



Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Monday, 5 September 2011
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Members are asked to consider whether they have personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they are.

Members are reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they are subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2011.

3. AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN WIRRAL (Pages 7 - 16)

4. INWARD INVESTMENT (Pages 17 - 24)

5. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL REVIEW - FIRST QUARTER 2011/2012 (Pages 25 - 30)

6. BUDGET ISSUES FOR ECONOMY AND HOUSING IN 2012/13 (Pages 31 - 52)

7. GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW - UPDATE (Pages 53 - 60)

Report of the Green Growth Scrutiny Panel

8. **SHALE GAS FRACKING (Pages 61 - 66)**
9. **THE WIRRAL APPRENTICE (Pages 67 - 72)**
10. **FAIR TRADE - UPDATE**

Verbal report from Councillor Mark Johnston

11. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 73 - 78)**
12. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the period September to December 2011 has now been published on the Council's intranet/website. Members are invited to review the Plan prior to the meeting in order for the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider, having regard to the work programme, whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan and, if so, how it could be done within relevant timescales and resources.

13. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 1)**
14. **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The public may be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

RECOMMENDED – That in accordance with section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The public interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

15. **REGENERATION UPDATE**

The Interim Director of Corporate Services will provide a verbal update on major development schemes within the Borough.

16. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 2)**

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 6 June 2011

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	M Johnston (Chair)	
	Councillors	A Cox P Hackett A Hodson P Kearney S Kelly	S Niblock D Realey L Rowlands (In place of G Ellis) S Whittingham
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	G Davies (Cabinet Member)	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	G Ellis	

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

Councillor S Whittingham declared a personal interest in respect of minute 87 (End of Year Performance Report 2010-11)) by virtue of him being a member of the Wirral Partnership Homes Board.

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement. No such declarations were made.

2 MINUTES

The Director of Law , HR and Asset Management submitted the minutes of the Regeneration and Planning Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 March, 2010

Resolved – That the minutes be received.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Committee was requested to appoint a Vice-Chair.

It was moved by Councillor Rowlands and seconded by Councillor Cox that:

Councillor Hodson be appointed Vice-Chair of this Committee for the current municipal year.

The motion was put and lost (4:5) (1abst)

It was moved by Councillor Hackett and seconded by Councillor Realey that:

Councillor Kelly be appointed Vice-Chair of this Committee for the current municipal year.

The motion was put and carried (5:4) (1abst)

The substantive motion was put and carries (5:4) (1abst)

Resolved - That Councillor Kelly be appointed Vice-Chair of this Committee for the current municipal year.

4 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Interim Head of Strategic Investment and Regeneration gave a presentation comprising an overview of the committee's terms of reference, the areas of activity, key strategies and key projects.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

5 **END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2010-11**

The Interim Director of Corporate Services gave a presentation and submitted an overview of progress made against the indicators for 2010/2011 in the fourth quarter and key projects which were relevant to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

There were 21 indicators that could be reported at this year end to the committee. Of these 21, 15 could be compared with the previous year and 18 could be reported against target. The overall performance against the 2010/11 projects showed that 23 projects were green (Appendix 2 - all milestones had been met) and no projects were red or amber.

He highlighted the key achievements:

- The number of jobs created had exceeded the target.
- The Wirral Waters proposals were not called in by the Secretary of State and planning permission had been given.
- Peel announced that their preferred location for the International Trade Centre was at West Float, Birkenhead. This was a unique development and had the potential to create significant investment and employment opportunities.

- A major development of the New Brighton waterfront was on site and good progress was being made by Neptune Developments to bring investment and employment to this area.
- A major development by ASDA was on site in Birkenhead Town Centre. This project and the associated highway improvements would bring significant investment and employment opportunities.
- The Apprenticeship Programme had seen a further £1million investment. The Wirral Apprentice was one of the ways in which the Council was helping to tackle the Borough's unemployment rate, particularly within the 18-24 year old age range. This investment would see the creation of 146 new jobs, primarily within small and medium sized firms taking The Wirral Apprentice programme to over 300 jobs since its launch in September 2009. It had also received a North West award.
- During 2010/11 300 affordable housing units had been completed within Wirral. This had surpassed the original target which was set and has been achieved by the Council securing additional funding from Government Initiatives via the Homes and Communities Agency.
- Of the 300 units, some 119 extra care units for older people had been delivered offering housing for both rent and shared ownership and a further 23 shared equity homes aimed at supporting first time buyers and supporting developers.
- Wirral Council's Cosy Homes Insulation Programme which was funded by Wirral Council and British Gas commenced in October 2010 and was now well underway with 7654 measures installed into private properties across Wirral, which represented a 131,929,256 kg per annum CO2 saving in the borough.
- Wirral's Cosy Homes Insulation Programme offered loft and cavity wall insulation subject to an initial technical survey to establish the levels of insulation required, and a maximum grant allowance. The insulation was usually free of charge and this had been the case for the vast majority of Wirral residents who have already benefited from the Scheme.
- The Programme, which has also created 30 jobs locally, has made insulation available to private properties throughout the Borough, and included a targeted campaign in certain areas from the Council's delivery partner Energy Projects Plus, to encourage take-up
- There had been significant over performance of the HMRI Programme resulting from additional HCA investment secured to accelerate clearance and demolition to help support new build. This had been further enhanced by the higher than expected take up of refurbishment programmes such as group repair in Birkenhead and Energy efficiency improvements.

The main risks to the achievement of performance targets were the current economic situation, the availability of national resources, the continued housing market stagnation and lack of mortgage liquidity.

The Director responded to questions from members concerning current housing policies relating to affordable housing and agreed to bring back a further exempt report to this committee on the financial implications for different parts of the borough. He also agreed to provide further information to members by email regarding lettings to people with priority need status and a breakdown of homeless families living in temporary accommodation over a one year period.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Director gave an explanation regarding the calculation of Gross Value Added (GVA) per head and the consequences for Wirral having the lowest GVA in England in terms of businesses, jobs and worklessness.

Resolved –

(1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Director be requested to report back to the next meeting on the implementation of affordable housing policies.

6 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

Further to minute (14/3/2011) the Interim Director of Corporate Services presented a report comprising an analysis of:

- the funding of the new apprentice programme and the current support given to different levels of qualification within the programme;
- ways to encourage attainment of Level 3 qualifications and access to higher paid employment opportunities
- ways to improve the current support for apprentices aged 19 or over;
- ways to build on the success of the programme.

On a motion by Councillor Kelly seconded by the Chair it was:

Resolved – That:

(1) The details of the Wirral Apprentice be noted.

(2) Committee looks forward to commenting on the work currently being undertaken to increase level 3 up-take within the scheme and asks that the idea of specific premiums be considered as part of the review.

(3) Committee notes that many apprenticeship frameworks are soon to replace the requirement for key skills qualifications with the new requirement for functional skills, and asks the Director of Children's Services to report on the preparedness of the education sector for this new challenge.

(4) Committee asks that the Cabinet Member makes appropriate representations to government ministers to seek an increased contribution to training apprentices in the 19-24 age range.

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

The Chair referred to his discussions with the spokespersons and outlined his suggestions on items for inclusion in the committee's work programme for the current municipal year:

- (i) Green Growth – to progress the notice of motion that was approved at the Council meeting on 18 April, 2011 (minute 126);
- (ii) Business Start Programme – development of a more targeted approach;
- (iii) Use of the European Social Fund to provide employment opportunities;
- (iv) Inward Investment – map activity against the government's priorities for growth. In this connection, the Director reported that he was preparing a report on the Regional Growth Fund highlighting those areas where the government would give additional mentoring and support.
- (v) Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) – development of plans to address the reduction in funding.

The Chair emphasised the need for members to be involved in the scrutiny function and he asked the spokespersons to let him have their nominations for the above workstreams.

The Director suggested that it may be useful to arrange a tour of regeneration and housing sites e.g. housing schemes, Wirral International Business Park and Wirral Waters.

Councillor G Davies, Cabinet Member (Housing and Community Safety) commented on the issues raised during the earlier discussion regarding affordability and suggested that a tour of the housing schemes would enable members to see the cleared sites, repair schemes and new affordable homes that were built to a very high specification e.g. the Sevenoaks development in Tranmere.

The Forward Plan for the period June to September 2011 had now been published on the Council's website and Members were invited to indicate to the chair or party spokespersons whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan.

Resolved –

(1) That the proposed work programme for the current municipal year, as outlined by the Chair, be approved

(2) That the Director be requested to make the necessary arrangements for a tour of regeneration and housing sites in consultation with the Chair and spokespersons.

8 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved – That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The public interest test had been applied and favoured exclusion.

9 REGENERATION UPDATE

The Interim Director of Corporate Services provided an update on major development schemes within the borough.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5TH SEPTEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN WIRRAL
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR GEORGE DAVIES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of the differing levels of affordability within the borough impacting on local peoples' ability to access appropriate housing. The report also highlights the work undertaken by the Housing Division in responding to local affordability issues along with the range of specific programmes and activity undertaken.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 That Members note the content of this report highlighting information on local house prices, house sales, and average incomes and the impact this has on affordability issues in Wirral.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 Members requested at Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 6th June 2011, that a further report detailing the affordable issues in different parts of the borough and the affordable housing policies being implemented be brought back to a future meeting of this committee.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Providing new and affordable homes is a key priority within the Council's Corporate Plan and delivering affordable homes in Wirral is one of the key themes within the Housing Strategy 2011-2026. This local priority is underpinned by a national policy framework, 'Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing' (PPS3) which sets out the Governments key housing policy goal to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home, which they can afford within a sustainable mixed community along with outlining the key role that the planning system has in the delivery of affordable housing.

4.2 To achieve this the Governments housing policy seeks to:

- Achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, both affordable and market housing to address requirements of communities;

- Widen opportunities for home ownership and ensure high quality housing for those who cannot afford market housing, in particular those who are vulnerable or in need.
 - Improve affordability across the housing market , including increasing the supply of housing;
 - Create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas;
 - Provide through housing policy objectives the context for planning for housing through development plans and planning decisions ensuring a mix of housing can be delivered, both market and affordable (particularly in terms of tenure and price) to support a wide variety of households.
- 4.3 The term 'affordable housing' is used throughout Government housing policy however the term 'affordable housing' can mean different things to different people depending on their circumstances. Some people may chose and be able to pay more than others for their home either in relation to a mortgage or a rental amount and therefore perceptions of homes which are 'affordable' for one person may be unaffordable for the next.
- 4.4 To support national policy and set the context for local authority policy, the Government has officially set out in PPS3: Housing the following definition of the term 'affordable housing':-
- 4.5 Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specific eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:
- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
 - Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative housing provision.'
- 4.6 This definition was revised in June 2011 following a Government Consultation exercise to include within the definition of affordable housing, the new affordable rent model introduced by the Government as part of the Homes and Communities Agency Affordable Homes programme. The Affordable Rent model has the same characteristics as social rented housing however it is outside the national rent regime but subject to other rent controls that require it to be offered to eligible households at a rent of up to 80% of local market rents.
- 4.7 This new definition set out above is the context for supporting local authorities in responding to affordability issues through planning policies and has been adopted within the Housing Strategy for Wirral as the context for responding to affordability locally.

Affordability in Wirral

- 4.8 For Wirral, affordability is not just limited to the more affluent areas where property prices are well in excess of the average householder's financial capacity to obtain a mortgage. Affordability is just as much prevalent in a wide range of neighbourhoods which fall within the eastern side of the Borough where resources are being focused to restructure local housing markets. This along with changes in the type and size of households means Wirral needs to increase the availability of affordable housing.
- 4.9 During 2010 there were just over 4800 properties sold across the borough. 10% of sales occurred in Wirral's inner areas, with 48% of sales occurring in the outer areas and 42% in rural areas in the west of the borough.
- 4.10 The Table in Appendix One of this report clearly identifies that sales prices for these properties are wide ranging and vary dramatically between wards, an example being in the Bidston and St James Ward where sales prices for properties ranged from £25,000 - £350,000.
- 4.11 House price sales when compared to the CACI 2010 Paycheck data, identifies an average household income for Wirral residents of £33,172 which is a slight decrease from the average of £33,522 in the previous year. The average household income for the Borough translates into a buyer capacity based on 3.5 times the average earnings which is £116,102. First time buyers however have a lower buyer capacity based on 3.2 times the average earnings.
- 4.12 Again, it is clear when looking at the table in Appendix One. The average earnings in the borough compared to the average sales prices presents particular problems in house affordability, especially for those at the lower end of the earnings scale such as young first-time buyers who also have limited savings to assist with deposits. Whilst sales values in the inner area would be within reach of some individuals, the quality and choice of offer is not consistent with aspirations of purchasers so there is still work to do in investing in those areas where unpopular, poorer quality housing is not attractive to would be buyers.

Our Response

- 4.13 Wirral is committed to finding solutions to help address the difficulties facing many households in accessing affordable housing. The following sets out what the Council is doing in its role to ensure the delivery of affordable housing and also the work which it does with its partners to maximise the opportunities to benefit local people.
- 4.14 Provide land at below market value for residential development
The Council seeks at all times to maximise the receipt from the sale of land that it owns. Exceptions to this Disposal policy are :-
- Where land has been identified which would meet the Council's Strategic Objectives including the delivery of affordable housing;

- Where the Council has, through targeted clearance action, assembled sites for re-development and subsequently needs support from a developer and or a housing association to provide properties for sale, shared ownership or rent on this land.
- Where land forms part of a wider regeneration scheme.

4.15 Use Section 106 agreements to provide affordable housing

Government planning policy guidance allows councils to seek to negotiate community benefits from developers when they apply for planning permission. This means that, as part of developing new open market housing, developers can be asked to make a contribution towards funding new infrastructure, providing for open spaces and building some of the homes as “affordable housing”.

- 4.16 The Council when considering the percentage of affordable housing on eligible residential sites (those which have the capacity to deliver 5 or more units) will do so subject to the viability of the individual site at the time of application. However, Wirral’s current policy approved by Members on 14th October 2010 sets a target based upon a Borough wide viability study for 10% of new development within the Housing Market Renewal intervention area to incorporate affordable housing on sites and 20% on sites located in the rest of the Borough. The planning gain would include for these units to be sold at less than open market value and would be assessed on the ability of a local housing association to purchase, based on rental income generated and without the need for any public subsidy. Affordable housing is always expected to be provided on the same site as the open market housing, unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not be the case.

