

WIRRAL COUNCIL

BIRKENHEAD CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

26TH FEBRUARY 2015

SUBJECT:	CONSTITUENCY MANAGERS UPDATE
WARD/S AFFECTED:	WARDS WITHIN THE BIRKENHEAD CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARY. BIRKENHEAD AND TRANMERE BIDSTON AND ST JAMES CLAUGHTON OXTON PRENTON ROCK FERRY
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENGAGEMENT
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Section 2.0 of this report provides an update on progress in relation to agreed schemes of work from the budget allocated and devolved to the Constituency Committee to date.
- 1.2 Section 3.0 of this report details updates and actions agreed at the previous Constituency Committee meetings, including the last one on 30th October 2014.

2.0 UPDATE ON BUDGET FOR BIRKENHEAD CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

2.1 Constituency Committee budget 2013/14- £50,000

The Committee was given a budget of £50,000 in 2013/14 to 'kick-start' work on the new neighbourhood working model with a focus on tackling inequalities. Below is an update on each of the schemes of work that were agreed by the committee to be developed utilising this budget allocation to deliver against identified priorities:

1. £20,000 was allocated to 'Improving Communication' through the development of a community publication for Birkenhead.

Update: A tender process was carried out to appoint a provider to deliver this project for a 12 month period. The closing date for submissions was 20th October and the evaluation of them took place on 22nd October.

Lairdside Community Trust (LCT) secured the tender to deliver three publications of the new newsletter publication 'Town Talk' over one year to 40,000 households

in the Birkenhead Constituency Area. Please see Appendix 1 for first edition of 'Town Talk'.

LCT has set up an editorial group made up of community representatives and statutory partners. The first edition of 'Town Talk' is to go to print in February 2015. The content of the newsletter includes details of local events and updates on community activities and services.

If anyone has an ideas for articles they would like to include please forward details to LCT at email address news-towntalk@hotmail.com. We hope to have copies of the newsletter available at the constituency meeting.

Actions: The Constituency Manager will manage the contract and a report on progress will be provided at each Committee meeting along with copies of the publication for information.

2. £20,000 was allocated to 'Improving the Environment' through the development of a service to improve sites in Birkenhead that have been left open, poorly maintained and/or disused, therefore looking unsightly in the area often attracting litter and fly tipping (dumping of waste illegally). It was also agreed to use this funding to deliver a reactive fly tipping service; this is referred to in point 2.5 of this report.

Update: A tender was advertised with a closing date of 14th November 2014 and a 12 month contract has been put in place with a start date of 1st December 2014 to appoint a service to improve poorly maintained sites in Birkenhead.

Lairdside Community Trust (LCT) has won the contract and will clear up a number of grotspot areas around the Birkenhead constituency. Locations for clean ups have been identified by Local Councillors and will be prioritised by LCT following a site visit. LCT will undertake clearance and will engage with nearby residents to complete satisfaction surveys.

Members of the Committee have submitted proposals of schemes of work to be considered to be carried out within this contract.

Action: LCT has agreed to provide an update report which can be found in Appendix 2.

3. The Committee wish to have a clear overview of current spend and delivery on public services within Birkenhead through the appointment of an expert to collate, evaluate and analyse the existing data. Due to the size of this task it was agreed by the Committee to initially carry out the task on spend for services of children aged under 5.

There has been collection of some of this information (primarily spend is from Public Health, Wirral Council and Clinical Commissioning Groups) which was presented to the Constituency Committee on 10th April 2014. Continuation of this work has been delayed due to the introduction of the Future Council project. Future Council project was established to help meet the future budget challenges and as part of the project Wirral Council has conducted a comprehensive review into all of

its services (82 service reviews), the report states 'Every part of the Council has been scrutinised to ensure every pound is spent effectively and every service is as efficient as it can possibly be'. The challenge with this task set by Birkenhead Constituency Committee was that the data required was not available.

