



## Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 4 July 2012</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6.00 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall</b>

**Contact Officer:** Lyndzay Roberts  
**Tel:** 0151 691 8262  
**e-mail:** [lyndzayroberts@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:lyndzayroberts@wirral.gov.uk)  
**Website:** <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

---

### 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 - 8)**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2012.

**3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Committee is invited to appoint a Vice-Chair.

**4. FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT (Pages 9 - 14)**

**5. REVENUES, INCOME AND BENEFITS (Pages 15 - 20)**

**6. BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2013/15 (Pages 21 - 26)**

7. **WELFARE & DEBT ADVICE SERVICES (Pages 27 - 34)**
8. **BENEFITS ANNUAL REPORT**
9. **CUSTOMER SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 35 - 68)**
10. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12 (Pages 69 - 82)**
11. **REVIEW OF USE OF CONSULTANTS (Pages 83 - 94)**
12. **CORPORATE FIREWALL (Pages 95 - 98)**
13. **2011/12 YEAR END PERFORMANCE & FINANCIAL REVIEW (Pages 99 - 132)**
14. **MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) QUALIFICATION**

REPORT TO FOLLOW

15. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS - REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD (Pages 133 - 142)**

The Scrutiny Programme Board at its meeting on 28 February, 2012 (minute 33 refers) referred this report with the following resolution:

- “(1) The contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) That the report be referred to all five Overview and Scrutiny Committees for their consideration.”

16. **REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 143 - 160)**
17. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the period June to September 2012 has now been published on the Council's intranet/website and Members are invited to review the Plan prior to the meeting in order for the Council Excellence 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.

18. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 1)**

**19. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The public may be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items 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 items 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.

**20. EXEMPT APPENDIX - CORPORATE FIREWALL (Pages 161 - 162)**

Appendix 1 to agenda item 12, exempt by virtue of paragraph 3.

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

This page is intentionally left blank

## COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 26 March 2012

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Gilchrist (Chair)	
	Councillors	A Brighouse RL Abbey J Keeley A Cox D Dodd	P Doughty J Hale C Jones S Williams

### 91 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - 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.

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.

Councillor Doughty declared his personal interest in agenda item 5 – Revenues, Income and Benefits (see minute 95 post), insofar as it relates to income from building control fees, by virtue of him being an agent who submits building control applications.

Councillor Abbey declared his personal interest in agenda item 4 – Achievement of Income Targets (see minute 94 post), insofar as it relates to golf course income, by virtue of him being a golfer and a member of a golf club.

### 92 MINUTES

**Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 31 January and 28 February 2012, be approved.**

### 93 MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) PROGRAMME

Further to minute 52 (17 November 2011), the Chair referred to the report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management in relation to the return on investment of the MBA Programme and referred also to minute 352 (Cabinet – 15 March 2012), which had agreed the award of the contract for the continued delivery of the MBA programme to the University of Chester. The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance provided an explanation to Members for the non-attendance of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development. The report provided details of the MBA return on investment and highlighted the benefits of the MBA qualification, which was one element of the Council's suite of leadership development options. The report considered how best to improve the return on investment and commented that

leadership development was essential to organisational success and was critical when the organisation faced tough challenges and hard times.

Members expressed their dismay that the Cabinet had approved the award of the contract prior to consideration of the matter by this Committee and questioned whether the Cabinet's decision had been fully informed, particularly in relation to negative views expressed by managers who had completed the course that were set out in an evaluation survey. Members suggested that the Council should assess how managers were utilised, having completed the qualification and questioned whether the MBA Programme represented value for money. Further information was also requested in relation to the leadership development options offered by other local authorities.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance commented that the Cabinet's decision was to agree that if the MBA course was to continue then, having regard to the outcome of a procurement exercise undertaken between June and November 2011, it should be with the University of Chester.

#### **Resolved –**

- (1) That the Cabinet be requested to note the significant concerns expressed by the Council Excellence O&S Committee in relation to the MBA Programme, in particular –**
  - (i). that it had not had regard to any comparative information on leadership development programmes from other local authorities;**
  - (ii). that the skills and knowledge gained by managers who have completed the training programme have not been fully utilised;**
  - (iii). that value for money has not been demonstrated;**
  - (iv). that had the Cabinet seen the report now presented, it may have made a more informed decision.**
  
- (2) That a further more detailed report be presented to the next appropriate meeting, to address the concerns highlighted in (1) above, and to include also, details of the training budget and the percentage of that budget utilised by the provision of the MBA Programme.**

#### **94 ACHIEVEMENT OF INCOME TARGETS**

Further to minute 78 (31 January 2012), which requested the attendance of the Director of Technical Services to provide further information to Members in relation to the achievement of income targets in those areas within his remit, the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance advised the Committee that the Director of Technical Services had not been able to attend the meeting as requested, having been called away on a matter of urgency. However, the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and the Head of Regeneration and Planning were in attendance to offer comment on those matters within their purview.

Members referred to the drop in income from golf courses, which had been attributed in part to the poor summer weather and also to the national common trend, which suggested that usage was linked to the economic position. Members commented that to play on a regular basis, it was more cost effective to be a member of a golf club and suggested that the budget forecasts needed to be adjusted to a more realistic

and achievable level. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance reported that all Chief Officers would be required to examine their income levels during 2012, in comparison with other local authorities.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

95 **REVENUES, INCOME AND BENEFITS**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance provided information on the position regarding Council Tax, National Non Domestic Rate, general debt and cash income collection and the payment of benefits. In response to comments from Members in relation to Building Control fees, the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning indicated that although the charges were complex and income was also reliant upon the housing market and investment by developers, which had suffered in recent years with only limited signs of improvement, increased competition had also been a factor in reduced income levels. However, the Director reported that fees would be reviewed during 2012 and he would be grateful for the involvement of Members in the review process.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

96 **OFFICE RATIONALISATION**

Further to minute 83 (31 January 2012), the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management presented an update on what had been done or was in hand since the Cabinet decision on 2 February 2012 (minute 279 refers) in respect of Office Rationalisation. He indicated that timescales had yet to be finalised and progress would be dependent upon a review of the project plan. A review would also be undertaken of the resource available to the project and progress would be in line with the capacity to deliver it.

.....

In the light of a comment from a Member in relation to a specific commercial interest in a building, the Chair proposed that the press and public should be briefly excluded from the meeting, so as to have regard to the officers' advice.

On a motion by Councillor Gilchrist and seconded by Councillor Keeley, it was

**Resolved – That in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for 10 minutes to allow for consideration of advice from officers that may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act. The public interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.**

In response to a question from a Member, the Director commented upon a commercial interest that had been expressed recently in relation to one of the Council's buildings. Members were disappointed that such information had not been available at the time of previous decisions.

.....

Members sought additional information from officers including the provision of a background paper which detailed all of the Council's building assets. Members commented also that there should be a reduction in the use of external consultants, with greater use of internal knowledge requested information in relation to the use of external consultants and upon the total costs that had been incurred to date, associated with the Office Rationalisation programme.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That the officers be requested to present a further progress report to the next appropriate meeting, to include –**
  - (a) a greater emphasis on timescales;**
  - (b) an update in relation to the outcome of consultation.**
- (3) That the background paper in relation to the Council's building assets be circulated direct to Committee members.**
- (4) That the officers be requested to take such steps as may be required to reduce expenditure on consultancy services.**

#### 97 **FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance provided a summary of the position of the revenue accounts and General Fund balances as at 29 February 2012. The Statement includes the composition of the original 2011/2012 budget by Department including agreed savings and the 'one year' policy options; monitoring against the 2011/2012 budget including the financial implications of any changes agreed through Cabinet decisions; anticipated variances, changes not agreed by Cabinet, against the original budget and; comments that provided an explanation of variances and areas identified as requiring further attention.

The Director highlighted changes agreed by the Cabinet which affected the 2011/2012 financial position and he commented that the impact of those decisions was an overall increase in balances of £8.1m. The Statement presented an update of the revenue budget and General Fund balances as at 29 February 2012 and he indicated pressures and potential over/underspends that had been identified by Chief Officers. As at 29 February, the latest projections were for £18.4m in balances as at 31 March 2012 and this had been taken into consideration when setting the 2012/2013 budget.

**Resolved – That the Financial Monitoring Statement be noted.**

#### 98 **WELFARE REFORM**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance presented a detailed update report on Welfare Reform and provided an overview of the key impacts of each major area, including changes to Housing Benefit (Local Housing Allowance) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) plans to replace the Council Tax Benefit Scheme (CTB) with a localised rebate scheme which would provide support for Council Tax (Council Tax Rebate, 'CTR'). His report also detailed the introduction



of the Single Fraud Investigation Service, replacing separate independent benefit fraud investigation teams that had operated in Local Authorities, HMRC and DWP with one national service, planned to be operative from April 2013. He also provided an update on the Universal Credit (UC) proposals, which were seen as the centrepiece of the welfare reform programme, as well as plans to reform the Social Fund from April 2013 along with an update on the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) fund.

In response to comments from Members, the Director indicated that the Welfare Reform Act had received Royal Assent. However, the ongoing programme of development in each area and a lack of regulations meant that it had not been possible to put all measures into effect and the quantifiable impact of the reforms remained uncertain. In response to concerns expressed by Members in relation to various changes to be introduced, the Director proposed to present regular updates to future meetings of the Committee.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That in view of the scale of change and the consequential impact on claimants, as well as the compressed timetable proposed by the Government, regular updates be presented to future meetings of the appropriate Committee.**

#### 99 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance presented a review of Treasury Management policies, practices and activities during the third quarter of 2011/2012 and confirmed compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators. The review had been prepared in accordance with the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the revised Prudential Code. In response to comments from Members in relation to Icelandic Investment, the Director indicated that with regard to the £2m deposited with Heritable Bank, the latest creditor progress report issued by the Administrators Ernst and Young suggested that the return to creditors was now projected to be 90% by the end of 2012 and the final recovery could be higher. However, he commented that if Heritable Bank was unable to repay in full, a pre-emptive claim had been made against Landsbanki Islands HF for the difference. When the original investment had been made it was with Landsbanki Islands HF providing a guarantee to reimburse the Council should Heritable be unable to repay. Members also noted that Landsbanki Islands HF was also in Administration. In response to a question from a Member as to whether there was now greater confidence in European Banks, the Director indicated that at the present time there was not. Consequently, officers were now looking to North American banks for investment opportunities.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

#### 100 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2012-2015**

Further to minute 322 (Cabinet – 21 February 2012), the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance presented the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2012-2015, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury

Management in Public Services. Effective treasury management provided support towards the achievement of business and service objectives and he indicated that the Council was committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective treasury management. He outlined the purpose of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and highlighted the main risks to the treasury activities.

**Resolved – That the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2012-2015 be noted.**

101 **2011/2012 THIRD QUARTER PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Further to minute 278 (Cabinet – 2 February 2012), the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance presented the 2011/2012 Third Quarter Performance and Financial Review, which indicated the performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-2014 for October to December 2011. The report provided Members with an overview of performance, resource and risk monitoring, together with detail of corrective action for performance issues.

In response to a comment from a Member in relation to the use of the term 'children's hotel' being inappropriate for a respite care centre, the Director proposed to take the matter up with the Director of Adult Social Services.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

102 **STRATEGIC CHANGE PROGRAMME**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance presented an update of the Strategic Change Programme (SCP) for 2011/2012, which had been agreed by the Cabinet (minute 321 (21 February 2012) refers). The Programme also included a schedule of projects for the next three years and the Director provided an outline of the major projects that the Change Team would be addressing in 2012.

A Member referred to the potential saving of £100,000 as a result of a Street Light Dimming Policy trial being extended and expressed his concern in relation to the recent failure of street lighting in a number of areas, particularly in the vicinity of Bidston and Leasowe.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That the revised Strategic Change Programme be noted.**
- (2) That a progress report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee upon the achievement of benefits, particularly financial, of the projects in the Strategic Change Programme.**
- (3) That the Director of Technical Services be requested to address the failure of street lighting, now referred to and to report as appropriate to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

## 103 IMPROVING CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Further to minute 75 (31 January 2012), the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported upon the progress that had been made by the Corporate Governance Committee and submitted details of matters considered and decisions that had been taken at its meeting on 8 February 2012. However, the Corporate Governance Committee had subsequently been disbanded as the Wirral/LGA Improvement Board was considered to be the most appropriate vehicle to take the improvement agenda forward.

The Improvement Board was a partnership between the Council and the Local Government Association and the Director outlined its role and membership. Its recommendations were referred to the Cabinet for decision and its proceedings were on the Council's website. Every third meeting would be held in public and the Director commented that its first public meeting would be held on 30 March 2012.

### **Resolved –**

- (1) That the progress made so far in addressing the findings of the AKA Report on Corporate Governance be noted.**
- (2) That the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be requested to keep the Committee up to date by reporting on the improvements being made to strengthen the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements.**

## 104 DESTINATION EXCELLENCE

The Deputy Chief Executive presented an update on the work undertaken in response to a series of 11 Destination Excellence events held on 12 and 13 January 2012. The events provided an opportunity for the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive to engage with staff to share the vision and values of the draft Corporate Plan; to acknowledge the failings set out in the AKA Report; and to set out the work being done to strengthen Corporate Governance.

Over 4000 staff (80% of the Council workforce) attended the events and over 1000 completed feedback forms had been received. The Corporate Governance Team had undertaken an analysis of the feedback to deliver a number of outputs for the Chief Executive. The events had provided a means to engage with staff on a large scale and secure feedback on a range of staff issues and concerns. Since their delivery, significant work has been progressed to analyse and provide support in responding to the comments and questions raised. As a result of the change in administration, the Chief Executive had now taken responsibility for the necessary corporate and personal communications required following the events.

In response to comments from Members, the Deputy Chief Executive indicated that it was intended that the feedback analysis would be published as soon as possible.

Members commented also, in the light of recent changes, upon the need for all Members of the Council to be aware of what functions fall within the remit of Chief Officers. This, together with contact information should be included within the induction pack for new Members and should also be circulated periodically to all Members as changes take place.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That the report and the work undertaken by the Corporate Governance Improvement Team be noted.**
- (2) That a further update report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee upon how the Council takes into account the views expressed by staff.**
- (3) That a report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee to indicate what functions fall within the remit of each Chief Officer, to include also a Council structure with key contacts identified; the information also to be included within new Members induction packs.**
- (4) That the thanks of the Committee be accorded to all Members of staff, operating in very difficult and challenging circumstances.**

105 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported that the Forward Plan for the period March to June 2012 had been published on the Council's intranet/website. Members had been invited to review the Plan prior to the meeting in order for the Council Excellence 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.

**Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.**

106 **REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair referred to the Committee's Work Programme and sought the views of Members as to whether any matters should be recommended for inclusion in the Work Programme of the Committee for the 2012/2013 municipal year.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That the Work Programme be noted.**
- (2) That the following topics be recommended to the new Committee for inclusion in its Work Programme for the 2012/2013 municipal year –**
  - Review of the Use of Consultants**
  - Office Rationalisation**
  - Benefit Reform and its impact on working arrangements**

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2012

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>ACTING CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides a summary of the position of the revenue accounts and General Fund balances as at 31 May 2012.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

##### MONITORING STATEMENT

2.1 The Statement is attached to this report and includes the following:

- Composition of the original 2012/13 budget by Department including agreed savings and the 'one year' policy options.
- Monitoring against the 2012/13 budget including the financial implications of any changes agreed through Cabinet decisions.
- Anticipated variances, changes not agreed by Cabinet, against the original budget.
- Comments providing an explanation of variances and areas identified as requiring further attention.

2.2 Council agreed the 2012/13 budget on 1 March 2012.

##### IMPACT OF CABINET DECISIONS HAVING BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

2.3 The changes agreed by Cabinet affecting the 2011/12 financial position are:-

- On 29 March 2012 it was agreed that as the Pacific Road Theatre complex had not been disposed of, to fund costs within the 2012/13 year of £0.6 million.
- On 12 April 2012 an uplift of £67,100 in respect of the Streetscene Contract to reflect property and waste variations was agreed.

The impact of these decisions is an overall decrease in balances of £0.7 million,

- 2.4 The Financial Out-turn report for the 2011/12 financial year will be presented to Cabinet on 21 June 2012. Any variation within the 2011/12 financial year compared to budget will result in an adjustment to General Fund Balances.

### **LATEST DEPARTMENTAL PROJECTIONS**

- 2.5 The Statement presents an update of the revenue budget and General Fund balances as at 31 May. Chief Officers are reporting a number of pressures and their explanations are detailed below.

#### 2.5.1 Adult Social Services

The Director is reporting estimated pressures of £9.1 million. These arise from an underlying overspend of £5.9m in 2011/12, demand pressures on older people and learning disability budgets for 2012/13 (£2.8m) and slippage against the employee savings target (£0.4m). The outcome of the fee rate consultation is to be reported to Cabinet in July and may add to future budgetary pressures.

#### 2.5.2 Children & Young People

The Acting Director is reporting pressures of £4.9 million. The main pressure areas are as last year in Social Care and Transport. There are issues particularly with looked after children and residential care where numbers continue to exceed target levels.

#### 2.5.3 Finance

No budgetary pressures have been identified at this early stage of the year. The department contains a number of volatile budgets including Housing and Council Tax Benefits and Treasury Management borrowing and interest budgets.

#### 2.5.4 Law, Human Resources and Asset Management

The Director has reported pressures of £1.9m. These relate to savings not yet achieved. Approximately £0.8m of savings are to be allocated against other departmental budgets leaving £1.1m to be allocated against Law, Human resources and Asset Management

#### 2.5.5 Regeneration, Housing and Planning

The achievement of income targets remains the key concern. An income review is currently underway within the department.

## 2.5.6 Technical Services

No pressures have as yet been identified at this stage of the year. However income from car parking and cultural services activities continue to be closely monitored as they remain challenging targets in the current economic climate.

Although a number of pressure areas have been highlighted within departmental budgets none have as yet been disclosed as overspends at this early stage of the year.

## 3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Any variations from the agreed budget will impact, positively or negatively, upon Council balances and so affect the financial position of the Authority.

3.2 There is a risk that if there are budget pressures within individual departments then either services will not be delivered at the anticipated level or they will be delivered at additional cost. The responsibilities of Chief Officers in this respect are laid down in the Council's Constitution.

## 4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 There are no options considered in this report.

## 5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 No specific consultation has been undertaken with regard to this report.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

## 7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As at 31 May 2012 the latest projections are for £8.1 million in balances at 31 March 2013.

Details	£m
Projected balance 31 March 2013 when setting the Budget 2012/13	8.8
Cabinet decisions since the 2012/13 Budget was agreed	(0.7)
Overview from departmental Directors	0.0
Projected balance 31 March 2013 per latest projections	8.1

7.2 There are no staffing, IT or asset implications arising directly from this report.

## 8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for this report.

## **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATION**

12.1 That the contents of the Financial Monitoring Statement be noted.

## **13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

13.1 The Statement is sent out after the end of each month to all Members of the Council. At each meeting of this Committee a formal report is produced to accompany the latest available Statement.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Peter Molyneux  
Chief Accountant  
telephone: (0151 666 3389)  
email: [petemolyneux@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:petemolyneux@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

Financial Monitoring Statement 2011/12 - Position as at 31 May 2012.

## **SUBJECT HISTORY**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet – Council Budget 2012/13	21 February 2012



Department	ORIGINAL BUDGET			MONITORING			COMMENTS (INCLUDING Red/Amber/Green RATING)	
	Policy Option	Saving Target	Agreed Budget	Changes Agreed	Changes Not agreed	Forecast	Rate	Comments
Expenditure	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		
Adult Social Services	500	2,567	66,660	-	£9.1 million pressures	66,660	A	Main pressure areas are within care services including additional 2012/13 pressures and underlying 2011/12 overspend
Children & YP (plus Schools)	1,378	2,899	73,665	-	£4.9 million pressures	73,665	A	Child care costs, particularly residential, as a result of rising demand remain the volatile area whilst transport costs represent a challenge.
Finance	100	5,310	24,610	-	-	24,610	G	Housing benefit remains the largest budget.
Law, HR and Asset Mgt	(220)	1,759	13,901	250	£1.9 million pressures	14,151	A	The progression of the accommodation strategy (disposals and rationalisation) is a key area. Achievement of savings including those to reallocate to other departments a pressure area
Regen, Housing and Planning	3,000	2,456	25,764	-	-	25,764	G	The income budgets for planning / building control are the main issue. A review of income is currently underway
Technical Services	185	1,467	59,478	427	-	59,905	G	Income targets for car parking and cultural services activities remain the most significant challenge.
Merseytravel	-	-	29,060	-	-	29,060	G	Fixed amount - no change.
Local Pay Review	-	-	248	-	-	248	G	Available to meet the implementation of Job Evaluation / Low Pay.
EVR/VS Scheme	-	-	(290)	-	-	(290)	G	Balance for CYP employees.
Council Tax Reimbursement	-	-	3,990	-	-	3,990	G	Amount of grant confirmed by Government in April.
Contribution from Balances	-	-	(9,605)	(677)	-	(10,282)	G	Before any changes agreed by Cabinet.
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	<b>4,943</b>	<b>16,458</b>	<b>287,481</b>	-	-	<b>287,481</b>		
Income								
Government Grant	-	-	144,737	-	-	144,737	G	Fixed amount - no change
C/Tax Freeze Grant	-	-	6,573	-	-	6,573	G	Fixed amount - but note £3.3m of this is for 2012/13 only.
Local Services Grant	-	-	1,805	-	-	1,805	G	Amount of grant confirmed by Government in April.
Council Tax	-	-	132,911	-	-	132,911	G	Fixed amount - no change
Collection Fund	-	-	1,455	-	-	1,455	G	Fixed amount - no change.
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>287,481</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>287,481</b>		
Statement of Balances								
As at 1 April	-	-	18,405	-	-	18,405		Opening balance with forecast for 31 March 2013 of £8.8 million.
Contributions from Balances	-	-	(9,605)	-	-	(9,605)		Before any changes agreed by Cabinet.
Cabinet decisions								
Changes – Agreed Cabinet	-	-	-	(677)	-	677))		29 Mar Pacific Road £0.6m, 12 Apr Streetscene contract £0.1m
Changes – Not Agreed	-	-	-	-	-	-		Based upon departmental projections and not yet agreed.
<b>BALANCES</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>(677)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,123</b>		<b>Projected balance at start / end of year</b>

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 5

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

04 JULY 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>REVENUES, INCOME AND BENEFITS</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>ACTING CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides information on the position regarding Council Tax, National Non Domestic Rate, general debt and cash income collection and the payment of benefits.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1. The following statement compares the amount collected for **Council Tax** in the period 1 April 2012 to 31 May 2012 with the amount collected in the same period in 2011/12:

	<b>Actual 2012/13 £</b>	<b>Actual 2011/12 £</b>
Cash to Collect	<b>125,898,593</b>	125,512,298
Cash Collected	<b>24,705,827</b>	24,665,993
% Collected	<b>19.6%</b>	19.7%

- 2.2 The following statement compares the amount collected for **National Non-Domestic Rates** in the period 1 April 2012 to 31 May 2012 with the amount collected in the same period in 2011/12:

	<b>Actual 2011/12 £</b>	<b>Actual 2010/11 £</b>
Cash to Collect	<b>69,063,099</b>	66,412,142
Cash Collected	<b>14,694,864</b>	12,234,823
% Collected	<b>21.0%</b>	18.4%

- 2.3 The following statement provides information concerning the collection of local taxes from 1 April 2012 to 31 May 2012:

	<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>Business Rates</b>
Reminders/Final Notices	15,291	1,893
Summonses	1,749	115
Liability Orders	0	91
Recovery action commenced		
Attachment of Earnings	387	
Deduction from Income Support	691	
Accounts to Bailiff	756	25
Pre-Committal Warning Letters	461	-
Committal Orders Issued	3	0
Debtors Committed	0	0

#### Insolvency cases to 31 May 2012

The following information concerns Council Tax recovery work which involves cases where Insolvency action or charging orders against properties are used:

Bankruptcy cases	342
Charging orders	230
Winding up orders	3

#### New cases from 1 April 2012 to 31 May 2012

Bankruptcy	3
Charging orders	18
Winding up orders	0

#### Status of Insolvency cases at 31 May 2012

Winding-up paid	1
Charging orders granted	155
Winding up Order	1
Supporting other petitions	3
Cases paid	101
Bankruptcy orders	133
Cases closed	160
Ongoing cases	<u>42</u>
	596

#### 2.4 **Sundry Debtors Invoices**

	<b>Actual 2011/12</b>	Actual 2010/11
Dept Debtors		
CYPD	<b>£1,043,093</b>	£1,441,965
Corporate Services	<b>£1,115,248</b>	£1,050,802
Finance	<b>£4,349,876</b>	£6,293,945
Law/HR & Asset Management	<b>£417,764</b>	£2,816,872
Regeneration	<b>£10,168</b>	£16,992

DASS	<b>£18,272,753</b>	£15,523,693
Technical Services	<b>£3,939,619</b>	£3,839,013
Unallocated	<b>£-741,720</b>	£-149,864
Total outstanding @ 31.12.12	<b><u>£28,406,801</u></b>	<u>£30,833,418</u>

Number of reminders 01.04.12 to 31.12.12 **5,245** 5,095

## INCOME

2.5 The following budgets and income received relate to other sources of cash income generated by the Council:

	<b>2012/13 Budget</b>	<b>Income to 31-May-12</b>	<b>2011/12 Budget</b>	<b>Income to 31-May-11</b>
i. School Meals	£1,395,300	£223,838	£1,473,100	£235,173
ii. Sports Centres	£3,740,300	£661,623	£3,627,100	£669,557
iii. Golf Courses	£968,000	£188,625	£967,800	£279,838
iv. Burials and Cremations	£2,652,700	£263,496	£2,577,000	£266,815
v. Building Control Fees	£494,900	£77,405	£494,900	£51,840
vi. Land Charges	£358,300	£30,975	£358,300	£27,024
vii. Car Park (Pay and Display)	£2,024,200	£139,171	£1,885,600	£157,492
viii. Car Park (Penalty Notices)	£950,000	£86,190	£922,300	£75,844

2.6 Further explanation of the income collection performance is provided below:

- (i) **School Meals:** A school meal service is provided by Metro Catering in 85 primary and special schools. The service costs £4.4m of which £2.8m is paid by schools (representing the cost of Free School Meals). The income generated is from the charges for a school meal (£2.00), school milk and other paid meals. The income at 31 May 2012 is 16% of the budget, this reflects the term profile and a number of primary schools choosing to manage their own meals service. It is anticipated that the charges for meals and to schools for the year will cover the cost of the service. However, any variation in income would be reflected within the Schools Budget.
- (ii) **Sports Centres:** Income is on target in comparison to last year and Invigor8 income is again doing very well so far this year.
- (iii) **Golf Courses:** The poor weather in April has again affected golf income. The situation will continue to be monitored throughout the year.
- (iv) **Burials and Cremations:** Again the total income received from this service exceeds its running costs. At this stage income looks to be on target but the service is affected by seasonal trends and therefore, it is too early to make a more accurate estimate.