4.17 Provide advice and support for residential development briefs

In addition to using planning powers and the sale of Council owned land at below market levels we will actively seek partnerships with private developers and housing associations to provide support and advice to them at pre planning application stages. This ensures housing association developments are delivered in line with appropriate, affordable housing needs. In terms of private developments, encouragement is given, prior to a formal planning application being made, to include within developments the type of housing which is in line with wider local housing needs. Both forms of support and advice are given with a housing assessment of the local area where the land site is located. This approach is also undertaken where applications for private developments have already been submitted and there is a potential Section 106 agreement required for affordable housing. Support is then offered to the developer to broker relationships with a local housing association who will purchase the affordable units developed at less than market value and then make them available for affordable housing.

- 4.18 Work in partnership with local housing associations to increase the availability of affordable housing for rent and sale
As part of its commitment to the development of affordable housing in the Borough the Council actively seeks the support of housing associations in the development of affordable housing to meet identified housing need. This is either as part of a mixed development or independently with the Housing Association.
- 4.19 Affordable Housing Grant is a funding source provided by the Homes and Communities Agency for the delivery of new affordable housing. During the 2008-2011 programme period, Wirral benefited from a total of £15.8m in funding from the HCA enabling an overall development programme of £52.5m to build 294 homes for local people. A further 207 units of affordable homes totalling £19m in value has also been completed through the Council working with local housing associations to secure alternative funding i.e. Department of Health and in the use of council assets.
- 4.20 The current submissions for the 2012-2015 Affordable Homes Programme have been submitted by housing associations. Whilst it is not anticipated the full grant levels will be secured, we should be confident based on our track record of working with local housing associations that we can successfully deliver units for the future and as such set a target to deliver 300 units by 2013.
- 4.21 Actively promote FirstBuy (previously known as Homebuy) as a means of providing affordable housing for sale in the Borough
Wirral Council works closely with developers to help them successfully secure and promote initiatives designed at helping first time buyers into affordable home ownership. As part of this process the Council provides information through a range of sources including its web site, which details the products available and web links to further more detailed information and as well as providing information in newsletters and through specific events which are targeted at first time buyers.
- 4.22 Seek to enter into preferred partnership arrangements with private developers in housing market intervention areas, ensuring development of affordable housing alongside regeneration activity offering houses for sale
As part of Wirral's Housing Market Renewal programme, development partnership arrangements are in place with private sector developers Lovell (Tranmere and Rock Ferry) and Keepmoat (North Birkenhead) to deliver a range of new homes on previously cleared sites in order to both address areas of housing market failure and improve the housing offer in these neighbourhoods. This is achieved through the provision of a range of housing types for outright sale, part ownership (through equity share) and social housing rent, including 'Affordable Rent'. Both developers have a track record of successful large scale housing redevelopments often undertaken in higher risk regeneration areas.
- 4.23 Land values have been used in negotiations with developers to maximise the new housing offer, which includes the provision of affordable housing in new developments, although, in practise, land values are often relatively low due to the locations involved. The agreements reached to date have utilised land values to achieve more affordable properties.

4.24 External funding agencies involved in the land assembly, such as the HCA, often impose conditions related to the provision of affordable housing in any future redevelopment. Failure to meet agreed outputs could result in the claw-back of funding. Such conditions influence the negotiations with developers. For example, a recent agreement to secure in excess of £2m from the HCA commits the Council to ensure the provision of 599 units of 'low cost market housing' on a number of HMR sites assembled in North Birkenhead.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 Failure to respond to affordability issues would result in the inability of emerging households to access appropriate, affordable homes. There would be an increased risk of households living in overcrowded and cramped living conditions and those having no choice but to live in poorer, quality accommodation.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 There were no other options considered as part of this report.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 There are no consultation issues arising directly from this report. However during the development of the Housing Strategy 2011-2026 a borough wide consultation exercise was undertaken with over 1,300 responses received. 86% of respondents agreed that increasing the availability of new homes including affordable homes is important to them.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report for voluntary, community and faith groups.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 In providing land at below market value there will be a loss of capital receipt to the Council. The Capital receipt lost cannot be identified for the future delivery of affordable housing until the land has been identified and a value placed upon it.

9.2 The Housing Division delivers and co-ordinates the activity relating to assessing local affordability and delivering responses set out in 4.12 of this report. All initiatives involving housing associations, land for sale, affordable housing, policy links to the Local Development Framework, advice to private developers on Section 106 affordable housing, are co-ordinated by the Housing Strategy Team. Work on engagement of preferred developer partners within the housing market renewal intervention areas is co-ordinated by the Private Sector Renewal Team.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Housing Strategy for Wirral which sets the overarching work in relation to delivering affordable housing and responding to local affordability recognises the needs of vulnerable people, and reinforces the need to address inequalities in the housing market and improve access for all.

11.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? Yes

(b) If 'yes', has one been completed? Yes – no negative impacts identified.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The work being undertaken by the Housing Division in delivering and increasing affordable homes in the Borough ensures that new and existing homes provided are of a good quality and homes are affordable after people have moved into them. Standards to ensure sustainability issues are integrated into the design of schemes are encouraged with private developers and local housing associations are governed by the Homes and Communities Agency standards for Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 on new developments.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific planning implication arising directly from this report, however the delivery of affordable housing is closely aligned with the councils planning policies and the emerging Local Development Framework which supports the delivery of the Boroughs housing priorities.

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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economic & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee report <i>"End of Year performance report 2010-2011"</i> .	6 th June 2011
Cabinet report 'Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update and Affordable Housing Viability Assessment – Key Findings and Policy Implications for Wirral'	14 th October 2010

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APPENDIX ONE

2010 / 11 House Price Data and Affordability Levels

Ward	Median House		Volume of Sales	Average Income	Affordability (3.5)	Affordability (3.2)		RSS	
	Price	Range				First Time Buyers	RSS Inner	Outer	RSS Rural
Bebington	155,036	55,000 - 352,000	114	£35,874.00	£125,559.00	£114,796.80	N	Y	N
Bisdston & St James	94,875	25,000-350,000	73	£22,707.00	£79,474.50	£72,662.40	Y	Y	N
Birkenhead & Tranmere	76,057	30,000-230,000	89	£22,720.00	£79,520.00	£72,704.00	Y	N	N
Bromborough	141,322	45,000-430,000	129	£30,962.00	£108,367.00	£99,078.40	N	Y	Y
Clatterbridge	201,325	65,000-525,000	146	£41,425.00	£144,987.50	£132,560.00	N	Y	Y
Claughton	155,944	49,000-499,950	89	£35,636.00	£124,726.00	£114,035.20	Y	Y	N
Eastham	140,276	60,000-447,500	128	£34,595.00	£121,082.50	£110,704.00	N	Y	N
Greasby, Frankby & Irby	190,856	40,000-710,000	144	£39,702.00	£138,957.00	£127,046.40	N	N	Y
Heswall	311,990	75,000-925,000	157	£48,392.00	£169,372.00	£154,854.40	N	N	Y
Hoylake & Meols	229,027	67,500-943,531	167	£40,254.00	£140,889.00	£128,812.80	N	N	Y
Leasowe & Moreton East	113,681	50,000-218,500	117	£28,594.00	£100,079.00	£91,500.80	N	Y	N
Liscard	106,382	22,000-240,000	108	£28,708.00	£100,478.00	£91,865.60	Y	N	N
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	128,860	50,000-285,000	129	£32,674.00	£114,359.00	£104,556.80	N	Y	Y
New Brighton	130,401	30,000-280,000	110	£32,560.00	£113,960.00	£104,192.00	N	Y	N
Oxton	156,770	40,000-424,000	147	£36,033.00	£126,115.50	£115,305.60	Y	Y	N
Pensby & Thingwall	169,675	80,000-645,000	145	£34,363.00	£120,270.50	£109,961.60	N	N	Y
Prenton	144,705	38,000-393,000	112	£34,832.00	£121,912.00	£111,462.40	N	Y	N
Rock Ferry	95,737	25,000-350,000	97	£24,951.00	£87,328.50	£79,843.20	Y	N	N
Seacombe	81,630	25,000-199,000	103	£24,739.00	£86,586.50	£79,164.80	Y	N	N
Upton	135,432	58,000-570,000	106	£29,181.00	£102,133.50	£93,379.20	N	N	Y
Wallasey	169,690	64,000-575,000	130	£37,678.00	£131,873.00	£120,569.60	N	Y	N
West Kirby & Thurstaston	284,536	72,000-1,140,000	166	£42,566.00	£148,981.00	£136,211.20	N	N	Y

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5TH SEPTEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	INWARD INVESTMENT TARGETTING
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY
KEY DECISION? <i>(Defined in paragraph 13.3 of Article 13 'Decision Making' in the Council's Constitution.)</i>	YES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the Interim Director of Corporate Services plans to develop a series of targeted inward investment activities with the explicit aim of promoting Wirral as a business investment location to drive economic growth and create new jobs within the Borough. These activities will actively promote Wirral's investment opportunities by specifically targeting expanding companies with investment projects by using experienced intermediaries to undertake and manage inward investment lead generation activity. The report outlines how these activities will be co-ordinated and delivered in line with the wider investment support services framework.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the plans for Inward Investment are noted and that the implementation of the proposals is supported.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Attracting inward investment to Wirral is one of the key priorities of the Council's Investment Strategy which aims to deliver a strong, vibrant economy with high levels of investment and employment opportunities for the residents of Wirral. Significant amounts of hard work and effort by Wirral Council and its strategic partners has seen the development of several significant investment opportunities that now require promotion on an international stage. However, in order to succeed with the resources available, specific targeting is a critical part of the strategy to generate leads and secure appropriate investment.

3.2 Cabinet on the 21st July agreed the recommendation to support the Inward Investment activity.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Wirral's Investment Strategy recognises the importance of attracting new inward investment to Wirral in order to deliver a strong and dynamic economy and provide employment opportunities for Wirral's residents

4.2 In order to secure new inward investment, Wirral Council will need to work with its strategic partners to maximise the use of key resources to target specific companies in countries that are interested in the UK as an investment location and use the products and opportunities on offer to generate interest and where possible, secure investment for Wirral. Based on this, Wirral will seek to deliver inward investment activity based on the following four key principles:

1. Attract new successful businesses, particularly those in key growth sectors and matching the requirements our key investment products
2. Promote strategies and develop technical specifications that will help provide the appropriate environment to encourage investment
3. Link to strategies that help train, attract and retain talented, skilled and knowledgeable people in the Borough
4. Position Wirral as a leading, vibrant global business location with a gateway to the UK and mainland Europe

4.3 Wirral has a number of specific investment opportunities that have been developed since the inception of the Investment Strategy in 2007. The quality of these opportunities and products are now recognised as extremely high, particularly for promotion internationally. These opportunities include:

4.4 **Wirral Waters:** In 2010, Planning permission was given to Peel Holdings' Wirral Waters East Float development, which is the UK's largest regeneration project to have been given planning approval. The £4.5 billion regeneration scheme will take place over the next 25 years and will create in excess of 20,000 new jobs. Peel Holdings is beginning to promote the development on an international basis using a renowned team of property specialists to build a strong and recognisable brand for Wirral Waters, specifically identifying key investment projects within the short, medium and long term. It is essential that the Councils strategy supports that of Peels in the context of Wirral Waters.

4.5 **Enterprise Zone:** The whole of the Wirral Waters site has been designated as one of the four named 21st Century Enterprise Zones (EZ) by central government in Budget 2011. Along with Liverpool Waters, it forms the Mersey Waters EZ. Cabinet on the 14th April (Min 396) welcomed the designation of Wirral Waters as an Enterprise Zone and noted that this would assist businesses through tax incentives, superfast broadband, improved infrastructure and simplified planning rules. The EZ provides a clear opportunity to promote the Borough as a preferred location for inward

investment and it is anticipated that Wirral will receive an increased number of investment enquiries.

- 4.6 **International Trade Centre:** In June 2011, Wirral Council received a planning application from Peel Holdings for the development of an International Trade Centre at the West Float site of the Wirral Waters development. The 4 phased development totals in excess of 2.5 million square feet that would enable up to a 1,000 separate companies from China, India, South Korea or other emerging economies, to exhibit, sell, assemble and distribute their goods into the UK, Irish and European markets. The facility will include showroom spaces, warehousing/ storage and assembly facilities. The ITC will be the first of its kind in the United Kingdom and the largest and most sustainable Trade Centre in Europe.
- 4.7 **Wirral International Business Park:** One of the region's most impressive regeneration success stories is Wirral International Business Park (WIBP). However, there is over 70 hectares of employment land still to be developed at WIBP and its strategic importance is higher than ever in terms of its ability to support the opportunities of key sector developments, such as the ones outlined below.
- 4.8 **Offshore Energy opportunities:** The port related facilities of the Eastern end of the Borough offer a unique opportunity of available land, skilled workforce, port and harbour facilities and access to an established supply chain to serve the West coast, East coast and Scottish West coast offshore renewable energy markets. Cammell Laird offers the offshore wind industry an excellent range of opportunities for both manufacturing and pre-assembly as well as operation and maintenance bases for the wind farms. At the heart of the UK economy's shift to low carbon, by 2020 the offshore wind industry alone could be worth £75bn and support up to 70,000 jobs in the UK and the uniqueness of the Cammell Laird offer, alongside high quality port related land, is a key investment offer for Wirral as a place to target appropriate investment to support this sector.
- 4.9 **Research and Development:** Wirral's R and D sector is a crucial part of the Council's enterprise and employment plans for the future and has seen considerable growth in recent years with notable investments made in research facilities by Bristol -Myers Squibb and Biofortuna. Over 13,000 people currently work in the Bio/life science industries in Wirral. The biomedical sector is an important employer in Wirral and Research and Development across all fields is hugely important to Wirral and forms part of the investment offer that exists in the borough.
- 4.10 Over the last six years, The Mersey Partnership (TMP) has delivered inward investment services on behalf of all of the Local Authorities in the Liverpool City Region. An annual subscription for inward investment of £140,000 has been paid to TMP by Wirral Council for the last three years. However, a decision taken by Liverpool City Region partners in response to current budget challenges faced by the LA's has seen the withdrawal of this additional money and TMP receive only a basic subscription for which they are now

delivering basic inward investment services. There is an facility to buy additional TMP investment services on a 'pay as you go basis, but Officers feel that whilst this is an option to work on specific LCR partnership activity, it will not provide as much added value as conducting specific targeted activity within the co-ordination of activity within the revised Investment Strategy prospectus, which members have discussed as a previous item on this Cabinet agenda.