Update: Prior to Future Council starting, the Chair of the Constituency Committee and Constituency Manager had a series of meetings with Liverpool University and an Audit Manager from KPMG. The meeting concluded that it would be difficult to analyse the data due to how diverse datasets are from differing agencies. At the same time the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues were being focussed on in Birkenhead and it was agreed that the some of the allocated funds could be used to analyse ASB data.

Action: Tony Kinsella has been invited to the Committee meeting to report on data collation around Anti-Social Behaviour spend across agencies in Birkenhead.

2.2 **Public Health outcome Fund 2013/14- £25,000 (plus a further £25,000)**

The Committee were given this budget allocation to deliver against specific priorities identified by Public Health. It was agreed by the Committee to utilise the funding to focus on one priority of 'Reducing the Impact of Child Poverty'. It was agreed to develop a 'Community Hub' at a local primary school based on a model that has been delivered in two other sites in Wirral through the Child Poverty Working Group. All primary schools in Birkenhead with over 50% of pupils living in areas of high income deprivation were invited to submit an Expression of Interest to this project, two schools will be offered a grant of £25,000 each to achieve the outcome that 'Children are Ready for School'. They will utilise the funding to:

- Provide high quality service provision and interventions for children below statutory school age that will have a positive affect on Childrens' intellectual and social /behavioral development prior to school entry.
- Work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop at home and in the community, delivering the key message and understanding that what parents do is more important than who parents are.
- Build on the strengths and well-being of the local community; mapping what resources are available for parents and children and help families learn about and use resources and services available within the community

Based on the proposal Public Health agreed to offer a further £25,000 to this project.

One expression of interest was received and an interview was carried out with this school on 21st October to discuss the proposal in more detail. The panel consisted of:

- Councillor Moira McLaughlin
- Councillor Ann McLachlan
- Birkenhead Constituency Manager
- Public Health Manager
- Chair of the Child Poverty Working Group
- Director, Birkenhead Foundation Years Project

Update: This panel has now formed a Task and Finish Group to monitor development, make recommendations, evaluate the impact of this project and provide updates to the Committee at each meeting. There is funding to award £25,000 to two schools.

St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School was successful in their tender to develop a community hub focussing on school readiness. The Task and Finish have made recommendations around the operating of the hub and ensuring the hub is linked with the already established hubs in Leasowe and Woodchurch.

The project steering group is being set up and delivery is expected from the Easter holidays onwards.

Contact has also been made with Rock Ferry Primary School by the Task and Finish group and a meeting has been set up to support their bid to deliver a further community hub focussing on school readiness.

Action: The Task and Finish group will receive regular updates from the Community hub at St Paul's and will report back to the Birkenhead Constituency Meeting. The group will also make recommendations around how the project will be delivered in Rock Ferry and report back to the Committee.

2.3 **Voluntary Sector Support Fund- £25,000**

On 10th December 2013 the Director of Public Health presented a report to Cabinet recommending £100K to be administered through the Constituency Committees" aimed at supporting the voluntary sector in Wirral, Birkenhead received an allocation of £25,000. Below is an update on each of the schemes of work that were agreed by the committee to be developed utilising this budget allocation:

1. £15,000 was allocated to increase Breast Feeding initiation rates in Birkenhead by developing an antenatal support programme.

Update: Appendix 3 contains the third quarterly report submitted by Home Start, the provider of this service for the period of October 2014 – January 2015.

One of the challenges highlighted with this service was low referral rates and ensuring all pregnant women were aware of the support available. A significant development to overcome this challenge is that the Hospital Trust midwifery service has agreed to an information sharing protocol being set up between them and Home-Start Wirral which would mean that the provider would get the contact details of every pregnant Wirral woman and they will then contact them at 28 weeks of pregnancy to offer them information/support. It has also been agreed that an information sharing protocol will be established with the Health Visiting Service and that they will do an automatic referral to Home Start when they do their antenatal visit. They don't at the moment and very few antenatal referrals are received from Health Visitors.

