

YOUR SAY 

 **WIRRAL**

**Liscard & Seacombe
Area Forum**

**Papers for the forum meeting
Wednesday 11th February 2009**

**Wallasey Town Hall
Brighton Street, Wallasey
Wirral, CH44 8ED**

7.00pm

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Code of Conduct for Area Forums

- 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

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

Minutes from last meeting October 2008

AREA FORUM (LISCARD AND SEACOMBE)

Monday, 13 October 2008

Present: Councillor L Fraser (Chair)
Councillors: AER Jones, J Keeley, D Knowles, J Salter
In attendance: Community Representatives: Margi Allen, Joe Lee, Carole Thomas, Diane Ledder, Fr Leon Ostaszewski
Lead Officer: Mark Camborne
Area Service Co-ordinator: Michelle Gray
Street Scene Manager: Chris Jones
Community Safety: Mike Walker
Wirral Primary Care Trust: Kathy Doran Tina Long
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust: Jo Goodfellow
Merseyside Police: Inspector Julie Fletcher
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service: Tony Mooney
Council Officers Kevin Adderley, John Webb, Christina Jones
Apologies Councillors K Hayes, Ken Harrison

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed forum members and 31 members of the public to the Area Forum. Apologies received from Councillor Karen Hayes and Ken Harrison.

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM

The Chair informed forum that matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting would be dealt with under Item 7. Change to the published agenda, to bring Item 5 Care in the Community forward as Item 4, Central Park Liscard Hall – What Next? following as Item 5. Minute Decision: Minutes 3rd June 2008 be confirmed.

3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Michelle Gray, reported that Area Forums are currently advertising for the second round of Area Forum funding, Liscard and Seacombe Area Forum has £6997.40 available from the Community Initiative Fund and £1224.46 available from Primary Care Trust. Application forms were available at the meeting for those from the voluntary or community sector interested in applying. Closing date is 10th November. Nomination forms for any roads or pavements requiring maintenance work were also made available, with a closing date of 14th November. Mark Camborne gave an overview of the You Decide initiative whereby the Council has agreed to allocate £20,000 additional funding to each Area Forum through participatory budgeting, and has conducted a campaign to encourage residents to vote on how this funding is spent. The Area Forum members met last Wednesday to review the results, and agreed that the areas for spending were to be Safety; Sports & Youth Activity; Cleanliness; Transport/Road Signs; and Education/Libraries. Minute Decision: Resolved that: Community Engagement Officer and Lead Officer be thanked for their reports.

4 CARE IN THE COMMUNITY - POULTON HOUSE

The Director of Adults Social Services, John Webb, gave a presentation on the use of Poulton House and how its use has changed over time. He reported that it was built as a residential care home and that currently, as well as providing intermediate care, it provides therapy and other medical services. He outlined the previous proposal for its use which was to invest £1.5m in creating a 60 place care centre at Poulton House for use by residents across Wirral. However, John outlined concerns that to borrow this sum of money would increase the cost of placements by £100 per week, and that using Poulton House in this way does not fit with the Intermediate Care Strategy as it only caters for residential needs. At

Thursday's Cabinet meeting it will be recommended that this investment is not pursued. It is thought that the building can continue to operate without incurring major expense for three further years.

Meanwhile, the aim is to look to provide more localised services in four locations across Wirral, and to use the next three years to better understand the needs of the community.

The forum were also advised that £8m has been secured for a further development at the former site of Somerville School will create 70 extra care housing units, with scope for expansion in Phase Two of the development.

Kathy Doran added that the PCT has been working for some time to develop more localised services. A review found that Wirral has high levels of hospitalisation and that just over 50% of people cared for in hospital could have been safely maintained at home had the appropriate services been in place. Further funding has been allocated to community nursing, community therapy and technological developments to support people in their own homes. Over the next three years community nursing will be significantly increased to support people outside nursing homes, care homes and hospitals. It is thought that once these changes are in place it will be possible to make an assessment of the need for beds in the community and make a judgment on the future of Poulton House.

