

Public Document Pack

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL SOUTH

Monday, 6 June 2016

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	T Pilgrim (Chair)	
	Councillors	C Carubia P Gilchrist A Hodson K Hodson D Mitchell C Muspratt C Povall L Rowlands	L Rowlands W Smith A Sykes J Walsh W Ward I Williams KJ Williams
	Community Representatives	MC Craig R Squire M Wright P Wright	

Councillor M Patrick – Cabinet Member – Community, Engagement and Communications

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded and it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Councillor Tracey Pilgrim be elected Chair of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year; and**
- (2) Councillor Chris Carubia be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.**

Councillor Tracey Pilgrim took the Chair and thanked Councillor Jerry Williams for being a good Chair of the Committee during the 2015/16 Municipal Year. She told Members that she was looking forward to chairing the Committee during the new Municipal Year. She informed that she hoped that Members would not become too political and asked them not to try to score points off each other.

Councillor Pilgrim also informed Members that, at this meeting, she intended to take questions after each update/report/presentation.

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

Councillor Dave Mitchell declared a personal interest in agenda Item No. 4 Support so far (Impact Video) by virtue of him being a member of ARCH Initiatives.

3 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs Kevin Sutton and David Armstrong (Assistant Chief Executive).

4 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE**

Councillor Christina Muspratt was concerned that the Wirral South's New Social Isolation Contract appeared not to be working as well as expected. The Constituency Manager informed that the contract had only been launched in December 2015 and when the report was considered by the Committee on 4 February 2016 it was less than two months old and still in its infancy. The report had only been presented at the last meeting to set the scene and project how the contract was expected to proceed. The contract was for 18 months and the Constituency Manager intended to provide a progress report at the next meeting of the Committee on 5 October 2016.

Councillor Jerry Williams reported that some of the presentations the Committee had received in the last Municipal Year had been 'pretty abysmal' and he would like to see an improvement this year. Also, he was concerned that presenting Officers had been allowed to leave the meetings before they ended and had not been there to answer questions on their presentations.

Councillor Tracey Pilgrim informed that this was why she had decided to hold a question and answer session after each presentation this year.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 February 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

5 **SUPPORT SO FAR (IMPACT VIDEO)**

The Committee watched a brief video that highlighted some of the support it had provided since its inception in October 2013, to various groups and organisations across Wirral South. A number of volunteers had appeared in the video including the Friends of Dawstone Park, Mayer Park and helpers from Dibbinsdale and the Arch Initiative and Gift Project.

A round of applause followed the video presentations which served to emphasise how pleased Members were with the progress the Committee had made in supporting local projects and groups.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the video that highlighted the progress of the projects and the support the Committee has provided be noted; and**
- (2) the Constituency Manager, Fergus Adams and the Engagement Officer, Shannon Kennedy be congratulated on the work they have carried out which has contributed to these excellent achievements.**

6 UPDATE FROM MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

It was noted that the Committee would not be receiving an update from the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service as the Station Manager was not in attendance at the meeting.

Councillor Christina Muspratt made reference to a recent incident where a refuse vehicle had unidentified material in it which warranted the road, where she lived, to be closed. However, she and two of her neighbours had not been informed of this at the time. She had found out later about this and that the material in question had been found not to be dangerous. She asked the Constituency Manager to ascertain why the residents of 45, 47 and 49 Fairacres Road, Bebington had not been informed about the incident at the time.

7 UPDATE FROM MERSEYSIDE POLICE

Katie Wilkinson, the Neighbourhood Inspector was in attendance at the meeting and provided the Committee with an oral position statement on crimes and anti-social behaviour in Wirral South. This included:

- The detail of vehicles that had been engaged in anti-social activity and the subsequent actions the Road Policing Unit were taking.
- Anti-social behaviour on the Croft Retail Park in Bromborough which had been curtailed in recent months. There had also been some anti-social activity at the Oval in Bebington. Preventative work was ongoing in respect of this with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team and Youth Outreach.
- Robberies had been on the increase in New Ferry. Someone had been arrested and the robberies had stopped.
- The details of a robbery of a lady in Bromborough and the subsequent arrests.

- Burglary of dwellings and vehicle crimes in Wirral South had reduced significantly.
- Targeted visits to licensed premises. Two premises had been closed as a result.
- Intelligence was needed from the local community and this could be via 'Crime Stoppers' so that appropriate action could be taken.