- 4.11 It is proposed therefore that Wirral adopts a specific three stage inward investment approach that will add value to TMP's LCR 'umbrella' investment strategy and allow the Council to target specific sectoral and project based opportunities that identifies market opportunities by engaging with specialist intermediaries to generate leads and target specific companies. Cabinet is asked to support the following three stage model in its development and implementation:

Stage One

- 4.12 The recruitment of dedicated inward investment expertise to Wirral Council. This includes the appointment of an Inward Investment Manager to the staff establishment at the Council to run the day to day operations of inward investment from within the Investment Strategy Team. The post holder will be suitably qualified and have a high degree of experience of working with investment intermediaries and developing relevant strategy. A high competence of dealing at a senior executive level of large corporate organisations will be expected from this post holder. A report will be taken to Employment and Appointments committee on the 28th September for authorisation to advertise this post.

Stage Two

- 4.14 The appointment on a retained basis of a suitably qualified UK intermediary to facilitate international promotion of Wirral's key investment opportunities. This person will call upon an international network of leads and contacts to source viable investment opportunities to target based on Wirral's key opportunities and USP's. This person would be retained in the first instance on a set number of days. Work has already started to make contact with suitable qualified intermediaries.

Stage 3

- 4.15 This stage will give the Council the ability to use internationally based intermediaries payable upon on the success of a.) lead generation and b.) actual inward investment secured (eg terms agreed). The exact terms are to be set and agreed in accordance with procurement rules and regulations. This will include attendance at appropriate trade fairs in line with the targeted investment activity.
- 4.16 Overall, Wirral is developing a new approach to inward investment, moving away from general marketing to implement specific strategies based on investment opportunities and products and explicitly targeting appropriate investment leads which will be generated by experienced investment intermediaries who will have the contacts internationally to promote Wirral's

products. This will complement the investment marketing that is being done via investwirral.com and further enhance the work being done by TMP at a City Region level.

- 4.17 The Investment Strategy Manager will work closely with Invest Wirral and promote Wirral under the Invest Wirral brand.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 A full risk analysis had been carried out by Wirral Officers and the business targeted approach to inward investment been designed to offer Wirral businesses the highest quality level of support.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Officers have carefully developed the proposals taking into account past experience of dealing with inward investment in Wirral and other experiences of best practice from elsewhere. The options outlined in this report have been designed to offer the maximum return on the money invested in this activity.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Wirral's investment strategy has been reviewed following an extensive consultation with partners. More detail is included in the Investment Strategy refresh report that has been presented to Cabinet on this agenda. Inward Investment and the attraction of new businesses to Wirral forms an essential part of this investment strategy.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 None as a direct result of this report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 9.1 Stage One of this proposal will mean the creation of the post of Inward Investment Manager will be taken through Employment and Appointments Committee on the 28th September. This post will be created through a restructure of the Councils Investment Strategy Team which will be implemented by the Interim Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. All costs associated with this re-structure will be met within existing staff budgets.

- 9.2 Cabinet on the 21st February 2011 (Min 327) confirmed funding to support investment growth and to continue some investment support services previously funded by Working Neighbourhoods Fund. Cabinet on the 24th June supported the delivery of the investment Support Services Framework which included an outline proposal for inward investment activity. The activity set out within Stages two and three of this Inward Investment report will be funded via the resources identified in the June report (£1.625m) which was

agreed by Cabinet. The funding for stages two and three is proposed to be £70k

- 9.3 The Director of Finance confirms that one of the most cost effective ways of procuring the Stage Two services outlined in the report would be through the operation of the Council's Matrix contract. This service has been procured by Wirral Council and will enable individuals or private sector businesses to be employed on a task and finish basis. This would enable a UK intermediary to be engaged that possesses the key attributes and experience specified within this report. The implementation of Stage Two will allow suitable arrangements for Stage Three to be sourced using the UK intermediaries experience and network of contacts to engage with them. As detailed within para 4.15, the exact terms are to be set and agreed in accordance with procurement rules and regulations.
- 9.4 Market analysis has indicated that an appropriate daily rate to obtain the necessary qualified and self employed individual for Stage Two could be obtained via Matrix. The cost of using the Matrix contract will be in addition to this and is likely to be within the range of 5 – 10% of the costs. The procurement of the Matrix contract through the Council's tender process will assist the service demonstrate value for money through the efficient and competitive procurement of staff.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The development of the targeted inward investment activity will need to comply with the obligations arising under the Bribery Act 2010 which comes into force on the 1st July 2011.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None as a direct result of this report
- 11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 None as a direct result of this report, but the investment strategy will target low carbon investment opportunities as a key sector for Wirral.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 None as a direct result of this report

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SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet Investment Support Services Framework	23 rd June 2011
Cabinet Business Support Services	14 th April 2011
Cabinet Council Budget 2011-12	21st February 2011
Cabinet Targeted Inward Investment Activity	23 rd July 2011

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY & REGENERATION

5TH SEPTEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	2011/12 First Quarter Performance and Financial Review: Economy and Regeneration
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	Interim Director of Corporate Services
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Phil Davies, Councillor George Davies
KEY DECISION:	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-14 for April to June 2011 in relation to economy and regeneration, and provides members with an overview of performance, resource and risk monitoring.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the contents of this report be noted.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Council approved the Corporate Plan on 18th April 2011. This report provides a quarterly progress on delivering the economy and regeneration section of the Council's Corporate Plan, including performance of relevant projects and indicators and associated financial and risk monitoring information.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 **Performance Summary**

The presentation accompanying this report provides an overview of quarter one performance with more detail outlined in this report including corrective action for performance issues.

4.2 Your ECONOMY

What's working well:

- A single streamlined contact point for all investors is being implemented
- 162 business assists took place during April and June 2011 (116% over the target)
- Wirral Council has announced that it has renewed it's agreement with the England Illegal Money Lending Team, to target loan sharks who may be operating in the Borough and to conduct investigations into illegal money lenders
- The Wirral Apprentice Programme has been commended as a model of good practice nationally and regionally, and is increasingly being recognised as an exemplar of effective partnership working. Most recently, in May 2011, the Programme received a number of awards at the NW Regional finals of the National Apprenticeship Awards. These included one Wirral Apprentice employer winning the Small Business Award; another Wirral Apprentice

Employer achieving a commendation; and the Council itself won a Special Recognition Award for its innovative model and approach

- Following the extremely successful Wirral Apprentice programme, Wirral Council has launched a new initiative to support businesses so that they can employ more staff and expand. The Wirral Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) is a flexible programme that supports companies to employ people on an anticipated 52 week contract with the Council contributing funding for the first 26 weeks of that contract.
- 384 jobs have been created or safeguarded via Invest Wirral during April to June 2011 (66% over the target)

Performance against the Corporate Plan

There are no performance issues identified at quarter one within this theme of the Corporate Plan.

Resource implications

Policy options in regards of business support and minimising impacts of empty shops are currently being implemented. The Wirral Waters scheme continues to be developed with positive benefits for Wirral's economy anticipated.

Support continues for the 'Think Big Investment Fund' with a number of grants being awarded in this quarter.

Future challenges and risks

The development of the Wirral Waters project by Peel Holdings continues and it is anticipated that this will create significant economic opportunities for the Borough. Peel Holdings has also submitted a planning application for an International Trade Centre in Birkenhead. Activity also continues to support Wirral businesses.

4.3 Your NEIGHBOURHOOD

What's working well:

- Wirral's Cabinet has approved a new Housing Strategy which will direct policy until 2026, following an extensive public and stakeholder consultation

Performance against Corporate Plan project(s)

The following projects have been assessed as **amber**:

Portfolio	Key project	Status	Corrective Action
Housing & Community Safety	Deliver a heating improvement programme to 140 vulnerable private sector residents per year in 2011-12 and 2012-13	Amber	The original target for Number of households assisted will be met over the two year period, but with greater numbers in year 2. This is due to the start of the scheme being delayed until the Financial Assistance Policy has been approved, which is a statutory requirement.

Portfolio	Key project	Status	Corrective Action
Social Care & Inclusion	Develop a housing plan for people with Learning Difficulties by August/September 2011	Amber	Delays have arisen as a result of integrating the work of the Housing Sub Group with the wider Learning Disabilities Partnership Board agenda - timescales will be pushed back by three months.
	Renegotiate /Retender Supported People/Housing services for people with Learning Difficulties	Amber	Currently working in partnership with Adult Social Services (DASS) - timescales may be affected, due to changes in DASS's own contractual arrangements (Existing LD contracts to be extended until September 2011 to allow time for renegotiated services to be implemented)
	To review housing services for at risk young people and young people in care by August 2011	Amber	Timescales have been amended to March 2012.

Resource implications

There are no resource implications identified at quarter one within this theme of the Corporate Plan.

4.4 Customer Feedback

Between 1st April – 30th June 2011 there was a total of 1,688 customer feedback contacts recorded; 3% less than the previous quarter though slightly above the quarterly average of 1,656 contacts for 2010/11. By channel, internet and email was used for 57% of all contacts.

Compared to the previous quarter, there was a 25% decrease in corporate complaints and a 24% decrease in statutory complaints, offset by a 55% rise in Ombudsman contacts (22 contacts in total) with Children's Services (Schools) and Adult Social Services (Care Services) experiencing increased contact.

Customer suggestions, mainly prompted by the questionnaire sent out with council tax bills in March 2011, displayed an 85% increase from the previous quarter.

There was an improved average response rate for complaints, falling from 14 working days in the last quarter to 11 working days in this quarter (corporate target 15 working days). Councillor and MP enquiries took on average longer to respond to in this quarter, taking 6.5 working days compared to 5 working days in the last quarter/6 working days per quarter for 2010/11 (corporate target 10 working days).

There was a 38.5% increase in Children's Services complaints compared to the previous quarter, all other departments reported decreased numbers of complaints following on from the previous quarter.

The focus for complaints and wider customer feedback is 'putting things right and learning from it' and Corporate Services reported 29% of their complaints resulted in some positive organisational learning for future service delivery. The Department of Law, HR and Asset Management and Adult Social Services reported no changes implemented.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 The Corporate Risk Register is currently being revised to take account of the new Corporate Plan.

5.2 Whilst risk issues are identified under the Corporate Theme the major issues identified as posing the greatest risk to the achievement of the objectives are:-

- Future resource constraints including forthcoming Local Government Resource Review may impact upon ability to meet citizen expectations.
- Wirral Waters investment (positive risks)

It is planned to highlight and deal with any other risks through the introduction of Executive Team risk identification sessions with an updated Corporate Risk Strategy and Corporate Risk Register being presented for consideration by Cabinet in September 2011.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 Not applicable

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation in relation to the draft Corporate Plan engaged individuals and organisations from across Wirral's diverse communities and this is reflected in the Corporate Plan.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 The Corporate Plan sets out commitments and clear actions in relation to working with voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to improve outcomes for local people.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 The Council Budget 2011/12, Schools Budget 2011/12 and Capital Programme 2011/13 have been agreed and support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Resource implications relating to the delivery of actions in the Corporate Plan have been set out in individual departmental plans. Further details are contained in Appendices 3, 4 and 5 which are placed within the Library.

9.2 The projected general fund balance at 31 March 2012 is £11.5 million as shown below

Details	£million	£million
Projected General Fund balance at 31 March 2012 when setting the budget for 2011/12		6.9
Cabinet decisions		
17 March – Fernleigh retained		-0.5
23 June - Financial out-turn 2010/11 showed a net increase in the balance of £1 million after meeting a net revenue overspend of £0.3 million		+1.0
23 June - Integrated Transport Unit additional funding		-0.3
23 June - EVR/VS scheme funded as part of 2010/11 thereby releasing the requirement to fund in 2011/12		+4.4
Projected variances / potential overspends		
None declared although pressures identified at the end of June 2011 within: - Adult Social Services £6.0 million - Children and Young People £5.6 million		-
General Fund balance at 31 March 2012 based upon the latest projections		11.5

9.3 Both Adult Social Services and Children and Young People Departments have highlighted significant pressures on their departmental budgets. Any subsequent overspend would impact upon the general fund balances.

9.4 The capital programme is summarised below:

Spend	Original Approval £000	Forecast June £000
Adult Social Services	1,154	2,943
Children & Young People	25,889	39,195
Corporate Services	5,181	10,788
Finance	1,000	3,671
Law, HR and Asset Mgt	8,163	8,779
Technical Services	7,872	11,564
Total Programme	49,259	76,940

Resources	Original Approval £000	Forecast June £000
Borrowing	15,905	28,553
Capital Receipts	3,000	3,000
Revenue, reserves, contributions	300	4,194
Grants - Education	23,441	26,283
Grants - Integrated Transport	1,155	1,155
Grants - Local Transport Plan	3,095	3,095
Grants - Other	2,363	10,660
Total resources	49,259	76,940

9.5 The 2011/12 capital programme has increased by £28 million due to £10 million of additional grant funding mainly associated with educational activity and £18 million slippage from the 2010/11 capital programme. The majority of projects transferred from 2010/11 involve schools, highways, housing and IT projects.

9.6 Progress continues to be made on a number of schemes including those at the Birkenhead Girls Academy, Cathcart Primary School, the former Mendell Lodge scheme, Williamson Art Gallery and Landican Crematorium as detailed under the Corporate Plan themes.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Legal implications relating to the actions set out in the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Corporate Plan has a clear focus on supporting those who are disadvantaged, including the delivery of specific services and through ensuring that all of Wirral's diverse communities are equally able to access services.

11.2 Equalities implications relating to the actions set out in the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate, and details set out in individual departmental plans. This work is also monitored by the Corporate Equalities and Cohesion Group and the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Carbon reduction is a specific goal in the Corporate Plan, with associated actions and measures as set out in the agreed Interim Carbon Budget 2011-12.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Planning and Community Safety is a specific goal in the Corporate Plan, with associated actions and measures.