Q. Margi Allen – What are the plans for the development at the back of Poulton House?

A. John Webb – This will be used for shared ownership housing. It will be a good quality extra care unit surrounded by other services.

Q. Carole Thomas – Please could you clarify the location of the site?

A. John Webb – It is a four acre site off Gorse Lane.

Q. Joe Lee – How has the amount of years Poulton House can continue to operate for been estimated?

A. John Webb – Poulton House currently meets registration standards, and a building appraisal has found that it should continue to do so for a further three years, or possibly more, with general maintenance.

A member of the public informed the forum of an incident last night involving 4 HGVs parked outside the building site near Mill lane with unprotected gas cylinders. Kathy Doran was not aware of the incident, and gave assurance that she would investigate it.

A member of the public gave examples of how difficult it is to move away from residential care such as that at Poulton House and highlighted the need to consider this. John Webb emphasised that there is no suggestion that Poulton House will close, but only a recommendation not to invest in a 60 place care centre for Wirral as it does not fit with the strategic approach planned. He informed the forum that it is recognised that better discharge plans and different services are required and that these will be put in place over the next three years, during which Poulton House will continue to operate.

Q. Leah Fraser [Chair] – Can you give any assurance over the choice to use shared ownership housing in the current financial climate?

A. John Webb – The model has been costed and funding for some of it has been secured. Shared ownership is a model which has worked and no information to the contrary has been received.

Minute Decision: Resolved that: John Webb and Kathy Doran be thanked for their time.

5 CENTRAL PARK - LISCARD HALL

At the meeting on 3rd June an update on Liscard Hall was requested. Kevin Adderley noted that the position stated at this meeting was that two developers had applied to develop the hall, and the council had asked them submit their final plans. He then provided an overview of what has happened regarding Liscard Hall since that meeting, and reported that on 6th July Liscard Hall was subject to an arson attack and the council had been forced to demolish the hall. He reported that the following 5 options for how to take forward the site at Liscard Hall had been agreed at a meeting of the Friends of Liscard Hall to be proposed in a report

resented to Cabinet on 16th October 1. Leave the site in its current grassed over state as part of central park 2. Leave the site in its current state with the tops of the walls exposed and a plaque identifying the hall 3. Seek interest from developers to build on the site of the hall 4. Promote a new scheme to refurbish the remaining buildings at the site. 5. A combination of options three and four: build on the current site but incorporate the remaining buildings to create a bigger development. A development brief will be issued giving clear guidance on preferences for the use of the site, but its development will be dependent upon the market and forthcoming opportunities.

A member of the public clarified that the location of Liscard Hall is in Seacombe, and not Liscard, and noted that the only development they considered to be desirable would be something that gave back to the community, rather than something solely commercial in nature. The need for widespread public consultation prior to a decision was also noted.

Q. Member of Public – what would the cost of demolishing the building and clearing the site have been had it not been subject to an arson attack?

A. Kevin Adderley – This is a question that cannot be answered as demolition had not previously been considered. However it cost in the region of £50,000 to pay for the demolition after the fire and the removal of all rubble. Q. Cllr John Salter – Could you give an update on progress with the insurance claim?

A. Kevin Adderley – Discussions regarding the insurance claim are continuing. Suggestions for the future use of Liscard Hall were made by members of the public. Kevin Adderley advised that developers would be asked to express an interest based upon a development brief. He also advised that proposals would be subject to full internal and external consultation. The Chair urged attendees to respond to the consultation exercise when this was in place. As yet there are no proposed timescales for the consultation.

Q. Joe Lee – Are those developers who were previously interested in developing the site still interested?

A. Kevin Adderley – The simple answer is I believe so. However, the proposal is very different to the previous proposal as there is now no building to develop so it will be necessary to go out to the Market for developers to note their interest in developing the site, rather than the building.

Carole Thomas informed the forum that at the meeting of Friends of Liscard Hall, the view that there should be no residential accommodation in the park was expressed. Minute Decision: Resolved that: Kevin Adderley be thanked for his time.

