WIRRAL SOUTH CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE HANDBOOK 2014/15

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This Handbook provides practical guidance to everyone involved with Wirral South Constituency Committee; including members of the public, Elected Members (ward councillors), service delivery partners and Council officers. The guidance in this Handbook should be read alongside the Council's Constitution, which can be found here.

http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD867&ID=867&RPID=1000884748&sch=doc&cat=12881&path=12881

This Handbook sets out procedures and processes to help the business of the Constituency Committee run smoothly. While the Handbook supports the rules and procedures set out in the Council's Constitution (link above), the Council's Constitution will always take precedence over the Handbook.

"Wirral will be a place where the vulnerable are safe and protected, where employers want to invest and local businesses thrive, and where good health and an excellent quality of life is within the reach of everyone who lives here".

This is the vision and aspiration for Wirral. Neighbourhood working, through the Constituency Committees, will help improve the link between the strategic priorities and local priorities. It is the Constituency Committee that will deliver an area vision, which local Elected Members, local residents, service delivery partners, Council officers and voluntary, community and faith groups will drive and implement.

Wirral South Constituency includes the wards of Bebington, Bromborough, Clatterbridge, Eastham and Heswall.

Wirral South: Connecting People, Connecting Places, Connecting Lives

Wirral South Constituency Committee consists of fifteen Elected Members (three ward councillors for each of its five wards) and up to five Community Representatives (to be appointed); with the option to co-opt a further young person's Community Representative. Further detail on the appointment of Community Representatives can be found in Section 3.

This Handbook will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if required. Next due for review April-June 2015.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND TO NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING

The Localism Act 2011 gave councils more freedom to work together with others in new ways and introduced new rights for communities including a 'Right to Bid'. For example; when listed assets come up for sale or change of ownership, the Act then gives community groups the time to develop a bid and raise the money to bid to buy the asset when it comes on the open market. This 'Right to Bid' is intended to help local communities keep much-loved sites in public use and part of local life. Locally this has presented opportunities to forge new partnerships with communities to evidence, shape and deliver public policy and services across the borough.

Strong neighbourhood working is intended to provide the basis for the Council, public services and the wider community to facilitate a more flexible response to residents' issues through co-ordinated services and involving residents in shaping decisions and services. Local Councillors have a significant leadership role to play in this process.

Neighbourhood working was introduced in Wirral in mid to late 2013, with the Council, Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service taking the first steps to configure services into a Constituency footprint, mirroring the parliamentary (national voting area) boundaries (i.e., Birkenhead, Wallasey, Wirral South and Wirral West). Neighbourhood working operates across organisational boundaries to help ensure residents and services work together to improve their neighbourhood.

The benefits of neighbourhood working include:

- Greater opportunities for Elected Members to lead and influence local service delivery within their localities and to respond to local needs and priorities;
- Increased community confidence to explore creative and innovative approaches to meet local needs;
- Increased multi-agency working aimed at delivering better value for taxpayers' money by reducing duplication across service areas;
- A local focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by bringing the Council closer to the needs and priorities of local communities.

Each Constituency area will have a Constituency Plan produced by the respective Constituency Committee setting out the priorities and objectives for the area for the coming period. The Constituency Committee is supported by a local Public Service Board (see **Section 7**) which brings together a range of service, agencies and partners to co-ordinate the strategic delivery of the Constituency Plan and report progress to the respective Constituency Committee.

Confirmed Budget for 2014/15:

- Core Budget
 - £50K
- Local Transport Capital Funding and the Integrated Transport Block £77,750
- Wirral Health and Wellbeing Fund £50K
- Remainder of Core budget from 2013/14 £38,720.50
- Your Wirral Fund £35K

Total: £251,470.50

SECTION 3: ROLE OF THE CONSTITUENCY COMMITEEE

The role of Wirral South Constituency Committee includes the following:

- Agree desired outcomes, develop and monitor a Constituency Plan for Wirral South;
- Commission activities relevant to the Constituency Plan;
- Review and seek to establish the most effective operation of responsive front line services;
- Work towards resolving community issues which impact on a significant number of residents:
- Maximise the engagement of local residents and other stakeholders in decision making on matters which affect them.

