

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - BIRKENHEAD

Wednesday, 13 June 2018

Present:

Councillors	A Brame	B Kenny
	P Cleary	M McLaughlin
	A Davies	J McManus
	G Davies	C Meaden
	S Foulkes	J Stapleton
	S Frost	G Wood
	L Grey	

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Committee Services Officer to the Committee invited nominations for the appointment of the Chair.

On a motion moved by Councillor Brian Kenny and seconded by Councillor Chris Meaden, it was –

RESOLVED:

That Councillor George Davies be appointed Chair of the Birkenhead Constituency Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor George Davies in the Chair

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

On a motion moved by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Chris Meaden, it was –

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Moira McLaughlin be appointed Vice-Chair of the Birkenhead Constituency Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

3 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests or any other relevant interest in connection with any items on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Councillor Steve Foulkes declared a personal interest in all matters contained within the agenda by virtue of any reference made to Magenta Housing of which he is a Board member.

In noting reference to the proposed Hoylake golf course development in the submitted minutes of the previous meeting, Councillors Allan Brame, Pat Cleary, George Davies, Steve Foulkes, Brian Kenny and Samantha Frost, advised of their membership or deputy membership of the Planning Committee and that they would, if called on to do so, give due consideration to any planning application that may come forward in the future.

Councillor Jean Stapleton declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 'Birkenhead Business Improvement District' by virtue of membership of the Business Improvement District Committee.

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bill Davies, Phil Davies, Paul Doughty and Stuart Kelly.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Birkenhead Constituency Committee held on 1 March 2018 be approved as a correct record.

6 BEECHWOOD LITTLE CENTRE, BIG LOCAL, PLAY AREA AND SKATE PARK

George Thomas of Beechwood Community Trust welcomed the Committee to the Beechwood Little Centre and addressed the meeting on the development of community activities on Beechwood and the progress of the Little Centre.

Mr Thomas summarised developments in Beechwood since the 1980's, noting a description from that time of the Ford Estate as "notorious". Through residents' action, the establishment of a Homewatch scheme being key to the process, and working with the Council, the Beechwood Community Association was established in 1981. The Association in due course became the Beechwood Community Trust with the intention of becoming a sustainable local organisation. With regard to housing, an Estate Management Board had been established to enable residents, alongside the Council, to manage the local housing stock. Following a tenants' vote leading to a stock transfer to Beechwood and Ballantyne Community Housing Association, the use of estate land for housing development led to Section 106 monies being used to refurbish the Little Centre. With tenants' agreement, the housing stock had since transferred to the Liverpool Housing Trust.

A big development for the area had been the allocation of £1M over ten years of Big Local funding from the National Lottery, Big Local helping local people

make communities better places to live in, both now and in the future. A Big Local partnership, predominantly led by local residents, had been established and a refurbishment scheme had commenced 18 months ago. A new Manager for the Little Centre had been appointed recently and would be looking to extend usage of the Little Centre. The Little Centre, alongside the library, recreation centre and other local facilities, was also part of the Beechwood Digital Hub.

Mr Thomas and other local representatives further advised on recent community led developments in the area. The Little Centre was now accredited for the provision of certain training; funding had been received for improvement of the adjacent Play Area, the Committee being advised of consultations undertaken and of the proposals for the area; the operation of the Beechwood Food Larder enhanced a service provided previously by the Beechwood Chapel; and the recently opened Skate Park had proved to be a great success and which had, in development, included consultations with young people and been a real example of partnership working in the area.

Mr Thomas advised of the difficulty in recruiting new volunteers and, while acknowledging that this was likely to be an issue elsewhere, commented that more, younger people were needed to help with the running of the Centre and, in due course, replace longer standing volunteers. In conclusion, he noted that a lot of work had been done by local residents who should be commended for their efforts.

Responding to a query from Councillor Steve Foulkes, Mr Thomas agreed that Beechwood Community Trust might provide advice to a new generation of volunteers at the resident association on the Ridgeway Estate, but again noted the age profile of Beechwood Community Trust members and the difficulties in getting a new generation involved.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Little Centre for their hospitality in hosting the meeting and the Beechwood Community Trust for their presentation to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Thomas and other representatives be thanked for their presentations to the meeting, and the Beechwood Community Trust be thanked for and supported in their continuing work within the local community.