6 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS UPDATE

NHS Foundation Trust – Jo Goodfellow

Jo noted that she had no particular issues to raise but would welcome any comments or questions from the forum.

A member of the public advised the forum that it is the 60th Anniversary of Clatterbridge hospital and that a display has been erected at the hospital. Forum attendees were urged to visit the hospital to see the display or to pick up a form made available at the forum if they are interested in becoming a member. The chair asked Carole Thomas if her question regarding mixed wards at the last Area Forum meeting had been resolved to her satisfaction, to which Carole replied that it hadn't. Jo Goodfellow responded further to say that they are looking to develop more single sex wards and are trying to secure funding for 50% more rooms but that this is a huge investment and will need to be done gradually over time. She added that separate plans are being developed for children's and maternity wards, but that these are not yet ready for consultation. An update will be forwarded to Michelle Gray for discussion at the next meeting.

Q. Joe Lee commented that he had spent 1 ½ hours trying to park at Arrowe Park hospital and members of the public noted that they had experienced similar problems.

A. Jo Goodfellow had not been aware of the problem and resolved to obtain full details after the meeting and to discuss the matter with the Director of Facilities.

Q. Member of Public – what is the current position on respite care and what will future provision be?

A. Tina Long – work is progressing to provide better support for carers and to work with those in the Council and the Mental Health Trust to consider care for those with dementia.

Work is also progressing to assess the availability of places for carers to go for a break from providing care and to fill any gaps within this.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service – Tony Mooney

Tony Mooney drew forum attendees attention to a note he had placed on seats giving details of current fire and safety campaigns. He outlined details of the Winter Warm campaign where electric blankets are being tested and replaced free of charge where they are found to be unsafe. He also gave details of the Bonfire Night campaign and previous years' success, noting that this year the campaign has been extended to schools and problematic areas such as allotments, and a more targeted approach has been taken. The Fire & Rescue service are also working with retailers to clarify the terms of the relevant licensing legislation and regulations and to ensure enforcement. The Fire & Rescue service are also investigating key areas for nuisance fires and targeting inspection activity accordingly.

Q. Joe Lee – What can be done to reduce the problem of gas bottles being left and causing a hazard? Can we work with retailers to resolve this?

Q. Diane Ledder – This can be particularly difficult where gas providers have gone out of business.

A. Tony Mooney – There is no easy answer to this as it is difficult to enforce their return.

Q. Carole Thomas – Where in Wheatland Lane are electric blanket tests being carried out?

A. The Housing Association have arranged the site. Further details will be passed to Michelle for communication to the Forum.

A member of the public queried the regulations around timescales for return, but Tony Mooney was unable to comment as the timescales are set within the legislation.

Q. Member of Public – Will there be a bonfire in Central Park this year?

A. Chris Jones – There will be a bonfire in Leasowe Park but not in Central Park due to health and safety and due to the costs involved. Firework displays will be put on across the Borough.

A. Mark Camborne – Locations of firework displays and bonfires will be sought and passed to Michelle Gray for circulation to the Forum.

A. Michelle Gray – Any attendees who would also like to receive these details should sign the book of attendance so they can be circulated.

A member of the public informed the forum that a function is being organised to recognise the achievements of those involved in the recent World Fire Games. An invitation was extended to forum attendees to attend the function.

Merseyside Police – Inspector Julie Fletcher

Julie Fletcher drew forum members attention to the closure of a crack-house which highlighted issues previously discussed and was particularly significant as it was an owner-occupied house where sufficient evidence had been secured to prove the supply of drugs on the premises. The owner has been evicted for 3 months. Julie reminded all in attendance to pass any evidence regarding drugs supply or antisocial behaviour to police as this is vital to secure closures such as this. Julie also highlighted successful recoveries of drugs and weapons following information received from the community through Crimestoppers. She reminded attendees that anyone reporting crime in this way will remain anonymous and that information received will be acted upon. Julie reported that the Bonfire Night operation had been launched today and that arrangements had been made for extra officers to be out in the Wallasey area. The police are visiting schools, writing to parents and liaising with retailers to discuss the responsible sale of fireworks and materials used to cause nuisance such as flour and eggs.