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APPENDICES

To be placed in the web library:

Appendix 1 – Financial Monitoring Summary

Appendix 2 – Capital Monitoring Summary

Appendix 3 – Corporate Risk Monitoring Summary

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Previous Council and Cabinet reports as detailed in the subject history below:

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
CABINET – Q1 Performance & Financial Review	21 July 2011
CABINET - Delivering the Corporate Plan	17 April 2011
COUNCIL - Adoption of Corporate Plan 2011-14	14 April 2011
CABINET - Draft Corporate Plan for 2011-14	17 March 2011

WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2011

SUBJECT	ECONOMY & HOUSING BUDGET ISSUES 2012/13
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	CLLR PHIL DAVIES & CLLR GEORGE DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As part of the 2012/13 Budget Consultation process Cabinet are asking Scrutiny Committees to consider the functions within their portfolio and offer suggestions as to how to close the estimated £25 million budget gap and limit any Council Tax increase in 2012/13.
- 1.2 The responses will be considered along with the responses from the other engagement processes to inform the budget setting process. Further consultation will be undertaken regarding any specific service changes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the views of Scrutiny Committee are requested.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Cabinet has requested the views of Scrutiny Committees to inform the 2012/13 Budget Consultation process.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

Financial projections for the Council

- 4.1 Cabinet is regularly updated on the financial position of the Council and the latest Budget Projections report was considered on 21 July 2011. The Director of Finance reported that the shortfall between likely spend and likely resources was £25 million for 2012/13 with shortfalls of £31 million and £30.3 million identified for 2013/14 and 2014/15 respectively.
- 4.2 The Government is presently considering options for the future funding of local authorities and the level of any Government Grant supported is affected by population numbers. Both could result in further reductions in available resources to the Council. The Leader of the Council requested Members and employees to consider carefully what was included in budgets and let him have any suggestions for making savings.
- 4.3 The key issues and challenges facing the Department are set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 Schedule 1 sets out the functions of the Department and risks can only be assessed once Members have given their views.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None as this report is seeking the views of Members.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consideration by the Scrutiny Committee is one of the means which is being used to inform the setting of the 2012/13 Council Budget.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 None arising directly from this report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None arising directly from this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None arising directly from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None arising directly from this report.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None arising directly from this report.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None arising directly from this report.

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APPENDIX 1: ECONOMY & HOUSING BUDGET ISSUES 2012/13

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
None	

APPENDIX 1:

ECONOMY & HOUSING BUDGET ISSUES 2012/13

Corporate Plan theme Your Economy
Service Area Business Support and attracting Inward investment Planning- Development management and Building Control Forward Planning Economic Development Private Sector Housing Supporting People and Adaptations Housing Strategy and Homelessness Tourism
Budget: £21,378,200

Contents

- Section 1: Corporate Objectives
- Section 2: Department Budget
- Section 3: Departmental Overview
- Section 4: Impact and achievements
- Section 5: Challenges
- Section 6: Opportunities
- Schedule 1: Breakdown of service delivery

1. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

1.1. Introduction

The Corporate Services Department leads the delivery of the following core services:

- The delivery of the Investment Strategy
- Addressing the strategic housing and support needs of Wirral residents and improving housing markets
- Providing advice to the planning committee and providing an effective enforcement and conservation service

The primary focus of the Department is the delivery of Wirral's Investment Strategy. The key aim of this is to build a Borough founded on a strong, vibrant economy, with high levels of employment and investment, where businesses flourish, and all Wirral residents have the skills and opportunities to work. It ensures the housing needs of the Borough are delivered, more jobs are created and that Wirral is promoted nationally and overseas as a destination for investment and tourism. Planning policies are produced; planning applications are processed and building developments are inspected to ensure the sustainable delivery of the Investment Strategy.

- 1.2. The department also contributes to the delivery of several Council-wide aims; and specifically, to the following objectives within the Corporate Plan:

Your Family – Children and Young People

- Increasing the numbers of 16-18 young people in education, employment and training including vulnerable groups
- Improving outcomes for children and young people where poverty and disadvantage affect their achievement

Your Family – Adults

- Delivering the Care Quality Commission DASS Improvement Plan (specifically: improving Employment opportunities for people with Learning Disability)

Your Neighbourhood

- Reduce Wirral's carbon footprint
- Support vulnerable people in maintaining their independence in the community
- Prevent and alleviate homelessness
- Make best use of the existing housing stock across all sectors
- Provide new and affordable homes

Your Economy

- Grow Wirral's economy and improve access to employment and skills opportunities and tackle barriers to work
- Market Wirral as a world class location for businesses and visitors
- Make Wirral Council the most business friendly and supportive Council in the country

Your Council

- Ensuring the Council meets the legal requirements of the 2010 Equality Duty
- Review the delivery of the Planning Service in light of the Localism Bill

2. DEPARTMENT BUDGET

2.1. The Department has a budget of £21,378,200 which is detailed in Schedule 1.

The Capital Programme allocation for the Corporate Services Department is shown below:

Expenditure	2011/12	2012/13
Think Big Investment Fund	400	300
West Wirral Schemes	206	0
Destination West Kirby	1,100	150
Wirral Country Park (£1.3m in 2013/14)	0	1,600
Mersey Heartlands New Growth Point	0	0
Improvements to Stock	850	800
Clearance	0	0
Disabled Facilities – Adaptations	1,550	1,550
New Brighton Phase 2	0	0
Quarry Bank Affordable Housing	345	0
Wirral Healthy Homes	105	105
Cosy Homes Heating	250	250
Empty Property Interventions	125	125
Power Solutions to Strategic Investment Areas	250	4,750
Total Expenditure	5,181	9,630

2.2. Budget Issues

Key challenges are as follows:

- Significant reduction in external Community Fund resources which are due to end March 2012 - £1.2 million to support Homelessness Teams and Private Sector Housing Teams from the Community Fund and carry over of HMRI funds
- £500k shortfall in income target against actual income for Development Control
- £740k in year grant to tackle worklessness will not be received in 2012/13. This will impact on the delivery of worklessness schemes.
- The vast majority of Revenue Budget relates to staffing costs, as a result of £20 million reductions from April 2011 due to loss of Working Neighbourhoods Funds; HMRI; and the Regional Housing Pot

3. DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

3.1. Investment Strategy

The Corporate Services Department leads the delivery of Wirral's Investment Strategy, a key corporate priority. Wirral's Investment Strategy recognises that a successful economy is fundamental to the Borough's future prosperity and to achieve social equity outcomes. The Strategy aims to deliver a Borough founded on a strong, vibrant economy, with high levels of employment and investment, where businesses flourish, and all Wirral residents have the skills and opportunities to work.

We recognise that areas with an under performing economy, and significant concentrations of deprivation and disadvantage requires additional innovative approaches to grow the economy. Furthermore, it is essential to understand the significant impact of Wirral's economic challenges on wider inequalities and deprivation. Apart from the limited individual life opportunities, this puts massive pressures on wider services that the Council delivers.

Against the backdrop of changing economic conditions and a rapidly shifting national policy landscape, we have recently reviewed and updated our original Investment Strategy. **The Investment Strategy 2011-16** was agreed by Cabinet in July 2011 and sets out how Wirral Council and its partners will drive economic growth and increase investment in Wirral over the next 5 years.

The Strategy is based on robust economic data and a strong understanding of Wirral's economy. We continue to produce regular economic updates, and ensure that this evidence base is used to inform and develop effective regeneration policy and projects in Wirral across the 3 main themes of Place, People and Business.

3.2. Core Services of the Department

3.2.1 Economic Regeneration: The department continues to play a leading role in driving forward our local economy, working to attract new investment to the borough, and creating skilled jobs that will increase employment and improve the lives of families.

This includes the development and implementation of a number of initiatives to facilitate investment and make Wirral the most business friendly location in the country. Key priorities for this year will be taking forward our Enterprise Zone, International Trade Centre, and supporting businesses to access new opportunities such as the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) and New Enterprise Allowance.

The department continues to lead on the delivery of Wirral Waters and to help secure private investment on a scale that will transform the local area. The £4.5 billion project has the potential to provide up to 20,700 jobs. We will ensure the project is integrated into the wider regeneration of Birkenhead and Wallasey and delivers economic benefits for the whole of Wirral.

The alignment of strategic economic policy with the delivery of regeneration programmes, including housing, has further enhanced the Council's ability to co-ordinate regeneration activity.

3.2.2. Tackling worklessness and improving skills: We are committed to increasing employment in all parts of the borough and working with the Government to help those people who can work back into employment. This year, we have continued to develop the Wirral Apprentice Programme, as well as implement a number of new employment and skills projects to support those unemployed Wirral residents who most need it.

3.2.3 Implementation of the Local Development Framework: We continue to prepare a Core Strategy Development Plan Document, for adoption in late 2012, to set out the Council's vision and spatial strategy for the social, economic, and environmental regeneration of the Borough. The Core Strategy will replace the Council's Unitary Development Plan and will be used to identify the land needed for homes, jobs and infrastructure and to guide decisions on individual planning applications, legal agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

We are also jointly preparing jointly a Waste Development Plan Document, in partnership with the councils of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens and Sefton, to identify suitable sites to maximise recycling and minimise landfill.

3.2.4. Support to business and social enterprise: The department supports businesses to start up, grow and become sustainable. We are co-ordinating all business support through Invest Wirral to offer a seamless and single point approach that improves how businesses are supported throughout the business life cycle.

In addition, we will continue to support international trade links to maximise inward investment and enable Wirral businesses to access new markets and opportunities.

3.2.5. Investment Marketing: The Department leads the delivery of a clear Wirral investment package and brand. It manages and maintains Wirral's tourism and investment marketing web presence including www.visitwirral.com. The nationally recognised www.investwirral.com website continues to attract significant interest, and research recently conducted by Ipsos MORI will inform and target future campaign activity to attract inward investment.

3.2.6. Tourism: The objective of this business service area is to effectively and efficiently market Wirral as a quality visitor and investment destination, and help create a sustainable environment that benefits the local community and businesses. An annual implementation plan has been developed to help achieve this objective and includes:

- **Encouraging Business** – supporting a 100 plus private, public and community sector Wirral Tourism Business Network and six Partnerships (ie accommodation, attractions, coast, food and drink, golf and, history and heritage)
- **Excellent Events** - Develop, support and deliver an annual programme of new and existing events to raise the positive profile of the Borough nationally and regionally, including Mersey Pirate Muster in New Brighton, Christmas Food Fayre in Port Sunlight and Wirral Golf; International Kite Festival in New Brighton; Port Sunlight Summer Festival, Hoylake RNLi Open Day in Hoylake, Wirral Food and Drink Festival in Bebington, Birkenhead Park Festival of Transport Festival, Tourism Awards, etc.

3.2.6. Housing Services: The service continues to meet the Council's statutory homelessness and housing advice duties. This includes homeless prevention services, incorporating mortgage rescue, housing and debt advice, private sector tenancy bond/support scheme and emergency temporary accommodation for those who have lost their homes. Provisions of a range of housing options and improving access to housing of all tenures including delivery of the CBL service on behalf of most of the social landlords in Wirral. This includes working with key partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide support and early intervention to prevent homelessness. Key elements of our approach will be determined by a strategic review of homelessness services and development of a new Homelessness Strategy.

Statutory functions also include strategic housing services including assessments of local housing needs and conditions and development of housing strategies/plans to address these needs. The service delivers and manages revenue and capital budgets

totalling £6.5m; this includes the Councils Home Insulation Scheme's £2.098m per annum.

The Supporting People and Adaptation services provide preventative services, designed to assist the most vulnerable people in society to achieve and maintain independent living through the delivery of support services such as sheltered housing and disabled adaptations such as stairlifts and ramps. By providing these services it reduces the financial burdens on other, more costly, budgets such as Social Care and enables people to remain in their own homes.

The Council's strategic direction in relation to housing is set through the Housing Strategy Statement 2011 – 2026. The Strategy and Strategic Housing Plan has been developed following an extensive process of evidence reviewing and public consultation, to obtain specific views on all of the key issues which inform housing policies and initiatives for the future. The Strategic Housing Plan clearly determines the approach to meeting the needs of the Borough, it supports housing market and economic growth and promotes inward investment whilst also addressing and supporting the needs of vulnerable people in our communities. The Housing Strategy Statement 2011 - 2026 was endorsed by Cabinet on 23rd June 2011 and its implementation is driven forward by the Housing Service. The Strategic Housing Plan clearly aligns with the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Corporate Plan objectives and as such the broad range of statutory and non-statutory activity delivered by the Housing Service supports all objectives within the Corporate Plan.

Supporting vulnerable people in maintaining their independence in the community, preventing and alleviating homelessness, making the best use of existing housing stock across all sectors and providing new and affordable homes are all key corporate priorities and the primary focus for the delivery of these priorities is through the Housing Service.

3.2.8. Development Control and Building Control

The service processes planning applications, taking into account local plan policies, government guidance and the individual merits of each scheme, in order to control development in the Borough in the public interest. It ensures that buildings are properly designed and constructed and encourages the sustainable use of resources.

The service is also responsible for enforcing planning decisions and for conserving the Borough's heritage assets.

The Government's intention is to radically reform the planning system in order to make it clearer, more democratic and more effective. The Service will need to respond to these changes and review its service delivery in light of the Localism Bill while continuing to provide advice to the Planning Committee, meet performance targets for determining planning applications, defend Appeals effectively and provide an effective enforcement and conservation service.

The Department is currently undertaking a costing process of staffing time and duties in conjunction with other authorities in the Liverpool City Region and the wider North West region, together with benchmarking exercises carried out by the Planning Advisory Service and CIPFA. This exercise is extremely important should the Government, as has been suggested, give authorities the opportunity for Councils to set their own individual planning fees for planning applications.

The Service's handling of an existing backlog of Enforcement complaints is well underway and it is proposed that the Planning Enforcement Policy will be reviewed and overhauled in 2011/12. This project will also introduce an effective policy for

dealing with works to protected trees that will enable resources to be focused, taking account of all the relevant issues arising from the Government's growth agenda and the increased workload of applications and the need to formally discharge planning conditions.

The Service continues to maximise the contribution of heritage assets to the economic development and visual enhancement of the Borough and to provide urban design lead & guidance to improve the quality of development. It also continues to advise members of the public and community groups on development in relation to historic buildings and conservation areas.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

4.1. Tackling worklessness: Ensuring that business growth is linked to increased employment opportunities for local people requires our workforce to have the necessary skills to meet the needs of investors and businesses. We work closely with employers and new businesses to ensure that economic growth is linked to tackling worklessness. The department has worked extensively with partners to bring a focused and co-ordinated approach to tackling worklessness and improving skills levels. This approach has led to the Department securing some significant resources to support Wirral residents secure employment including:

- Sourcing, securing, developing and subsequent contracting of Future Jobs Fund budget, resulting in 650 jobs created;
- Wirral Apprentice programme directly secured – resulting in 313 direct apprenticeship job outcomes
- Wirral Worklessness programme directly secured – resulting in 702 direct job outcomes

This approach will become increasingly important to ensure that Wirral residents can benefit from sustainable employment opportunities particularly as imminent regeneration developments start to come to fruition.

