

# CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - BIRKENHEAD

Thursday, 8 October 2015

Present:

Councillor Rt Hon Field MP (Chair)

Councillors	A Brighthouse	P Doughty
	P Cleary	S Foulkes
	A Davies	B Kenny
	G Davies	M McLaughlin
	P Davies	C Meaden
	WJ Davies	D Roberts

## 11 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Phil Davies and Councillor Chris Meaden declared a personal interest by virtue of them being Non-Executive Directors of Lairdsie Communities Together.

Councillors Steve Foulkes, declared a personal interest by virtue of him being a Board Member of Magenta Living.

## 12 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and reported that he had, sadly, to report the recent tragic death of Police Constable David Phillips. The Chair asked that, as a mark of respect and remembrance, the audience stand for a minute in silence.

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the Committee's deepest condolences be offered to his family, friends and colleagues.**

## 13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor J Crabtree  
Councillor A McLachlan  
Councillor J Stapleton  
Councillor P Williams  
Mr J Blott, Strategic Director, Transformation and Resources  
Mr S Tour, Head of Legal and Member Services

14 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2015 be agreed as a correct record.**

15 **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR BUDGET**

The Chair reported that two bids had been received from Birkenhead Youth Club and Wirral Tennis Centre in relation to the delivery of anti-social behaviour (ASB) activities, it was suggested and agreed that the bids be referred to the ASB Task and Finish Group for further consideration.

The Chair indicated that the Committee had previously received an update on data and action plan in relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB) from Mr Tony Kinsella, Independent Consultant who had been commissioned to undertake analysis in relation to ASB allocation. The Chair asked Members how they wished the funding to be spent and reiterated that at the last meeting it was agreed that funding would be given only to those services that added value in tackling ASB in Birkenhead.

In response to the Chair, a Member indicated in relation to ASB in Shaw Street, a new CCTV system had been installed and fencing had been erected to stop the thorough-through to Borough Road, he felt that the problems on Shaw Street had now been resolved but suggested that this be monitored on a regular basis to ensure no reoccurrence.

A Member raised concern regarding the CCTV system installed at Rock Ferry as it did not seem to be appropriately monitored and there had been recent incidents that had not been captured. She further indicated that the CCTV system in Birkenhead Park was not working, this had been reported and officers would be investigating, she further reported that she would like to see additional CCTV installed in the park due to recent incidents.

In response, Members indicated that CCTV was monitored by both Merseyside Police in Borough Road and Liverpool. The Chair asked the Constituency Manager to ascertain where the CCTV images were monitored; were they monitored 24 hours a day; what proportion of cameras were working and report back to the ASB Task and Finish Group.

A Member raised concern regarding a recent burglary that had occurred at Prenton Primary School; the school had asked if its CCTV system could be included in the monitoring scheme. In response it was reported that if the school was a member of the Community Patrol it would be automatically

monitored as part of the scheme. The Chair asked the Constituency Manager to ascertain information as to which schools had CCTV cameras and had opted into the community patrol service and at what cost and also investigate whether Prenton Primary could be linked up to a monitoring network and report back to the ASB Task and Finish Group.

In relation to CCTV, the Constituency Manager indicated that she had invited Ian Lowrie, Mark Cambourne, Steve Preston and Keith Patterson to the next meeting of the ASB task and Finish Group for a progress update as to how the monitoring system was working.

The Chair asked the Members of the ASB Task and Finish Group to provide a report as to how they feel the ASB budget should be spent and for those recommendations to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for further discussion.

The Chair further asked the Constituency Manager to report to the Task and Finish Group on the recent trends in ASB at McDonalds, ASDA and Birkenhead Park and liaise with McDonald's and Asda as to whether they would be willing to contribute to funding a Community Support Officer and ascertaining their views on how they feel the money should be spent on tackling ASB in those particular areas and feed back to ASB Task and Finish Group. He also asked that she liaise with Councillor George Davies on his suggestions on how the ASB budget could be spent in Birkenhead Park and feedback to the ASB Task and Finish Group.

**RESOLVED: That**

**(1) the Constituency Manager be requested to report back to the ASB Task and Finish Group at its next meeting on the following issues raised by the Committee;**

- **Recent trends in ASB at McDonald's, Asda and Birkenhead Park**
- **Suggestions gathered from McDonald's and Asda as to how the ASB budget might be most effectively spent in the town centre, and whether they may contribute funding for a Community Support Officer**
- **Suggestions from Councillor G Davies in relation to ASB Budget spend in Birkenhead Park**
- **Birkenhead's CCTV images – monitoring and proportion of cameras working**
- **Schools which had opted into the Community Patrol service, and at what cost**

- (2) **the Constituency Manager be requested to invite representatives from Community Patrol be to a future meeting of the ASB Task and Finish Group; and**
- (3) **be requested to investigate as to whether Prenton Primary could be linked up to CCTV monitoring network and the query raised by constituent in relation a telephone pole;and**
- (4) **the ASB Task and Finish Group be requested to provide a report as to how they feel the ASB budget should be spent and for those recommendations to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for further discussion.**

## 16 **KEEP BIRKENHEAD CLEAN BUDGET**

In response to the Chair, the Constituency Manager indicated that 20k had been allocated from the Committee's Budget for 'Improving the Environment' or 'Grotspot1' projects this was to develop a service to improve sites in Birkenhead that had been left open, poorly maintained and disused, therefore looking unsightly in the area, often attracting litter and fly tipping.