The Committee's remit includes all locally delivered statutory services, enabling Elected Members and Community Representatives to exercise a much broader influence over activity in the public sector.

Wirral South Constituency Committee has a devolved budget. However, not all service decisions or budgets can be devolved to the Constituency Committee. Some budgets are allocated according to Wirral-wide criteria often in response to national requirements. In these cases there is a need to support service delivery patterns and different partner organisations outside local government and also to retain some budgets at the centre to support strategic service delivery, maximising economies of scale and efficiency.

Wirral South Constituency Committee will monitor the local impact of all public services. Meetings of the Constituency Committee will be open to the public and press (however there may be occasions when specific matters may need to be considered in private). Local residents interested in specific agenda items will be able to raise a question through a public question time (see **Section 4**).

Information will be easy to access, understand and tailored, as appropriate, to different audiences to support involvement, being aware of the equality requirements.

Conduct of meetings

Constituency Committee meetings are open to the public. Each agenda is published no less than 5 working days before the date of the meeting. These are published online at

http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=693

Committee meetings are held four times a year during the evening at 6pm, allowing those with daytime commitments to attend. The dates for this financial year are set out in **Appendix 1**.

For the Constituency Committee to have the information it needs to carry out its role, it may require the attendance of the relevant portfolio holder (Cabinet member), Director and/or any senior officer to provide evidence or information on

reasonable notice. To make sure that the Committee can carry out its business effectively, it is the duty of an officer of the Council to attend if asked to do so.

The work of the Constituency Committee is extremely varied and may involve making decisions, being involved in consultations and responding to questions from the public.

Conduct of Committee Members

Members of the Committee are required to make a declaration of any interest that is known to them in relation to an Agenda item at the start of the meeting. Members must disclose "disclosable pecuniary and non pecuniary interests" and how the interest arises (where necessary). It may also be necessary for members to make an interest known if an interest arises during the course of the meeting). Depending on the nature of the interest, the Member may be required to leave the meeting whilst that Agenda item is dealt with by the Committee. To ensure the smooth running of the meeting, each member should consider, when reading the Agenda in preparation, whether they need to declare an interest. Members should seek advice well in advance of the meeting from the Legal Services Officer at the meeting or Monitoring Officer if they are in doubt or have any particular queries or concerns in this regard.

Period of appointment

- Elected Members every four years
- Community Representatives for one municipal year

Vacant Community Representative positions may be filled within the municipal year subject to agreement by the Constituency Committee. If a recruitment process has taken place within the previous 6 months, applicants who were unsuccessful may be reconsidered in order to expedite the process.

Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Constituency Committee will be Elected Members and will be appointed by the Committee.

Wirral South Constituency Committee has agreed to have a rolling appointment of Chair and Vice Chair. As such the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee will be appointed during a standing agenda item at the previous meeting. For the purposes of all requests made in relation to that committee the most recently voted Chair assumes the related responsibilities from the close of the meeting at which they are voted as Chair until the close of the next meeting (at which they formally act as Chair).

<u>Criteria for Community Representatives</u>

- A representative is expected to be an active member of a group that operates within the Constituency, or has strong links within the voluntary, community and faith sector;
- A representative should have a defined area in which they operate, established networks and appropriate processes for passing information between the Committee and the community that they represent;
- A representative will bring additional knowledge and experience to Constituency Committee meetings (and other meetings such as Task & Finish Groups) that will support the decision making process.

Appointment process for Community Representatives

Wirral South has five places for the co-option of Community Representatives and has the option of adding a further Youth Representative (see below).

Invitations will be sought from community groups/voluntary sector organisations throughout Wirral South to nominate one of their members for co-option as a Community Representative. Said application will establish the applicant's links to the community groups/voluntary sector organisations by requesting sign off from the organisation in question. This opportunity will be advertised using various media platforms, Wirral CVS, Voluntary Community Action Wirral (VCAW) and other partners.

