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CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WALLASEY

Wednesday, 26 September 2018

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| <u>Present:</u> | Councillor | B Mooney (Chair) | |
| | Councillors | C Blakeley P Hackett P Hayes AER Jones C Jones L Rennie | S Williams J Williamson B Berry P Stuart T Usher I Lewis |
| <u>Apologies</u> | Councillors | C Spriggs RL Abbey S Jones | A Leech T Jones |

9 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No such declarations were made.

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Ron Abbey, Sharon Jones, Tony Jones, Anita Leech and Christine Spriggs.

11 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the Wallasey Constituency Committee meeting held on 19 June, 2018 be approved.

12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Constituency Manager informed the Committee that no Public Questions had been received on-line. The Chair then asked for questions from Rev. Father Leon Ostaszewski and he raised the matter of local libraries that would be under threat of closure next year. Libraries had active support from the local communities however in the case of Wallasey Central library better use could be made of the lecture hall if the height of the existing glass partition dividing the area could be increased to ceiling level thereby soundproofing the

two separate areas enabling better use of the facility; Rev Father Ostaszewski indicated that he had discussed this with the principal librarian who was in agreement with this proposal. He also raised the issue of a moving paving stone outside his home and referred to the Leander Road and Newland Road area which had now been repaired. He also requested that consideration be given to the area between Belvedere Road to Wallasey Road be made a one-way system as there was a danger to little ones as there was a nursery in the area. The Chair indicated that the matter of the libraries was still under review and that the issues raised would be responded to.

13 **PROBLEM SOLVING FUND: UPDATE ON SPEND**

The Constituency Manager introduced the report of the Director of Strategy and Partnerships that provided an update on Wallasey Constituency Committee Problem Solving Fund spend. The Problem solving Fund was set aside by the Committee for low spend items that will provide a quick response to issues and/or allow a new approach to be tested that may ultimately lead to improvements within the Constituency.

The report informed that since the last meeting a spend of £423.07 had been agreed by the Chair for the purchase and installation of a double litter bin on the Leasowe/Moreton Circular Trail. Following the installation of a new pathway, the footfall at the location had increased significantly. There was no bin provision at the site and a litter-pick had seen fifty bags of rubbish removed. A spend of £499.00 had been agreed by the Chair as payment to The Voice of Egremont to buy equipment to enable the new group to set up and undertake environmental activity in their local area to tackle pressing quality of life issues. The area required immediate attention to prevent an escalation of issues with anti-social behaviour, dog fouling, fly-tipping, etc. over the summer. The group had no current funding and could not access other funding in the short-term to address the issues.

The Constituency Manager informed that a balance of £7,368.78 remained in the Problem Solving Fund and circulated a list of spend of £500.00 or less that had been authorised by the Chair. These included;

- Cleaning high level interior windows and directional signage
- CCTV signage to assist local traders tackle crime
- Dropped kerb to facilitate access to a service for people with disabilities
- Exterior lighting to a building to enable operation during large scale events
- Cleansing and gardening equipment for a new group unable to access funding
- Mobile wheeled library shelving to enable better use of the space
- Payment to a group whose funding had been lost to ensure continuation of service
- Road safety measure at a school

- Safety railings outside a community centre.

The Chair advised that anyone who had any items requiring funding they should speak to the Constituency Manager in the first instance and this would be passed on to the Chair for a formal request.

Councillor Bruce Berry raised the issue of dropped kerb facilities in the Moreton area. He had spoken to Mark Smith, (Interim Director Highways & Streetscene) who would support this but he did not know the costs. Councillor Berry therefore asked if an estimate could be obtained. Councillor Chris Jones indicated that she had requested a bin in Poulton Road, Wallasey but to date this had not been provided and she further requested dropped kerb facilities in the area and asked the Constituency Manager to let her know the costs involved. The Constituency Manager indicated that the Members should let her know the locations relating to these requests.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

14 **COMMUNITY CLEAN UPS**

The Constituency Manager introduced the report of the Director of Strategy and Partnerships that provided an update on the Wallasey Constituency Committee's Community Clean Ups budget and sought a decision on the proposal for allocation of the remaining funding. The budget had been devolved to the Constituency Committee and was ring – fenced for activity to improve the local environment. Other options that had been explored by the Committee were set out in the report.