Lairdside Communities Together (LCT) won the contract for one year, which ends in December 2015, to clean up a number of 'grotspot' areas around the Birkenhead constituency. Locations for clean ups had been identified by Local Councillors and had been prioritised by LCT following a site visit. LCT was undertaking clearance and would be engaging with nearby residents to complete satisfaction surveys.

Representatives of LCT were present at the meeting and provided an update report (also attached as Appendix 3 to the Constituency Managers report). They highlighted the clearances that had been completed so far and indicated that they had worked with site owners to put in place preventative measures to avoid problems recurring in the future.

In relation to the clearing of privately owned properties, it was reported that locating and identifying the responsible landlords had proved problematic and explained that landlords reserved the right not to engage with their officers. In relation to the billing of sites cleared, officers were working to try and engage landowners to resolve this issue and collect payment.

In response to the Chair, the Legal Advisor to the Committee indicated that it was difficult for officers to identify unregistered landowners, however, for those that were identified the Council can serve notice on land that is considered to be detrimental to the amenity of the area. If notice is not complied with the Council can enter the land and undertake works in default

and a charge can then be entered on the local land charges register against that property. The Council also has the right to prosecute those who failed to comply with the notice. A Member, in response, asked what percentage of the Biffa contract was given to prosecute landowners for their failure to act.

In relation to Bonfire night, the Chair asked the Constituency Manager to contact Magenta regarding possible issues on the Noctorum estate linking with the Lairdside Community Trust contract.

Councillor D Roberts and the Constituency Manager agreed to liaise with the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority to clear skips prior to Bonfire Night and on any potential joint activities utilising the skip funding.

In relation to the 'In Bloom' project, the Environmental Task and Finish Group be requested to develop the project and evaluate the Lairdside Community Trust contract.

The Chair requested Ward Councillors to meet and identify their worst 'grot spots' and urged them to utilise the skip project.

Members in response, to a letter sent to the Chair from the Chief Executive requested that the Constituency Manager contact the Council's Environmental Team to ask them again to provide data breaking down spend for the constituency area regarding the Biffa contract. The Chair asked that this letter be shared with the Environmental Task and Finish Group.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the progress made by the LCT 'grotspot' project as reported in the Constituency Managers report be noted;**
- (2) the Constituency Manager be requested to:**
  - along with Councillor D Roberts, liaise with Merseyside Fire Authority on clearing of skips before Bonfire Night and on any possible joint activities using skip funding**
  - contact the Council's Environmental Team requesting data breaking down spend for constituency area for the Biffa contract**
  - contact Magenta regarding possible issues on Noctorum estate for Bonfire Night and link with the Lairdside Community Trust contract**

- (3) the Environmental Task and Finish Group be requested at its next meeting develop the 'In Bloom' project and evaluate the Lairdside Community Trust contract.**

17 **FEEDING BIRKENHEAD**

The Birkenhead Constituency Engagement Officer and an officer from the office of The Rt Hon Frank Field MP gave a verbal update regarding the Feeding Birkenhead Project.

Mr Brannan indicated that seven projects were currently running and it was intended that these projects would carry on through the October half term.

The Chair indicated that he had written to four schools which had a high proportion of children receiving free school meals to ask if they would be willing to open up their schools during the half term, to date none of the schools had replied. The Chair reported that he, the Deputy Chair and Leader of the Council would continue to chase up the schools for support.

The Chair introduced Ms Emma Wilkes to the Committee who updated Members on their SEAD project.

SEAD project was a Neo Community Café's Empowerment and Social Action programme which offered communities the tools and knowledge to build self-sustainable long-term solutions to the issues of food poverty. It was hoped that the project would be replicated in Birkenhead and Rock Ferry.

In relation to activities Ms Wilkes indicated that week days there would be activities such as Community Café – 3 days per week, 0-5 early years provision supported by the Shaw Trust, baby and tots groups, baby massage, surplus food project in conjunction with local shops and free family law weekly advice sessions.

Ms Wilkes indicated that she had regular meeting with the community to discuss what activities they would like to see delivered.

The Chair updated the Committee on the Task and Finish Groups that had been established in each Ward consisting of Ward Councillors, himself and Andrew Forsey would work to secure a community venue for a daily 'food hub'. The first of these Task and Groups would be held in Rock Ferry and its first objective would be to secure the future of the Vikings Centre and discuss a bid received from the Neo Café who wished to operate there.

