

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WALLASEY

Thursday, 22 January 2015

Present: Councillor R Gregson (Chair)

Councillors	B Berry	AER Jones
	M Daniel	C Jones
	L Fraser	A Leech
	P Hayes	B Mooney
	T Johnson	C Spriggs

Community Reps	Mr J Carson
	Miss A Cooke
	Mr K Harrison
	Mr B Higgins
	Mr A Jones
	Mr K Raybould

<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	RL Abbey	J Salter
		C Blakeley	J Williamson
		L Rennie	S Williams

21 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.

22 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the Wallasey Constituency Committee held on 23 October, 2014 be approved.

23 UPDATE FROM 'HAVE YOUR SAY' EVENT

The Chair invited Inspector Pete Kolokotroni to update the Committee on the previous quarter. Inspector Kolokotroni summarised the priorities for the Committee as follows:-

- In the Seacombe and Poulton area there was Police involvement in the Ashville Road area. An urban street gang had been identified and working in partnership with other agencies a number of arrests for

burglaries had been made and several youths had been arrested for a variety of reasons including breach of bail conditions, breach of Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) conditions and domestic violence. A week of disruption was planned involving other agencies e.g. Trading Standards, Utility Companies when the area would be targeted. Working in schools, again in partnership with outside agencies, Police were trying to break down barriers and promote respect in the area.

- In the Liscard/Egremont area neighbourhood disputes had led to arrests being made and mediation had taken place. In the Rice Lane area Wirral Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team had been involved and a youth gang ringleader had been identified. Police were now looking to close this priority.
- In the Moreton and Leasowe area the focus was on the Moreton Cross/Pasture Road area. Groups of youths had been involved in race hate incidents and an urban street gang had been identified. These had been tackled by working with other agencies e.g. landlords leading to arrests and ASBO's with strict conditions. An ASBO involving a 15 year old youth had been breached and leaflets explaining the effect of the ASBO on the individuals were circulated to over 400 local residents and showed the information that they needed to know including the restrictions placed on the individual concerned and the exclusion zone involved. There was a joint agency approach and local landlords were involved together with joint agency visits. Staff had been visiting shops regularly and a shopkeeper had been issued with a small body camera for reassurance. There had been no other reported incidents.
- In the Wallasey Village and New Brighton area efforts had been concentrated on thefts from sheds and burglaries. A team of detectives had been involved and a number of shed alarms had been distributed to those who were vulnerable and had suffered repeat thefts. Detectives had visited stores such as Cash Converters and their books checked. Several search warrants had been issued and stolen property had been recovered. Police had worked with landlords in the Rake Lane area and the number of shed burglaries had been reduced.

Inspector Kolokotroni informed the Committee that new priorities had now been set;

- In the Seacombe/Poulton area the urban street gang identified would remain a priority.
- In the Moreton/Leasowe area the priority would remain to collate further information.
- In the Liscard/Egremont area the priority would be on speeding cyclists with the area around McDonalds being the focus.
- In the Wallasey Village/New Brighton area the priority would be around the Marine Point/Tower Grounds area where there was a problem with youths drinking.

Inspector Kolokotroni informed the Committee that he would bring a progress report to the next meeting.

Councillor Bernie Mooney commented that there had been 19 burglaries in the Rice Lane area over the Christmas period and questioned the priority around cyclists. Inspector Kolokotroni responded that this number of burglaries had not been reported however there had been several arrests made and one individual had been imprisoned and another individual had been recalled to prison on other matters. Since these two individuals had been incarcerated incident levels had been reduced.

The Constituency Manager reported that at the market place event held before the Constituency meeting there had been representatives from multiple agencies who had given out information on a variety of enquiries including Council Services, Environmental Health, Streetscene, ASBO's, One Stop Shops, Youth Services, Police, Fire Service and Community Action Wirral. She also indicated that the invitation would be extended to Community groups at the next Wallasey Constituency meeting.

24 **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 (Form reference: AF88897)

Mr Johnston, Moreton

What, if anything, is being done about parking of vehicles in inappropriate, illegal, or dangerous places, including on pavements or partly on pavements?

