

YOUR SAY 



**West Wirral
Area Forum**

**Papers for the forum meeting
Monday 16th February 2009**

**Hoylelake Chapel
Station Road
Hoylelake
CH47 4AA**

7.00pm – 9.00pm

Tracey Smith

Senior Community Engagement Co-ordinator

Tel: 0151 691 8026 Fax: 0151 691 8159

Minicom: 0151 691 8480 www.wirral.gov.uk

Email: traceysmith@wirral.gov.uk

**Community Engagement Team, Corporate Services, Town
Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral CH44 8ED**

Code of Conduct for Area Forum Meetings.

Indicate to the Chairperson when you would like to speak

Let invited speakers finish what they have to say

Respect others right to be heard

Do not use abusive or offensive language

Do not make any discriminatory remarks

Do not have private conversations while meeting is in progress

AGENDA

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies
2. Area co-ordinators Report
 - Minutes of last meeting and matters arising
3. Hoylake & West Kirby Regeneration Projects
4. Local Development Framework
5. Closure of Hoylake Library
6. Westbourne and Hoylake Community Centre's
7. Public Question time
8. Partner information
 - Streetscene - Integrated Transport Block Funding
 - NHS Wirral
 - Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
 - Merseyside Police/Community Safety
 - Fire Service
 - Older Peoples parliament
9. Dates of Future meetings

Contents

<u>Section One</u>	Minutes from last Meeting	Page 5
<u>Section Two</u>	Local Updates	Page 13
	➤ Anti Social Behaviour Team	Page 14
	➤ Community Safety Team - report on crime	Page 16
	➤ Integrated Transport Block	Page 19
	➤ Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Page 23
	➤ Equality & Diversity	Page 25
	➤ Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Page 27
	➤ Youth Update	Page 29
	➤ Transport Update	Page 31

Information

We are very pleased to announce that the new Local Strategic Partnership website is now live.

We would really appreciate it, if you could browse the website and let us have your views. Some areas of the website are still under development, it is expected that the site will be fully operational by March 2009. Your input and ideas would be really helpful, particularly at this initial stage.

The website address is <http://wirral-lsp.org/>. Please can you inform as many people as possible.

- Maxine Joynson 0151 691 8266 maxinejoynson@wirral.gov.uk

Section One

Minutes

Present	
Chair	Gerry Ellis
Councillors	David Elderton, Jeff Green, John Hale, Geoffrey Watt
Community Representatives	Gary Evans.
Business Representative	Ian McKellar
Lead Officer	Jim Wilkie [Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services]
Area Service Co-ordinator	Tracey Smith
Wirral University Teaching Hospital Trust.	Sue Green
Wirral Primary Care Trust	Glen Coleman
Merseyside Police	Inspector Paul Vickers
Council Officers	Howard Mortimer, [Corporate Services Strategic Development], Peter Riley, David Green [Director of Technical Services] Caroline Laing, Manager, Anti-Social Behaviour Team], Phil Dickson [Environmental Health Manager]
Apologies	

Index to minutes

Minute 1 - Welcome, introductions & apologies

Minute 2 - Area Co-ordinator's report – Minutes of last meeting and matters arising.

Minute 3 - 'You Decide'

Minute 4 - Dog Fouling

Minute 5 - Regeneration Projects update.

Minute 6 - Date of next meeting

Minute 1 - Welcome, introductions & apologies

The Chair, Councillor Gerry Ellis, opened the meeting and welcomed approximately 220 members of the public to the meeting in West Kirby. He invited members of the forum to introduce themselves.

The Chair thanked members of the public for an excellent turnout, which he assumed was due to the high level of interest in the issue of a hotel in West Kirby. On three occasions in the last six months, the Chair had requested Howard Mortimer to ask the developer, Carpenter Investments Ltd, to organise a public meeting, and on each occasion the reply had been that it was not appropriate to do so. Councillors therefore decided to use this Area Forum meeting as a public meeting on the issue. The agenda will be re-scheduled to bring forward the item, Regeneration Projects update, and if necessary the meeting will be extended beyond the normal close time of 9 pm to allow everyone an opportunity to express their views or to ask a question.

Minute 2 - Area Co-ordinator's report – Minutes of last meeting and matters arising.

The Area Co-ordinator's report has been posted on the Council's website and paper copies have been distributed to One Stop Shops. A limited number of copies were available at the meeting. Further copies can be obtained on request to the Area Co-ordinator. [tel. 691 8026. email: traceysmith@wirral.gov.uk.]

The minutes of the meeting of the Area Forum on 11 June 2008 had been incorporated on pages 4 to 12 of the Area Co-ordinator's report. Written responses to the issues raised at the meeting had been incorporated under Matters Arising on pages 13/14.

The Area Co-ordinator drew attention to unallocated Community Initiative Funding of £15,812.77 and PCT funding of £4,250.00, available for projects in West Wirral. Voluntary and Community Sector groups are invited to submit applications by the closing date of 12 noon on Monday, 10th November 2008. Application forms were available at the meeting.

Minute decision:

Resolved: That –

- i the minutes of the meeting of the Area Forum on 11 June 2008 be received;
- ii the Area Co-ordinator be thanked for her report.

Minute 3 - 'You Decide'

Wirral Council has allocated £250,000 new money to be spent on extra Council services in Wirral's 11 area forums through a new project called 'You Decide'. To ensure everyone had the chance to take part, a Borough-wide survey was conducted in September asking residents to identify the additional Council services they would most like to spend the money on. A total of 179 responses had been received to the 5,000 questionnaires distributed in West Wirral. Forum members had met to analyse the results of the surveys and based on the priorities identified, Councillors and community representatives subsequently met and decided to allocate half of the £20,000 received by this area forum for youth supported activity and youth sports in Hoylake, Meols, West Kirby, Newton and Thurstaston areas with the remainder being spent on street cleaning, including additional litter bins and graffiti removal; and road safety, including the introduction of automatic solar panel safety signs, initially in Caldly Village and one/two other areas.

Minute 4 - Dog Fouling

A request was made at the last Area Forum for a talk on the control of dogs in the area. Phil Dickson, Environmental Health Manager, was invited to give a presentation on dog fouling.

The Environmental Health Division of the Department of Regeneration has responsibility for a number of disciplines, namely, Food Safety, Health and Safety, Pollution Control, Environmental Health, Pest Control, Animal Health and Welfare and Animal Control.

Wirral Animal Control and Welfare Service [the Dog Warden Service] has three principal roles – enforcement of legislation in relation to dangerous dogs, the collection, kennelling and, wherever possible, the re-homing of stray dogs, and dog fouling. The Dog Warden Service is based at the Council Kennels in Corporation Road, Birkenhead, and is staffed by one senior warden, three dog wardens and three kennel staff.

The whole of Wirral Council area is designated under the Dogs [Fouling of Land] Act 1996. On designated land it is an offence for the owner or keeper of a dog to fail to clear up after their dog has fouled. Failure to comply can result in prosecution and a fine up to £1,000. Anyone who fails to clean after their dog may be issued with a fixed penalty or prosecuted. Enforcement concordat policy requires that offenders be given a verbal warning upon which they have the opportunity to put right any offence [ie by picking up the mess]. Further action is taken if they refuse. The burden of proof that is required before action can be taken is 'beyond all reasonable doubt', ie the wardens need to have seen evidence of an offence at close hand. Where there is insufficient evidence for issuing a fixed penalty notice a verbal or written warning may be given. An authorised Council enforcement officer or in some cases a Police Community Support Officer [PCO] may issue the owner or keeper with a fixed penalty notice of £50.

