

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

3<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2014

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE BUDGET 2014-15</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>WARDS WITHIN THE WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>GREASBY, FRANKBY AND IRBY</b></li><li>▪ <b>HOYLAKE AND MEOLS</b></li><li>▪ <b>PENSBY AND THINGWALL</b></li><li>▪ <b>WEST KIRBY AND THURSTASTON</b></li><li>▪ <b>UPTON</b></li></ul>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>CONSTITUENCY MANAGER (WIRRAL WEST)</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING &amp; ENGAGEMENT</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Committee as to the process for taking forward expenditure in relation to the Constituency Committee's budget allocation for 2014/15, i.e.:

- 2013-14 budget underspend (section 2 of this report);
- 2014-15 neighbourhood working allocation (section 3 of this report);
- 2014-15 Integrated Transport Block (road safety) allocation (section 4 of this report).

#### 2.0 2013-14 BUDGET UNDERSPEND

2.1 The Committee's total budget allocation for 2013-14 amounted to £100,000:

- £50,000 core Council budget to 'kickstart' neighbourhood working; and
- £50,000 Public Health Outcomes Fund budget to improve health and well-being, with a focus on supporting voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.

2.2 The Committee's core Council budget of £50,000 to 'kickstart' neighbourhood working was allocated on the basis on £10,000 per ward via the Wirral West Community Fund. Voluntary, community, faith and not for profit groups and organisations based in Wirral West could apply for a minimum of £100 and a maximum of £1,000 from the Fund. The community was asked to vote on these projects and the outcomes of the vote considered by councillors in their decision-making on the 6<sup>th</sup> March.

2.3 The subsequent allocation of grants by ward was follows:

Ward	Total Community Fund Grants Allocated	Underspend
Hoylake and Meols	£3,090.00	£5,740.00
Greasby, Frankby and Irby	£7,595.00	£2,405.00
Pensby and Thingwall	£6,590.00	£3,410.00
Upton	£6,850.57	£3,149.43
West Kirby and Thurstaston	£9,923.00	£0,077.00

2.3 As agreed by the Committee in March, the budget underspend for each ward following the allocation of Community Fund grants was to be held in reserve (i.e. carried over into 2014-15) for ward improvements and/or to extend a further opportunity for local projects to access grants and add value to existing community activities. The Constituency Manager has been working closely with the relevant ward councillors to allocate this expenditure broadly in line with the initial ideas put forward following consultation with members, and which were presented to the Committee at the meeting on the 6th March. The criterion for expenditure is to improve the quality of life for people who live in the ward, in line with the objectives of the Community Fund and the outcomes will be monitored accordingly.

2.4 The Committee's Public Health Outcomes Fund budget of £50,000 was allocated via the Wirral West Public Health grants programme based on the evidence of need set out in applications and taking into account the view of the Committee in relation to at least £25,000 of this budget being split equitably across the five wards. The resulting allocation by ward was as follows:

Ward	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	Hoylake & Meols	Pensby & Thingwall	Upton	West Kirby & Thurstaston	Total	Underspend
Public Health Grants Allocated	£3,767.00	£12,773.25	£9,141.23	£11,421.95	£7,263.00	£44,366.43	£5,633.57

2.5 The Constituency Manager has been working with partners in recent months to develop a project proposal in response to a Cabinet Office funding opportunity aimed at supporting older people and reducing hospital admissions during the winter months. Should the bid be successful, the project would fund a voluntary or community sector organisation in each of the four constituencies to act as a 'winter champion' by increasing social action and improving the support networks available for older people where they live. It is proposed that the Constituency Manager is given delegated authority to use the Public Health underspend of £5,633.57 to further develop this partnership working with the voluntary, community and faith sector in respect of support for older people in Wirral West.

### **3.0 2014-15 NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING ALLOCATION - £50,000**

3.1 The Council's budget for 2014/2015 includes a further allocation of £200,000 to be devolved to the Constituency Committees to enable neighbourhood working to be further developed (£50,000 per constituency area). The Committee is asked to consider and agree whether the broad approach set out in 2.2 above (i.e. an equitable split between the five wards, with project applications voted on by the community) should continue in 2014-15. Subject to agreement by the Committee, there is a significant amount of feedback from the community which can be used to develop and improve the approach. This feedback is in two parts:

- The views of groups who participated in the Wirral West Community Fund about the application and voting process;
- The views of residents on what they value in the area, and how budgets should be spent.

3.2 Initial feedback from the groups involved in the application and voting process suggested that it would be helpful to undertake a full evaluation to inform future activities, and to make recommendations about how we can best build on our experience of community voting initiatives in Wirral West. A survey was completed by over 50% of the groups involved in the process.