Applicants for the young person's representative position must be aged 16-25 (inclusive at the time of application). This will be advertised and promoted within youth forums, youth clubs/hubs and all schools and colleges throughout Wirral.

Elected Members and existing Community Representatives have a role to play in promoting the role of Community Representatives in the Constituency Committee. The recruitment process may be supported with a recruitment event at which existing Community Representatives would be expected to support and participate.

A 'Selection Panel' Task & Finish Group will be formed of Elected Members to consider and review all nominations. The Task & Finish Group may choose to interview all applicants or shortlisted applicants. The Task & Finish Group will make recommendations to the Constituency Committee about which Community Representative applicants should be considered for co-option. It is a matter for the Task & Finish Group how they select the nominees, but they must adopt a fair and transparent selection process.

Existing Community Representatives are welcome to reapply and are not disbarred from serving further term/s.

Substitutions

With the prior approval of the Chair, a Community Representative may substitute another named member of their group to attend a Committee meeting and/or Task & Finish Group on their behalf. Elected Members may nominate a substitute to attend a Task & Finish Group meeting/s on their behalf.

Voting rights

All Elected Members have voting rights. Community Representatives, whilst not having voting rights, can still undertake a full role in terms of sharing their views and knowledge and influencing discussions and debates. Where a vote is to be taken on an issue by Elected Members at Committee the views of Community Representatives will be sought prior to taking that vote.

Principles of conduct

All Elected Members are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Members' Code of Conduct also applies to co-opted members (such as the Community Representatives).

Any complaints received against Elected Members or co-opted members will be dealt with in accordance with the Protocol for Dealing with Complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct.

Expenses

Any travel and subsistence claim must be claimed in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme included in the Council's Constitution.

Training

The Council provides an ongoing programme of training seminars which provide background information to a range of issues pertinent to the Council. This training is available to both Elected Members and Community Representatives. Newly Elected Members and Community Representatives also receive an induction.

Task & Finish Groups

A Task & Finish Group can be set up by the Committee to undertake further work or analysis with a view to drawing together recommendations for the Constituency Committee to consider further.

Due to the composition of Wirral South Constituency Committee, any Task & Finish Group will consist of Five Elected Members and two Community Representatives (when appointed). The exception to this is the 'Community

Representative Selection Panel' Task & Finish Group. Due to the potential conflict of interest only Elected Members will sit on this Task & Finish Group.

Terms of Reference

- The Group will vote a participating elected member as Chair;
- The Constituency Manager will undertake an advisory role;
- Additional advisors may be appointed by the Group (including from partner agencies);
- The frequency of meetings will be agreed by the Group based on the nature of the task and timescales involved;
- Work will be carried out in a transparent, inclusive and timely manner;
- Progress will be reported and recommendations made to the Constituency Committee;
- All Task and Finish groups will be minuted
- Meetings will be held during the day, whenever possible

SECTION 4: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Community engagement

Wirral South Constituency Committee will support genuine opportunities for people to have their say. This will form part of standard practice and cover aspects from the delivery of services to policy and decision making. The Constituency Committee recognises that the most effective form of engagement is 'involvement'.

Public Question Time

As standard, each Constituency Committee meeting will include a Public Question Time. Time will be allowed for 'on the night' questions. In order to enable a comprehensive response at the meeting and to allow members of the public to participate who are unable to attend it is requested that questions be submitted in writing in advance of the meeting (where possible).

Subject to sufficient questions being submitted, no less than 20 minutes will be set aside for the Public Question Time. Replies to questions will be given verbally. If it is not possible during the Committee meeting to answer every question and/or there are questions that require further consideration, these will be responded to in writing within 14 working days by the appropriate officer. It is a matter for the Chair at each meeting and subject to the agenda whether to extend this time. Preference will be given to questions submitted in advance, but at the discretion of the Chair a further question/s from a member/s of the public in attendance may be allowed 'on the night'.

