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CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - BIRKENHEAD

Thursday, 30 January 2014

Present:

Chair Frank Field

Councillors	A Brighouse	AR McLachlan
	J Crabtree	M McLaughlin
	G Davies	C Meaden
	P Davies	T Norbury
	WJ Davies	D Realey
	P Doughty	D Roberts
	S Foulkes	H Smith
	S Kelly	J Stapleton
	B Kenny	

Also Present:

Mr J Brace
Mrs L Brace
Ms H Robinson
D Roberts
Mr P Griffiths
C Purcell
Ms G Jones
Ms R Shaw
Mr P Barton
Ms R Burns
Ms P Lawson
Ms P Haywood
Mrs P Cocker
Mr J Cocker
Ms Julie Smith
Mr D Collinson
Mr D Rigby

Apologies

Councillors P Williams

14 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

15 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Birkenhead Constituency Committee held on 28 November, 2013, be approved.

16 **CONSTITUENCY MANAGER'S UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Neighbourhoods and Engagement updating on progress in relation to the actions identified at its meeting on 28 November 2013 (Minute 9 refers).

Ms Dawn Tolcher, Constituency Manager introduced the report highlighting the action to be undertaken and the progress to date.

In relation the recruitment of a post graduate to undertake further analysis and provide conclusions and recommendations on the priorities to inform the Constituency Plan. Two member's and the Constituency Manager indicated that they had met with academics from Liverpool University who would be assisting with the task of collating the public spend in Birkenhead. some data was presented at the previous committee meeting but now the work will focus on the spend on services for children under 5 to help us shape our early intervention work.

In relation to constituency profiling, Ms Tolcher indicated that a session was to be held with Members on Tuesday 3 February 2014, to update them on the Constituency Profile that public health have formulated. A Member stressed the need for the Committee to be more proactive in accessing all available funding streams.

A task and finish group was established to determine the priorities and proposals for spend in 2013/14.

The Group suggested that the priorities for the funding allocation for this financial year were improving the environment, Date Audit of current spend and need ; improving services for young people and improving communication with the community.

Lead Members for each of the four priorities introduced the priorities and highlighted the recommendations which required approval from the Committee. The following comments were made:-

Improving the Environment

A Member indicated that this priority was looking at tackling the issue of cleanliness of entries. Funding had now been identified to improve this as part of a pilot project. It was suggested that aside from BIFFA, funding could be used to fund the employment of officers to assist in regular cleansing of the “hotspots”. It was further suggested that education and promotion could be enhanced to encourage the public to care for their environment.

A Member suggested that the community payback team could be asked for assistance.

Ms Tolcher, Constituency Manager indicated that as part of this project, the issue of prosecution would be looked into and a report would be presented at the next meeting indicating prosecution rates and how we can make people more aware of the processes.

In response to the Chair’s question as to how many people had been prosecuted to date. A Member stressed the difficulty of gaining evidence in order to prosecute.

Members of the public commented that the increase they felt was largely down to the “bulky item” removal service now being chargeable and suggested that the Council may wish to look at waiving the fee or charge it at a reduced rate.

It was further commented that landlords also had a big part to play in the project, ensuring that their tenants cleared their property upon leaving.

A Member commented that as the “clean up” develops this could then be communicated to the public to encourage further community involvement.

A member of the public suggested that this was something young people could get involved with a possible positive community project.

The Chair indicated that this issue had been raised at the previous meeting and that the Housing Associations had suggested creating places of beauty to enhance the area.

It was suggested that the introduction of alley gates could be looked into as those areas that had them had evidenced an improvement to the area.

It was further suggested that through the National Citizenship Service, young people could assist in community projects.

Improving Services for Young People

A Member indicated that this priority centred on the reduction in children becoming NEET, improving their lifestyle through healthy eating and improving support to mums during pregnancy and after birth. The task and finish group had recommended that the Committee agreed to allocate the total £50,000 from Public Health to improve services for young people focusing on these outcomes.

Ms Tolcher indicated that she had met with the Chair to discuss the issue of children becoming NEETs. It was suggested that a session be held with Members and teachers to enable the Committee to gain a better understanding of how children become NEETs.

Members of the public indicated that there was a need to identify the those young people that were NEETs and look at reasons behind the lack of attainment and employment opportunities.

In response, Ms Tolcher indicated that she had met with the Cabinet Member to discuss this with a view to reducing the number of young people that were NEETs and looking into various models of good practise. A further meeting was due to be held on 20th February 2014. Ms Tolcher had also met with alternative education providers.

A Member suggested that further discussion be held with Merseytravel to tackle the issue of transport access to employment and training opportunities.