Questions and Answers

Mr N Johnson referred to the continuous round of break-ins in the local area and asked for an update on break-ins at Thornton Hough Village Hall and at Heswall Golf Club.

Inspector Wilkinson informed that she would ask the Community Support Officers to make a visit. She also informed that the Police were looking at community buildings as there had been a spate of break-ins.

Councillor Jerry Williams referred to a spate of commercial burglaries including shops in Bebington village in the last few weeks and informed that a lot of people had lost confidence with the Police's telephone system (101) because it was almost impossible to get through.

Bebington had lost its PCSO after many years and a request was made to have more Police on the ground in the Wirral South area and also some cohesion and not the 'here today gone tomorrow' mentality.

Inspector Wilkinson informed that the Police Force was being restructured. From January 2017 a different style of policing would be in operation. There would be changes and there would be new policing teams. Consideration was currently being given to the number of PCSOs there would be across the Wirral and the outcome of this was not known yet. There was no ongoing selection process for PCSOs. The Police wanted its Officers out on the streets. There were community hubs and electronic devices to allow them to stay out longer.

Inspector Wilkinson promised to take back the comments regarding the 101 telephone number response times as she had been told that it took a very long time for it to be answered. This would enable the reasons for this to be ascertained.

Councillor Les Rowlands thanked the Officers in attendance for their good works during the previous Municipal Year. He noted, in particular, the improvement works carried out in Dawstone Park, Heswall and reported that there had been some serious criminal activity there. He proposed that consideration be given to putting up signage informing the Park was under surveillance - as a deterrent.

Inspector Wilkinson informed that she was aware of the damage that had been caused in Dawstone Park. She had made a report and provided extra PCSO cover in Heswall, particularly over the weekend periods. The Police recorded what went on and any young people causing problems would be identified.

Councillor Dave Mitchell thanked the very helpful PCSO who had stayed behind well after his shift finished to assist in the aftermath of some recent anti-social activities.

Inspector Wilkinson agreed to pass Councillor Mitchell's thanks on to the PCSO.

Councillor Christina Muspratt raised concerns about anti-social behaviour in Mayer Hall informing that the Council's Community Patrol was sent there regularly. She was concerned about youths who travelled around the local area, setting fire to neighbouring fences. There were areas where there was asbestos. The youngsters had climbed onto the scaffolding, and they travelled through Parkside Close to where there were elderly peoples' bungalows and proceeded to frighten the residents. Some of the youngsters had motor cycles and converged on the Town Lane Estate in New Ferry. Councillor Muspratt requested the Inspector to make sure that the Police dealing with issues at the Oval in Bebington also looked into these incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist referred to the Police having to juggle priorities and asked about drivers who did not keep to the speed limits.

Inspector Wilkinson informed that the Police, working with Community Speed Watch, would periodically carry out speed checks.

RESOLVED:

That Inspector Katie Wilkinson be thanked for her report and her attendance at the meeting.

8 WIRRAL SOUTH PRIORITY UPDATE

The Constituency Manager introduced his progress report on the resolved priorities and allocated budget for the Committee in 2015/16 and beyond.

The Committee was informed that, in respect of the Improved Open Spaces initiative, Officers had worked with the Friends of Dawstone Park in Heswall to ensure that all proposed improvements (supported by the Committee) could be delivered as expediently as possible. Also, progress had been made on the dual location approach (Torr Park, Eastham and New Ferry Park, Bromborough) spanning 2016/17 and 2017/18 and arrangements were being made to discuss local resident's involvement.

The Committee was informed that the successful provider for the Wirral South One to One Counselling Service was now in place and was delivering sessions in suitable venues in Eastham, Bebington and Heswall. The new service was already fully subscribed based upon young people from Wirral South who were on the Wirral-Wide waiting list with Response at the time of establishing the new service. This meant instant impact upon waiting times for the young people in question from Wirral South.

The Committee was informed that the Wirral South specific provider (GIFT Network) continued to deliver their service throughout the five wards and was currently supporting 22 individuals. Also, new referral channels were being developed, including a proactive relationship with The Orchard GP Surgery in Bromborough. This social prescription pilot would refer relevant patients (with consent) to the network. Members noted that the progress of these individuals would be mapped using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). The concept would then be promoted to other clinics throughout the five wards. Initial interest was already being expressed in Heswall.

The Committee also noted the progress of the Your Wirral funded work stream proposal including its eligible criteria and the successful applicants during 2015/16. There was £16,630 left to allocate from the 2015/16 budget.