In response to Ms Wilkes request for the Committee to ask retailers and food outlets to support their projects, the Chair reported that the Committee would write to each of the supermarkets in Birkenhead asking them to pledge their

support to feeding Birkenhead by rescuing their surplus food and donating surplus chillers and freezers to each 'food hub'.

In response to a suggestion that chillers could be provided outside in the community giving people better access to food; this had been evidenced in a similar scheme in Spain. The Chair requested that the Constituency Manager and Mr Andrew Forsey explore this suggestion to see if this could be replicated in Birkenhead.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the update be noted;
- (2) **Task and Finish Groups that had been established in each Ward consisting of Ward Councillors, himself and Andrew Forsey would work to secure a community venue for a daily 'food hub'. The first of these Task and Groups would be held in Rock Ferry and its first objective would be to secure the future of the Vikings Centre and discuss a bid received from the Neo Café who wished to operate there.**

18 **PRESENTATION - HOMESTART - 'BREAST FEEDING PROJECT'**

The Committee received an update from Ms Bev Morgan, Home-Start Wirral regarding the Breastfeeding Peer Support, Antenatal Pilot Birkenhead District.

Ms Morgan gave a presentation indicating that the service was funded to pilot provision of additional support in the Birkenhead area during pregnancy to increase initiation rates, enable better health outcomes and reduce the impact of social inequality.

The presentation outlined the outputs and outcomes achieved; progress to date; ongoing support mechanisms; text buddy service; barriers to referrals and overcoming these barriers; creation of a breastfeeding community; progress from 1 February – September 2015; percentage of babies breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks 2014/15 by Wirral Wards; overcoming cultural barriers and feedback received.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Ms Morgan be thanked for her update presentation.**

19 **CROSSWAYS**

The Chair indicated that a residents meeting had been held and was progressing well.

20 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The Chair invited the following members of the public to ask their questions.

Question 1 Margaret Wycherley

Ms Wycherley was not present at the meeting but had raised concerns regarding ex-offenders selling door to door and asked if the Committee could help.

Ms Wycherley had received a written response from Merseyside Probation Services.

A member of the public asked if Birkenhead could apply to become a “no cold calling” zone, the Constituency Manager agreed to pursue this with Trading Standards Department.

Question 3 W Knapton

W Knapton was not present at the meeting but had asked about the telephone pole which had been lying in the alleyway behind CH42 6PH since February, despite being reported several times, also could the bags of rubbish that have had warning notices on them for four weeks be cleared away from the alley gates adjacent.

W Knapton had received a response from the Technical Services Department. In response, the Chair requested that the Environmental Task and Finish Group be asked to look at the issues raised on behalf of W Knapton.

Question 4 John Brace

Mr Brace asked two questions, one in relation to an update on the Youth Zone “the Hive” and a second regarding the payroll taxes paid by Members.

Mr Brace had received a response from the Children and Young People’s Department and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

Question 5 Frances Greenwood

Ms Greenwood who was not present at the meeting but asked about the utilisation of those serving Community Service and queried if there was a joint initiative with the Council and Probation Service.

Ms Greenwood had received a response from the Probation Service.

The Chair indicated that having read the response received by the Probation Service he had been impressed by the contributions made by Community Service and requested that on behalf of the Committee the Constituency Manager be asked to write to the Probation Services thanking them for the work they had undertaken and liaise with Ms Greenwood to identify further areas Community Payback could do.

#### Question 7 Bob Giles

Mr Giles asked three questions regarding the Council's contribution to food banks; control measures with regard to charity collectors known as "chuggers" and plans to install a drinking water fountain at the Central Library.

Mr Giles had received responses from the appropriate officers/departments.

The Legal Advisor indicated that in relation to the issue of charity collectors he would liaise with the Council's Licensing Manager and provide Mr Giles with a detailed response.

#### Question 8 Susanne McLoughlin

Ms McLoughlin asked the Committee if they would consider supporting a request to Merseytravel proposing a train station from Prenton to Liverpool.

Ms McLaughlin had received a response from Merseytravel.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair asked Councillor A Davies to write to the Chair of Merseytravel to enquire about a new station in Prenton and request information on the distribution of expenditure from the investment budget i.e. how it was split between Wirral and other local authorities.

## 21 **ST PAULS COMMUNITY HUB**

The Constituency Manager updated that Committee on the planned action for St Pauls Community Hub which include development of the outdoor garden into a creative learning space and an increase in the speech and language provision.

The Action Plan was attached as an appendix to the Constituency Managers update report.

22 **TRANMERE COMMUNITY PROJECT**

The Committee received a verbal update from Ms Lynne Cullens from the Tranmere Community Project.

Ms Cullens reported that the first of the seven planned schemes had been held and had proved very successful; Ms Cullens was now looking to secure the future for the remaining projects.

The Chair congratulated Ms Cullens on an excellent project indicating that the scheme whilst was fun during the holidays for the children it also ensured that the children were fed.