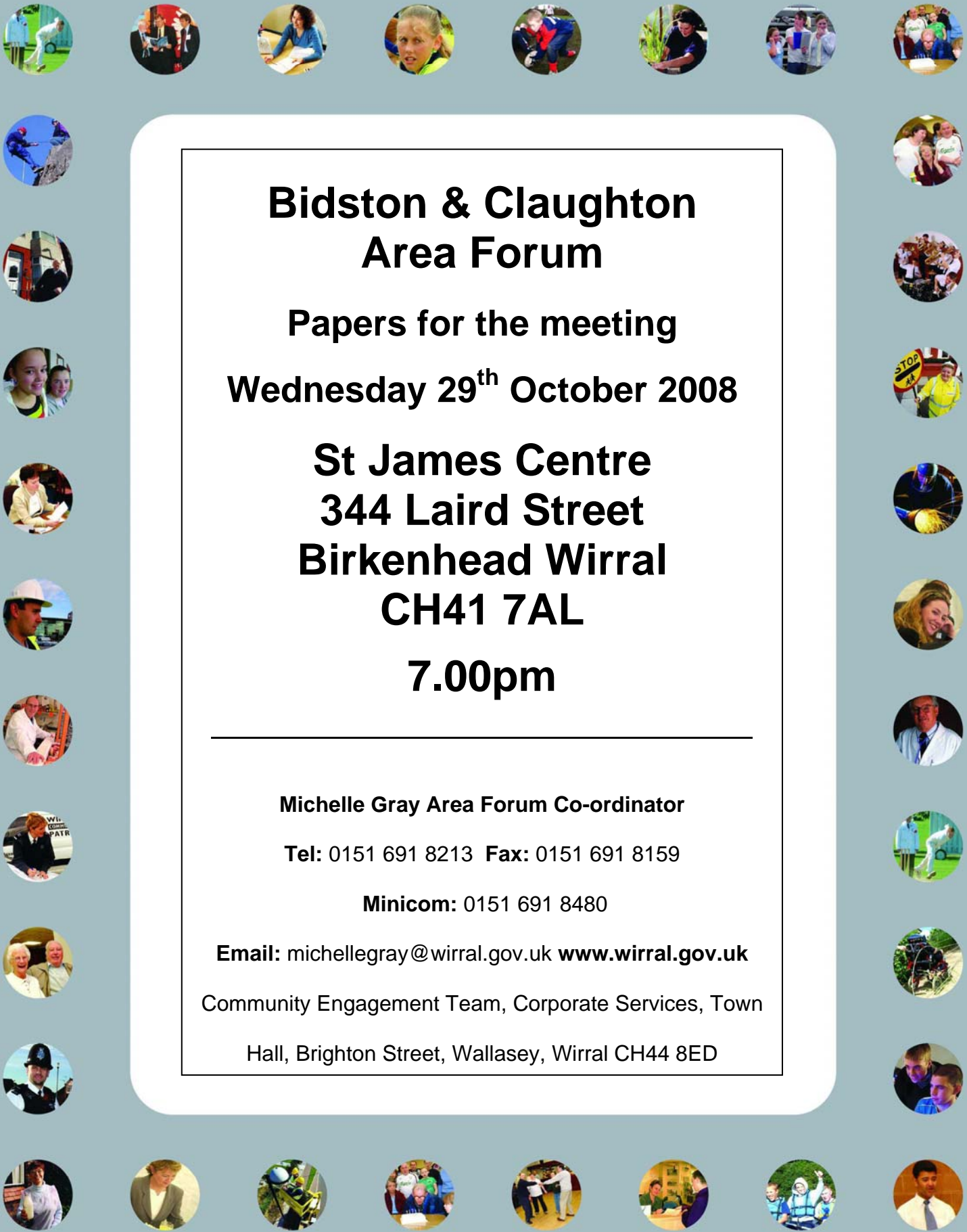


YOUR SAY 

 **WIRRAL**



Bidston & Claughton Area Forum

Papers for the meeting

Wednesday 29th October 2008

**St James Centre
344 Laird Street
Birkenhead Wirral
CH41 7AL**

7.00pm

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Section One

Minutes and matters arising

Minutes - Area Forum (Bidston and Claughton) - 25 June 2008

Present	
Chair	Cllr Denise Roberts
Ward Councillors	Jim Crabtree , George Davies , Steve Foulkes , Ann McLachlan
Community Representatives	Graham Cole (Business representative) , Pat Landsborough (Claughton Community Group)
Older People's Parliament Representative	Edith Niblock
Lead Officer	Russ Glennon (Head of Corporate Policy)
Street Scene Manager	Gary Cummings
Area Service Co-ordinator	Louise Harland-Davies
Wirral Primary Care Trust	Marie Armitage
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Dr Joyce Magennis
Merseyside Police	Inspector Paul Harrison
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service	Ben Ryder
Council Officers	Jan Johnson (Minute Taker) , Jim Thompson (Community Safety Team)
Apologies	Michelle Gray , Jean McIntosh , Cllr Harry Smith , John Webb (Director of Adult Services)

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Minute 1 - Welcome, introductions & apologies

The Chair, Councillor Denise Roberts, welcomed forum members and 18 members of the public to the Bidston & Claughton Area Forum meeting being held for the first time in St Bede's Chapel and Community Centre. A loop system was available for anyone with a hearing impairment. There was a presentation on the agenda of the Area Forum DVD Launch and, following that, there would be plenty of time for people to ask questions.

Apologies noted from Michelle Gray, John Webb, Jean McIntosh and Councillor Harry Smith

Minute 2 - Minutes & any matters arising

The minutes of the Area Forum meeting of 12 February 2008 were agreed and there were no matters arising.

Minute Decision : Resolved that: Minutes of the Forum held on 12 February 2008 be agreed.

Minute 3 - Area co-ordinators update

Louise Harland-Davies, provided an overview on behalf of Michelle Gray, the Area Co-ordinator's report:

Page 11 – Louise drew attention, under Sustainable Appropriate Housing, to affordable renovated houses for sale. Details were given for anyone interested in purchasing a property that has been refurbished to extremely high standard at an affordable price.

Page 12 – Good news item. Celebrating the achievements of 13 young people across the borough and the positive contribution they have made.

Page 15 - Safer Communities and partner updates from Police and Community Safety, both of which are on the agenda this evening.

Page 19 – Wirral Council's sign up to the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Page 31 –Progress report for all projects funded during 2006-2007.

Minute Decision :

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

Minute 4 - Area Forum DVD Launch

Area Forums were established to provide an opportunity for people who live and work in the area to have a say in local issues to be more active in decision making and shaping local services that affect their lives.

Each area forum is allocated money each year and local community groups can apply for funding. Six local schools filmed projects across Wirral that had been funded through Area Forum money. The schools went to visit and film the projects and then edited and produced the DVD. Every year funding enables voluntary groups to undertake projects to meet the needs of local people and the purpose of DVD is to promote and encourage people to apply to their local area forum for funding, by showing projects that have already been funded.

Many areas in Wirral have excellent quality of life, excellent housing, schools and high level of employment, however for some people it is a very different picture with high unemployment, high levels of anti social behaviour and unacceptable levels of ill health. The DVD showcases six projects:

Wirral High Flyers A trampolining club: as recommended by occupational therapists as a great exercise for children with special needs. Funding from the Area Forum enabled the club to carry on running.

Wirral Society for Blind and Partially Sighted Applied for funding to purchase equipment to take into the community and funding also helped with their outreach service.

Safeguarding Children's Services A year's funding for this children's charity helped in organising groups and planning a timetable for the whole year. The aim of the charity is to work with young people at risk and who have been abused. Children are usually referred by Connexions and Social Services in the 13-18 age group. Funding helped to twice run a successful 10 week programme, in conjunction with

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

Merseyside Victim Support and Witness Service This service helps support people in the community who have been a victim of crime and those giving evidence at trial. This voluntary organisation is funded by the Home Office, with each area being run by volunteers, referrals come from the police and other agencies. Here on Wirral there are 22 volunteers.