As one of the largest employers in the borough, Wirral Council has also worked hard to improve its economic influence and to maximise accessible employment and skills opportunities for Wirral people. Internal policies on procurement and human resources have been redesigned to create opportunities for targeted employment and stronger inter-departmental linkages have been forged to embed the Investment Strategy's influence.

4.2. Economic Analysis: We continue to build and capture robust intelligence about Wirral's economy. This has been particularly important during the recession, informing Wirral's Economic Recovery Plan and enabling delivery of responsive and effective projects to support Wirral residents and businesses. Clearly the recession has impacted upon business growth at both a national and international level, but the actions that the Council has taken to address the economic downturn have both minimised the negative effects upon the Borough and ensured that it is well placed to take advantage of new and emerging opportunities.

4.3. Business Support: Wirral Council has made steady improvements to its interface with the Private Sector over the last four years, with Invest Wirral being the primary business facing arm of Wirral Council and delivering key support services. This has resulted in the development of relationships with key businesses and Invest Wirral has engaged over 1,800 businesses during the course of the last three years and captured inward investment projects which have generated an investment value of over £23 million into the local economy.

In addition, funding support has been provided through the Think Big and Big Business investment grants with 179 investment projects being supported in 2010/11. This also included supporting companies to access regional and national funds. This work enabled Wirral to put in place a robust Economic Recovery Plan to respond to the economic downturn in ways that both minimised the negative effects upon the Borough and ensured that it is well placed to take advantage of new and emerging opportunities. Actions included financial planning assistance, targeted resources through a grant programme, business advice and project management support. The total grants distributed from April 2009 to date amount to over £1.9M. As a result of

the activity above Invest Wirral has generated an investment value of more than £23M and has helped create and safeguard 1689 jobs.

Recognising the importance of supporting businesses to grow, to strengthen the economy and provide employment, Wirral Council has committed significant resources to build on Invest Wirral's successful approach. The recently agreed Investment Support Services Framework will ensure that Invest Wirral provides a single point of contact and a seamless service for the business lifecycle by providing a range of co-ordinated and innovative services that assist businesses to set up, grow and maintain competitiveness.

- 4.4. Securing Investment:** The creation of a dedicated Investment Strategy team and improved integration with Wirral's planning function, including the appointment of a major projects officer, has enabled the council to carry out a range of activity that supports the offer to the private sector and ensures that the underlying conditions to attract investment are in place by facilitating opportunities whilst still fulfilling statutory obligations. This has included dealing efficiently and effectively with the UK's largest planning application to receive approval, the East Float Development at Wirral Waters and ensuring that this will be linked to the wider regeneration of Birkenhead and Wallasey and delivers economic benefits for the whole of Wirral. It also includes taking forward our Enterprise Zone, working with businesses to access new opportunities such as the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) and New Enterprise Allowance and maximising opportunities from the International Trade Centre proposals.

We continue to work with other private sector and strategic partners to develop the wider City Region and Regional economies. In addition to the Investment Board, this will include supporting the newly established Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Mersey Dee Alliance. We are developing proposals to increase inward investment, that will add value to TMP's LCR 'umbrella' investment strategy and allow the Council to target specific sectoral and project based opportunities that identifies market opportunities.

- 4.5. Tourism and Visitor Economy:** This service helped to sustain a tourism economy worth over £250 million and which employs almost 4,000 people in Wirral. Wirral events have an economic impact worth over £2.5million. Recent initiatives include:

Making It Easy (for visitors and businesses): Wirral tourism marketing literature is developed, delivered and distributed around the north west (eg Visitor Guide, Food and Drink Guide, Walk and Cycle Trails, Nature Guide, Events Leaflet, etc). Wirral Investment marketing literature is also developed and delivered (ie targeted to specific potential investors both nationally and internationally).

Intelligence Led: Research is managed and conducted at each event to evaluate past performance and plan future activity. External funds are sourced and secured, and support is provided to Wirral's businesses to develop projects for external funding (eg 11 tourism businesses have accessed over £625,000 of grant from the Rural Development Programme for England over the past 18 months).

- 4.6. Improving Infrastructure:** We are taking forward a number of projects aimed at increasing the number and quality of business sites and premises and to improve our Town Centres. In addition, we will continue to develop the infrastructure required to enable business growth and investment. In particular, through the procurement of a super-fast next generation broadband network, we aim to create a world-class business environment that will allow companies to thrive by reaching new customers, increasing sales, reducing time to market and greatly lowering operating costs. The project also aims to improve Wirral's premier brand as an enterprising location for high

growth inward investment. The supply of sufficient power to support development of Wirral's business parks is also of strategic importance; consequently we will strengthen the links established with key players within the electricity industry and seek to shape future investment decisions.

- 4.7. Housing:** The recent alignment of strategic economic policy with the delivery of regeneration programmes, including housing, has further enhanced the Council's ability to co-ordinate regeneration activity. We recognise that delivering economic growth is inter-linked with developing a strong housing and quality of life offer. It is clear that achieving high value growth must be driven alongside an improved offer of quality and appropriate housing. Our approach is based on the co-location of areas of need and opportunity for housing and economic growth on an unparalleled scale to achieve new growth and investment at the heart of an area of very substantial and sustained deprivation.

We continue to build upon work to improve housing standards for our residents to reduce inequalities and will explore all means to deliver alternative ways of delivering housing renewal and growth as a transition from the HMRI programme to other housing interventions in line with the new housing policy framework. This may include clearance of poor quality, obsolete housing that no longer meets the needs of our residents or refurbishment or improvement where this is more appropriate, and taking enforcement action, where appropriate, to ensure reasonable standards in the private sector stock. Work will be continued to reduce the energy consumption of residents and provide greater affordable warmth. The delivery of the Cosy Homes Insulation Programme will provide up to 24,000 measures in residents homes by 2012, assisting to reduce energy consumption, and provide a positive outcome for residents.

The service has secured investment from Government and attracted external agencies and partners to deliver housing to benefit Wirral residents and support employment opportunities (£54.2m secured during 2008-2011).

The numbers of long term empty properties in Wirral have been steadily increasing in recent years. Wirral's Empty Property Team has developed an effective toolbox of measures to address empty properties and last year was instrumental in bringing back into use over 280 long term empty properties. Targets have been stretched to 300 long-term empty properties this year as well as 60 empty property grants approved. In addition the team have successfully introduced a range of new incentives from private sector leasing, developer liaison and proactive monitoring and targeting hot-spot areas to encourage owners of long term vacant properties to either refurbish and re-let or dispose of them to help meet the boroughs housing needs.

Through Supporting People and Adaptations services we assist approximately 8,000 Wirral residents per year to remain independent in their own homes through the provision of aids and adaptations and support services such as sheltered housing. The positive impact of these services is realised by increasing the length of time clients remain in their own home and the quality of life they experience. In addition they do not have to access more costly residential care service, thereby alleviating the financial burden on other Council Departments and services.

- 4.8. Securing external resources:** At a time when public sector resources to support economic regeneration are being radically reduced, departmental expertise has enabled Wirral to successfully identify, bid for and secure some significant external funding for local initiatives. These include:
- A bid of £4m being made for **Page 42** funding for HMRI schemes. A decision on this bid is awaited.

- A Regional Growth Fund bid of £4,115,315 with Keepmoat Homes to develop a number of sites in the former HMRI area. A decision on this is awaited.
- As part of the contract discussions regarding the Newlands 2 Programme between the NWDA and Forestry Commission, the Council has been able to negotiate and secure £2.204m to restore the former Bromborough Landfill site and £1.4m for a green infrastructure project which will help to set the scene for growth as part of the Wirral Waters project.
- The Council has also supported a local developer to secure a £1.3m European grant to provide 1,896²m of Grade A office accommodation in Birkenhead.
- Wirral Worklessness/ILM Programme £2,440,620 budget resulting in 702 direct job outcomes.
- Assisted Peel in securing Land Remediation funding for West Float

5. CHALLENGES

5.1. Economic Performance

Wirral's updated Investment Strategy demonstrates that Wirral is a borough with enormous potential and opportunity. Wirral has seen significant improvements in its delivery activities since the inception of the Investment Strategy and whilst the global recession has had effects in Wirral, the Council has ensured its strategy has supported businesses and individuals through targeted support during difficult economic conditions. However it is clear that much remains to be done.

Key Economic Indicators

- **Employment:** Wirral has the second lowest rate of Job Seekers Allowance in the Liverpool City Region (LCR). The gap between the regional, national and local employment rates has reduced, but Wirral's employment rate remains lower than average at 65.9%.
- **Economic Inactivity:** Although performing well in comparison to the LCR authorities, Wirral continues to have a higher percentage of people claiming out of work benefits than the regional and national averages at 17.7%. Wirral also has high concentrations in deprived areas at 36.0%.
- **Young People:** 18-24 JSA remains high at 10.1% compared to local, regional and national figures but improvements have been made over the last 12 months.
- **Young People:** 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) remains higher than regional and national figures at 9.0% with concentrations of NEET in deprived areas reaching up to 16% in some areas.
- **Skills Disparities:** Wirral continues to perform well in the percentage rates of qualified residents particularly NVQ Level 2 at 70.6%, however this does not correlate into reductions in worklessness or increased workplace earnings.
- **Skills Deficiencies:** Wirral performs on a par with the national average for the number of employers reporting skills gaps. However, across all occupational groups, the percentage of vacancies reported as hard to fill due to 'low number of applicants with the required skills' is significantly high.
- **Population:** Wirral's population has declined by 2.6%, over the last ten years and is also ageing.
- **Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010:** Wirral remains 60th most deprived nationally in the IMD 2010, even though 11% of all LSOA's in the borough are in the top 3% most deprived nationally. Wirral is ranked 10th in the Employment Domain, an improvement of 2 places since 2007.
- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** Wirral significantly lags behind other local areas in the growth of GVA, and has the lowest GVA per head in England at £11,478.
- **Job Density:** Wirral has the lowest job density ratio in the LCR with 57 jobs per 100 residents.
- **Child Poverty:** Wirral is the second least deprived authority in the LCR but is still behind both regional and national averages with 24.2% of all children in the borough in poverty.
- **Industry:** Wirral is heavily public sector dependant making up 38% of employee jobs in the borough; this is 9% above the national average.
- **Enterprise:** Wirral has increased its enterprise base by 39% since 2005 this is faster than local, regional and national averages.
- **Floorspace:** Business floorspace in Wirral has decreased since 2005, with industrial floorspace seeing the biggest decrease, land values for both Wirral and Liverpool have also decreased over this period.

In summary, Wirral faces a number of economic challenges as follows:

People

- The main challenge for Wirral's workforce is to overcome the high levels of economic inactivity in disadvantaged groups and in the most deprived parts of Wirral
- Overall the borough performs well in terms of skill levels, however, there are pockets of the borough with concentrations of low skills and young people not participating in education, employment and training
- There is a need to engage with the long term unemployed
- There is also a need to ensure the skills base of the existing workforce is developed to match the emerging employment opportunities in high growth sectors
- A key goal is to ensure that the curriculum in schools provides young people with relevant skills so that they can secure future job opportunities

Place

- The key challenge is to address the shortfall in the quantity and quality of employment land and premises to meet the economic growth targets of the Investment Strategy, maximising the opportunities that Wirral's geography provide
- There is a need to radically increase levels of inward investment and increase jobs

Business

- The key challenge to growing Wirral's economy is to improve Wirral's business base and increase jobs.
- There is a need to increase the number of business start-ups, levels of self-employment.
- There is also a need to speed up economic growth, and achieve significant growth in higher value sectors

Housing

- The changing economic climate has provided challenges for the housing service, particularly through high demand for housing, debt advice and an increase in the numbers presenting as homeless resulting in greater demand for support services to assist vulnerable people.
- Wirral's ageing population will require greater investment in aids and adaptations to properties to enable Wirral residents to remain in their own homes.
- Housing affordability in Wirral is not just limited to the more affluent areas where property prices are well in excess of the average householder's financial capacity to obtain a mortgage. Affordability is just as much prevalent in a wide range of neighbourhoods which fall within the eastern side of the Borough where resources are being focused to restructure local housing markets.
- The average earnings in the borough compared to the average sales prices presents particular problems in house affordability, especially for those at the lower end of the earnings scale such as young first-time buyers who also have limited savings to assist with deposits.
- Vulnerable people exist in a variety of groups and we will work to provide support to those individuals to maintain independent living, participate in mainstream community and contribute to the local economy. We will, based on evidence of need, commission appropriate housing and support services and refocus services where required. In 2011/12 this will include renegotiating service provider contracts to ensure value for money for the client and authority and refocusing key services such as the Black and Minority Ethnic support service and Disabled Persons Housing Register.

5.2. External Challenges

- (i) **Public Sector economy:** It is important to consider potential implications of reductions in public sector budgets on the local employment landscape and the effects on the local economy. This is particularly important, since indicative analysis shows that Wirral has a significant reliance on public sector employment.

- (ii) **Policy Landscape:** Against a rapidly changing policy landscape, the department has been providing effective expert economic analysis and responses to ensure that Wirral's priorities are reflected, and also to identify and secure external resources wherever possible. This is particularly important given the significant shift away from central government intervention and support, and reduction in available regeneration resources. Wirral needs to maximise opportunities for investment through the LEP and City Region governance arrangement. It will be essential to ensure that Wirral continues to secure a share of any future public sector resources and attracts increasing levels of private investment in order to deliver our Investment Strategy goals. This approach will build on some of the recent successes outlined earlier in paragraph 4.8.

Housing: Key to supporting this work will be to work with housing provider partners to maximise opportunities through the Homes and Communities Agency Affordable Housing Programme (2011-15) to regenerate priority areas and provide housing that meets peoples needs. This will be further enhanced following the recent alignment of strategic economic policy with the delivery of regeneration programmes including housing to co-ordinate regeneration activity, enabling a more joined up approach to working with private developers and funding agencies to identify and bring forward the development of strategic development sites across the borough.

Whilst sales values in Wirral's inner area would be within reach of some individuals, the quality and choice of offer is not consistent with aspirations of purchasers so there is still work to do on investing in those areas where unpopular, poorer quality housing is not attractive to would-be buyers.

Business Support: National policy changes are particularly impacting on Business Start/Support programmes, and Wirral needs to consider how it will ensure that businesses continue to receive targeted advice and support to develop and grow sustainably.

