

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Matthew Patrick
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Communications & Engagement
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	David Armstrong Assistant Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our 'Neighbourhoods' programme, delivered through the Constituency Committees, continues to deliver excellent local programmes – enabling communities to be engaged, supported and empowered to improve their local communities.

A new Strategy, guiding how we will go further to increase the involvement and ability of our Constituencies in delivering the 20 Pledges, is currently in development and will be brought to Cabinet later this year.

For 2016/17, each Constituency Committee is able to invest £50,000 in commissioning activities, projects and additional work to contribute to local priorities. This grass-roots engagement with residents is paying real dividends across the entire borough, with a number of positive developments just in the past few months. Some highlights include:

- In Wirral South, the Friends of Bebington Library and Friends of New Ferry Park are being supported to work in the community and encourage more volunteering opportunities and activity.
- In Birkenhead, our Constituency Team are working alongside the Probation Team to focus on reducing anti-social behaviour and cleaning up alleyways and grot-spot areas. The library 'pocket park' has now been officially opened and welcomed by the local community.
- In Wirral West, the 'Community Fund' is now in its third year and has invested more than £250,000 in supporting local organisations. The Little Brothers'

project will be launched soon where young graduates will mentor younger children to help tackle peer culture which leads to anti-social behaviour.

- In Wallasey, the team have supported the development of the New Brighton Coastal Community team, bringing local businesses and community groups together to develop a joint action plan to continue to build on the town's economic success.

We also recognise the vital importance of volunteers in Wirral, and the ongoing contribution made to the borough by colleagues in the community, voluntary and faith sector. We continue to work on improving our approach in these areas, and will be developing Strategies in the coming months to make sure we are able to encourage, enable and empower residents and community organisations to continue their great work.

2. COMMUNICATIONS & CONSULTATION

In July, Cabinet agreed a proposal to implement a new communications approach in Wirral, consisting of an improved website, social media activity and a printed publication which would be delivered monthly to every resident and business.

The new approach is in response to our Residents' Survey from last year, which provided clear feedback to suggest we needed to prioritise improving how we communicate with residents. Almost 6 out of 10 residents stated they did not feel well informed by the Council, with this rate increasing in the more economically deprived areas of the borough.

I am pleased we have reacted to this feedback in such a positive and ambitious manner, and believe we have an opportunity to drive major improvements this year in how we communicate with our residents; making sure every resident in the borough is provided with current, useful and relevant information about the services available to them to support them to improve their lives.