Ellerary Park School There are 82 children with special needs at this school. Funding from Area Forum will help towards building a new playground which will form a rich and stimulating environment in which to learn as well as having fun.

West Kirby Light Operatic Society Formed 58 years ago with members from all over the Borough. The Society perform musicals and operettas. Funding helps with overheads and performance expenditure.

The Lead Officer pointed out that if anyone wanted any more information around any of the projects or the Community Initiative Fund, they should contact Michelle Gray, the Area Co-ordinator who would be happy to help.

Minute 5 - Partner Information/Updates

Merseyside Police

Inspector Paul Harrison updated the forum on recent actions. Since the last forum police had made 788 arrests in the Laird Street location, which covers Noctorum, Claughton, Beechwood, Ballantyne and Oxtan. - They were successful with a crack house closure recently. They applied to the courts to evict tenants and this then sent a message out to the public that anti social behaviour would not be tolerated.

- In the last year a substantial amount of drugs and fire arms had been recovered. Police agenda was moving away from burglaries, robberies, wounding with violence, towards anti social behaviour and they were trying to put more resources into this new initiative.

- Closed down brothels in Oxtan area.

- In the past couple of weeks police were successful in breaking a vehicle thieving ring. They executed a number of warrants, recovered 30 stolen vehicles, made 5 arrests and the investigation was still ongoing.

One of the 4 local dedicated officers was present tonight to assist with questions relevant to this particular area. One current issue of concern was stone throwing, smashing windows etc in the Ballatyne Estate with the potential to kill someone. Officers were working really hard with the resources available to try and combat this.

Q – Would the recent announcement of anonymous witnesses not going to be allowed, affect some of the work you are doing?

A – It will affect witnesses at this present time and Police were concerned about whether they would come forward or not, although it was difficult to gauge what the impact would be. The Government was trying to bring some emergency legislation to plug that gap.

Q – There have been a number of incidents recently on Bidston Hill, what are you doing to control that anti social behaviour?

A – This is one area causing some issues and police would be putting in extra patrols. Wirral Anti Social Behaviour Team were looking to put their bus in the area, which was a youth club resource on wheels. Wirral wardens are aware of the issue and have promised more resources up there, so there were sorts of organisations trying to make difference.

Jim Thompson, Community Safety Team, confirmed there are other areas suffering from upsurges in anti social behaviour and there were a whole array of resources to help address those issues.

Q – Would like to thank Paul Harrison for work done around Bidston village traffic. Following a recent meeting with Cllr Harry Smith and community members, regarding a footpath and corner of land, could the Area Forum help look at this issue with a view to having the footpath transferred? This would be at a nominal cost, but would make a big difference.

A – Noted. The Area Forum, whenever they could, would support Ward Councillors

Q – A rep from Thornton Allotment Association, Vyner Rd North, raised a query about fencing around the site.

A – Operation Safe Space would be running through the summer to help with our hot spot areas, utilising extra officers to patrol hot spot areas - open areas including allotments. Give particular details after the Area Forum to dedicated officer who works in your area.

Q – Three weeks ago on Friday night phoned to say burglary in process and was informed that would not be able to send anyone out because police were dealing with anti social behaviour in town centre.

A – Burglary in process does take priority. Pass on details and I would investigate that.

Wirral Community Safety Team

Jim Thompson, Community Safety Team, reiterated Paul's comments. Wirral Community Safety Team was formed in 2000 and since that time we have seen dramatic falls in crime, burglary, wounding, car crime. Last year less than 1000 burglaries in whole of the Borough, with 142,000 households, making Wirral an even safer place now. Resources were being focused on anti social behaviour issues that blight people's lives and affect your daily quality of life.

Q – To what extent has CCTV contributed to Wirral being a safer place?

A – There are two factors, first they help with detection and secondly they make people feel safer and provide reassurance. There have been improvements in CCTV technology, with mobile units being a great asset.

Q – Is the alleygate scheme a help?

A – Yes, average reduction was 56%, rising in some cases to 70%.

Q – We initiated this scheme in Bidston Avenue and since then helped to reduce crime by 40%, but have now been informed that we have to pay insurers. Are we being victimized?

A – Closing alleyway takes it out of public responsibility, putting the emphasis on residents who have right on alleyway. Councillor George Davies had been trying to negotiate with the Council to negotiate a way of addressing this. The Area Forum supported the view that those who initiated this scheme should not be penalised.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

Ben Ryder, District Manager drew attention to the comprehensive information provided in the

pack. The Service had been given Beacon wide status for its work in improving public health and are continually trying to work with partners to push in areas that you wouldn't consider to be Fire and Rescue Service remit. They were working to improve communities in all different ways.

- Still trying to fit every home in Merseyside with smoke alarms and if you know of anyone who hasn't had home advice please let them know this is available.
- Looking to put strategy in place for grass fires.
- Two Beacon courses running for young people in Wirral.
- In conjunction with World Fire Fighter Games www.wffg.com, firefighters from all over the world coming to Merseyside for this very prestigious event. Many events will be held in the Echo Arena but some will also be held in Wirral. Everything will be free of charge for spectators and all money raised goes to charity. They were hoping to raise over £1m. The Games were being held over a 2 week period - 24 August to 7 September.

Wirral Primary Care Trust

Marie Armitage, Joint Director of Public Health, updated the Forum on activities within Wirral PCT. At the last Area Forum there was a presentation on the consultation that PCT did earlier in the year. There had been a very positive response with over 8000 people feeding back and 2,500 people who have said they would like to become more involved. The PCT would be making people aware of their proposed actions as a result of that feedback. On the whole people were very supportive and made some very helpful comments, particularly around GP opening hours which have been extended. There would be a wrap around on the local free paper next week which coincides with the 60th anniversary of the NHS.

PCT would put together their plan of health needs in Wirral area. There are currently high levels of cancer deaths and also specific problems with alcohol and these would be looked at in detail. This reflects what was shown earlier in the DVD about the comparisons in life expectancy in different areas of Wirral and what contributes to that. The plan would invest in things like:

- healthy eating, - childhood obesity, - smoking cessation, - improving physical activity
- ways of managing alcohol and a whole range of services for children and also older people because we know of the increasing number of older people in Wirral. This would include looking at preventative screening, bowel cancer, etc and how to improve services in areas with the greatest health needs.

Q – How much money has been invested into celiac disease, especially in children?

A – Cannot answer in depth, but would be happy to go away and look at that if you would give me details at the end of the meeting. Looking at investing in alternative sources of help, such as phone lines, where people have got similar long term health conditions and are keen to work with groups of people living with those conditions who could help and advise others. The aim is to help people to be as well as possible and support people in managing their day to day lives.

Q – Why hasn't Wirral expanded on departments so don't have to travel to places some distance away like Fazakerley? Why aren't services available in Wirral?

A – Some of this is about us spending that money carefully. Where there is a specialist unit, in order to get the best quality of service, e.g. Clatterbridge CCO, where people from other parts of the region travel to Wirral to have that treatment it makes more sense to concentrate that expertise in a particular place. However every condition and every service involve patients feeding back and PCT welcome their input when designing and commissioning services. If you let me have details afterwards and I will give you a specific response.

Q – GP practices. Change of medication, think it because a cheaper product but reason given was inhaler spoiling atmosphere. Had it for 10 years.

A – Would be very disappointed if not given the correct reason. Know what the issue is about. One of things have to consider is that NHS is huge organization, have a enormous impact on things like climate change. Content of inhaler – suggest that if have ill effects or doesn't suit you go back, there are a range of different products that can be tried.