Welfare Reform: In addition, there have been extensive changes to Welfare Reform that will significantly impact on Wirral residents. It will be essential to ensure that Investment Strategy aims to grow our economy are linked to reducing worklessness so that residents can benefit from sustainable employment opportunities created by regeneration projects such as Wirral Waters. This is particularly important to directly target people and groups who may be hard to reach; or who may have specific multiple barriers to accessing employment; and to develop skills within our workforce that will drive economic growth in priority sectors. In relation to the new Work Programme, it will be essential to monitor and scrutinise local delivery of Prime Contractors, in order to pro-actively identify and address any issues of local impact and performance. This is particularly important given DWP's decision not to permit any data sharing about Primes' performance until Autumn 2012.

- (iii) **Population demographics:** Many Wirral residents enjoy an excellent quality of life. However between the most affluent and the most deprived areas there is a stark mortality gap, with those in the most affluent areas living on average over 10 years longer than those in the most deprived areas. Addressing this disparity and related deprivation are at the heart of the Investment Strategy vision.

Wirral has an ageing population; the number of older people is set to increase considerably over the next two decades. By 2031 it is estimated that 26% of Wirral's population will be aged 65 or above¹. This will have a considerable impact on health

and social care services, as the number of older people presenting with health related problems increases. This also clearly has implications for Wirral's economy, not least that there will be more people claiming benefits such as state pensions and less people working and paying income taxes.

Wirral's Investment Strategy is focused on priorities to tackle worklessness, improve skill levels; and increase enterprise, business growth and investment. It is important to have a strategic and coordinated approach to economic regeneration, tackling worklessness and related child and family poverty. Tackling child and family poverty is particularly pertinent to Wirral's economic regeneration, given the borough's persistent concentrations of high levels of worklessness and low income households.

- (iv) **Global competition:** Wirral's Investment Strategy recognises the importance of attracting new inward investment to Wirral in order to deliver a strong and dynamic economy and provide employment opportunities for Wirral's residents. In order to secure new inward investment, Wirral Council will need to work with its strategic partners to maximise the use of key resources to target specific companies in countries that are interested in the UK as an investment location and use the products and opportunities on offer to generate interest and where possible, secure investment for Wirral

6. OPPORTUNITIES

The department continues to play a leading role in driving forward our local economy, working to attract new investment to the borough, and creating skilled jobs that will increase employment and improve the lives of families. The housing offer in the Borough underpins economic growth and sustainable communities and forms a key strand of our corporate Investment Strategy. We will be actively seeking to improve the housing offer, by making best use of our existing housing stock, including bringing empty properties and derelict land back into use, and supporting investment and planning gain to provide new and affordable homes. Wirral has a number of specific investment opportunities that have been developed since the inception of the Investment Strategy in 2007. The quality of these opportunities and products are now recognised as extremely high, particularly for promotion internationally. Key opportunities include:

- 6.1. **Wirral Waters:** In 2010, Planning permission was given to Peel Holdings' Wirral Waters East Float development, which is the UK's largest regeneration project to have been given planning approval. The £4.5 billion regeneration scheme will take place over the next 25 years and will create in excess of 20,000 new jobs. Peel Holdings is beginning to promote the development on an international basis using a renowned team of property specialists to build a strong and recognisable brand for Wirral Waters, specifically identifying key investment projects within the short, medium and long term.
- 6.2. **Enterprise Zone:** The whole of the Wirral Waters site has been designated as one of the four named 21st Century Enterprise Zones (EZ) by central government. EZ status will assist businesses through tax incentives, superfast broadband, improved infrastructure and simplified planning rules. The EZ provides a clear opportunity to promote the Borough as a preferred location for inward investment and it is anticipated that Wirral will receive an increased number of investment enquiries, which needs to be secured by being able to offer a high quality investment product. It also provides an opportunity for the Council to maximise its investment in business support.
- 6.3. **International Trade Centre:** The Council will also work to maximise the opportunities created by the recent planning **Page 47** from Peel Holdings to develop an International Trade Centre at the West Float site of the Wirral Waters development

and support the co-ordination of this opportunity with other sector development proposals. The 4 phased development totals in excess of 2.5 million square feet that would enable up to a 1,000 separate companies from China, India, South Korea or other emerging economies, to exhibit, sell, assemble and distribute their goods into the UK, Irish and European markets. The facility will include showroom spaces, warehousing/ storage and assembly facilities. The ITC will be the first of its kind in the United Kingdom and the largest and most sustainable Trade Centre in Europe.

6.4. Wirral International Business Park: One of the region's most impressive regeneration success stories is Wirral International Business Park (WIBP). However, there is over 70 hectares of employment land still to be developed at WIBP and its strategic importance is higher than ever in terms of its ability to support the opportunities of key sector developments.

6.5. Offshore Energy opportunities: The port related facilities of the Eastern end of the Borough offer a unique opportunity of available land, skilled workforce, port and harbour facilities and access to an established supply chain to serve the West coast, East coast and Scottish West coast offshore renewable energy markets. Cammell Laird offers the offshore wind industry an excellent range of opportunities for both manufacturing and pre-assembly as well as operation and maintenance bases for the wind farms. At the heart of the UK economy's shift to low carbon, by 2020 the offshore wind industry alone could be worth £75bn and support up to 70,000 jobs in the UK and the uniqueness of the Cammell Laird offer, alongside high quality port related land, is a key investment offer for Wirral as a place to target appropriate investment to support this sector.

6.6. Birkenhead Town Centre: Wirral's Integrated Regeneration Strategy for Birkenhead outlines the potential for new opportunities and development in and around Birkenhead. The Council will be working with Partners to ensure that Birkenhead is developed and strategically linked with the wider regeneration aspirations for the area. This includes ensuring that new development is physically integrated with the surrounding area so that connectivity with Birkenhead Town Centre is maximised.

Work is underway to bring together a range of activities that directly support the unlocking of the development potential of sites adjacent to Wirral Waters to deliver private sector led economic growth and to optimise the linkages with Birkenhead and the surrounding areas.

6.7. Brand New Brighton: Phase 1 was completed in 2008 with the opening of the new Floral Pavilion Theatre. Phase 2, a £40 million mixed-use, retail and leisure development is due for completion in 2011.

6.8. Tourism and Visitor Economy: The Ricoh Women's British Open Championship will take place in Wirral during September 2012, the Wirral Year of Coast and Countryside, and The Boys British Amateur Championships will take place in 2013. The Open Championship will return to the Royal Liverpool Golf Club in Hoylake in 2014.

SCHEDULE 1: Breakdown of service delivery

Corporate Plan theme Your Economy
Service Area Housing Strategy & Homelessness
Budget £3,223,800 – this includes £2.098m revenue budget for delivering the Councils Home Insulation Scheme
Brief service description (max 100 words) This service is responsible for:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statutory homeless and housing advice and assistance service. This includes homeless prevention services, incorporating mortgage rescue, housing and debt advice, private sector tenancy bond/support scheme and emergency temporary accommodation for those who have lost their homes.• Securing investment from Government and attracting external agencies and partners to deliver housing to benefit Wirral residents and support employment opportunities (£54.2m secured during 2008-2011).• Statutory functions relating to strategic housing services including assessments of local housing needs and conditions and development of housing strategies/plans to address these needs.• Delivering and managing capital programmes of £3.6m in addition to the revenue budget identified above.

Corporate Plan theme Your Economy
Service Area Forward Planning
Budget <i>Pay - £282,700</i> <i>Running costs - £64,100</i>
Brief service description (max 100 words) The Forward Planning service consults with members of the public to set out how Wirral's land should be used to support long term growth and protect our environment. This Plan is called Wirral's Local Development Framework and it includes how much land is needed for homes, jobs and roads, how the Borough's town centres could be supported and policies for the protection of the environment, such as open space and the Green Belt.

Your Economy
Service Area Business Support and attracting Inward Investment - Invest Wirral and Inward Investment
Budget <i>Employees: £298,000</i> <i>Running Costs: £1,559,300</i>
Brief service description (max 100 words) <p>Wirral Council recognises the importance of attracting investment to the Borough and supporting businesses to set up and grow. Invest Wirral is the Council's single point of contact and offers a range of support for business development.</p> <p>This includes providing specialist advice, help for businesses to enter new markets at home and abroad, access to targeted business grants and support for social enterprises. Invest Wirral runs a business forum which increases trading and networking opportunities for businesses. The service also keeps a database of available commercial properties, actively promotes Wirral as a business investment location and will specifically target companies to attract inward investment projects to Wirral.</p>

Corporate Plan theme Your Economy
Service Area Economic Development - Investment Strategy, Economic Policy and Regeneration
Budget <i>Employees: £1,193,900</i> <i>Running costs: £1,637,500</i> <i>Supporting Apprentices: £500,000</i> <i>Supporting Next Generation Access: £1,075,000</i>
Brief service description (max 100 words) The service supports the growth of the Borough's economy by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progressing major developments, such as Wirral Waters, New Brighton, Wirral International Business Park; • attracting private sector investment and public sector funds; • developing sites and improving the quality of business premises; taking forward programmes to support Wirral residents to gain the skills necessary to meet employers' needs and to overcome the high levels of unemployment in the Borough, which has pockets of deprivation amongst the worst in the country.

Service Area
Planning – Development Management and Building Control
Budget <i>Employees</i> £1,535,500 <i>Running Costs</i> £372,700 (Income is generated through Building Control and Planning Applications)
Brief service description (max 100 words) The Planning service processes planning applications, taking into account local plan policies, government guidance and the individual merits of each scheme, in order to control development in the Borough in the public interest. It ensures that buildings are properly designed and constructed and encourages the sustainable use of resources. The service is also responsible for enforcing planning decisions and for conserving the Borough’s heritage assets.

Corporate Plan theme Your Economy
Service Area Housing Services Private Sector Housing
Budget Revenue Budget £1,026,800
Brief service description (max 100 words) Delivers significant elements of Wirral’s statutory housing responsibilities, protecting public health through housing interventions targeted at sub standard housing conditions, improving neighbourhoods and assembling land for housing development by securing investment into housing in the Borough. This includes housing clearance, improvements and new-build programmes; protecting the health and safety of residents in higher risk Houses in Multiple Occupation, improving standards in the private rented sector through Landlord Accreditation, bringing empty properties back into use and protecting the health and wellbeing of vulnerable residents through Healthy Homes. The service is also delivers a capital programme of £5.3million in addition to the revenue budget shown above.

Corporate Plan theme Your Economy
Service Area Supporting People and Adaptations
Budget Employees: £958,400 Running Costs: £9,045,000 Total: £10,003,400

Brief service description (max 100 words)

The Supporting People and Adaptation programmes provide preventative services, designed to assist the most vulnerable people in society to achieve and maintain independent living through the delivery of support services such as sheltered housing and disabled adaptations such as stairlifts and ramps. By providing these services it reduces the financial burdens on other, more costly, budgets such as Social Care and enables people to remain in their own homes.

The service also includes the additional delivery of £3m capital programme for adaptations in addition to the revenue budget shown above

Corporate Plan theme

Your ECONOMY

Service Area

Tourism

Budget

- Employees - £242,400
- Running Costs: £200,600 (including contribution to Tranmere Rovers Football Club)
- Tourism Events: £139,100 (including Investment Marketing)

Brief service description (max 100 words)

This service is responsible for the effective marketing and promotion of Wirral as a quality visitor destination and providing advice and support to tourism businesses. 2012 has been designated the Wirral Year of Coast and Countryside to encourage visitors for day and short breaks in Wirral which will provide much needed support for the tourism sector during the current economic downturn.

The service is also responsible for attracting potential investors to Wirral and supporting major tourist events which attract visitors to the area and help increase income which is vital for the sustainability of Wirral businesses.

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 5th SEPTEMBER 2011

REPORT OF THE GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY PANEL MEMBERS

GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW - PROGRESS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on progress with the Green Growth Scrutiny Review.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, held on 6th June 2011, members agreed to undertake an in-depth scrutiny review to produce an informed response to the Notice of Motion that was approved by Council on 18th April 2011. The Notice of Motion, which was agreed unanimously, was:

That Council:

- (1) Recognises the importance of environmental sustainability to future business growth and the development of the Borough's economy, not just the Green economy.
- (2) Recognises that aligning resource efficiency, sustainable procurement, waste reduction strategies, commercial waste infrastructure, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources are common across all sectors of the economy and key to long term success and sustainability.
- (3) Notes the ENWORKS report 'Making an impact in the Liverpool City Region' and the excellent resource efficiency support that this organisation has offered to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), making businesses stronger through better use of resources.
- (4) Instructs officers to review the Council's economic regeneration policies to ensure that businesses in Wirral can access appropriate information and support tools to enable them to benefit from increased profitability, productivity and sustainability through improved energy and resource efficiency.
- (5) Recognises the green value of Wirral's Home Insulation Programme, set up under the previous Labour/Liberal Democrat administration and continued by the present administration, which will benefit Wirral householders, increase employment opportunities and reduce the Carbon Footprint of the Borough.
- (6) Believes that there is real potential for the development of emerging Green technologies on Wirral and asks the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate and draw up a report for Cabinet on the best ways to create and support a "cluster" of companies to lead the way in driving a Green economy on Wirral and across the country.

- 1.2 The Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that a panel of members should be formed to undertake the scrutiny review. Subsequently, the following members volunteered to be members of the Panel:
- Councillor Mark Johnston (Chair)
 - Councillor Peter Kearney
 - Councillor Steve Niblock
 - Councillor Stuart Whittingham

2. Scope of the Review

- 2.1 The Panel members have met on two occasions to discuss the scope of the review. Panel members suggest that the review should focus on paragraph (6) of the Notice of Motion. The review will, therefore, concentrate on “the best ways to create and support a ‘cluster’ of companies to lead the way in driving a green economy on Wirral and across the country”.
- 2.2 A draft Scope Document, agreed by the Panel members, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Committee members are requested to consider this draft document for approval.
- 2.3 The Panel is recommending that this scrutiny review focuses on the following major issues:
- National Policy –
What is national Government policy / strategy and how will this impact on Wirral?
 - Current business support provided by the Council –
What is already being done regarding support to local businesses in the green economy and how can we support these companies to expand?
 - Marketing -
How are we marketing Wirral to attract inward investment and to create more green investment jobs, for example, through involvement with trade fairs?
What will be the opportunities for the green economy arising from the proposed Enterprise Zone?
 - Creating a green market –
What is the Council doing to create a green market and support the green economy?
 - Education / training –
What are the educational / training needs of the sector?
 - Planning and land availability –
Does the existing planning regime encourage green growth?
What has Wirral Borough Council got in terms of rentable space / land and how suitable is it?
 - Council properties –
What does the Council do with its own properties regarding green technology and is there an opportunity to create a market for green suppliers?

