

AREA FORUM (LISCARD AND SEACOMBE)

Wednesday, 10 June 2009

Present:

Councillor	L Fraser (Chair)
Councillors	K Hayes AER Jones J Keeley, D Knowles J Salter
Community Representatives	Ken Harrison, Dianne Ledder, Joseph Lee, Carole Thomas
Faith Representative	Fr. Leon Ostaszewski
Lead Officer	Mark Smith, Streetscene (for Mark Camborne)
Area Service Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray
Street Scene Manager	Mark Traynor
Community Safety	Jim Thompson
Wirral NHS	Dr Shymal Mukherjee
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Jo Goodfellow
Merseyside Police	Sgt. Justin Diggins
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Tony Mooney
Council Officers	Christina Jones

Apologies

Councillor(s) Margi Allen, Chris Jones

In attendance

Simon Finnie, Arriva

The Chair, Councillor Leah Fraser, welcomed the forum members and 15 members of the public to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Margi Allen and Chris Jones. Best wishes were sent to Chris Jones, who had been involved in an accident, on behalf of the forum with the hope that he gets well soon.

The Chair informed the forum that the interpreters from Merseyside Society for Deaf People would be filming and would only be recording their interpreting and asked if anyone had any objections. None were received.

2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The following points / matters arising were raised from the minutes of last meeting held on 11th February 2009:

Fr. Leon Ostaszewski clarified the following, from the February forum

- Page 3 – clarified that the parking problems mentioned in the minutes related to Wallasey Road.
- Page 4 – The information kiosk mentioned was at Birkenhead Bus Station.

Councillor Leah Fraser added that information was available on benefits available to grandparents who have been left to look after their grandchildren, and agreed to pass this onto Carole Thomas.

The Community Engagement Co-ordinator gave a brief overview of her report, highlighting the following:

- You Decide Survey 2009/10 – a questionnaire was made available to vote on what local people would like to see in their area. There are two pots of funding per forum £20,000 for the provision of additional services / activities and £18,200 for the provision of road safety initiatives. She urged people to complete and return the questionnaire and offered to give further information and advice on this at the end of the meeting. The Chair added that the questionnaire was available to all Wirral residents and asked the forum to get as many residents as possible to complete the questionnaire.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on this and none were raised.

Partner Updates

Merseyside Police – Sgt. Diggins highlighted the following:

- An initiative to tackle knife crime took place last week and led to
 - 8 people being arrested locally for carrying knives
 - 8 retail stores being tested
 - 19 primary schools, 4 youth clubs and local internet cafes being visited, in relation to crime prevention and the danger of carrying knives

- Safety Arch – this was used in the Liscard and Seacombe area in the evenings. This is basically a large metal detector and was used on people entering licensed premises to check for knives etc.
- S30 Dispersion Order – a few zones have been subject to S30 orders this year, which are to conclude in July. Customer community questionnaires were issued prior to the start of the order and want feedback to ascertain whether these have been effective.
- Operation Staysafe – a pilot for Wirral, to be operated from the Allandale Centre, is due to start on 19th June 2009. This will involve taking young, vulnerable people along to the centre and contacting their parents. The scheme will be advertised in the press in the near future and will run every 4/5 weeks during the summer.
- Tackling drugs / changing lives, initiatives targeting drug related problems have led to :
 - Seizure of £50,000 of controlled drugs from one address in Seacombe, based on community intelligence information.
- Local Newsletter issued by the Manor Road Police Station, copies of which were available at the meeting
- Policing Pledge Information, issued by the Home Office, which is a 10 point plan setting out what can be expected from the Police Service. Further information on this was available at the meeting. Sgt. Diggins agreed to discuss this in more detail after the meeting.

The Chair thanked Sgt. Diggins for his update and the following question was raised:

1. Dave Hanlon - where was the safety arch used (a similar exercise is run by Merseytravel at Central Station)?
 - A. It was used at licensed public houses.

Community Safety – Jim Thompson informed the forum that the safe place initiative, which was developed in Wirral and taken on by Liverpool, involves working with other major agencies and feeding into lots of processes (such as medical, youth teams).

The crime rate and Anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) rate have fallen in this forum area, but are still higher than the rate for Wirral. Seacombe used to stand out with a high ASBO, but this has plummeted due to six months of hard work by the team and the Police.