NHS - Wirral University Teaching Hospital

Dr Joyce Magennis from WUTH drew attention to highlights on the information sheet provided:

- Huge problem with infection in all hospitals which was getting worse due to the increasing use of antibiotics and WUTH working with GPs to try reducing the overall number of antibiotics and types that are prescribed. Infection was one of top priorities over the last year and had seen a

huge reduction. Clatterbridge Hospital was infection free as was the Maternity Unit at WUTH - Waiting times for treatment had come down significantly over the last few years. Tough government targets to meet and we do meet them.

- Recent inspections - Women's Services attained level 3 accreditation. Out of 156 maternity units only 17 other achieved level 3, unit at APH is only one to get 100% at every standard at every level, according to National Survey at end of 2007. WUTH in top 40 performing hospitals, by independent benchmarking company.
- Developments this year – various projects including upgrading IT system, patients accommodation, medical equipment, upgrade of surgical wards. WUTH now a urology cancer centre, with patients travelling here for specialized treatment. New Stroke accommodation was being developed and WUTH keen to become one of the centres involved and also to become a centre of excellence for cardiac services.
- We would like to increase number of public members having an input into how the hospital run and what it does.

Q – Why are nurses allowed to go out in uniforms and go back into hospital? Should there be a change in procedure?

A – When I trained it was forbidden for staff to go out of hospital in uniforms, however the position has changed. One problem being lack of changing accommodation as all available space is used. Another factor is that infection control guidance says this would not make a difference, however I think there may soon be a change of thinking.

Q – You mentioned Macular Regeneration was now being treated at WUTH now.

A – Yes, there are 2 different drugs being used and treatment for anyone who needs it locally. This is as a result of feedback from patients.

Q – Does money follow through if patients coming from other health authority?

A – Yes it should do. The money follows the patient.

Q – On the infection issue, is there a way of sending older people away from main hospital so they don't pick it up?

A – One of things trying to do is preventing people having to be admitted to hospital if at all possible. So looking at preventative initiatives for older people, however if people need to be treated looking at alternative ways of providing services, i.e home or GP practice. Also looking at the use and development of St Catherine's site.

Wirral Older People's Parliament

Edith Niblock, Older People's Parliament rep, reported to the Forum on retirement villages. The OPP had visited two villages for OP, one in Rainhill and one in Orford. Edith reported that they were excellent facilities with everything on site. However there were additional charges which included payment for services, maintenance, supporting people. There were currently long waiting lists.

Minute 6 - Open forum/public question time

Q – Query around an allotment site to the rear of Sumner Road that was being cleared. When I questioned council worker I was told the land was being sold for single storey units for the homeless.

A – Councillor Foulkes commented that residents had requested the allotments to be cleared because of fly tipping etc there was no plans of any description other than to clear it on behalf of residents. Councillor Foulkes emphasised that anyone who represented the council should always be truthful and if anyone had any doubts they should report them.

Q – Bidston Hill is a green belt area. A few houses have been built, are there plans to build any more?

A – Bidston Hill is a site of Significant Scientific Interest and also an Urban Green site. In terms of housing development the council is concentrating on housing market renewal sites.

Q – In view of the situation with fuel shortage, why doesn't Wirral take the initiative to bring alternative technology and make use of little businesses setting up producing fuel by alternative methods? Think about having our own diesel green station for police cars, fire engines etc. This could be a savings initiative and I would ask you to think about it.

A – Councillor Foulkes responded that the previous minutes mentioned the Corporate Plan, one of the 5 priorities of which was to reduce the carbon footprint. The council's energy bill was likely to increase in the region of 40%, in cash terms this amounted to £4.5m over the next 4 years, so anything we could do to reduce would be considered. In terms of waste, the council has invested lot of money into refuse collection contract and our record is good.

Q – In line with the docklands development, why doesn't the Council consider bringing an alternative technology park and encourage alternative technology firms to come to Wirral? A further issue is the destruction of houses now. Building regs mandate certain standards, why not get a footprint for Wirral?

A – This was a very competitive market and the Council is committed to get the higher end of investment for Wirral.

Q – Questions about the new Tesco development.

A – This is on the site of a petrol filling station and is a retail outlet in a retail centre. Councillor Foulkes updated the Forum of the process that had been undertaken via Planning Committee and the developer. Currently there was an application for reduced opening hours and an appeal on the original application going in at the same time and these would be heard on 31 July.

Q – Will they sell alcohol?

A – Yes.

Q – Surely talking about ASB issue of licence could it be revised?

A – It is not an issue of whether they can sell alcohol, the licence is about whether the person holding the license is a fit person to sell alcohol.

Councillor Foulkes commented that if anyone wanted to continue the debate with ward councillors, they were available 6-7 every Friday Birkenhead Sixth Form College, and would be happy to continue representation at Planning Committee.

Minute 7 - Date of next meetings

The Chair thanked people for attending and St Bede's Centre for the use of the venue.

The next Area Forum would take place on 16 October in Bidston/St James, venue to be confirmed.

Councillor Foulkes emphasised the new opportunity coming via Area Forums, drawing attention to the You Decide campaign, which allocates £20,000 for Area Forums to buy specific council services. A report would go to Cabinet on 23 July. More details at the next forum but details would also be in the local press.

Section Two

Local Updates

Area forums provide an opportunity for people who live or work in Wirral to have a greater say on local issues and be more active in decision making and shaping local services.

They involve local ward councillors, police, Wirral Primary Care Trust, fire safety representatives along with community representatives and officers from various departments of the council. Forums also provide information about current services, how they can be accessed and ultimately raise awareness of local council initiatives.

This section covers relevant news under the Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy themes *strong local economy, sustainable appropriate housing, life chances for children and young people, health and well being and living and working environment.*

Strong Local Economy

Council Leader to deliver key speech at International Conference in Suzhou, China

The Leader of Wirral Council, Cllr. Steve Foulkes has been invited to deliver a key speech to a prestigious international conference in Suzhou next month. While in Suzhou, a private meeting will also take place between Wirral Council's Leader, Cllr Steve Foulkes and Mr Yan Li, the city's Mayor.

Currently, Suzhou has a number of sister city relationships throughout the world, but no significant relationships with cities in the United Kingdom. Renowned for its culture, history and tourism, Suzhou believe that a beneficial relationship can be developed with Wirral.

Cllr Foulkes says that the visit has been planned down to the finest detail: "We recognise that establishing a productive working relationship with Suzhou will be mutually beneficial for both regions. "During our visit, we'll be examining the possibility of working very closely on four key areas; education, trade, culture and tourism and port-related activity.

"If you take education as just one example, our schools have already recognised the significance of China. They are involved in significant initiatives to enable students to capitalise on the opportunities that China is likely to generate in the future. For example, Calday Grange Grammar School has been awarded a prestigious role in the development of Mandarin teaching through the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and has been chosen to be the "Confucius Classroom" for the North West of England.

Cllr Foulkes added: "And schools are just one example of how we in Wirral are positively engaging with China. In addition we are keen to progress discussions with Peel Holdings to deliver a significant link between businesses in Suzhou and the Wirral Waters project. The Government of Suzhou has expressed a strong desire to establish formal links with Wirral and I am confident this visit will be the start of a relationship that will deliver significant benefits to the children and businesses of Wirral."

Lindsey Ashworth, Development Director at Peel Holdings who is leading the delivery of the Wirral Waters project said: "The significance of this potential relationship cannot be underestimated. I have been impressed already by the commitment shown by both Wirral Council and the Government of Suzhou. Our ambition for Wirral Waters is to deliver a truly world class waterfront and the significant interest already shown by China must be capitalised upon to help us achieve that."