- (v) **Building Control Fees:** Income is reliant upon the housing market and investment by developers which has suffered in recent years and shows limited signs of improvement.
- (vi) **Land Charges:** In recent years legislative changes have increased competition for this service for which information is now available online. As a result fee income is declining
- (vii) **Car Park Income (Pay and Display Tickets):** Income has been declining for a number of years due to recessionary pressures and competition from other retail areas.

## HOUSING BENEFITS

- 2.7 The following statement details the number of claimants in respect of benefit and the expenditure for Private Tenants and those in receipt of Council Tax Benefit up to 31 May 2012:

	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
Number of <b>Private Tenant</b> recipients	<b>31,259</b>	30,299
Total rent allowance expenditure	<b>£22,381,649</b>	
Number under the <b>Local Housing Allowance</b> scheme ( <u>included in the above</u> )	11,582 £9,491,715	9,883
Number of <b>Council Tax Benefit</b> recipients	<b>39,986</b>	39,433
Total Council Tax Benefit expenditure	<b>£31,612,186</b>	
Total expenditure on benefit to date	<b>£53,993,835</b>	

- 2.8 The following statement provides information concerning the breakdown according to client type as at 31 May 2012

	<b>Private Tenants</b>	<b>Owner Occupiers</b>
Working age and in receipt of J.S.A.	15,288	1,775
Elderly and in receipt of J.S.A.	6,743	5,214
Working age and not receiving J.S.A.	6,914	1,350
Elderly and not in receipt of J.S.A.	<u>2,314</u>	<u>3,441</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,259</b>	<b>11,780</b>

There are **43,039** benefit recipients in Wirral as at 31 May 2012.

- 2.9 **Housing Benefit Fraud and Enquiries From 1 April 2012 to 31 May 2012**

New Cases referred to Fraud team in period	415
Cases where fraud found and action taken	19
Cases investigated, no fraud found and recovery of overpayment may be sought	96
Cases under current investigation	194
Surveillance Operations Undertaken	0

Cases where fraud found and action taken:  
Administration penalty

2

Caution issued and accepted	6
Successful prosecution	11
Summons issued for prosecution purposes	6

### **Discretionary Housing Payments**

2.10 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) may be awarded to provide short term financial assistance to Housing and Council Tax Benefit claimants who are experiencing difficulty meeting a shortfall in their rent or Council Tax because maximum benefit is not being paid.

2.11 DHP is not a payment of Housing/Council Tax Benefit and is funded separately from the main scheme. The Government contribution for 2012/13 is £522,238 with an overall limit of £1,159,688 which the Authority must not exceed. This Government contribution includes £58,363 which was underspent last year which we have been allowed to carry forward. This together with an increase in excess of 60% offers provision to help alleviate hardship resulting from the LHA Reforms. To date I have paid £75,295, compared with £15,423 at this point last year, and committed a further £137,837 to the end of the financial year.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

3.1 None.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 None.

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 None.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**13.0 RECOMMENDATION**

13.1 That the report be noted.

**14.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

14.1 To update Members on financial issues.

FNCE/ /12

**REPORT AUTHORS: Revenues & Benefits**

***Malcolm Flanagan***

*(Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services)*

telephone: (0151 666 3260)

email: [malcolmflanagan@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:malcolmflanagan@wirral.gov.uk)

**Income**

***Tom Sault***

*(Head of Financial Services)*

telephone. (0151 666 3407)

email: [tomsault@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:tomsault@wirral.gov.uk)

**APPENDICES**

None.

**REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Information from relevant systems.

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

Council Meeting	Dates
Report submitted to each meeting of the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee	



## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2012

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2013/15</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>ACTING CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>YES</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy presents an overview of the financial projections for 2012/15. Following agreement of the Budget for 2012/13 by Council on 1 March 2012 this report presents an update on the projections for 2013/15.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

##### 2.1 Assumptions Underpinning the Projections

- a) Inflation - Provision is included for price inflation of 2% per annum with income to increase by 3% per annum. Pay awards are assumed to increase by 1% per annum as requested by the Government.
- b) Capital Financing - Cabinet on 8 December 2011 agreed the capital programme. Subsequent changes by Council in setting the 2012/13 Budget resulted in a programme with an increase in revenue cost of £1.7 million per year.
- c) Pension Fund - the increase arising from the actuarial valuation in March 2010 will increase the contribution by £0.3 million in 2013/14. The revaluation scheduled for March 2013 will be implemented from 2014.
- d) Waste Disposal - Landfill Tax is increasing by £8 per ton per annum, an increase of 50% between 2010/11 and 2014/15. The levy is assumed to increase by £1.5 million per annum.
- e) Merseytravel – The levy is assumed to increase by £1 million per annum.
- f) Schools - it is assumed that the Schools Budget will vary in line with the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- g) Efficiency Investment - in order to continue to deliver efficiencies in future years it will be necessary to continue to invest and therefore £2 million per annum has been provided.

- h) Other Unavoidable Growth - a number of items of less than £0.2 million will arise which usually total about £1 million per annum.

## **2.2 Grant Negotiations**

- 2.2.1 The Spending Review 2011/15 incorporated four year projections for local government expenditure. However the Local Government Finance Settlement only provided figures for 2011/13. Figures for 2013/15 will be subject to the outcome of the Local Government Resource Review (LGRR). Clearly this will have a major impact on the budget projections for 2013/15 included in the Appendix.
- 2.2.2 The Local Government Finance Bill continues its passage to enactment with the House of Lords considering on 12 June 2012. The two major elements are the Localisation of Business Rates and Council Tax Benefits. For Business Rates the Government has issued a further series of policy papers. The final proposals are anticipated later this year for implementation as part of the Finance Settlement 2013/14. The Government also continues to issue updates on the Council Tax Benefit scheme.
- 2.2.3 The Council Tax Freeze Grant agreed for 2011/12 was equivalent to a 2.5% Council Tax rise and amounted to £2.5 million for Wirral. This Grant is to continue for the period of the Spending Review. A further Freeze Grant was allocated for 2012/13 only.
- 2.2.4 As part of the LGRR the Government proposes to reduce specific grants from 2013. Whilst the detail is awaited the pro-rata impact for Wirral could be a loss of £7 million in 2013/14 and £23 million in 2014/15. The details of which specific grants will be reduced will be announced in spring 2012.
- 2.2.5 During the course of this budgeting period the results of the Census 2011 will become available and will be incorporated into the grant distribution formulae. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has released the mid-2010 estimated populations and the reduction for Wirral since the Census 2001 is greater than for any other metropolitan or unitary authority. If confirmed in the Census 2011 the reduction in grant receivable could be significant. The ONS has confirmed that the analysis of the Census data should be completed for incorporation into the Finance Settlement for 2013/14.
- 2.2.6 The Local Support Services Grant and New Homes Bonus Grant are both general grants and assumed to continue at the existing levels in future years.

## **2.3 Other Legislative Issues**

- 2.3.1 Pensions - The Independent Public Service Pensions Commission issued final recommendations on 10 March 2011. The Pensions Committee is being updated on progress with implementation now expected in 2014.

- 2.3.2 Welfare Reform Act - Implementation of Universal Credit and a Local Council Tax Benefit System is due to commence in 2013. The Local Council Tax Benefit System will result in a reduction of grant of 10% (£3.2 million). Councils can choose to support this loss of grant from efficiencies elsewhere or can reduce the level of support offered to individuals. However, the Government has specified that pensioners and vulnerable people, who are the vast majority of the recipients, should be protected from any reductions.
- 2.3.3 Localism Act 2011 - Will require a local referendum if a proposed Council Tax increase is considered to be excessive.
- 2.3.4 Council Tax Revaluation - This has been deferred until after 2015.
- 2.3.5 Public Health - Responsibility for Public Health transfers to Local Government in 2013. The budget to be transferred will not be issued until December 2012. However, The Department of Health issued an adjusted current spend figure of £22.3 million on 7 February 2012 with funding by a specific 'ring-fenced' grant. The responsibility for, and the funding of, public health for children under the age of 5 transfers to the Council from 2015/16.

## 2.4 Balances

- 2.4.1 The Budget 2012/13 included balances of £18.4 million at 1 April 2012. Of this sum £9.6 million was used to fund £8.9 million of 'one-off' options and £0.7 million of permanent changes. This resulted in projected balances of £8.8 million at 31 March 2013.
- 2.4.2 The decisions of Cabinet have reduced the projected balances from £9.8 million to £8.1 million:-

Details	£m	£m
Projected balances at 31 March 2013		8.8
Cabinet decisions (additional spend):-		
29 March Pacific Road Theatre	0.6	
12 April Streetscene Contract Review	<u>0.1</u>	<u>0.7-</u>
Projected balances at 31 March 2013		<u>8.1</u>

- 2.4.3 The production of the Annual Accounts for 2011/12 is presently being completed and the financial position, Insurance Fund Annual Report and Treasury Management Annual Report are all being reported to this Cabinet meeting.
- 2.4.4. The minimum recommended balances are £6 million.

## 2.5 Savings

- 2.5.1 Cabinet on 21 February 2012 agreed an amended Strategic Change Programme. Substantial work is required to increase the size and scope of this Programme in order to deliver the savings required for 2013/15.

Strategic Change Programme		2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
Finance	Income (included in the Projections)		
Finance	Welfare Reform	1,000	1,000
Finance	Libraries / OSS Merger	200	200
Finance	ICT Review	210	90
*LHRAM	Transforming Business Support	1,000	1,000
*LHRAM	Terms and Conditions	1,000	1,000
		3,410	3,290

\* Both are lead by the Department of law, HR and Asset Management but the savings will be allocated across all departments.

### 3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 For 2013/15 the Government proposes significant changes to the grant distribution system which could cause major changes to these projections.

3.2 The Government has indicated that the austerity measures outlined in the Spending Review for 2011/15 are now likely to continue beyond 2015.

### 4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 All of these projections represent my assumptions of the most likely outcome from a wide range of available options.

### 5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 The Government is consulting on a number of issues which will impact on the budget projections. Whilst working with national and regional groups on responses I respond to all consultation exercises to try to ensure the best outcome for Wirral.

### 6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

### 7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS – FINANCIAL

7.1 The assumptions outlined above are reflected in the budget projections in the Appendix.

### 8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

### 9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

**12.0 RECOMMENDATION**

12.1 That the budget projections 2013/15 be regularly reviewed.

**13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

13.1 Regular reporting of the projected financial prospects is a requirement of good corporate and financial planning.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Tom Sault  
Head of Financial Services  
telephone: 0151 666 3407  
email: tomsault@wirral.gov.uk

**APPENDIX**

Wirral Council - Budget Projections 2013-15

**REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Budget - HM Treasury - March 2011.  
Independent Public Service Pensions Commission Report - March 2011.  
Spending Review - HM Treasury - October 2010.  
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/15 - October 2011.  
Local Government Finance Settlement 2012/13 - DCLG - January 2012.  
Council Budget 2012/13 - March 2012.  
Autumn Statement – HM Treasury – November 2011.

**SUBJECT HISTORY**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet Budget Projections	Update reports are presented to each meeting.

**APPENDIX**

**WIRRAL COUNCIL**

**BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2013/15**

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Base Budget	288.2	282.7
Increased Requirements		
Pay Inflation	1.7	1.7
Price Inflation	4.2	4.2
Capital Financing	1.7	1.7
Pension Fund	0.3	2.5
Waste Disposal	1.5	1.5
Merseytravel	1.0	1.0
Efficiency Investment	2.0	2.0
Other Unavoidable Growth	1.0	1.0
Specific Grant Reduction	7.0	16.0
Council Tax Benefit	3.2	-
Pacific Road Theatre	0.6	0.6
Streetscene Contract	<u>0.1</u>	<u>0.1</u>
	<b>312.5</b>	<b>315.0</b>
Reduced Requirements		
Strategic Change Programme savings	-3.4	-3.3
Income Inflation	<u>-1.0</u>	<u>-1.0</u>
	<b>308.1</b>	<b>310.7</b>
Resources		
Formula Grant	144.7	134.5
Council Tax Freeze Grant (from 2011/12)	3.3	3.3
Local Services Support Grant	0.8	0.8
New Homes Bonus	1.0	1.0
Council Tax	<u>132.9</u>	<u>132.9</u>
Forecast Resources	<b>282.7</b>	<b>272.5</b>
Shortfall	25.4	38.2

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>WELFARE AND DEBT ADVICE SERVICES</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF FINANCE</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the work undertaken at the One Stop Shops (OSS) and Libraries with regard to financial advice to residents. It also details the provision of information and advice on fuel tariffs and the opening of bank accounts to further improve financial inclusion. The report was requested by, and noted by, Cabinet on 12 April 2012

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Cabinet on 21 February 2012 agreed as part of the budget for 2012/13 that the One Stop Shops Service, already providing financial advice, should look to expand the range of advice to fuel tariffs and the opening of bank accounts to improve financial inclusion.

2.2. One Stop Shops have been established for 14 years and in that time have expanded the range of work and advice offering a variety of information and advice on Council and non Council services. Staff are trained to ask relevant questions when a customer presents with one query as there may often be another issue, for example health and debt are often problems.

#### 2.3 Current work at One Stop Shops

2.3.1 The major area of work is Council Tax and Housing Benefits which link to advice in a number of ways:

- In terms of Housing and Council Tax Benefit staff are able to maximise income through identifying other potential benefits not being claimed and translate the complexities of the benefit schemes to ensure that customers are aware of what information they need to provide to the Council.
- Staff are able to explain the role of basic bank accounts to customers who currently don't have an account and need one in order to have their Housing Benefit paid into it.

- With regard to Council Tax, staff can negotiate repayment periods within the same financial year with customers who fall behind with their instalments and can make arrangements with customers for arrears of Council Tax where customers have received a summons for non payment.
- Staff utilise the Council Fair Debt Policy which offers an arrangement based on income and expenditure details to make one single payment to clear arrears in addition to keeping current year debt payments up to date and thereby avoid any further charges. As one debt is paid the arrangement moves to the next debt and by doing this the aim is to break the cycle of debt.
- Education Welfare Benefits - Advisors promote the take up of free school meals to eligible parents which positively impacts on the weekly income the household has available.

2.3.2 There are a number of stand alone and linked areas that support the advice work such as:

- Loan Sharks - Advisors receive training to help identify unexplained patterns of payments when reviewing Housing Benefit documents which might indicate that a customer is paying a loan shark. In such circumstances they will sensitively enquire to establish if this is an issue and will offer to assist the customer in contacting the Illegal Money Lending Team or provide details to the customer should they prefer that option.
- Credit Unions - Discussions have taken place with Wirral Credit Union to enable them to work in partnership with the Council from Library and OSS sites. Wirral Credit Union would be able to promote their services and use the Library and OSS sites as collection points. This will enable customers who do not have access to a bank account to set up saving accounts and take out affordable loans based on the amount of their saving and their ability to repay loans.
- Affordable Loans - Advisors promote the Moneyline service to customers who are not able to get loans from their own bank but may be eligible through Moneyline. Surgeries are currently held at Seacombe One Stop Shop, which are proving to be successful and productive with a higher than average number of customers opening bank accounts.
- Fuel Poverty - Advisors are kept up to date on initiatives that will help customers to reduce their fuel bills or assist them in keeping their homes warmer. This includes initiatives such as the Warm Front scheme, Cosy Homes Heating Grants along with reference to the Energy Saving Trust website for additional advice.



- Tell Us Once -This national service allows advisors to inform a range of Council and Government departments that someone has died. It also provides an opportunity to give advice on a wide range of topics that will help the surviving spouse/family members. This service is to be extended to include the registration of Births. This will provide an opportunity to ensure that the parent is aware of all the services that are available to them at an early stage.
- Consumer advice - The impact of poor/faulty goods to someone on a limited budget can be significant. Advisors can provide initial advice on customer rights and the remedies available. This support is also available on a wide range of topics e.g. doorstep sales.
- Signposting - One Stop Shops have established links with a number of agencies which can help to improve the finances of individuals, e.g. regular surgeries are held by Age UK and the Pension Service across the sites. NHS Wirral surgeries also show how debt and well being are linked.

## 2.4 **Advice and support on Fuel and Bank Accounts**

2.4.1 With regard to Advice on Fuel Tariffs the One Stop Shops are progressing with the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning Home Energy Officer a range of initiatives including:

- British Gas has funding for a fuel debt advice service which covers Wirral and work is progressing on how this service could be delivered from Libraries and One Stop Shops.
- As part of the Affordable Warmth Implementation Plan 2012-14, there are plans to improve the fuel tariff advice initially by linking with a Consumer Focus accredited energy comparison service. There is a potential income stream for the Council as for every successful switch the service would pay a rebate.

2.4.2 With regard to advice and promotion of Bank Accounts advisors will have refresher training on how to promote bank accounts and this will ensure they are able to explain the difference between different types of accounts available e.g. current or basic bank accounts.

2.4.3 Advisors will also be able to explain which key features should be considered when opening a current account having understood the customers needs e.g. whether they want to access their account through a local bank branch or prefer to bank using the telephone or online.

2.4.4 For those customers who are not able to open a current account the advisors will be able to explain the key features of the different basic bank accounts offered and the services provided by them e.g. if they provide a free “buffer zone” or the amount charged for any unpaid direct debits or standing orders. For many people opening a basic bank account can be the first step to opening a current account.

2.4.5 Advisors will also be able to act as an advocate for the customer in completing the relevant documentation and where necessary may liaise directly with the banks. Where appropriate they will provide free financial guidance leaflets for customers to refer to when making a decision on which bank account is most suitable for the individual. As with fuel tariff advice it will be vital that our advice in this area is impartial.

## 2.5 **Future Developments on Advice**

2.5.1 While advice on fuel tariffs and bank accounts are clearly important there are other aspects of advice that are being progressed via the merged Libraries and One Stop Shops and these are detailed below:

- (a) Advisors can offer a benefit check e.g. using the Personal Advisor on Directgov. This can be offered when an advisor is dealing with an enquiry relating to a Council Tax reminder/summons for non payment.
- (b) Advisors can establish if there are grants available to assist with any issues discussed e.g. "Turn 2 Us" website. This could be offered to identify additional income to which the customer may be entitled.
- (c) Meetings are being arranged to progress more local Credit Unions working within the One Stop Shops and Library network.
- (d) The Library IT suites are venues to hold money management training courses. This maximises use of IT in Libraries and advances the principle of being the local source of support and advice.
- (e) The recent approval of the contracts for Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Support and General Advice Services will allow the Libraries/OSS to offer and extend work with the successful tenderers. I will look to dovetail and refer customers between services to be clear on identifying who delivers what to reduce duplication and customer confusion. These organisations can be offered the availability to work from within the One Stop Shop and Library sites.
- (f) In the delivery of debt advice more advisors will be trained to deliver first tier debt advice and some staff will be trained to become accredited debt advisors. There is the possibility of this service being delivered at One Stop Shops and Libraries on an appointment basis.
- (g) We will develop a Wirral Financial Help Pack in liaison with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector as well as the General Advice Service which would identify sources of help.

- (h) There is an opportunity to promote and expand the services the One Stop Shop Advisors can offer to Department of Adult Social Services customers. Clients and Financial Agents should be able to hand in their financial assessment forms, disability related expenditure forms and income/expenditure forms at a site near to them which will be more convenient. They should also be able to obtain free debt advice or be signposted to external free advice debt agencies if they are experiencing problems paying a Council invoice. Repayment arrangements and the Fair Debt Policy will be offered where relevant. Crucially advisors may identify financial abuse, therefore there will be agreed mechanisms in place for Advisors to report this type of Safeguarding issue to the relevant professional. Where relevant, advisors will be able to signpost Clients and Financial Agents to the Department for Work and Pensions in order to maximise benefits that are not being claimed.
- (i) There are also identifiable links between the work of the One Stop Shops and the Benefits service with the work of the Department of Adult Social Services (DASS) Welfare Rights Unit. In order to deliver a more effective and coherent service under the management and overview of one Department this function is being transferred from DASS to the Finance Department.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 3.1 If the developments do not take place there is a risk of uncoordinated, duplicated or inefficient advice being given on a range of issues. Conversely, without proper planning and training incorrect or impractical advice could be given. Mitigation of these latter risks is being undertaken via staff training with internal and external support.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 To not undertake such work which would be inefficient for both the Council and service users.

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Consultation has already taken place with a number of organisations as well as with internal departments. As detailed plans are formulated this will extend to other relevant groups and organisations.
- 5.2 The discussion and consultation with both internal and external bodies will help to maximise use of both staff and properties and advance further the Libraries and One Stop Shops service being recognised as a place of local support in respect of a wide variety of issues and organisations able to be dealt with on site.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 6.1 This work will look to support Voluntary, Community and Faith organisations as well as the General Advice Sector to present efficient ways of offering linked services to the benefit of the community.

## **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING & ASSETS**

7.1 **Financial** – These proposals are being progressed within the current funding of the Library and One Stop Shop service and any improvements in efficiency will further support this.

7.2 **IT** – There are none arising directly from this report.

7.3. **Staffing** – These proposals will have a consequential impact on staff training. The staffing establishment and budget for the Welfare Rights Unit, currently located in DASS has been transferred to the Finance Department as agreed by Cabinet on 12 April 2012.

7.4. **Assets** – There are none arising directly from this report.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There will be a need to ensure that advice given is impartial and completed in a way that minimises any liability to the Authority.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 This development should continue to assist equality of access to local services for the benefit of all users. The commitment to equality and diversity is integral to delivering excellent customer contact services responsive to all users including those who may not be current users. The recognition that users have different physical and service needs informs access and service plans.

9.2. The link to the Equality Impact Assessment for Library and One Stop Shops is below; <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/finance>

## **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATION**

12.1 That Members note the progress on the delivery of welfare and debt advice services.

## **13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

13.1 To make Members aware of the work undertaken by the service, the transfer of the Welfare Rights Unit to the Finance Department, and the work that is in development.

FNCE/94/12

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **Malcolm Flanagan**  
Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services  
Telephone: (0151 666 3260)  
email: malcolmflanagan@wirral.gov.uk

**APPENDIX**  
None

**REFERENCE MATERIAL**  
None

**SUBJECT HISTORY**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet	21 February 2012
Cabinet	12 April 2012

This page is intentionally left blank

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2012

SUBJECT:	CUSTOMER SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR CHRIS MEADEN
KEY DECISION?	NO

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the Customer Services Annual Report for 2011/12 as well as detailing for Members the current and future work programme. Customer Services represent much of the front face of the Council contact facilities which for the purposes of this report includes call centre, libraries, one stop shops and the web. It also encompasses the customer services development team which provides a framework to lead, develop and innovate within our frontline service areas. Together as one combined service area our aim is to deliver the library, customer access and web strategies.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Customer services like most services in the Council is stringently scrutinising its role and function. The external economic climate and the internal budget deficit could make customer service appear as an optional extra to the delivery of council services. However it is particularly important during these difficult economic times that our customers need to be able to contact us, and feel assured that they we will receive a timely and accurate response. They need to have places available where they can relax, learn, develop and feel safe.
- 2.2 National trends do see Local Authorities looking at delivering more with less and part of the modernisation review of public libraries states that during times of increasing financial pressures it is imperative that local authorities consider innovative ways of working to generate library improvements and efficiencies.
- 2.3 Wirral Council have decided that by combining libraries and one stop shops to provide a merged customer service focussed workforce to offer the level of customer experience that the public want. This initiative is now being rolled

out elsewhere in the country as a model which provides excellent best practice as regards value for money. It has taken time to produce but is now ready to be rolled out as a modern merged workforce drawn from a wide range of skills and experience.

- 2.4 Other benefits of working together mean that the service can access funding to support this innovative joint working and that is the intention for future development. Aligning the merged services work with local needs and local priorities has been paramount to all of this.
- 2.5 The challenge for public services, including public libraries and one stop shops is how to demonstrate how we can help deliver the shared council priorities. A recent study by PricewaterhouseCoopers funded by the Laser Foundation sought to establish the impact of public libraries partnerships on council shared priorities. The research found evidence of a clear and measurable contribution made by libraries to wider policy priorities at both local and national levels' particularly in the areas of merged services supporting education, children, health, the vulnerable and older people.

#### **LIBRARIES AND ONE STOP SHOP SHOPS MERGER UPDATE**

- 2.6 **Staffing and structure** - A structure has now been developed which sees the senior management teams working together in the delivery of a merged staffing structure across the network of libraries and one stop shops. The ethos of the structure is flexibility with staff from similar levels in both services meeting regularly to ensure that all aspects of the services are delivered and standards maintained.
- 2.7 The generic customer service assistant role is a combination of the previous library assistant and one stop shop receptionist and is currently working at the two pilot sites of Eastham and Heswall. It has been and continues to be a challenge to bring together two large service areas where work overlaps and cultures are significantly different. This challenge is not just for the staff, but also for our customers who are adjusting to a different type of service delivery. Generally feedback has been very positive from staff and customers alike who see the benefits in the two services working as one, without the loss of the traditional functions of the two separate services.
- 2.8 When not attending to specialist enquiries at the booths, our one stop shop advisers will be trained and then able to support the delivery of the wider library functions, adding interest and variety to the role.
- 2.9 The immediate action is for 'roll out' across the whole network, learning lessons from the two pilot sites. It has taken longer than anticipated and this is for a variety of reasons including, staffing volumes, HR issues relating



previous contracts and anomalies in the application of council policy and practices. Information Technology is fundamental in taking the structure forward and that for some staff there will be a change in their working pattern to benefit the service. For clarity of expectations, unified conditions of service relevant to the merged service will be developed. Ascertaining the correct staffing numbers required will be ongoing to ensure a streamlined workforce adaptable enough to be able to respond to potential changes in opening hours. We intend to do this by having a peripatetic team of staff that will help us ensure we remain open across our sites, and also ensure we are not over staffed at any sites. Changes in job roles require sensitive negotiation and consultation whilst recognising the national trends in Council front line services.