3. Evidence Gathering and the Report

3.1 The Panel members propose to use a number of methods to gather evidence:

- Meetings with key officers
- Meetings with representatives of the business community
- Visits to appropriate sites

3.2 Further written evidence will be gathered from recent Committee reports, relevant Government reports and strategies as well as from other Councils.

3.3 It is planned that the final report for the Green Growth Scrutiny Review will be completed before the end of 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee approve the Scope for the Green Growth Scrutiny Review, as detailed in Appendix 1.
- (2) That the Panel members be confirmed as Councillors Mark Johnston (Chair), Peter Kearney, Steve Niblock, and Stuart Whittingham.

Report of the Green Growth Scrutiny Panel Members:
Cllr Mark Johnston (Chair)
Cllr Peter Kearney
Cllr Steve Niblock
Cllr Stuart Whittingham

Appendix 1: Scope Document for the Green Growth Scrutiny Review

Review Title: Green Growth Scrutiny Review

Scrutiny Panel Chair: Cllr Mark Johnston	Contact details: mobile: 07986 540930
Additional Panel members: Cllr Peter Kearney Cllr Steve Niblock Cllr Stuart Whittingham	Contact details: 0151 343 1719 mobile: 07583 395300 mobile: 07939 578041 0151 653 5539 mobile:
Scrutiny Officer: Alan Veitch	Contact details: 0151 691 8564
Departmental Link Officer: Kevin Adderley	Contact details: 0151 691 8187
Other Key Officer contacts:	
<p>1. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</p> <p>1.1 Market Wirral as a world class location for businesses and visitors.</p> <p>1.2 Make Wirral Council one of the most business friendly and supportive Councils in the country.</p>	
<p>2. What are the main issues?</p> <p>2.1 National Policy - What is national Government policy / strategy and how will this impact on Wirral?</p> <p>2.2 Current business support - What is already being done regarding support to local businesses in the green economy and how can we support these companies to expand?</p> <p>2.3 Marketing - How are we marketing Wirral to attract inward investment and to create more green investment jobs, for example, through involvement with trade fairs? What will be the opportunities for the green economy arising from the proposed Enterprise Zone?</p> <p>2.4 Creating a green market – What is the Council doing to create a green market and support the green economy?</p> <p>2.5 Education / training – What are the educational / training needs of the sector?</p> <p>2.6 Planning and land availability – Does the existing planning regime encourage green growth? What has Wirral Borough Council got in terms of rentable space / land and how suitable is it?</p> <p>2.7 Council properties – What does the Council do with its own properties regarding green technology and is there an opportunity to create a market for green suppliers?</p>	

<p>3. The Committee's overall aim/objective in doing this work is:</p> <p>3.1 Council agreed a motion on 18th April 2011 which included: "This Council believes that there is real potential for the development of emerging Green technologies on Wirral and asks the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate and draw up a report for Cabinet on the best ways to create and support a 'cluster' of companies to lead the way in driving a Green economy on Wirral and across the country".</p>																		
<p>4. The possible outputs/outcomes are:</p> <p>4.1 To understand the current position regarding the green economy in Wirral. 4.2 To gauge the current strength of the low carbon sector in Wirral. 4.3 To develop proposals to help stimulate further green growth in the borough.</p>																		
<p>5. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic?</p> <p>Further scrutiny will help to raise the profile of green growth within the Council and, hopefully, remove barriers to future development.</p>																		
<p>6. Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?</p> <p>6.1 Appropriate Cabinet members and Directors, Wirral Borough Council. 6.2 Indirectly, potential investors.</p>																		
<p>7. Duration of enquiry?</p> <p>Report due at the end of 2011.</p>																		
<p>8. What category does the review fall into?</p> <table> <tr> <td>Policy Review</td> <td>x</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Policy Development</td> <td>x</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>External Partnership</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Performance Management</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Holding Executive to Account</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Policy Review	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy Development	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	External Partnership		<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Management		<input type="checkbox"/>	Holding Executive to Account		<input type="checkbox"/>			
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External Partnership		<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Management		<input type="checkbox"/>													
Holding Executive to Account		<input type="checkbox"/>																
<p>9. Extra resources needed? Would the investigation benefit from the co-operation of an expert witness?</p> <p>The review will be conducted by councillors with the support of existing officers. However, the panel are looking for advice from people with expertise on this topic.</p>																		

10. What information do we need?	
<p>10.1 Secondary information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc).</p> <p>Relevant Government Departmental documents</p> <p>Recent Committee / Cabinet reports</p> <p>Relevant national documents</p> <p>Reports from other Councils into similar topics</p> <p>Examples of good practice from other Councils, for example, Bristol.</p>	<p>10.2 Primary/new evidence/information</p> <p>An evaluation of the businesses currently operating in the green economy sector in Wirral. (How many businesses, number of employees, type of business, etc..)</p> <p>Interviews with key officers</p> <p>Interviews with representatives of the business community</p> <p>Possible survey of representatives of the business community</p>
<p>10.3 Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet portfolio holder, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc).</p> <p>Several meetings will be held including: Ben Lavell (Invest Wirral, WBC)</p> <p>Mark McManus (Managing Director, Stiebel Eltron) plus other representatives of the business community</p> <p>Kevin Adderley, Interim Director of Corporate services, WBC) – to discuss Inward Investment strategy</p> <p>Gill Rutter (Destination Marketing, WBC)</p> <p>Andrew Fraser (Strategic Development, WBC) - to discuss the planning regime and land issues</p> <p>Ian Brand (Asset Management, WBC)</p> <p>Alan Evans (Strategic Development, WBC)</p> <p>Visit to the Green Energy Training Centre (Stiebel Eltron)</p> <p>Wirral Metropolitan College</p>	<p>10.4 What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p> <p>Which part of the Council's current service provision is particularly successful?</p> <p>Where can improvements to service provision be made?</p> <p>What are the current barriers to green growth in Wirral?</p> <p>Can these barriers be removed?</p> <p>What should be the priorities for the future?</p>

11. What processes can we use to feed into the review? (site visits/observations, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, written questionnaire, etc).

- 11.1 Meetings with officers and representatives of the business community
- 11.2 Visits to include the Green Energy Training Centre, Invest Wirral
- 11.3 Survey of businesses in the green economy sector
- 11.4 Desk-top analysis

12. In what ways can we involve the public and at what stages? (consider whole range of consultative mechanisms, local committees and local ward mechanisms).

- 12.1 None at this stage, other than through the business community

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY & REGENERATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 SEPTEMBER 2011

PLANNING COMMITTEE 20 SEPTEMBER 2011

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26 SEPTEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	SHALE GAS FRACKING
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following reports of exploratory works for shale gas in Lancashire, concern has been raised about environmental implications. The purpose of this report is to advise members of local and national responsibilities and regulatory roles in relation to development for gas exploration and extraction.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of this report.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The report sets out the Local Authority's responsibility role and regulatory role in relation to gas exploration within the Borough.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Council, at its meeting on 18th July 2011 raised concern about test drilling for shale gas deposits near Blackpool, which was followed by earthquakes on the Fylde coast.
- 4.2 It was also reported that the company IGas Energy has licenses, covering over more than 700km² between Manchester and the Mersey / Dee estuaries, to extract gas from onshore underground coal seams including locations in Liverpool and Wirral. The company has estimated that 1.95 trillion cubic feet of shale gas may lie trapped under Wirral alone.
- 4.3 Consequently the Council resolved to:

- a) state opposition to applications for shale gas or coal gas methane testing or extraction until safety and risk of adverse environmental impact has been fully addressed,
- b) prepare an officers' report for Planning Committee, the Economy and Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees to aid Members in better understanding the Council's responsibility and regulatory role, and
- c) request a study on whether there would be any adverse impact on Wirral becoming a leading area for the manufacture of low carbon technologies and development of a green economy (Council, 18th July 2011, Item 28 refers).

Extraction Process

- 4.4 Shale gas is an “unconventional” fossil fuel, which needs additional procedures to extract it beyond regular drilling. There are three main types of unconventional gas: shale gas; tight gas; and coal-bed methane. Shale and tight gas are dispersed over wider areas than conventional gas, meaning many more wells would be drilled to extract the same amount of gas as from conventional resources. Fracking is a process of creating fissures by the injection of a fluid (mainly water and sand with chemicals) into underground shale formations. Fractures would be propped open by the sand, which allows the natural gas to flow into the wellbore for collection at the surface. Rising fuel costs and recent advances in drilling technology are the main reasons for rising interest in prospecting for this type of fuel.

Responsibilities & Regulatory Controls

- 4.5 The search for land based gas in the United Kingdom is governed by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) who have responsibility for granting licenses under the Petroleum Licensing (Exploration and Production) (Seaward and Landward Areas) Regulations 2004 (No 352) and the Hydrocarbons Licensing Directive Regulations 1995.
- 4.6 The west of Wirral has been subject to licenses for the exploration of oil and natural gas for some time under the former Department of Energy with preliminary tests carried out in the 1970's and 1980's. DECC License PEDL 184 currently covers west Wirral which enables a company to pursue a range of oil and gas exploration activities, subject to necessary drilling/development consents and planning permission. Alongside conventional onshore oil and gas exploration and development, the licence covers exploration and development of coal bed methane, mine-vent gas, oil shale, shale gas and gas storage in a previous gas field.
- 4.7 There are permitted development rights for mineral exploration under Part 22 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. The drilling of boreholes, seismic surveys and excavations could be carried out without a formal planning application to the Local Planning Authority, subject to a number of caveats and conditions such as land restoration and tree protection etc.

Development on land over a period exceeding 28 consecutive days would not, however, be permitted unless the Local Planning Authority has been notified of the location and nature of the intended works.

- 4.8 In its response to the House of Commons Select Committee on Energy and Climate Change 5th Report concerning shale gas, the Government on 26th July 2011 stated that 'specific consent from DECC gives DECC the opportunity to prevent the well from being drilled if it is not satisfied about any aspect of the well, including the applicant's financial capacity.' The Government also indicated that 'following the seismic tremors which took place in April and in May, DECC had discussions with the operator and agreed that a pause in hydraulic fracturing operations is appropriate so that a better understanding can be gained of the cause of the seismic events experienced in Poulton-le-Fylde. A geomechanical study is being undertaken, along with further work by the British Geological Survey and Keele University. The implications of this information will be reviewed before any decision on the resumption of these hydraulic fracture operations is made.'
- 4.9 A formal planning application to the Local Planning Authority would be required for any more permanent development associated with gas extraction, which is not covered under Permitted Development rights. Hazardous Substance Consent may also be required if stocks of gas exceed a threshold of 15 tonnes. Nationally significant applications may need to be considered by the Infrastructure Planning Commission, who would consult affected Local Planning Authorities. Significant development could also be subject to full Environment Impact Assessment.
- 4.10 Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that 'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'
- 4.11 Relevant Development Plan policies for assessing such applications currently include the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS, September 2008) Policy EM15, and Policy MI2 in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP, February 2000) as saved by the Secretary of State on 28 September 2007. RSS Policy EM15 places an emphasis on promoting sustainable energy production and consumption. The impact from design, siting (particularly in relation to sensitive areas and development), noise, dust, odours and traffic would also need to be assessed under the terms UDP Policy MI2.
- 4.12 In terms of the future, the Core Strategy Preferred Option 19 sets out the Council's proposed general strategic approach to minerals. While there is no specific mention of shale gas, the intention is to include criteria in future policies to cover environmental impact, design, construction, operation, restoration and aftercare of any mineral related site. No representations have been received during the consultation period regarding potential shale gas sites. The final Core Strategy policy is expected to be reported to Cabinet towards the end of the year.
- 4.13 One of the Government's objectives in National Minerals Policy MPG1 (November 2006) is to secure working practices which prevent or reduce as far as possible, impacts on the environment and human health. The gas industry is expected to fully discuss any proposals with Local Planning Authority and that planning policies are expected to be drafted to ensure that individual applications are considered on

their own merits. Matters for consideration include the need to minimise visual intrusion; control vehicular activity; drilling residue; noise and light emissions. These would also be matters for consideration in nationally significant applications under DECC National Policy Statement for Gas Supply Infrastructure and Gas and Oil Pipelines (July 2011).

Other Controls

- 4.14 Gas storage and supply infrastructure sites are subject to stringent safety standards under the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 1999
- 4.15 Boreholes Sites and Operations Regulations 1995 apply from the beginning of operations on site and will continue to apply during the life of the facility until the borehole is decommissioned. The Health and Safety Executive enforces these Regulations.
- 4.16 An abstraction licence may also be required from the Environment Agency under the Water Act 1991 for the use of more than 20 cubic metres of water from the environment.

Impact on low carbon technologies and developing green economy

- 4.17 If significant amounts of shale gas were to enter the market, there is a possibility that investment in more-expensive lower carbon and renewable technology could be discouraged. This point was raised by the House of Commons Select Committee on Energy and Climate Change, which concluded that the UK needs to manage this risk in order to achieve its aim of generating more electricity from renewable and other low carbon sources. The Select Committee went on to recommend that this could be done through progressive implementation of an Emissions Performance Standard (EPS) to prevent gas power stations operating as base load providers after a certain date, unless fitted with carbon capture and storage.
- 4.18 In the Government's response, published on 26th July 2011, it was indicated that gas in particular will be needed to provide vital flexibility to support an increasing amount of low carbon generation and to maintain security of supply. It was considered important that investment in gas generation is not undermined over the next few years and that sufficient certainty for investors is provided. The Government went on to conclude that it will introduce an EPS above the level of emissions of gas plant. Plants consented before the end of 2015 will be offered a guaranteed EPS for a pre-determined period. Work with stakeholders is to be undertaken to determine how this should be implemented and what the period should be, recognising that investment certainty, security of supply, and support for decarbonisation must be balanced. The future use of EPS will also be subject to review in line with the decarbonisation reporting process required under the Energy Act 2010

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 There are no direct risk implications arising from this report.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 No other options have been considered, as this report sets out responsibilities and regulatory roles in relation to development for gas exploration and extraction.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 There are no implications for community consultation arising from this report. Operations or structures requiring planning permission will be subject to statutory consultation procedures.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 There are no direct resource implications: financial; IT; staffing; and assets implications arising from this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The responsibilities and regulatory roles in relation to development for gas exploration and extraction are set out within the main body of this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
(a) Is an EIA required? No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct carbon reduction implications arising from this report, although conclusions on the impact of gas supply on low carbon technologies are contained within paragraphs 4.17 and 4.18.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 This report identifies legislation and local, regional and national planning policy that can be relevant in the determination of planning applications for development in relation to gas exploration and extraction.

