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CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL SOUTH

Thursday, 16 October 2014

Present: Councillor P Gilchrist (Chair)

Councillors A Hodson A Sykes
D Mitchell J Walsh
C Muspratt I Williams
S Niblock KJ Williams
W Smith

In attendance: Co-optees L Longshaw Parr
K Sutton
M Wright
MA Craig
WA Ward

MARK DELAP - PRINCIPAL COMMITTEE OFFICER

The Chair reported the sad and sudden death of Mark Delap at the age of 53. Mark had been employed by the Council for 37 years. He was a Principal Committee Officer and was responsible for taking the Minutes of the Wirral West Constituency Committee, amongst other things.

The Committee stood in silence for one minute in tribute to Mr Delap.

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Carubia, K Hodson, C Povall, L Rowlands and T Smith.

17 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C Muspratt declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 6 – Wirral South Priorities Update (Minute No. 21 refers) as she was a Friend of Mayer Park and Mayer Park was mentioned in the report.

18 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

Further to Minute No. 15 – Date of Next Meeting - when the Committee had been informed that it was not possible to hold its meetings at the Mayer Hall on Wednesday evenings due to a block booking, Members raised concerns over the inconvenience, to some, of holding meetings on Thursday evenings and requested that this be reviewed.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 June 2014 be confirmed as a correct record; and**
- (2) the matter of holding meetings on a Thursday evening be reviewed before to the Council's Committee Calendar for 2015/16 is agreed.**

19 COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 19 – Constituency Representative Update, the Constituency Manager reported that Dave Johnson was unable to take up his co-option on to the Committee because of family reasons.

The five remaining co-opted Members introduced themselves to the Committee; they each provided details of their background, experience they had working within the local community and their particular interests.

RESOLVED:

That the co-opted Members' introductions be noted.

20 WIRRAL SOUTH BUDGET AND SPEND UPDATE

A report by the Constituency Manager provided the Committee with an update on the current allocation of all budgets devolved to the Committee. This included:

- £50K Wirral South Health & Wellbeing Fund
- £38,720.50 core budget rolled over from 2013/14 (allocated £10k per ward)
- £50K Core budget allocated to three main priorities
- £77,750 Road Safety Money
- £35K "Your Wirral" funding

The report also set out the Committee's three budget priorities and recommendations in relation to the various projects to be funded from the "Your Wirral" grants programme.

Appended to the Constituency Manager's report were:

- Wirral South Health and Wellbeing Fund Successful Projects Updates (Appendix 1)
- Wirral South Road Safety Task and Finish Group Meeting Notes – 13 August 2014 (Appendix 2)
- "Your Wirral South" Recommended Funding Applications (Appendix 3)

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made in respect of the allocation of the “Wirral South Health & Wellbeing Fund” be noted;**
- (2) Members will work closely with the Constituency Manager and other officers to ensure that the remaining under spend from 2013/14 is allocated, prior to the first Constituency Committee meeting of 2015 (22 January);**
- (3) the following proposals of the “Road Safety Task and Finish Group” be agreed:**
 - To utilise some of the £77,750 (£10K suggested) to carry out a constituency wide project to future proof a number of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS).**
 - The remaining amount to be split evenly per ward.**
- (4) Members will work closely with the Constituency Manager and other officers to ensure that the ward based road safety monies are spent in a timely manner (with a full and detailed report on the projects and their progress being brought to the first Constituency Committee meeting of 2015 (22 January); and**
- (5) the proposal to fund the ten “Your Wirral” projects outlined in Appendix three to the report be agreed. (To reopen the aforementioned fund until 28 November 2014, reconvene the existing task and finish group to assess applications expediently and allocate monies reporting back to the January 2014 Committee meeting.)**

21 WIRRAL SOUTH PRIORITIES UPDATE

A report by the Constituency Manager set out progress in respect of the resolved priorities for the Committee during 2014/15 and beyond.