A Wirral Dog Watch campaign involved visiting all areas of the Borough over a 12-month period and using the media and other means of publicity to raise awareness. As a result, there has been a progressive change in attitude, evidence of increasingly responsible dog ownership, and a reduction in the number of complaints about dog fouling. Nevertheless, dog fouling remains an issue of concern.

In 2007 Wirral Council invested £20,000 in a further campaign, '**Don't give a dog a bad name**'. This involved increased presence via wardens and community patrols, posters, poop scoop bags and leaflets. In 2008, Wirral Council committed a further £40,000 for dog fouling initiatives. This involves the purchase of a new multi purpose cleaning and enforcement vehicle, new tri-signs, posters on lampposts, and an incentive scheme that offers reward cards for a monthly £50 draw.

The Services continues to work successfully with Wirral Partnership Homes and more recently has worked with the Police CSOs in dealing with this issue of dog fouling.

In response to questions, Phil Dickson stated that there have probably been about 25 successful prosecutions in total since the legislation was introduced. There were five fixed penalties issued by wardens in 2007. Fines tend to be £50 or £100. The Press are invited to attend the Court when there is a prosecution, but they tend not to attend, so it is difficult to 'name and shame' offenders. There have been no prosecutions this year and so far seven written and about 30 verbal warnings have been issued. The Wardens would be interested in seeing any photographic evidence of an owner being irresponsible, but a witness statement is more likely to be received in court than a photograph. The legislation applies to all open land, including beaches. There is no legislation that applies to dog owners who allow dogs out on their own. If the dog has no identification, the wardens can pick up the dog and the

owner would need to pay a redemption fee for the return of the animal. The wardens regularly monitor along the promenades.

Minute decision:

Resolved: That Phil Dickson be thanked for an interesting presentation.

Minute 5 - Regeneration Projects update.

Jim Wilkie explained that he proposed to give a presentation on the regeneration plans for West Wirral, to provide an update on how the projects have developed so far, and finally to focus on the regeneration programme for West Kirby.

In providing background information, Jim Wilkie stated that the return of The Open was the catalyst for regeneration. A master plan was developed and consulted on and although there was disagreement with some aspects of the plan, there was general support for the overall master plan.

The principal aims of the master plan are to:-

- enhance the quality of Hoylake and West Kirby and their sea fronts
- improve local facilities and business prospects
- improve the quality of the Country Park
- seek investment in a golf resource
- benefit residents and businesses.

The potential outcomes would be to:-

- improve the local environment.
- improve the local economy
- secure £160 million investment
- create 500 new jobs
- influence the future return of The Open to Wirral.

Following a major consultation exercise, initial work on the development of the proposals began in 2003/04 with the aim of gauging the interest of major backers to support the proposals.

Jim Wilkie described the progress made to date on each of the projects:

- Market Street Hoylake Improvement Scheme
- Hoylake and Meols Promenade improvements
- Proposal for a new Golf Resort in West Wirral.
- Wirral Country Park – new Visitor Centre
- West Kirby –
 - ▶ Public Realm improvements
 - ▶ The Sail Project (hotel)
 - ▶ The Greater Concourse.
 - ▶ The Crescent
 - ▶ The Canopies

To date, no firm decisions have been taken on the Sail project except that the Cabinet has identified Carpenter Investments Limited as the preferred bidder to develop their ideas for a new hotel in West Kirby under a lock in agreement. The lock in agreement ends at the end of the year and Officers will be preparing a report and recommendations to Cabinet on the West Wirral master plan.

The Chair commented that both he and Councillor Hale have made it clear in the past they are opposed to the Sail project in its present form and that other West Wirral Councillors are opposed to the proposal. The public have been consulted and

the response of Councillors as representatives of the people in the area is that the project should not go ahead.

Councillor Hale referred to the public meeting attended by 120 people in 2003. He was the first to say that he was opposed to a hotel on the proposed site and nothing has happened since to change his mind. 95% of the people at that meeting had voted against a hotel on that site. Since then, leaflets have been issued to every house in his ward and people had voted overwhelmingly against the proposal. He had recently been given access to the developer's questionnaire which had allegedly indicated that the responses were in favour of the development. He intended to study the results in greater detail.

He reiterated the comments by the Chair that the Officers should reflect the views of the people of West Kirby when they prepare their report, and that the Cabinet should respond accordingly.

Councillor Watt added that in his view the consultation process undertaken by the developer was inadequate, and the exhibition was inadequate and vague. He gave an assurance that Councillors representing West Kirby and Thurstaston Wards would do their best to ensure that Cabinet is made fully aware of all the issues and that Cabinet will make the right decision and stop this thing going ahead.

Councillor Hale added that, although West Wirral is not represented on the Cabinet, Cabinet members have a duty to listen to the clearly expressed view of the people of West Kirby and further afield that the promenade should not be touched. To disturb the promenade would be a grave error and the hope of local Councillors is that Officers will be giving the same message to Cabinet when they do their report.

By prior arrangement with the Chair –

Mr Amos gave a presentation which focussed on the Pedestrian perspective. He quoted examples where the rights of pedestrians would be eroded by proposals to reduce the width of pavements to facilitate vehicular parking. He sought the support of members of the public and the area forum in ensuring there is no encroachment of pavements.

Also by prior arrangement, John Hutchinson gave a presentation on impact on the promenade and the car park should the proposal go ahead for a hotel to be built on the proposed site. He stated that the area is a zone 3 flood area, and his presentation included photographs of a typical winter scene taken in the area where the hotel is due to be sited and of the Dee Lane car park.

Mr Hutchinson stated that he had prepared 60 questions on the public consultation, the hotel prerequisites, car parking needs, site construction, and the basic question, 'Does West Kirby need a new hotel?' He had directed the questions to Councillors and Council staff, but has received no substantial replies.

The Chair invited comments from anyone who is in favour of the proposals.

Mr Alan Beer, Managing Director, Carpenter Investments Ltd, and his colleague David Brewer identified themselves amongst the audience. David Brewer explained that he had only heard about the Area Forum meeting at 6 pm this evening and he had not had time to prepare a formal presentation.

Mr Brewer stated that he has been working with Council officers for several months with the objective of delivering something that everyone can be proud of but there is no desire to deliver something that is not wanted by the public. Detailed plans are

not yet available but a top-class firm of architects has been appointed to develop the plans; more than 700 residents in the area have been consulted, but he has not been contacted by email by any Council member. It was upsetting to be portrayed as someone who did not wish to speak to people.

He believed that the scheme and images that have been shown tonight by Mr Hutchinson bear no resemblance to anything he would be prepared to put his name to. He would be happy to hear from any member of the public and disclosed his email address at his office in Hope Street, Liverpool. He offered to answer questions.

In the question/comments time which followed a number of issues were raised by members of the public as follows;

Who's idea was the hotel, the Council's or the developer's?; when was the hotel decided?;

What other sites were looked at in West Wirral?