QUESTION 2 (Form reference: AF89235)

Mr Saul, Wallasey

What is going to be done about cars parked fully on pedestrian pavements making it almost impossible for people to pass without stepping into the road. I have every sympathy with trying to avoid receiving damage to your car when parked but not at the expense of safety for pedestrians some of whom may be disabled. A typical example of many roads locally like this is Winchester Drive where the pavements are now treated by some residents as personal car spaces even though they have driveways, which when I walk down there in the evening is almost impassable on some sides.

Officer response (David Rees, Road Safety Manager):

Wirral Council has introduced waiting restrictions on many roads and at junctions to restrict inappropriate or potentially dangerous parking. We do not condone illegal or dangerous parking and consider that drivers should obey the Highway Code.

Pavement parking is a complex issue, and unless there is a specific traffic regulation order (either a yellow line in operation or a separate

verge/pavement parking Traffic Regulation Order), the Council doesn't have any specific powers to take direct action against drivers. The current approach aims to warn drivers causing an obstruction of the pavement parking aims to make drivers more aware of the problems that it can cause. In these instances we may issue a warning notice to the vehicle. Where we find repeated problems we may pass this information to the police to see if they wish to undertake enforcement (prosecutions).

Instances of obstructive or dangerous parking can of course be reported directly to the police too. The Council undertakes a significant number of prosecutions every year where drivers contravene the (yellow line) waiting restrictions. We will continue to prosecute such offences both to improve road safety and keep traffic moving.

Highways Officers have taken a note of the location raised (Winchester Drive) and will visit the road and assess the matter further.

QUESTION 3 (Form reference: AF88906)

Mr Edgar, Wallasey

When will something be done about the dreadful state of the pavement in Grove Road, Wallasey Village particularly the stretch between the village (traffic lights) and St. George's Road. At some lengths the road surface is higher than the pavement!

Officer response (Chris Jones, Streetscene Team Leader):

We are aware of the issues in Grove Road. A safety inspection is carried out each year to identify actionable defects these are noted and instructions issued to repair. The footway will be considered for inclusion in future programmes in phases due to the length of the road this of course will be subject to priority and resource we will continue to monitor for safety and take action when necessary.

QUESTION 4 (Form reference: AF88933)

Mrs Lockwood, Moreton

Can you please tell me how we can get speed humps in our lane to stop the speeding cars? We have had problems for years people using Acton Lane as a cut through.

Officer response (David Rees, Road Safety Manager):

The Council continues to receive many requests for speed reduction measures such as traffic calming (humps; cushions, etc). In recommending measures to be funded from our centralised road safety programmes we consider it important to introduce such measures in road or areas that demonstrate ongoing poor road safety records as a priority.

Investigations indicate that Acton Lane has a good overall road safety record with no recorded injury crashes over the last 3 years. The Constituency Committee have also looked at a number of local road safety issues that have

been brought to the attention of Members and allocated some (limited) funding to address these. Action Lane has not been prioritised within the current 2014/15 programme, however we will keep this request on file and (along with other locations) assess this location again should additional funding for speed reduction or road safety measures become available in the future.

QUESTION 5 (Form reference: AF88935)

Mrs Moor, Wallasey

As a local mum of three children who have benefitted enormously from our local libraries, Wallasey, Seacombe and Earlston can I ask why they are now cutting the funding for a specialist children's librarian and indeed, have plans to close the specialist children's library at Earlston Road as it reaches its 100th birthday?

I urge you to review the cuts and instead engage with the community work that such libraries do for children and their families. The ingenuity and passion for literacy and love of reading that is fostered within those four walls is impressive. Please reconsider the closure in such an important and historic building.

Officer response (Future Council Project Team):

Our library and children's centre services are both going through extensive redesigns at the moment to achieve the savings which are required of us. These changes involve redesigning what services are available where, and at what times. We have approached it in this fashion to limit, as much as possible, the total removal of services and closing buildings.

Consultation regarding both of these service areas is ongoing and we are currently working with friends groups of libraries and families and users of children's centres to ensure we make the changes, and savings, required in partnership with the people using the services.

QUESTION 6 (by email)

Mr Leckey, New Brighton

I would like it verified or denied that parking meters are to be introduced in New Brighton. If they are to be introduced. Where? When? Cost?