The report informed that at Budget Council on 6 March 2017 (minute 125 refers) it had been agreed that £50,000 would be allocated to the four Constituency Committees, as a permanent budget, to help support local communities to clean up and improve their local areas ('Community Clean Ups'). This had been split equally between the Constituencies, each being allocated £12,500 per annum. This funding was therefore available to the Committee for both 2017/18 and 2018/19

In July 2018 the Constituency Team had been advised that due to additional funds being made available following the first year of this devolved funding, no underspends for any Constituencies had been carried forward from the 2016/17 allocation. The remaining balance from 2016/17 of £5,683.27 was therefore no longer available for the Committee's use. The Committee had £25,000 (from 2017/18 and 2018/19) available for its use to improve the local environment.

It was reported that due to similar underspend in Wirral South, a way forward with this funding had been discussed and the proposed approach set out in the report developed to make maximum use of the allocation. Subject to

Committee approval, this would see the Engagement Officers from the two Constituency areas work together to support activity in each of the Constituencies, bringing additional capacity and expertise.

It was proposed that the remaining funding of £25,000 be allocated to fund targeted environmental activity within local communities, through both 'Environmental Action Days' and a small grants programme for environmental improvements by local community, voluntary and faith groups. The suggested process for this was outlined in the report.

The Constituency Manager outlined the proposal that the Constituency Engagement Officer co-ordinate an 'Environmental Action Day' within each of the Constituency's six wards in or around the Spring of 2019, in a location identified by elected members. Due to historic issues over the Mischief, Halloween and Bonfire Nights period, it was further proposed that an earlier and additional Environmental Action Day take place in Seacombe/Egremont in late October/early November specifically to help reduce the amount of flammable material in this location during this time. The operation of the 'Days' would be similar to the 'Respect Action Days' previously co-ordinated by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team and the 'Blitz Days' currently conducted in Birkenhead Constituency. Each Environmental Action Day would see the co-ordination of multi-agency and community activity to tackle environmental and quality of life issues.

The report identified key partners likely to be included and set out the focus of each Environmental Action Day. It was reported that the costs incurred for each Environmental Action Day were likely to include, where applicable, resources and materials (e.g. paint, flowers, etc.), wheelie bin amnesty, skip hire, printing (leaflets) and refreshments for volunteers. The Constituency Manager indicated that an indicative cost for each day was up to £1,000.

The Constituency Manager also outlined the proposal that a Wallasey Constituency Committee 'Love Where You Live' Fund' be launched week commencing 1 October, 2018. This would be open to community, voluntary and faith groups to apply for funding of no more than £500 to make environmental improvements to any outdoor areas to which the general public had access. The closing date for bids (typed) would be Monday 3 December 2018, allowing around eight weeks for applications. As with previous rounds of the Committee's Wallasey Bright Ideas Fund an assessment of bids, based on the contents of the respective application form, would be undertaken by the Constituency Manager and the outcome of that assessment reported to the next available Wallasey Constituency Committee on 12 March 2019 for decision. Grants would be awarded to successful groups by early April 2019 and projects would be required to be completed and a short typed evaluation report (with receipts) submitted to the Constituency Team by no later than Friday 1 November 2019.

The report indicated that due to the nature of the grant an abridged version of the application form for Wallasey Bright Ideas Fund would be drafted. Groups might only apply for one project and funding would not be permitted for core staff salaries and/or core administration costs. Applicants must have demonstrated that their project would have a visible positive impact on an outdoor space; this might include (but not exclusively) repainting benches and railings, clearing and planting, creating and installing artwork, by way of example.

Councillor Lesley Rennie commented that there had been problems with fly-tipping in the Buxton Lane area of Wallasey and suggested that the provision of a skip could be looked into and although there was clearly a risk that this might attract more tipping would like this to be explored.

The Chair welcomed the funding for community groups to organise their own clean-ups and cited the example of The Voice of Egremont where this had been very successful.

Resolved – That the indicative amounts of £7,000 towards seven Environmental Action Days across the Constituency and £18,000 towards a Wallasey Constituency Committee ‘Love Where You Live’ small grants fund be allocated.

15 **WALLASEY CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE BUDGET AND SPEND**

The Constituency Manager outlined a report that provided an update on the Constituency Committee’s completed projects and any identified underspends. This report also outlined the Committee’s budget for 2018/19, and sought decisions around how that budget, together with the Committee’s underspends, would be allocated. Appendices to the report provided the reports relating to; Appendix 1 – Smokefree Community Champions List; Appendix 2 – Breakdown of Marine Point Initiative Spend; Appendix 3 – Breakdown of Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Spend; Appendix 4 – Defibrillator Locations; Appendix 5 – Dementia-Friendly Businesses & Organisations List; Appendix 5a – Dementia-Friendly Grant Allocations and Appendix 6 – Christmas Lighting Spend.