What feasibility studies have been undertaken to assess demand for a hotel?

When will we see the elevations and detailed plans, before a decision is made; what plans will be available for the Councillors to base their decision on, and when?

Who owns the land?

The planning application and planning process

It's not so much about whether or not a hotel is built, it is to do with the process for consultation. Asking people what they want to have. Whether there has been a robust consultation. There needs to be consultation for three weeks rather than for three days, then there would not be a need for so much 'hot air' tonight. There should have been an opportunity at a much earlier stage for people to voice their opinions.

The process from here on, rather than what has happened in the past. It seems the message is not getting out; many people do not know what is going on. We have heard about 5,000 leaflets and low responses. You need to get out and talk amongst the people of West Kirby about what they want, and perhaps offer some alternative proposals. A number of people said that they didn't know what the proposals were and were told that this was because of commercial confidence. Some people had written to Carpenters via the website and have had no response. The general feeling is people have not had responses from Carpenters.

If a decision has to be made by the end of the year, how can decisions be made on incomplete plans? Surely, before making an important decision of this magnitude they need to see the plans. Can I ask when the plans are going to be in place and if there is a delay in the introduction of those plans ask Jim Wilkie to delay his report, otherwise there will be no true consultation on those plans.

The form that was given out was not clear. It asked Yes/No about the hotel, but they were talking about the Sail project.

One of the questions I asked at Carpenter's consultation was the number of storeys the building would have. I finally elicited from the company that they intend to build a four-storey building.

I have been attending meetings for the last five years, and everyone seems to be disjointed about what is going on. We don't want a cheap hotel and people have reservations about other things that are going on. There has been a steering group working with Councillors, and at every meeting people have been given categorical reassurances by local Councillors that they were not in favour of a hotel because the

public are not in favour of it. I feel we have been misled by the Council. The town has said we don't want a hotel and there seems to be a need to go back to basics and decide what we really want.

There was an artists' impression of the building at the meeting in the Concourse. There has been an independent survey. How many forms were issued, whether

those people who received the forms in a position to vote, who was in control of those forms, who handled them? Four/five months have elapsed during which time those forms may not have been in control of someone who is independent.

It is possible to have an extension of the Cabinet meeting. I am concerned that a decision will be made when plans have not been made. It is possible to extend the timescale?

I am concerned that the whole project has been developed on the idea that sailors will be staying at the hotel. If that hotel fails, is it an opportunity to convert it into flats; given there is an embargo on flats in this area.

The Council say that Area Forums should be an important part of any consultation. How much influence does the Forum have in bringing that to bear?

The majority of us here would want that discussion to take place and for decisions to be made in the open where residents have an opportunity to see the decisions made.

Can we trust the Cabinet to make the right decision, given the confusion concerning the proposal by the PCT to develop green belt land, in a country park, in Thingwall? Do we want the same thing to happen in West Kirby?

Is the land dedicated for use by the public? If so, that dedication needs to be lifted before you can do anything with it.

Nothing has been said tonight to prove there is a demand for a hotel on that site. Is anyone going to tell us that there is a demand for a hotel? If it is to be on this site it means people want to use it. If business users want to use it, it doesn't have to be on the front. If people are coming on holiday, it doesn't have to be on the front. I feel insulted that the developers have said there was a reasonable consultation. As soon as someone asked a pertinent question, the answer came back, 'these are not the final plans' etc. That is not consultation. If you need to build on stilts over the car park, why not build somewhere else? What happens if there is a storm? The building will not last five minutes in a storm. No sailors want the hotel that has been proposed. They want B&B not a posh hotel. If it is to finance the sailing school, build it somewhere else. Still put the money in and we have the improvements in the sailing school. Have you consulted the sailors and people who will be using it? Those people have not been asked. Have you done your homework?

If you are asking for someone with a positive view, I favour the proposals. There is an opportunity for a positive message from this meeting. The hotel could be welcomed, but it is the site that is the problem.

Can you clarify who the sailing school will belong to?

The Chair gave Carpenters representatives the opportunity to have a final word.

Mr Beer stated that he appreciated the opportunity to join in the debate this evening. He strongly believed that the point of consultation is to listen, it is not to 'sell' the proposal, but to listen and take on board what has been said. The message from the public has come over loud and clear and as a resident himself it is important that people have the opportunity to express what is important to them. He believed it is an important development that can create great benefit for West Kirby but it was important to get it right and develop something that everyone can be proud of.

Carpenters are happy to listen to all comments and will take on board the criticisms. Clearly there is a lot of feeling about the location and there are many issues that are important to local people. Especially in the current economic climate, the company is not prepared to invest a vast amount of money in a scheme that does not have broad support, but if it goes ahead there is a need for something that is high quality, not mediocre.

In closing the meeting, the Chair asked members of the public to signify by a show of hands if they were in favour of or against the proposal to construct a hotel on the site described. Three members of the public, apart from Carpenters' representatives, indicated that they were in favour of the proposal for a hotel. Over 200 people voted against it.

The Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 9.45 pm.

Section Two

Local Updates

Area forums provide an opportunity for people who live or work in Wirral to have a greater say on local issues and be more active in decision making and shaping local services.

They involve local ward councillors, police, Wirral Primary Care Trust, fire safety representatives along with community representatives and officers from various departments of the council. Forums also provide information about current services, how they can be accessed and ultimately raise awareness of local council initiatives.

Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team- September 2008 – January 2009

In addition to ongoing enforcement action against the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, specific activity has included:

Graffiti busting campaign given green light (September 2008)

A new anti-graffiti campaign was launched as part of Wirral's strategy to tackle anti-social behaviour and improve the environment and quality of life for local residents. This new approach saw a partnership between the Council's Streetscene service, Anti-Social Behaviour Team and Together Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder based in Tranmere; working closely with Wirral Youth Offending Service and Probation Services and supported by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service. This wider service for the first time allows homeowners, tenants and small business to have general graffiti removed for free. The Council's tough stance on removing racist and other offensive graffiti within 24 hours remains. A key element of this new approach is a detailed strategy that focuses not only upon the prompt and effective removal of graffiti, but also gathering intelligence on the perpetrators and taking robust enforcement action, coupled with strengthening preventative work in schools targeting the peak age group for committing graffiti of 14-17 years old. Information campaigns and reward schemes will also feature as part of the new approach.

Anti-Social Behaviour Advice Surgeries

A six-month programme of advice surgeries for residents in the private sector suffering with anti-social behaviour concluded in October 2008. This saw the Anti-Social Behaviour Team's Respect Bus taken into communities and staffed with Enforcement Officers who took complaints directly from the public and provided comprehensive advice.

Community Mobile Police Station relocated to Birkenhead (October 2008)

The station, a 40 x 12 x 10 foot converted shipping container, was relocated to north Birkenhead to tackle anti-social and criminal behaviour. The specially made unit is equipped with a public enquiry desk and a wide range of literature for community safety, support groups and local activities and is a partnership between Wirral Council and Merseyside Police. The unit is managed by a Community Development Officer, who is based within Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, and whose role it is to co-ordinate multi-agency activity within the deployment area.