The Committee noted that Members had attended a priority setting session in order to identify possible themes for the Committee’s consideration. The following three main themes were proposed and agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 25 June 2014 (Minute No. 4 refers.):

- Improved Open Spaces; to increase the number of green flag parks in Wirral South year on year.**
- Gaps in Youth Provision; to work with the internal and external partners to identify and rectify any existing gaps in provision of youth services in Wirral South.**

- Tackle Social Isolation; Identify the various groups affected by social isolation in Wirral South, establish the evident gaps in provision throughout the Constituency and aim to either support existing providers or commission a new piece of work.

The Committee had also resolved that each of the priorities above should be allocated £15k each, thus leaving £5k of core budget to support various engagement initiatives.

The Constituency Manager detailed current initiatives, progress made and proposals for the Committee's consideration in respect of each of the three identified priority areas.

Since that meeting the Committee, noted in particular, that the Constituency Manager had met with representatives from the Wirral South Park's Team, including the Senior Manager - Parks and Countryside Services to highlight the most suitable location on which to focus the Committee's efforts throughout 2014/15. Based upon this discussion and a subsequent site visit it was decided that Mayer Park was the most suitable location because of a number of factors, not least the existence of an enthusiastic and active "Friends Of" group plus the overall infrastructure being in acceptable condition. Since then a Parks Priority Task and Finish Group of elected Members has been set up and met on 6 August 2014. The notes of its meeting were appended to the Constituency Manager's report as Appendix 1. It had made the following proposals for the Committee's consideration:

- Installation of new bins.
- Arboreal work (removal of old tree stumps which require specialist equipment).
- Installation of a small fence to make a "kick around" area safer as it currently opened onto a main road.

A Member queried how a small fence would prevent children running out onto the road or balls going over it. The Constituency Manager reported that advice had been sought from a Green Flag Award judge who was of the view that chestnut fencing would work to begin with by emphasising the barrier to the Park.

The Member told the Committee that it was responsible for children's safety and that a risk assessment needed to be carried out. He considered that Green Flag Awards were more about how things looked rather than safety aspects.

Another Member felt that the fence would act as a deterrent and that it needed to be erected where the allotments used to be. It was an improvement on what was there now but she was unsure how safe it was going to be.

A Member reported that Bebington Members were awaiting quotations for road works to be carried out. These quotations were not being submitted very quickly so this may mean that the work may not be able to be completed within the agreed timescale. The Constituency Manager agreed that he would chase up these quotations so that the work was not delayed.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the spend associated with the following improvements to Mayer Park be agreed:
 - Installation of new bins
 - Installation of a small fence to make a "kick around" area safer as it currently opens on to a main road
- (2) the Park Related Priority for Wirral South be amended to encapsulate the wishes of the Task and Finish Group regarding increased access for those with a disability. The updated Priority should read:

“Improved Open Spaces; to increase the number of green flag parks in Wirral South year on year *and ensure accessibility is improved in each chosen location.*”
- (3) the Constituency Manager be requested to continue to work with Colleagues in the Parks and Countryside Service and members of the ‘Parks Priority Task and Finish Group’ to produce a shortlist of locations for consideration in 2015/16;
- (4) the Committee grants delegated powers to the existing and representative ‘Parks Priority Task and Finish Group’ to ensure budgetary spend can be agreed and improvements can be made as expediently as possible, thus maximising the potential for applying for the Green Flag Award within 2014/15;
- (5) the Constituency Manager be requested to work with Youth Support to compile a list of further initiatives in relation to the remaining youth budget for 2014/15; (This list be presented to Committee in January.)
- (6) the progress made in relation to initiating a “Dementia Friendly Community Pilot” in the Heswall area be noted and an initial allocation of up to £1000 between now and January 2015 be approved to allow the project to proceed in a timely manner; and
- (7) the progress made in relation to the identification of ways in which the Wirral South Constituency Committee can support

carers within the five wards be noted and a proposal be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

22 UPDATE FROM MERSEYSIDE POLICE

The Neighbourhood Inspector, Wirral South made a presentation to the Committee on the Police Estates Strategy and it was noted that it was proposed to reduce Police buildings in Wirral from ten to five. The proposed Strategy was out for public consultation until 30 November 2014. There were two road shows planned (Thursday, 30 October 2014 – 12 – 2pm at Tesco's in Heswall and Tuesday, 28 October 2014 – 10.30 – 12.30pm at Asda at Bromborough) and there would also be a public meeting at Birkenhead Town Hall on 11 November 2014.