A Member commented that there was a need to recognise the achievements of those people within the community who actively encourage peoples' lives, especially those who do this on a voluntary basis. It was suggested that the Committee could introduce an award scheme to recognise the work done within the community by volunteers and smaller community group, which may encourage others within the community.

In relation to the support offered to mums during pregnancy and after birth, the Chair indicated that a report would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

Improving Communication with the Communities

In relation to this priority, it is recognised that local publications such as the Wirral globe did not reach the Birkenhead Wards, It was suggested that a community newspaper be introduced for Birkenhead which would improve communication within the area also could provide possible employment opportunities.

A member of the public asked if local residents who pay for local distributor but did not receive local publications could be reimbursed. In response, Ms Tolcher agreed to pursue this.

It was suggested and agreed that discussions be held with local organisations, health and church groups to explore the idea of pooled resources to enhance communications and publication of community issues.

A Member suggested that as there was funding available surrounding social inclusion; the Committee may be able to apply for this to assist in enhancing communication to the public.

A member of the public commented that Committee needed to think about reaching those residents for who English was not their language.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Recommendation 2.3a: *Improving the Environment* as detailed within the report be approved as a priority for 2013/14 in Birkenhead and an allocation of £20,000 from the £50,000 be allocated to tackle inequalities. The constituency manager be requested to form a proposal on how to deliver this project to be discussed with the task and finish group and presented back to the committee as a recommendation at the next meeting on 27th March;**
- (2) Recommendation 2.3b: As detailed within the report the Constituency Manager be requested to work with Ward Councillors to collate other issues within Birkenhead related to waste and Improving the Environment to contribute to the Constituency Plan for 2014/15;**
- (3) Recommendation 2.3c: As detailed within the report, £10,000 of the £50,000 allocated to the committee from Wirral Council be allocated to support a data audit to be carried out detailing the current spend of public funding in Birkenhead on services.**
- (4) Recommendation 2.3d: As detailed within the report, *Improving Services for Young People* be approved as priorities for 2013/14 in Birkenhead and the constituency manager be requested to form a proposal on how to deliver this project to be discussed with the task and finish group and presented back to the committee as a recommendation at the next meeting on 27th March.**
- (5) Recommendation 2.3e: As detailed within the report Improving Communication be approved as priority for 2013/14 in Birkenhead and the constituency manager be requested to form a proposal on**

how to deliver this project to be discussed with the task and finish group and presented back to the committee as a recommendation at the next meeting on 27th March.

- (6) It was approved that the Priorities Task and Finish Group progress the proposals based on the approved priorities; they do not need to wait to discuss again at the next committee meeting in March. Progress report will be presented at the next meeting.
- (7) Recommendation 3: As detailed within the report, a Task and Finish Group be formed to discuss and devise an action plan to develop community engagement in Birkenhead to support the work and priorities of the Constituency Committee in 2014/15.

17 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION (NOT TO EXCEED 20 MINUTES)**

During the Public Question and answer session the following questions/comments were raised;

- (1) Is the Wirral Youth Zone still going ahead?

In response, It was reported that the Council had committed two million pound to the project and had identified a site near to the Fire station in Birkenhead, it hoped that a further four million could be sourced. It was envisaged that work on the project would start by the end of 2105 and operating from early 2016.

Ms Tolcher indicated that the she was currently working with a group of young people to design the logo and branding for the youth zone, and update on this would brought back to the next Committee meeting.

A Member suggested that a visit to other Youth Zones could help with the development of this project.

In response to concerns raised regarding transport issues, It was reported that officers were in discussion with Merseytravel on this to ensure there was adequate transportation links to the site.

- (2) Mrs Brace indicated that despite having a disabled bay outside of her property her vehicle had been damaged by passing traffic and she was having to park on the pavement and asked what could be done about this?

In response it was reported that the issue of parking on pavements was discussed at a recent Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee and a report would be brought back to the Committee in due course.

- (3) Could we have an update on the Neptune's Master Plan?

In response, A Member indicated that it was hoped that information on this would be received in the next few months.

- (4) Where there plans to hold weddings in Birkenhead Town Hall?

In response, Mr Joe Blott, Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources indicated that although there is a licence to hold ceremonies in the Town Hall there were no catering facilities, however the Council was looking at incorporating the whole of the Hamilton Square area to enhance the service provision.

- (5) What are the plans for the Williamson?

In response, it was reiterated that the Council do not want to close the Williamson; plans for which were contained on the budget options listed which had been previously considered by Council. There was a draft plan and this would be discussed at a meeting to be held shortly.

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