Parents 4 Parents support group launched (October 2008)

A new support group run by parents for parents with children engaged, or at risk of engaging, in anti-social behaviour, was launched with the support of Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team. The group provides a friendly non-judgemental atmosphere for parents to share experiences and be given support; offering a ear to listen or a shoulder to cry on if needed. The group specifically offers a weekly drop-in service; speakers on relevant topics; signposting to services and one-to-one and group discussions. The group is run by four committed parents who have come together, with the support of Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team's parenting service, to provide a route for parents who want help and support from other parents who understand the difficulties of dealing with difficult behaviour by children and young people. Parents 4 Parents can be accessed by contacting Bobbie Crawford (Parenting Co-ordinator) or Alison Sendall (Parenting Support & Intervention Worker) on 606 5773 or 606 5757.

'Sportsmobile' launched to tackle anti-social behaviour in hot spot areas (October 2008)

The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team and Sports Development Unit launched an exciting new project aimed at preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour; the 'sportsmobile'. The vehicle is equipped with sporting equipment, staffed by Sports Development Workers, and deployed into hot-spot areas to divert young people from anti-social behaviour. A lighting rig on the roof allows for dark and poorly lit spaces to be floodlit. Seventeen young people, who were successful in winning a photograph competition run by Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team at last year's Wirral Show, were adorned on the vehicle.

Wirral Family Intervention Project celebrated a year's successful operation (November 2008)

Launched in 2007, the Family Intervention Project (FIP) was created to work with the most problematic families engaged in anti-social behaviour, by both challenging unacceptable behaviour and providing and co-ordinating support and interventions to address the underlying causes of their behaviour. In the last year, more than 30 families have been referred and more than 80% of the families allocated to Project Workers have engaged with the service. Complaints of anti-social behaviour across the families has reduced by 71%. School attendance has also improved. The project has recently recruited for additional Project Workers due to the demand for the service. The FIP is delivered on behalf of the Council by registered charity Action for Children (formerly NCH). The project delivers support to families through outreach work in their homes and through dispersed tenancies.

Respect Watch Scheme for Bidston Rise (November 2008)

Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, in partnership with Merseyside Police and landlord Wirral Partnership Homes, has designated the Bidston Rise area of Birkenhead as a Respect Watch Scheme area. The initiative is designed to protect residents who have already suffered at the hands of anti-social individuals and includes a Local Lettings Agreement with residents. The scheme will run for 12 months and covers over 400 properties within this area.

New powers to tackle anti-social behaviour (December 2008)

Community safety partners in Wirral received significant new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour. New Closure Order powers came into force nationally that enable a property where persistent disorder is reported to be closed temporarily. The powers work in a similar way to current 'Crack House' Closure Order powers that allow premises, where the misuse of Class A drugs is causing serious disorder to local residents, to be closed for a period of time. The new Closure Order powers for persistent nuisance or disorder allow for any premises to be closed for a three month period where there is significant and persistent disorder or persistent serious nuisance to a community. The powers, which are available to both police and local authorities, are tenure-neutral and therefore apply to any tenure, including owner-occupied properties. Premises can also include residential properties, common areas adjacent to properties, factories, shops, pubs and clubs, public buildings, community centres or halls and car parks. Properties closed can remain sealed for a further three months, up to a maximum of six months, but other interventions will be used alongside the power to resolve the problem in the longer-term.

Joint Community Safety Team report

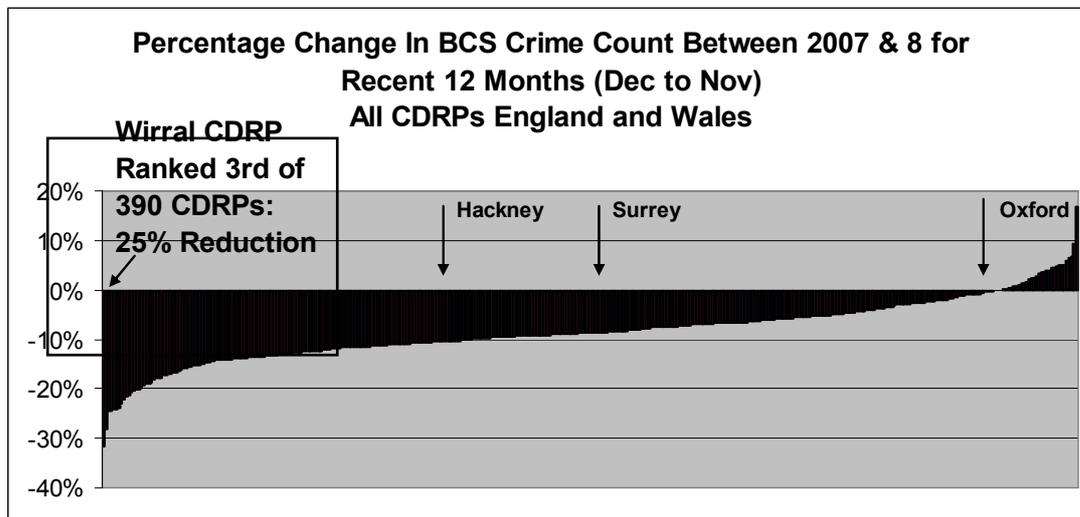
Assessment of Wirral Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

The Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) framework was introduced in April 2008 and applies to all police forces in England and Wales. It covers key services delivered by the police working on their own or in partnership, complementing (but not substituting) performance arrangements being developed by other partners. These are used to assess and monitor performance to the public and, critically, to help partners in England and Wales deliver and improve performance against national and local priorities.

Crime rates can change as a national trend due to environmental factors such as improved security. It has therefore been increasingly important to measure performance against other areas using the same criteria with data which is as recent as possible.

Local Area Agreements have been made between Wirral Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Government Office. Local measures, as well as the '198 National Indicator' measures have been used to monitor and ensure improved performance. Overall performance is monitored by APACS measures

British Crime Survey Comparator Crime is a measure taken from a basket of crime categories. Although this is no longer a target, it is still monitored in Wirral as it reflects the trends measured nationally by the British Crime Survey. Government Office targeted reductions of 20% by March 2008 were met and surpassed.



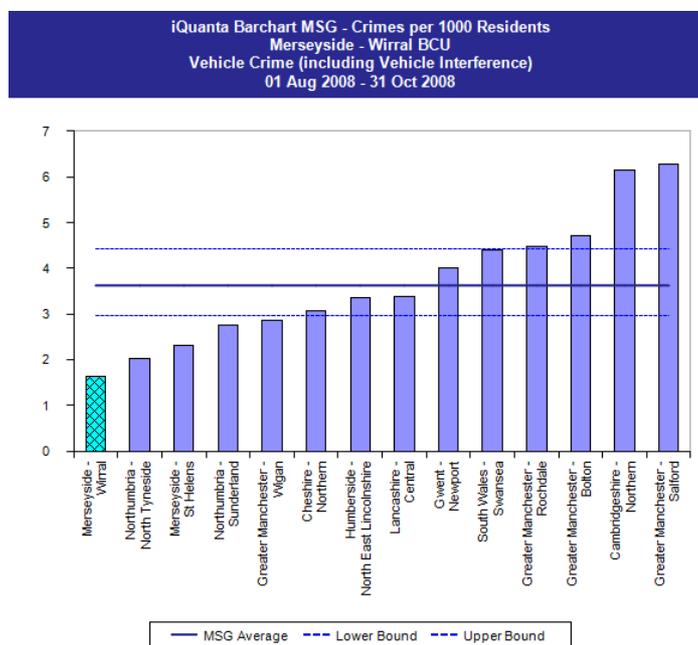
Theft of a Vehicle

Despite being a stretch target, performance has been sufficiently dramatic that the Partnership is confident the target of 941 car thefts in 2009/10 will be easily met.