3.3 The survey asked for views on the Community Fund application form. 75% of those who responded thought the Community Fund application form was very easy to complete, with the remainder though it was fairly to complete. No respondents thought it was difficult to complete.

3.4 The survey also asked for views on the community vote, i.e. was this:

- a) An effective and fun way of involving local people in decision-making;
- b) A good way to involve local people in decision-making which could be further developed and improved;
- c) Not an effective way of involving local people in decision-making.

The majority of respondents selected the second option, i.e. that this is good way to involve people but that it could be improved. A small number of respondents thought that it was not effective.

3.5 The survey asked for ideas about how the voting process could be improved or alternative ways of involving people. A number of issues and concerns are apparent from the responses provided:

- Groups feel that they might be disadvantaged by having fewer networks or communications mechanisms to encourage support for their projects from the wider community - without this participation from the wider community, i.e. if it is only members of groups voting, the results can potentially be 'weighted' unfairly;
- Groups feel uncomfortable about competing with other projects;
- Groups and communities might get voting 'fatigue' if the approach is over-used;

The responses also highlighted areas for improvement:

- Review the online voting system to ensure that information about the projects and the options for voting are clear;

- Allow more time for preparation and better, more effective publicity to increase the level of awareness and support that the wider community;
- Ensure locations for voting events are easily accessible and give careful consideration to dates and times, as well as the use of 'A' boards to draw people in;
- Think again about whether groups should give an informal presentation about their project as part of a more structured event.

3.6 Finally, the survey asked for views on the voting events which took place in each ward to encourage the community to vote and to provide an opportunity for groups and organisations to network with one another. 50% of the respondents said they had made new connections at their funding event and almost 70% said they would welcome similar opportunities in the future. One respondent said that it was *“good to meet other groups applying for funding to explore joint ways of working together for the benefit of our local community”* and another commented that they *“hope to exchange visits with another group”*. A third of the groups who responded said they would be happy to contribute to organising future events.

3.7 Through undertaking the community vote, the Wirral West Constituency Committee was uniquely positioned gather the views of residents who participated about wider issues for the area. Over 1,100 people took part in the community vote and well over 50% of these responded to the questions about what they most value about Wirral West and their views as to allocating budgets. The level of responses compares well with other exercises of this nature, especially given that there was a relatively short timescale for people to respond, and suggests that local people welcomed the opportunity to inform local decision-making.

3.8 Of the 1,126 Wirral West residents who completed a voting form, 660 provided a response to the question ‘what do you value most about where you live?’ 23% of the Wirral West residents who responded mentioned the word ‘community’ to describe what they value most about the area. The responses highlight the strong sense of community spirit and strong sense of place in all parts of the constituency. Overwhelmingly, Wirral West residents value local parks and open spaces. 37% of all respondents used words and phrases including ‘open spaces’, ‘parks’, ‘green spaces’ and ‘countryside’ to describe what they value most.

3.9 Local beaches and Wirral West’s coastline are also highly valued, particularly in the west of the constituency – ‘beach’ and ‘sea’ appear in over 20% of the responses from West Kirby and Thurstaston and Hoylake and Meols residents. Other characteristics valued by local people in Wirral West include local facilities and shops and good public transport. Many people who are not residents of Wirral West also took part in the survey and commented on local community spirit and access to spectacular scenery and open spaces.

3.10 Of the 1,126 Wirral West residents who completed a voting form, 612 provided a response to the question ‘if you were given a budget to spend on improvements that would benefit the local community, what would you spend it on?’ Whilst people were not specifically asked to identify their priorities, analysis of the responses provides a useful indication of how Wirral West residents would direct budget expenditure if they were able to influence this. This analysis has been done by assessing the number of times words and phrases appear in the responses, and exploring how this compares or differs across wards.

3.11 Perhaps not surprisingly, the assets most valued in Wirral West – parks and open spaces and the strong sense of local community – strongly featured in terms of people’s ideas about the right way to allocate financial resources, along with a strong focus on the importance of the Streetscene. Analysis of the questionnaire responses suggests that if respondents to the questionnaire were given a budget to spend on improvements, they would prioritise spending on:

- **The streetscene** – over 28% of the Wirral West residents who answered this question mentioned words and phrases relating to maintaining the Streetscene. Particular issues included maintaining grass verges and flower beds, general cleanliness, dog fouling, road surfaces and potholes and parking. There were some variations across wards, e.g. in Hoylake and Meols a significant number of people also said that they would allocate budget to improve the promenade and local beaches (over 27% of Hoylake and Meols residents who responded to the question). Many residents also mentioned that there should be more outdoor seating areas and benches for people so that they can enjoy outdoor communal spaces.
- **Community facilities and activities** – nearly 26% of Wirral West residents mentioned words and phrases relating to community facilities and activities in their responses to this question. Many of the responses from local residents were concerned with making sure that the use of other local facilities is promoted – from community centres to libraries to church halls. A large number of responses were concerned with ensuring that local projects and activities are supported. The responses also highlighted that people recognise the particular value of activities for vulnerable people within the local community. Activities for young people were also mentioned a significant number of times.
- **Parks and open spaces** – nearly 18% of Wirral West residents mentioned parks and open spaces in their responses to the question. This level of response was fairly consistent across Greasby, Frankby and Irby, Hoylake and Meols, Pensby and Thingwall and Upton and Woodchurch. Whilst residents in West Kirby and Thurstaston made many references to making improvements to parks and open spaces, respondents from this ward had a much higher tendency to mention road maintenance and parking issues as their priority for expenditure. Ideas from local residents in relation to parks and open spaces included more community events, planting trees and encouraging wildlife, promoting responsible dog ownership amongst users of parks and open spaces in the area and increasing the sporting facilities available. Supporting the development of allotments was also mentioned.

3.12 As referred to in 3.1, it is suggested that the feedback from groups about the process and the feedback from those who participated in the vote about what’s important in Wirral West should be taken into account in the further development of the Community Fund should the Committee agree to take forward the same broad approach in 2014-15.

#### **4.0 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK FUNDING ALLOCATION**

4.1 The Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme for 2014/15 agreed by Cabinet on 13th March 2014 provides an allocation of £77,750 for each Constituency Committee to be distributed in relation to 2 objectives:

- Improving Road Safety (£38,875);
- Promoting Active Travel and Health (£38,875).

4.2 The Council has a statutory duty to improve road safety and bases investment on value for money schemes where a 'rate of return' can be demonstrated from measures which will reduce the number and/or severity of the road casualty record provided by Merseyside Police. Active forms of transport such as walking and cycling can have significant positive impacts on an individual's health and wellbeing, they have the potential to make an important contribution to quality of life, providing a generally accessible, clean, healthy and enjoyable way to travel short distances and to enjoy urban and rural public spaces. Also, by enabling access to employment, education and other life opportunities improvements for active modes of transport can make significant improvements to people's economic, physical and social wellbeing.

4.3 The funding is to be used for capital expenditure schemes which will address the as opposed to revenue expenditure, i.e. the budget can be spent on the creation of a fixed asset rather than on operating costs or providing a day to day service. The types of schemes which can be funded with this budget are listed in Appendix 1, many of which meet both of the objectives outlined in 4.1 above.

4.4 It is proposed that:

- Recommendations for the allocation of the budget for road safety to fund schemes across the five wards are identified through consultation with members of the Committee;
- To facilitate this consultation, a lead member is nominated for each ward to work with the Constituency Manager and the Road Safety team to identify possible road safety schemes.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

5.1 Any risks relating to the allocation of the Constituency Committee's budget will be mitigated by open and transparent decision-making and processes and effective monitoring which demonstrates the outcomes being achieved.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

6.1 This report is intended to initiate discussion about the options for the approach to allocating constituency funding.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Constituency Manager consults with Wirral West Constituency Committee members on an ongoing basis with regard to the work of the Committee. The community has been consulted in respect of the previous approach to allocating the neighbourhood working budget and also as to their views as to how budgets should be spent in the local area.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

8.1 This report will have positive implications in that it is the proposed funding programmes will result in financial and project management support being received by voluntary, community and faith groups and organisations in Wirral West.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

9.1 This report has implications for the expenditure of the budget allocated to the Wirral West Constituency Committee.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no legal implications.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 An impact review for neighbourhood working can be found at the link below (Progressing Neighbourhood Working):

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/chief-executives>

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The allocation of the Constituency Committee budget may create opportunities to encourage the sharing of community assets, therefore supporting carbon reduction.

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 The allocation of the Constituency Committee budget may have a positive impact upon community safety.

