Appendix 4   **Priority Area:** Improving Communication

Objective: To improve the engagement with residents in Birkenhead to offer greater knowledge sharing for improving public service provision.

Background Information:
Birkenhead Constituency Committee wants to ensure engagement with the community is participatory not just representative. Through the formulation of the Handbook for Birkenhead Constituency Committee it was agreed 'In 2014/15 it is important for the Committee to gather information on what the community has and wants in terms of assets and needs. Birkenhead Constituency Committee will use **Community Researchers** on specific pieces of work or analysis in relation to the priorities in the Constituency Plan '.

Project Description: To offer quality training and travel expenses for community researchers to carry out research as directed by the Constituency Committee.
The training offered would be an Open College Network accredited 2 day course and would include:

- The topic being researched
- How to do a 'Listening survey'
- Why we are collating the information and how it will be used
- Confidence and communication skills

Each course would accommodate 10 Community Researchers.

Outcomes to be achieved:

1) Builds the skills of residents : By training members of local community to carry out research, the researchers gain new skills which they can use to conduct their own research or may increase the employability skills for the future.

2) Reveals the stories behind the statistics: Indepth community engagement can provide important insights into attitudes, beliefs and behaviour in particular communities which quantitative data cannot explain. This deepens understanding of cultural issues and adds the 'how' and the 'why' to statistical data. This can assist significantly with improving service provision.

3) Uncovers issues unknown to external researchers: Community researchers have specific knowledge of issues which may not b considered by professionals. Community researchers can inform the research process, improving the quality of the research, and discovering findings which would have otherwise been missed.

4) Creates partnerships and communication channels: Working with community researchers develops new partnerships and improves communication between organisations in different sectors and hard to- reach groups. These communication channels can be used for sharing knowledge and information, and engaging with communities again in the future.

5) Encourages communities to develop their own solutions: Research should generate benefits for the participants as well as the researchers. Engaging with communities encourages community members to discuss the issues being researched and ideas to improve services and developments to meet their needs.

Provider: Alt Valley Community Trust who have local deliverer in Wirral.

Project Costs: £2,000

The costs to deliver training are £300 per 2 day course (costs for tutor, paperwork and refreshments)

 4 courses = £1,200. This would train 40 Community Researchers.

£600 will be used for travelling expenses of researchers.

Partner Contributions: No cash value contributions have been identified but voluntary sector organisations will be contacted to offer venues for training as an in kind contribution.
It will be explored for this training to be sustained of effective through Wirral's Lifelong learning Programme.

Contribution from Birkenhead Constituency Committee: £2,000