The Chair indicated that the total underspend available for Committee reallocation was £59,565 and invited Members views.

Councillor Janette Williamson suggested that the available funding be used for helping Child Poverty in Wallasey to help hungry children, girls without sanitary products and families in poverty. Councillor Blakeley suggested that the available funding should be divided between each area and that spend should be devolved to each Ward and each Ward Councillor to determine greatest need. Councillor Adrian Jones commented that it would not be beneficial to divide the funding into Ward areas and it would preferable for the

funding to be pooled to meet the needs of children and families across Wallasey. Councillor Blakeley then suggested a smaller amount of funding be allocated to each Ward and the remainder be allocated to an appropriate scheme in Wallasey. Councillor Chris Jones commented that it was time the Constituency Committee made a real difference to everyone in Wallasey and urged that the funding be spent appropriately as a whole. Councillor Ian Lewis stated that the Committee had not seen any proposals/costings/value for money and stressed that Members need to see the evidence for how the money is to be spent, the timescale for spend and how the success of the outcome would be measured. Councillor Paul Hayes commented that no solid proposals had been put before the Committee and that he would support Councillor Blakeley's suggestions. The Chair indicated that it may be beneficial for a special meeting or sub group to investigate how the funding could be best spent and have a proposal ready for January. Councillor Janette Williamson made the suggestion that community groups could be asked to come forward with proposals. Councillor Lewis noted that at the last meeting Councillor Janette Williamson had referred to Brightside and shown how £500.00 could make a significant difference to a community group. He commented that community groups needed to be made aware that there is funding available and that Members themselves may be aware of appropriate community groups. Councillor Lewis further indicated that this could be a pilot scheme however he raised concern that the Committee may have to wait another 6 months before any action is taken and emphasised that the process needed to be in place now. Councillor Lesley Rennie commented that she would like the social isolation of people, particularly older people, some of whom may be suffering with Dementia, to be discussed. Councillor Hackett highlighted that with Christmas approaching there was necessity for the funding to be allocated without delay and suggested discussion by a panel of community representatives. The Chair informed the Committee of a Brunch Club that was operating through local churches in Wallasey and the Committee could look into organisations such as the Feed Birkenhead initiative. The Chair suggested that a sum of £9.000 could be put aside for emergencies and a £50.000 pot be allocated to tackling child poverty in Wallasey. Councillor Chris Jones suggested that Jo Burrell, Constituency Manager, Birkenhead be approached to find out more information on the Feed Birkenhead initiative. Councillor Paul Stuart agreed with this suggestion but commented that the Committee could not wait until January. Members raised the question of when the money had to be spent and the Constituency manager indicated that there was no firm guarantee that the core budget could be carried over. Councillor Tom Usher stated as there was no firm proposal currently the Committee needed to meet as soon as possible. Councillor Ian Lewis urged that the Committee needed to set parameters and invite organisations for discussion.

It was moved by Councillor Chris Blakeley and seconded by Councillor Ian Lewis that a sum of £5,965.00 be allocated to each ward Councillor for

organisations within each Ward to bid into and that the balance be used to support appropriate schemes in Wallasey.

The motion was put and lost (6:7).

The Chair suggested that the Constituency Committee meet before Christmas as there was need for a special meeting to discuss this matter. The Chair informed Members that she and Councillor Usher would be meeting with people from the Brunch Club in Wallasey the next day and suggested that this could give the Committee a starting point. Members discussed the possibility of a smaller group of the Committee meeting to discuss ideas that could report back via Councillor Mooney and Councillor Lewis. Other Members suggested that all Members of the Committee should meet together to determine the way forward. The Chair agreed that a special meeting of the Constituency Committee be arranged around the beginning of December 2018.

On a motion by Councillor Bernie Mooney and seconded by Councillor Janette Williamson it was;

Resolved (7:2) – That;

1 the Wallasey Constituency Manager hold a discussion with the Birkenhead Constituency Manager in order to gain further information on the Feed Birkenhead scheme.

2 a special meeting of the Wallasey Constituency Committee be arranged for early December to determine how the Committee will allocate the £59,565 available to it this financial year, in line with its priorities.

3 the remainder of the report be noted.

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

The Chair informed that there was no urgent business.

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