## **14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

14.1 In relation to the 2013-14 Community Fund underspend carried over for each ward, the Committee agrees that this should continue to be allocated by the Constituency Manager through ongoing consultation with the relevant ward councillors in line with the resolution of the Committee in March;

14.2 In relation to the 2013-14 Public Health Outcomes Fund underspend of £5,633.77, the Committee agrees that the Constituency Manager be given delegated authority to utilise this funding to support partnership working with the voluntary, community and faith sector to support older people;

14.3 In relation to the 2014-15 Council allocation, the Committee delegates authority to the Constituency Manager to develop the Community Fund programme taking into account the feedback from local people as to their priorities for expenditure and the feedback from groups as to improving the community voting process;

- 14.4 In noting the priorities identified by local people, the Committee requests that these should be taken into account in respect of the work being undertaken by the Council and Executive to develop proposals for the further devolution of budgets, functions and responsibilities to the Constituency Committees. The Committee further requests that the Constituency Manager prepares a report for the next meeting of the Committee on how these proposals are progressing with a view to producing a business case thereafter;
- 14.5 In relation to the 2014-15 road safety allocation, the Committee agrees that a lead member for each ward should be nominated to work with the Constituency Manager to identify possible schemes for funding.

#### **15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 15.1 To seek agreement from the Committee as to the approach for allocating the various elements of Committee's budget.

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#### **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet – Neighbourhood Working – Proposed Operating Model	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2013
Cabinet – Public Health Outcomes Funding	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2013
Wirral West Constituency Committee	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2013
Cabinet – Public Health Outcomes Fund	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2013
Wirral West Constituency Committee	12 <sup>th</sup> December 2013
Council – Council Budget 2014-15	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2014
Wirral West Constituency Committee	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2014
Cabinet – Local Transport Capital Funding and the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) Programme 2014/15	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2014



**APPENDIX 1 – ESTIMATED COSTS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR ROAD SAFETY / ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES**

Road Safety / Active Travel Schemes	Estimated Costs (for guidance purposes only)	Considerations
Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) – generally used to prohibit parking (including verge or pavement parking)	Approx £1,000 to £4,000 depending on extend of scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May assist with regulation of areas of concern</li> <li>▪ Will need formal advertisement</li> <li>▪ Can have significant effect on businesses or residents</li> <li>▪ If too onerous, drivers may not willingly comply leading to enforcement burden</li> </ul>
Pedestrian refuge islands	Approx £13,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides a staging area enabling pedestrians to cross roads in two 'bites'</li> <li>▪ Can contribute to speed management acting as a form of calming device.</li> <li>▪ Require a minimum road width (depending on traffic route e.g. buses)</li> <li>▪ Can restrict parking nearby and may need an additional TRO</li> </ul>
Traffic Calming (Physical Measures)	Dependent on scheme area covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Variety of types can be used including road humps; cushions; chicanes; build outs</li> <li>▪ Self enforcing measure working 24/7</li> <li>▪ Effectively guarantees speed reduction and unlikely to need further (police) enforcement action in scheme area</li> <li>▪ Will need formal advertisement</li> </ul>
20mph Speed Limit Orders	Dependent on scheme area covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will need formal advertisement</li> <li>▪ Generally not self enforcing and may need police presence to enforce</li> <li>▪ Generally not as effective at reducing speeds as physical measures</li> <li>▪ Ideally need to be considered as part of an area approach to speed reduction</li> <li>▪ Can reduce traffic speeds</li> <li>▪ Not as costly as physical measures</li> </ul>
Traffic Signs and Road Markings	£200 - £3,000 but varies on scheme extent and type of signs/markings required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comparatively inexpensive</li> <li>▪ Some measures may need TROs</li> <li>▪ Must comply with DfT regulations and need to be</li> </ul>

Road Safety / Active Travel Schemes	Estimated Costs (for guidance purposes <u>only</u> )	Considerations
		consistent with national policy/application
Cycle Lane Marking	Dependent on scheme area covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comparatively inexpensive</li> <li>▪ Requires a minimum road width (depending on traffic route e.g. buses) and may need an additional TRO</li> </ul>
Vehicle Activated Signs	£7,000 – £9,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visually prominent</li> <li>▪ Impactive on those drivers triggering the unit</li> <li>▪ Need good location for solar power</li> <li>▪ Need to comply with DfT regulations for type and settings</li> <li>▪ Over provision dilutes impact of message</li> </ul>
Cycle Parking Provision	£250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comparatively inexpensive</li> <li>▪ May be difficult to site in some circumstances</li> </ul>
Bitumen cyclepath	£110 per metre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assists/encourages off road cycle use</li> <li>▪ May be difficult to obtain a contiguous route</li> </ul>
Puffin/Toucan Crossings	£67,000 - £80,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assists pedestrians to cross</li> <li>▪ Will need formal advertisement</li> <li>▪ Can restrict parking due to controlled area</li> </ul>
Pedestrian dropped kerbs	£1,600 per pair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assists mobility for people with mobility issues, the elderly and people with prams etc</li> <li>▪ Some locations may not be practicable and may need additional work</li> </ul>