Q. A member of the public raised the issue of anti-social behaviour and reported that they had been unhappy with the response they were given when they phoned to complain about anti-social behaviour at their place of work.

A. Julie Fletcher – All calls are graded according to their severity with targets for response times set accordingly. The person reporting an incident will often get a call back to check that attendance is still required. As the response provided to this query by email was not considered adequate, a visit will be arranged.

Q. Member of Public – What is the usual response to an incident being reported in terms of obtaining a description of the suspect?

A. Julie Fletcher – The Police staff are advised to just ask for a description, without asking leading questions.

Q. Chris Jones – Was the delivery of services affected for the person issued with an anti-social behaviour order in relation to drugs?

A. Julie Fletcher – The police have no power to permanently evict the homeowner but can restart the process after any subsequent incidents and this can often be a much quicker process.

Q. Diane Ledder - Did the person own his home or was it mortgaged?

A. Julie Fletcher – His house was mortgaged but the police have no way to take this forward with the mortgage provider.

Q. Diane Ledder informed the forum of good practice employed by Sunderland Police to deal with handbag thefts whereby a bell gives an alert to the incident.

A. Julie Fletcher – This method was used in Birkenhead but hasn't been extended to Liscard as the issue is not as common.

Q. Fr Leon Ostaszewski – Is it true that Wirral is the lowest area in the country for burglary.

A. Julie Fletcher – It is the second lowest area. Fr Leon Ostaszewski gave credit to the police for this achievement.

Q. Fr Leon Ostaszewski reported parking problems on Wallasey Road near the zigzag lines and highlighted that this prevents busses passing and presents a hazard with people to have to alight in the street.

A. The police have responsibility for the enforcement of parking rules regarding zigzag lines and will get someone to investigate this.

A. Chris Jones – Anyone who notices a problem can call 606 2004 to report this and an attendant will be sent to issue a fixed-term penalty notice.

A. Michelle Gray – For those wanting to use Minicom, the number is 0151 697 8481.

A. Carole Thomas confirmed that problems reported are dealt with.

Q. A member of the public raised a similar issue regarding taxis parking on the Wallasey Road junction and informed the forum on behalf of Moseley Avenue residents that a meeting is being held with all concerned parties, including a representative for the taxi drivers and enforcement officers. He asked whether a representative from Street Scene could join the meeting.

A. Leah Fraser [Chair] informed the forum that this was being looked into by Sergeant Diggins

Q. Denis Knowles – Following the reduction of anti-social behaviour in Central Park due to police and community police safety officers patrolling the area, where do these people now congregate and is it possible to use a section 30 order to control the sale of alcohol to underage people in this area?

A. Julie Fletcher – A meeting is due to take place on Friday to discuss any displacement and where this is occurring. Evidence is being gathered and considered. If anyone has information on the sale of alcohol to underage people they should report it to the police. Adrian Jones congratulated Wirral's Police OCU on their achievements and reported that rumours of imminent police station closures in the area are not true. Leah Fraser [Chair] informed the group that she is awaiting an email to confirm this situation. The chair then thanked Julie Fletcher for both the success and the approachable nature of the police. Minute Decision: Resolved that: All contributors be thanked for their updates and question responses.

7 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Older people's parliament Rep Stan Thompson informed the group that the number of parliament members continues to grow and encouraged attendees over 50 to join as a member using forms made available at the meeting. An overview of recent conferences and issues raised was provided. Diane Ledder - parking problems outside the allotments had been resolved and thanked those relevant.

Q. Fr Leon Ostaszewski raised the issue of the poor condition of paper at Earlston Road Library.

A. Dennis Knowles – A visit to the library will be arranged.

Q. Member of Public – What is the latest regarding the demolition of Charter House in Seacombe.

A. James Keeley – This will take place over the next 3-5 years but the decommissioning will be carefully managed to ensure the safety of those moved at a later date. Reassurance has

been sought that residents will be prioritised in terms of allocation of Wirral Partnership homes.

