

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## POLICY AND PERFORMANCE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

3 SEPTEMBER 2014

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>DECISION MAKING BY CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEES – A REPORT ON PROGRESS</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>HEAD OF NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENGAGEMENT</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details progress to date on the decision making process of Constituency Committees which were established in October 2013 (Wallasey, Wirral South and Wirral West) and November 2013 (Birkenhead).
- 1.2 Constituency Committees meet quarterly, in public, and have been established to further empower elected members as community leaders to fully utilise the devolved powers and responsibilities given to Constituency Committees to maximise public resources in their areas, and increase community resilience within neighbourhoods to encourage greater independence.
- 1.3 Following the outcome of the Future Council programme, the Executive will devolve more decision making to Constituency Committees wherever it makes sense to do so, and elected members will further inspire communities to come together to find the right solutions to address local need and improve residents' lives. This approach will not just deliver more cost effective services; it will deliver better outcomes for local residents.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Article 10 of the Council's Constitution states that Constituency Committees are:
  - (i) To discharge such functions as may be delegated to them from time to time by the Executive and/or the Council.
  - (ii) To act as a voice for the community with respect to:-
    - (a) The development of area action plans which reflect the needs and priorities of the area;
    - (b) Issues concerning the environment, traffic, policing, education, jobs, health;
    - (c) Development of the Borough's Community Strategy
    - (d) The quality, range and level of services provided in the area by public bodies;
    - (e) Providing public bodies with an opportunity to consult with local

people on the development and delivery of plans, programmes and services  
(f) Making recommendations to the Executive in respect of the expenditure of any funds allocated to them.

- (iii) To be a decision making Committee. They may submit reports on matters of concern locally to the Cabinet or Coordinating Committee as the committee deems necessary.
- (iv) The Committee can appoint up to six Community representatives with non-voting rights.
- (v) Any Member of the Committee, including Community Representatives, may be appointed as the Chairperson of the Committee.

2.2 (a) *The development of area action plans which reflect the needs and priorities of the area;* All Constituency Committees are currently developing 3 year outcomes focussed Constituency Plans based upon priorities identified via Members, local communities and constituency profiles developed by Public Health. Committees will commission activities accordingly with devolved constituency budgets and in accordance with the Council's new Commissioning Strategy (please note this is currently being developed and is yet to be approved).

2.3 (b) *Issues concerning the environment, traffic, policing, education, jobs, health;* Constituency Committees have identified various local priorities including improving the environment, improving communication within communities, improving youth activities, personal well-being, economic well-being, neighbourhood well-being, community assets, and tackling social isolation.

2.4 (c) *Development of the Borough's Community Strategy:* All Constituency Committee meetings have an allotted time for Public Question Time, and they are also developing engagement frameworks that highlight 4 key stages to the community engagement process, i.e. communication and information, consultation and involvement, community empowerment, and working together.

Constituency Committees consist of all ward members (15-18 ward members per constituency), and Wallasey, Wirral South and Wirral West have community representatives as members of the Committee. Birkenhead will be recruiting community researchers, i.e. local people or groups who carry out their own research into their communities, as local people can achieve higher rates of participation and build successful relationships with people who are marginalised, isolated or disadvantaged. Community researchers will share the experiences and backgrounds of the people that are the focus of a research project.

Constituency Committees are also developing communication plans in order to: (i) ensure people understand the role of the Constituency Committees, (ii) drive engagement and participation, (iii) promote the work and objectives, (iv) promote community activity, (v) promote the work of partners, (vi) promote the activity of businesses / organisations who are working with and/or funded by Constituency Committees, (vii) promote funding opportunities, (viii) demonstrate the success of the work, and (ix) change behaviour and improve perceptions.

