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CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WALLASEY

Thursday, 23 October 2014

Present:

Councillor R Gregson (Chair)

Councillors	B Berry	C Jones
	C Blakeley	A Leech
	M Daniel	B Mooney
		J Salter
	T Johnson	J Williamson
	AER Jones	S Williams

Community Reps	Mr J Carson
	Mr K Harrison
	Mr B Higgins
	Mr A Jones

Apologies

Councillors	RL Abbey	P Hayes
	L Fraser	L Rennie
	P Hackett	C Spriggs

Community Reps	Miss A Cooke
	Mr K Raybould

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

The Chair, having welcomed everyone to the meeting, then asked if Members whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

14 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the Wallasey Constituency Committee held on 26 June 2014 and the Constituency Committee Working Group held on 1 October 2014 be approved.

15 **CO-OPTION OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

Further to minute 17 (19/2/14) and minute 8 (26/6/14) the Chair informed the Committee that Mr John Carson and Miss Alex Cooke had been appointed as Co-opted Community Representatives but as the Working Group had not been quorate the Committee was being asked to formally agree the co-option of the Community Representatives and to invite them to join the Committee. Miss Alex Cooke had sent her apologies but Mr Carson was in attendance and introduced to members of the Committee.

Resolved – That John Carson and Alex Cooke (young person’s representative) be co-opted as Community Representatives.

16 UPDATE FROM 'HAVE YOUR SAY' EVENT

The Chair invited Sergeant Kate Roberts to update the Committee on the previous quarter. Sergeant Roberts informed the Committee that there were 4 priorities in Wirral in the Seacombe, Liscard, Leasowe and New Brighton areas.

- In the Seacombe area there was involvement in the Ashville Road/Ash Villas area where there had been anti-social behaviour/drug dealing involving one family. There had been multi agency involvement resulting in the young people concerned being identified and the family evicted. This had had a positive effect and the priority had now been closed.
- In the Liscard area the priority concerned retail crime – shoplifting and Sergeant Roberts reported that strategies including CCTV recorded evidence had had a positive impact. There was also a red card scheme in place where red cards were issued to individuals to show the impact their behaviour was having.
- In the Leasowe areas there were issues with off road bike riders one of whom had been identified and could be targeted by traffic officers so there had been a positive result.
- In the New Brighton area there had been some issues last year around Marine Point – subsequently signage had been put in place and the situation was much improved. In the area of retail crime there was now a shop safe radio link and all stores had been visited by Police officers so there were positive outcomes this year.

Sergeant Roberts informed the Committee that new priorities had now been set.

- In the Seacombe area an urban street gang with an involvement of drugs and anti-social behaviour had been identified and a multi agency approach had been employed with the aim to disband the street gang. There was also a long term campaign employed with Police officers going into schools.
- In the Liscard area there was currently some anti social behaviour being looked into and in Moreton in the Whitely Estate area there had been some racially aggravated offences which were currently being

given attention and Police officers were also working with other agencies.

- In the New Brighton area it was reported that there were issues with motor bike and cycle thefts and Police officers had obtained intelligence on the offenders who were a priority target.

With regard to the Rice Lane, Wallasey area Councillor Bernie Mooney, referring to waste dumped in the Charlotte Road areas, commented that it was important that attempts were made to get landlords to take responsibility for their tenants. It was important that incidents were recorded in order to force appropriate legislation. Sergeant Roberts responded that Police officers were linking with landlords and targeting relevant addresses of troublesome families who had moved into the area in conjunction with the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

The Constituency manager reported that 13 people had attended the market place event that had been held prior to Constituency Committee's meeting.

Resolved – That the update from Sergeant Kate Roberts and the Constituency Manager be noted.

17 FUTURE COUNCIL UPDATE

Kevin MacCallum, Corporate Marketing Officer, attended the meeting and gave an overview of Future Council outlining the Council's key priorities and how these priorities could be achieved in the present financial situation. Agreed savings of £57 million would impact until 2017. The key aim of the Corporate priorities was to protect the vulnerable in the Borough and the four themes of work included looking at cost effective ways of delivering services, demand management, income and efficiency and customer contact – moving to online services where possible. Public Consultation was ongoing and would close on 31 October, 2014 when all feedback would be collated and reported to Cabinet in November, 2014. Kevin MacCallum gave details of the budget proposals by which sufficient savings would be made to bridge the budget gap of £2.5 million. The various options were detailed including Youth and Play, School Crossing Patrols, Council Tax Over 70's discount, Commemorations, Registrations and Memorials, Charging for allotments, bowling greens and football pitches, Pest Control, Public Conveniences and Roadside Grit Bins. The area of Customer Contact would have a thorough review to ensure they were as cost effective and targeted as possible and the proposed option concerning 15 Community Libraries would see a reduction in opening hours.