7 BIRKENHEAD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Gemma Nichols and Mark Clemson of the Wirral Chamber of Commerce addressed the Committee in respect of the progress of the Birkenhead Business Improvement District (BID). The BID had started in April 2016 as a

result of a vote among businesses in a defined geographical area and was focussed on increasing footfall, making the area safer and looking better, and making the area a good place to live, work and shop.

The BID had four key priorities, as listed below, and work undertaken in support of these priorities were highlighted to the Committee: -

- **A Safer, More Secure Birkenhead**
Town Hosts operated within the BID area using their particular skills to better the area. A multi-agency approach was used to address problems, and strong working relationships with businesses and the community had been developed. As an example, the BID Team reported issues such as anti-social behaviour to the police and the Council for resolution, but action was also taken to address those areas where anti-social behaviour was likely to occur.
- **A Cleaner, More Attractive Birkenhead**
The placement of hanging baskets and planters and the refurbishment of street furniture had contributed to making areas look good and be places to be proud of. Clean-ups had been undertaken with local businesses and housing agencies, and civil powers had been pursued with the Council to address buildings and wider areas in poor condition. Forthcoming work included development of proactive business community clean-ups and the provision of new bins.
- **Better Marketing and Promotion for Birkenhead**
Approaches had been a mix of BID initiated activities or, mindful of resources available, activities in partnership with or complementary to those being developed by others. The BID had supported a Commercial Property Showcase highlighting available properties and presented as positive opportunities to potential investors, and had contributed to or undertaken complementary activities linked to events such as the Tall Ships, Tranmere Rovers homecoming, the Pyramids shopping centre summer activities and the Bigger Birkenhead Festival.
- **Better Support for Businesses in Birkenhead**
The BID had initiated or promoted a number of schemes in support of businesses such as a collective buying scheme to secure better discounts for businesses, networking events to put businesses in contact with each other, and the provision of or signposting to business development guidance.

The BID Team was also engaged with Volunteer Wirral to establish a network to increase the number of volunteers involved in their local communities, the project being developed being seen as a means of instilling a sense of pride back into local areas. With regard to the seeking of volunteer Town Hosts, Mr Thomas suggested the use of the term 'Birkenhead Ambassador' or similar,

as opposed to the term 'volunteer' which might not be an attractive term to some people. He further noted that the Little Centre was an accredited training centre that may be able to provide appropriate training for volunteer Town Hosts recruited.

In response to a query from a member of the public regarding parking charges around Hamilton Square, it was confirmed that the BID Team had had discussions with the Council on this issue. The issue was not necessarily as straightforward as it might appear, for example there was a concern that free parking would be used by people travelling onwards to Liverpool, but consideration of options and dialogue with the Council would continue.

Further to a query from Councillor Steve Foulkes, the funding arrangements for the BID were advised. Once businesses had voted to have BID in place, a levy of 1.5% on the business rates of those businesses in the agreed area was collected by the Council and given to the Wirral Chamber of Commerce to manage. The annual sum was in the region of £400k, and was split to support the for priority areas.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the representatives from the Wirral Chamber of Commerce / Birkenhead BID Team for their presentation to the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Wirral Chamber of Commerce / Birkenhead BID Team be thanked for the presentation and for the work being undertaken to enhance and promote Birkenhead.

8 BIRKENHEAD CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

Prior to consideration of the submitted report of the Birkenhead Constituency Manager, the Chair permitted two short presentations on matters pertinent to the Birkenhead Constituency and the wider work of the Committee.

Tranmere Rovers Football Club

Mark Palios, Chairman of Tranmere Rovers Football Club, was in attendance at the meeting with the National League Play-off Final Trophy.

He noted and endorsed comments made about community and partnership working that had been made during the meeting, advising that the Club was seeking to work in a similar manner to bring the community together. Examples of work being undertaken in the community were outlined to the Committee. Mr Palios commented that he felt the spirit generated by working together had contributed to the success of the team at the Wembley final.