The team is bidding for funding from Central Government to help secure homes.

Wirral as a borough is a very safe place to live, as is Seacombe, and we are working to make it safer.

The Chair thanked Jim Thompson for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

2. Fr. Leon Ostaszewski – is the team still based at the Courthouse?

A. Yes, for the moment, a new site has been mentioned but will probably remain where we are for 12 months. The team is unlikely to be disbanded as it was the second best in the country at reducing crime.

The Chair added that there had been an audit of the council buildings, and there were assurances that the services will remain in the same area.

3. Carole Thomas – asked if there was any information on the 27 club, Manor Road, as building work was being undertaken.

A. Chair confirmed that no decisions had been made on the future of buildings in Liscard. Christina Jones added that social club are carrying out improvements to the building.

4. Councillor Knowles – complaints about the area around Tesco's (graffiti, broken windows in the new build) and ASB in the Hawthorne Grove and Percy Road area have been made at recent councillor surgeries.

A. Jim Thompson agreed to pass this to the ASB team.

Fire & Rescue Service – Tony Mooney informed the forum that there was an update on pages 11-12 of the forum papers, and highlighted the following:

- Home Fire Risk Assessment – the St Paul's area will be targeted on the 20th June 2009, there will be more appliances in the area and we will be aiming to assess as many properties, both vacant and occupied, as we can.
- Funding has been allocated to develop the hearty beat gym at Wallasey, including new toilet and kitchen facilities and a new meeting room that will be available for the community to use free of charge.
- There will be an Open Day at the Wallasey Fire Station, Mill Lane on 20th June 2009, and everyone is welcome to come along. We will be there with our partners to demonstrate the equipment / facilities available.

The Chair thanked Tony Mooney for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

5. Mike Connor from the service has been seconded to work with community groups; will this secondment carry on when he retires?

A. The commitment to groups will remain

6. Dave Hanlon – mentioned 999 calls re: fires after midnight set after midnight.

A. There are fewer calls now due to the additional work put into place, team work and extra resources to tackling such issues.

7. David Hale – asked about what provisions were in place to reduce risks from other fumes, not just smoke?

A. The key priority is reducing fire risk, but limited work has been carried out on other risks and a second level visit would be arranged if there seemed to be a risk on this level.

8. Free audio smoke alarms are not suitable for deaf people, what provisions are made for the supply of visual alarms?

A. Alternative smoke alarms, such as light or vibrating pads, are available and the appropriate system will be used dependant on the specific risk.

9. Carole Thomas – how do people get assessed for the heart beat gym?

A. The gym is run in partnership; people are assessed at St Catherine's Hospital following treatment and are given a fitness programme that they can follow at gyms based in all six fire stations as part of their recuperation.

Dr Shymal Mukherjee added that the hospital do extensive heart checks prior to referring patients to the gyms.

Older Peoples Parliament (OPP) – Audrey Moore informed the forum that there was an update on pages 18-19 of the forum papers, and highlighted the following:

- The Social Care Team gave a presentation to the OPP on elderly abuse, and suggested that this presentation could be made to the forum
- The OPP has liaised with Adult Social Services on examining domiciliary care, to ensure that it is reliable and trustworthy
- The OPP has been involved in a system set up by NHS Wirral in the Wallasey area involving liaison with GPs, so please let the OPP know if you have a problem that the health service could help with
- The OPP is looking at the issue of support for people with mental health problems once they are discharged

The Chair thanked Audrey Moore for her update and informed the forum that the OPP was open to new members, the date of the next meetings were included on page 19 of the papers. She also added that Help the Aged could offer more information on the topics raised.

Dave Hanlon added that he had joined the OPP and attended his first meeting last week, he encouraged more people to join the parliament, which can be done by contacting Brian Christian on 0151 666 2220.

Dr Shymal Mukherjee added that the liaison with the GPs is a listening exercise at which NHS Wirral act on what it hears.

NHS Wirral – Dr Shymal Mukherjee informed the forum that there was an update on page 16 of the forum papers, and added the following:

- A guide was being delivered to all Wirral residents giving health information and advice and a measuring tape
- What alcohol misuse campaign – the campaign is about sensible drinking and needs to be supported by everyone.
- Swine Flu – this is not a problem on Wirral
- Victoria Central – the new building has brought heart back into Wallasey and offers mental health, x-ray, walk-in facilities. We are delighted with this 21st Century community health service.