Kevin MacCallum responded to members' questions and members expressed concern about the budget proposals concerning West Kirby Marine Lake and the proposed increase of charges for football pitches.

Resolved – That Kevin MacCallum be thanked for the presentation.

18 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair informed the meeting that a number of questions had been received in advance of the meeting and these were listed below with the name of the questioner and the respective response given.

Question 1

Mrs Wharton, Wallasey

What is being done or can be done with regards to stopping cuts and the reduction of groups and services across the Wallasey cluster children's centres? Myself and other parents are unhappy at the current situation and would like this issue to be rectified by leaving the centres and staff as they are. They provide a crucial service to families of all backgrounds and in most cases is the only point of contact these families have with others. Disruption of this service would have a devastating effect on the community.

Kevin MacCallum responded that the Public Consultation involving these services had taken place last year and the outcome reported to Cabinet. There was one main Children's Centre in each Constituency and surrounding satellite Centres. No Centres had been closed. Proposals to reduce opening hours were being considered by the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee.

Question 2

Miss Hayes, Moreton

Why is the council planning to hit young children who play football by increasing the cost of the use of their ground, which I might add, are frequently covered in dog dirt? Over the years, community centres have been closed down leaving only costly activities for kids. Most people are already struggling. Football is a very popular activity these days and at the moment, is still affordable. Don't take this away from our kids, there isn't much of a future off them as it is.

Kevin MacCallum responded that the proposed charges amounted to about £15 per team which equated to a couple of £'s per child. Costs were still subsidised by the Council.

Question 3

Mr Griffiths, McDonalds (Liscard)

Is the Committee about to or interested in submitting a BID? To create a Business Improvement District?

Answer: From Neil Mitchell (Project Manager)

There are no plans currently for the creation of a BID within the Wallasey Constituency. That's not to say that traders, businesses or Wirral Chamber could not seek to work to develop one themselves.

A BID is a geographical area where businesses are invited to decide how to improve their trading environment. A local mechanism is used to progress the BID where non-domestic ratepayers occupying local business premises pay an extra levy (usually 1%) on top of the annual business rates for a fixed period (up to 5 years). This additional funding generated is then ring-fenced and spent at the discretion of the BID Board based on a business plan of services and improvements within the designated BID area. Such initiatives generally are led by private sector – traders groups, Chambers of Commerce etc. The Council's role generally is around organising the referendum and in the event of a "Yes" vote, collecting the levy through its business rate collection processes. The lead in time is on average 18-24 months.

Wirral Chamber of Commerce is currently developing a BID for Birkenhead Town Centre. This is being resourced through the £100k that DCLG made available to the Council through the High Street Innovation Fund. These resources were given to those local authority areas that experienced riots/civil disturbances in August 2011 (of which Birkenhead Town Centre/Charing Cross area suffered).

The Chair invited further questions from members of the public. There being none the Committee moved to the next item on the agenda.

19 **INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION UPDATE**

Further to minute 5 (26/06/14) Kate Robinson, Principal Electoral Services Officer, gave an update to the Committee on the progress on the transfer to Individual Electoral Registration ('IER'). The Principal Electoral Services Officer reported that at the last meeting the Council was about to embark on IER in an initiative set up by the Cabinet Office that compared Electoral Registration data with the DWP register with some people being required to re-register. In Wirral the match rate was reported as 91%, with only 9% being asked if they want to re-register. Wallasey Constituency was reported as above average with Seacombe having a higher than 85% confirmation rate. The final stage of the annual canvass aimed to encourage people to vote and 1st time electors were able to register online. It was reported that National Insurance numbers were now required, causing some concern about security however this information was only given to the DWP to compare and this information was not retained. Special arrangements had been put in place by Parliament to enable voters to remain on the register until December 2015. Further information was available on the website: -

www.gov.uk/government/publications/using-data-matching-to-confirm-electors-interim-evaluation

Responding to a question from Cllr Chris Blakeley asking how many times canvassers would try to contact residents the Principal Electoral Services Officer responded that canvassers would be visiting once and trying to make contact and delivering the form and card explaining that the resident may make contact by telephone or online. In response to a question from a member regarding Nursing Homes the Principal Electoral Services Officer responded that the Council's Electoral Services would be employing staff to assist nursing home residents by a personal visit to nursing home managers offering face to face assistance to vulnerable people.