Life Chances for Children and Young People

£880,000 Lottery boost for play projects

Wirral Council and Wirral Play Partnership - with the support of hundreds of Wirral children and young people - have successfully secured a massive £881,208 for children's play from the BIG Lottery Fund.

The money will fund seven play projects across Wirral over the next three years, and will help deliver Wirral's Play Strategy and provide more and improved play opportunities across Wirral.

Projects include: -An extensive Community Play Ranger scheme to provide outreach play sessions in parts of Wirral where no formal opportunities currently exist. The rangers will facilitate play in local parks, open spaces and informal play spaces, and encourage participation in active play.

-The development of four exciting Adventure and Nature play areas incorporating natural landscapes and new fixed play equipment.

-A Play Practitioners project to provide supervised open access play sessions in five identified locations across Wirral

-An inclusive 'Play For All' project which will encourage children to access local free play opportunities and engage other children through play. It is estimated that nearly 15,000 children and young people aged five-16 years will benefit from the new play projects and facilities across Wirral.

As part of the projects' development, the Council consulted with over 1,000 children and young people through surveys and focus groups. This involved nearly 60 schools, as well as representatives from a range of statutory and voluntary agencies who attended Play Strategy seminars to develop a Play Policy and Strategy for Wirral.

Children highlighted a number of issues including safer routes to play, the need to feel safe in their play space with the support of qualified staff, more challenge and risk in equipped play areas, and better access to natural play environments. They suggested more localised play places designated for play within short walking distances so they could 'see and be seen'. They also wanted increased access to free play through inclusive play provision for vulnerable children and young people and more opportunities to access local play facilities, including use of local schools for play and playschemes which are open all year round.

Welcoming the big Lottery boost, Cllr Chris Meaden, Wirral Council's Play Champion said: "This money means that more children and young people will be able to access free play and socialise with friends on their doorstep. Children need space to play in the community and play is nature's training for life which is essential for a healthy and happy childhood. We want Wirral children to be afforded the best possible play opportunities and facilities and the award will enable a number of play projects to come to fruition"

New Children's Centres for Wirral

Wherever you live in Wirral, if you have children under five there will soon be a new centre – designed with you in mind. Wirral Children's Centres are continuing to grow with another phase of nine centres now opening across the borough.

There are already ten centres serving local communities as a one stop shop for children under five and their families. The state-of-the-art centres provide a rich environment of activities, advice and support services for parents of young children and they put childcare and early education at the heart of the community.

The new phase will see nine new centres opening to serve areas of Wirral which, as yet, have not been able to benefit from a facility.

On Tuesday September 16th Stephen Hesford MP will be opening both the Hoylake and the West Kirby Children's Centres.

Other new centres are either opening soon or have already opened in Bebington, Eastham, Moreton and Saughall Massie, New Ferry, Oxton, Pensby and Thingwall, Prenton. Existing centres are at Bidston and St James, Birkenhead and Tranmere, Bromborough, Cloughton, Leasowe, Liscard, New Brighton, Rock Ferry, Seacombe and Woodchurch.

Phil Davies, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning, said: "There really is something for everyone at your local Children's Centre. The range of activities is excellent – from breastfeeding advice, specialist support and advice on health issues to 'stay and play' sessions, craft activities and other fun activities the children love. "I would encourage parents to just pop in and see what there is on offer at their local centre...much of it is free and is a great way to make sure children are getting the best start in life."

Wirral Youth Service

Youth work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society, through informal educational activities which combine fun, challenge and learning. The Service works with young people aged 13-19 years, and specifically targeted young people aged 20 until their 25th birthday who have additional needs and need support with transition into adult life/services.

The Cavendish Youth Club: is open on Monday and Wednesday 7.00 pm – 10.00pm. The newly refurbished club is proving very popular with young people; there are now separate areas for specific activities including a chill area, a computer room and a fitness room. The D.i.ing and M.C.ing continues in popularity with the young people, this activity is currently very popular and likely to remain so for some time. A small group recently achieved an accredited outcome having successfully completing a food safety and hygiene course, Six young people achieved an accredited outcome in first aid course. The staff have recently held a sexual health workshop which was attended by eight young people.

The North End Young People's Project: works with young people in the Bidston and Claughton areas of Birkenhead. Work has continued with Birkenhead Park Sports Association, participating in Festival of Sport. During the summer, as well as running a brunch club, NEYPP organised games sessions, including rounders, giant draughts, giant skittles and jenea, in Birkenhead Park. In addition to this, young people from the NEYPP took part in the coastal walk, some participated in dance workshops, others saw 'Dancing on Ice' at the Echo Area, some went to Manley Mere and another group went to a restaurant for a meal. Work to become a Health Promoting Youth Unit is nearly complete.

The Fender Youth Action Project: works with young people from Beechwood and Ballantyne Estates. Regular streetwork has enabled young people to have access to support and advice and to participate in informal sessions about issues that are important to them and their well-being. One group of young women, 'Girlzgroup,' made a successful bid for £1700 to the Youth Opportunity Fund. This money will enable the girls to take up a range of health related activities to help them to develop a healthier lifestyle.

Safer Communities

Wirral leads the way in reducing volume crime

The level of reported volume crime is reducing faster in Wirral than almost any other area of England and Wales, figures have shown.

In the first quarter of this year, Wirral reported the second biggest reduction in crimes such as burglary, vehicle crime, violence and criminal damage compared to the same period last year.

And these figures are just a further demonstration of what is more than three years of achievement by Wirral's Joint Community Safety Team in meeting the Government's PSA1 target for crime reduction; achievements that were recently acknowledged by the Home Office, who invited members of the Wirral team to a reception celebrating the most successful crime reduction partnerships in the country.

The facts speak for themselves. Volume crime in Wirral dropped by 32% in the first quarter of this year, compared to the same period in 2007. Only the crime reduction partnership in Mid-Devon bettered this performance out of 424 partnerships in the country. Over the last three years, Wirral's Joint Community Safety Team, which brings together staff from Wirral Council, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, probation and Wirral PCT,



has far exceeded its PSA1 targets - the target was 20%, but the figures showed a 40% reduction.

Since April this year there have been the lowest monthly recorded totals since 2003 for burglaries to people's homes and the theft of motor vehicles. Between May and July 2008, Wirral has been the best performing local authority of all 19 North West authorities according to the British Crime Survey comparator crime figures. Steve McGilvray, Manager of the Joint Community Safety Team, puts the success achieved in the area down to the ability of staff from all the agencies to work together.

"The fact that we are all under one roof, I'm sure, has been a big factor in the level of crime reduction in Wirral. Our work is intelligence-led where all the agencies share and analyse crime data and target our attention on the areas where it is most needed, that's how we get results."

Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team June 2008 – September 2008

In addition to ongoing enforcement action against the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, specific activity has included:

Anti-Social Behaviour Advice Surgeries - A six-month programme of advice surgeries for residents in the private sector suffering with anti-social behaviour is continuing (launched May 2008) by Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team. This sees the Team's Respect Bus taken into communities and staffed with Enforcement Officers who can take complaints directly from the public and provide comprehensive advice. The full timetable can be found at:

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/News/Archive/200804/news_0000601.html

Respect Watch Scheme for Overchurch (launched July 2008) Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, in partnership with Merseyside Police and landlord Wirral Partnership Homes, has designated part of Royden Road as a Respect Watch Scheme area. The initiative is designed to protect residents who have already suffered at the hands of anti-social individuals and includes a Local Lettings Agreement with residents. The scheme will run for 12 months.