Officer response (Future Council Project Team):

Introducing car parking charges to the Fort Perch Rock Car Park in New Brighton was a budget proposal for the coming financial year which was consulted on with residents from September to December 2014. This proposal was accepted by Councillors on December 15th and, as such, parking meters will be installed at Fort Perch Rock over the coming months.

This proposal will generate in the region of £35,000 income every year against a one-off investment in the car park itself of around £20,000. The parking charge will be in line with the rest of the borough.

QUESTION 7 (Form reference: AF88901)

Mr Kinnear, Moreton

Wirral Council has loaned £35,000,000 to other Labour Councils at interest rates of about 1%, some as little as 0.75%. The various Labour Councils in receipt of more than thirty five million pay Wirral less than £350,000 a year in interest. They have lending schemes for their ratepayers at 6% to 9% interest bringing a return on Wirral cash of more than £2,000,000 a year. They make a profit of at least £1,650,000. That's more than one million, six hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year which should belong to Wirral Taxpayers. £35,000,000 in Barclays Bank pays 3%, which would bring £700,000 more than we are being paid by Doncaster, Lancashire, Stockport, Fife, Halton, Hull, Newcastle and Northumberland. Who authorised this, and why will local councillors not respond to my requests for information? Foreclose on those creditors and put the cash back in Wirral.

The Chair responded that while there is money in the budget waiting to be spent this is loaned out short term and helps out other local authorities. Mr Kinnear attended the meeting and asked why the Council was lending money out when there are cuts and jobs being lost? Councillor Adrian Jones responded that this was not a political issue and was carried out by officers, money laying idle was better used as a short term loan – the rates of interest was a matter left to professional officers. Councillor Matt Daniel commented that the loans were for very short term only. The Chair informed Mr Kinnear that he would be given a more detailed response regarding the low rates of loan.

QUESTION 8 (Form reference: AF88899)

Mr Kelly, Moreton

In these times of austerity why it is that only the constituents have felt the pain. Why have there been no cuts in MPs or local councillors? There are far too many of both, all earning big wages and generous expenses.

The Chair responded that this was not a political issue most Councillors would not be claiming expenses for attending this event for example – expenses were in the public domain and new figures would be released in April. Councillors themselves were residents of Wirral and they themselves were going through the cuts in services. Of the 4 MP's none had been singled out for excessive use of expenses. Councillor Paul Hayes commented that there was ongoing debate as to the necessity for the number of Councillors to sit in the Borough. Councillor Leah Fraser she had submitted a motion to Council on the need for 66 Councillors as she believed this could be reduced by one third. Councillor Bernie Mooney commented that it was a myth that Councillors were paid the same as MP's and noted that given the amount of work involved Councillors would effectively be below the minimum wage. Most Councillors had a second job and whilst acknowledging that there may

currently be anti-politician feeling the Councillors considered themselves to be Community Representatives who work very hard for the Borough and she would like perceptions to change. Councillor Adrian Jones echoed this and highlighted the number of hours spent per year and the time and effort spent on personal workloads on behalf of residents. The Chair noted that all expenses could be viewed on the Council website.

The Chair then invited questions from the audience.

A member of the public from the Newland Drive – Liscard/Wallasey wards referred to the structures at the ‘gateways’ into Liscard Way. The medallions at the top of these structures now looked very shabby and he asked whether something could be done given that Chris Jones, Streetscene Team Leader, had informed him that the artwork was still available.

The Chair responded that this enquiry would be looked into.

A member of the public said that residents had not been made aware of bin collection dates this year and she had been informed that this information was only available on the Council website which was unfair to those without computer access and the elderly.

Councillor Bernie Mooney responded and advised that the information had been given to the local press and if necessary libraries would print out the information for residents with no computer access. This measure would result in a saving of £31,000 which would be used to retain other services.

25 **YOUR WIRRAL (WALLASEY) - BID YW2: STRIDING OUT CIC**

The Constituency Manager introduced a report that sought a decision by Wallasey Constituency Committee as to bid YW2 to Your Wirral (Wallasey) by Striding Out CIC for a Digital & IT Skills for Employability Project.

The details of bid YW2 were set out in Appendix 1 of the report and Appendix 2 set out an extract from Striding Out CIC’s bid document to the Council’s Lifelong Learning Team which outlined the contents of the courses currently funded.