- 2.10 We have in the past twelve months made significant progress forward in managing this change with staff, allowing them the time to start to understand the reasoning behind merging. This process by necessity is slow, but in order for this to succeed staff need to feel involved and consulted and at the same time have a realistic understanding of the need to change.
- 2.11 Staff across all the service areas have worked to an interim structure for over 12 months and so we are working to a date when roll out of the programme can take place. We are looking for this to take place during July / August or as near as. New job descriptions for all roles within the merged service have been written and are currently being progressed with the TU and staff.
- 2.12 Most Library staff have now been trained to deliver the generic customer services assistant role, and are awaiting the full merger in order to put their new skills into practice. Likewise training for the one stop shop staff is progressing so that they can support the new customer services assistant role.
- 2.13 Four area management groups are being proposed to assist with managing the service. Sites have been grouped to ensure an equal distribution of staff and building responsibilities for the Area manager role.

### **Facilities Update**

- 2.14 Alongside the staffing and establishment changes we are working on a programme of building and facilities refurbishment. Our vision is for buildings that are attractive and comfortable for our customers and staff and efficient and cost effective for the council to maintain. Where possible we will provide buggy parks for parents of young children, lockers for customers, cycle racks and drinking water fountains. We will use lighting both internal and external to help us create the welcoming environment we seek for our customers.

Combining services makes real savings for the council and we are aiming to avoid duplication and vacate surplus buildings where possible.

- 2.15 The merged service will have integrated space, with 'zones' to relax, learn and seek advice and help. Our aim is to provide a space which is free flowing and less formal, but also provides private space for those customers who need it. The look will be modern and inviting, a place which we hope all sectors of the community will want to visit and use.
- 2.16 Space permitting we will create a community cafe or a coffee lounge area with vending machines. There will be comfortable seating and a range of newspapers / magazines and popular publications providing a welcoming social space for users to gather and spend time whilst in the building .When setting up cafes we will look to the work being done by council colleagues in developing community enterprises. We hope that this could see fulfilling work experience opportunities for local young people with learning difficulties who could operate the facility.
- 2.17 These refurbished, revitalised buildings (where applicable) will adopt the new corporate colour scheme of holly and lime green supported by clearer signage inside and outside the building. All of the sites are now equipped with digital signage displays that allows us the opportunity to deliver richer more visually appealing messages to our customers.
- 2.18 We will introduce Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) machines into some of our buildings to allow customers the option of self access and discharge of books. This has been installed already at Heswall and is proving popular with all age groups and will free up staff to deal with more complex enquiries as well as allowing them the opportunity to interact with customers away from the barrier of the counter.
- 2.19 We will improve the range of facilities for our younger users by providing new children's play furniture and children's computers where it is practicable.
- 2.20 We are looking to ensure our public access PC's are up to date as we want to encourage all ages to access them to help reduce digital exclusion. Free Wi - Fi will be made available to our customers.
- 2.21 Where it is appropriate we will invest in new shelving which will be mobile so the space can be used as flexibly as possible.
- 2.22 We will trial the use of customer pagers at Rock Ferry which will alert customers when an adviser is free to deal with their enquiry. This will allow the customer the opportunity to utilise the various facilities available e.g.

browsing the library shelves, using the free computer facilities or simply enjoying a coffee or newspaper.

### **Site Update**

- 2.23 **Eastham** is the first library one stop shop to be refurbished. It is now lighter and more open plan with improved accessible shelving, which can be more easily moved to make full and flexible use of the space in the library and will enjoy new flooring and furnishings throughout. The redesigned space will include an attractive coffee area with comfortable seating, space to sit and use a laptop as well as a secure buggy park. New signage both inside and out will make the building easier to navigate. Unfortunately the works were protracted because of some contractual issues and the need to work around keeping the building open where possible. In doing so we could have compromised health and safety and the noise levels were distracting for customers and staff alike. We have learnt lessons from this and will in future consider closing the facility for as short a period as possible to avoid these issues where the level of work requires this and it may also reduce the overall timescale of the works. Any closures will be minimal and in consultation with members and local users.
- 2.24 **Rock Ferry** library one stop shop is the next facility to be merged and the development which will include building work is progressing well. We have finalised the design and the public have been asked for their views on the improvements. Colleagues in Technical Services are liaising with the appointed firm of architects as part of the tendering process for the work. No firm date has been set for the work although we anticipate work starting by August with completion in December. Inevitably there will be some disruption as the building work is undertaken and this may mean some activities are suspended and operate from alternative venues during the work. We have liaised with current users of the building to keep them briefed on the plans and to minimise inconvenience. There will be one entrance to a more open environment with free flowing space for customers to access the library one stop shop. The decision has been taken not to use metal security shutters as it is anticipated that this will have a positive effect on the overall ambience of the neighbourhood after hours and increase confidence in the community that the area is a safe place. The site will provide a much improved community hall environment. From listening to users, customers, staff and partners, the type of facilities needed at Rock Ferry have been identified and the development will seek to meet these needs where possible and increase the number of groups and activities on offer within the facility.
- 2.25 **Heswall** - the ground floor of the library one stop shop will see extensive remodelling to create an attractive and welcoming open plan space. The

most obvious change will be to relocate the children's area to the rear of the library away from the automatic entrance doors and the area will be partially screened in glass to reduce noise whilst maintaining visibility. A cafe area with attractive lighting, comfortable furniture and tables is to be created in the former children's space that can be utilised when waiting to see an adviser. New flooring will be installed throughout. Upstairs the former exhibition room will be redecorated and refitted to allow for study and PC use, meetings and events as well as exhibitions. The heavy doors will be converted to automatic opening to improve accessibility. Public access computers will be relocated to the non-fiction area adjacent to the lift. An agile working space / small meeting room will be created through the more efficient use of space. New signage both inside and out will make the redesigned spaces easy to use.

- 2.26 **Moreton** one stop shop on Knutsford Road at the back of the complex will be vacated and the service will relocate into a remodelled and modernised space within Moreton library, one of our busiest libraries. The location of the library is excellent, close to the main shopping area and bus stops and highly visible from the main road. Work will commence by October and the one stop shop will not relocate into the library until the work has finished. The existing one stop shop can host existing surgeries from the library to avoid disruption to services. These plans will lead to a more flexible open area including private interview rooms, an agile working space, coffee area and better use of ICT facilities.
- 2.27 **West Kirby** one stop shop will move into the library in a reconfigured modernised space. The library and one stop shop are currently located next to each other within the Concourse and the move will release the existing one stop shop area for alternative use. Work will commence by about October and again the one stop shop will not relocate until it has finished. The library will be designated as the fourth central library one stop shop with opening hours in line with the other three in Birkenhead, Wallasey and Bebington.
- 2.28 **Birkenhead Central Library** plans are being drawn up for a potential capital bid to focus on the relocation of all public facilities such as the Reference Library all onto the ground floor leaving the first floor predominately for staff and back office work as well as a new meeting room with the basement exclusively for storage. There would be re-modelling in the main room so that all services can be offered from one new "joint" counter rather than three separate ones as is the current arrangement. A cafe run by a Social Enterprise would look to be provided in the entrance lobby area. Most of these works will require an application for funding from the capital programme.

- 2.29 **Wallasey Central Library** has services delivered from the two separate buildings and we will look at options to relocate the Children's Library within the main Lending Library, the provision of a new "joint" counter for Adult, Children's and Audio Visual which will mean users have a single point for all transactions to be carried out, current concerns of parents and children having to walk through a car park to access the Children's library would then be addressed. The Reference Library would remain as is on the first floor. Most of these works will require an application for funding out of the capital programme after finalising on site plans which would include local consultation.
- 2.30 **Bebington** Library is subject to large £1.2m capital programme allocation which was to include the merger of the One Stop Shop from Pennant House as part of the borough wide merger of the two services. The One Stop Shop service is subject to a Cabinet decision for it to remain at Pennant House. The condition of the building continues to deteriorate as discussion has been ongoing about the future of Pennant House, Mayer Hall and 63 the Village. Some small remedial works will take place to paint the outside of Pennant House. Internally a separate staffing area is to be created as the building has suffered from pest infestations. In terms of one stop shop staff merging with staff from Bebington central library whilst more problematic, staff will be swapped with other sites to gain experience and to feel part of the merger.
- 2.31 **Birkenhead One Stop Shop** site on Conway Street will next year see the vacation of Connexions. This then may allow a reconfiguration and modernisation of the space on the first floor if funding is available. There are no plans to vacate Birkenhead Central Library and so we will look into a small mobile or 'pop up' library provision at Conway to show the two services as integrated as possible and to widen access for the public to joint services.
- 2.32 The smaller library one stop shops will have minor adaptations so that they can operate as much as possible as a merged facility.

### **CALL CENTRE**

- 2.33 A number of new services were migrated to the Call Centre this year. These include enquiries relating to Parks and Countryside, Business Rates, free school meals, One Stop Shop appointments and invoices received by customers concerning a Council Service
- 2.34 Call Centre staff handled telephone enquiries in response to the Budget consultation exercise 'You Choose' in August 2011. This service was introduced at short notice, and its success was as a result of a number of departments working together to provide a range of access channels available for customers to have their say.

- 2.35 The first phase of an extensive project to handle telephone contact from customers of the Library service was introduced. The Call Centre currently handles enquiries concerning book renewals and reservations, and also provides general information and advice for four libraries. This project will progress over the coming months as further libraries are migrated. Interestingly the call centre had to handle a 15% increase in calls from what had been initially projected which revealed that by using the corporate call centre true volumes were much more accurate and should assist improving the overall service to the users.
- 2.36 In addition to Call Centre staff responding to customers with regard to existing and new services, they have also supported departments to deliver services themselves, using the Call Centre technology. These include Human Resources, with regard to the Schools Job Evaluation exercise and the Department of Adult Social Services helpline in relation to the 4 week delay in assessment of care packages. The value of utilising both the human and technological expertise of the centre again showing its value.
- 2.37 Customers have the option to provide feedback about their experience of accessing the Council's website by using the 'rate this page' facility. Call Centre staff are now responsible for managing the comments left by customers which provide an insight into their experience. These comments are reviewed on a daily basis and either responded to with further information if possible, or referred to the relevant department for further action. This feedback has, in some cases resulted in improvements being made to the information or flow of information on the website, which benefits future users. The regular monitoring of the feedback ensures that customers receive information speedily and this form of contact is logged appropriately, as many customers view it as an alternative access channel.

### **LIBRARY, CALL CENTRE, ONE STOP SHOP AND WEB PERFORMANCE**

#### **2.38 Library Performance**

	<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2009/10</u>	<u>2008/09</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
<i>ISSUES</i>	1,844,132	1,883,554	1,870,668	1,826,529	1,676,186
<i>VISITS</i>	1,817,492	1,778,182	1,756,063	1,823,462	1,768,656
<i>NEW BORROWERS</i>	16,819	16,948	15,671	16,951	16,121

- 2.39 The total issues for 2011/12 saw a decrease of 2.2% on 2010/11 having the year prior seen a 0.7% increase. The largest percentage increases were at

Higher Bebington (10.2%) and Ridgeway (10.0%), the largest decreases were at Beechwood (16.3%) and New Ferry (23.9%). For New Ferry this can be put down to the major refurbishment of the centre and closure for five months.

- 2.40 The total number of visits for 2011/12 saw an increase of 2.2% on 2010/11 having the year prior been a 1.3% increase. The largest percentage increases were at Greasby (29.5%) where the library was closed for two weeks in July 2010, Eastham and Wallasey Village (both 11.3%). The largest decrease was at Beechwood (18.2%). The number of visits to libraries increased by 2.2% and this is contrary to the national trend of decreasing visitor figures. An increase in the number of our "virtual visits" has also been recorded where users have been given increased opportunity to renew items online rather than having to physically visit a library.
- 2.41 The number of items issued reduced by 2.2% from 2010/11 which reflects the pattern of the last 5 years of small percentage reductions. It is expected that the move to offer new ways to loan materials (E-Books and E-Audio) will see the number of "traditional" item loans reduce

### **E- Books**

<i>ISSUES</i>	<i>TITLES IN COLLECTION</i>	<i>EXPENDITURE</i>
4,120	3,751	£32,750

- 2.42 In November 2011 a new E-Book service was launched and 31 March 2012 there have been 4120 'checkouts', the highest monthly total being January 2012 with 859 'checkouts'. Expenditure on E-Books in 2011/12 was £32,750.

### **Call Centre**

- 2.43 The Call Centre's performance statistics are as follows:

	Calls offered	% Calls handled
2010/11	796,372	95%
2011/12	837,005	88%

Emails received:

2010/11	11,801
2011/12	10,251

2.44 The Call Centre was offered over 40,500 more calls in 2011/12, when compared with 2010/11. This increase is reflective of the additional services migrated to the Call Centre this year. This increase, coupled with the loss of staff following the Early Voluntary Retirement/Voluntary Severance exercise affected the percentage of calls handled.

### **One Stop Shops**

2.45 One Stop Shops performance statistics for 2011/12:

<i>One Stop Shop</i>	<i>Total Customers</i>	<i>Total Enquiries</i>	<i>Average Waiting Time</i>
Bebington	14,623	17,618	8.5 mins
Birkenhead (Conway)	64,382	76,624	9.8 mins
Bromborough	760	1,014	2.1 mins
Eastham	9,123	11,143	5.2 mins
Heswall	9,364	10,895	5.3 mins
Hoylake	305	354	0 mins
Liscard	7,410	8,975	9 mins
Moreton	21,752	26,690	4.5 mins
New Brighton	7,076	8,117	1.2 mins
Rock Ferry	29,145	32,387	6.5 mins
Seacombe	29,159	34,732	8.9 mins
Upton	836	1,046	3.7 mins
West Kirby	11,283	12,425	1.3 mins
Totals	205,218	241,660	

2.46 The 2011/12 statistics highlight a 4.15% reduction in overall customer numbers compared to the previous year 2010/11. A more detailed analysis shows a 9.9% reduction in Housing and Council Tax Benefit enquiries. This may be attributed to a number of factors and initiatives that have been undertaken in the last year. The new benefit claims procedures were



reviewed and leaner processes introduced which resulted in a reduction in the need for repeat visits from customers. Other changes in Benefit processes included increased use of electronic data gathering with less need for the claimant to provide proof of income etc. Similarly an increased use of e-mail and telephone to contact landlords directly for proof of tenancy reduced the need for visits to one stop shops. A further contributory factor is the work that has been done to improve the detail contained in the Housing Benefit notifications meaning clearer information first time to customers.

2.47 The top ten customer requests at One Stop Shops:

<i>Service Area</i>	<i>2011/12</i>
Housing Benefit	80,452
Wirral Homes	35,687
Council Tax	35,742
Adult Social Services	20,798
Children and Young People	11,127
Wirral Partnership Homes	6,260
Consumer Advice, Environmental Health, Pest Control, Licensing	7,638
Technical Services	8,503
Homeless	7,400
Non Council Enquiries	10,374

2.48 The resolution rates of queries at the combined One Stop Shops were:

<i>Service Area</i>	<i>2011/12</i>
Housing Benefit	82%
Council Tax	90%
Children and Young People	95.5%
Adult Social Services	97.3%

Wirral Homes	96.5%
Wirral Partnership Homes	97.2%
Consumer Advice, Environmental Health, Pest Control, Licensing	97.8%

Resolution at first point of contact for all services	80.3%
---	-------

2.49 A further analysis of resolution rates shows an improved performance with one stop shops resolving 80.3% of all enquiries at first point of contact in comparison with a figure of 72.1% for the previous year. This correlates with the improved Housing Benefits processes mentioned above as the resolution rate of housing benefit enquiries rose from 76.2% to 82.0%.

### **Web**

2.50 The web performance statistics for 2011/12 were:

	2010/11	2011/12	% Increase
Visitors	1,479,276	1,971,610	33%
Unique Visitors	587,420	779,910	33%
Page views	6,585,664	7,914,446	20%

2.51 The current council website was launched on the 18 May 2010 to a very positive response, since that date we have developed the site extensively and achieved a 33% increase in visits and a 20% increase in page views since May 2011; this has exceeded our target increase of 10%. Most recent visitor figures, May 2012, indicate that we attract over 164,000 visitors per month and our web pages have been accessed over 7.9 million times in the last 12 months.

### **CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY (CAS)**

2.52 **Systems update** – the main system used is the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) along with other component parts which make up the council's customer tracking system. A business case has been developed for functionality that will deliver savings as well as delivering service benefits such as customer insight data, capturing equality & diversity

data and being able to use email confirmations that will allow us to inform customers via email when service requests are closed which will in customer service terms “close the loop”.

- 2.53 Customer Services, the Web Services Manager and IT services have introduced on-line forms which integrate directly into the Oracle CRM system. These integrated on-line forms allow customers to log a request for a service on the Council’s website which will automatically generate the correct tasks for the back office staff. As some of the services are delivered by external contractors this means that no Council resources are required to deliver the services, but the Council maintains a view of the requests being logged. These on-line forms are primarily in the Streetscene areas, but the use of these forms is being extended. CRM functionality has also been developed to allow Biffa to raise “Bin in Wagon” service requests. Prior to this the Call Centre had to raise them, and this has therefore helped to reduce the cost of service delivery.
- 2.54 We have implemented an on-line forms package which can be used for self-service and can be used internally to support service delivery and it also provides simple workflow, which means that the package can be expanded into service areas which require workflow functionality.

### **C A S – the Library One Stop Shop merger process update**

- 2.55 Telephone calls to the library service were analysed and scripted and those calls made to four of the library sites are now handled by the call centre. The roll out of further library sites is dependent on resources being made available in the call centre
- 2.56 The Finance administration work has been reviewed and the library administration team co-located with the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services administration team, as part of this review petty cash handling in libraries is being re engineered and where practicable reduced.
- 2.57 The Library Reader Services section is responsible for the purchasing of library book stock; the cataloguing and classification of stock; so that it can be easily retrieved; and the management of stock throughout the network of libraries in the borough. The service has recently been reviewed and a number of recommendations have either been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. These include the electronic receipt of book supplier invoices via electronic data interchange (EDI), the automatic transfer of invoices from the library management system into the Councils Oracle Payments system and the direct delivery of new books from suppliers to all branch libraries. These recommendations will enable the council to reduce expenditure in this area by approximately £5,000 per year.

- 2.58 The Customer Service Development Team significantly supported the production of the Library Strategy. Consultation on this strategy was carried out in February 2012. Online forms were produced and staff visited every library to promote and publicise this. Following on from this consultation a focus was needed on the proposed changes to library opening hours and this was undertaken through questionnaires and at a targeted event at Bebington Central Library on 28 February 2012.
- 2.59 The Reference Library Service (RLS) main function has been to provide a cultural resource for family history or local history projects through the on-going collection of local information and relevant materials. An outline review of the RLS was completed in September 2011 to document materials held and their current accessibility, identify opportunities for service improvements and efficiencies in recognition of the reduced specialist staffing resource available. This would be supported by improved access to materials and investigating the potential for joint-working with the Council's Archive and Records service. Recommendations under review include a shift in the service to a much more open access, greater use of customer insight to inform service provision and a focus on working in partnership with the Archives & Records service.

### **C A S - Other Service Re-engineering Projects**

- 2.60 Following new Government legislation and guidance, work was undertaken with colleagues in DASS and the One Stop Shops to develop and implement new processes and documentation to support the delivery of the Blue Badge service.
- 2.61 The 'Accounts Receivable' (Sundry Debtors) service has also been developed for delivery by the front of house services.
- 2.62 Telephone calls in respect of Business Rates have also been analysed and scripted and are now handled by the call centre.
- 2.63 Following the transfer of the Personal Finance Unit from DASS into the Finance Department in March 2011, processes have been reviewed and refined and a document management system implemented which improves work processes, performance management and creates efficiencies with better links to the Housing Benefit service.
- 2.64 Freedom of Information requests have been reviewed and new processes implemented to align them with customer feedback, providing better visibility and reporting of the service.

- 2.65 Document scanning is now being used at all One Stop Shops for job applications received. All of the new Multi functional devices (MFD's) on site have a secure process to enable applications to be scanned securely to the HR recruitment shared area. This has not only saved time and made the process more efficient for the advisors and HR but has also saved paper as forms were previously faxed. The proposal is to now roll this out to other service areas e.g. Trading Standards allowing supporting evidence to be scanned and received by the department as soon as the enquiry is received.
- 2.66 SMS text messaging is used on a service requirement basis and this year a new account was created for Rock Ferry Children's centre for the service to send out messages and reminders to their customers/clients.

### **C A S – One Stop Shop update**

- 2.67 One Stop Shop staff now successfully deliver the new Blue Badge Scheme within exceptionally short timescales.
- 2.68 With regard to the Military Veterans Service the one stop shops had the opportunity to support the Wirral Veterans Contact Centre and met with them on several occasions to explain the assistance that they could offer on site to complement the work that they were already carrying out with veterans who had approached them. The Military Veterans' Service now provide surgeries at two One Stop Shop sites working with service personnel to support mental health and emotional wellbeing issues along with that of their families.
- 2.69 Connexions work from a number of sites following a restructuring of how they deliver their services. They offer high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance for young people aged 13 to 19 (and up to 25 in certain circumstances). Connexions Advisers work to increase the number of young people who are in employment, education or training and improve choices and skills ensuring they achieve employability and a successful transition to adult and working life. Libraries and One Stop Shops offer the perfect venue to help support these aims with private rooms for one to one interviews, computer and printing access as well as direct links to other relevant services.
- 2.70 Moneyline credit union work from Seacombe one stop shop and offer affordable loans to help customers manage debt effectively. From January 2012 to May 2012 Moneyline have seen 240 people and issued 120 affordable loans for items such as furniture, deposits on properties and household items. 35 customers have also set up savings accounts which will assist them in managing their future financial affairs.
- 2.71 Plasma screens are now operational across the network of libraries and one stop shops and display information on a range of council and partner

organisations. Research has shown this approach to be a much more effective communication medium than traditional methods and we continue to exploit its potential for publicising council services. By advertising revenue earning activities such as the Invigor8 leisure programme and the forthcoming productions at the Floral Pavilion we also support generating income for the authority.

### **C A S - Call Centre Update**

- 2.72 A number of additional services have been migrated to the Call Centre this year, following the Council's Voluntary Severance/Early Voluntary Retirement initiative. This has required staff to undertake a significant amount of training within a short period of time to equip them with the knowledge to deliver the new services. The Customer Services Toolkit, which is available on the Intranet as a support to all front line staff, has proved to be invaluable during this time of rapid change, as staff are able to confirm information as they continue to learn.
- 2.73 New services migrated to the Call Centre include enquiries relating to Parks and Countryside, Business Rates, Free School Meals, one stop shop appointments and Accounts Receivable invoices. In addition, the first phase of an extensive project to handle telephone contact from customers of the Library service was introduced. The Call Centre currently handles enquiries concerning book renewals and reservations, and also provides general information and advice for four libraries. This project will progress over the coming months as further libraries are migrated.
- 2.74 Calls relating to the Local Election and Referendum in May 2011, increased throughout April with 1,641 enquiries being handled in total during the month
- 2.75 A new Switchboard system was implemented in July 2011, and staff received training in its use in a 'live' environment.
- 2.76 In March 2012, the Revenues Team within the Call Centre was offered an additional 8,805 calls, most of these being presented to the team between 19 and 30 March. Although this is a historically busy time of year, Members agreed a number of changes which could affect Council Tax accounts (3% budget reduction, pensioner discount reduced to 70 years of age and payment over 12 instalments by Direct Debit) These changes contributed to the increase in volumes as they prompted customers to contact us for clarification and application.

## **C A S –Future Developments**

- 2.77 In the coming months the Customer Service Development Team will focus on project managing Welfare Reform changes including welfare assistance, council tax benefit abolition and replacement and the introduction of universal credit. This is to ensure that the Council provides a strategic response to this Government initiative and that the right people know how to access information about these changes and receive their correct entitlements.
- 2.78 Future developments will continue to focus upon supporting the restructuring of the library and one stop shops including staffing, buildings and processes.
- 2.79 The development of the CRM system remains a key focus, given the councils investment in this system. The CRM will adopt a ‘citizen-centric’ approach which will enable a complete view of a customer’s interactions with the Council over the range of disparate services offered. This is particularly important as it will allow us to collect equality and diversity information about customers, helping us to shape future services.
- 2.80 The planned introduction of e-mail workflow functionality in the CRM will automatically email the back office with the details of a service request made to the call centre or one stop shops. This will allow customer service to be delivered to departments that do not have CRM as their main line of business application, whilst capturing the details to inform customer insight. E-mail workflow functionality in the CRM will allow us automatically to inform our customers via email when their service request has been updated or closed. This improves the customer experience and reduces customer contact to the Council thus reducing service delivery costs.
- 2.81 As informed by the CAS, channel of choice will be offered with an increasing emphasis on the web channel and self service where appropriate.

## **LIBRARY STRATEGY UPDATE**

- 2.82 It has been a year of significant change for libraries nationally and Wirral's libraries remain extremely popular with the public. They have continued this relationship as well as widening their reach, merging with one stop shops, expanding services, embracing new technologies and in doing so have now begun to create a public library service for the 21st Century.
- 2.83 2011/12 saw the adoption of Wirral’s first ever Library strategy which set out the future for the service and how will it develop in response to the many requirements of users and the changing world the service operates in. This was also an important requirement which came out of the Library Review in 2009 and allows the service to move forward clear in how to deliver the

service in the future. The strategy as with the Customer Access Strategy will be kept under review.