Wirral Show (July 2008) Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team's hoard of displays drew the crowds at this year's Wirral Show. Visitors were attracted to the Team's Respect Bus staffed with officers giving advice and information about tackling anti-social behaviour; not to mention the 'Love Your Neighbour' competition which required visitors to guess the number of love heart sweets in a jar. The team's ice cream van attracted both adults and young people, with its realistic mannequins styled to support the Department of Health campaign around binge drinking themed "you wouldn't start the night like this, so why end it like this?". Finally, the team's marquees drew in huge numbers focusing upon the theme of graffiti. A graffiti wall was used to interact with young people highlighting the consequences of committing graffiti, including Fixed Penalty Notice and prosecution, up to the penalties of eviction and ASBO.

Celebration for Seacombe young people (July 2008) - A Celebration of Achievement night, hosted by Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, saw thirty-one young people from Seacombe who had just completed Sport Leadership programmes, receive their awards. The presentations were made by Wirral's Mayor, Cllr. Adrian Jones, at Wallasey Town Hall. Young people aged between eight and nineteen took part in three courses, each lasting eight weeks. The courses, which have been run by an organisation called 'Play Like Brazil' for two years now, were staged at the Soccer Dome, Seacombe. The programme is supported by a range of partners, including the Live Wirral Wardens, Wirral Partnership Homes, RegendaFirst (Maritime) Housing Association, Riverside Housing Association, Seacombe Residents' Group, 'Play Like Brazil' and Wirral Council's Community Sports Development Unit.

Operation SafeSpace (launched July 2008) - A partnership initiative, led by Merseyside Police, which aimed to increase the use of parks and open spaces. This involved, throughout the summer months, enforcement activities across hot-spot parks by the police and diversionary activities throughout the summer in parks, open spaces and multi-use games areas. **Challenge & Support Respect Project** launched (September 2008) - A multi-agency early intervention process for dealing with young people engaged in, or at risk of engaging in, anti-social behaviour. The process takes a twin-track approach of both 'challenge' (in terms of enforcement action for unacceptable behaviour) and 'support' (in terms of intervention to tackle the underlying causes of their behaviour and/or to divert them from anti-social behaviour). Between 750-1,000 children and young people (aged up to 19 years) are expected to go through the process over the next year. Wirral has received £250,000 over three years from the Department for Children, Schools & Families to support the project.

3G CCTV As discussed, the 3G CCTV system is owned and operated by Wirral Council with two laptops which are loaned to Merseyside Police for access to the cameras within their Neighbourhood. At present we have the following cameras situated at the below 'hotspots' -

Tranmere: Church Road, Bedford Road / A41, Rodney Street, Well Lane / Victoria Park

Woodchurch: Hoole Road, Pemberton Road, 2 new cameras to be sited soon -, Big Meadow Road, Eltham Green shops

Others: Stadium Road, Bromborough, Hillburn Drive, Birkenhead, Grange Road West, B'head, Illford Ave, Poulton

The cameras within Tranmere and Woodchurch (4 in each) have been purchased using Neighbourhood Management funding and cameras are deployed through the 'hot-spotting' process through their Neighbourhood Action Groups operated through Merseyside Police and their respective Neighbourhood Management with data supplied through the Joint Community Safety Team and Police Intelligence. That is the agreed protocol so that there won't be a precedent set by anyone 'shouting loudest' and there is a clear rationale based upon data mapping.

Camera deployment for the rest of Wirral is determined through the same process as above in respect of data however it is through the Joint Agency Group which consist of a variety of agencies which have signed up to the Data Sharing Protocols.



Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

The Fire Service on Wirral is delivered through 6 community fire stations located at Birkenhead, Bromborough, Heswall, Upton, West Kirby and Wallasey. We are committed to innovative and imaginative change in order to help make our communities safer and stronger. We are also committed to integrated working with other authorities, agencies and the voluntary sector to improve public safety and well being.

We have an **Integrated Risk Management Plan 2008/09** which sets out the measures which are intended to be taken to continue the modernisation and improvement of services to the people of Merseyside. This I.R.M.P can be viewed online at www.merseyfire.gov.uk/media or copies are available at local libraries and One Stop Shops.

Community engagement remains the cornerstone of our proactive activity, in particular the delivery of the **Home Fire Safety Checks** and the provision of free smoke detectors were necessary. We continue to improve our effectiveness by utilising intelligence led targeting of **HFSCs**. We are currently developing household specific dwelling fire prediction software to assist in the process. The Service has set challenging performance targets and we are pleased to report that Wirral stations regularly achieve and exceed these targets. During the last quarter the Fire Service visited nearly 6,000 homes on Wirral to complete Home Fire Safety Checks.

Following a successful campaign in schools prior to the summer break and close links during the holiday period between Community Safety Team and stations, we saw 65% reduction in reported Anti-Social Behaviour.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service was extremely proud to have hosted the 10th **World Firefighters Games** at the end of August this year. Over 3,000 fire-fighters and their families from across the globe travelled to Merseyside to participate in the event, which were a resounding success with the U.K. team topping the medals table! The event incorporated a wide-ranging and innovative community engagement programme. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority are very proud of their record in the field of community engagement and the Games represented a great opportunity to continue with this work and engage with people that perhaps we hadn't previously been able to reach.

Following on from the success of our collaborative **Bonfire Strategy** in 2007, which saw a significant reduction in the number of bonfires requiring Fire Service attendance and decrease in the illegal selling and storing of fireworks, we are again working in partnership with the Police, Trading standards, Probation Service and Community Safety Team to ensure the same impact over the bonfire period this year. The number to contact to report suspected illegal storage and/or sales of fireworks and bonfire material that requires removing is

FREEphone 0800 731 5958

Fire Support Network is a non-profitable registered charity which works in partnership with the Fire Service on Merseyside to promote fire safety to the local communities through volunteers and partner organisations. Volunteer roles vary from working directly with the fire-fighters, leafleting and replacing batteries in smoke detectors to providing an after fire care service and fund raising. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can register online at www.firesupportnet.org.uk or contact via telephone on 0151 296 4600.

FSN will be holding their annual **Winter Warm Campaign** this October and will be on the Wirral as follows - Thu 16th Oct Rockferry Library & Fri 17th Oct- Wheatland Lane, Seacombe. The events take place between 10am – 2pm and anyone with aged electric blankets should bring them along to be tested by qualified personnel, if condemned they will be replaced **free of charge**. The first 50 people at the events will also receive a **free carbon monoxide detector!** Fire Service personnel will also be in attendance to offer advice on home fire safety and arrange appointments to perform home visits if required.

In conjunction with the operational crews FSN will be organising a **Bonfire Poster Campaign** in schools across the Wirral. The aim of this campaign is to educate and inform the children of the dangers of fireworks, help reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and engage with the children. We are hoping to offer a prize for the winning poster and a visit for the winner's class to a fire station. After a successful **Christmas in the Community** event last year, which was held at Heswall Community Fire Station, jointly arranged by FS and FSN, discussions are underway to hold at least 2 similar events at stations on the Wirral this December. Partner agencies will be invited to attend to provide information and advice to the community. We are currently working closely with Wirral PCT on the **Smoke Free Homes Campaign**, the aim of which is to encourage smokers to make a pledge not to expose their family and friends to second hand smoke in their homes and cars, this will also assist in the reduction of accidental fires in properties and vehicles due to smoking related material. This scheme is currently being piloted in Heswall and surrounding area prior to being rolled out across the Wirral.

Community Fire Stations

- | | | |
|--|----------|---------------|
| • Birkenhead: Exmouth Street. Birkenhead | CH41 4AX | 0151 296 5325 |
| • Bromborough: Dock Road South. Bebington | CH62 4SQ | 0151 296 5925 |
| • Heswall: Telegraph Road, Heswall | CH60 OAF | 0151 296 5805 |
| • Upton: Arrowe Park Road. Upton | CH49 OUF | 0151 296 5895 |
| • West Kirby: The Concourse. West Kirby | CH48 4HX | 0151 296 5955 |
| • Wallasey: Mill Lane. Wallasey | CH44 5UE | 0151 296 6180 |

For a FREE Home Fire Safety Check, including FREE smoke alarm installation if required please contact Fire Service Direct on FREEphone 0800 731 5958

Health and Well Being

Smokefree Wirral – One year on and successfully Smokefree

July 1st marked the first anniversary of the banning of smoking in public places in England. The good news in Wirral is that the concept of going smokefree has been widely embraced by the vast majority of people. There has also been a tremendous level of compliance and support from local employers and businesses.