REPORT AUTHOR: Eddie Fleming
Principal Planning Officer
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email: eddiefleming@wirral.gov.uk

REFERENCE MATERIAL

National Minerals Policy MPG1, November 2006 can be viewed at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/152993.pdf>

DECC National Policy Statement for Gas Supply Infrastructure and Gas and Oil Pipelines (EN-4) July 2011 can be viewed at <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/meeting-energy-demand/consents-planning/nps2011/1941-nps-gas-supply-oil-en4.pdf>

The House of Commons Select Committee on Energy and Climate Change 5th Report can be viewed at:
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmenergy/1449/1449.pdf>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council – Item 28	18 th July 2011

WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SRUTINY COMMITTEE

5TH SEPTEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	THE WIRRAL APPRENTICE
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES REGENERATION & PLANNING STRATEGY
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to respond to the motion raised by Councillor Kelly at the Economic and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 6th June 2011.
- 1.2 The report details work currently being undertaken by Council officers to support the up-take of level 3 (Advanced) Apprenticeships within the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme. The report also provides a commentary on the currently position of the education sector to deliver functional skills.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 Cabinet is to note report findings and the establishment of the Council Apprenticeship Strategy Working Group (SWG). This group draws officer expertise from children & young people, economic development, business support, human resources and procurement. The SWG will take forward a holistic view of Apprenticeship engagement in the borough and are developing a Wirral response to the actions detailed in the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy. The SWG will initially report to Executive Team to ensure this strategic approach to apprenticeships is communicated across all directorates.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 Cabinet on 9th December 2010 agreed the recommendation of the Economy and Regeneration Task Force for continuation of the Wirral Apprentice.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 On Monday 6th June 2011 Cabinet considered a Notion of Motion in relation to continuation of the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme.

Notice of Motion it was resolved as follows:

- The details of the Wirral Apprentice be noted.
- Committee looks forward to commenting on the work currently being undertaken to increase level 3 take-up within the scheme and asks that the idea of specific premiums be considered as part of the review.
- Committee notes that many apprenticeship frameworks are soon to replace the requirement for key skills qualifications with the new requirement for functional skills, and asks the Director of Children's Services to report on the preparedness of the education sector for this new challenge.

Progress on Apprenticeship Activity and Level 3 (Advanced Apprenticeship) Promotion

- 4.2 It is widely recognised that level 3 (Advanced) Apprenticeships are a key driver of business competitiveness and growth. If businesses are to meet the increasing forces of globalisation and retain a market share employers need to continuously update skills.
- 4.3 Members will note that Cabinet adopted a Liverpool City Region (LCR) Apprenticeship Strategy on 23rd June 2011 and authorised officers to work with LCR colleagues, on behalf of Wirral Council, in the development of an Apprenticeship Strategy Action Plan.
- 4.4 The LCR Apprenticeship Strategy details a number of strategic priorities and twenty key actions. Priority 2 in the strategy is concerned with Apprenticeships meeting the needs of the Liverpool City Region economy, including in the Transformational sectors. Within this priority is an action to drive up the volume and share of level 3 Apprenticeship programmes.
- 4.5 Council Officers came together in August to establish a group to take forward the actions identified in the Apprenticeship Strategy and influence the future direction of the LCR strategy. The group draws officer expertise from children & young people, economic development, business support, human resources and procurement. Draft terms of reference for this group have now been agreed and the group will take forward a holistic view of Apprenticeships in Wirral, encompassing the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme, the on-going programmes which support take up of jobs and training opportunities, such as Build Wirral which influences accessibility via procurement processes. The Officers Group is currently defining practical actions and solutions to be implemented in Wirral to support the Apprenticeship Strategy's identified priorities and actions. Key to the actions and solutions will be a full consideration as to how the officers group can practically support increasing the number and share of level 3 Apprenticeships in the borough.
- 4.6 In terms of the current Wirral Apprenticeship programme there is no capacity to respond by increasing the volumes of level 3 Apprenticeships. This due to the fact that all available funding is currently in contract. The officers group will however set in training considerations as to how any future Wirral

Apprenticeship Programme funding could be prioritised to encourage greater volumes of level 3 Apprenticeships and grow the market.

- 4.7 The Wirral 14-19 Strategic Partnership circulated, for consultation, a draft copy of the 2011 Wirral Strategic Overview (WSO) in July 2011. The WSO identifies the supply and demand of education and training provision in the borough for young people aged 16 to 19 (or up to 25 where subject to a learning difficulty assessment). This is done as part of Wirral Council's statutory duties under the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL), 2009. The consultation, which closes 23rd September 2011, is seeking the views of stakeholders in respect of identified education and training priorities for 2012/13. In the Apprenticeships section under, 'key risks factors to achieving priorities' it has been identified that a key priority for the Council and Government is level 3 Apprenticeships.
- 4.8 Upon completion of the consultation phase the Council 14-19 Team will be presenting Wirral priorities and findings to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) – the national key agencies responsible funding Apprenticeship provision. It is at this stage the 14-19 Team will be looking to agree specific support and actions with the SAF and NAS to assist in making a reality of the identified priorities and aspirations. This meeting is scheduled to take place in September 2011.
- 4.9 Members will note that the National Apprenticeship Service has recently released a Higher Apprenticeship Fund prospectus which is designed to increase activity in Level 4 apprenticeships.
- 4.10 Officers have promoted and explored the potential for local applications to this fund from appropriate local organisations within the subscribed criteria. Members will be updated on any subsequent successful developments in this activity. The full prospectus can be found on the National Apprenticeship Service website at: <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/News-Media/Latest-News/~//link.aspx?id=C0E72E74DA424B6BBBE56BED93FA16A3&z=z>

The Education Sector and Preparedness to Deliver Functional Skills

- 4.11 In the context of Apprenticeships Functional Skills qualifications are due to replace Key Skills, as a mandatory component of all Apprenticeship frameworks. This requirement is stated in the Specification for Apprenticeship Standards in England (SASE) which sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognised English Apprenticeship framework.
- 4.12 Compliance with the SASE will be a statutory requirement of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act. The agreed minimum requirement for Functional Skills qualifications in Apprenticeship frameworks is English and Mathematics at Level 1 for Intermediate Level Apprenticeship and Level 2 for an Advanced Level Apprenticeship.
- 4.13 On 14 July 2010, the Business, Innovation and Skills Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning agreed to extend dual running of Key Skills and Functional Skills in Apprenticeships until the end of March

2011 to allow time for employers and providers to finalise their models for delivering Functional Skills within Apprenticeship frameworks.

- 4.14 Following consultation with key partners and the identification of a need for additional development time, Ministers have agreed an extended, temporary transitional arrangement involving parallel running between Key Skills, Functional Skills and the new GCSEs (with increased functional content) from April 2011 until the end of September 2012. This extension is subject to further work with stakeholders, to develop a wider range of flexible assessment models to ensure that Functional Skills are intrinsic to Apprenticeships and to facilitate full implementation by September 2012.
- 4.15 The Learning and Skills Improvement Service provided formal support to post-16 learning providers up to August 2010. All supporting materials and Adviser Support Services have now transferred to the Excellence Gateway.
- 4.16 Locally the Council 14-19 Team has provided support for schools, independent private providers and Wirral Metropolitan College during the development (2008 onwards) and implementation phases of the 14-19 Diploma. Support has included development days facilitated by external consultants and the Council 14-19 Team, resource development and 1:1 support for teaching professional. All Wirral Council online resources are publically accessible at: [Wirral 14-19 Partnership :: 14-19 Curriculum :: Foundation Learning :: Functional Skills for Foundation Learning ****](#)
- 4.17 The Wirral 14-19 Strategic Partnership have committed to fund a teaching professional from Wallasey School to drive forward, during the 2011-12 academic year, Foundation Learning curriculum development. Sue Elliott is now in post and will work to support Wirral post 16 learning providers in the development of Foundation Learning curriculum. Functional Skills are part of the core curriculum in Foundation Learning.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 There are no direct risk implications arising from this report.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Options for the delivery of the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme were considered and agreed by cabinet before the start of each phase.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Wirral Apprenticeship Programme forms part of the Council's Regeneration Programmes which are taken forward in close consultation with partners from private, public and voluntary, community and faith sectors.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 The Wirral Apprenticeship Programme forms part of the Council's Regeneration Programmes which are taken forward in close consultation with partners from private, public and voluntary, community and faith sectors.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Wirral Apprentice forms part of the Council's Regeneration Programmes which adhere to current legislation including those relating to equal opportunities. The Wirral Apprentice directly supports priority customer groups currently under-represented in the labour market to secure sustainable employment.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct carbon reduction implications arising from this report.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no direct planning or community safety implications arising from this report.

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REFERENCE MATERIAL

Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy –
(<http://www.liverpoolcitystrategyces.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/lcr-apprentice-brochure.pdf>)

National Apprenticeship Service website – Functional Skills in Apprenticeships
(www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

Wirral 14-19 Strategic Partnership Virtual Learning Environment – Functional Skills materials and the Wirral Strategic Overview document
(<http://clc2.uniservity.com/GroupHomepage.asp?GroupId=20115134>)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Wirral Apprentice Programme	23rd April 2009
Cabinet – Additional Allocation of Working Neighbourhood Funds	26th November 2009
Cabinet - Extension of Wirral Apprentice Programme	14th October 2010
Cabinet - Liverpool City Region European Funding Proposal	4th November 2010
Cabinet - Tackling worklessness and supporting apprenticeships in Wirral through the European Social	9th December 2010
Cabinet - Tackling worklessness and supporting apprenticeships in Wirral through the European Social	3rd February 2011
Economic and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Programme funding for the Wirral Apprentice Programme.	6th June 2011

UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAMME : ECONOMY & REGENERATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 05/09/11

Reports to assist in monitoring the Committee's work programme

It was agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs Group in September 2008 to use the following reports to monitor the work programme for each Scrutiny Committee. The last item on each Scrutiny Committee agenda should be 'Review of the Committee Work Programme'.

Report 1 - Monitoring Report for Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

This report will list all items that have been selected by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme for the current year.

It will also include items, such as previous Panel Reviews, where recommendations have been made to Cabinet. It is important that the implementation of these recommendations is monitored. Otherwise there is no measure of the success of scrutiny.

For each item on the work programme, the report will give a description, an indication of how the item will be dealt with, a relative timescale for the work and brief comments on progress.

Report 2 - Suggestions for Additions to Work Programme

The Work Programme for the Committee should be reviewed at each meeting. This will enable members to ask for new Items to be added to the programme. This report will list any newly suggested items. Committee will then have the opportunity to agree (or not) for them to be added to the programme.

Report 3 - Proposed Outline Meeting Schedule for the Municipal Year

The report will, for each scheduled Committee meeting, list those items which are likely to be on the meeting agenda. This will give the opportunity for Committee members to take a greater lead in organising their work programme.

Report 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

This report will give a very brief update on progress / timescales for in-depth panel reviews which are in the 'ownership' of the Committee.

REPORT 1
MONITORING REPORT FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
ECONOMY & REGENERATION : 2010 / 2011

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
06/06/11	The implementation of affordable housing policies	Report to Committee on 05/09/11		During the discussion on the 'End of Year Performance Report' on 06/06/11, members requested a report to the next meeting on this item.	
06/06/11	Wirral Apprenticeship scheme	Report to Committee		During the discussion on the 'Apprenticeship Programme' item at the meeting on 06/06/11, members requested a further update specifically on level 3 up-take and on the preparedness of the education sector for the challenge of the new requirement for functional skills.	
06/06/11	Green Growth – Motion agreed at Council in April requesting this Scrutiny Committee to “investigate and draw up a report for Cabinet on the best ways to create and support a ‘cluster’ of companies to lead the way in driving a Green economy on Wirral and across the country”.	In-depth Scrutiny Review by Working Group of Members	December 2011	This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11.	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
06/06/11	Business Start Programme The Programme has performed well but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we supporting businesses for the future? • What size of business is supported? • How long have supported businesses remained in business? • Were businesses satisfied with the support? 	Report to Committee		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11.	
06/06/11	European Social Fund and the Work Programme to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress report on the contract with the Reach-Out consortia • What are the comparisons with arrangements / results at other Local Authorities? 	Report to Committee in November		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11.	
06/06/11	Inward Investment	Report to Committee		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11.	
06/06/11	Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) What are the options now that HMRI has ended?	Report to Committee		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11.	
06/06/11	Visit to regeneration and housing sites, for example, housing schemes, Wirral International Business Park, Wirral Waters	Members visit to be arranged by Kevin Adderley		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11.	

REPORT 2
SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME
ECONOMY & REGENERATION : 05/09/11

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Completion Date
Shale Gas Fracking – Referral from Council meeting held on 18 th July 2011	Referral from Council meeting held on 18 th July 2011	Officer Report	
Fair Trade	Cllr Mark Johnston		

REPORT 3
PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR
ECONOMY & REGENERATION : 2010 / 2011

Meeting Date	Topic Description
06/05/11	Terms of Reference for the Committee End of Year Performance report 2010-11 Apprenticeship Programme Scrutiny Work Programme Forward Plan Regeneration Update
05/09/11	Invest Wirral – Presentation (Paula Basnett) Future plans for the Business Start Programme (Kevin Adderley) Implementation of affordable housing policies (to include options for localised definition of affordable housing) (Ian Platt) Inward Investment (Kevin Adderley) Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 (Kevin Adderley) Green Growth Scrutiny review: Update (Report of Working Group – Cllr Mark Johnston, Chair) Referral from Council meeting on 18 th July 2011 – Motion regarding Shale Gas Fracking Fair Trade – Progress report (Cllr Mark Johnston) Scrutiny Work Programme Forward Plan Regeneration Update
07/11/11	European Social Fund and the Work Programme (Kevin Adderley) Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 (Kevin Adderley) Scrutiny Work Programme Forward Plan Regeneration Update Plus other items.....

REPORT 4
PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS
ECONOMY & REGENERATION : 05/09/11

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report to Committee
Green Growth Scrutiny Review	Cllr Mark Johnston (Chair) Cllr Peter Kearney Cllr Steve Niblock Cllr Stuart Whittingham	As at 28/07/11: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two meetings of the working group have been held to discuss the general approach to the review • A draft Scope for the review has been agreed • Further meetings will be held in September with Council officers and members of the business community to commence evidence-gathering for the review 	End of December 2011