- 2.84 In line with this new strategy a number of developments have already been moved forward and these are detailed below.
- 2.85 The introduction of self service facilities into merged library/one stop shop sites with plans to expand this. The staff resources previously used for issuing and discharging library books is now used for value added services such as answering queries and sorting out problems for users.
- 2.86 Our Digital Media collection (E-Books) supplied by Overdrive was launched in November 2011. Users are able to check-out downloadable digital eBooks and audio books through our website. The collection offers many of the same features as our physical book collection making it in effect a "virtual branch" which allows users to use it directly from home or from any internet enabled device (e.g. Smartphone) free of charge.
- 2.87 The aim to improve literacy through the promotion and support for the development of reading in children, young people, those with basic skills and in families to help create a literate population continues.
- 2.88 A new volunteer policy was set out to specify how the service will work with volunteers and what volunteers can expect from the Library Service. Recruitment and placing of volunteers in library computer access suites to offer the public basic help and assistance is underway and four libraries now offer this service.
- 2.89 Library service key achievements this year include:

#### **Children and Young People**

- Schools Paperback of the Year Award.
- Launch of the annual Summer Reading Challenge.
- Children's Book Week.
- National Bookstart Launch.
- Christopher Salmon Poetry Extravaganza.
- Extensive and varied programme of summer activity events on a weekly basis in the school holidays in all library sites.
- Library outreach sessions to schools and other community venues throughout the year.



- Targeted and evaluated project work specifically targeting boys and reluctant readers.
- Media Monkeys comic writing and computer skills sessions in many libraries.

### **Adults**

- Wirral Libraries Annual Bookfest week launched by Sir Andrew Motion.
- High profile events and promotions linked to established book awards including the Orange Prize for Fiction, Costa, Man Booker and Richard and Judy's Summer Reads.
- Wirral Libraries Reading Groups Festive Readers Evening.
- New reading groups in libraries for teenagers.
- Expansion of further GIR groups in libraries and in the community particularly aimed at vulnerable adults.
- GIR project workers based in four Wirral libraries running regular reading groups and arranging reading related events.
- Literacy and basic reading skills sessions for adults with learning disabilities.
- Three Bite-Sized community Shakespeare Events.
- Two Dickens Centenary Celebration Events.
- World Book Day Events in five libraries.
- World Book Night Events in two libraries
- Read Yourself Well PCT funded health material collections expanded to three more libraries.
- Raising the profile of the library through a strategic and effective marketing plan centred on the 'More Than Books' campaign producing high quality leaflets, posters and website information developed in around a programme of major corporate themes.
- Established new Quick Choice collections of best-selling accessible fiction and non-fiction in a number of our libraries.
- Adult Learners Week – 'Take Your Nan' silver surfing initiative.

- Drop in local history sessions at reference libraries during local history week.
- Genealogy and local history drop in events in many libraries.
- Increased amount of home readers visited by library service to over 700.

### **LIBRARY ONE STOP SHOP FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- 2.90 Ongoing development of the service is vital and whilst bringing many benefits in improved service and increased efficiency and overall lower costs it brings with it challenges and initiatives that will be developed by our joint service. Below are detailed some of the initiatives planned to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of Libraries remains without impairing the traditional and much respected service.
- 2.91 Develop and further the role of volunteer assistance to support learning activities particularly in relation to IT assistance, Homework Clubs home reader services and children's story time and holiday activities.
- 2.92 Develop a documented cohesive learning programme to meet community needs and further digital inclusion.
- 2.93 Identify funding opportunities for additional community learning activities courses and reading promotion events.
- 2.94 Participate in Make a Noise in Libraries fortnight and the Get it Loud initiative to attract more young people into our service.
- 2.95 Further the libraries one stop shops strengthening role in relation to public health offering the Five Ways to Wellbeing programme in all libraries one stop shops and developing the library offer in this area.
- 2.96 Develop and evaluate a pilot Health and Wellbeing library at Leasowe Library in partnership with The Reader Organisation (TRO) and the Primary Care Trust (PCT).
- 2.97 Further expand the Read Yourself Well collections in libraries in conjunction with health partners to provide a collection of self-help books for people with mild mental health problems.
- 2.98 Use Librarians more strategically to actively seek opportunities to work in partnership with statutory, voluntary and community organisations to further engage hard to reach groups to extend access to library one stop shops.

- 2.99 Continue to develop social networking and web technology to engage with new and existing users using Facebook and other technology to meet changing customer needs and expectations.
- 2.100 Update the written stock selection policy to take account of Wirral's changing demographics.
- 2.101 Introduce a public library stock suggestion procedure.
- 2.102 Develop a marketing strategy to further the libraries one stop shop role as a trusted source of information offering advice, guidance and support with job applications, CV's and job searching.
- 2.103 Roll out Frontline reader development training across all frontline staff in merged service.
- 2.104 Establish further quick choice and easy read collections of books across the service for reluctant readers.
- 2.105 Develop Read 2 Me support to people who cannot reach a library or may be unable to read due to an illness or disability, by reading to them in their own homes delivered by volunteers, supported by library staff.
- 2.106 Provide IT at home service providing taster sessions on how to use a computer for accessing government and council information. Sessions can be held in libraries and individuals own homes to combat isolation.
- 2.107 As the service is linking inexorably with the One Stop Shops the above initiatives are complemented and enhanced by number that are reflect both Libraries and One Stop Shops. These are set out below;
- 2.108 Deliver the face to face element of the new sub regional choice based letting system to assist people who are looking for social housing.
- 2.109 Improve access for customers or their representatives to be able to hand in Financial Assessment Forms, Disability Related Forms and Income Expenditure forms and any supporting documents into a OSS or if customer requiring assistance completing the forms to be able to go to their nearest OSS.
- 2.110 As the implementation of the Government's Welfare Reforms commence the frontline staff will play an important role in dealing with customer's enquiries regarding their payment of Universal Credit and additional areas that impact on Housing Benefit during the transitional period.

- 2.111 Develop the role that frontline staff play in delivering welfare and debt advice to ensure Wirral residents are able to maximise any benefit entitlement and improve financial inclusion throughout the borough. This will include:
- Advice on Fuel Tariffs
  - Advice on opening bank accounts
  - Benefits Maximisation
  - Checking if a person is eligible for any other financial assistance e.g. charitable grants
  - Work with Wirral Credit Union to provide access to their service within sites
  - Advisors being trained to deliver first stage debt advice
  - Developing a Wirral Financial Help Pack in liaison with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector as well as the General Advice Service
- 2.112 Open plan working - as the buildings are refurbished and the move is to more open plan desk arrangements for advisers. This removes the physical separation that currently exists and allows staff to interact more effectively with customers by allowing them to easily leave their desks and assist a customer using a self service kiosk or public access PC.
- 2.113 Liaison is underway with Narcotics Anonymous with a view to supporting the establishment of a Narcotics Anonymous programme at Rock Ferry that would see recovering addicts supporting each other through the process of becoming “clean”.
- 2.114 Business continuity - Library one stop shops will play a role in helping other Departments maintain information and services to Wirral residents in the event of any service failure. The service will participate in a corporate discussion regarding their role within a risk management framework.
- 2.115 Citizen Advice Bureau - With the library, one stop shop merger it will mean that there will be one stop shop advisers based in locations which the CAB also work from. We will explore with them if there are any areas of work where the advisers could assist them, such as debt advice.

#### **WEB STRATEGY UPDATE**

- 2.116 The website is continuously developed, most of which is in response to the daily feedback received from customers who have used the “rate this page” facility with enthusiasm. Work has been completed to ensure that this Web

feedback is managed and disseminated to the relevant content owners by staff within the Call Centre. This ensures that feedback/contact is handled in the same professional manner as other contacts.

- 2.117 The annual SOCITM “Better Connected 2012” report has been released and indicates that the website continues to improve. We have been awarded 3 stars out of a possible 4, compared to 2 stars from 2011. Overall, the comments received were very favourable with some criticism being levelled at content rather than any technical issues. Areas for improvement have been identified and actions distributed amongst the officers responsible.
- 2.118 The new integrated Library website was successfully launched in July 2011, whilst a large amount of feedback was initially received, both positive and negatives, we now are running on an even keel. In comparison to other website launches, the library website certainly resulted in the most feedback from the customer. A combination of the new design, the introduction of eBooks and the intuitive access to your library account to renew and reserve books has resulted in a significant increase in traffic to the library site.
- 2.119 The SOCITM report singled out Wirral library’s website as one of the best customer experience sites they had come across and after contacting us for comments, included a Wirral Library case study within the main “Better Connected” report.
- 2.120 The success of the new library design led onto its employment in other areas of the site, most notably the “Sports” section, where changes have resulted in a near eradication of negative feedback. Plans are in place to continue to roll out this design across the site and incorporate “top task” architecture into the Homepage and landing pages.
- 2.121 In close conjunction with the Council’s central PR and Marketing staff Wirral has carefully introduced the use of social media via Twitter and Facebook and has seen an increase in the number of “followers” and an increase in the level of two way communication via these channels. Future management of these facilities is currently being investigated as a major increase in its use is forecast.
- 2.122. The website was successfully used to launch the “Budget Simulator” to the public, and eventually generated 1,650 responses. This represented the second-highest response in the country. 45% of people who viewed the budget simulation completed it.

- 2.123 The Bin Collection pages were revised and are now in a tabbed format. Feedback indicated that customers were struggling to decipher between the collection dates of the various bin colours. The tabbed format makes the facility more intuitive to use. This work was highlighted as best practise by the SOCITM “Better Connected” report.
- 2.124 A new system called Self Serve has been rolled out across the Council to enable non-school employees to securely access their pay details and manage their personal data. This system is available via the intranet or via the footer of the council website enabling staff to access their details from any web enabled pc outside of work.

### **Web Future Developments**

- 2.125 A number of future developments are being assessed for suitability such as the redesigning of the website around top tasks functionality and the use of mobile Apps or mobile optimised web design to give greater and more efficient access to services. Video could provide an alternative way for advice and information to be distributed in a clearer and more accessible manner.
- 2.126 Greater analysis is to be undertaken in how successful a customer’s journey has been through the web site and an emphasis on guiding the customer to the correct online service as efficiently as possible. The Intranet will be developed in the future and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) will have a greater part to play in identifying what services and amenities are available to customers within a locality.

### **Online Forms**

- 2.127 As part of the ongoing commitment to producing a 24 x 7 self serve portal, 22 forms that integrate seamlessly into the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) have been developed. These have been thoroughly tested and have seen positive take up with customers and represent a strong beginning to the necessary channel shift. The development programme has identified a further 53 forms that have been batched by complexity and potential volume of usage. These forms have been supplied to the IT Development teams and will be released when complete and thoroughly tested.
- 2.128 The “Achieve online forms” product has enabled the Customer Services Development Team to produce a further 31 forms. This product allows rapid production of the simpler forms in conjunction with the business owner and is also used to “pilot” forms before they are handed over to ITS for development into CRM integrated forms. As more forms come online, feedback builds up

to enable the forms to be fine tuned to ensure the customer finds them easy and straight forward to complete.

### **Digital Inclusion**

- 2.129 The need to address the growing “digital divide” is a project that has recently come to Customer Services. A great deal of emphasis is placed on honing the web interface that customers interact with, but until now, little emphasis has been placed on those customers that cannot even access the website or any digital service.
- 2.130 A programme of work and a policy is currently being devised that will look to tackle a number of areas such as education, equipment provision, access and perception change. The intended outcome of this work is more opportunities for all through improved access to information resulting in economic improvement and area regeneration, job opportunities and a greater spread of channel shift amongst Wirral’s residents.

### **CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

- 2.131 Significant work has been undertaken in support of the wider customer focus work area, of which managing the performance of customer feedback (corporate complaints; councillor/MP contacts; ombudsman contacts; customer suggestions and compliments) is an integral role for customer services.
- 2.132 The following work is on-going to ensure a consistent approach towards collecting customer feedback and engaging with our customers across council services:
- Ensuring the council’s Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system reflects the revised departmental/service splits for accurate monitoring, supported by designated coordinators
  - Alignment of data collation with new corporate plan performance framework with a focus on performance management as opposed to performance monitoring
  - Collation of wider customer feedback through all channels to ensure consistency of response and review for organisational learning
- 2.133 Key projects initiated or completed in 2011/12 include:
- Review of the ‘Wirral’s Future – your road and neighbourhood ‘survey which was sent to all Wirral households in March 2011. There was a focus on Streetscene-related services (93% of all responses received) but the opportunity was also offered for wider comments on council service

provision. The majority of responses (99%) were collated in the council's CRM system between March and June 2011:

- 3,438 service requests were raised, across 55 distinct service areas and the most popular services contacted about were:
  - Road defects 18%
  - Pavement defects 13%
  - Dog fouling 12%
  - Customer feedback 7%
  - Tree issues 6%

- 2.134 Process implemented to ensure customer feedback received via the council website's rate this page function is recorded and managed through the CRM system.
- 2.135 Improved web form provided for customers wishing to provide feedback by this channel with efficient process to ensure routed to relevant coordinator and managed in CRM
- 2.136 Work in support of the inclusion of Freedom of Information requests, Data Protection (Subject Access) requests, internal reviews and contacts from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) in CRM, now being recorded with effect from April 2012.
- 2.137 Responsibility taken for coordinating all customer feedback received for the Libraries service.
- 2.138 Update and revision of the council's policy towards vexatious and unreasonable complaint behaviour, to be considered by Standard's Committee in July 2012.
- 2.139 Contribution to the council's compliance with the Equality Act 2010, including the ability to record equality data against (online) customer feedback and the introduction of quarterly snapshot surveys in the call centre, libraries and one stop shops.
- 2.140 The focus for customer feedback is to 'put things right and learn from it' which recognises that complaints specifically should not be dealt with in isolation and instead should be used to inform future improved service delivery.
- 2.141 There were a total of 6,049 customer feedback contacts recorded in 2011/12, which represented a 7% decrease from 2010/11 (6,485). This overall figure included 14% fewer corporate complaints, with the lack of adverse weather conditions affecting services over the winter months, as in previous years, a



key factor (Technical Services recorded a 31% annual reduction in their complaints). Similarly, statutory complaints recorded a comparative reduction, of 28%. Recorded councillor and MP contacts also displayed an annual reduction (5%), along with Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) contacts (9.5%).

- 2.142 By channel, internet and email was used for two thirds of all contacts, continuing a trend that seen usage of these channels increase by 6% from 2011/12.
- 2.143 There was an increase in the average response rate for complaints with 15 working days taken to respond to all complaints in 2011/12 compared to 14 working days in 2010/11.
- Corporate complaints, which are measured against a target of 15 working days to respond, recorded an average of 10 working days, maintaining performance from 2010/11.
  - Statutory complaints (DASS and CYPD Children's Social Care) recorded an average of 34.5 working days to respond, compared to 24 working days in 2010/11.
  - Councillor/MP enquiries took on average 7 working days in 2011/12 compared to 6 working days in 2010/11. The corporate target is 10 working days.
  - LGO contacts took slightly longer to respond to in 2011/12 with an average of 16 calendar days taken compared to 14 calendar days in 2010/11. This compares to the standard response target of 28 calendar days
- 2.144 An average of 9% of all complaints received across the council resulting in some organisational learning. Some examples are provided below:
- New allotment application process and database introduced to improve management of waiting list (asset management)
  - Staff training provided to improve customer care offered (environmental health)
  - Enhanced information available on website to ensure displayed information for activities is accurate and up to date (marketing)
  - Improvements to coverage provided by external contractor in response to feedback received (bridleways and public rights of way)

- Requirement placed on external contractor to improve notice given and signage used on site when undertaking future works (COLAS/Highway maintenance)
- Revised bin collection times to avoid school traffic and minimise missed collections (refuse collection service)
- Charges to be introduced for 'no show' bookings to maximise take up of leisure classes, in response to complaints received (sports and recreation service)
- Improved instructor to child ratio to be introduced for swimming classes, in response to feedback received (sports and recreation service)
- Review of CCTV coverage and provision of safe-guarding training for staff as a result of anti-social behaviour reported in a leisure centre (sports and recreation service)
- Erection of dog fouling signs to deter local issue reported (community safety)
- Website information reviewed and improved, in response to feedback received (marketing)
- Improved landlord accreditation process introduced in response to feedback provided (housing standards service)
- Improved training implemented for SEN school escorts (transport)
- Improved disabled access at a local leisure centre (sports and recreation)
- New arrangements introduced to improve liaison between schools and admission team for 11+ exams (schools)
- Customer questionnaire introduced in response to customer comments asking for a review of fitness suite opening hours (sports and recreation)
- Increased frequency of street cleansing rota introduced to minimise future complaints (street cleansing)

### **National Feedback**

2.145 Libraries complete Public Library Statistics returns on an annual basis for CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy). The collated returns from all library authorities are published to enable performance comparisons.

- 2.146 The Call Centre remains a member of 'Call North West', a support organisation for Contact Centres across various service sectors based in the North West. Call Centre team leaders and managers have the opportunity to attend meetings when the agenda items are of interest to our organisation. The Good Practice meetings allow open discussion and the opportunity to network with both public and private sector organisations
- 2.147 Wirral are one of the longest standing members of the National OSS Benchmarking Group who meet to share knowledge and learn from good practice. With the collection and collation of benchmarking data including, costs per enquiry and customer satisfaction levels, Wirral is able to compare performance with other Local Authorities across the country. A further benefit of the group is the ability to consider adopting already tried and tested methods of service delivery with collected data being valuable for use in service reviews.

### CASHIERS

- 2.148 Cashiers are based at one site Conway Building in the Birkenhead One Stop Shop and remain consistently busy; continuing to process substantial amounts of cash and cheque payments from over 200 internal Wirral establishments and providing an excellent front of house service to the people of Wirral.
- 2.149 The success of this has seen all Income now reaching the Authorities Financial systems within a 3 day period, before the change was implemented the average time for monies received in the Financial systems was an average 21 days.
- 2.150 Amounts received from Wirral Establishments from April 2010 – March 2012 are as follows:

	Cash items	Cash	Cheques	Cheque £
<i>April 10 – March 11</i>	7,867	£4,473,241	31,217	£4,444,617
April 11 - March 12	8,163	£4,603,521	29,914	£4,215,983

- 2.151 Cashiers process payments from One Stop Shops drop in boxes within a one day time limit. This facility continues to provide a steady source of payment. Amounts received from April 2010 – March 2012 are as follows:

	Cash	Cheques

<i>April 10 – March 11</i>	<i>£74.00</i>	<i>£2,622,395.00</i>
April 11 – March 12	£585.00	£2,070,730.00

2.152 The counter facility has seen an overall decrease in income however continues to remain consistently busy. The post facility has seen an overall decrease in income but an increase receipts. Back office duties continue to be extremely busy due to banking of Establishment monies.

2.153 Amounts from Counter and Postal Income are as follows:

	Counter receipts	Income	Post receipts	Income
<i>April 10 – March 11</i>	<i>109,876</i>	<i>£24,120,334</i>	<i>23,656</i>	<i>£19,780,033</i>
April 10 - March 11	84,204	£23,309,685	26,784	£18,959,370

2.154 The total income processed through Cashiers is:

*April 10 – March 11 - £43,900,367*      April 11 – March 12 - £42,269,055

2.155 It is anticipated that Cashiers will continue to remain busy throughout 2012. Cashiers was restructured during 2011 with changed staffing. Training needs were delivered to both new staff and continuing staff whose role had changed due to the exercise. Throughout the whole of the process the section continued to meet all deadlines.

## **SUCCESS STORIES**

2.156 **Customer Service Excellence** - The Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services division was assessed against the criteria for the Customer Service Excellence standard (previously Charter mark) in February 2012. Following this assessment, the Standard was again confirmed. The process required the division to undertake a self assessment against specific criteria, and compile evidence to support it. In addition, a site visit by the assessor took place in February. Within the final report, the assessor highlighted a number of areas that warranted praise. These include:

- The 'rate this page' option on the website.
- The process followed to merge the One Stop Shop and Library services in Heswall, and the enthusiasm shown by the staff involved.

- Support provided by the Customer Services Development team in migrating new services to the Call Centre and One Stops.
- Customer Service Toolkit (CST)-we continue to develop our knowledge management system to assist our frontline staff in delivering services to customers. The system was developed in house at Wirral and has proved invaluable in supporting staff and improving the quality and consistency of our service delivery. Our efforts in developing the CST was rewarded when it was commended during a recent Customer Service Excellence inspection as one of the best systems the assessor had observed.
- Extension of generic working in the call centre

2.157 **Staff Development** - During 2011/12, the Development and Customer Relations Officers have been fully utilised in delivering training to one stop shop, call centre and library staff. Induction training has been delivered to a number of new recruits. Training sessions have been undertaken throughout the year following a number of recruitment exercises. In January 2012 a programme was started to train library staff in one stop shop procedures. These sessions have been held over five consecutive days with seven staff per session and to date 94 library staff have been trained. Library staff are trained to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to deliver a range of one stop shop services, as the project to merge one stop shops and libraries continues. This training will be built upon and library assistants will attend further sessions as the service develops.

2.158 In addition, all one stop shop advisers have, or will shortly receive, training in the new processes for delivering the Blue Badge and Property Pool Plus (formerly Wirral Homes) services due to extensive changes made to these schemes. The Development and Customer Relations officers have also supported at a number of events this year. These include Wellbeing for Wirral (Wirral Older Peoples Parliament) Redundancy Support for Trans Foods and Nifty after fifty.

2.159 A number of Customer Services advisers from the call centre and one stop shops elected to undertake an NVQ Level 3 in Customer Service when the Apprenticeship Scheme was introduced last year. The majority of these have now successfully completed their study which included functional skills in Mathematics and English. Following this initial phase, it is our intention to support this area of development moving forward.

2.160 We are currently evaluating an apprenticeship programme "Libraries, Archives & Information Services" which will be fully funded via Wirral Metropolitan College.

- 2.161 A number of additional services have been migrated to the call centre this year, following the Voluntary Severance/Early Voluntary Retirement initiative. This has required staff to undertake a significant amount of training within a short period of time to equip them with the knowledge to deliver the new services. The Customer Services Toolkit has proved to be invaluable during this time of rapid change, as staff are able to confirm information as they continue to learn.
- 2.162 The effectiveness of the service they provide e.g. the updated Revenues and Benefits system, e-learning courses on fraud awareness, equality and diversity and safe guarding.
- 2.163 Two members of Customer Services are close to finishing a Masters in Business Administration (MBA), as part of the Wirral MBA programme based at the University of Chester. Over the previous six modules, learning has been closely aligned with local government experience to encourage the transfer of new skills back to the workplace. Completion of final dissertations is expected by November this year.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 2.164 This report reflects a frenetic and productive previous 12 months. The forthcoming 12 months will continue at a pace seeing the fruition of one of the councils major restructures, the library and one stop shop merger. Welfare Reform will have a major impact on the work of the customer services and will shape what and how front line services deliver to ensure the public are fully cognisant, with an informed ability to make clear choices.
- 2.165 How people choose to access services is constantly changing with social media developments. Our role is to help those who can, access services via the web and to improve the ability of those who don't currently access the web, breaking down the digital divide will be a key role across customer services teams working corporately to look at the consequential economic impacts these changes will bring.
- 2.166 Never has the work of customer services been so prolific and intrinsic in supporting the council to meet the economic and structural constraints of the future whilst ensuring the public receive a robust and responsive service.

## **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 3.1 Failure to deliver on the many diverse tasks that face customer services will mean that those of our customers who are the most vulnerable may not receive the services that they rightly deserve. Failure to deliver on the Welfare Reform agenda will have economic impacts for generations to come.

#### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 None within the context of this report.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 Consultation work undertaken is set out in the main body of this report , particularly in relation to the Library strategy.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

6.1 There is potential for significant impact particularly as the effects of Welfare Reform is rolled out. Groups will be consulted as part of the wider customer focus work within the Customer Access Strategy.

#### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

7.1 The main area for resourcing issues are the restructuring of the library one stop shop service. There will be resource implications with regards to meeting the welfare agenda.

#### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required specifically as part of this report though one has been developed for the updated Customer Access Strategy and also for One Stop Shops and the Call Centre.

#### **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 All building details for library one stop shops will be fully undertaken within appropriate planning and building regulations.

#### **12.0 RECOMMENDATION**

12.1 The report is for noting.

#### **13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

13.1 That Members are aware of the work being undertaken within the field of Customer Services.

**REPORT AUTHOR:****Malcolm Flanagan***Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services*

Telephone: 666 3260

Email: [Malcolmflanagan@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:Malcolmflanagan@wirral.gov.uk)

## APPENDICES

None.

Council Meeting	Date
Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12 July 2011
Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 July 2010



## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2012

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>ACTING CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents a review of Treasury Management activities in 2011/12 and has been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The year saw these activities realise a net underspend of £3.7 million. Of this sum £2.5 million was anticipated and included in the Estimates 2012/13 as agreed by Cabinet on 21 February 2012. The report also confirms compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Treasury management is defined as: "The management of the local authority investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."
- 2.2 The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. This requires public sector authorities to determine an annual Treasury Management Strategy and as a minimum, formally report on their treasury activities and arrangements in mid-year and after the year-end. These reports enable those tasked with implementing policies and undertaking transactions to demonstrate that they have properly fulfilled their responsibilities. They also enable those with responsibility/governance of the treasury management function to scrutinise and assess its effectiveness and compliance with policies and objectives.
- 2.3 Cabinet approves the Treasury Management Strategy at the start of each financial year. This identifies how it is proposed to finance capital expenditure, borrow and invest in the light of capital spending requirements, the interest rate forecasts and the expected economic conditions. During the year Cabinet receives a quarterly monitoring report on treasury management activities and at the end of each financial year this Annual Report. Scrutiny of treasury policy, strategy and activity is presently undertaken by the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

- 2.4 The 2011/12 Strategy was agreed in February 2011. At that time there were tentative signs that the UK was emerging from recession. Recovery in growth was expected to be slow and uneven as the austerity measures announced in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review were implemented in order to reduce the budget deficit, reduce Government borrowing and rebalance the economy. Inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) had remained above 3%; Unemployment was at 2.5 million and was expected to rise further as the public and private sector contracted. There was also a high degree of uncertainty surrounding Eurozone sovereign.
- 2.5 During 2011/12 inflation saw CPI and RPI at 5.2% and 5.6% respectively in September 2011, primarily due to escalating utility prices and the January 2011 increase in VAT to 20%. By February 2012 reductions in transport costs, food prices and the VAT effect falling out CPI was at 3.4% and RPI 3.7%.
- 2.6 Growth remained elusive. The Bank's Quarterly Inflation Reports saw the outlook downgraded to around 1% in 2011 and 2012. The unresolved problems in the Eurozone weighed negatively on global economic prospects. The UK GDP was positive in only the first and third calendar quarters of 2011; annual GDP to December 2011 registered 0.5%; unemployment rose to 2.7 million and youth unemployment passed 1 million.
- 2.7 The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee maintained the status quo on the Bank Rate which has been 0.5% since March 2009, but increased asset purchases by £75 billion in October 2011 and another £50 billion in February 2012 taking the Quantitative Easing (QE) total to £325 billion.
- 2.8 In Europe, sovereign debt problems for some countries became critical. Bailout packages were required for Greece and Portugal whilst Spain and Italy came under increased stress in November. Standard & Poor's downgraded nine European sovereigns. The successful Greek sovereign bond swap in March 2012 shortly after its second bailout package allowed it to avoid bankruptcy later that month, but it was not a long-term solution. The ECB's Long-Term Refinancing Operations (LTROs) flooded the financial markets and relieved much of the immediate funding pressure facing European banks but markets ultimately took the view the LTROs simply delayed a resolution of, rather than addressed, the issues.
- 2.9 Markets sentiment oscillated between 'risk on'/'risk off' modes, this swing becoming the norm for much of 2011/12 as investors shifted between riskier assets and the relative safety of higher quality government bonds. Gilts were a principal beneficiary of the theme which helped push yields lower. There was little market reaction to, or impact on, gilts by the decision by Fitch and Moody's to change the outlook on the UK's triple-A rating from stable to negative. PWLB borrowing rates fell commensurately but the cost associated with borrowing longer-term whilst investing the monies temporarily until required for capital financing remained high.