So what has Smokefree Wirral been up to recently? Smokefree Wirral is a partnership between the Primary Care Trust and Wirral Council. The partnership aims to reduce the risks associated with tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke. You may have observed the Smokefree trailer at various venues over the last year, maybe in Birkenhead town centre, leisure parks or at the Wirral Show. With couches, a flat screen TV and activities to take part in, it's a great place to be.

Young People The Stop Smoking Service along with Smokefree Officers has been attending various youth events in order to reduce smoking uptake in young people and to offer advice and support to those wishing to quit. Over 100 young people have tried the new Age Progression Software, an innovative way of demonstrating the harmful effects of smoking on facial appearance, designed to encourage young people and adults to stop smoking or better still never to start. In addition, Environmental Health has initiated a Mersey wide policy development to tackle young people smoking on school buses.

Black and Ethnic Minority groups The Stop Smoking Service has developed a specialist provision for those using tobacco from other countries, with translation services and the choice of a male or female advisor. Around 100 trained Council Staff have been increasing awareness of this service as part of their normal roles; stop smoking advice can now be received at One Stop Shops, libraries and from community staff.

For the last month One Stop Shops have asked every customer if they would like advice about stopping smoking, reaching around 3,500 Wirral residents a week. Partnership working with Wirral Change and the Wirral Multi-cultural Organisation has resulted in many smokers from varying communities quitting tobacco use.

Smokefree Homes Pledge Wirral PCT is launching a smokefree homes campaign. The main aim of the campaign is to reduce children's exposure to cigarette smoke by persuading parents and carers to refrain from smoking in the presence of children, particularly in enclosed places like the home and car. This will impact on the health of babies and children, reducing childhood ailments and will also reduce adult smoking rates. At the heart of the campaign is the Smokefree Pledge which we are hoping parents and carers will take to ensure their homes and cars remain free from cigarette smoke. Once parents or carers have made the pledge we can send them a range of exciting products for their children.

Consultation To support and encourage responses in Wirral Smokefree Northwest postcards were used as a quick and easy way for the public to respond in large numbers. These have been used at various public events and are placed in Wirral One Stop Shops. An online web page was also developed and Smoke Free Wirral was out in Birkenhead Town Centre to engage with local people. A Smoke Free Wirral Response has been drafted but will only be finalised when we are able to insert public responses.

Primary Care Trust

NHS Constitution - Introduction

1. Alongside Lord Darzi's review of the NHS, the Government published in July 2008 a draft UK-wide constitution setting out NHS values and the rights and responsibilities of 'people who pay for, use or work for the NHS'.
2. The PCT is supporting this consultation.

3. The 12 week consultation began in August and will end on the 17 October 2008.
4. During this time the PCT will be:

Raising awareness of this draft national consultation through our communications network, ie via our and partner websites, press releases and advertorials.

Briefing any LINK meetings and Area Forums which take place within the consultation period on ways to respond. The draft consultation was presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) meeting on 2 September 2008. The OSC will consider their response at their October meeting. Inviting a group of people from those who have said they wish to be actively involved with us to an event to provide them with a specific opportunity to generate some responses.

Contacting partner organisations who work with hard to hear groups such as Black & Racial Minority, disability and faith groups to ask them to publish the consultation to ensure people in these groups have their say. Undertaking staff briefings to ensure those of us working in the organisation can contribute.

Making a formal response on behalf of the PCT.

5. Should anyone wish to contact the PCT on this matter they should do so via our 'Have Your Say' team (telephone number 0151 647 4251).

Summary of the Consultation

6. The constitution poses 17 questions, and is summarised in a quick guide document .
7. There is a lot of supporting information on the Department of Health (DH) website e.g. 'handbooks' explaining some of the detailed thinking behind the values, rights and responsibilities proposed.
8. In addition, the PCT has a limited amount of literature supplied to us by the DH which we are able to send out on request.

PCT Advertorial Programme - An 8 week programme of full page advertorials has been placed in both local papers each week commencing on the 3/9. These cover service development areas or stories relating to the positive steps being taken by the PCT to promote good health and or treat ill health. The topics covered are:

Small Grants Programme: small amounts of money have been given to community groups to enable them to improve what they do.

AMD (age related macular degeneration): a new service has been commissioned which is helping to stop people going blind.

Stop Smoking: Stopping smoking can make a real difference to your life and the PCT are promoting the uptake of stop smoking services wherever it can

Waiting Times: PCT are increasing investment into services to ensure waits between gp appointments and hospital appoints are reduced.

Stroke services: There will be increased investment into preventing and treating strokes.

Better mental health: Healthy living can improve your mental health, the PCT are investing in early identification and treatment of mental health

Advice Services for young people: PCT have made an investment into on-line counselling services through Kooth.com. Plus 1 more campaign to be confirmed

Annual report

Copies of the Annual report to be launched at the PCT AGM on the 26/9 will be available at the meeting. The PCT will briefly report on some of the achievements of the PCT highlighted in the document

Wirral University Teaching Hospital 
NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust is pleased to be able to participate in the Local Area Forums and welcomes the opportunity to brief Wirral residents and our partner organisations on topical issues. Representing the Trust will be an Executive Director or Senior Manager and the elected Public Governor for the host constituency.

- Controlling Infection.....
 - Our Elective Surgical Unit at Clatterbridge remains MRSA bloodstream infection free – this Unit can undertake most planned surgical procedures including joint replacements.
 - Our Women’s Services Unit at Arrowe Park is also MRSA bloodstream infection free
 - The ‘rate’ of MRSA infections at the Trust (i.e. rate per 10,000 bed days) compares very favourably with national and regional rates:
 - Wirral = 0.86
 - Regional = 1.05
 - National = 1.16
 - The ‘rate’ of Clostridium difficile infections (i.e. rate per 10,000 bed days) also compares favourably with national and regional rates:
 - Wirral = 1.89
 - Regional = 2.11
 - National = 1.56
 - Reducing the incidence of MRSA and Clostridium difficile is a very high priority for the Trust and staff continue to implement a comprehensive action plan to achieve this.
 - In partnership with local GPs, our staff are working towards a more prudent use of broad-spectrum antibiotics that, if over-used, can make C.difficile infection more likely to develop.
- Improving Our Standards.....
 - Our Women’s Services achieved a ‘hat-trick of excellence’ when they were recently awarded CNST Level 3 accreditation. Of the 156 Maternity Units in the country, only 17 others have achieved Level 3 and our Unit is the only one to have achieved 100% in every standard at every level.
Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts (CNST) Level 3 is evidence that our maternity services are extremely safe, well-managed and overall ‘first-class’. This follows the Unit’s score of ‘best performing’ in the Healthcare Commission’s Maternity Services Review and being named ‘best in the region’ in a national survey of new mothers and mothers-to-be at the end of 2007
 - For the second year running we have been named as one of the country’s Top 40 performing hospitals by an independent benchmarking company that compares our performance in 20 key areas – including infection rates, mortality rates and waiting times – against other, similar hospitals.
 - In the 2006/07 Healthcare Commission Annual Health Check we scored ‘good’ for our use of resources and ‘good’ for the quality of our services. Note – the 2007/08 assessment is due to be published on 16th October 2008
 - An external assessment of our standards by the Patient Environment Action Team resulted in the following scores being awarded to the Trust for 2008 -