Action: The Birkenhead Constituency Antenatal project would like to come to a constituency meeting to make a presentation about the project and its impact on individuals in the area.

2. £5,000 was allocated to increase and develop the use of the Wirral Well website through improved and targeted promotion.

Update: The artwork and content has been agreed through market testing with residents and the following products will be purchased to promote the website

- Banner stands
- Leaflet Vinyl's for shop windows
- Fold out credit card
- Stickers

An engagement plan has been written and will be implemented through the Birkenhead Engagement Officer and Community Action Wirral.

Work has been ongoing with Community Action Wirral to agree a broad marketing plan and marketing materials have been designed by the Council's in-house Graphics Section. These materials will go to print shortly and the full marketing plan will be finalised and then implemented in due course in conjunction with partners.

Action: The marketing plan and marketing materials will be brought to the next Committee meeting for information.

3. £5,000 of this budget was allocated to provide additional support with the development of a local publication detailed in point 2.1 of this report.

The additional £5K was set aside to provide additional support for the publication if required.

Action: There have been no requests for additional support for the newsletter as yet. So it is recommended that the £5K could be used to add pages to the future editions, as there are more articles than space available at the moment. Please could the Committee consider this option which is recommended for their approval.

2.4

Constituency Committee budget 2014/15- £50,000

The Constituency Committee were given a further £50,000 to develop schemes of work to deliver against agreed priorities.

It was agreed by the committee to use £10,000 of this allocation to give a grant to Rock Park Trust Company to carry out the repairs to the Esplanade.

Update: The specification for the works has now been agreed and the Rock Park Trust Company is currently inviting tenders.

The Priorities Task and Finish group met on 12th September to discuss proposals for the remaining £40,000, in attendance were Frank Field MP, Councillor P Davies and Councillor S Kelly. The proposals discussed and agreed at the Committee on 30th October 2014 were:

1. An allocation of £2993.24 to improving the environment by increasing the signage in Birkenhead to act as a deterrent for environmental crime and increase awareness of enforcement proceedings.
2. An allocation of £35,000 to be allocated for a service to aim to reduce anti social behaviour. An action plan has developed and is in Appendix 4.
3. An allocation of £2000 to develop Community Researchers in Birkenhead to increase the engagement with residents to offer greater knowledge sharing for improving public service provision.

The Community Research project is being steered by the 'Handbook Task and Finish Group' who are due to meet week commencing 24th February 2015. At the meeting the Councillors will confirm which of the available research topics they would like to focus on what order they will choose to focus on them. Please see Appendix 5 for details of the proposed community researchers project for information.

2.5 'Love Wirral' Funding 2014/15- £10,000

Love Wirral was a borough wide campaign that was launched in June 2013 to encourage people who live, work and visit Wirral to take pride in our local environment. As part of this campaign a Love Wirral grant scheme was launched in October 2013. This grant scheme aimed to encourage existing and new groups to get involved offering a small amount of funding for projects to be developed to improve the local area and encourage people to take pride and responsibility in keeping their part of Wirral clean and attractive and a pleasant area for them to live, work and visit. The grant was split equally across the 4 constituencies, £10,000 to each.

On reviewing the grant process the following points were highlighted to determine was a grant process the best use of this funding allocation:

- The funding was limited to £500 per application; this meant a lot of the projects were short term with no long term impact or sustainability.
- Many of the proposals required specialist installation and removal (e.g. planters), this was causing additional revenue implications for Wirral Council or community groups.
- Due to the assessment process not including technical expertise some of the projects could not be delivered due to health and safety implications, resulting in groups feeling frustrated and disadvantaged.
- The small projects required a lot of Wirral Council's technical services staff time to advise, this meant some time delays with a lot of the projects, again resulting in frustrated community groups.

Based on the above points being highlighted it has been agreed that for 2014/15 each Constituency Committee will have an allocation of £10,000 that they can use how they wish to, they do not have to follow a grants programme but can devise a scheme that will work towards Improving the Environment.