2.10 Europe's banking sector was inextricably linked with the sovereign sector. Sharp moves in sovereign Credit Default Swaps and bond yields were fairly correlated with the countries' banking sector performance. The deterioration in the prospects for real growth had implications for earnings and profit growth and banks' creditworthiness. The European Banking Authority's banking stress tests of 70 EU banks undertaken in October 2011 identified a collective €106 billion shortfall to banks' Core Tier 1 ratio of 9%. The slowdown in debt and equity capital market activity also had implications for banks' funding and liquidity. These factors, as well as a reassessment by the rating agencies of future sovereign support for banks, resulted in downgrades to the long-term ratings of several UK and non-UK financial institutions in autumn 2011.

### INVESTMENT ACTIVITY

2.11 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Investment Guidance which came into effect on 1 April 2010 reiterated the need to focus on security and liquidity, rather than yield. It also recommended that strategies include details of assessing credit risk, reasons for borrowing in advance of need and the use of treasury advisers.

2.12 The opening and closing investment portfolio for 2011/12:-

<b>INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>Balance at 1 April 2011 £m</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2012 £m</b>	<b>%</b>
<u>Current Assets (Cash Equivalents)</u>				
Loans and Receivables - Specified	12	9	15	15
Available for sale financial assets - Specified	50	37	19	18
<u>Current Assets (Short Term Investments)</u>				
Loans and Receivables - Specified	60	44	37	36
Available for sale financial assets - Specified	2	1	1	1
<u>Long Term Investments</u>		-		
Loans and Receivables - Non Specified	4	3	23	22
Available for sale financial assets - Non Specified	8	6	8	8
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>136</b>		<b>103</b>	

2.13 A breakdown of investments and the movement throughout the year:-

<b>Investments with:</b>	<b>30 Jun 11 £m</b>	<b>30 Sep 11 £m</b>	<b>31 Dec 11 £m</b>	<b>31 Mar 12 £m</b>
UK Banks	61	60	47	35
UK Building Societies	15	15	6	6
Money Market Funds	39	29	40	20
Other Local Authorities	32	36	34	34
Gilts and Bonds	10	8	8	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>103</b>

- 2.14 Security of capital remained the main investment objective. This was maintained by following the counterparty policy as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2011/12. Investments included:-
- Deposits with other Local Authorities.
  - Investments in AAA-rated Stable Net Asset Value Money Market Funds.
  - Call accounts and deposits with UK Banks.
  - Bonds issued by Multilateral Development Banks.
  - Pooled funds (collective investment schemes) meeting the criteria in SI 2004 No 534 and subsequent amendments.
- 2.15 Counterparty credit quality was assessed and monitored with reference to credit ratings (minimum long-term counterparty rating of A+ across all three rating agencies, Fitch, S&P and Moody's); credit default swaps; GDP of the country in which the institution operates; the country's net debt as a percentage of GDP; any potential support mechanisms and share price. Counterparty credit quality has progressively strengthened throughout the year.
- 2.16 In keeping with the DCLG Guidance on Investments, the Council maintained a sufficient level of liquidity through the use of Money Market Funds and the use of call accounts.
- 2.17 The Council sought to optimise returns commensurate with the objectives of security and liquidity. The Council considered an appropriate risk management response to uncertain and deteriorating credit conditions in Europe was to shorten maturities for new investments. Short term money market rates also remained at very low levels which had a significant impact on investment income. Income earned on longer-dated investments made in 2010/11 provided some cushion against the low interest rate environment
- 2.18 In respect of Icelandic investments the Council had £2 million deposited with Heritable Bank, a UK registered Bank, at an interest rate of 6.22% which was due to mature on 28 November 2008. The Company was placed in administration on 7 October 2008. Members have received regular updates regarding the circumstances and the latest situation. In March 2009 an Audit Commission report confirmed that Wirral Council had acted, and continues to act, prudently and properly in all its investment activities.

- 2.19 The latest creditor progress report issued by the Administrators Ernst and Young, dated 28 July 2011, outlined that the return to creditors is projected to be 90p in the £ by the end of 2012/13 and the final recovery could be higher. To date, £1.5 million has been received with a further £0.3 million expected before April 2013. However, it should be noted that the amount and timing of future payments are estimates and are not definitive. Favourable changes in market conditions could lead to higher than estimated repayments.
- 2.20 In summary the budgeted investment income for the year had been estimated at £1.3 million and the actual interest earned was £2.3 million with this additional £1 million principally due to:-
- Average investment balances during the year being higher than originally budgeted which was mainly due to slippage in capital expenditure;
  - The maturity of long standing GILT, generating a one off £500k surplus.
  - Continuing proactive daily cash flow management by the Treasury Management Team.
- 2.21 The average return on investments for 2011/12 was 0.90%. To place this in context, in 2011/12 the average Bank of England base rate was 0.5% and the average rate of return achieved by the Local Authorities advised by the Treasury Management consultants, Arlingclose, was 0.77%. It should also be noted that Wirral Council's credit risk rating is also lower than the average of these other Local Authorities.

## **BORROWING ACTIVITY**

- 2.22 The underlying need to borrow as measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as at 31 March 2012 was estimated at £378 million. This compares with the total external debt of £326 million.

	<b>Balance on 31-Mar-11 £m</b>	<b>Debt Maturing £m</b>	<b>New Borrowing £m</b>	<b>Balance on 31-Mar-12 £m</b>
<b>CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT (CFR)</b>	<b>390</b>			<b>378</b>
PWLB borrowing	100	15	5	90
Market borrowing	174	0	0	174
<b>Total Borrowing</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>264</b>
Other Long Term Liabilities	65	3	0	62
<b>TOTAL EXTERNAL DEBT</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>326</b>

- 2.23 The average rate of interest paid on Council borrowings as at 31 March 2012 was 5.8% (the same as at 31 March 2011). The average life of Council borrowings is 19 years (compared to 18 years in 2010/11).

- 2.24 The PWLB remained the preferred source of borrowing given the transparency and control that this continues to provide. In 2011/12 a total of £5 million of new loans were raised which included the replacement of maturing debt.

Loans Borrowed during 2011/12	Principal £m	Fixed/ Variable	Rate %	Final Maturity	Terms
PWLB	5	Fixed	2.30	15 June 2021	Equal Instalments of Principal (E I P)
<b>Total New Borrowing</b>	<b>5</b>				

- 2.25 Given the significant reductions to local government funding the Strategy continued to be to minimise debt interest payments without compromising the longer-term stability of the portfolio. The differential between the cost of new longer-term borrowing and the return generated on the temporary investments was significant (between 2% - 3%). The use of internal resources in lieu of borrowing was judged to be the most cost effective means of funding capital expenditure. This has, for the time being, lowered overall treasury risk by reducing both external debt and temporary investments. Whilst this position is expected to continue in 2012/13, it will not be sustainable over the medium term and there will be a need to borrow for capital purposes in the near future.
- 2.26 During the year four loans matured and have been repaid and four loans, as per the terms of the loans, have been partially repaid.

Loans maturing in 2011/12	Principal £m	Fixed/ Variable	Rate %	Final Maturity	Terms
PWLB	1.50	Fixed	4.50	15-Jun-11	Maturity
PWLB	5.00	Fixed	4.55	07-Nov-11	Maturity
PWLB	5.00	Fixed	5.50	15-Mar-12	Maturity
PWLB	1.50	Fixed	5.25	25-Mar-12	Maturity
PWLB	0.50	Fixed	3.04	19-Dec-19	E I P
PWLB	0.50	Fixed	2.94	19-Dec-19	E I P
PWLB	0.50	Fixed	1.89	15-Jun-20	E I P
PWLB	0.25	Fixed	2.30	15-Jan-00	E I P
<b>Total Maturing Borrowing</b>	<b>14.75</b>				

### Other Long-Term Liabilities

- 2.27 Other Long-Term Liabilities include the schools Private finance Initiative (PFI) scheme and finance leases used to purchase vehicles plant and equipment. Under the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) these items are now shown on the Balance Sheet as a Financial Liability and therefore need to be considered within any Treasury Management decision making process.

- 2.28 During 2011/12, the Council procured two new lease contracts for IT equipment and catering equipment to the value of £167k.
- 2.29 As at 31 March 2012 the PFI liability was valued at £61 million to be repaid by 2031 and there were twelve finance leases with a total value £1 million, repayable over 1 – 5 years.

### **Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)**

- 2.30 The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/414) place a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision has been issued by the Secretary of State and local authorities are required to “have regard” to such Guidance under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 2.31 There are four MRP options available namely Option 1: Regulatory Method; Option 2: CFR Method; Option 3: Asset Life Method and Option 4: Depreciation Method.
- 2.32 Options 1 and 2 may be used only for supported expenditure. Methods of making prudent provision for self financed expenditure include Options 3 and 4 (which may also be used for supported expenditure if the Council chooses).
- 2.33 The MRP policy for 2011/12 was approved by Cabinet on 21 February 2011 when it was agreed that Option 1 would be adopted for Supported Borrowing and Option 3 for Unsupported Borrowing. When Option 3, the asset life method, is applied to the funding of an asset with a life greater than 25 years a default asset life of 25 years is applied. Estimating assets lives over 25 years is difficult to achieve accurately; therefore, using a default of 25 years is considered the most prudent approach and is in keeping with the Regulations. MRP in respect of PFI and leases brought on Balance Sheet under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) is also calculated using Option 3 and will match the annual principal repayment for the associated deferred liability.
- 2.34 In 2011/12 the decision to use internal resources in lieu of borrowing for capital purposes and the beneficial timing of the new borrowing has helped generate savings of £5 million in complying with the Regulations.
- 2.35 The economic situation, both nationally and locally, has an impact upon the financial position of individuals and businesses as well as the Council in respect of the collection of revenues. The Council makes an annual assessment of the potential non-payment of outstanding sums and sets aside an appropriate provision for potential bad debts. In 2011/12 this assessment resulted in the provision for bad debts being increased by £2.3 million. This being funded from the resources made available by the MRP savings.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

- 2.36 The Council can confirm that it has complied with the Prudential Indicators for 2011/12 that were approved on 21 February 2011 as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement. Details of the Indicators are in the Appendix.
- 2.37 In compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice this report provides a summary report of the treasury management activity during 2011/12. None of the Prudential Indicators have been breached and a prudent approach has been taken in relation to investment activity with priority being given to security and liquidity over yield.

## **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 3.1 The Council is responsible for treasury decisions and activity and none of these decisions are without risk. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are important and the main risks are:-
- Liquidity Risk (Inadequate cash resources).
  - Market or Interest Rate Risk (Fluctuations in interest rate levels).
  - Inflation Risk (Exposure to inflation).
  - Credit and Counterparty Risk (Security of investments).
  - Refinancing Risk (Impact of debt maturing in future years).
  - Legal and Regulatory Risk.

## **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 There are no other options considered in this report.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 There has been no consultation undertaken or proposed for this report. There are no implications for partner organisations arising out of this report.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

## **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 7.1 In 2011/12 treasury management activities achieved £1 million of additional investment income and a saving of £5 million from capital financing activities. Of this £2.3 million was used to increase the Council provision for bad debts so the net effect is that the sum of £3.7 million has been returned to the General Fund balances. Members are advised that the Estimates 2012/13 agreed by Cabinet on 21 February 2012 included a projected underspend of £2.5 million in 2011/12 from treasury management activities.



7.2 There are no IT, staffing or asset management implications arising directly from this report.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Council's has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. This requires the annual production of Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the reporting of treasury management activities at least twice a year.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no implications arising directly out of this report and an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required.

## **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no implications arising directly out of this report.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no implications arising directly out of this report.

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

12.1 That the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2011/12 be agreed.

12.2 That the transfer of the net underspend of £3.7 million to General Fund balances in 2011/12 be agreed.

## **13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 Wirral has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management ("the Code"), which includes quarterly reports to Members of treasury activity. This report is the year end review for 2011/12.

13.2 Under the Council's financial regulations any surplus resources are returned to balances and so used to support the delivery of other Council services.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Mark Goulding  
Group Accountant (Technical Services & Treasury)  
telephone: (0151) 666 3415  
email: [markgoulding@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:markgoulding@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDIX**

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2011/12

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services, CIPFA 2009.  
Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities CIPFA 2011.

## SUBJECT HISTORY

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet - Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2011 to 2014	21 February 2011
Cabinet - Treasury Management Annual Report 2010/11	23 June 2011
Cabinet - Treasury Management Performance Monitoring	21 July 2011
Cabinet - Treasury Management Performance Monitoring	3 November 2011
Cabinet - Treasury Management Performance Monitoring	2 February 2012

## PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2011/12

**Capital Financing Requirement**

Estimates of the Council's maximum external borrowing requirement for 2011/12 to 2013/14 are shown in the table below:

	31 Mar 12 Estimate £m	31 Mar 12 Estimate £m	31 Mar 13 Estimate £m
<b>Capital Financing Requirement</b>	378	370	369
Less:			
Existing Profile of Borrowing	264	247	217
Other Long Term Liabilities	62	59	56
<b>Cumulative Maximum External Borrowing Requirement</b>	52	64	96

**Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt**

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to set an Affordable Borrowing Limit, irrespective of the indebted status. This statutory limit should not be breached and was set at £497 million for 2011/12.

The Operational Boundary is based on the same estimates as the Authorised Limit but reflects the most likely, prudent but not worst case scenario without the additional headroom included within the Authorised Limit. For 2011/12 this was set at £482 million.

During the year; external debt at its peak was £339 million.

**Upper Limits for Fixed and Variable Interest Rate Exposure**

These allow the Council to manage the extent to which it is exposed to changes in interest rates. The upper limit for variable rate exposure allows for the use of variable rate debt to offset exposure to changes in short-term rates on the portfolio of investments.

Interest Rate Exposure	Fixed Rate of Interest	Variable Rate of Interest	Total
<b>Borrowings</b>	£264m	£0m	<b>£264m</b>
Proportion of Borrowings	100%	0%	<b>100%</b>
Upper Limit	100%	50%	
<b>Investments</b>	£23m	£80m	<b>£103m</b>
Proportion of Investments	22%	78%	<b>100%</b>
Upper Limit	100%	100%	
<b>Net Borrowing</b>	<b>£241m</b>	<b>£-80m</b>	<b>161</b>
Proportion of Total Net Borrowing	150%	-50%	<b>100%</b>

The table shows that borrowing is mainly at fixed rates of interest and investments are mainly at variable rates. This was considered a good position when interest rates were rising as the cost of existing borrowing remained stable whilst investments, at variable rates of interest, generated increasing income. As the position has changed to one of low interest rates, the Treasury Management Team continues to seek to adjust this but is restricted by a number of factors:

- the level of uncertainty in the markets make investing for long periods at fixed rates of interest more risky and, therefore, the Council continues to only invest short term at variable rates of interest;
- Many of the loans have expensive penalties for early repayment or rescheduling which makes changing the debt position difficult.

### **Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing**

This indicator is to limit large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates.

<b>Maturity structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing</b>	<b>Upper Limit</b>	<b>Lower Limit</b>	<b>Actual Fixed Rate Borrowing as at 31 Mar 12</b>	<b>% of Fixed Rate Borrowing as at 31 Mar 12</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>%</b>
under 12 months	20	0	17	6
12 months and within 24 months	20	0	30	11
24 months and within 5 years	50	0	29	11
5 years and within 10 years	50	0	34	13
10 years and above	100	20	154	59
			<b>264</b>	<b>101</b>

### **Actual External Debt**

This indicator is obtained directly from the Authority's balance sheet. It is the closing balance for actual gross borrowing (short and long term) plus other deferred liabilities. The indicator is measured in a manner consistent for comparison with the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit.

	<b>31 Mar 12</b>
<b>Actual External Debt</b>	<b>£m</b>
Borrowing	264
Other Long Term Liabilities	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>

### **Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days**

This indicator allows the Council to manage the risk inherent in investments longer than 364 days and for 2011/12 the limit was set at £30 million.

As at 31 March 2012 the Council had £23 million of investments for longer than 364 days. This comprised of £17 million with other Local Authorities and £6 million with UK Banks.

### **Capital Expenditure**

This indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and in particular, to consider the impact on Council Tax.

A full breakdown of capital expenditure and capital financing in 2011/12 can be found within the Capital Outturn report elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda.

### **Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream**

This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs. The ratio is based on costs net of investment income.

<b>Ratio of Finance Costs to net Revenue Stream</b>	<b>2011/12 Estimate %</b>	<b>2012/13 Estimate %</b>	<b>2013/14 Estimate %</b>
Ratio	8.6	9.34	9.57

### **Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions**

This is an indicator of affordability that shows the impact of capital investment decisions on Council tax levels. The incremental impact is calculated by comparing the total revenue budget requirement of the current approved capital programme with the equivalent calculation of the revenue budget requirement arising from the proposed capital programme.

<b>Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions</b>	<b>2011/12 Estimate £</b>	<b>2012/13 Estimate £</b>	<b>2013/14 Estimate £</b>
Increase in Band D Council Tax	13.54	5.30	11.93

### **Adoption of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code**

This indicator demonstrates that the Authority adopted the principles of best practice. The Council approved the adoption of the CIPFA Code at its meeting on 1 March 2012.

This page is intentionally left blank

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2012

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>REVIEW OF USE OF CONSULTANTS</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>ACTING CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides details regarding the use of Consultants by the Council during 2011/12. Members are asked to note the report.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Members of the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed on the 26 March 2012 to add to the forthcoming year's work programme a review of the use of consultants.

2.2 This report provides details of the budget and use of consultants analysed by department for the 2011/12 financial year and the budget for the 2012/13 financial year also by department. The information upon which the analysis is based has been extracted from the authority's financial ledger.

2.3 There is no precise agreed definition of consultancy. For this and past exercises to aid consistency a number of activities where a physical service has been provided or where costs are incurred on behalf of another body have been excluded from the figures. A number of activities originally charged against consultancy have been excluded from this exercise. These include:

	£
• Home Insulation Programme costs	1,176,000
• Architect Charges	545,000
• Payment on behalf of North West Efficiency Partnership	32,000
<b>Total Excluded</b>	<b>1,753,000</b>

2.4 A summary analysis of expenditure for 2011/12 and budget for 2012/13 by department is contained within Table 1 of this report. This contains information extracted from the financial ledger together with explanations from Chief Officers as to the purpose for the use of the listed consultants.

**Table 1**

<b>Departmental Consultancy Expenditure and Budgets</b>			
Department	2011/12 Budget	2011/12 Expenditure	2012/13 Budget
	£	£	£
Adult Social Service	46,200	10,953	46,200
Children and Young People	33,800	80,420	37,700
Schools	-	117,317	-
Finance	269,600	196,230	273,700
Law, HR and Asset Management	445,000	342,525	15,000
Regeneration, Housing and Planning	39,700	65,900	39,700
Technical Services	800	99,977	291,100
<b>Totals</b>	<b>835,100</b>	<b>913,322</b>	<b>703,400</b>

Note1: £1,985,000 and £985,600 have been excluded from the 2011/12 and 2012/13 Consultation budgets respectively for Regeneration, Housing and Planning as this relates to the implementation of the Home Insulation scheme rather than consultancy. Similarly Home Insulation costs have been excluded from 2011/12 expenditure figures.

Note 2: The schools consultancy work is funded from a budget held separately for improvement activity that is jointly used to fund both internal and external support as appropriate. Therefore the schools budget does not include a defined amount within it for consultancy.

- 2.5 There is a reduction in the consultancy budget between 2011/12 and 2012/13. This partly reflects the one year costs incurred in 2011/12 relating to the Anna Klonowski report and realignment of some budgets to reflect actual activity levels and future predicted use of consultancy.
- 2.6 The increase in the Technical Services budget for consultancy in 2012/13 reflects a number of one off commitments including £150,000 relating to the 20 mph zone programme plus works in relating to the Waste and Highways contracts and works post Parks contract decision. Funding for 2011/12 expenditure has been met from within departmental budgets.
- 2.7 The Department with the highest spending in 2011/12 was Law, HR and Asset Management. This is primarily due to the Anna Klonowski work which totalled £247,000 plus work undertaken by Hay Group relating to the local pay review.
- 2.8 Finance is the next highest spending department. The majority of expenditure on consultants within Finance relates to Merseyside Pension Fund activities which Wirral manages on behalf of all the Merseyside local authorities and admitted bodies and who will all effectively fund these costs via their contribution rates.
- 2.9 A full list of departmental transactions relating to the 2011/12 financial year is contained within Appendix 1.



2.10 In addition to the departmental revenue expenditure, £388,688.80 has been incurred within the capital programme for consultancy costs in 2011/12. This expenditure relates to a number of approved capital programme schemes. Details of these transactions are also detailed in Appendix 1.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

3.1 No decisions are required in relation to this report. As such there are no risks or opportunities to report.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 These are not applicable in respect of this report.

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 No specific consultation has been undertaken with regard to this report.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report relating to resources.

### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **12.0 RECOMMENDATION**

12.1 That the report be noted.

### **13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

13.1 Members have previously asked for information to be made available regarding the use of consultants

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Peter Molyneux  
Chief Accountant  
telephone: 0151 666 3389  
email: petemolyneux@wirral.gov.uk

**REFERENCE MATERIAL / SUBJECT HISTORY**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>

**Consultancy Transactions for 2011-12**

**APPENDIX 1**

Page 87

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES</b>		
EXPERIAN LTD	Credit Check	90.00
HELEN ROWLEY	Cabinet Reports	10,862.50
<b>ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES TOTAL</b>		<b>10,952.50</b>
<b>CHILDREN &amp; YOUNG PEOPLE</b>		
ALLAN KETTLEDAY	School Improvement Associates monitoring underachieving schools	6,300.00
ARTHUR GRALEY	School Improvement Associates monitoring underachieving schools	1,200.00
CHRIS BATMAN	Support for School Funding Formula	1,762.27
DEREK C BARNES	School Improvement Associates monitoring underachieving schools	100.00
DON WILLIAMSON EDUCATION SERVICES	Management of Training Programme	2,975.00
DOROTHY LEWIS CONSULTANCY	Independent Chair of Adoption Panel.	11,284.00
	Specialist input to NW wide Adult Learning Continuing Professional Development	
IAN RUFF	Event	700.00
IAN RUSH CONSULTANCY LIMITED	Independent Chair Wirral Fostering Panel	2,837.50
INVOLVE NORTHWEST	Witness support and evidence gathering	8,000.00
K & L GATES LLP	Asset Management	5,698.37
	Specialist input to NW wide Adult Learning Continuing Professional Development	
MARIE KERWIN	Event	1,400.00
	Specialist input to NW wide Adult Learning Continuing Professional Development	
MATTHEW W SMITH	Event	1,750.00
MICHAEL FLETCHER HUNT	School Improvement Associates monitoring underachieving schools	1,600.00

Supplier	Reason	Total
MIKE DIXON CONSULTANCY LIMITED	School Improvement Associates monitoring underachieving schools	5,300.00
MORGAN HUNT PUBLIC SECTOR LTD	Fostering form assessment for panel	2,060.00
MTH ASSOCIATES (M T HUMPHREYS)	School Improvement Associates monitoring underachieving schools	2,600.00
QA RESEARCH LIMITED	Audit on Childcare across Wirral.	16,660.00
TOM MCNAMARA EMPLOYEE RELATIONS	Additional Support to deliver schools HR SLA	8,192.50
<b>CHILDREN &amp; YOUNG PEOPLE TOTAL</b>		<b>80,419.64</b>
<b>EDUCATION – SCHOOLS</b>		
ALAN PEAT LIMITED	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	580.00
ANDERTON TIGER LLP	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	988.44
CERTANTI FOUNDATION	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	540.00
CLIVE HAMPTON ASSOICATES LIMITED	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	400.00
DON WILLIAMSON EDUCATION SERVICES	Management of Training Programme	15,088.62
ECM EDUCATION CONSULTANTS LIMITED	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	4,560.00
ERIC CRAVEN	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	800.00
FENNELLY ART LIMITED	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	17,930.00
INDEPENDENT THINKING LIMITED	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	4,284.25
JEB EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANCY LIMITED	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	1,848.00

Supplier	Reason	Total
JOHN YATES INTERNATIONAL	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	12,560.00
LANGUAGES FOR LEARNING	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	800.00
LYNNE HAYES	Schools Support to Advanced Skills Teachers package	900.00
MALCRO CONSULTANTS	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	8,400.00
MAXIMISING POTENTIAL	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	4,800.00
MB EDUCATION & CREATIVE SERVICES	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	5,625.00
MICHAEL BUTLER	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	3,900.00
MICHAEL CAROLAN	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	2,200.00
MICHAEL FLETCHER HUNT	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	2,400.00
PAM STEVENSON	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	362.20
PETER J DIXON LEADERSHIP CONSULTANTS LIMITED	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	4,150.00
ROSEMARY MCPHERSON	Music Advisor Support to Primary Schools	2,640.00
SALLY TONGE	Part of Education Quality Package External Provider - Specific Project	3,240.00
SO INTO IT LIMITED	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality Package	1,820.00
SUCCESS THROUGH CHARACTER LIMITED	Part of Schools Continuing Professional Education/ Educational Quality Package	1,250.00
TAGHAN PRESS	Schools Curriculum Support part of Education Quality package	4,000.00

Supplier	Reason	Total
WILLOWEDGE LTD	School Improvement Associates part of Education Quality package	11,250.00
<b>EDUCATION - SCHOOLS TOTAL</b>		<b>117,316.81</b>
<b>FINANCE</b>		
A2I TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES LIMITED	Pensions Transcription	684.85
ARLINGCLOSE LIMITED	Treasury Management Advice	11,850.00
ATMOS DATA SERVICES LIMITED	IT Services	12,859.00
AUDITWARE SYSTEMS LIMITED	IT Services	447.50
BLINDVOICE UK	Transcription to Braille	865.25
BOLLAND & LOWE LIMITED	Pensions Publicity	5,027.54
CPA GLOBAL LIMITED	Legal Services	424.00
DARKHORSE DESIGN & ADVERTISING	Pensions Publicity	850.00
EXPERIAN LTD	Commercial Information for Pensions	131.25
HEYWOOD LIMITED	Pensions Advice	60,403.67
LA DIRECTORIES	HB Advice	4,252.50
MERCER LIMITED	Pensions Advice	2,000.00
MPF	Pensions Advice	17,102.41
MPF	Pensions Publicity	59,818.63
PETER DERRICK & ASSOCIATES LIMITED	Credit Check	15,000.00
PUNCHLINE MEDIA & EVENTS LIMITED	Pensions Publicity	117.80
RICHARD ANDERSON ASSOCIATES	Risk Management Survey and Review	4,396.00
<b>FINANCE TOTAL</b>		<b>196,230.40</b>
<b>LAW HR ASSET MANAGEMENT</b>		
ANNA KLONOWSKI ASSOCIATES LTD	Governance Review and Advice	247,010.25
EXPERIAN LTD	Credit Check	435.00
HAY GROUP MANAGEMENT LIMITED	Local Pay review	92,999.00
NORTHGATE ARINSO UK LIMITED	IT Services	1,631.00
NOVAS SCARMAN GROUP	Translation Services	50.00
T C GADSDEN	Local Pay review	400.00

Supplier	Reason	Total
<b>LAW HR ASSET MANAGEMENT TOTAL</b>		<b>342,525.25</b>
<b>REGENERATION, HOUSING &amp; PLANNING</b>		
A P SHEEHAN AND CO LIMITED	Viability for strategic housing land study	5,100.00
BE LIMITED	Employment forecasts update	1,000.00
CIPFA	Training Programme	420.00
DEAFABILITY PRODUCTIONS LIMITED	Training Programme	512.00
EXPERIAN LTD	Asset Management	105.00
GLHS LIMITED	Housing Strategy Survey	11,691.30
GVA GRIMLEY LLP	Retail Impact Advice on Red Cat, Greasby	500.00
KINNEAR MILLER ASSOCIATES	Housing Contracts (recovered from applicant)	6,625.60
LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL	Flood Prevention.	5,000.00
UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS	Analysis of data relating to Housing. Services	2,000.00
WEIGHTMANS	Merseyside Information Service Contract	31,569.00
WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP HOMES LTD *001	Housing provider	1,077.09
WYG MANAGEMENT SERVICES LIMITED	Housing Contracts	300.00
<b>REGENERATION, HOUSING &amp; PLANNING TOTAL</b>		<b>65,899.99</b>
<b>TECHNICAL SERVICES</b>		
ACTIVE TREE MANAGEMENT	Maintenance	25,410.00
ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE (APSE)	Temp Cover for Environmental & Waste Services Manager	14,400.00
MERCERS	Pension Actuary Fee	21,900.00
EVERSHEDS	Legal Advice on highways contract	14,103.00
EXPERIAN LTD	Credit Check	751.25
KEEP BRITAIN TIDY	Levy	3,000.00
KEVIN EARLE LIMITED	Highways New Engineering Contract	22,868.08
MERSEYSIDE RECYCLING AND WASTE AUTHORITY	Income - bag project	-7,500.00
MPF	Pension Actuary Fee	2,145.00

Supplier	Reason	Total
QUEST & NBS	Quest Launch	2,900.00
<b>TECHNICAL SERVICES TOTAL</b>		<b>99,977.33</b>
<b>OVERALL DEPARTMENTAL TOTALS</b>		<b>913,321.92</b>
<b>WMBC Capital Programme</b>		
AECOM LIMITED	Coastal Strategy	60,957.40
APEC ENVIRONMENTAL LTD	Asbestos Surveys	1,562.60
ATKINS LTD	Highway Maintenance	37,395.75
BASEMAP LIMITED	IT Services	550.00
CHESHIRE CLERK OF WORKS	Housing Contracts	9,800.00
COASTAL ENGINEERING UK LIMITED	Coastal Strategy	4,250.00
EXPERIAN LTD	Credit Check	18.75
HEWLETT-PACKARD LIMITED	IT Services	14,236.59
IMP-ITS	IT Services	295.86
INFINITE 3D LIMITED	IT Services	497.40
KGA PARTNERSHIP	Housing Contracts	2,700.00
LABOSPORT LIMITED	Testing of sports surfaces	5,900.00
LIVERPOOL HOUSING TRUST	Housing Contracts	40,013.13
MIKE BROWN	Academy Programme	150.00
MIKE BROWN	Asset Management	1,350.00
MILIEU LANDSCAPE DESIGN LIMITED	Asset Management	2,250.00
MOTT MACDONALD LIMITED	Academy Programme	80,200.00
NAVIGANT CONSULTING (EUROPE) LIMITED	IT Services	10,846.40
NOVATIA PLC	IT Services	2,982.00
SCOTT WILSON LTD	Highway Maintenance	59,068.17
SWITCHSHOP LIMITED	IT Services	897.14
THE PSL GROUP	Scooter Scheme	181.18
URS INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT UK LIMITED	Highway Maintenance	29,134.56
WEBBCOM	IT Services	6,090.00
WYG ENVIRONMENT PLANNING TRANSPORT LIMITED	Housing Contracts	4,471.58



<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Total</b>
WYG MANAGEMENT SERVICES LIMITED	Design Quality Indicators	1,975.54
WYG MANAGEMENT SERVICES LIMITED	Housing Contracts	14,914.75
<b>CAPITAL PROGRAMME TOTAL</b>		<b>392,688.80</b>
<b>DEPARTMENTAL AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME TOTAL</b>		<b>1,306,010.72</b>

This page is intentionally left blank

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4 JULY 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CORPORATE FIREWALL</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>ACTING CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the award of a contract, under delegated authority, for the provision of a pair of firewalls to protect the Council's corporate connection to the Internet. The contract was awarded to Sapphire, who submitted the lowest priced bid at £64,934, which includes the first twelve months support and maintenance. Ongoing provision of support and maintenance will be assessed on an annual basis.
- 1.2 The evaluation matrix used to assess the tenders is included in Appendix 1 but since it contains commercially sensitive information it should be considered exempt from publication under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Firewalls are computerised devices that prevent or restrict access to data networks or computer systems. The two devices purchased under this contract have been installed between the Council's computer network and the corporate connection to the Internet to prevent unauthorised access to the Council's computer systems by potential hackers. They replaced two existing devices that had reached the end of their useful life and were no longer supported by the manufacturer.
- 2.2 Tenders were invited in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and with the assistance of the corporate Procurement Unit. They were published via the Chest procurement portal and responses were received from three potential suppliers, Sapphire, Enline Plc and Network Defence Ltd. Submissions were assessed against pre-determined evaluations criteria. Sapphire achieved the highest score and had also submitted the lowest priced bid; consequently they were awarded the contract under delegated authority.

#### 3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 There is a present and growing risk that data stored in computer systems residing on a network connected to the Internet may be accessed by unauthorised individuals and any data acquired used for criminal purposes. The legislation contained within the Data Protection Act requires the Council to safeguard all personal information and the Information Commissioner has the power to fine an organisation that fails in this duty up to £500,000. Firewalls are part of the security systems used to mitigate this risk to the Council.

- 3.2 The Council's use of the Internet to deliver services is increasing. Since the firewalls are installed between the Council's network and the Internet there is a risk that if they fail then service delivery will be affected. The two firewalls purchased have been installed as a high availability pair. During normal operation they share the data traffic between the Council's network and the Internet. If either device fails then the other assumes the full load and service continues. Once the failure is rectified then the device can be brought back into use without disrupting services.
- 3.3 Several staff have been trained to manage, configure and maintain the firewalls to mitigate the risks associated with over reliance on a single member of staff.

#### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Primarily there are two options; not to connect the Council's network to the Internet, which is not practicable due to the use of the Internet for service delivery, or to connect the Council's network directly to the Internet without the use of firewalls, which would leave the Council's computer systems vulnerable to hacking and misuse via the Internet. Both have been discounted.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 No consultation was undertaken.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 6.1 There are no implications for voluntary, community and faith groups

#### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 7.1 The project has been financed from the corporate computer budgets. Existing staff from the Telecommunications team have implemented the systems and will provide ongoing support. There are no asset implications.

#### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Implementation of these devices assists the Council in protecting personal data and hence compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

#### **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

#### **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no carbon reduction implications. The power consumption of the new devices is similar to those they replaced.

#### **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no planning or community safety implications.

## 12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That Members note the award of a contract under delegated authority to Sapphire for the provision of two firewalls, including twelve months support and maintenance, at a total cost of £64,934.

## 13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 Sapphire submitted the lowest priced bid and scored highest against the tender evaluation criteria.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Geoff Paterson  
Head of IT  
telephone: (0151) 666 3029  
email: geoffpaterson@wirral.gov.uk

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 ~ Tender evaluation matrix

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

This page is intentionally left blank

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	2011/12 Year End Performance & Financial Review
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	All
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Acting Chief Finance Officer
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	Councillor Ann McLachlan
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	No

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-14 for the end of year 2011/12, and provides members with an overview of performance, resource and risk monitoring.
- 1.2 The report also includes an appendix providing a full year outturn of performance against all Corporate Plan and Strategic Change Programme projects and Corporate Plan indicators.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

##### 2.1 Performance Summary

- 2.1.1 The table below provides an overview of progress against the Corporate Plan targets and the Strategic Change Programme.
- 2.1.2 Appendix 1 accompanying this report provides a detailed analysis of performance for 2011/12 for all Corporate Plan targets and the Strategic Change Programme projects, as well new targets and which measures will continue for 2012/13.
- 2.1.3 Details of what's working well; exceptions against Corporate Plan targets and Strategic Change Programme (projects that are awaiting data or that have missed their targets and been assessed as red or amber); resource implications; future challenges and risks for are set out below by theme.
- 2.1.4 Performance relating to customer feedback contacts and response rates to complaints are also set out below.

The table sets out the number of goals for each theme of the corporate plan and the associated measures of progress against target. It shows that 63% of the indicators have performed on or above their 2011/12 target, 66% of Corporate Plan projects and 79% of Strategic Change Projects were on track or have been completed / closed.

Corporate Plan		Overview of Performance: Year End 2011-12															
Themes:	Goals	Indicators						Corporate Plan Projects				Strategic Change Projects					
		No.	Green	Amber	Red	Blue	Target not set	No.	Green	Amber	Red	Completed / Closed	No.	Green	Amber	Red	Completed / Closed
Your FAMILY: C&YP	5	30	13 43%	3 10%	6 20%	7 23%	1 3%	2	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 100%	2	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 100%
Your FAMILY: ADULTS	4	5	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%	0 0%	0 0%	8	3 38%	3 38%	0 0%	2 25%	7	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	7 100%
Your NEIGHBOURHOOD	12	13	5 38%	0 0%	3 23%	5 38%	0 0%	32	10 31%	1 3%	5 16%	15 47%	6	1 17%	0 0%	0 0%	5 83%
Your ECONOMY	3	8	5 63%	1 13%	0 0%	2 25%	0 0%	3	1 33%	0 0%	0 0%	2 67%	0	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Your COUNCIL	4	7	3 43%	1 14%	3 43%	0 0%	0 0%	19	3 16%	4 21%	7 37%	4 21%	18	1 6%	5 28%	5 28%	7 39%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>



## 2.2 Your FAMILY: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### What's working well


- **Wirral pupils' work to be 'Big in Japan'** – the work of Wirral school children has been on display in schools in Japan as part of a long-running cultural exchange. Pupils from 9 primary schools and 3 secondary schools in Wirral took part in the work exchange with 8 kindergartens, 9 elementary schools and 3 junior high schools from Kyotanabe. Around 600 children have produced work altogether.
- **Wirral young people urged to sign up for new National Citizen Service** – the scheme will give up to 30,000 16-year-olds around the UK the chance to do something different and challenging while learning new skills, and incorporates two residential stays involving outdoor activities such as mountaineering, canoeing and abseiling.
- **Awards for young people on innovative alcohol awareness scheme** - young people's efforts to positively influence their peers' attitudes to alcohol have been celebrated at a special event at the Lauries Centre, Birkenhead. Wirral Alcohol Peer Mentoring Programme was carried out by young people aged 17-21 who went into schools to talk to 12-16 year olds about attitudes towards alcohol use and challenge some of the myths surrounding its effects. Through this effective partnership work, Wirral has achieved a good level of success in reducing the rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions over the last year and we aim to build on that success.
- **25 new Foster Carers have been approved, 5 (25%) above the target.**
- **79.5% of 0 - 5 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds are registered at a Children's Centre, 9.5% above the target.**

### Performance against Corporate Plan / Strategic Change project(s)

All of the Corporate Plan and Strategic Change projects have been completed or closed, and further details on these have been included in appendix 1.


### Performance against indicator(s):

The following indicators have been assessed as **red** (missed year end target by more than 10%) or **amber** (missed year end target by between 5% and 10%):


Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 62	Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements	8.9%	9.0%	11.2% (E)	Red	
				(Lower is Better)			
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	Regular meetings are being held between the adolescent support team and family placement to identify placements at risk of disruption. This enables additional support to be provided to both foster carers and the young people in placement. This work is also supported by Child and Adolescent Mental Health						


	Service (CAMHS). Foster Care peer mentors have now been recruited and the scheme has now begun to provide enhanced support and development opportunities for foster carers. In residential care placements, disruption meetings are being introduced. This is to ensure a consistent approach to identifying actions that could stabilise a placement or inform a placement move to improve placement stability.
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is an estimated figure. Performance against this target has deteriorated since Q2 and is estimated to be 2.3% below 2010/11 year end performance. This represents 76 children having three or more placements for 2011/12 compared to 61 children in 2010/11. The level of performance at 11.2% compares well to the England average for 2010/11 of 10.9% and falls well within the "Very Good" national category of (0% - 16.01%).

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
			Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 70a	Reduce emergency hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in 0-4 years	212	267 (E)	<b>Red</b>	n/a (Introduced 2011/12)
			(Lower is Better)			
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	<p>Regular monitoring of the home safety equipment scheme is undertaken by the Child Safety Implementation Group and actions to reduce accidents are included in all Children Centre delivery plans. There are plans to combine Public Health and Local Authority budgets to deliver one safety equipment scheme across Wirral (rather than two separate schemes) based upon an evidence based model from the Royal Society of Accident Prevention (RoSPA). This will be effective from April 2012 but will require time to draw the current Public Health scheme to a close.</p> <p>A Children's A&amp;E Needs Assessment has been completed and the report is currently being signed off, the recommendations of this will inform future work and additional funding has been allocated to progress the recommendations from the report.</p>					
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is an estimated figure. The most current available data for 2011/12 covers April - February 2011/12 (full year data will not be available until the 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2012). There have been a total of 233 admissions in the 0-4 age group during this period. This is a 4.5% increase on performance for April – February 2010/11 (223 admissions)					


Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 102b	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 4	36%	30.2%	34.5%	<b>Red</b>	
				(Lower is Better)			


<b>Corrective Action:</b>	A review has been conducted to examine the results of the 100 identified FSM pupils who were targeted with additional resources, through the '100 Club' project. The review focussed on identifying the actual impact and improvement in achievement made by this group of young people. From this analysis the 2011/12 academic year programme is now underway with additional support being provided to a further 100 children.
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	Performance against this target has improved compared to 2010/11 year end, with a reduction of 1.5% in the attainment gap between the FSM and the Non FSM groups. The FSM group achieved a 38.6% pass rate in June 2011 compared to 31.8% in June 2010; this is a 6.8% increase and is higher than the England average of 34.7%. The non FSM group improved by 7% over the same period to 72.8%, significantly higher than the England average of 62.2%. The England gap of 27.5% is lower than the Wirral gap; however, both FSM and non FSM children do significantly better overall in Wirral schools than the national average. The 2011/12 year end target was missed by 4.3%. The review of the intervention programme put into place within 2011/12 and its effectiveness will not be realised until the June 2012 exams.


Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 112	Percentage reduction in the under 18 conception rate	-13.1%	-49.9%	-6.5%	Red	
		(Lower is Better)					
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	A revision of the local under -18 conception target has been approved by Public Health and Children's Trust Board and will now see Wirral's Teenage Pregnancy Steering group implementing targeted interventions for those wards above the Wirral average with the aim of reducing the overall Wirral rate by 5% in 2012.						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	Performance against this target has deteriorated with a reduction, from the 1998 baseline, of -6.5% at 11/12 year end, compared to -13.1% at 10/11 year end. The 11/12 year end target was missed by 43.4%. 2010 under-18 conception data released in February 2012 shows a rate of 47.3 (per 1000 15-17 year olds). This is an increase in the rate compared to 2009. The 2010 rate equates to 276 conceptions.						

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	8.6%	7.9%	8.9% (P)	Red	
		(Lower is Better)					
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	A number of interventions are planned to ensure this indicator remains stable over the coming year. These include the following:						


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department of Work and Pensions Youth Contract programme for disengaged 16 and 17 year olds will commence July 2012.</li> <li>• Cabinet is considering options for a further extension of the Wirral Apprentice programme to commence April 2012.</li> <li>• New targeted information, advice and guidance service for NEET young people aged 16 to 18 has been commissioned. The service is being delivered by Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership and can be accessed locally through selected Council One Stop Shops and the library service.</li> <li>• Cabinet is considering options for the delivery of a work experience programme during 2012/13 for young people. The programme will be delivered in partnership with the voluntary, community and faith sector and will offer employability skills support and an extended work placement.</li> </ul> <p>New European Social Fund engagement funded provision- New Futures is now in place. This is a flexible, engaging and supportive programme for Wirral young people who are NEET – or at risk of becoming NEET. The programme is currently being delivered through a consortium of voluntary, community and faith organisations across the borough.</p>
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is a provisional figure, subject to validation. The economic climate has remained difficult and this has had a significant impact on this indicator. This indicator has shown a small deterioration (0.3%) compared to 2010/11 year end. However, the 2011/12 year end target has been missed by 1%.

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 148	Care leavers in education, employment or training (EET)	38.6%	48.0%	58.0%	Red	
				(Lower is Better)			
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	<p>Targeted interventions are taking place with identified care leavers. These interventions include 1:1 mentoring, work tasters, and the development of employability skills. The impact of this additional support will be monitored to enable tracking and reporting on the progress of individual care leavers.</p> <p>In addition to working with the young people directly. The foster carer taskforce group are building their capacity in terms of understanding the education landscape and support arrangements for vulnerable young people.</p> <p>The Looked After Children Employability Team are scheduled to be operational by end of May 2012. They are responsible for refreshing and driving forward actions in the "From Care to Work" Plan.</p>						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	<p>This is a provisional figure as data is still being validated; however initial results show that 24 care leavers have been helped into EET in 2011/12 compared to 17 in 2010/11. Based on a cohort size of 44 for 2010/11 and 50 for 2011/12, the indicator outturn has increased from 38.6% to 48% for 2011/12. The indicator has fallen short of the target of 58%. The target for 2012/13 is 65% of Care Leavers are assisted into EET. The cohort of young people for 2012/13 has been identified as over 70 individuals making the target number of young people into EET, approximately 45.</p>						

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 92	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest	27.6%	27.6%	29.9%	Amber	
		(Lower is Better)					
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	The Early Intervention Manager is working with identified schools to ensure current F2 cohorts are on track to meet at least the Wirral average, an alert goes to the Strategic Service Manager when they are not, to ensure extra support is provided, In addition the Early Years team work with schools / settings to identify target group of low attaining boys and put in place targeted support to decrease the attainment gap.						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is an actual figure as reported at Q2. There has been an increase in the attainment gap of 2.3% compared to the 2010/11 cohort of children. Performance in 2010/11 was higher than expected and the target was to maintain this level of performance for 2011/12. However, the target was missed by 2.3%. This is due to the disadvantaged group attaining lower results than in the previous year, (63.1% compared to 64.4%) and the 'other' group of children performing much better than in the previous year (93.0% compared to 91.1%). For 2011 results Wirral are ranked 56th nationally and remain in the second quartile. The England gap for 2011 is 31.4%, 1.5% greater than Wirral.						

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 104	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths threshold	47.7%	46%	50.2%	Amber	
		(Lower is Better)					
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	School Improvement Associates are working with schools to identify the reasons why SEN pupils have not made the expected progress. The SEN Green Paper will focus senior leaders in ensuring that the correct provision is in place to move pupils' learning forward.						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is an estimated figure. Performance against this target has deteriorated, with a rise in the gap of 2.5% when compared to the 2010/11 year end. The 2011/12 year end target was missed by 4.2%. This indicator will be replaced in 2012/13 with a local measure that is specific to the attainment of the SEN children who have a statement.						

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		

Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 105	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving 5 A* - C GCSE inc. English and Maths	52.6%	47%	50.3% (P)	Amber	
				(Lower is Better)			
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	School Improvement Associates are working with schools to identify the reasons why SEN pupils have not made the expected progress. The SEN Green Paper will focus senior leaders in ensuring that the correct provision is in place to move pupils' learning forward.						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is an estimated figure. Performance against this target has improved, with a reduction in the gap of 2.3% when compared to the 2010/11 year end. The 2011/12 year end target was missed by 3.3%. This indicator will be replaced in 2012/13 with a local measure that is specific to the attainment of the SEN children who have a statement.						

2011/12 target was not set for the following indicator; therefore an assessment of performance against target could not be made.

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 111	First time entrants (FTE's) into the YJS aged 10 - 17 (Under Review)	648 (Lower is Better)
<b>Comments</b>	During 2011/12 this indicator was reviewed by the Youth Justice Board, therefore no target was set for this indicator in 2011/12. New data was released by the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2012, which includes a recalculated figure for 2010/11. This is the most recent data available at present. The 2011/12 data is expected to be available for reporting at Q2, 2012/13. A target for 2012/13 has been set based on the new data release.		
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	The 2010/11 outturn of 648 compares well to the North West rate of 905 and to the England figure of 876. A year on year comparison of the new data shows an overall decreasing trend in FTE's.		

### Resource implications

The anticipated 2011/12 budget forecast overspend is £1 million a reduction from £1.6 million in the quarter. This was largely due to the use of one-off funding from balances and the Schools forum agreeing in January to fund planned preventative maintenance expenditure. The "one off" in year reductions include uncommitted income balances in Children's Centres which have accumulated over a number of years. There are still significant underlying pressures within the Children and Young People's revenue budget including within children's social care for looked after children and residential care. In the longer term the Strategic Change program for Looked After Children will help to stabilise the Social Care budget.

The approved Children and Young People's 2011/12 capital programme accounts for approximately 40% of the total Council programme. The expenditure forecast has increased by £1.8 million on the previous quarter due mainly to further progress and reprofiling of the Birkenhead High School for Girls Academy project.

A large number of schemes have been taking place at schools during the year. The Cathcart Primary and Pensby Primary schemes are nearing completion. Pensby was handed over 2 May and external works at Cathcart were due to be completed in May. Two large schemes have commenced at Woodlands Primary and Overchurch Infants School.

Willowtree the Children’s ‘Home from Home’ was opened in December.

**Future challenges and risks**

The management of children’s safeguarding arrangements is always a very high priority and under constant review. The comprehensive review of services/outcomes for children following the Munro review of child protection continues and remains on schedule.

The continuing adverse economic climate placing further demand pressures on services especially children’s social care creates additional challenges. The department continues to face pressures in managing within its budget.

**2.2 Your FAMILY: ADULTS**

**What’s working well**

- **Volunteers supporting Wallasey’s Central Park Walled Garden** – this hidden Wirral gem, which features an informal café, is to be fully reopened for the benefit of community groups and residents. Members of the local community can drop in Monday to Friday for hot or cold drinks and friendly conversation. It is run by volunteers that use Wirral’s day services, who all have disabilities. The volunteers get the opportunity to put their independent living skills into practice by serving in the cafe, as well as organising and taking part in other activities around the garden.

**Performance against Corporate Plan project(s)**

The following Corporate Plan projects have been assessed as **amber** (some non-critical milestones have been missed or there is a danger of non-critical slippage):

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Social Care and Inclusion	Ensure and be able to demonstrate that 100% of our relevant staff are trained and effectively safeguarding adults	Green			Amber	Work to ensure this will be continued, and will be monitored as part of a project in the Department's Business Plan for 2012-13.