	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Privacy & Dignity</i>
<i>Arrowe Park</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Clatterbridge</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
- Consulting with Local People
 - During October the Trust is consulting with local people on its draft Public Health Strategy. A copy of this is enclosed in this briefing pack and you are invited to contribute by answering the questions on the back page. The closing date for responses is 31st October 2008.
- Providing New Services.....
 - The Trust is now able to offer women who require a hysterectomy a new, less invasive type of operation, the benefits of which include a shorter stay in hospital, fewer complications and a shorter recovery time. Ladies who are suitable for this type of ‘keyhole’ surgery will be able to discuss treatment options with hospital staff in clinic.
 - The Trust is now designated as a centre for providing drug therapy for age-related Macular Degeneration. This is a new, local service for the benefit of Wirral residents.
 - The Trust is a designated Urology Cancer Centre for Wirral, Chester and Northern Cheshire patients requiring major cancer surgery

- We are the only NHS organisation in Merseyside and Cheshire to offer a new laser technique – the *greenlight laser* – that is transforming the treatment of prostate conditions for men.
- We will soon be bringing our Rheumatology services closer to where people live and work with the appointment of an additional Consultant Rheumatologist – clinics will soon be up and running at St Catherine’s Community Hospital and Victoria Central Hospital as well as Arrowe Park & Clatterbridge Hospitals
- We now provide Sexual Health services in the community – closer to where people live and work
- Easy to Use Website.....
 - Our new-look, easy access website can provide lots of useful information for patients, the public, staff and GPs about the Trust and its services go to www.whnt.nhs.uk
 - The website is speech enabled for browsers with sight related problems
 - The new, easy click, ‘email a patient’ facility continues to be a popular feature
- Come and Join Us!
 - As a Foundation Trust we are keen to involve our Public Members in helping us to shape future services – we currently have more than 5,800 Public Members and are keen to recruit more. Public Members can get involved as much or as little as they like – from just receiving ‘Public Membership News’, our regular newsletter, to participating in surveys or standing for election as a Public Governor.
 - The Trust will shortly be holding elections for Public Governors to represent the Public Members in Bidston and Ellesmere Port – if you, or someone you know is interested in standing, please contact the Membership Office ☎ 0800 0121 356.
- For more information.....
 - The Trust has published its Annual Report and Accounts for 2007/08. This can be accessed via our website www.whnt.nhs.uk or a copy can be obtained from the Membership Office at Arrowe Park Hospital ☎ 0800 0121 356

Living and Working Environment

New facility preserves local history

Wirral Council’s Archive Service will open the doors to its new, cutting edge records facility on 1st September.

The new premises at the Cheshire Lines building on Canning Street, Birkenhead, features a spacious search room, with microfilm and microfiche readers and state of the art computers to support research into local history. The facility boasts over 5 miles of compelling documents, covering local government, workhouses, schools, hospitals, law courts and businesses, including the world-famous Cammell Laird shipbuilders. Photographs, maps, plans and local newspapers dating back to the nineteenth century are preserved in a large, purpose-built strong room along with records including census, electoral and burial registers, which give an interesting insight into Wirral’s family history.

Leader of Wirral Council, Councillor Steve Foulkes explained: “The new archive facility will provide a much better service, combining important historic documents with modern technology. The building is in a convenient location, with good bus and rail links making it easy to access a wealth of information on local history. People will be impressed by the thousands of documents available; the oldest being a medieval title deed for Wallasey dating back to 1447! I am delighted with the improvements and look forward to opening our doors to the public.”

Councillor Jerry Williams, Wirral’s Heritage Champion added: “The opening of the new Wirral archive facilities is an important response to the never ending enthusiasm and interest in the diverse history of Wirral that has local, national and international significance. Wirral’s numerous Historical Societies, are highly knowledgeable, well organised, with an energy and drive few could match. They have pioneered the preservation of important archive material.

The sheer numbers of local history publications published in recent years is an example of Wirral people's love of local history. The amazingly productive partnership between Wirral Council and local history organisations is making major strides forward. I applaud this latest development."

Wirral Archive Service is running free Saturday morning workshops aimed at everyone from schoolchildren to families and local history groups. The sessions will be brought alive with original documents and cover topics including family history, the history of Wirral, schools and education and Wirral at war.

The archive service is accessed via Shore Road, Birkenhead, and is open from Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm and Saturdays from 10am to 1pm. For more information call 0151 606 2929 or email archives@wirral.gov.uk. Alternatively, visit www.wirral.gov.uk, go to 'Leisure and Culture' then select 'Records and Archives'

Cross Cutting (across all themes)

Week commencing 3rd November is National Diversity week!!!

Equality Watch, the Council's equality and diversity programme team, are delighted to announce that Wirral Council's first Employee Diversity Day will take place on Thursday 6th November and all **council employees** are invited to attend.

All employees are encouraged to drop-in on the event and sample cultural food, see what services are provided by our local communities, talk to colleagues who have joined a staff diversity forum and also to 'road test' the new online equality training.

As part of Wirral's ongoing commitment to equality and diversity issues, Wirral hosted its first pilot equality watch think-tank session on Thursday 4th September. Community leaders / projects / organisations were randomly selected from the council's community database, to attend.

Those present were asked for their views on the following:

1. What equality and diversity issues do you feel will be affecting your community(s) in 5 years time? What issues are affecting them now?
2. What are your projects/ organisations doing to support those issues? What will you need to do to support future issues?
3. How would you / your organisation like to get involved in the council's equality and diversity programme?
4. What is the council doing to address community issues? What will the council need to do to support future issues?
5. How are you able to participate in working together to support Wirral's diverse communities? How would you like to participate in the future?

The information provided during the think-tank session will help the council as we embark on major equality and diversity developments, including a Single Equality Scheme, full equality impact assessments for services and policies, a comprehensive engagement strategy, equality and diversity training for all staff and councillors, and identifying the equality and cohesion priorities for Wirral. A summary of the outcomes of the day will be available from October 2008 for anyone who may be interested.

Please email equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk to request a copy.

Equality Watch newsletter - Since December 2007 five bi-monthly electronic version newsletters have been produced for council staff that have access to the intranet. We are pleased to report that a full colour, glossy brochure will be produced in February 2009 that **all** council staff will receive with their payslips. We also intend to distribute this (and future editions of the glossy version) to various locations throughout Wirral such as libraries, one stop shops, health centres, community centres / groups etc.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list as a contact point, please contact Maxine with your details and how many copies you would like to receive.

Disability Issues Voice UK – is a national charity supporting people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable people who have experienced crime or abuse. We also support their families, carers and professional workers.

We provide a telephone helpline, the line is attended from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday: **Telephone 0845 122 8695** Our statistics show that calls to our office from people needing advice and assistance are increasing steadily. Each new case represents a shocking, traumatic event for a person with learning disabilities and their families and carers.

For more information please visit www.voiceuk.org.uk or call 0845 122 8695.

Sexual Orientation Issues Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill (17 July) - Parliament passed important new legal protections against incitement to hatred on grounds of sexual orientation on Wednesday 7 May 2008. The Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill received Royal Assent on 8 May, another historic step towards legal equality.

Stonewall believes that the newly-extended criminal offence of incitement to hatred will go some way towards addressing the hatred and violence directed towards lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in Britain at a time when homophobic attacks are on the increase. It sends a strong signal that such behavior is unacceptable in a civilised society. Like race, a person's sexual orientation is an intrinsic characteristic for which no citizen should ever feel under threat of verbal or physical violence. Regrettably the House of Lords also voted, by 178 votes to 164, to retain an amendment to the Bill that Stonewall believes 'is unnecessary and could mean that a very small number of people of extreme views attempt to avoid prosecution by citing a 'religious defence'. We will work hard to press Ministers, the Crown Prosecution Service and police forces to ensure that this defence is not deployed unscrupulously by those who incite hatred'.