Success in reducing the rate of car theft has meant that the forecast for 2008/9 is to be less than 600 crimes. This equates to a 75% drop in the annual number of thefts from vehicles in the three years since the target baseline.

Comparable statistics are not available for theft of a vehicle, but when measured together with **Theft From A Vehicle** and **Vehicle Interference** and compared to demographically similar areas:

Wirral has the lowest vehicle crime rate per population in our most similar family;

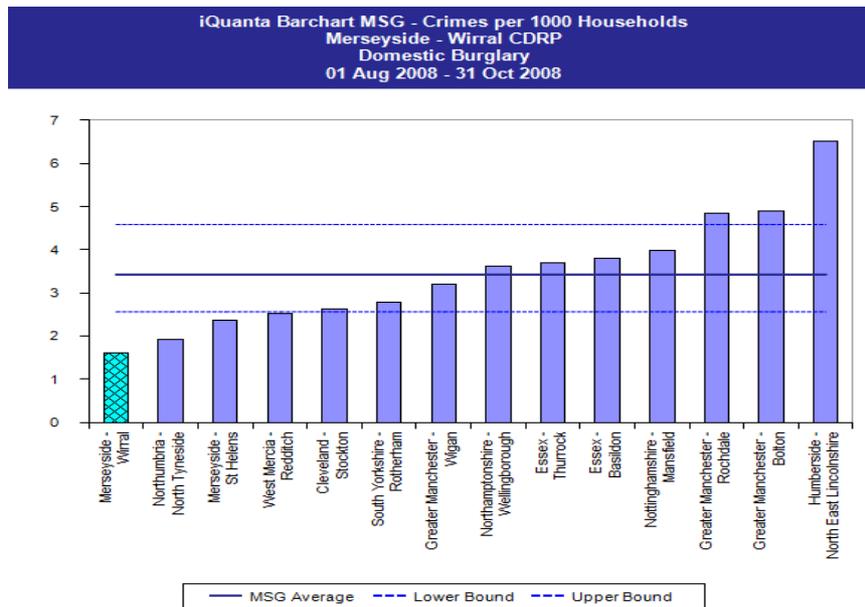


Burglary

This stretch target is for domestic burglary. Performance has been consistently beyond targets every year since they were set. The target for 2008/09 is 1500 burglaries whilst the year end projection is only 837. This means that the final target of 1205 burglaries in 2009/10 will also be achieved. This has meant the rate of burglaries for Wirral has been reduced 67% over four years from 2539 to 837.

Compared to demographically similar areas:

Wirral has the lowest domestic burglary rate per population in our most similar family;



Domestic Violence

There are two LAA Stretch targets for domestic violence. The first is to increase the number of crimes reported to the Police, and the second to reduce the number of victims reporting abuse who have previously reported in the past twelve months. These two targets are specifically aimed to promote reporting this ‘hidden’ crime and thus enable victims to access support more easily. The support is provided as a package by a wide range of agencies coordinated to reduce the likelihood of repeated victimisation. One of the difficulties in combating domestic violence has been the high incidence of under-reporting and hence the cycle of abuse being allowed to continue.

The LAA target is to increase the number of domestic violence victims reporting to the Police from 3325 in 2006/07 to 5522 that is projected to be achieved by 2008/09.

- This is a 66% increase in two years.

The LAA target to decrease the victims reporting to the Police who have reported in the previous 12 months is also forecast to be achieved by the end of 08/09. This achievement would mean repeat victimisation is reduced from 43% to 26%.

These two LAA targets have been met through the dedication of a wide range of agencies increasing their commitment and care for victims, focussed and coordinated through the MARAC process.

AREA FORUMS – FEBRUARY 2008 CYCLE OF MEETINGS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF INTEGRATED TRANSPORT FUNDING TO AREA FORUMS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report is at the request of the Council's Cabinet, which met on 4th September 2008. It invites your Area Forum to give comment as to whether or not it wishes to receive de-centralised funding in 2009/10 of a proportion of the Local Transport Plan Capital Budget known as the Integrated Transport Block.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 At the Cabinet meeting held on 12th June 2008, a report was considered on the de-centralisation of Integrated Transport funding to Area Forums. Cabinet subsequently agreed to continue the allocation of funding to the two Forums for Heswall/Pensby/ Thingwall and Bromborough/Eastham for the current year 2008/09.

2.2 The success of this initiative piloted in 2007/08 in these two Area Forums, was also reported upon with the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services welcoming the positive feedback.

2.3 Cabinet resolved (inter alia).

- the positive consultation feedback from the two pilot Forums and strong support for the continued de-centralisation of funding in future years be noted; and
- officers be requested to consult the remaining nine Forums in the next cycle of meetings to determine if they wish to receive de-centralised funding for 2009/10 based on the success of this pilot initiative.

3.0 REPORT

3.1 For the Heswall, Pensby and Thingwall Forum, the improvements introduced in 2007/08 were as follows:

- a pedestrian refuge at Barnston Road near to its junction with Border Road.

3.2 For the Bromborough and Eastham Forum, the improvements introduced in 2007/08 were as follows:

- contribution to a Traffic Calming scheme at Winstanley Road, New Ferry;
- direction signing at the junction of Bebington Road/Howell Road;
- lowered kerb crossings at Tarvin Road, Kelsall Avenue and Delamere Avenue.

3.3 For the remainder of the Integrated Transport allocation apportioned between the remaining nine Forums, a variety of highway improvements were introduced focusing on improved pedestrian facilities and speed reduction measures as set out in the Walking and Cycling Capital Programme 2007/08 approved by Cabinet on 28th June 2007 (Minute 93 refers).

- 3.4 The total budget for the Integrated Transport block is £180,000. Apportioned across the eleven Area Forums this would equate to around £16,300 per Area Forum. This is the value of the budgets this financial year which both Heswall, Pensby and Thingwall and Bromborough and Eastham are allocating to schemes similar to those carried out in 2007/08. Officers will report verbally on these schemes at your meeting.
- 3.5 This funding and the rationale behind its use is not to be confused with the “You Decide” initiative. The Integrated Transport Block is a composite part of the Local Transport Plan Capital Fund and can only be used to bring about improvements to the movement of traffic and pedestrians and to assist in enhancing road safety.
- 3.6 The “You Decide” initiative however can be used as community-based funding to a current financial ceiling of £20,000 per Area Forum. This means that should each Area Forum choose to have their own individual share of £16,300 as previously mentioned, the “You Decide” monies could be added to the Integrated Transport Block allocation making a total allocation of £36,300. This level of funding would clearly enable schemes of a greater degree of complexity and cost to be introduced.
- 3.7 Where any identified traffic management engineering schemes cross Area Forum boundaries, neighbouring Forums could combine their funds together to facilitate an even larger scale scheme, for example $2 \times £36,300 = £72,600$, which would fund a large area speed reducing scheme or possibly a set of traffic signals.
- 3.8 In arriving at a decision on the way in which the Integrated Transport Block is distributed, it must be borne in mind that there is no guarantee of the “You Decide” initiative funding being available in subsequent years.