The Chair thanked Dr Mukherjee for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

10. Chair – requested confirmation that parking at the new health centre was free, as she had received a few queries from residents re: parking issuing of parking tickets on the way into the car park.

A. Parking is free for patients; the barriers are there to be used if there are any problems

11. Chair – the information booklet was very good, but did not include dentistry.

A. Dr Mukherjee – agreed to take this issue back and get this added to the next edition. Wirral is reported to provide the best dentistry in the North West, but this still needs to be improved.

12. It is difficult to get information about services available for people with dementia, despite an increasing amount of dementia. All services should co-operate and work together to provide advice and guidance on this.

A. This is a very relevant point, as dementia levels are predicted to rise considerably over the next 20-30 years. Work has been done on this area and we are about to commission a whole pathway of dementia which will be launched soon, as we need to offer advice and support to carers. The waiting time from referral to treatment is two years, but have introduced an intermediate service where patients diagnosed are given tablets straight away.

Councillor Knowles – added that he had recently used the walk-in at Victoria Central and that it was an excellent service. He also confirmed that reduction in levels of alcohol drinking was an important issue.

13. Carole Thomas – What is Albert Lodge used for?

A. It is used for an integrated community service to deal with problems like dementia, which is on the rise; and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) - a progressive condition that usually affects smokers (it is similar to emphysema) and needs to be managed properly or the sufferer may die within 5 years. The management involves pulmonary exercise to help treat COPD early to enable patients to live longer and have a better quality of life. A huge amount of work has been done, with GP practices receiving training on this.

Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – Jo Goodfellow informed the forum that there was an update on page 14 of the forum papers, and highlighted the following:

- Work has started on the women's and children's buildings
- The new children's outpatients department opened, designed to give children a better experience
- New parents accommodation is being built
- Improvement work is being carried out on the maternity unit / ward
- £1m of funding is being invested on mixed sex wards, and plans were signed off this week for bathroom / toilet area improvements and the installation of partition doors
- A second MRI scanner is being installed
- Pandemic flu – a lot of work has been carried out to ensure that we have extensive plans in place for coping with this

The Chair thanked Jo Goodfellow for her update and no questions were raised.

Minute decision Resolved that:

- (i) **Jim Thompson to pass on complaints about the area around the Tesco store (graffiti, broken windows in the new build) and ASB in the Hawthorne Grove and Percy Road area to the ASB team.**
- (ii) **Dr Mukherjee to ensure that dentistry is included in the next health information booklet.**

3 ARRIVA NORTHWEST

The Chair thanked Simon Finnie from Arriva for attending the forum again and Simon gave the following update:

- New vehicles used on the 432/433/437 routes have improved the punctuality and reliability of these services, and passenger numbers have increased in excess of 5%
- 15 new low floor buses will be introduced on the 403/413/423 routes will be introduced in September 2009
- The recent increase of the afternoon 432/433 services has had a positive result and led to an increase in passenger numbers
- The issue of connections to Lime Street Station has been looked into, and there is scope on the 432/433/437 to service this on an hourly loop basis. The problem is the amount of building work still going on in Liverpool City Centre, causing grid locking problems. Once we are satisfied that the work outside Lewis's is complete we will look at this again, probably around September 2009, as this is high on our agenda
- We work closely with Merseytravel on improving service provision

The following questions / issues were raised:

1. Carole Thomas – are there any plans to service Norton Street Coach Station from the Wirral?
A. We want to get buses through the tunnel as quickly as possible, if we were to take the 432/433 services through this area it could cause delays to these, but it is something that we will look at with provision of service to Lime Street.
2. There is no 433 service after 6.60 pm or at weekends, leaving many elderly people stranded as would need to go to Poulton Road to get a bus to Liverpool. The off-peak service for the 433 should be extended to remedy this.
A. This will be looked into and considered for our September 2009 route amendments. From a business point of view weekends and evenings are areas we would look at to grow our service, especially with more leisure facilities being available in New Brighton and Liverpool One.
3. Dave Hanlon – What is the situation re: traffic problems in Sir Thomas Street; could something be done re: 1hour+ gap in the 413 evening service from Liscard to Wallasey Town Hall?