- 2.5 *(d) The quality, range and level of services provided in the area by public bodies;* The Wirral Public Service Board (WPSB) has been established to act as the strategic driver for transformation across public sector services. The WPSB is working on a number of common principles and cross-cutting issues, for example mapping and sharing data, identifying the joint cost of providing services that are delivered across Wirral, prevention and early intervention, and ensuring residents can actively shape and influence new service design and delivery.

With our key public, private and community partners the Council will develop more joint commissioning and joint working activities and a new way for local providers to work together to meet local needs, thus improving outcomes for local people and reducing duplication. 4 Local Public Service Boards have also been established to act as the operational co-ordination of implementing Constituency Plans and for dealing with residents' issues at source in a multi-agency / multi-disciplinary way.

- 2.6 *(e) Providing public bodies with an opportunity to consult with local people on the development and delivery of plans, programmes and services;* The constituency footprint will be used for consulting local people, e.g. consulting on budget options from the Future Council programme during September 2014.
- 2.7 *(f) Making recommendations to the Executive in respect of the expenditure of any funds allocated to them;* Each Constituency Committee will produce an annual report for Council. Cabinet Portfolio Summary Reports are also regularly produced and include budget allocations and spend.
- 2.8 Consisting of Members and Community Representatives, priority setting task and finish groups have been established by Constituency Committees to prioritise budget expenditure and in accordance with any set criteria.
- 2.9 Following the outcome of the Future Council programme, Constituency Committees will also commission activities accordingly with devolved constituency budgets and in accordance with the Council's new Commissioning Strategy (please note this is currently being developed and is yet to be approved).
- 2.9 Each Committee has also produced a Handbook setting out, over and above the Council's constitution, how it will operate.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 3.1 A risk register underpins the implementation of the constituency programme, developed and monitored in line with quarterly performance management arrangements. Examples of risk include:
- Effectively forecasting impacts from social / demographic change.
  - Potential disconnect between local priorities and the Council's Corporate Plan.
  - Insufficient capacity within social sector to fully engage with the constituency programme.
  - Key partners using different systems and processes for reporting residents' issues.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 Upon considering best practice elsewhere, operating on a constituency footprint provides the most effective way of ensuring that every Wirral community, group and resident has the opportunity to influence Council resources in their neighbourhoods.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 Not applicable.

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

6.1 The social sector is a key partner to develop a shared understanding of the priority issues in Wirral, to develop solutions to address them, including a co-design / co-production approach to re-designing and delivering services.

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

7.1 The constituency programme will support efficiency savings in the following areas:

- Sharing resources (workforces, services, budgets and assets)
- Eliminating duplication
- Service redesign
- Service integration (e.g. health and social care)
- Joint, outcomes focussed commissioning and procurement
- Prevention and early intervention programmes
- Increasing neighbourhood resilience
- Less demand for public services

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Localism Act 2011 gives councils more freedom to work together with others in new ways and has introduced new rights for communities: including a 'Right to Buy' public assets and increased opportunities for participation in the delivery of services. Locally this presents opportunities to forge new partnerships with communities to evidence, shape and deliver public policy and services across Wirral.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Not applicable.

## **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The constituency programme will encourage sharing of community assets, therefore supporting carbon reduction.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Positive implications will arise from the constituency programme as local communities will have a greater role in commenting on planning proposals and having a more immediate and direct influence regarding community safety implications

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

12.1 Co-ordinating Committee notes the progress of the decision making process of Constituency Committees.

### 13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 For services to be more effectively and efficiently configured, targeted and delivered.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Emma Degg  
Head of Neighbourhoods and Engagement  
telephone: (0151) 691 8688  
email: [emmadegg@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:emmadegg@wirral.gov.uk)

### SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Cabinet - <i>NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING –FORGING A MODERN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND RESIDENTS</i></b>	<b>24/01/13</b>
<b>Council - <i>NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING –FORGING A MODERN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND RESIDENTS</i></b>	<b>11/02/13</b>
<b>Cabinet – NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAMME (PROGRESS REPORT)</b>	<b>13/03/14</b>