Resolved – That the Principal Electoral Services Officer be thanked for her update

20 **CONSTITUENCY PRIORITIES AND SPEND**

The Constituency Manager introduced a report that provided an update on the Constituency Committee's committed spend for 2014/15 and outlined proposals for the remainder of the budget.

Appendix 1 to the report summarised the committed and uncommitted spend for Wallasey Constituency Committee for 2014/15. It was reported that the Committee had £46,306.73 currently uncommitted for this financial year. This included £5,950 set aside for the Problem Solving Fund which should remain.

It was reported that Partners engaged through Wallasey Public Service Board had been consulted on projects that based on their professional knowledge and experience would assist Wallasey Constituency Committee in tackling its priorities and areas of focus. Research had also been conducted relating to improving community cohesion and raising the aspirations of young people (two of the Committee's areas of focus) by a university student undertaking work experience with the Constituency team over the summer period, which had been factored into the development of a number of these proposals. The proposals are summarised for the Committee and further information set out for each in Appendix 2 of the report.

The Committee gave consideration to each of the proposals outlined in Appendix 2 of the report to determine those it wished to fund from the Committee's Constituency Options Fund (£30,000). The Constituency Manager set out the priorities for these initiatives from those set by the Committee.

The Committee also gave consideration for a deferred bid for Your Wirral funding Wallasey Constituency Working Group (1/10/14 - minute 20 refers) that had been deferred for further information.

Bid number YW2 by Striding Out CIC for a Digital & IT Skills for Employability project (£2,485) had been deferred for decision for further information; namely whether there was a gap in provision that this project would fill. The Council's Lifelong Learning Team had recently commissioned Striding Out CIC to deliver a project to 160 learners from Vale House Community Centre. The Team was satisfied that this would provide adequate coverage from this geographical location. The Committee was requested to make a decision as to whether this project submitted to Your Wirral was funded.

The Committee also gave consideration to allocating funding from the Committee's Constituency Options Fund (£30,000) and/or Love Wirral fund (£10,000) for the erection of Christmas lighting displays and associated festive events. The Constituency Manager reported that Officers had conducted site visits with elected members to ascertain minimum requirements for each ward in preparation for this Christmas in order to obtain estimated costs for the Committee to consider further. This work was ongoing and the amount requested was presented as Appendix 3 to the report.

The Report gave details of the centres – Liscard, New Brighton, Seacombe, Wallasey, Moreton West & Saughall Massie and Leasowe & Moreton East – the funding required and its purpose. A member suggested that the centres be considered en bloc as it would not be fair for communities to be set against each other for this funding. Councillor Chris Blakeley endorsed this view and commented that secure storage was vital and the cost of this needed to be taken into account for each area. Councillor Bernie Mooney said that in the Liscard area the lights were 3 years old and may need replacing when they were switched. A member of the public suggested that the money be put into FoodBanks instead of being spent on Christmas Lights. Members accepted that this was a worthy suggestion however there was specific funding supporting this and the benefits of funding the Christmas Lights, although a small amount, uplifted the areas, was moral boosting and was good for trade. The general view was that this was a starting point for communities that would hopefully inspire them to 'grow' the displays.

Resolved - That:-

1. further information be sought as to the bid for Your Wirral funding by Striding Out CIC and they be asked to attend the next Constituency Committee to respond to any questions about their application.

2. the following initiatives outlined in Appendix 2 of the report be funded from the Committee's Constituency Options Fund as follows and the maximum bid amount for the Little Sparks Fund be set at £500:-

Project name	Cost
Smokefree Community Champions	£500
Reducing Super Strength Alcohol Campaign	£2,500
Inspirational Community Volunteer Intergenerational Project	£5,000
Little Sparks Fund	Min £2,000
LGBT youth provision/Navajo Merseyside LGBT Charter Mark status	£2,005

Young People's Community Clean Up Project	£830
Facilitating the provision of diversionary activities for young people	Up to £2,505
Pop Up Talent Events	£2,400
Winter Safe	£1,500
Maximum commitment	£24,780

3. the proposal “Illegal and Illicit Tobacco Campaign”, with a cost of £5,540, be refused on the grounds of duplication.

4. the requests for Christmas Lights outlined in Appendix 3 of the report be funded from the Committee’s Constituency Options Fund/Love Wirral Fund and a maximum of £20,000 in total is set aside to allow for any contingencies.

5. the remaining budget be added to the £5,950 set aside for the Committee’s Problem Solving Fund.

6. learning from the various small grants programmes be used to revise the criteria and terms and conditions for future programmes operated by Wallasey Constituency Committee.