A. The issue re: Sir Thomas Street is being looked at with Merseytravel. The issue re: 413 evening service will be considered at the next review of evening and weekend services.

4. David Hale – can the issue re: 413 evening service be resolved by the next forum meeting?

A. The next service change is due in September 2009 (we try to keep changes to a minimum to avoid problems for users and bus drivers) so this should be done prior to the next meeting.

5. Carole Thomas – we had been assured that the new buses were to be in place by the end of May 2009.

A. There was a delay due to another large bus operator placing an order with the firm that supplies the new vehicles, then cancelling this. The cancelling of the order led to staff at the firm supplying the vehicles being laid off which led to industrial action. We have now had confirmation that the vehicles are on track for a September delivery.

6. Bins are needed at bus stops, as rubbish and cigarette butts are being dumped at stops.

A. Mark Smith confirmed that bins at bus stops are primarily a Council responsibility, and we do look carefully at all locations for bin placements. Please register any specific locations causing problems with our Streetscene call centre so these can be looked into.

7. Carole Thomas – most bus stops do not have bins by them

A. Chair – Streetscene could look at this issue

Minute Decision Resolved that:

- (i) **Arriva to look at connections from Wirral to Lime Street and Norton Street; 433 off-peak service and 413 evening service at their September review**
- (ii) **Streetscene to look at issue of lack of bins at bus stops**

4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair gave an update on the following:

- Liscard Hall – an update on this is due, will contact council officers and request that they write to community groups on what is happening on space in the park.
- Public Inquiry on library closures – this took place over last two days, and was run by Sue Charteris, who will send her recommendation to the Secretary of State for a decision. There will be a 14 day period for interested parties and the Council to make further representations and respond to these. The decision should be made within the next six months.

1. Diane Ledger – when giving the council submission Alan Stennard said that the submission was to be taken to the area forums and created the impression that there had been ongoing discussions on this with the forums.

Chair added that he was probably referring to the special area forum meetings that took place in the parliamentary constituency areas, despite requests that these be taken to the local area forums. She added that on Friday she was informed of an audit of the Council's assets had taken place, and that she was surprised that the councillors had not been involved in this.

Brian Kendall added that he felt that consultations should be more local than area forum level and that he wanted to get more people from the Seacombe area involved in the Wallasey Village Campaign.

2. Dave Hanlon – there are few youth services in this end of the borough. Mosslands youth club was a thriving place 10-20 years ago but has declined in recent years, besides this there are only the Wallasey YMCA and the Allandale centre. There is no provision in Wallasey village and there should be more provision in the area for young people.

Chair – requested that the forum discuss youth provision and activities within the Wallasey and Egremont area, as there was not one answer to this, and the following discussion took place:

Joseph Lee – we are trying to tackle this problem in partnership, we need to break youth into younger and older sets, bring back role models, respect and give young people a focus. The Allandale centre is only looking at 8-13 year olds and has very limited resources.

Jo McCourt – the three main areas of youth provision (Wallasey YMCA, Allandale Centre and Mosslands Youth Club) used to be run with staff employed by the local authority. Changes in policies mean that they now have no staffing from the council and have to rely on external funding, so have reasonable youth provision buildings with no-one prepared to pay for the staffing of these, leading to an inability to provide adequate services for young people. The YMCA building is owned by the council but the responsibility for all repairs lies with the YMCA.

Tony Mooney – the Fire Station Centre is still being developed. We have been working with partners, such as the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team to do outreach work with young people using the station and service vehicles, and NHS Wirral organising activities for young people. Young people are comfortable with the station environment. There was some consultation with the voluntary and community representatives on the use of existing provision.

3. David Hale – partners are made up of Council, Police, Fire and Health services and voluntary sector representatives, and residents are not included in the partnership. Engagement needs to be made with residents to create a better spirit of community.

Jim Thompson – the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) meetings held at Manor Road are a key consultation element that is open to all members of the community that wish to be involved.

4. Public (OPP) – what is happening to Woolworths in Liscard?

Chair confirmed that no planning permission had been applied for, but consent would not be required if it was to remain as retail use. Carole Thomas added that she had

heard that repairs were being made to damage on roof and that staff were being interviewed by Poundland.