At Wallasey Constituency Committee Working Group on 1 October 2014 a decision had been made to award Your Wirral (Wallasey) grants amounting to a total of £61,733.42 to social sector groups (minute 20 of the Working Group refers). A decision in relation to bid number YW2 (Digital & IT Skills for Employability) for £2,485 had been deferred for further information, namely whether there was a gap in provision that this project would fill.

The Your Wirral (Wallasey) Fund had been overspent by £11,733.42 and at Wallasey Constituency Committee on 23 October 2014, the Constituency Manager identified alternative funding to allocate to this overspend (minute 20 of the Committee refers). The Constituency Manager also provided additional

information in relation to bid YW2 by Striding Out CIC, proposed to be delivered from Vale House Community Centre, New Brighton. She reported that the Council's Lifelong Learning Team had recently commissioned Striding Out CIC to deliver a project to 160 learners also from Vale House Community Centre. The Team had been satisfied that this would provide adequate coverage from this geographical location. The Committee had requested further information regarding the bid, in particular where there were any overlaps/duplication with the project currently funded, and had asked that the applicant attend the next Committee meeting to answer any further questions

Before discussion of this matter commenced Councillor Leah Fraser recorded her thanks to the Constituency Manager for all her hard work regarding the Christmas lights.

The Constituency Manager then introduced Elaine Owen from Striding Out to answer any questions that the Committee had. She informed the Committee that the funding would be used to help to provide training for local people of all ages who are currently unemployed or in low paid/seasonal jobs to provide them with IT and digital skills to make them more employable and able to apply for jobs and or promotions to a wider range of employers. Questions from the Committee including was the organisation comfortable that the new recruitment plan was working, whether places would be available to all wards or just Wallasey, how the funding would be spent, whether the CIC was confident that the places could be filled and if not what would happen to the remaining funding, were responded to and the Chair indicated that the Committee would take a vote on whether the application for funding should be approved.

Resolved – That;

- 1. The application to fund Bid YW2: Striding Out CIC be refused (3:8).**
- 2. The Committee notes that an update on the budget will be reported to the next Constituency Committee meeting on 16 April 2015.**

26

GUINEA GAP LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT

Martin Simmons, Leisure Centre Manager, attended the meeting and gave the Committee a verbal update on the refurbishments at Guinea Gap. Historically the baths had been opened in 1908; the Territorial Hall given in 1973 and redevelopment had taken place in 1989. Martin gave details of Development Phase 1 that involved the conversion to floodlit 3G (Third Generation) football pitches. These were available for hire and working with partners' usage was being successfully developed with young people. Details of Phase 2 were outlined which included a 55 station fitness suite and an exercise class studio. There was an extensive range of programmes on offer and working with partners the LiveWell Team offered weight management, Body Mass and blood pressure monitoring leading to improved health including sign-posting where necessary. In response to questions from the Committee Martin gave

further details on the costs and payment methods involved, the timetabling of activities and reported that swimming at the baths continued to do well.

Resolved – That Martin Simmons be thanked for the report.

27 **UPDATE: ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD)**

The Chair invited Chris Shaw, an Associate with Nuture Development, and Frank Lund from the Black Pearl (New Brighton), to give a presentation on the progress of this Public Health funded project. The following link - Cormac Russell talks Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) – YouTube – has been provided following the meeting as a useful reference;

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=w5wK8455pwo>

Chris Shaw introduced the item and said that through his work with Advocacy Wirral he believed passionately that Mental Health should not define one's life. He opined that it was peoples' contribution that was important and that sometimes people were kept ill or 'medicalised'. Chris introduced Frank Lund who informed the Committee that 3 years ago he had looked at drawn art as an outlet but moved to Community Art – beach artwork. Subsequently the Black Pearl had become known throughout the world, many people had gained inspiration from it and it was now on facebook. The Black Pearl demonstrated an important principle for ABCD that the community needs to take part in its own destiny and Frank outlined his work in the community.

Resolved – That Chris Shaw and Frank Lund be thanked for an informative presentation.

28 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR**

There being no other urgent business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and on behalf of the Committee wished Councillor Chris Jones a very Happy Birthday.