The Inspector informed that in Wirral South it was proposed: That

- Bebington Police Station would be retained and refurbished and would become a Community Police Station and Neighbourhood and Patrol Hub replacement for Bromborough Police Station. Bromborough Police Station could then be declared surplus to requirements and disposed of; and
- Heswall, Hoylake, Moreton, Well Lane and Laird Street Police Stations could each be replaced by one Community Police Station and then they could each be declared surplus to requirements and disposed of.

The Inspector informed that the proceeds from the sale of some of the estate would be reinvested into the new estate, in laptops for all Officers (so they did not need to return to the Station each day) and in body worn cameras. He also informed which PCSOs were aligned to which ward.

Following the presentation the Inspector answered questions put by the Committee. It was noted that Bromborough Police Station was a lovely building but most of it was not in use and that Bebington had been deprived of a Police Station for a long time.

RESOLVED:

That the Neighbourhood Inspector be thanked for his report.

23 UPDATE FROM THE MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The new Station Manager (Andy Forshaw) informed the Committee that he had been based at Bromborough and Heswall Fire Stations for the last six weeks. He also provided statistical information for both station areas in respect of:

- Home fire safety checks.

- Responses to dwelling fires, secondary fires, deliberate vehicle fires, road traffic collisions, non domestic property fires.
- Call outs during the Bonfire periods 2011/12 and 2012/13. It was noted there had been a large reduction each year.

The Station Manager also reported on arrangements being put in hand with partner agencies for the 2014 Bonfire period including education integration, education messages, uncertain fireworks' drop offs, hazard spotting, free skips in certain locations, the media campaign targeted at youth groups via Facebook and Twitter and the Cage Soccer being provided in New Ferry as an alternative. He informed of the arrangements to deal with remnants of bonfires where crews would be touring all areas and ensure any remnants were extinguished.

Members noted that in the past debris from bonfires in public places had remained in situ for up to six months but last year they were cleared away quickly. This had been the result of a partnership arrangement between the Fire and Rescue Service, the Probation Service and the Council. This arrangement was still in place and bonfire residue would be removed quickly this year as well.

RESOLVED:

That the Station Manager be thanked for his report.

24 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION (APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES)**

Elected Members and members of the public in attendance raised the following questions, comments and requests.

Number 1

A member of the public asked if Housing Associations were still "dumping" their problem tenants in New Ferry. He went on to inform that residents were even more convinced than ever that this ongoing problem was getting worse. (It was not only public sector tenants, but private rented sector ones too. He asked what could be done about it.

When representatives of the Housing Associations had been invited to attend a NeFRA meeting, two years ago, they had denied that they had a deliberate policy of putting tenants with anger management/drugs/alcohol/antisocial behaviour issues in New Ferry, but the problems just did not seem to go away. They had said that if residents had issues with any tenants, to report them to the relevant Housing Association. However, he had found residents who were reluctant to do this because they feared "reprisals" from the

unsavoury neighbours with whom they had been having problems. Some people, he said, had been hounded out of the local area by problem tenants.

The member of the public formally requested that representatives from the various Housing Associations be invited to the South Wirral Constituency Committee meeting to answer the questions residents had about this issue.

The Chair informed that some detailed work would be carried out behind the scenes.

The Constituency Manager agreed to facilitate a closed meeting and to invite representatives of Riverside to attend. Also, Shorefields Problem Solving Group would consider this matter at its next meeting. A holistic approach would need to be taken.

Councillor S Niblock declared a personal interest by virtue of him being a tenant of a social landlord.

A Member informed that there were problems with tenants of social and private landlords and that there was a scheme on the Wirral to register private landlords so they were more responsible and did not just “dump” people in areas. However, this was not the forum to debate this matter in too much detail.

The Neighbourhood Inspector informed that from 20 October 2014 there would be major changes in legislation which would make it easier to evict bad tenants.