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 During the last financial year and being similarly piloted this year, two of the eleven Area Forums decided that they would prefer to benefit locally by having part of the LTP Integrated Transport Block decentralised and put at their disposal for consideration of local schemes. This arrangement was reached based on a similar consultation exercise to this held in 2006.
- 4.2 It has been accepted by the Council that this initiative has proved popular and that officers now consult with the remaining nine Area Forums to determine if they wish to receive decentralised funding for 2009/10.
- 4.3 The sum of money is in the region of £16,300 per Area Forum and can typically be used to provide lowered kerb crossings, modest local signposting and road lining schemes. In some instances depending upon physical constraints it may be possible to provide for a central road island to help people cross the road and/or introduce pedestrian safety barriers.
- 4.4 Should you Area Forum decide that it wishes to go along with this approach, this will be reported back to the Cabinet.
- 4.5 The alternative to not decentralising the funding is for it to be administered centrally as now and for larger, more expensive schemes to be put in on a Borough-wide basis based on a priority assessment so some areas will benefit but others would not.
- 4.6 Those two Area Forums currently holding their own budget receive officer input to guide them in their decision making process and this would be made available if the initiative was expanded to cover all Area Forums.
- 4.7 Should Area Forums decide to have their own de-centralised share of Integrated Transport funding, there is no restriction of neighbouring Area

Forums combining funding or providing match funding from “You Decide” or other sources.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The overall works, estimated to cost in the region of £180,000, will be financed from the 2009/10 Transport Capital Programme. The decision to be taken is whether or not each Area Forum wishes to have a one-eleventh share of around £16,300.

6.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no additional financial or staffing implications arising directly from this report. Staff will assist in any decision-making process. Future maintenance costs will be met from the Highway Maintenance Revenue Budget.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None directly from this report, however some schemes can have a positive effect on assisting disabled, visually impaired persons and persons with prams and pushchairs to cross the road.

8.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Introducing traffic calming features will ensure that vehicle speeds are moderated at all times.

8.2 Typical schemes in the programme are designed to support the Council's endorsement of the Local Transport Plan.

9.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None arising directly out of this report.

10.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific planning implications arising directly from this report.

11.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific human rights implications arising directly from this report.

12.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report.

13.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific social inclusion implications arising directly from this report.

14.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

14.1 This report has implications for all Wards.

15.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 No specific background papers have been used in preparation of this report other than Cabinet minutes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Area Forum is requested to:

- (i) Note the type of traffic management schemes which can be funded through the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block allocation;
- (ii) Provide views as to whether or not it wishes to receive a decentralised one-eleventh share of the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block Allocation equating to approximately £16,300 per Area Forum to carry out scheme(s) of a traffic management/road safety nature in the local area.

**DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES**

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

The Fire Service on Wirral is delivered through 6 community fire stations located at Birkenhead, Bromborough, Heswall, Upton, West Kirby and Wallasey. We are committed to innovative and imaginative change in order to help make our communities safer and stronger. We are also committed to integrated working with other authorities, agencies and the voluntary sector to improve public safety and well being. We have an **Integrated Risk Management Plan** which is a local strategic plan that outlines the measures intended to be taken to continue the modernisation and improvement of services to the people of Merseyside. Past and current I.R.M.P can be viewed online at www.merseyfire.gov.uk or copies of the latest plan are available at local community fire stations across the district, public libraries and One-Stop shops.

There were a number of public consultation meetings held at fire stations across the district and we would like to thank all those that attended for their input. This input will be considered as part of the consultation process before a final draft is published. The subsequent document will inform you of any new responsibilities that the service and the authority must comply with and will also demonstrate how we intend to provide compliance and any effects that it will have on the Service, its partners and our community.

Community engagement remains the cornerstone of our proactive activities, in particular the delivery of the **Home Fire Safety Checks** and the provision of free smoke detectors where necessary. We continue to improve our effectiveness by utilising intelligence led targeting of **HFSCs**. Unfortunately there are still some vulnerable groups within the communities we serve which have proven difficult to access. To ensure all efforts are made to reach these targeted properties, MFRS has developed a collaborative strategy with partner agencies to access these groups throughout the coming year. The Service has set challenging performance targets and we are pleased to report that Wirral stations regularly achieve and exceed these targets. During the last quarter the Fire Service visited nearly **6,000** homes on Wirral to complete Home Fire Safety Checks.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has set a goal to become an environmentally regenerative service. We will carry out investigations to reduce our carbon footprint with the ultimate aim of becoming carbon positive. The aim of which is to leave the climate in better shape at the end of each year. This goal will take a sustained effort over a number of years and will require radical change in how we operate as a business, whilst we maintain our high levels of service, intervention and response to the people of Merseyside. The Fire Service are committed to working in partnership to achieve strategic objectives within the Local Area Agreement.

The Fire Service has been working with partners to develop facilities at Wallasey Fire station as part of an integrated healthier lifestyle project. Work is nearing completion on a new **Lifestyle Centre** which will incorporate a Wirral HeartBeat gym and new community meeting and welfare facilities. It is envisaged that this will be available for use early 2009.

Another such initiative, utilising forum funding, is the development of a **Beacon Programme** running out of Birkenhead Fire Station. This is run 1 day a week for 12 weeks and is designed for children aged 11-16yrs. This is a partnership project to engage young people at risk of exclusion from mainstream education and involvement in arson related crime. The course participants are given a learning

experience outside the school environment to build their confidence and self-esteem. The course combines practical drill ground and scenario based training with classroom centred activities and workshops-including community fire safety.

In conjunction with Merseyside Police and other partners we are working towards reducing road traffic accidents across the district through the development of an educational training package, which is to be delivered to students by FS personnel. Fire Support Network volunteers will also be utilised in the overall strategy to assist in reducing speeding and other contributory factors of road traffic collisions.

Fire Support Network is a non-profitable registered charity which works in partnership with the Fire Service on Merseyside to promote fire safety to the local communities through volunteers and partner organisations. Volunteer roles vary from working directly with the fire-fighters, leafleting and replacing batteries in smoke detectors to providing an after fire care service and fund raising. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can register online at www.firesupportnet.org.uk or contact via telephone on 0151 296 4600. The **F.S.N** are currently developing campaigns targeted towards the older people in the community and working with other relevant agencies to publicise further the facilities available to older people and the need to maintain fire safety in the home.

We are currently working closely with Wirral PCT on the **Smoke Free Homes Campaign**, the aim of which is to encourage smokers to make a pledge not to expose their family and friends to second hand smoke in their homes and cars, this will also assist in the reduction of accidental fires in properties and vehicles due to smoking related material. This scheme is currently being rolled out across the district, half of which is now included with the other station areas to follow shortly.