Merseytravel

An expansive vision for Merseyside

James Abbott reports on rail developments in this year's European Capital of Culture

Merseytravel has expansive plans for the local rail system, with extension to the electrified network prominent among them. Third rail services from Liverpool city centre currently provide a connection at Bidston where there is an hourly class 150 service to Wrexham. Merseytravel would like to see better services on Wrexham route, not only to draw shoppers from North Wales into Liverpool to spend money with city's retailers, but also to improve labour mobility. The steelworks at Shotton closed in the 1980's but employment levels have bounced back to the point where there is now a shortage of skilled labour in the Welsh border area. British Aerospace and Toyota have big workforces, and the Corus remains an important local employer. Improved rail services from the city could benefit both areas, taking shoppers into the city and delivering key workers to the areas around the stations in the border area.

The PTE has looked at extending the third rail to Wrexham, but 'costs were in the stratosphere and way beyond our expectations' according to Alan Stillwell, Merseytravel's Director of Operations. A need for barrier fencing to deter trespassers, the number of substations required and problems with steel sleepers were all factors in this. As a result, Merseytravel is now looking at 25kV wiring between Bidston and Wrexham, with dual-voltage stock.

(copy of press release, supplied by Tony Garrett Wirral Transport Users Association)

Section Three

Funding

Every year each area forum has funding to give out to small community groups within their ward area. This funding is to help and support services that benefit the community. This section provides an update on how some of this money has been spent in this area.

The Community Engagement Team pilots a new and exciting way and giving money to the community.

July saw the first '*Participatory Budget (PB)*' event take place in Wallasey Town Hall. Wirral has been chosen as one of the national pilot areas for PB, so all eyes were on this event.

Every year, each area forum has funding available for organisations and individuals looking to carry out projects in their community.

Traditionally this funding has been allocated by a panel of councillors and community representatives assessing each application.

While this way of allocating the funding stayed the same for 8 out of the 11 area forums, the Bidston and Claughton and Oxton and Prenton Area Forums were chosen to pilot PB.

The purpose of PB is to allow the community itself to decide how the money should be spent in their own area.

Everyone who applied for funding was asked to come along and give a 3 minute presentation on their project and why they should be funded.

However, the unique part of PB is that all the applicants themselves get to vote on each others projects to see who gets funded.

The projects with the highest number of votes then received the funding they requested.

Comments from the PB event.....



"This process was more democratic than most funding application processes"

"Good opportunity to network & make links with similar organisations"

"This process was more democratic than most funding application processes"

Of course not all the comments were as positive as these! Like any other pilot project there are aspects of it that can be improved for next year. All the comments from the groups who took part in the event have been taken on board.

Our first PB Event proved to be successful and while lessons will be learned to improve the process for next year, we are confident 'Participatory Budgeting' will provide the community with more of a say on how money is spent in their area.



Area Forum Funding Progress Report - Bidston and Claughton *previously awarded monies - 2007/08 onwards*

Organisation	Birkenhead Park FC (Rugby Union)	Total awarded by this forum	£1,750.00	Total Awarded:	£1,750.00
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Project DetailsTo contribute towards the sports development programme working with young people in schools and the community and to provide equipment for new teams and activities at the club. **Progress Report** The club has carried out an extensive programme of sports development work in the community, in partnership with local schools, and has succeeded in launching two new youth rugby teams as a direct result of this. New kit and equipment has been purchased to enable the new teams to take part in competitive games and training. In addition to this a youth diversionary programme of activity has commenced which offers free use of the all weather pitch to local youths interested in sport.

Since running the programme there has been a noticeable decrease in vandalism and petty crime, as local youths feel a sense of ownership.

Organisation	North Birkenhead Neighbourhood Forum	Total awarded by this forum	£491.50	Total Awarded:	£491.50
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Project DetailsTo contribute towards annual community fun day at Ilchester Square Park. **Progress Report** The fun day was held in August 2007, which provided activities for children, provided information on local organisations and brought the community together. The day was very successful and we are hoping to run one every year.

Organisation	St Peter's St Vincent De Paul Society / Conference	Total awarded by this forum	£1,779.69	Total Awarded:	£1,779.69
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Project Details To contribute towards cost of sending 16-20 disadvantaged children to the Ozanam Camp in North Wales for one week. **Progress Report**The camp was held in July 2008 and 20 children attended from Noctorum. There were many different activities available and the children were encouraged to develop their social skills, interacting with their peers and the volunteer helpers. They were introduced and made aware of a different environment.

Organisation	Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)	Total awarded by this forum	£600.00	Total Awarded:	£600.00
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Project DetailsTo contribute towards cost of holding a three-day workshop to develop non-violent ways of resolving conflicts by building up self-esteem, communication skills and trust. **Progress Report**A weekend workshop was held in June 2008 and 11 participants attended, and worked with three volunteer facilitators. We were able to offer free places to the six participants not in paid work, and the seventh paid a reduced fee. The early sessions focussed on building up self esteem and activities progressed to looking at communication skills and assertiveness to the introduction of some basic ideas in conflict resolution. We received excellent feedback, and now have a band of volunteers offering to help with publicity for our next workshop, which is planned for late October 2008.

Organisation	St Vincent De Paul Society	Total awarded by this forum	£1,000.00	Total Awarded:	£1,000.00
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Project DetailsTo contribute towards the cost of giving under privileged children age 9-12 years the opportunity to attend a summer camp for a week, which they would not get without our assistance. **Progress Report** During the Summer nine children, two girls and seven boys from the North End and Bidston areas, attended the Ozanam Camp. In total 50 children from the Birkenhead and Bebington areas took part in the seven day camp. We also arranged for a family of six to visit our caravan, and we hope that we will be in a position to send another family. The children and family participating in the holiday have assured us that this was the highlight of their year, and will spread the information in their respective communities, bringing our organisation into contact with more people, and through these connections we are able to assist more people in our local community.

Organisation	Wirral Raynet	Total awarded by this forum	£100.00	Total Awarded:	£700.00
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Project DetailsTo provide a radio and tracking device to enable a quick response of deployment of emergency vehicles. **Progress Report** We have purchased the major part of the equipment and it has been used during several training events.

Organisation	Parkside United JFC	Total awarded by this forum	£213.00	Total Awarded:	£566.00
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Project DetailsTo purchase a football kit for the club. **Progress Report** The football kit was purchased and has enabled the children of the club to play football in the Wallasey Junior Football League for the present season. It has provided them with a sense of pride and we are very grateful for the support we received.

Organisation	Girlguiding Wirral	Total awarded by this forum	£500.00	Total Awarded:	£5,500.00
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Project Details To purchase equipment, training and storage to encourage guides with their leaders to get out of their meeting places to explore and enjoy the cycle ways of Wirral. **Progress Report** Planning permission has been obtained for the bike storage unit and the unit, bikes, helmets, lights and locks were delivered on 25th July 2008. Leader training will commence in September 2008, with four evening and weekend dates scheduled. The bikes went into use on Saturday, 26th July 2008, as part of an activity style camp for 250 girls from across Wirral. The bikes were a huge success with the guides and senior section members, with over 100 girls using them on the Wirral way during the week long camp. We expect units to start using them fully from September 2008.

Organisation	Friends of Eastham Country Park	Total awarded by this forum	£200.00	Total Awarded:	£1,560.00
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Project Details To create 3 inter-linked marked routes aimed at different levels of age and fitness to encourage people who are not used to walking and to guide people safely through the woods. **Progress Report** The materials have been purchased and the routes marked out. The work will commence in September 2008 and the map / information leaflet will be commissioned once the posts are installed, and will be available from the visitor centre and other sites throughout Wirral. This will encourage park users who don't venture far from the visitor centre to do so and promote exercise.