Policing Update

Inspector Georgina Minnery, Neighbourhood Policing Inspector, in referencing earlier remarks relating to partnership working, noted the importance of collaborative working in the current challenging policing landscape.

Reference was made to a recent day of action in an area of Rock Ferry that included the execution of four warrants, the making of three arrests and the closure of a house. The police work had been supported by other agencies, including the Council and the Probation Payback Team, in undertaking complementary work in the same area. Members of the Committee thanked Inspector Minnery for the action taken, noting also the other multi-agency issues that had been addressed and actions taken.

In response to a query from a member of the public, Inspector Minnery indicated that the Police were aware of and appreciated the issues caused by off-road motor bikes. While noting that this was a difficult issue to deal with, it was confirmed that the Police did seek to address such matters.

Report of the Birkenhead Constituency Manager

The Committee then received and noted the report of the Birkenhead Constituency Manager that provided an update on progress in relation to agreed schemes of work from the budget devolved to the Constituency Committee and in relation to other Birkenhead Constituency Committee neighbourhood projects in progress.

The report considered and reported on progress of projects and schemes under the following areas –

- Keeping Birkenhead Clean
 - Progress on the current five ‘love where you live’ hubs and litterpick kits;
 - The 2018 ‘In Bloom’ projects, together with examples of where agencies had put in time and funds to work with schools and residents to make improvements. A number of positive outcomes from ‘In Bloom’ projects were highlighted;
 - Skip Fund Community Partnership days and clean-ups which had removed an estimated 120 tonnes of waste;
 - Clean-up dates in the past 12 months; and
 - Work undertaken and jobs completed by the ‘Community Payback Team’.
- Feeding Birkenhead
 - Beechwood Update – including the official opening of the Skateboard Park; activities at the Little Centre Beechwood; meetings to look at a new community partnership to takeover running of the Ballantyne Centre; securing of a non-levy

- apprenticeship contract by the Beechwood Community Trust; and the Beechwood Digital Hub;
 - Gautby Road Community Centre – including the offer of a discounted supermarket, kitchen refurbishment at the Centre, work to support youth activity and holiday food provision; and
 - Livingstone Street Centre – including details of activities offered, becoming an Open Awards accredited centre, and looking at future and ongoing projects.
- Improving Life Chances
 - Update for Improving Life Chances Community Pilots, including community and agency involvement in the Pilots and the good outputs that had already been achieved; and
 - Improving Life Chances Actions for 2017-18.
- Community Connectors Project
 - Setting out the purpose, activities and objectives for the Connectors in providing support for individuals to access local community activity to improve their wellbeing and, as appropriate, readiness for work.
- Birkenhead First Activity Update 2017
 - Work of the Birkenhead Improvement District (BID) Team, including forthcoming events during June and July 2018.
- Birkenhead Assets Update
 - Progress and developments in respect of the Beechwood Centre and the Beaconsfield Centre.
- Pathfinder project
 - Activities and evaluation of the Pathfinder Project, a partnership between the Police, Council, Youth Offending Team, local schools, the CELLS project, army and leisure services, to deter offending.

An appendix to the submitted report provided an update on neighbourhood engagement undertaken by the Birkenhead Constituency Team, including work on Birkenhead in Bloom, Community Action Days, the Good Neighbour Scheme and an arson awareness campaign.

RESOLVED: That -

- (1) Mr Palios and Inspector Minnery be thanked for their presentations to the Committee;**
- (2) the partnership work undertaken for clean-up days, and future clean-up days funded by the skip fund, be noted;**

- (3) the contribution of probation to Birkenhead clean-ups be noted;**
- (4) the 2018 Birkenhead in Bloom schemes and the £1k allocation to each Ward to support projects be noted;**
- (5) the updates from food hubs and holiday food projects be noted;**
- (6) the updates regarding the Improving Life Chances community pilots be noted;**
- (7) the updates for the Birkenhead Improvement District (BID) Team, Community Connectors, the Pathfinder Project and those related to assets be noted.**

9 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Committee were advised that no questions had been submitted for consideration at this meeting of the Committee.