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	Have dedicated, co-located teams of social care fieldwork and health professionals to help people gain full independence after serious illness in the three Wirral localities, Adult Learning Disabilities Service and the Hospital Discharge Service by April	Green			Amber	<p>Co-location arrangements have been established in Wallasey, Bebington and West Wirral localities. Health premises have been identified in the Birkenhead locality and the intention is to move staff by the end of September 2012. A fully-integrated on-site discharge service is now operational at Arrowe Park Hospital.</p> <p>The monitoring of the project to finalise co-location and co-working will be included in the Department's Business Plan for 2012-13.</p>
	Ensure that all representatives of voluntary, community and faith social care organisations are involved in our service planning activities	Green			Amber	<p>A major consultation with Voluntary, Community and Faith sector partners is taking place early in the first quarter of 2012-13. Following this a plan will be developed that will undertake a re-commissioning of services.</p> <p>Progress on this will continue to be monitored through the Department's Business Plan for 2012-13.</p>

### Performance against Strategic Change project(s)

All of the strategic change projects have been completed or closed, and further details on these have been included in appendix 1



## Performance against Corporate Plan indicator(s)

The following indicators have been assessed as **red** (missed year end target by more than 10%) or **amber** (missed year end target by between 5% and 10%):

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Social Care & Inclusion	NI 130	Percentage of Social care clients receiving Self Directed Support	32.60%	80.00%	66.70% (E)	Red	↑
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	Different reporting practices are being introduced in 2012-13 which will enable the department's managers to more closely track and direct activities associated with this target. The methodology for measuring performance against this target for 2012/13 onwards will not include services that cannot be self-directed.						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	<p>This is an estimated figure. The formula for this figure is known by the Department of Health to contain an error in that services that cannot be subject to the offer of a personal budget - such as 'professional support' (which includes involuntary admittance to hospital under the Mental Health Act) - are counted in the denominator. The formula is under review. The actual figure, when services that cannot be self-directed are discounted, is 76.69%.</p> <p>Performance against this target has improved compared to 2010/11 year end, with an increase of 34.10% of social care clients receiving self-directed support. The target was missed by 13.3% based on current formula, but would have only missed target by 3.31% if based on figure where services that cannot be self-directed are not included.</p>						

Portfolio	PI no & Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
			Target	Actual		
Social Care & Inclusion	LOCAL 8858 a, b, c & d Ensure that 100% of people who approach us for social care support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have the opportunity of completing their own, self-directed assessment</li> <li>• are offered the opportunity of taking up a personal budget</li> <li>• are made aware of the range of care services available to them</li> <li>• have an opportunity to consider whether Assistive Technology, such as fall detectors and</li> </ul>	New Indicators set for 2011/12	100%	94.87% (E)	Amber	n/a

	epilepsy sensors, may be able to support individuals to live independently for a long as possible					
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	Performance against this set of indicators has improved since Year End reporting and is now performing at 98.51%.					
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is an estimated figure. Performance against this set of indicators has risen by 10.33% since the first quarter. Based on the year-end reporting figure, missed the target by 5.13%, but has only missed the year end target by 1.49% based on the latest performance figure.					

### Resource implications

The anticipated year end deficit remains at £6.0 million from an underlying overspend in 2010/11, potential 'one-off' slippage of approximately £3.0 million against some savings targets and £1.2 million shortfall in funding for the re-provision of services following the release of staff under the EVR/VS scheme. Further work is required to assess the financial impact of movements in activity levels during March before the final outturn figure can be confirmed.

The forecast outturn against the £3 million Capital Programme for 2011/12 is £1 million. The most significant item of capital expenditure in 2011/12 is £732,000 relating to the final payment for the Mendell Lodge Extra Care housing scheme. The slippage of £2.0 million will be carried forward into 2012/13 for the Transformation of Day Services project and Integrated IT system.

### Future challenges and risks

Safeguarding arrangements for adults are under constant review by the Department of Adult Social Services and its partners on the Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board.

A peer review is to take place in May 2012 focussing on safeguarding arrangements. Preparations for this review are in place.

On going challenges remain regarding demand pressures from an ageing population requiring greater levels of support with more complex needs having to be managed. The Department continues to face ongoing budgetary pressures linked to the increased demand for services for older people and clients with learning disabilities. Services also need to be configured to deliver greater levels of personalisation and choice to our clients.

## 2.3 Your NEIGHBOURHOOD

### What's working well

- **Wirral on the move** - Wirral Council is committing almost £2 million to improve road safety, reduce congestion and promote active travel and health. Key areas for investment include safer routes to schools programmes, together with measures to assist safer travel for pedestrians and cyclists. Local communities will also benefit with £220,000 being provided for Area Forums to allocate to local highway projects.
- **E-Books are a big hit!** - with more than 2,500 downloads of the new e-book service at Wirral's libraries and 750 new users, e-books are proving a successful addition to Wirral's collection. Members no longer have to go into their local branch to enjoy their favourite books and audiobooks, and can instead do it from the comfort of their own home.

- **Improvement works to begin at Leasowe Leisure Centre** - this long awaited investment to provide new and improved facilities; including an open-plan fitness studio and smaller, more intimate accommodation for quieter classes, is great news for the local community.
- **Pollution pledges pass 1000 tonnes – CRed Wirral** (Wirral Council’s climate campaign); which encourages residents and workers to consider how changes to their everyday lives can cut pollution, help look after the environment and save money, has passed an important milestone. Local people have now recorded 613 pledges, exceeding the target by 22.6%, with enough pledges to cut carbon pollution by over 1000 tonnes.
- **There has been a continuous improvement in the reduction of missed bin collections**, (3.25 lower than quarter one and 26.25 lower the target of 40 missed bins per 100,000 collections)
- **There has been a continuous improvement in the number of empty properties brought back into use**, with 294 empty properties returned to use as a result of Council intervention, exceeding the target by 44 empty properties.
- **230 affordable homes were provided in 2011/12**, 30 (15%) above the target

#### Performance against Corporate Plan project(s)

The following projects have been assessed as **red** (critical milestones have been missed or there is serious slippage) or **amber** (some non-critical milestones have been missed or there is a danger of non-critical slippage):

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Housing & Community Safety	Deliver a heating improvement programme to 140 vulnerable private sector residents per year in 2011-12 and 2012-13	Amber	Green	Red		76 cases were assisted. The target was not met due to price of works escalating. The costs for pipework increased significantly and the number of referrals for outright heating replacements rather than the original estimated for repairs as an option. The waiting list for 2012/13 currently stands at 99 households which is showing an absolute demand of the service beyond the current budget.

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	Renegotiate /Retender Supported People/Housing services for people with Learning Difficulties (Existing LD contracts to be extended until September 2011 to allow time for renegotiated services to be implemented)	Amber	Green	Red	On 13th October 2011 Cabinet approved an extension of four months, with an option to extend further up to six months if required for completion of this project. It has now been established that the 200+ clients that are the subject of these negotiation now require re- assessments of their current care and support needs. The implication of this requires this action to role forward to next year, therefore this will continue to be monitored as a corporate priority for 2012/13 with a new target: "By April 2013 develop a project plan with DASS to assess clients with Learning Disabilities who are jointly funded to inform new contracts / personal budgets"	
	Implement proposals to reduce under occupation in social housing by August 2011	Green	Amber	Red	Work was undertaken with Registered Social Landlords to finalise proposals and agreement to take pilot forward. Some proposals have been implemented to help respond to under occupation but the introduction and impact of welfare reform has meant that the emphasis of this project has been extended and is now the focus of a new target which will continue to be monitored as a corporate priority for 2012/13: "Develop an action plan to respond to under occupation in both the social and private rented sector by Summer 2012".	

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	Implement a new Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme by December 2011	Green	Red	Green	Red	This is a ground breaking project, with 5 local authorities moving to a shared service with 25 housing associations and over 70,000 actual registered customers. The delivery date has slipped due to delays in agreeing configuration with partners, but the system is currently being tested, and delivery is expected to go live date in June 2012. The project will reduce costs by at least £50,000 (12.5%) per year.

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Streetscene & Transport Services	By 2020, reduce the total number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) road traffic casualties by 50%, compared with the average for 2004-8; (Target for 2011 : reduce to 106; Target for 2012 : reduce to 104; Target for 2013 : reduce to 102)	Green	Amber			A Greater than normal number of incidents involving motorcycles and in-car casualties occurred from July to December 2011. The provisional number of people KSI in road traffic casualties for 2011/12 is 126. A capital bid for further funding for engineering schemes to reduce road casualties was successful and the scheme list was approved by Cabinet on 15 March 2012. These schemes will be implemented during 2012/13.
	Implement a speed restriction programme during 2011/12	Green	Amber	Red		This programme was not implemented during 2011/12 however a report on the implementation of the project programme for 2012/13 & 2013/14 was submitted to and approved by Cabinet on 12 April 2012.

**The following Corporate Plan project is awaiting a status / progress update**


Portfolio	Key project	Status				Progress Update
		Q1	Q2	Q	Q4	
Housing & Community Safety	Complete a review of the Council's and partner organisations approach to anti-social behaviour, including the implementation of community justice, by December 2011	Green			Not reported	<p>The Children and Young People's Department provided data for this project for quarters one to three. However, it has been difficult to establish ownership for this project and year end data has not been reported.</p> <p>The 201/13 Corporate Plan has a target to "Complete full review of anti-social behaviour".</p>

**Performance against Strategic Change project(s)**


All of the strategic change projects are on target, have been completed or closed, and further details on these have been included in appendix 1

**Performance against indicator(s):**

The following indicators have been assessed as **red** (missed year end target by more than 10%):

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Housing & Community Safety	NI 32	Repeat incidents of domestic violence	7.53	7.53	11.55	Red	
				(Lower is Better)			
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	The recent introduction of restraining orders post conviction has provided victims with additional safety measures, but when breached by a perpetrator is counted as a crime and therefore recorded as an automatic re-referral to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee (MARAC) as a repeat as per NI 32 guidance. In the same circumstances previously it would not be an automatic MARAC referral. This process is actually a valuable safety plan as victims are now calling the police when the perpetrator breaches the order. Positive police and court action in the majority of cases puts the perpetrator into prison, thus reducing the risk to the client and any children. The re-referral allows MARAC agencies to review risk and address any gaps in the safety plan						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	Referrals have increased by 53% compared to year end 2010/11. It has missed its target by 4.02. The year end rolling total for domestic violence repeat victimisation in Wirral is 26.51% (National Average repeat rate as identified by CAADA is 26%), which is over the target set by the repeat rate measured in Wirral for 10/11. The number of referrals to the Family Safety Unit has increased by 25% from 895 to 1120 compared to last year.						

	Sources of previously unreported domestic violence survivors has realised a commensurate 25% increase in high risk cases, from 377 to 472. The number of domestic violence victims referred and assessed as high risk who have NOT been re-victimised has increased by over 20%, from 831 to 999.
--	---

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Streetscene and Transport Services	DEPT 47	Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	108	106	126	Red	
				(Lower is Better)			
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	<p>Analysis of casualty data leading to development of a road safety action plan for 2012/13 which will target key casualty/road user groups. Additional funding from Council bid for road safety activity secured, with schemes identified and agreed by Cabinet.</p> <p>Ongoing analysis of casualty data should show improvement during 2012/13, however it should be noted that road casualty numbers are subject to random fluctuation and factors outside the control of the Authority or partner agencies.</p> <p>Senior management attendance at the Wirral Accident Reduction Partnership will continue, and support in the development and implementation of a new road safety action plan (such as additional data analysis: appropriate funding for initiatives etc).</p>						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	The performance data is provisional. The number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents for 2011/12 has exceeded the target by 20, as there was a greater than expected number of people injured, including motorcyclists and in car casualties						

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Culture , Tourism & Leisure	DEPT 5184	Visits to the Williamson Art Gallery and Priory	N/A (new indicator for 11/12)	10%	-13.54%	Red	n/a
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	<p>Extended sickness leave during 2011/12 led to Birkenhead Priory being open weekends-only for a period, this severely curtailed visitor numbers. The Williamson also closed for several days for roof replacement.</p> <p>Staffing issues are not anticipated during 2012/13 however building work will continue to affect visitor numbers at both the Priory and the Williamson; some closures are inevitable.</p> <p>Improved publicity for events and a revised website during 2013 will raise the profile of the Museums Service, and it is hoped that re-launch events will make up for lost visitor numbers.</p>						

<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	The percentage number of visits fell by 13.54% during 2011/12. The target was missed by 23.54%
------------------------------	--

## Resource implications

The revenue budget forecast is for a balanced position. There are a number of areas of concern regarding achieving income targets including car parking and cultural services. These areas are being contained by compensatory savings. The delayed sale of the Pacific Road Arts complex may also have a budgetary impact.

A number of policy options have been progressed including the 'free after three' parking and the deep clean street cleansing initiatives, support for the Anti-Social Behaviour team and library equipment and engagement schemes. The community asset transfer programme continues to progress.

Capital schemes include renovations to the Williamson Art Gallery, which commenced in the spring, the Landican Crematorium Mercury Abatement scheme and an extensive road maintenance programme and bridge strengthening works.

## Future challenges and risks

It is important to deliver services to meet the needs and wants of our citizens and businesses. To help achieve this significant consultations have been undertaken to assist in the development of Neighbourhood plans for each area and to help identify priority areas to assist with the allocation of resources for neighbourhood use. Cabinet agreed on 29 March a revised approach to business planning for 2012/13 which includes a 12 week comprehensive consultation programme and will assist with the allocation of resources.

The modernisation of the maintenance arrangements for Wirral's parks and open spaces which includes the transfer of services previously undertaken by external contractors creates future challenges and opportunities.

Weather events may also impact upon Council services. A review of winter maintenance arrangements has been undertaken to help mitigate possible negative impacts although the winter has been relatively mild.

## 2.4 Your ECONOMY

### What's working well

- **Winner of LGC Economic Development Award 2012** - Wirral's Investment Strategy, an ambitious, innovative and extremely effective approach to supporting / developing the local economy, endorsed by local business testimonials was the winner of LGC award for 2012. This award highlights the innovative work that councils are doing, often in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors, to stimulate enterprise, open new job markets and improve prosperity.
- **Wirral conference held to get thousands of businesses exporting in 2012** - following a recently launched major Government initiative to boost the number of UK SMEs exporting goods and services abroad, a specialist event was held in Wirral to meet The Export Challenge. Supported by Invest Wirral, Wirral Council's business support team, Wirral businesses with an interest in exporting were urged to attend in a bid to expand and spread to new markets over the next four or five years.



- **Companies offered assistance to make cycling to work easier for staff** - businesses in East Wirral are being offered the opportunity to take advantage of a workplace improvement grant that can help towards the cost of installing cycle parking, clothes lockers and showers for staff. The grant is designed to make it easier for people to cycle to work so that they can improve their quality of life and their bank balance as well as providing business with the benefits of a healthier workforce.
- **Council commits £500K to boost Town Teams initiative in Wirral** - Wirral Council is committing half a million pounds to further improvements in shopping areas, with backing for the high profile, Government backed Mary Portas Pilots – Town Teams. Traders will be consulted and have the opportunity to bid for up to £100,000 to demonstrate how the money can be used to improve the vitality of their local town centre.
- **Growth for Wirral tourism economy** - Wirral is increasingly becoming a destination for a mini-break as well as somewhere to go for a ‘great day out’, a recent survey of visitors to the borough showed. Findings also suggested that visitors are sticking around for longer, which having a positive impact on Wirral’s local economy with the tourism sector bucking the overall trend by reporting growth of some 15% over the last five years.
- **The total investment value via Invest Wirral was £19,697,192 for 2011/12**, exceeding the target by £3,697,192 (23%) and increasing by £4,283,166 (27.79%) compared to 2010/11.
- **762 businesses were assisted, exceeding the target by 462 (154%)**. A number of businesses, including several new tourism businesses, came on stream boosting the number of business assists by the Partnership Officer; and Investment Marketing has provided support which has helped multiple businesses.

#### Performance against Corporate Plan project(s):


All of the Corporate Plan projects are on target or completed and further details on these have been included in appendix 1.

#### Performance against Strategic Change project(s):

There are no projects falling within this theme in the Strategic Change Programme.

#### Performance against Corporate Plan indicator(s):

The following indicator has been assessed as **amber** (missed year end target by between 5% and 10%):

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Regeneration and Planning Strategy	Local 6282	GVA per capita	£11478	£11809	£10736	Amber	
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	Poor economic conditions during the recession of 2009 have had a negative impact on the GVA per head in the borough, continuing work to attract large scale investments in Wirral such as the ITC and Wirral Waters by implementing						

	Wirral's Investment Strategy will start to have a positive impact in the borough over the coming years which in turn will be reflected in increased GVA performance in subsequent years.
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	Performance against this target has deteriorated, with a reduction in the GVA per capita of £742 when compared to the 2010/11 year end. The 2011/12 year end target was missed by £331.

## Resource implications

The capital programme forecast outturn has reduced due to slippage on improvement to stock schemes although progress continues on these schemes. Four grants were made to companies through the Think Big Investment Fund during the period. Going forward additional grant approval has been received for future years relating to former HMRI areas.

## Future challenges and risks

Growth in Wirral's economy will make it easier for the Council to deliver its vision of a more prosperous and equal Wirral.

The Wirral Waters scheme continues to progress with further discussion on the International Trade Centre and additional work in relation to the development of International links.

Significant work has been undertaken to develop a number of new initiatives including support for Micro Businesses and Social Enterprises and the implementation of the Green Growth Strategy.

## 2.5 Your COUNCIL

### What's working well

- Praise for Council websites** - residents are finding it increasingly easier to find a piece of information or complete a transaction with the Council online, thanks to improvements to the Council website which have been highlighted in a recent national, 'Better Connected' report. The survey examines all council websites every year and reports on its findings. Wirral saw an increase in its score from 2 to 3 (out of 4) stars. In particular, the Libraries section was held up as an example of one which other local authorities should look to emulate.
- Wirral unveils plans for June 1 Olympic Torch Relay welcome** - Wirral is proud to welcome the Relay to Wirral on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June. The flame will arrive in Wirral at around 5.45pm, follow a route through Birkenhead and pass through a celebration event in the Park. It will then be carried through Birkenhead Town Centre and Hamilton Square, before being taken across the River Mersey from Woodside on one of the famous Mersey Ferries. The Council's leisure and fitness centres are also planning to mark the Olympics by organising a number of new sports projects that will form a lasting legacy for the future.
- Customer feedback performance** – fewer complaints were recorded compared to 2010/11, with 14% less corporate complaints (1045 in total) and 28% less statutory complaints (233 in total). Corporate complaints took, on average, 10 working days to respond against a corporate target of 15 working days. Recorded councillor/MP contacts (3930 in total) were responded to on average within 7 working days, against a corporate target of 10 working days. Local Government Ombudsman contacts (57 in total) took on average 16 calendar days to respond to, against a standard target of 28 calendar days. Across the council 9% of all complaints received were recognised as resulting in some level of organisational learning, leading to improved future services.

## Performance against Corporate Plan project(s)

The following projects have been assessed as **red** (critical milestones have been missed or there is serious slippage) or **amber** (some non-critical milestones have been missed or there is a danger of non-critical slippage):

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Finance & Best Value	Deliver SCP 2011-2012 projects to deliver agreed benefits to the agreed quality, on time and to budget	Amber		Red		<p>This project delivered £8.5m against a target of £10.725m. Cabinet agreed a revised programme on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012.</p> <p>The delivery of the SCP will continue to be monitored as a 2012/13 Corporate Plan priority.</p>
	Ensure all projects proposed to SCP during 2011-2012 have defined and achievable benefits to Council services, or budget	Green		Red		The projects proposed during 2011/12 did not have defined and achievable benefits and were therefore not added to the programme.

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Corporate Resources	Publish workforce information as set out in the 2010 Equality Duty by July 2011	Green	Amber		Red	Data was to be collected with an employee survey. A plan is being developed to collect the data. It is envisaged that this data will be collected by September 2012.
	Review HR policies by September 2012	Amber				Focus on other key projects has led to slippages in timescales, resources have been resourced and a plan put in place to deliver to timescales.
	Implement Job Evaluation (Stage 3) by April 2012	Green	Amber			There have been some slippages in timescales, plan being developed to move this forward and implement by July 2012. This will continue to be monitored as a 2012/13 Corporate Plan priority.

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	Agree membership, form and function of Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership by June 2011	Green	Amber			The LSP Executive Board met in January 2012 to consider its form and function. The board agreed to establish a management group to meet on a more frequent basis and review the partnerships terms of reference.

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Community & Customer Engagement	Work with the voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sector to put in place a single strategy for funding the sector and commissioning services from April 2012 by December 2011	Amber			Red	The Strategy is under review and will continue to be monitored as a 2012/13 Corporate Plan priority.
	Work with the VCF sector to Map sector activity and outcomes in Wirral by April 2011 to provide a baseline for future development	Green	Amber	Red		The Strategy is under review and will continue to be monitored as a 2012/13 Corporate Plan priority.
	Work with the VCF sector to review the Council's approach to engagement with the sector to put in place structures, and a clear policy framework by May 2011	Green	Amber	Red		The Strategy is under review and will continue to be monitored as a 2012/13 Corporate Plan priority.
	Work with the VCF sector to establish a 'Rights to Provide' policy framework by April 2012	Green	Amber	Red		The Strategy is under review and will continue to be monitored as a 2012/13 Corporate Plan priority.

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Corrective Action
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Social Care & Inclusion	In advance of full transfer of public health responsibilities and budget in April 2013:- Agree changes in Wirral Council organisational structures required by April 2012	Green			Amber	Papers have been prepared and were submitted to Cabinet. However, it was agreed not to discuss the paper in the Chief Executive's absence. A Report is due to be presented to Cabinet by July 2012.

**The following Corporate Plan project is awaiting a status / progress update**

Portfolio	Key project	Status				Reason status data not available
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Corporate Resources	Implement a Internal Communications Strategy by July 2011	Green				No update reported.

**Performance against Strategic Change project(s)**

The following strategic change projects have been assessed as **red** (project schedule, outcomes or financial parameters have or are going to be exceeded and cannot be managed within the project) or **amber** (project schedule, outcomes or financial parameters have or are going to be exceeded but can be resolved within the project):

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Red				Disposal of Assets	<p>£212,000 against a target of £481,000 has been achieved.</p> <p>A report for the lease of Hillcroft went to Cabinet 12/1/2012. With regard to the other transfers, legal agreements have been completed in respect of Grosvenor, Liscard, Hoylake, Greasby, Victoria Hall and Vale with the full transfer completing after building works have been finished. These works are scheduled to be completed in the June / July 2012.</p> <p>Delamere is on the verge of entering in to the legal agreement. Westbourne, Woodchurch, Kylemore and New Ferry Village Hall have been held back, as funding options still to be agreed.</p> <p>This project will be rolled forward to 2012/13.</p>

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Red				Office Rationalisation	There has been considerable delay to this project. £110,000 against a target of £368,000 has been achieved.

	Willowtree has been vacated. Discussions are still underway about the proposed relocation of the Community Safety team from the Old Court House.  A report on Phase 2 was submitted to Cabinet in February 2012. This project will be rolled forward to 2012/13.
--	--

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Amber	Red			Transforming Business Support	<p>No savings were formally agreed for this project.</p> <p>The roll out of HR Self Service was subject to a pause in the project to enable higher priority work to be delivered by the HR Project Team. The Team have now moved back onto the project and it is intended to roll out self serve car mileage claims, expenses and extended manager by October 2012 and follow this with annual leave, absences and other leave.</p> <p>The underlying status of the project against this new timescale is felt to be Green, however the project status is shown as red because the request to reschedule delivery has not been formally approved.</p>

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Amber		Red		Facilities Management	<p>No savings were formally agreed for this project.</p> <p>There has been no progress on this project since agreeing temporary measures following Early Voluntary Retirement departures in June 2011. This project continues into 2012/13 with a target of £500k.</p>

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Not Reported		Red		Review of Employee pay costs	<p>No savings were formally agreed for this project.</p> <p>This project has not moved beyond the conception stage during 2011/12. The project will continue into 2012/13 with a target of £300,000.</p>

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Amber	Red	Amber		Procurement	The overall procurement savings (projects 1,44, 67) of £2.7m were achieved, however some elements were not according to plan.

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Amber	Red	Amber		Contract	The overall procurement savings (projects 1,44, 67) of £2.7m were achieved, however some elements

			Review	were not according to plan.
--	--	--	--------	-----------------------------

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Green	Red	Amber		Printing Review	Activities are behind schedule, but savings of £250,000 have been released from the budget. This project continues into 2012/13. A project manager has been put in place to move this forward

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Red		Amber		Procurement Back Office	The overall procurement savings (projects 1,44, 67) of £2.7m were achieved, however some elements were not according to plan.

Status				Project	Corrective Action
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Green		Amber		ICT Strategic Review	The project is behind schedule but savings of £400,000 have been released from the budget. This project will be rolled forward to 2012/13.

#### Performance against indicator(s):

The following indicators have been assessed as **red** (missed year end target by more than 10%):

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Finance and Best Value	DEPT 2098	Percentage of audits in the Internal Audit Plan completed in 2011/12	N/A (new indicator at 11/12)	100%	84%	Red	n/a
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	Significant staff shortages and secondments experienced during the year. Audits were prioritised to enable appropriate assurance conclusion, some jobs are ongoing and will be completed in early 2012/13.						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	The 2011/12 year end target was missed by 16%						

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Finance and Best Value	DEPT 2099	Percentage of financial	N/A (new	85%	40%	Red	n/a

		assessments completed within 30 working days	indicator at 11/12)				
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	Changes to DASS care assessment process to be implemented. Bedding down of Civica processes to provide more efficient assessment processing						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This has missed its target throughout 2011/12, and missed the year end target by 45%						

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Finance and Best Value	DEPT 2112	Percentage of Council Invoices from SMEs paid within 10 days	N/A (new indicator at 11/12)	60%	46.43%	Red	n/a
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	A Task Group was established by the Deputy Director of Finance to achieve invoice payment targets early in this financial year. Specific areas of bad performance have been identified by the Group and will be investigated and addressed to achieve the required performance levels.						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This has missed its target throughout 2011/12, and missed the year end target by 13.57%						

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2010/11 Year End Actual	2011/2012 Year End		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Finance and Best Value	DEPT 2111	Percentage of Council Invoices from all suppliers paid within 30 days	N/A (new indicator at 11/12)	95%	88.06%	Amber	n/a
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	A Task Group was established by the Deputy Director of Finance to achieve invoice payment targets early in this financial year. Specific areas of bad performance have been identified by the Group and will be investigated and addressed to achieve the required performance levels.						
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This has missed its target throughout 2011/12, and missed the year end target by 6.94%.						



## **Resource implications**

The forecast outturn is that an underspend of £4.5 million will be achieved. This includes £2 million uncommitted requirement from the Efficiency Fund and £2.5 million from Treasury Management activities. There are a number of potentially volatile areas requiring close monitoring. These include asset management costs and the savings from the rationalisation of buildings, housing and council tax benefits, the achievement of procurement savings and treasury management activities.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) approval of the capitalisation of statutory redundancy costs has increased the capital programme by £3 million (with a further £1 million relating to schools) Expenditure within other areas of the programme remains low as a significant element of the agreed programme relates to works connected with the release of building assets.