Process for the submission of questions:

Questions submitted prior to the Constituency Committee meeting must be in writing and relate to a single issue. This can be done by following the instructions on the Wirral South webpage: http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/council-and-democracy/neighbourhoods/wirral-south/about-committee

Residents with literacy issues and those who do not consider English to be their first language can have submissions made on their behalf or be supported to complete forms by Council One Stop Shops. Questions will be required to be submitted by no later than 4.00pm the afternoon before the Committee meeting. To further inform members of the public of this support, a standard statement will be made by the Chair prior to the question and answer session at each constituency Committee.

The Chair of the meeting will determine which questions will be dealt with at the Committee and the order in which they will be taken. Questions which are considered defamatory, unsuitable, frivolous or derogatory will not be accepted. Questions should not refer to individual officers or members of the Council by name.

Communications

Wirral South Constituency Committee is committed to ensuring that regular and meaningful information is made available to residents in all communities about the work of the Committee and activity in the area.

Wider methods of communicating with local residents, businesses and stakeholders are set out in Wirral South Constituency's Communications Plan.

SECTION 5: MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR WIRRAL SOUTH CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

At the heart of the Constituency Committee is the principle that whilst the process is elected member led, all service delivery partners and local residents have an important role in identifying local priorities to improve upon and solutions that will lead to improvements.

Key contacts for Wirral South Constituency Committee can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Chair and Vice-Chair

The Wirral South Constituency Committee has chosen to elect both Chair and Vice-Chair on a rolling basis. As such each Elected Member in attendance could prospectively hold either position at the following Committee. With this in mind various elements of the role below are essentially the responsibility of all Elected Members.

- Ensure that the Constituency Committee operates in accordance with the Council's Constitution;
- Provide leadership for the Committee through the chairing of each Committee meeting (Vice-Chair in the Chair's absence), in accordance with the contents of this Handbook;
- Ensure the production and effective implementation of the annual Constituency Plan (all);
- Plan the agenda for each Constituency Committee meeting with the Constituency Manager;
- Ensure that decisions taken at Constituency Committee meetings are implemented (all);
- Ensure adequate representation on Task & Finish Groups and that each group achieve its aims(all);
- Ensure that there are adequate opportunities for community engagement, particularly under-represented groups(all);
- Ensure that public meetings are delivered to the highest standard, demonstrating transparency in decision-making and cultivating the trust of the general public in local politics;
- Act as a spokesperson for Wirral South Constituency Committee where appropriate, including in relevant press releases and statements;
- Attend and be a member of other Committees or working groups when appropriate in the role as Chair;
- Foster and maintain a disciplined approach by the members involved, having a regard to high standards of behaviour and ethics;
- Champion the work of the Constituency Committee.

Elected Members

Members of the Council representing those wards included within Wirral South Constituency Committee boundary will endeavour to attend each Constituency Committee meeting.

Role responsibilities:

Elected Members as community leaders will:

- Act as intermediaries between citizen, community, the Council and external partners;
- Take action to improve the quality of life of people in their communities;
- Guide and assist residents where appropriate and practicable;
- Investigate and resolve residents' problems effectively or explain to them why they cannot be solved;
- Be well informed, know their area and be clear about local priorities.

Elected Members in a corporate role will:

- Be effective ambassadors for the Council in their communities:
- Reflect the community's feedback and views in the Council's decision making processes to make policies and services more responsive;
- Make objective and informed decisions that balance local needs and priorities with those of the wider borough;
- Represent the Council's interests in local partnership working;
- Act in the best interest of the community as a whole.

Community Representatives

Whilst Community Representatives do not have a mandate to speak on behalf of the public, they do provide a level of expertise and/or knowledge to help inform the debate.

- Proactively engage with residents and communities beyond those within their existing networks;
- Accurately reflect the community's feedback and views in the discussions and decision making processes;
- Communicate with residents and communities, feeding back the work of the Committee;
- Be well informed and be clear about local priorities;
- Champion the Community Representative role ensuring it has value in the Constituency Committee process.

