

## WITHAM LOCAL COMMITTEE

17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008

### NOTES of informal meeting

**Present:** Councillors Tom Foster (Chairman), Lucy Barlow, Dr Robert Evans, Margaret Galione, Sandra Howell, Michael Lager, Janet Money, Bill Ramage and Bill Rose.

Also present: David Triggs - Locality Coordinator (Witham)  
Jan Cole – Field Worker

**Apologies** for absence were received from Councillors J Elliott, J Gyford and R Mitchell.

**INTRODUCTION:** The Chairman welcomed all Councillors and invited the Locality Coordinator to outline the objectives of the meeting.

The Committee was reminded that it had been decided to hold this meeting to review the Local Committee's priorities and specifically to look at the priorities and actions within the Community Led (Parish) Plans.

DT reflected that it had almost been a year since the first Local Committee meeting in July 2007. Members were reminded of the slides used at that first meeting. These identified the aims and objectives of the WLC most of which were as relevant today as they were last July.

The Committee received a brief review of the issues that had been dealt with by the Committee over the last 12 months and Members were asked to reflect on whether the balance of items considered by the WLC was about right.

Members were also given copies of the WLC Action Plan and the relevant pages of the report from Jan Cole concerning Community Led Plans considered at by the WLC on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008.

Members were advised of the following desired outcomes to be achieved from the meeting.

- 1 Review the work of the Committee over the last year
- 2 Review the WLC action plan and the Community Led Plans
- 3 Set some objectives /targets and prioritise this into a top 3.
- 4 Decide how the Local Cttee should meet these targets, decide what should be its role and the role of Local Members in meeting these targets
- 5 Consider what, if any, help the Committee/individual Members need to support it/them in carrying out this role.
- 6 Report outcomes to the next meeting of the Local Committee

Jan Cole introduced an exercise using post-it notes inviting Councillors to record their key priorities/issues of concern and the results of this exercise are listed in Appendix 1.

**Comment 1:** Function of WLC is to voice local concerns, be a forum for joint working, to commission projects and programmes.

Discussion:

We respond to requests for information, taking on more and more responsibilities as things are reported.

We need to focus on something and complete it before moving on; need to make sure something is done.

We need to set out a clear process.

We need to involve our partners.

A 'named person' should be responsible for taking actions forward.

To reduce the democratic deficit, people must feel that there is somewhere to take their issues and see that something is being done.

Do we need to distinguish between the role of the ward member and the issues to be brought to WLC?

WLC needs to show achievements. How do we measure success?

**Comment 2:** Will there be a planning role for WLC?

Discussion:

The Leader has agreed that there will be a review of the Local Committees to commence at the end of this year.

Parish and town councils still respond to planning applications and the WLC has a wider role to feed into Local Development Framework and Community Strategy consultations.

WLC has considered and commented on the development at Maltings Lane and could have a role in reviewing other major applications with recommendations to the Planning Committee.

**Comment 3:** Is there an issue around overlap and duplication of work of Witham Town Council (*and Parish Councils*)?

Discussion:

Need to work on the relationship between WLC and town/parish councils.

Need to improve communication with and engagement of town/parish councils.

Also need to involve other partners in the Witham area – a mini LSP.

Target specific organisations depending on the topics on the agenda.

Consider layout of room for meeting; only BDC members can vote on decisions.

In debating the above the following needs were identified for Councillors of the Local Committee:

- Contact emails for key BDC officers e.g. street scene
- Process for reporting issues/incidents to relevant BDC officer
- Feedback/follow up by the officer to the local Councillor to report that the issue has been resolved or to explain current situation.
- Items on the existing plan that are as yet unresolved need urgent answers
- A monitoring system for WLC so that progress on issues/projects can be reviewed at each meeting
- Advice on project management might be useful.

### **Priorities for WLC.**

In discussing the main priorities Members considered that **number one priority** should be:

- the improvement of **health facilities**. This should be achieved through additional and improved facilities be provided in Witham Town serving the wider Witham area including Wickham Bishops. The actions will require the support of the Mid Essex PCT;

The second priority related to **traffic, transport and road safety** in the area. This topic is a high priority for the majority of parishes in the area (as evidenced by parish plans). Many of the actions are of a strategic nature in relation to the A12. Others will require the support of Essex County Councils and independent transport providers. Some actions will be community-led e.g. Community Speedwatch and purchase of SIDs which can be supported by WLC.

The third priority relates to the **appearance of the area** and the importance of a high quality environment. This is important to all parishes in the area. The majority of actions will require the support of BDC Street scene. Some actions will be community-led e.g. in Bloom campaigns and can be supported by WLC.

It was also agreed that the Local Committee would undertake a monitoring role in a number of key areas including leisure provision and it would lend support to the actions in the Corporate Plan where appropriate.