5. Brian Kendall – the public should have been consulted on the siting of the hub for Wallasey (Fire Station for the Youth Service and Liscard for all other departments) not just on how this is to be furnished.

Chair confirmed that there is to be one hub in Liscard, and that potential areas are being considered and will be consulted on before a final choice is made. The Fire Station provision is separate and not connected to the hub.

6. Carole Thomas – the Central Park Partnership has discussed the Gateway Review on Parks, and raised concern that there are no Wallasey Councillors on the Cabinet to voice concerns for the area, and asked if anything could be done about this?

Public (deaf gentlemen) – added that the situation was the same for Moreton.

Chair – this was because no party has an overall majority on the Council.

Mark Smith – assured the forum that Gateway process is clearly reported and takes account of the views from partnerships on how the parks services are delivered in the future. As this is a key cabinet decision there will be an evidence trail on how the decision was made.

Diane Ledder added that she was a member of the Wallasey Central Park Forum who had not received any consultations on this.

Mark Smith agreed to notify any partnership groups wishing to be consulted on the review if they forward their details to him.

7. Diane Ledder – raised the following question, on behalf of a local resident with an interest in amateur dramatics. Can the Council confirm that the Floral Pavilion will remain available for local groups and that the pavilion will remain within the public sector?

Mark Smith – this question would need to be answered by the Director of Regeneration, and agreed to raise this and report back.

8. David Hale (CLARA) raised the following, on the Strategic Asset Review (SAR) as it affects East Wallasey, with Councillor Jones: I understand that you did not participate in the consultation exercise or the debates in Council, as you were the mayor at that time. As you are no longer the mayor, the consultation ended some time ago and the Charteris Review has concluded do you feel able to:

- Share your view of the SAR, specifically as it affects East Wallasey
- Tell us whether, as a Seacombe Councillor, you contributed to the Charteris Review?

Councillor Jones - In response to a question from Mr David Hale Cllr Adrian Jones agreed that during his term as Mayor it was not appropriate for him to become publicly involved in political controversy, including matters associated with the Strategic Asset Review, as the Mayor's duty is to guide the process of Council decision making with demonstrable impartiality.

He explained that as the Mayor has no public voice on controversial matters he instead wrote to the Leader of the Council, before the public consultation meetings

took place, setting out his views. He described to the Area Forum what his views were. A copy of the letter had been given to the Charteris Inquiry.

Fr. Leon Ostaszewski –added that Churches Together had submitted views to Sue Charteris. He added that the Peel Holding development on the dock estate will increase the need for a library in the area.

9. Mr Forder – the youth service update did not include details of how many young people are being served and what is being achieved in the area. Could we have a presentation on the youth service at the next forum?

Chair informed the forum that the forum was considering inviting a young person from the youth parliament to the next meeting.

Christina Jones confirmed that she was now employed within the Regeneration department, and no longer has responsibility for or direct links with the youth service. She added that funding for youth activities projects was now available and that more information could be found at the Council's website (http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100002/200095/828/content_0000847.html) or by telephoning the Children's Contracts Team on 0151 666 5580 / 4307

She added that a survey of young people through schools was taking place to find out what services young people want, and Seacombe was identified as a hot spot. Christina agreed to discuss this in more detail at the end of the meeting.

Jo McCourt – this is only short term funding, and there was still a need for someone to drive these forward.

Dave Hanlon added that the youth council used to meet at the town Hall once a month, and added that an invite to a member of the youth parliament to attend the next meeting would be welcomed. He also suggested that a senior officer from the Youth Service be requested to attend the meeting.

The Chair agreed to organise this.

10. Fr. Leon Ostaszewski – congratulated Streetscene on the start of road improvements in the Belvidere Road area which are due to be completed this year, and asked what was happening to the Capital / ABC site.

Chair – the owner has boarded up the site, but planning permission has not been applied for.

Minute Decision Resolved that:

The Chair to invite a member of the youth parliament and a senior officer from the youth service to the next forum meeting

5 **VISIT OUR EXHIBITION STANDS**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and invited them to look at the exhibition boards, and requested that they complete the You Decide questionnaires.

The meeting closed at 9pm

6 NEXT AREA FORUM MEETING

The next area forum will be held on Tuesday 20th October 2009 at Wallasey Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral CH44 8ED