Q. Member of Public – Can the lack of busses on the 432 service be investigated as there are not enough busses between the hours of 4-6pm.

A. Leah Fraser – As Mersey Travel will be in attendance at the next meeting it would be useful to raise this issue then.

A. Denis Knowles – A meeting is taking place on Monday and this issue will be raised there.

Q. Member of Public – Gave appreciation for the street scene improvements on the promenade from Seacombe to New Brighton and the newly refurbished area to play football. Also complemented the police on dealing with anti-social behaviour issues within the local parks. Appreciation was also given for the opportunity to meet forum members and to discuss current issues with them. Fr Leon Ostaszewski noted that the quality of roads in Wallasey is in need of attention.

Minute Decision: Resolved that: The Chair thanked the interpreters, members of the public and Area Forum members for attending the meeting.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

The next meeting will be held at Wallasey Town Hall, Wednesday 11th February 2009

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, NHS Wirral, University Teaching Hospital Trust, fire safety representatives etc 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.



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

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 x £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

Community Safety – report on crime

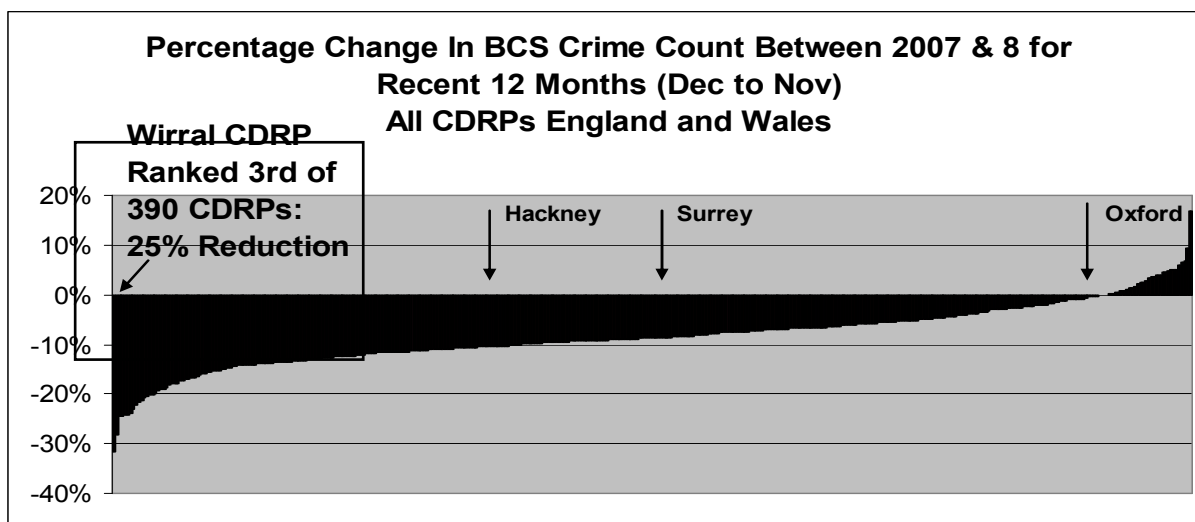
Assessment of Wirral Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

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.