Community Fire Stations

- **Birkenhead:** Exmouth Street. Birkenhead.CH41 4AX. 0151 296 5325
- **Bromborough:** Dock Road South. Bebington.CH62 4SQ 0151 296 5925
- **Heswall:** Telegraph Road, Heswall, CH60 OAF. 0151 296 5805
- **Upton:** Arrowe Park Road. Upton.CH49 OUF. 0151 296 5895
- **West Kirby:** The Concourse. West Kirby. CH48 4HX. 0151 296 5955
- **Wallasey:** Mill Lane. Wallasey. CH44 5UE. 0151 296 6180

For a FREE Home Fire Safety Check, including FREE smoke alarm installation if required please contact Fire Service Direct on FREEphone 0800 731 5958

Equality & Diversity Update

The Council's first staff diversity event took place on Thursday 6th November 2008 in the Civic Hall, Wallasey Town Hall, as part of National Diversity week.

The Deputy Mayor of Wirral, Councillor Andrew Hodson opened the event along with Jim Wilkie Deputy Chief Executive, Wirral Council.

We were fortunate to be visited by Carole Eniffer from the Home Office who made a special trip from London to be with us. She attended in support of the Hate Crime promotion campaign that is currently underway. Andy Pownall from Government Office North West (GONW) also attended the event.



The Equality Watch team are delighted to report that over 400 people visited the town hall throughout the course of the day. Over 50 volunteers helped by staffing stalls and over 20 artistes performed. The Equality Watch team would like to thank **EVERYONE** who took part and all those who took time out of their working day to visit the event. The layout of the civic hall embodied the six equality strands. Community groups and council sections shared tables to reflect this. Some services that are 'cross cutting' were also in attendance:

Sexual Orientation - Wirral LGB&T forum (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender) and Terrence Higgins Trust

Age- Age Concern, Connexions and POPIN (Promoting Older People's Independence Network)

Gender - Trans Wirral, Women's Enterprise Breakthrough and Men's Health Group

Disability - WIRED (Wirral Information Resource for Equality & Disability) Access Improvements (Corporate Services/Technical Services), WIRED also arranged for PSS, Advocacy in Wirral and Merseyside Society for Deaf People to be in attendance.

Religion or belief - Merseyside of Council Faiths

Race - BRM Partnership (Black & Racial Minority), Irish Community Care Wirral Change, Wirral Multicultural Organisation, BME Supporting People

Cross cutting services – Streetscene, Human Resources, Staff Diversity Forums, Pensions, Customer Services (including One Stop Shops and Call Centre) Unison, Hate Crime, Child Support Agency (CSA)

A huge variety of activities took place with a whole host of performances throughout the day including demonstrations of tai chi and yoga, chinese lion dance, bag piper, service users from several of our day centres performing 'sign-along', Bengali

musician, multi cultural band, cultural food, Indian dancers and our very own Tony Excell as DJ and Brian Jones as master of ceremonies!!

Equality Watch Scheme Consultation

The Council's Equality Watch Team want your views on the draft 2009 – 2012 Action Plan. A public consultation process is now underway for people to have their say on Wirral Council's Equality Watch Scheme 2009 – 2012. The Equality Watch Scheme is the Council's equality and diversity action plan for the period April 2009 to March 2012, covering all six equality strands, also taking into consideration multi-forms of discrimination

The Equality Watch Scheme details the actions that will be taken across the whole Council to eliminate any discriminatory practices and to promote equality and recognise diversity within employment and service delivery. The scheme will also provide the framework for the Council achieving the different levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The Equality Watch Scheme replaces the Council's Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. However, this proposed scheme does take into account the Council's statutory equality duties under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The Equality Watch Scheme also gives appropriate regard to the forthcoming Single Equality Act relating to sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.

The Equality Watch Scheme will be co-ordinated by the Council's Corporate Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator, who will be supported by the Corporate Equality Watch Team and Departmental Equality Lead Officers. The Council will also work in partnership to actively promote involvement of external stakeholders, including voluntary and community sector projects and peers within other public sector organisations. An Equality Watch Review Group will be established made up of members from a variety of stakeholders.

The three year action plan is split into four sections and will be reviewed on an annual basis. More information can be found at www.wirral.gov.uk or contact the Equality Watch Team on **0151 691 8064** or email equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk

The deadline for comments is 27 February 2009

The Trust is pleased to be able to participate in the Local Area Forums and welcomes the opportunity to brief Wirral residents and our partner organisations on topical issues. Representing the Trust will be an Executive Director or Senior Manager and the elected Public Governor for the host constituency.

- Controlling Infection.....
 - Our Elective Surgical Unit at Clatterbridge remains MRSA bloodstream infection free – this Unit can undertake most planned surgical procedures including joint replacements.
 - Our Women’s Services Unit at Arrowe Park is also MRSA bloodstream infection free
 - Reducing the incidence of MRSA and Clostridium difficile is a very high priority for the Trust and staff continue to implement a comprehensive action plan to achieve this including a new 8 bed isolation unit for medical patients diagnosed with C.diff.
 - For the three months July – September 2008 the number of Clostridium difficile cases reported at the Trust reduced by 37% - from 124 cases to 78.
 - Our recently launched publicity campaign - ‘Working Together to Keep It Clean’ - aims to raise the Infection Control profile even higher at the Trust and to raise awareness amongst staff, patients and visitors of how important it is to ‘Keep it Clean’
 - In partnership with local GPs, our staff are working towards a more prudent use of broad-spectrum antibiotics that, if over-used, can make C.difficile infection more likely to develop.

- Improving Our Standards.....
 - The Trust was awarded the accolade of ‘Best Hospital*’ in the Dr Foster Good Hospital Guide 2008 which compares services and treatment outcomes at all hospitals across the country.
 - For the second year running we have been named as one of the country’s Top 40 performing hospitals by an independent benchmarking company that compares our performance in 20 key areas – including infection rates, mortality rates and waiting times – against other, similar hospitals.
 - In the 2007/08 Healthcare Commission Annual Health Check we scored ‘excellent’ for our use of resources and ‘good’ for the quality of our services
 - Our Women’s Services achieved a ‘hat-trick of excellence’ when they were awarded CNST Level 3 accreditation. Of the 156 Maternity Units in the country, only 17 others have achieved Level 3 and our Unit is the only one to have achieved 100% in every standard at every level.
Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts (CNST) Level 3 is evidence that our maternity services are extremely safe, well-managed and overall ‘first-class’.
This follows the Unit’s score of ‘best performing’ in the Healthcare Commission’s Maternity Services Review and being named ‘best in the region’ in a national survey of new mothers and mothers-to-be at the end of 2007

- An external assessment of our standards by the Patient Environment Action Team resulted in the following scores being awarded to the Trust for 2008

	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Privacy & Dignity</i>
<i>Arrowe Park</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Clatterbridge</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>

Providing New Services.....