Constituency Manager

The Constituency Manager is responsible for the co-ordination of Wirral South Constituency Service Hub and engagement activities, building neighbourhood profiles and enabling residents' issues to be directed to the appropriate services.

Role responsibilities:

- Co-ordinate the Constituency Committee and Public Service Board, working across multi agencies to implement the Constituency Plan;
- Lead the development and implementation of the annual Constituency Plan and report on progress to the Constituency Committee, and including budgeting information;
- Lead consultations/service reviews/community needs assessments across the constituency involving residents, partners, customers, etc. to inform the Constituency Committee;
- Working with the Public Health Intelligence Team, ensuring that an up-to-date and comprehensive Constituency Profile is available to the Committee to enable decision-making to be evidence-based around priorities;
- Identify and bid for Constituency funding opportunities at national, regional and local levels;
- Identify and manage a process for identifying and managing neighbourhood profiling/community assets information;
- Devise and implement Wirral South Constituency's Community Engagement Framework;
- Design, manage and implement a diverse range of communications platforms across the Constituency, promoting its work and achievements:

Neighbourhood Engagement Officer

The Engagement Officer is responsible for the liaison and engagement with local groups and partnerships in the implementation of the Constituency Plan.

- Support the administration of the Constituency Committee, including booking venues, completing health and safety checks on venues prior to use and managing the online Public Question Time submissions;
- Manage the administration of the Public Question Time;
- Be a proactive link with Elected Members, community groups, representatives and organisations;
- Deliver Wirral South Constituency's Community Engagement Framework;
- Ascertain neighbourhood resource requirements (funding, community spaces, service needs, volunteering, etc.);

- Gather neighbourhood information and knowledge in order to build the Constituency Profile, including managing a process for identifying and recording up-to-date neighbourhood profiling/community assets information;
- Support the implementation of the Constituency Plan;
- Undertake consultation and engagement activities;
- Support neighbourhood volunteers:
- Resolve neighbourhood issues and manage any relevant processes (e.g. brokering, mediation, facilitation, etc);

Council officers and service delivery partners

Wirral South Constituency Committee may ask representatives of external service delivery organisations to attend their committee meetings, recognising the important contribution which they make to shaping and delivering local area priorities.

Representatives of area partners will be of senior management level or equivalent and therefore be able to speak for their organisation and be prepared to commit resources on behalf of their organisations.

- Provide representation at the appropriate level of authority and experience;
- Attend the Committee when requested to do so, where practicable;
- Have high level knowledge of the service area and its strategic operating context;
- Commit to improving the quality of life and satisfaction of residents in the area;
- Take an active role in owning and solving problems identified by the Constituency Committee;
- Commit to promote the interests of the area in decision making processes within their own organisation;
- Commit to engaging, involving and feedback with local residents in the design, delivery and improvement of services;
- Identify and assist the Constituency Committees, where relevant, in generating and match funding projects of strategic significance;
- Commit to construct, challenge and proactively improve services;
- Work with key contacts and stakeholders to create and build appropriate networks and partnerships to promote the Constituency Committee, priorities and performance measures;
- Monitor the quantity and quality of performance management, reviews and projects
- Establish methods for promoting and sharing intelligence, information and good practice;
- Objectivity in accessing issues and opportunities and how to approach these in the best interests of the area;

Acceptance of the Constituency Committee procedures and process.

Committee Services Officer

Role responsibilities:

- Efficiently and effectively run the administration of the Constituency Committee;
- Manage publication of the agenda for the Constituency Committee;
- Advise the Committee members on constitutional matters and provide advice and guidance on constitutional compliance in conjunction with Legal Services Officer;
- Invite all Elected Members, Community Representatives and guests to pre-meetings, Constituency Committees and extra-ordinary meetings;
- Take accurate minutes of the meeting, drafts to be produced within 10 working days of the committee;
- Place all actions on the electronic action tracker for officers to report on progress;
- Upload all minutes of meetings onto the Council's website;
- Issue materials provided by the Constituency Manager to representatives on the Committee.

