

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WALLASEY

Thursday, 28 January 2016

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	B Mooney (Vice-Chair)	
	Councillors	RL Abbey B Berry C Blakeley L Fraser P Hackett	AER Jones C Jones A Leech J Salter S Williams
	Community Representative	Mr J Carson	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	M Daniel R Gregson P Hayes T Johnson	L Rennie C Spriggs J Williamson

23 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.

Councillor Pat Hackett declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, 'Evaluation of Year 2 Wallasey Bright Ideas Fund Projects (2014/15)' because of his employment with the New Brighton Community Centre.

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Matt Daniel, Rob Gregson, Paul Hayes, Treena Johnson, Lesley Rennie, Chris Spriggs and Janette Williamson.

25 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the Wallasey Constituency Committee held on 22 October, 2015 be approved.

26 CO-OPTION OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

The Chair reported upon the selection process for Community Representatives for co-option onto the Committee. There were three applicants for the Committee's four vacant positions.

They had been interviewed and a Constituency Committee Working Group was convened on Tuesday 26 January, 2016. Unfortunately there were too few elected members present to make that meeting quorate, so the Group could not make recommendations to the Committee as to the co-option of new Community Representatives.

It was the Chair's intention to rearrange that meeting as soon as possible and convene a further Constituency Committee meeting immediately after in order that the co-option of new Community Representatives was not delayed further. It was hoped that this meeting would take place in the week commencing 15 February.

The remaining position or positions would be readvertised. The young person's representative, Alex Cooke, had very recently resigned so that position would also be readvertised.

Responding to comments from a Member the Constituency Manager stated that in this instance although the Working Group was inquorate, the Committee could not consider this item as the consideration of applications was not open to the public.

27 UPDATE FROM 'HAVE YOUR SAY' MARKETPLACE EVENT

The Chair invited Temporary Inspector Stuart Mclver to update the Committee on the police matters for the previous quarter. Inspector Mclver's comments included the following:

- In the Liscard area a safer cycling event had been held in Central Park on 17 January and the Police had attended a Friends of the Park meeting. One significant arrest had been made in the park and the person charged with supplying controlled drugs. A number of individuals had been identified in the Rice Lane area regarding anti-social behaviour and the use of drugs and high visibility policing had been increased in the area which had led to a reduction in calls.
- In New Brighton high visibility patrols had been introduced in and around Vale Park and the Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour team was identifying individuals. The Kontactabus had been invited down to the area and the Neighbourhood Team was organising crime prevention activities including diversionary activities such as mountain biking
- In the Seacombe and Poulton area increased patrols had been introduced at key locations. A number of individuals had been identified with one being dealt with through the courts and receiving a 6 month prison sentence. A number of individuals had been evicted from properties in the area because of anti-social behaviour.

Inspector McIver reported that forthcoming priorities for the area included, tackling a number of individuals for anti-social behaviour in the Liscard area; dealing with reports of drug use in the Town Meadow Lane area of Moreton; and cycling issues in the Seacombe area.

Responding to comments from Members, Inspector McIver stated that a lot of work was being undertaken regarding young people on motorised vehicles on pavements in the Seacombe area. He was aware of the issues with motorbikes and cycles being stolen in the Leasowe and Moreton area and positive action was being taken. Long term solutions were being implemented and just because an issue or issues had been dealt in an area the police were not going to move away as there were dedicated police officers in the area.

The Chair thanked Inspector McIver and welcomed him to the meeting having now replaced Inspector Kolokotroni in this role.

The Constituency Manager reported that the market place event held prior to the meeting had comprised representatives from a number of agencies, community groups, charities and local traders. A number of issues had been raised, including, counterfeit goods, debt advice, home and personal security and anti-social behaviour.

28 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair informed the meeting that a note of thanks had been received from Ian Calder, Vice-Chair of Wallasey Sea Cadets. He had hoped to convey his thanks for a grant of £2,500 from 'Your Wirral' awarded at the last Constituency Committee meeting but didn't have the opportunity. The Chair then read out the following:

"As you are aware, we are a charity and donations such as this are a lifeline and we are now very close to placing an order for the Jib Crane. I know that there are others "behind the scenes", such as Michelle Gray, who are always helpful, and thanks are due to all for a successful outcome".