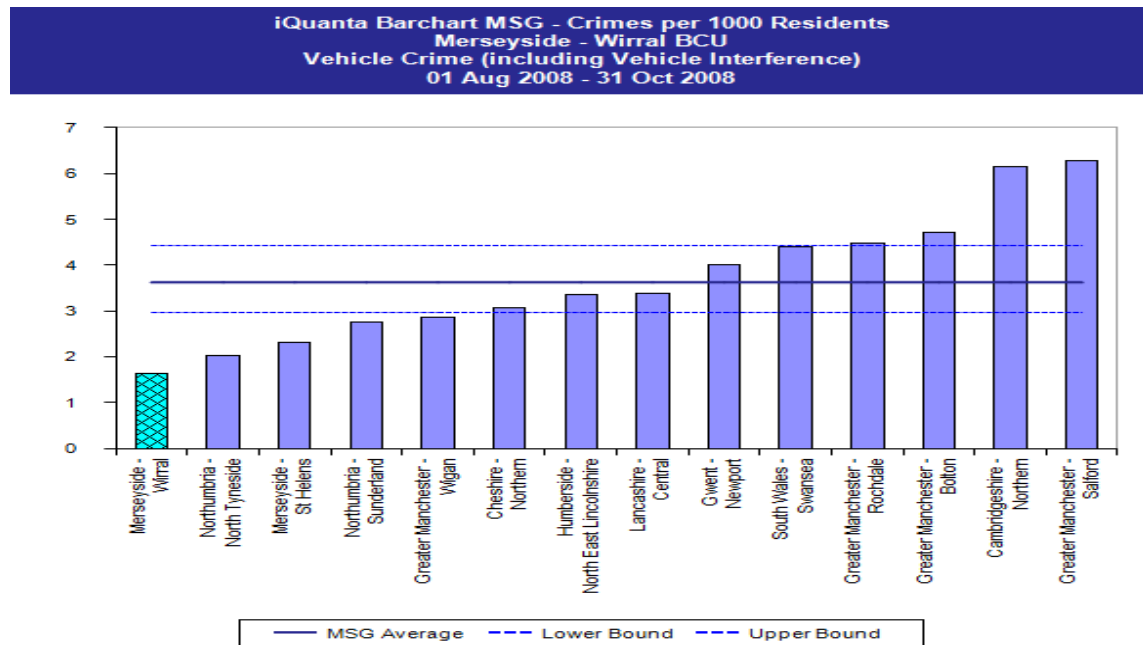
Theft of a Vehicle

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:

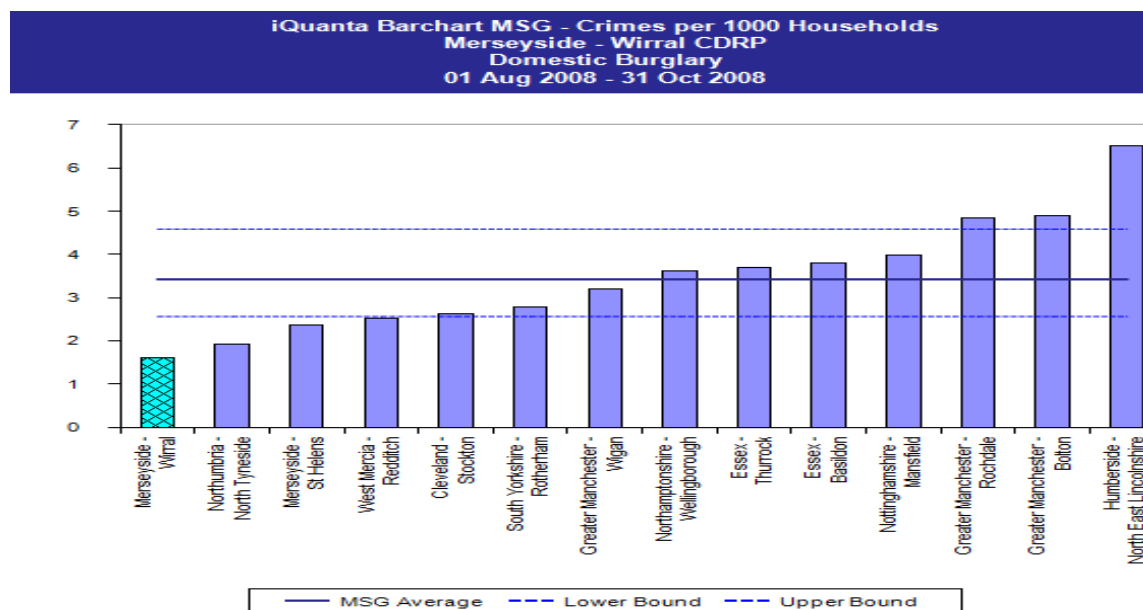
Wirral has the lowest vehicle crime rate per population in our most similar family;



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.