Legal Services Officer

Role responsibilities:

- Advise the Committee members on legal matters;
- Advise on constitutional matters and procedure;
- Advise on governance arrangements;
- Advise on matters pertaining to the Members' Code of Conduct.

Chief Officer

Wirral South Constituency Committee is aligned to a Chief Officer (Assistant Chef Executive). The Chief Officer will reinforce the strategic importance of the area dimension to the Council's policy and planning framework, and in particular will reinforce the importance the Council places on enhancing community governance, aligning resources and activity and improving public service delivery at a local level. The Chief Officer will also ensure an improved localities dimension to the Council's strategic planning. The role is to help clear 'blockages' and ensure issues of the Constituency Committee are taken to the highest levels if/when necessary.

- Provide high level representation from the Council's officer core to support the process and outcomes of the Committee's actions;
- Provide clarity and direction for the staff supporting the Constituency Committee and implementing the Constituency Plan once agreed;
- Ensure that strong links are made between the Constituency Committee and the overarching commitments of Wirral Council's Corporate Plan and framework providing for partnership activity, including Wirral Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Public Service Board (PSB).

SECTION 6: WIRRAL SOUTH PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Wirral Public Service Board (PSB) is chaired by the Council's Chief Executive. The Board exists for partners to proactively work together to identify and deliver efficiencies and opportunities for joint working. Through an agreed work programme, the Board (amongst other things) develops collective responses to national and local policy drivers impacting on all partners and strategically manages Wirral's approach to neighbourhood working.

Each Constituency has a local Public Service Board consisting of officers from a range of partners. It is the role of the Wirral South Public Service Board to ensure delivery of the Constituency Plan, with service delivery partners working together to achieve the Constituency's priorities and deliver the best service possible. Any cross-Constituency issues that cannot be resolved at a local level will be escalated to Wirral Public Service Board.

Wirral South Constituency Committee: Timetable 2014/15

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	
2014			
Wednesday 25 June 2014	6.00pm	Mayer Hall, Bebington	
8 Oct 2014	6.00pm	Mayer Hall, Bebington	
2015			
Wednesday 21 Jan 2015	6.00pm	Mayer Hall, Bebington	
Wednesday 15 April 2015	6.00pm	Mayer Hall, Bebington	

Access

If representatives or members of the public have any particular requirements or access needs to enable them to participate in the meeting, including requirement for information in formats such as large print or on tape, please contact the Committee Services Officer beforehand so arrangements can be made in good time.

Where possible Constituency Committee meetings will be held in rooms which are installed with a hearing loop system and rooms are accessible for wheelchair users or people with mobility impairments.

Wirral South Constituency Committee: Key Contacts

Constituency Manager Engagement Officer Committee Services Officer

Chief Officer

Legal/Monitoring Officer

fergusadams@wirral.gov.uk louiseharlanddavies@wirral.gov.uk shirleyhudspeth@wirral.gov.uk davidarmstrong@wirral.gov.uk surjittour@wirral.gov.uk

Community Representatives

(To be appointed)

Elected Members

Cllr Chris Carubia (Eastham) chriscarubia@wirral.gov.uk philgilchrist@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Phil Gilchrist (Eastham) Cllr Andrew Hodson (Heswall) andrewhodson@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Kathy Hodson (Heswall) kathyhodson@wirral.gov.uk davemitchell@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Dave Mitchell (Eastham) christinamuspratt@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Christina Muspratt (Bebington) steveniblock@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Steve Niblock (Bromborough) Cllr Cherry Povall (Clatterbridge) cherrypovall@wirral.gov.uk lesrowlands@btinternet.com Cllr Les Rowlands (Heswall) traceysmith@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Tracey Smith (Clatterbridge) Cllr Walter Smith waltersmith@wirral.gov.uk (Bebington) Cllr Adam Sykes (Clatterbridge) adamsykes@wirral.gov.uk joewalsh@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Joe Walsh (Bromborough) Cllr Irene Williams (Bromborough) irenewilliams@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Jerry Williams jerrywilliams@wirral.gov.u (Bebington)