The Chair informed the meeting that one question had been received in advance of the meeting and this was reported below, together with the response.

Mr Meaney, Moreton
(Ref: AF128497)

Question:

"What on earth is the Council thinking of in relation to the closure of Girtrell Court. Once again an attack on the vulnerable and their families with no other options available for respite care. I believe this is the worse ever proposal made and would ask whether this Labour run Council is serious in their

destruction of a safe haven for those with challenging problems. Please ensure that any excuse is not because of central government cuts as you are required to provide a service for those less fortunate and the Council have previously slashed funding to the service.”

Response from Graham Hodgkinson, Director of Adult Social Services

“The Director met with families of people that use the service at Girtrell Court on Friday 22 January to answer questions in relation to the Girtrell Court proposal this is being followed up by every family being met individually in relation to the consultation and to review their needs.

It is fully understood that at this stage of consultation people are feeling upset and it is very important to be clear about the process and to share information as well as to hear people’s views

It is fully recognised that people that use Girtrell Court and their families value the service, and the relationships they have built up with the staff there over the years. The proposal has not been made lightly.

The Council does, however have a very significant reduction in its grant and has to save a large amount of money. Adult Social Care is one of the biggest areas of spend that the Council has. Nevertheless this proposal is about making sure that needs are properly met from a reducing pot of money.

The Council runs Girtrell Court at high cost - around £1400 per week for each bed (£1.5M). By commissioning services from a range of other providers the Council can save a total of £500,000 and still reinvest an average of £1000 per week per family for respite or holiday support. In effect we can buy the same or better quality services and certainly offer a broader range of choice from the independent and voluntary sector. This level of investment in one place also means that there are limited resources to provide alternative respite facilities for people should they want something else.

This is still providing excellent care and helps the council get better value at a time when every budget is being massively reduced. When we have the opportunity to ensure the same service for less money we cannot ignore it.”

The Chair then invited questions from the audience.

David Jones, Unison Steward and resident of New Brighton addressed the Committee and expressed concern for the 46 staff employed at Girtrell Court as well as at the impact on those families who were service users. He disputed the validity of the figures from the Director of Adult Social Services. Over 1,000 nights of respite care were provided per year and it was also a home for six people. He suggested that this would be a very rushed decision and the impact on individuals would be devastating.

Other members of the audience outlined further concerns about the Girtrell Court proposal including:

- The list of alternative homes to look at on the Wirral, none of which were suitable due to the ages of most of those using Girtrell Court.
- The list of alternative homes suggested included homes for people with dementia when those who used Girtrell Court were not dementia sufferers.
- Alternative suggestions for homes currently had minimal numbers of vacancies.

Relatives of some of those using the services or resident at Girtrell Court gave personal and moving testimonies of the care and support their loved ones received there.

The Chair thanked the members of the public for their comments and reminded everyone that the consultation closed on Friday, 29 January and urged everyone to take part. The findings of the consultation would be reported to Cabinet on 22 February and also to the Policy and Performance Coordinating Committee on 16 February.

Councillor Blakeley expressed his support for those seeking to retain Girtrell Court. He had asked the Director of Adult Social Services for a cost benefit analysis of the facility but was still awaiting a response. He queried the £500,000 savings figure when the initial savings proposal referred to a figure of £155,000. He asked the Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Public Health to comment.

Councillor Chris Jones stated that the consultation was still open and no decisions had yet been taken. She referred to savings made during the previous Conservative Council administration when five homes had been closed.

Rev. Father Leon Ostaszewski asked about the Bus Stop road markings and vehicles parking on Belvidere Road and the road surfaces on several side roads in the area. He also referred to the proposed artwork for the medallion structures at the 'gateways' into Liscard Way. The Constituency Manager responded that she had not yet been able to identify an electronic version of the designs in order to obtain a quotation for the work.

Councillor Leah Fraser referred to the pavements in Grove Road being re-tarmacked but that work on Belvidere Road had had to be redone. She also explained the criteria for the filling of potholes.

Councillor Ron Abbey referring to the bus stop for the 409 explained that this was not a Merseytravel issue as the issue of vehicles parking at the bus stop should be dealt with by the police or by highways enforcement.

Inspector McIver clarified that if vehicles were causing an obstruction then it was a police matter but if vehicles were parking on double yellow lines then it was a Council highways enforcement matter.

