the Constituency Committee's 2015-16 Integrated Transport Block (road safety) budget allocation (including 2014-15 underspend).

The report informed that the Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme for 2014/15 agreed by Cabinet on 13th March 2014 provided an allocation of £77,750 for each Constituency Committee to be distributed in relation to Improving Road Safety and Promoting Active Travel and Health.

Members noted the progress and expenditure in relation to the schemes approved for funding in October 2014 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report. Based on the information, the Committee noted the budget position relating to its road safety allocation of £77,750 for 2014-15 as follows:

Actual expenditure to date	£57,871.00
Further estimated expenditure	£7,000.00
Total estimated expenditure	£64,871.00
Estimated underspend	£12,879.00

It was proposed that the Committee's Road Safety Panel reconvene, to identify how the funding available might be allocated to local schemes taking into account the Committee's previous resolutions and any variations between the estimated and actual cost of the schemes agreed in October 2014 - ensuring that the funding continued to be allocated equitably over the five wards in Wirral West. It was proposed that the Panel again be supported by the Constituency Manager and Road Safety Manager.

Resolved – That

- 1) the Committee's Road Safety Panel reconvene to identify how the funding available might be allocated to local schemes taking into account the Committee's previous resolutions; and**
- 2) decision making in respect of the budget be delegated to the Road Safety Panel in conjunction with the Chair of the Committee.**

23 **UPDATES FROM COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

The Chair invited the Community Representatives in attendance to provide a brief update in relation to local issues.

Hoylake and Meols Ward

Jackie Hall MBE informed that a 'Hoylake Forum' had been, with in the region of seventy residents in attendance at its first meeting. She informed that the Forum was meeting every three months, and due to the popularity wished to continue in its current format. The Constituency Committee was appraised of the Hoylake's success in welcoming new business and the development of the Hoylake Action Plan as reported in an earlier Agenda item (Minute No 20 refers). In addition to this work, the Committee was informed of recent local events that including the well-attended meetings / drop in sessions relating to plans for the Hoylake Golf Resort and the consultation on a Neighbourhood Plan for the area.

The Chair acknowledged and confirmed that the community forum concept was popular, mentioning that it was good to hear of the ongoing support from residents for this particular forum. He also stated his pleasure in respect of the positive feedback with regards to the Hoylake Golf Resort.

Greasby, Frankby and Irby Ward

John Smith referred to the development of of a Community Action Group and the Community Association following the local response to the fire station proposals.

Mr Smith informed the Constituency Committee about a number of successes and issues in the Ward, specifically regarding local businesses, Christmas lighting and support for the library. He further informed Members of the success of 'Celebrate Greasby Day' where he estimated that half the community had attended, supporting the Greasby Centre. Mention was made of local worries regarding the future of the Children's Centre.

Resolved – That the comments be noted.

24 COMMUNITY QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions from members of the public upon matters that were relevant to the Wirral West Constituency. No questions had been received in advance of the meeting –

- A resident, referring to an earlier item on the Agenda, commented that in relation to the future of the Irby Retail Area there appeared to be no mention within the parking proposals of facilities for delivery vehicles (a cause of congestion) and the introduction of time restricted parking (now 2 hours) which seemed to be an excessive amount of time, given that the restriction was introduced to stop business owners and employees taking up spaces for long periods of time. He stated that given the amount of space in the village, surely there was an opportunity to re-configure the parking completely.
 - The Head of Regeneration and Planning offered to continue dialogue with businesses, but informed that the time limit had taken into account the types of business and expected stays i.e. hairdressers, beauticians which, when including time for shopping was reasonable. He acknowledged that each area had its challenges and although highways had investigated a reconfiguration of the roadway already the Council would continue to welcome alternative proposals from residents.
 - Councillor Clements added that given the location of Irby Club and the local Church, there were occasions where parking was used for those attending funerals which could last in excess of 90 minutes.
- A resident commented that sadly the biggest project impacting on the area had not been included on the agenda, namely Hoylake Golf Resort.
 - The Chair informed that the item will be considered at the Constituency Committee in the future, but that as proposals had

only just gone out to consultation it would have been presumptive to review the topic with hearing the views of local people.

- The Head of Regeneration and Planning suggested that it would be helpful if feedback from the 6 sessions be prepared in the format of a composite report stating the number of attendees and listing individual comments.
- Councillor John Hale stated that within Hoylake Ward, as previously reported, seventy people had attended a forum which included a question period where views had been expressed, and that additional sessions had been arranged which too had been well attended. Outcome of consultation would be reported back, and public views on this major project continue to be welcomed.

Councillor Mike Sullivan entered the meeting, having earlier sent his apologies for his late arrival.