It was discussed and agreed by the Priorities and Budget Task and Finish Group on 12th September 2014 to recommend to the Constituency Committee to utilise this funding to deliver a reactive fly tipping service to improve the environment. It was then approved at the Committee meeting on 30th October 2014.

Update: A template has been developed and circulated to Councillors to identify areas to be cleaned up. The form is then uploaded through the Council's CRM system. The Council's environmental team then co-ordinate the work via the Biffa contract.

2.6 **'Your Wirral' 2014/15- £75,000**

The Constituency Committee was informed at the meeting on 24th July 2014 that 'Your Wirral' funding has been devolved to the Constituency Committees for 2014/15. It is a small grants programme that has been in operation since 2007, it is a strand of the Community Fund that came into being as a result of the Value Added Tax (VAT) return generated by the housing stock transfer from Wirral Council to Wirral Partnership Homes, now Magenta Living. The report on 24th July 2014 stated that Birkenhead Constituency Committee was given an allocation of £75,000 for 2014/15 with the recommendation to offer a Community Grants application process in Birkenhead to deliver against identified priorities.

It was discussed at the July Committee meeting and recommended from the Committee that better use of the funds would be to support those struggling to pay their rent as a result of the Bedroom Tax and consequently faced eviction. The action following the meeting was a letter was sent from the Chair of Birkenhead Constituency Committee to the Joint Working Group of 'Your Wirral' requesting the budget allocation can be used for this purpose. The Joint Working Group acts as an accountable body for the fund and is composed of representation from Wirral Council and Magenta Living. The request from the Chair was considered at a meeting of the Joint Working Group on 8th October 2014.

After the meeting on 30th October 2014 and discussions with Magenta Living, it was agreed that the Birkenhead Constituency 'Your Wirral' funding 2014/15 should be allocated to feeding Birkenhead children. The fund is open to "schools and other interested groups" with the aim of supporting families. This has been promoted in the local press and is detailed on the relevant pages of the Council website. Schools can apply for 'Your Wirral' as long as it is for activities that are extra-curricular.

The criteria require this funding to be used for new projects, excluding existing schemes. Priorities include the continuation of free schools meals in the holidays, breakfast and after schools clubs and for these programmes to begin in the 2015 Easter Holiday Period. The deadline for applications 25th February 2015 and there is a maximum of £2500 per organisation.

2.7 **Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme 2014/15- £77,500**

The Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme for 2014/5 agreed by Cabinet on 13th March 2014 (minute 178 refers) provides an allocation of £77,750 to each Constituency Committee to be distributed in relation to two objectives; Improving Road Safety and Promoting Active Travel and Health (£38,875). This was discussed at the Birkenhead Constituency Committee meeting on 24th July 2014 and it was agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to provide recommendations for this budget, the group agreed from self-nominations Councillor G Davies, Councillor S Kelly and Councillor D Realey. All members of the committee were asked to submit proposals to be considered to meet the

objectives of this funding; these were collated and presented to the Task and Finish group on 17th October 2014. The group were to be supported by an officer from the Council's Traffic & Transportation Division to advise on the costs and feasibility of schemes.

Councillor S Kelly was the only member of the Task and finish Group in attendance (the Road Safety Manager and Constituency Manager were also present.) therefore decisions on the recommendations could not be made. There was a detailed discussion regarding the submitted proposals and how to progress utilising the funding. Based on the proposals and the timescales to use this funding (it must be spent by March 2015) the following recommendations made and agreed by the Committee on 30th October 2014:

1. To split the funding into 2 allocations:
 - £32,000 to promote active travel by increasing the volume of dropped kerbs and some cycling infrastructure.
 - £45,750 to schemes of work to improve road safety e.g. parking issues, speeding reductions.
2. To re establish the Task and Finish group with a minimum of 5 members of the committee. The group will be supported by the Road Safety Manager for Wirral Council. It was suggested to invite representation from Merseyside Police to discuss input to the road safety issues and how they could support developments and WIRED (Wirral Information Resource for Equality and Diversity). Due to timescales of this funding allocation it is proposed this working group has the authority to prioritise use of funding and implement the schemes outside of the Committee meetings.