29 **EVALUATION OF YEAR 2 WALLASEY BRIGHT IDEAS FUND PROJECTS (2014/15)**

The Constituency Manager introduced a report that set out an evaluation of projects funded by Wallasey Constituency Committee through Year 2 Wallasey Bright Ideas Fund (2014/15).

The report gave details of the 27 projects funded to an amount of £15,460.85 together with the amount awarded to each and a collated evaluation of those completed projects, which had had to be submitted by 30 October, 2015.

Three projects had been granted an extension of time to complete for a variety of reasons as set out in the report and one project had been unable to deliver and had returned its grant allocation of £500. A total of £14,693.29 had been spent on Year 2 Wallasey Bright Ideas Fund projects, with a further £715.48 to be spent in the next three months.

A short slide show presentation took place, detailing the outcomes of individual projects with photographs of team members and facilities that had benefitted from the Bright Ideas Fund 2014/15 (Year 2).

A Member commented on the many uplifting and inspiring projects which had been funded across the constituency and thanked the organisations and volunteers for all their work on these projects.

The Chair then introduced Paul Hughes, Anne Archer and Dave Peddie who provided the Committee with verbal updates relating to the following projects, respectively:

- Money Guidance (from Flagship Money Guidance)
- The Dome of Home (from Ss Peter, Paul and St Philomena's Church)
- New Brighton Summer and Autumn Beach Clean (from The New Brighteners)

The Chair thanked the speakers for their presentations and all those involved in the administration and delivery of all the Wallasey Constituency projects which had and were making a real difference across the constituency.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

30 **INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK CAPITAL PROGRAMME FUND
(2015/16)**

Further to minute 21 (22 October, 2015) the Constituency Manager introduced a report which provided an initial assessment of feasibility and (where applicable) costings for schemes which supported road safety and / or promoted active travel and health, which had been identified by elected Members at the last meeting. These were set out in appendix 1 to the report. Potential projects for enforcement of traffic measures around schools had also been costed by officers in the Council's Traffic and Transport division.

The Constituency Manager reported that the smaller projects in appendix 1 added up to £32,035, over £7,000 more than the allocated budget of £25,000.

A Member commented that this funding had been allocated in July, 2015 and he suggested that the process should be speeded up for future allocations.

The Committee then discussed the merits of the projects and a number of suggestions were made as to which could be deferred to next year. Three schemes, suggested for deferral, totalled £7,500.

The Road Safety Manager reminded the Committee that the figures mentioned in appendix 1 were estimated costs.

A Member thanked those Members who had offered to defer schemes in their wards to make it possible for other wards' schemes to be funded.

Resolved - That the following schemes as detailed in appendix 1 to the report, be funded:

Moreton East and Leasowe

- Twickenham Drive / Gardenside - £2,200
- Danger Lane / Yew Way / Yew Tree Road - £3,000
- Ivy Lane / Eastway - £1,500
- Drake Road / Raleigh Road - £1,500

Moreton West and Saughall Massie

- Bramble Way / Pasture Road - £1,200
- Berrylands Road - £500
- Holt Avenue / Digg Lane - £2,000

New Brighton

- Mount Pleasant Road - £3,000
- Portland Street and Pilots Way - £2,500

Wallasey

- Grove Road - £235

- **Greenleas Close - £6,100**
- **Belvidere Road / Broadway Avenue - £800**

31 **PROBLEM SOLVING FUND**

The Constituency Manager introduced a report which provided an update on Problem Solving Fund spend.

The Problem Solving Fund was set aside by the Committee for low spend items that would provide a quick response to issues and / or allow a new approach to be tested that might ultimately lead to improvements within the Constituency. The lead political party spokespeople for the Committee were authorised by the Committee to spend from the Problem Solving Fund in individual amounts of £500 or less through unanimous agreement with the decision being reported to the next Constituency Committee.

Since the last meeting the following spend had been agreed:

- Relocation of a bench in Wallasey Village to enable a community group to restore a Victorian fountain which was obscured - £146.96 (estimate).

The value of the availability of this fund was noted by the Committee.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

32 **VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair suggested a venue for the next meeting of the Committee.

Resolved – That the meeting of the Committee to be held on 14 April, 2016 take place at Wallasey Town Hall.