- The Trust has just announced a major capital investment in services for Women and Children at Arrowe Park Hospital. Due to commence in May this year, the £10million scheme will create a 'centre of excellence' by bringing together under one roof, all acute hospital services for women and children. More information on this exciting development will appear in a special supplement to appear with the 'Wirral News' newspapers in w/c 9th February
- A state of the art ward (Ward 14) to treat patients diagnosed with urological conditions has recently opened at Arrowe Park Hospital after a £1.4million up-grade.
- The Trust is a designated Urology Cancer Centre for Wirral, Chester and Northern Cheshire patients requiring major cancer surgery
- We were the first NHS organisation in Merseyside and Cheshire to offer a new laser technique – the *greenlight laser* – that is transforming the treatment of prostate conditions for men
- A brand new, multi-million £ Dialysis Unit has opened at Clatterbridge Hospital to treat patients with renal (kidney) conditions.
- We now provide Sexual Health services in the community – closer to where people live and work
- Easy to Use Website.....
 - Our new-look, easy access website can provide lots of useful information for patients, the public, staff and GPs about the Trust and its services go to
 - www.whnt.nhs.uk
 - The website is speech enabled for browsers with sight related problems
 - The new, easy click, 'email a patient' facility continues to be a popular feature
- Come and Join Us!
 - As a Foundation Trust we are keen to involve our Public Members in helping us to shape future services – we currently have more than 7,000 Public Members and are keen to recruit more. Public Members can get involved as much or as little as they like – from just receiving 'Public Membership News', our regular newsletter, to participating in surveys or standing for election as a Public Governor. To join, simply complete and return the attached Form or join on-line @ www.whnt.nhs.uk
- For more information.....
 - The Trust has published its Annual Report and Accounts for 2007/08. This can be accessed via our website www.whnt.nhs.uk or a copy can be obtained from the Membership Office at Arrowe Park Hospital ☎ 0800 0121 356

* Best large acute trust outside London – awarded jointly with Darlington and County Durham NHS Foundation Trust.

Wirral Youth Service

Wirral Youth Service provides opportunities, which are open to all Wirral young people. Youth work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society, through informal educational activities which combine fun, challenge and learning.

The Service works with young people aged 13-19 years, and specifically targeted young people aged 20 until their 25th birthday who have additional needs and need support with transition into adult life/services.

The Youth Service in Wirral works with many young people in a variety of different settings, these include:

- Youth clubs
- Street work projects
- “Kontaktabuses”
- “Wirral Youth Theatre” and Youth Arts
- “Response” – Advice, support, advocacy and information service and Substance Misuse Service
- International exchanges
- Duke of Edinburgh’s Award
- Outdoor activities
- Projects in schools

The Service is flexible and able to respond to the needs of young people and offers opportunities that are both universal and targeted. Youth work on Wirral is delivered through joint working between the Local Authority, voluntary organisations and other agencies.

Youth workers work with young people in many different localities in Wirral. Having a variety of youth clubs and street work projects allows youth workers to work with young people in their neighbourhoods, meet their specific needs and respond to issues that are important to them.

Much of the work of the Youth Service takes place in one of sixteen open access youth clubs located across the Borough. Street work teams of youth workers make contact with young people who do not access the service elsewhere, build relationships with them and in negotiation with the young people, develop programmes which address their specific needs. This work is delivered on the streets, through project work and on mobile Kontaktabuses.

Response

Response is a Borough wide Youth Service provision, providing counselling, support, advocacy and information for young people. Many of these young people have complex needs requiring intensive support from the service including homelessness, abuse, poor health and poverty.

The agency also has a team of specialist workers providing support to young people who have drug and alcohol problems. The team work with those individuals in a variety of settings including outreach street work and one to one work in their homes or wherever young people feel safe. The team also deliver educational programmes within schools and other youth settings on the risk, consequence and health implications of substance misuse. Partnership work plays an important role in targeting vulnerable, hard to reach groups of young people. Service level agreements and regular joint working ensures the needs of young people are met.

International Work

Each year the Youth Service runs a comprehensive programme of International Youth Exchanges. Young people from Wirral take part in a number of international opportunities including, Hong Kong and the Azores.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Youth Service is the Licensed Operating Authority for the whole of Wirral. Awards can be gained through a variety of approved operating units and access organisations made up of a combination of youth centres, schools, an open award centre and a selection of voluntary groups. Young people in Wirral consistently gain over 450 awards per year at bronze, silver and gold levels.

The DofE is available to all young people aged between 14 and 25 with the emphasis being the development of young people's leisure time. By taking part in the DofE, participants are able to increase their own self confidence and self esteem, make new relationships and develop fresh skills.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award staff continue to work with a group of Looked After Children who after successfully achieving their Bronze Award are now working towards their Gold. This group recently successfully bid for Youth Opportunity Funding to enable them to visit the Czech Republic. This visit, which involved studying social and foster care in a former communist state, satisfied the requirements of their DofE Gold Residential

A newly formed Bronze group is hoping to complete their expedition at the Oaklands centre in the forthcoming expedition season.

In our drive to make the DofE available to everyone and to diversify its delivery we are now helping several new units to run the Award. This includes Meadowside Special School and the Observatory School where we will adapt the Award for pupils with learning difficulties.

Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts

Wirral Youth Theatre operates across the Borough to enable young people to access a wide range of performing arts related activities. Art forms such as drama, dance, music, technical theatre and new media are used to help young people to develop personally and socially as well as developing theatre and media related skills. A peer education company within the Wirral Youth Theatre have performed in parks and youth clubs a play about risk taking behaviour this is now going into schools

West Kirby Youth Club have had issues with behaviour over the past three months, the team have worked with the young people to come up with systems to promote good behaviour and also look at consequences of not conforming to the agreed ground rules, behaviour has started to improve. The young people were successful in obtaining Youth Opportunity Funding for a West Wirral djing/ mc'ing resource.

Deeside Young People's Project (DYPP) has continued to work in the mid and west Wirral areas using street work and the Kontakta Bus to engage with young people. As a result of funding the young people received from the Youth Capital Fund, a new high tech Kontakta Bus is operational. On a Friday night, in areas where numbers of young people congregate, the youth workers focus on promoting personal safety, harm reduction for alcohol and drug use and reducing anti social behaviour. DYPP has developed a positive working relationship with the Police, targeting those at risk of offending and involved in risk taking behaviour. A successful joint youth service/police school holiday positive activities programme has been developed.

Transport Update

At Council meeting on 15th December 2008 the following agenda item was discussed

MOTION: BORDERLANDS ELECTRIFICATION

(1) This Council notes:

- its consistent support for the electrification of the Bidston to Wrexham Borderlands rail line;
- the importance of the Borderlands rail line to the Wirral economy by linking the industries of Deeside with North Birkenhead, where greater employment opportunities are required;
- recent Government statements on the economic downturn, particularly the need to fund public works now, in order to get people back into work when the downturn is over.

(2) Council is dismayed at the recent Network Rail estimate for the electrification and upgrade of the line of £207m and notes this is more than three times the cost estimated for this work by Merseytravel. Council is perplexed at such wildly different estimates, and requests that an independent review of costs is jointly commissioned by Network Rail and Merseytravel to establish the true cost.

(3) Council also notes the application made by Merseytravel to take control of the track of the Merseyrail Network from Network Rail. Council believes by integrating management of the infrastructure with service delivery, greater efficiencies and investment can be secured for the benefit of local people and therefore supports this proposal.

(4) Council therefore:

- (i) requests that Merseytravel should now widen these discussions to include the Welsh Assembly Government and seek agreement to take ownership of the Borderlands line as part of these proposals, so that its operation can be fully integrated into the Merseyrail network;
- (ii) supports the electrification of the Bidston to Wrexham Borderlands rail line being undertaken by Merseytravel, with the possibility of a 25kV overhead electrified line being considered as an alternative;
- (iii) calls upon Wirral's MPs and North West MEPs to lobby the Government on these proposals on the Council's behalf.