The Constituency Manager reported that the Wirral South Anti-Social Behaviour Task and Finish Group had met on 27 October 2015 and set out the detail of the projects approved to receive funding.

The Constituency Manager also reported that the Engagement Officer for Wirral South continued to introduce herself to community groups across the constituency and had been intrinsically involved in some very interesting community development projects to date. A list of the projects she had been involved in included:

- Friends and Residents of Town Lane
- Wirral Arts Festival
- Improved Open Spaces Development

The overarching Neighbourhood Working Strategy would be considered by the Cabinet at a meeting in September 2016. It was then intended to draw up ward based constituency plans. There would be a meeting of the Task and Finish Group that had been asked to draw up the plans to discuss and agree a process that would ensure maximum engagement.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist proposed the following Motion which was seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell:

This Committee

- (1) Places on record its concern at the delay in notification of the key elements of the Constituency budget.
- (2) Expresses its concern at the impact on our forward planning, continuity of approach and commissioning of initiatives.
- (3) Requests Cabinet to issue budgetary information as soon as possible.
- (4) Looks forward to a more substantial devolution of powers and budgets to enable our activities to be more widely recognised.
- (5) Would welcome an opportunity to discuss our future role and development with the appropriate Cabinet Member/ Members.

Councillor Walter Smith proposed an Amendment that (1) and (2) above be deleted.

Some Members expressed concern over the late submission of the Motion and requested that, in future, they be submitted sooner so that more time could be afforded to Members to consider them.

Mr Peter Wright had regard to the Constituency Committee Handbook and registered concern that it limited the number of Community Representatives that could sit on a Task and Finish Group. The Constituency Manager informed that the Handbook was out of date and would be revised following the agreement of the revised Neighbourhood Working Strategy.

Councillor Matthew Patrick was in attendance at the meeting and informed that he appreciated the need for budgetary information to be provided swiftly. He was very interested in the discussions and would be taking lots of ideas away. He told the Committee that he understood it's desire for more power and resources to be made available to it.

Councillor Christina Muspratt informed that community groups were not happy about the delay in receiving budgetary details. The Constituency Manager informed that if he was given specific details he would follow this up.

Further discussion ensued and a proposal was put forward to replace (1) above with the following and delete (2):

- (1) Welcomes the recent allocation of £50k for this year.

This Amendment was put to the vote and lost 6 for and 8 against (1 abstention).

The Committee then reconsidered the original Motion with the revised (1) and revised (3) where the word 'further' was added after issue and before budgetary.

This Amended Motion was put to the vote and carried 8 for and 6 against (1 abstention).

RESOLVED:

That this Committee

- (1) Welcomes the recent allocation of £50k for this year.**
- (2) Expresses its concern at the impact on our forward planning, continuity of approach and commissioning of initiatives.**
- (3) Requests Cabinet to issue further budgetary information as soon as possible.**
- (4) Looks forward to a more substantial devolution of powers and budgets to enable our activities to be more widely recognised.**
- (5) Would welcome an opportunity to discuss our future role and development with the appropriate Cabinet Member/ Members.**

9 WIRRAL SOUTH COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

The Committee had regard to a report read out by Mr Peter Wright on their behalf that detailed the issues experienced by communities throughout Wirral South, on a ward by ward basis. (Attached to the minutes as an appendix).

The report set out progress to date following the co-options of the five Community Representatives to the Committee in October 2015 and since the previous Committee meeting held on 4 February 2016.

RESOLVED:

That ward based meetings with the Community Representatives, Officers and Members be scheduled (where necessary) within a month of this Committee meeting.

10 WIRRAL'S RESIDENT SURVEY - A WIRRAL SOUTH PERSPECTIVE

The Committee received a presentation by the Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications on the Wirral Resident's Survey – A Wirral South Perspective. He reported that the Council had not conducted market research

with residents since 2008. A random sample of residents had received a questionnaire asking what they thought about living in Wirral. 1,207 residents had provided their views.

The presentation included an insight into residents' priorities, attitudes and values. The presentation set the context, informed on methodology and benchmarking, significant issues requiring improvement compared to the rest of the Borough, residents' highest and lowest priorities, information on health and wellbeing, the economy and satisfaction, perceptions and reputation.

The Committee noted that much of the insight findings reinforced the Council's assumptions about its key challenges. It provided reassurance that the right actions were already being taken and provided additional and robust data on which to base key decisions, such as the Medium Term Financial Plan.