- A resident presented a complaint regarding the imposition of double yellow line parking restrictions at Upton Meadow. She stated that parking in the area concerned had not caused obstruction in the past, and with the imposition of the current restrictions, no public parking existed at the Meadow.
 - Councillor Tony Smith informed that one of the matters taken into consideration when introducing these restrictions was the illegal selling of motor vehicles on the highway at this location.
- A resident presented a complaint and information regarding the creation of off-street parking to the frontage of Edwardian properties in Trinity Road, Hoylake. She felt that the Planning laws had been circumvented by an out of area property developer destroying the architectural heritage of the area purely for profit.
 - The Head of Regeneration and Planning stated that he would discuss the matter personally with the complainant after the meeting, and look into the circumstances of this case.
- The Chair of the Woodchurch Trust expressed concern that the issue of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) was not specifically mentioned in the 2020 Wirral Plan and was concerned also that the previous plans which had been developed by the community, i.e. the Woodchurch Partnership Plan, were not being taken account of.

- The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) noted the comment regarding ABCD and local plans and commented that action identified by communities was central to the delivery of Wirral 2020.
- A resident commented on the condition of Hoole Road resurfacing, stating that the current repair was shoddy, and resembled nothing more than the equivalent of 'black paint'.
 - The Chair noted the information and stated that enquiries would be made as to why the work had not been completed satisfactorily.
- A resident commented on the subject of Woodchurch and the ABCD. They informed that it was their opinion that although the networking that had come out of the ABCD had been fantastic, the outcomes were in fact limited. They noted that this view may be corrected when the investment / results / outcomes were reported.
 - The Chair thanked the resident for their comments regarding ABCD and informed that this feedback would be passed on the information.
- A resident again passed comment that it was felt that a Plan for Woodchurch prepared 18 months ago, paid for by Magenta, had been effectively disregarded. This was in reference to the Hoylake Neighbourhood Plan which was mentioned by Jackie Hall.
 - The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) provided a point of clarification informing that the current Neighbourhood Plan was 'planning specific', however all plans combined to help community development, and there was no intention that any of the existing proposals would override the work of the community.
 - The Chair re-emphasised the point, informing that it was the 2020 Plan's desire to engage and involve communities and encourage further partnership working, and it was his personal intention and commitment to see that this happened. He agreed that such engagement had been patchy in the past, but both the Leader of Council and the new Chief Executive were fully committed to this approach, and ownership of the 'Plan' had cross party support and was to be driven from the bottom-up.
- A resident passed comment on his recent experience of what could be classed as a poor example of public consultation and engagement regarding a match fund project at Coronation Park Greasby. He informed that only 10 properties appeared to have been consulted, and

although the outcome agreed with his own view, he was disappointed at the lack of communication and lack of response to e-mails and telephone calls on the matter.

- The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) advised that the Council always did its best to achieve the standards of best practice in respect of consultation wherever possible. Lessons would be learnt from this particular case to ensure that the relevant amount of support would be provided when working together in the future. The Constituency Manager also mentioned the positive outcome in respect of the funding position for the project and that hopefully this would now proceed as quickly as possible.
- A resident informed that the electronic sign board in West Kirby (used for Golf Tournament traffic announcements) could be put to use in the advertising of Farmers Markets and promotion of local events, or as a 'Welcome to West Kirby' sign.
 - The Chair stated his agreement to the suggestion and advised that this would be investigated.
- A number of residents expressed concerns on the subject of global warming, rising sea levels and flood risk – particularly in the low lying and coastal areas of the constituency. A resident also passed comment on the matter of gasification, methane extraction and 'fracking', and the risk of contamination to the water table and the number of farmers in the area who relied upon bore holes as a water source. A resident queried Member's support on the matter of Fracking and Coal Gasification.
 - Led from the Chair, a series of Members expressed their individual opposition to Fracking and Coal Gasification. The Chair informed all present that the Council as a whole had unanimously opposed such plans for the area on a number of occasions, and was surprised that some members of the public were still under the impression that the Council felt otherwise.
 - Margaret Greenwood MP for Wirral West, who was in attendance at the meeting confirmed the Council's stance, stating that she and the other 3 Wirral MPs had met with the company concerned. She informed that at those discussions it was noted that the Wirral was not currently one of their 'priority areas', although test drilling had taken, or was taking place in the neighbouring Cheshire West and Chester Council area at Upton-by-Chester, Farndon and Ellesmere Port.

- The Chair made clear the position of the Council with regard to Fracking and thanked all those for their statements and clarity on their individual positions.
- Margaret Greenwood MP requested that the meeting take note of the proposed cuts to Police Budgets, expressing her concerns over the repercussions to individual service areas as a result.

The Chair thanked all attendees and contributors to the meeting.

25 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 11 February 2016, at Hilbre High School, West Kirby.