Update: The Task and Finish group met on 19th January 2015 and agreed to spend £32,000 on dropped kerbs and to specifically focus on medical centres to improve access to wheel chair and motorability users.

£29,000 was allocated to signs around local schools to try and reduce speeding. The remaining £10,000 was allocated to a larger £50,000 scheme to implement traffic calming measures around Birkenhead High School Academy, which will also impact on St Anselm's College and Red Court School. The £50,000 for the project is a separate road safety funding source, but it was decided that the £10,000 would add value to the larger scheme.

3.0 Other Updates

- 3.1 The Handbook Task and Finish Group met on 29th September 2014, in attendance was Councillor G Davies, Councillor M McLaughlin, Councillor A Brighthouse and Councillor T Norbury, Constituency Manager and Engagement Officer for Birkenhead. This meeting focused on developing Community Researchers in Birkenhead as detailed in the handbook and discussed at the committee meeting on 24th July 2014. It was agreed to recruit Community Researchers specific to research topics and to engage with community organisations that have a specialism in the identified topics.

A pilot piece of research was developed with the National Citizenship Service (NCS) to pilot the Community Researchers Project using young people to research what it is like to live in Birkenhead. A questionnaire was developed with a number of young people from the NCS course which will help to gather the opinions of fellow young people online and via a number of 'listening surveys'.

It was decided the next piece of research will be with Black and Ethnic Minority groups to enhance understanding of this community group in Birkenhead. The NCS group were used for the pilot, in terms of how the project may proceed. The NCS have completed all their listening surveys which will be collated and the data will be used as a guide to future community researchers. Details of the Community Researchers Action Plan can be found in Appendix 5.

- 3.2 Sixty one applications have been received for the second round of the Wirral Wide allocation of 'Your Wirral' funding of £20,000. The panel which is made up of Local Councillors and Magenta Living representatives will assess the applications and will meet towards the end of March with applicants being informed of the panel's decision following the meeting.
- 3.3 It was resolved at the Birkenhead Constituency Committee meeting on 24th July 2014 the Constituency Manager, on behalf of the Chair be requested to write to the Chief Executive of Wonga Loans to request information as to how many loans had been issued in Birkenhead.

Update: The letter was sent to Wonga but it was returned, the contact details have been checked and it is the correct registered address for the company therefore this is being followed up by MP Frank Fields Office.

- 3.4 There have been other community engagement activities taking in place in Birkenhead and some of these activities are detailed in Appendix 6.

4.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 4.1 All resource implications detailed within this report are related to budgets aligned or devolved to the Birkenhead Constituency Committee for their recommended use.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The arrangements will help the Council to deliver on the Localism Act 2011 and Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

6.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for each of the proposals.

7.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report has no direct carbon reduction implications.

8.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This report has no planning and community safety implications.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee are asked to:

- 9.1 Note and approve the content of the updates detailed at 2.1-2.7 related to specific schemes of work and approve for progress to continue.
- 9.2 Consider and agree the proposal detailed at 2.3.3 £5,000 additional newsletter fund.
- 9.3 Consider and approve the recommendations in the ASB Birkenhead Action Plan for £35,000 of the 2014/15 Constituency Committee budget allocation as detailed at 2.4.2

10.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To continue to progress the targeted schemes of work identified within the constituency to develop the new approach to neighbourhood working.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - First edition of 'Town Talk' newsletter

APPENDIX 2 - 'Improving the Environment' project, LCT update

APPENDIX 3 - Antenatal Breast Feeding Project Quarterly Report (Oct 2014 - Jan 2015)

APPENDIX 4 - Birkenhead Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan

APPENDIX 5 - Community Researchers Project Action Plan

APPENDIX 6 - Community Engagement Activity