It was noted that the Council intended to repeat this research on a regular basis in order to track progress, change perceptions and monitor its progress and that of the Wirral partnership.

Following the presentation questions were asked which were answered as appropriate by Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications.

Members noted in particular that:

- Currently the Council puts budgets together on 'a one size fits all' bases and that more devolvement was needed to Constituency Committees to target areas important to each of them.
- The quality of Broadband in parts of Wirral South was poor. How could businesses be developed without access to high Broadband speeds? The Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications informed that a piece of work was ongoing with BT to address this. He agreed to provide Members with the details.

RESOLVED:

That the Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications be thanked for his presentation.

11 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER (APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES) INCLUDING RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Committee and members of the public in attendance at the meeting raised the following questions, issues, concerns and requests.

Question 1

New Ferry was losing its Co-op Store and Lloyds Bank. The Bank's lease had expired. Members were aware that in future, when a Bank's lease was coming to an end, a decision would be made on whether or not to close it. This was expected to be the normal approach in future. It was known that the lease of a Bank in Bromborough would shortly expire. Traders in New Ferry wanted to work with the Council to protect its local centre.

Councillor Warren Ward informed that New Ferry's regeneration was a priority for the Council. There was regular dialogue with Lloyds Bank and the MP was involved. Ways to push regeneration forward for New Ferry were being discussed.

Question 2

As part of the presentation on Support so Far at Agenda Item No. 4 (Minute No. 40 refers.) a video had been shown that involved the efforts of a number of volunteers. It was proposed that the composite video should be provided for the local groups who had been involved in its making.

The Committee noted that this was the intention and the video was on YouTube.

Councillor Christina Muspratt considered that the video would be of interest to the other Constituency Committees and raised concerns that there appeared to be no link to the full Council.

Councillor Matthew Patrick informed that this was one of the reasons he was attending this meeting. He told the Committee that he was impressed with the work that had been carried out by it and that he wanted to ensure that credit was delivered back to the Constituency Committee.

Councillor Les Rowlands thanked the Constituency Committee Manager for his sterling efforts and informed Members that he was a very committed and hardworking Officer who undertook work far in excess of his pay grade.

12 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee had been advertised as taking place at 6pm on Wednesday, 5 October 2016.

Empowering Locally?!

It is a privilege to be asked to address the meeting on behalf of the ComReps.

Over the last nine months the ComReps, working as a team, have made considerable progress. We have met regularly, defined the ComRep role and responsibilities, set up ComRep/Officer meetings, set out the key challenges for WSCC in implementing neighbourhood working in support of Vision 20:20 and developed a possible way forward through working together. We now seek the meetings full support and involvement in order to continue. The next two steps are set out in the comRep report.

At one of our early meetings we agreed that our work is about today and tomorrow, not yesterday (water under the bridge), and we are going to be positive and proactive. We are not a complaints department. We believe that the Constituency Model for neighbourhood working is worthy of full implementation. We fully support the key outcomes and principles set out and approved by Cabinet in the report on Empowering Locally issued on the 8th October 2015.

But what does 'empowering locally' mean? The words are very strong and quickly raise expectations. What is local? Who and what is being empowered? Who will make the decisions?

The Cabinet report recognises the need for 'working with residents (to address issues and needs) at the most local level possible', but what does this mean? Who is going to do the working and what powers and support will they have? By what mechanism can ComReps gather neighbourhood views? What resources will they have in order to respond when the issues and needs are identified? It is not clear.

The ComReps' way forward is through the formation of the proposed local teams comprising Elected Members, Officers, ComReps and Resident Representatives, empowering at one and the same time WSCC and local residents to get things done.

But first, and of fundamental importance, is a resolution of what constitutes a neighbourhood. This is a choice for residents. The ward and constituency boundaries are satisfactory for local and national elections but may not be satisfactory for neighbourhood working.

There are important questions of workload and resources that need to be considered. Two ComReps are running family businesses and one is in full time employment and consequently their time is limited. This will be the same for Elected Members, and may be more so but by careful planning and delegation should be manageable.

The local teams once formed will bring matters forward for the attention of the T & F Group and then from there to WSCC for action.

There are many questions (hundreds of them) that need to be answered and the answers have to be found round this table. After all, that is why we are here isn't it. It can and should be done.

Chair, WSCC ComReps (on behalf of the ComReps Group).

This page is intentionally left blank