Number 2

A member of the public wanted to update the Committee on progress made in relation to the adoption of a private pumping station in Eastham Mews by United Utilities. She wished to draw attendees' attention to the fact that United Utilities were actively seeking out such locations in order that they might adopt them. (The following link signposts to United Utilities relevant web page: <http://www.unitedutilities.com/private-pumping-stations.aspx>).

The Chair informed that he had a copy of relevant correspondence. He would review it and obtain some technical advice.

It was noted that anyone who had a pump should be directed to United Utilities because they wanted to identify where they all were.

Number 3

A member of the public informed that the Council had contracted with an external organisation [Nurture Development] to promote the concept of Asset

Based Community Development [ABCD] throughout the Borough. He asked the following questions:

- Does the Committee endorse the concept of ABCD?
- How many Committee Members and officers have attended a meeting or seminar to learn about or discuss the concept?
- What plans did the Committee have to help communities within their boundaries to develop and carry forward the ABCD principles?

The Constituency Manager informed that the Council did endorse the concept of ABCD. He and some Members had received some training on this concept and on 10 November 2014 Members had been invited to a Seminar facilitated by Nurture Development.

It was intended that each Constituency area would develop programmes that come out of the Workshops being held.

Question 4

A member of the public informed that Higher Bebington Road had been closed that afternoon because of an event at the Sports College and it had involved three Police Officers. Road closures were now taking place whenever a tournament was on. Members considered it important that the School was informed that it needed to redirect the traffic in a safer way. Today, the road had been closed as the children were returning home from school.

A Member, who was also a governor of the School informed that he would take this matter up as a matter of urgency.

Congestion issues would be taken forward and the Assistant Chief Executive would speak to the Headteacher.

Question 5

A member of the public asked what could be done about parking outside schools at the beginning and end of the school day. The member of the public also informed that pupils from Higher Bebington School ran down the road on Tuesday and sometimes Wednesdays knocking over wheely bins in the process.

A Member informed that parking around schools was an issue across all schools. Headteachers and Governors tried to tackle this by sending out letters to parents asking that they park responsibly but this was not something that could easily be enforced.

Members could try to get yellow lines but down on roads in the vicinity of schools but this just moved the problems further down the road. PCSOs did issue tickets when vehicles caused an obstruction.

The Neighbourhood Inspector highlighted the fact that parking offenses were now decriminalised. There were very few Parking Officers. The Police could issue tickets for obstruction but it had a high burden of proof.

The Constituency Manager informed that the Council could speak to Headteachers where a problem had been identified and it could also consider using CCTV vehicles.

A Member requested that a CCTV vehicle could be deployed to Cross Lane, Bebington where parents regularly parked on double yellow lines. The Constituency Manager agreed to compile a list of hot spots and forward them to a relevant Council colleague for consideration.

Question 6

A member of the public made reference to isolation and loneliness of elderly men and asked if consideration could be given to how to get them out of the house and involved with other people e.g. Men in Sheds.

It was noted that the policy of not gritting estate roads added to the isolation as the elderly could not leave their houses for long time periods in the winter.

A Member informed that it was no longer possible to arrange for grit bins to be filled. This was a funding issue and it was very serious. The problem regarding ice was understood and it was the result of the severity of the cuts the Council had been forced to make. Members would try to find a way to solve this problem in these very difficult circumstances.

Question 7

The Alzheimer's Society in Birkenhead had received £9,000 to promote dementia and could hold an ABCD session.

The Chair informed that there had been a Notice of Motion to the Council about giving ABCD a higher priority and there was a training session planned at the Lauries Centre in Birkenhead shortly.

25 URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR - POLICE PRIORITY SETTING MEETING

It was noted that the Police wanted to carry out a priority setting session before or after a future Committee meeting.

The Neighbourhood Inspector reported that he wanted to hold a meeting for local people so they could voice their concerns about the Police and what they thought the Police should be dealing with. This would be an opportunity for local people to raise issues in this forum or in private with Police Officers in a Break Away Room.

RESOLVED:

That the Neighbourhood Inspector's report be noted and his proposal to hold a meeting for local people, so they can voice their concerns about the Police and what they think the Police should deal with, be supported.

26 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting had been advertised as taking place at 6pm on Thursday, 22 January 2014 at Mayer Hall, The Village, Bebington.

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