It was agreed that an action plan should be drafted based upon the above showing operational, partnership and strategic actions. It will:

- use the 7 agreed headings plus health
- include actions that are achievable
- set out timescale and resources
- allocate actions to named individuals or sub groups.

**Informal Meeting of Witham Local Committee (WLC)  
17<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

<b>Improve Health Facilities</b>		
<b>Operational</b>	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Strategic / Policy</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional health services in Witham Town</li> <li>• Improve current health facilities in Witham Town</li> </ul>

<b>Reduce Speeding and Improve Road Safety</b>		
<b>Operational</b>	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Strategic / Policy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to report incidents of speeding and identify hotspots. Monitor changes / improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate project to clean road signs and cut back vegetation. Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> <li>• Promote community-led speed reduction initiatives across the Witham Area e.g. SIDs and Speedwatch (<i>How? A campaign, leaflets, training for volunteers?</i>) Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> </ul>	

**Monitoring information required:**

Update on speeding hotspots and measures in place to tackle these.

**Further action:**

If necessary (depending on monitoring information) develop a partnership action plan to deal with speeding enforcement.

Improve Parking, Reduce Congestion, Improve Public Transport, Improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists		
Operational	Partnership	Strategic / Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to report incidents of cycling on pavements. Monitor changes / improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate HGV routing (and signage) through Witham Town and possible reductions in volume Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> <li>Investigate traffic congestion around Witham Station and possible solutions Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> <li>Investigate parking issues in Witham Town and possible solutions Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> <li>Investigate public transport issues in Witham Town and possible solutions Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide multi-directional slip roads at Feering junction of A12</li> <li>Provide a direct route from A12 to Arla Dairy avoiding Hatfield Peverel High St</li> </ul>

**Monitoring information required:**

Update on pavement cycling incidents and measures in place to tackle these.

Report from R & T action group on partnership projects identified in previous Local Priority and Action Plan.

**Further action:**

If necessary (depending on monitoring information) develop a partnership action plan to deal with pavement cycling.

Improve the appearance of Witham Area		
Operational	Partnership	Strategic / Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to report weed growth at kerb sides on estate roads. Monitor changes / improvements.</li> <li>• Continue to report street light failures around estates and schools. Monitor changes / improvements.</li> <li>• Continue to report parking on verges. Monitor changes / improvements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek roundabout sponsorship as part of local In Bloom Initiatives Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> </ul>	

**Monitoring information required:**

Details of street scene service to deal with kerbside weeds (response times etc).  
 Contact details for reporting street light failures.  
 Update on parking on verges

**Further action:**

If necessary (depending on monitoring information) develop a partnership action plan to deal with these issues.

Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour		
Operational	Partnership	Strategic / Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to report incidents of anti-social behaviour and identify hotspots. Monitor changes / improvements.</li> <li>• Continue to report incidents of groups of youths drinking and identify hotspots. Monitor changes / improvements.</li> <li>• Continue to report incidents of vandalism to play equipment, broken glass etc and identify hotspots. Monitor changes / improvements.</li> <li>• Continue to report incidents of graffiti and identify hotspots. Monitor changes / improvements.</li> <li>• Voice local concerns on difficulty in placing a response call to Essex Police HQ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly fund a PCSO to reduce anti-social behaviour (especially in Witham Town at night) Cost: £13,500 + £1,088 start up Project Lead: ASB Action Group Timescale:</li> <li>• Promotion of Neighbourhood Watch across the Witham Area (<i>How? A campaign, leaflets, training for volunteers?</i>) Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> </ul>	

**Monitoring information required:**

Current anti-social behaviour hotspots in the Witham Area and measures in place to tackle these.

Current underage drinking hotspots in the Witham Area and measures in place to tackle these.

Current vandalism hotspots in the Witham Area and measures in place to tackle these.

Current graffiti hotspots in the Witham Area and measures in place to tackle these.

Update on Police proposals to improve communication.

**Further action:**

If necessary (depending on monitoring information) develop a partnership action plan to deal with these issues.

Improve Access to Services in the Witham Area		
Operational	Partnership	Strategic / Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve Parkside Youth Centre / provide a drop-in centre for young people (<i>How and what?</i>) Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> <li>• Promotion of Arts Activities in the Witham Area (<i>How? A campaign, leaflets, training for volunteers?</i>) Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver affordable housing in rural parishes</li> </ul>

Regenerate the Town Centre of Witham		
Operational	Partnership	Strategic / Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a lead on getting local views on Town Centre regeneration initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve Witham Public Park Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> <li>• Promotion of Witham Market (<i>How? A campaign, leaflets, training for volunteers?</i>) Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> <li>• Explore feasibility of low cost craft workshops in Witham Town Cost: £ Project Lead: Timescale:</li> </ul>	