## **Future challenges and risks**

A robust response to the critical report into corporate governance is required to ensure the Council provides services to the community in an appropriate and open manner, that future inward investment into Wirral is not jeopardised, and to prevent damage to our reputation.

A number of actions are being taken:

- The council is working with the Local Government Association at both officer and member level to address issues raised in the report.
- An Improvement Board has been established to support delivery of the Council's improvement priorities
- £300,000 of additional resources have been allocated in the 2012/13 budget for improving standards and performance
- Cabinet on 29 March agreed the establishment of a cross party Business Delivery Board and Strategic Change Programme Board

Failure to engage effectively with the workforce could lead to demotivation, negative culture and focus on short term considerations. During the quarter an employee opinion survey has been undertaken by IPSOS MORI. Cabinet on 29 March gave its support to proposals including the establishment of an Independent External Ombudsman and for the development of a Corporate Performance Appraisal process.

Business failure from a supplier could lead to a disruption in services. An audit of business continuity arrangements for key external partners in critical service areas was completed in March.

## **2.6 Customer Feedback**

2.6.1 There were a total of 6,049 customer feedback contacts recorded in 2011/12, which represented a 7% decrease from 2010/11 (6,485).

This overall figure included 14% fewer corporate complaints, with the lack of adverse weather conditions affecting services over the winter months, as in previous years, a key factor (Technical Services recorded a 31% annual reduction in their complaints). Similarly, statutory complaints recorded a comparative reduction, of 28%.

Recorded councillor and MP contacts also displayed an annual reduction (5%), along with Local Government Ombudsman contacts (9.5%).

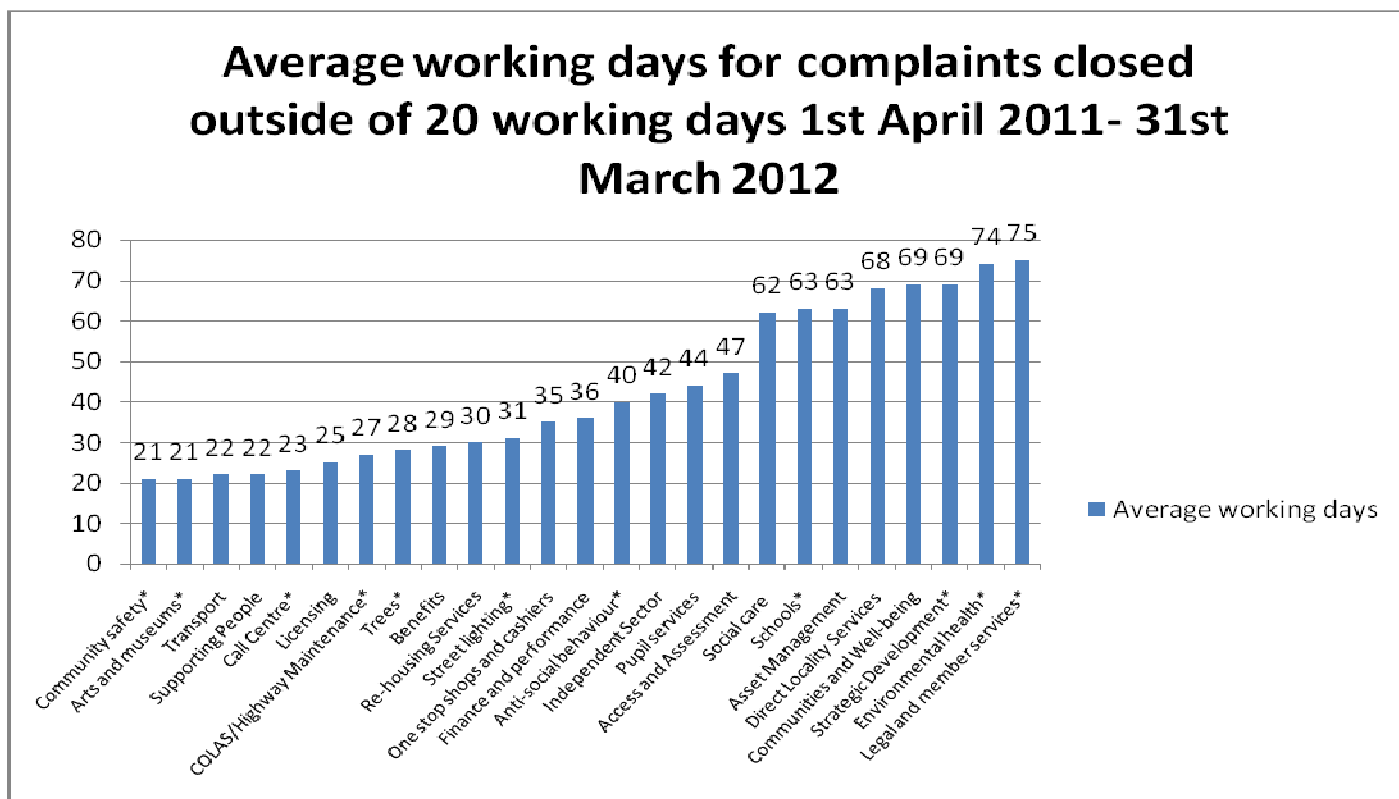
2.6.2 By channel, internet and email was used for two thirds of all contacts, continuing a trend that seen usage of these channels increase by 6% from 2011/12.

2.6.3 There was an increase in the average response rate for complaints with 15 working days taken to respond to all complaints in 2011/12 compared to 14 working days in 2010/11.

Corporate complaints, which are measured against a target of 15 working days to respond, recorded an average of 10 working days, maintaining performance from 2010/11.

Statutory complaints (DASS and CYPD Children’s Social Care) recorded an average of 34.5 working days to respond, compared to 24 working days in 2010/11.

2.6.4 Services responding significantly outside of the recognised corporate standard during 2011/12 are detailed as follows:



\*Services marked with an asterisk indicate single contact outside of 20 working days

- DASS report an on-going resource issue to effectively consider and respond to (frequently complex) complaints requiring significant investigation and tailored responses: average working days to respond increased from 31 days in 2010/11 to 47 days in 2011/12. Communities and well being services and direct locality services recorded averages of 69 and 68 working days respectively.
- LHRAM recorded an average of 26 working days to respond to corporate complaints, against 17 working days in 2010/11. The asset management service (32% of this department’s total complaints) recorded an average of 51 working days to respond to complaints. A limited number of potentially vexatious complaints, requiring significant resource to investigate and respond to, influenced this service’s performance. Overall the department responded to 61% of all complaints closed in 2011/12 within the corporate target.
- All other departments recorded maintained or improved complaints response rates, 2010/11 figures in brackets:

- CYPD 12 working days (15)
- Finance 10 working days (13)
- RHP 13 working days (17, recorded previously against Corporate Services)
- Technical Services 9 (9)

2.6.5 Responses to recorded Councillor/MP enquiries took on average 7 working days in 2011/12 compared to 6 working days in 2010/11. The corporate target is 10 working days.

- DASS recorded a reduced average of 19 working days, which represented a significant improvement on the 25 working days reported in 2010/11.
- LHRAM took an increased average of 12 working days to respond, compared to 10 working days in 2010/12.
- Technical Services recorded an increase from 5 working days in 2010/11 to 6 working days in 2011/12 though this is still well within the corporate target and this department accounted for 82% of all recorded Councillor/MP contacts (same proportion as recorded in 2010/11).
- Finance and CYPD maintained their average response rates (6 working days) whilst RHP recorded an improved response rate from 9 working days in 2010/11 (Corporate Services) to 7 working days in 2011/12.

2.6.6 Local Government Ombudsman contacts took slightly longer to respond to in 2011/12 with an average of 16 calendar days taken compared to 14 calendar days in 2010/11. This compares to the standard response target of 28 calendar days.

2.6.7 The focus for complaints and wider customer feedback is 'putting things right and learning from it' with an average of 9% of all complaints received across the council resulting in some organisational learning. Some examples are provided below:

- New allotment application process and database introduced to improve management of waiting list (asset management)
- Staff training provided to improve customer care offered (environmental health)
- Enhanced information available on website to ensure displayed information for activities is accurate and up to date (marketing)
- Improvements to coverage provided by external contractor in response to feedback received (bridleways and public rights of way)
- Requirement placed on external contractor to improve notice given and signage used on site when undertaking future works (COLAS/Highway maintenance)
- Revised bin collection times to avoid school traffic and minimise missed collections (refuse collection service)
- Charges to be introduced for 'no show' bookings to maximise take up of leisure classes, in response to complaints received (sports and recreation service)
- Improved instructor to child ratio to be introduced for swimming classes, in response to feedback received (sports and recreation service)
- Review of CCTV coverage and provision of safe-guarding training for staff as a result of anti-social behaviour reported in a leisure centre (sports and recreation service)
- Erection of dog fouling signs to deter local issue reported (community safety)
- Website information reviewed and improved, in response to feedback received (marketing)
- Improved landlord accreditation process introduced in response to feedback provided (housing standards service)
- Improved training implemented for SEN school escorts (transport)
- Improved disabled access at a local leisure centre (sports and recreation)

- New arrangements introduced to improve liaison between schools and admission team for 11+ exams (schools)
- Customer questionnaire introduced in response to customer comments asking for a review of fitness suite opening hours (sports and recreation)
- Increased frequency of street cleansing rota introduced to minimise future complaints (street cleansing)

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 3.1 Risk issues are identified and discussed within each of the Corporate Plan theme areas above. The successful implementation of actions to deal with issues arising from the report into Corporate Governance issues remains a particularly key priority. A series of actions have taken place to deal with this risk and further action is to take place.
- 3.2 Enhancements to corporate risk management arrangements and procedures continue to be examined. The Risk Management Strategy over the medium term will provide a framework and processes which are in accordance with the latest British Standard for Risk Management. To achieve this, 'a gap analysis' has been undertaken to identify actions required for improvement and proposals are being drawn up to further develop the authority's risk management arrangements.
- 3.3 The Corporate Risk Register has been examined and added to by the Executive Team during the quarter. Progress in mitigating actions has been included within the relevant sections above.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Not applicable

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 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.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.

### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 7.1 The Council Budget 2011/12, Schools Budget 2011/12 and Capital Programme 2011/13 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 2, 3 and 4 which are placed within the Library.

7.2 The projected General Fund balance at 31 March 2012 is £18.7 million. This includes £9.6 million of funding to support activities in the 2012/13 budget as shown below:

Details	£million	£million
<b>Projected General Fund balance at 31 March 2012 when setting the budget for 2011/12</b>		6.9
<b>Cabinet decisions</b>		
17 March – Fernleigh retained		-0.5
2 June – New Homes Bonus/ Local Services Grant		+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
21 July – Social Services Re-provision		-3.5
21 July – Support for School Pay		-0.2
22 September – Independent Review		-0.3
13 October - Capitalisation of Statutory Redundancy Payments		+2.7
12 January – Collection Fund Surplus release April 2012		-1.3
21 February – EVRs self funded release of reserve		+1.4
21 February – release of reserves and provisions		+9.9
<b>Projected variances / potential overspends</b>		
None declared although pressures identified at the end of March 2011 within:	£ millions	
- Adult Social Services	6.0	
-Children and Young People	1.0	
- Finance	-4.5	
- Regeneration, Housing and Planning	-0.5	-2.0
<b>General Fund balance at 31 March 2012 based upon the latest projections</b>		<b>18.7</b>
Balances to be utilised to support 2012/13 budget		-9.6
General Fund balance at 31 March 2013 based upon the latest projections		9.1

7.3 The Adult Social Services Children and Young People Departments have highlighted pressures on their departmental budgets. Any subsequent overspend would impact upon the General Fund balances. The predicted under-spends in Finance, Regeneration, Housing and Planning Departments will however help limit the impact of the over-spends.

7.4 The capital programme is summarised below:

<b>Spend</b>	<b>Original Approval £000</b>	<b>Revised Approval £000</b>	<b>Forecast Dec £000</b>	<b>Forecast Mar £000</b>
Adult Social Services	1,154	2,943	2,943	921
Children & Young People	25,889	32,805	22,953	24,370
Regeneration, Housing & Planning	5,181	18,169	12,571	6,718
Finance	1,000	6,671	6,728	3,435
Law, HR and Asset Mgt	8,163	8,280	8,879	2,827
Technical Services	7,872	12,568	11,564	9,245
<b>Total Programme</b>	<b>49,259</b>	<b>81,436</b>	<b>65,638</b>	<b>47,516</b>

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Original Approval £000</b>	<b>Revised Approval £000</b>	<b>Forecast Dec £000</b>	<b>Forecast Mar £000</b>
Borrowing	15,905	34,464	27,337	13,790
Capital Receipts	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Revenue, reserves, contributions	300	2,393	1,434	2,024
Grants - Education	23,441	21,103	19,084	18,850
Grants - Integrated Transport	1,155	1,348	1,155	1,348
Grants - Local Transport Plan	3,095	3,095	3,095	3,095
Grants - Other	2,363	16,033	10,533	5,409
<b>Total resources</b>	<b>49,259</b>	<b>81,436</b>	<b>65,638</b>	<b>47,516</b>

7.5 The outturn forecast for the 2011/12 capital programme has reduced by £18.1 million since quarter 3. This is mainly due to slippage in schemes within the regeneration, Housing and Planning, Adult Social Services and Technical Services departments. Additional approval granted following the receipt of permission from the DCLG to capitalise statutory redundancy payments. There has been some re-profiling of schemes within CYP and Regeneration, Housing and Planning.

7.6 Progress continues to be made on a number of schemes including those at Pensby and Cathcart Primaries which is nearing completion. Willowtree the Children's Home from home based at the former Rosclare site opened in December. The Landican Crematorium Mercury Abatement building works programme continues as does work on the Town Link Viaduct in Birkenhead.

## 8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

## 9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

## 10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 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. Any carbon reduction implications have been identified in Section 4 of this report.

## 11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Planning and Community Safety is a specific goal in the Corporate Plan, with associated actions and measures. Any planning and community safety implications have been identified in Section 4 of this report.

## 12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 Cabinet note the contents of this report and request any further information or action to be taken.

## 13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 Council approved the Corporate Plan on 18 April 2011. This report provides progress on delivering the Council's Corporate Plan, including performance of relevant projects and indicators and associated financial and risk monitoring information.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **Carol Sharratt**  
Performance Management Officer  
Telephone: (0151 666 3865)  
Email: [carolsharratt@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:carolsharratt@wirral.gov.uk)

## APPENDICES

### To be placed in the web library:

**Appendix 1** – Detailed analysis of performance for 2011/12

**Appendix 2** – Financial Monitoring Summary

**Appendix 3** – Capital Monitoring Summary

**Appendix 4** – 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
<b>CABINET – 2011/12 Q3 Performance and Financial Review</b>	<b>02 February 2012</b>
<b>CABINET – 2011/12 Q2 Performance and Financial Review</b>	<b>03 November 2011</b>
<b>CABINET – 2011/12 Q1 Performance and Financial Review</b>	<b>21 July 2011</b>
<b>CABINET - Delivering the Corporate Plan</b>	<b>17 April 2011</b>
<b>COUNCIL - Adoption of Corporate Plan 2011-14</b>	<b>14 April 2011</b>
<b>CABINET - Draft Corporate Plan for 2011-14</b>	<b>17 March 2011</b>

This page is intentionally left blank



## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD

28 FEBRUARY 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EQUALITY AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b><i>ALL</i></b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b><i>DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT</i></b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	NO

#### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This summary report (Appendix 1) is at the request of members at the last Scrutiny Programme Board held on 4 January 2012. The report summarises the CfPS Policy Briefing 'Equality Impact Assessments.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 Members are requested to note the report.

#### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

3.1 As part of the Equality Duty 2010 and further The Public Sector Equality Duty which came into full force in April 2011, the Council has a legal requirement to give due regard to the impact of its policies and decisions on people who share protected characteristics (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion / belief, gender re-assignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity).

3.2 As part of the Independent Corporate Governance Review report, AKA highlighted 'shortfalls in the way the Council evaluated the impact of its policies both prior to execution and in response to evidence about the impact'. Subsequently the report identified 'Equalities' as an area for improvement.

#### **4.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

4.1 As outlined in 3.2 above.

4.2 The Council failing to meet legal requirements.

4.3 The Council open to reputational risk.

4.4 The Council open to legal challenge.

#### **5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 None

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 None

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

7.1 None

## **8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

8.1 None

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 By not formally adopting Equality Impact Assessments as the Council's process for giving due regard to the impact of its policies and decisions, the Council is open to legal challenge.

9.2 The Council constitution will need reviewing to take account of the new legislation.

## **10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 As part of the Equality Duty 2010, which came into full force in April 2011, the Council has a legal requirement to give due regard to the impact of its policies and decisions on people who share protected characteristics (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion / belief, gender re-assignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity).

## **11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None

## **12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Equality Impact Assessments can and should inform planning and community safety policies and decisions.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** *Alison Mountney*  
telephone: 691 8507  
email: [alisonmountney@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:alisonmountney@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1**

Summary report on CfPS Policy Briefing 'Equality Impact Assessment'

### **APPENDIX 2**

Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

# APPENDIX 1

**SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD  
28 FEBRUARY 2012**

## **EQUALITY AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

---

### **SUMMARY**

At the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Board held on 4 January 2012, a CfPS Policy Briefing entitled 'Equality Impact Assessments' was provided to members. Members made a request that the Policy Briefing be summarised for this meeting of the Scrutiny Board.

### **BACKGROUND: PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

The Equalities Act 2010 ("The Act") has two main purposes:

- to harmonise discrimination law, and
- to strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

The Public Sector Equality Duty ("PSED") (section 149 of The Act) came into force on 5 April 2011.

The PSED applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all and which meet different people's needs.

The PSED is supported by specific duties, as set out in the Statutory Code of Practice, which came into force on 10 September 2011. The specific duties require public bodies:

- to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the PSED; and
- to set themselves specific and measurable equality objectives.

Section 31 and 32 of the Equality Act gives the Equalities and Human Rights Commission ("EHRC") the power to issue "a compliance notice" if these duties are not being carried out. Individuals disadvantaged by public sector decisions can still bring an action under the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)**

All council officers, from recycling officers to transport planners to social workers to librarians, have a duty to consider access to the services they provide and the implications of the policies they develop for all groups in the local community: it is not only the responsibility of the equalities officer or diversity champion. Likewise, consideration of equalities issues is important to scrutiny committees, whether they are carrying out a

review of the council's recycling policy, monitoring children's social services or challenging the development of the library plan.

An intrinsic part of the PSED is the preparation of EIAs. EIAs have been operational in WMBC since 2008 and are published on the Council's website. EIAs should be produced whenever a WMBC policy is being developed. An EIA will enable the Council to make an informed judgement as to whether a policy will have unintended, negative consequences for certain people.

According to the EHRC, an EIA can have one of four outcomes:

- No major change
- Adjust the policy
- Continue the policy
- Stop and remove the policy

A robust methodology in the completion of EIAs will allow the Council to affirm that it has made a policy decision in a logical way, and that no assumptions have been made about the impact of a certain section of the community.

As it is important to consider the broad policy impacts of decisions, the effective production of EIAs relies on the principles of equality being "mainstreamed" within the wider decision making process. It is difficult to think of any policy change that the Council could implement that would have no impact whatsoever on local people.

The North West Employers Organisation Equality network has asked WMBC to be a case study in EIAs. WMBC were one of the first in the region to redesign its toolkit following the introduction of The Act in 2010.

It is essential that the Council's EIA process becomes more robust in terms of completion, quality assurance, scrutiny and transparency.

As part of the Independent Corporate Governance Review report, AKA highlighted "shortfalls" in the way the Council evaluates the impact of its policies both prior to execution and in response to evidence about the impact". Subsequently, the AKA report identified "Equalities" as an area for improvement.

Failure to carry out EIAs will leave the Council:

- failing to meet legal requirements.
- open to reputational risk.
- open to legal challenge.

It was agreed at Cabinet 12 January 2012 that the authority formally adopts EIAs as the Council's process for giving due regard to the impact of its policies and decisions.

## **SCRUTINY AND EIAs**

At national level there have been a number of decisions overturned due to EIAs having been carried out ineffectively, or not considering the full issues.

Using EIAs to analyse proposed service changes (as part of a “pre-scrutiny” process) immediately focuses on the results of that change, rather than the process used to reach it.

An approach taken in Gloucestershire whereby EIAs (renamed “community impact assessments”) are now sent to O&S committees before being signed off by the relevant cabinet member, the intention being that this provides a way of building “pre-scrutiny” into the process and to provide additional political leadership. This suggests a new and more focused approach to “pre-scrutiny” more generally, where a discussion of methodology is mixed with a broader, substantive discussion on the policy

## **THE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

In 2009 WMBC adopted this framework as a benchmarking toolkit. The toolkit involves an assessment and categorisation in one of three levels:

- Development;
- Achieving; and
- Excellent.

WMBC is currently “Achieving” and is looking to become “Excellent”.

This framework strongly promotes the use of scrutiny in establishing a culturally different approach to equality. Councillor engagement is particularly encouraged as part of this process.

## **SCRUTINY REVIEWS**

Scrutiny reviews should involve a consideration of the way in which recommendations will impact upon different local residents. An awareness of equalities issues in the planning, delivering and monitoring of scrutiny reviews will enhance their robustness and ensure that recommendations have a greater chance of being implemented.

Using scrutiny reviews to examine equalities issues also brings wider benefits to the council. Involving a range of councillors in equalities work draws on their community experience and knowledge, raising issues that may not immediately occur to officers who may be less connected to local communities. The process of challenge and review can also provide an opportunity for officers to step back from day-to-day service delivery and reflect on its impact on the whole community.

Focusing on broader issues of concern to the community, rather than simply looking at internal council policies and services, can be a useful way for scrutiny to set and own its own agenda and helps avoid the temptation to politicise the scrutiny process. All members of a scrutiny panel, whether from the administration or opposition groups, can share, for example, a common desire to improve local health inequalities for or ensure better access to transport services.

This page is intentionally left blank

# Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

**Section 1:      Your details**

Council officer:

Email address:

Head of Service:

Chief Officer:

Department:

Date:

**Section 2:      What Council function / proposal is being assessed?****Section 2b:      Is this EIA being submitted to Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?**

Yes / No

If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

.....

And please add hyperlink to your published EIA on the Council's website

.....

**Section 3:** Will the Council function / proposal affect equality in .....? (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

**Section 4:** Within the Equality Duty 2010, there are 3 legal requirements. Will the Council function / proposal support the way the Council ..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)



**Section 5:** Will the function / proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications

**Section 5a:** Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

**Section 5b:** If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

**Section 6:** What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

**Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council function / policy?**

Yes / No – (please delete as appropriate)

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

**Section 8: How will consultation take place?**

Before you complete your consultation, please email your 'incomplete' EIA to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for re-publishing.

**Section 9: Have you remembered to:**

- a) Add a hyperlink to your published EIA on the Council website? (section 2b)
- b) Include any positive impacts as well as negative impacts? (section 5)
- c) Send this EIA to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer?
- d) Review section 5 once consultation has taken place and sent your completed EIA to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?

## UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAM : COUNCIL EXCELLENCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR – APRIL 2012

### 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**  
**COUNCIL EXCELLENCE : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR – APRIL 2012**

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
08/07/10	Performance Monitoring (Quarterly updates on existing performance indicators – ‘Exceptions’ only will be reported).	Officer Reports (Emma Degg) (from Oct 2011 – Ian Coleman)		Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports will be included on each agenda from September onwards.	Continuing
08/07/10	Strategic Change Programme: - Regular updates on proposed savings; - Monitor the effectiveness of the Change Programme;	Officer Reports (Dave Green)  (from Oct 2011 – Ian Coleman)		A report on the progress of the Strategic Change Programme Board was provided for the Special meeting on 28/10/10. Further reports were produced for the meetings on 18/11/10 & 31/01/11. Committee, on 12/07/11, agreed that this item should be part of the work programme for the new municipal year. A further update was received by Committee on 15/09/11. Agreed that Committee “looks forward to receiving details of emerging projects for inclusion within the Strategic Change Programme”. An Update report was provided for the meeting on 17/11/11. <b>A further report was presented to Committee on 26/03/12. Committee resolved: “That a progress report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee upon the achievement of benefits, particularly financial, of the projects in the Strategic Change Programme”.</b>	Continuing

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
08/07/10	Financial Reporting / Budget: - Monitoring the financial statements - How the authority performs against savings targets; - Review the impact on local residents where savings are made; - Impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review on the borough;	Officer Reports (Ian Coleman)		Financial / Budget Monitoring reports will be included on each meeting agenda.	Continuing
08/07/10	Office Accommodation: - The EC Harris report was referred to the Council Excellence Committee by Cabinet (24 June 2010); - Need to understand the Cabinet timetable; - What are the implications for the Council's Data Centres?; - Future role for agile working	Officer reports plus site visits. (Bill Norman / Ian Brand)		Special meeting of the Committee arranged for 24 <sup>th</sup> August 2010. Further reports provided at the meetings on 21/09/10 and 18/11/10. Another report produced for the meeting on 31/01/11; to focus particularly on agile working and working in local hubs. Further report produced for 16/03/11. Committee raised anxiety over progress and agreed that "update reports should be presented to future meetings of this Committee on a quarterly basis". Further report to Committee on 12/07/11. Committee also agreed that this item should be part of the work programme for the forthcoming municipal year. A subsequent report was presented to Committee on 15/09/11. A further report will be presented to Cabinet in November 2011.	Continuing

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
	Office Accommodation (continued):			<p>Further report to Committee on 17/11/11 resulted in the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management being requested to liaise with group spokespersons to agree a date for a seminar on agile working.</p> <p>A progress report was received by Committee on 31/01/12, prior to the same report being presented to Cabinet along with the recommendations of the Council Excellence Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>A further update report, responding to the Cabinet decision of 02/02/12, was presented to Committee on 26/03/12. Members requested a further progress report to a future meeting, including a greater emphasis on timescales and an update in relation to the outcome of consultation. A background paper in relation to the Council's building assets was also requested for circulation to Members.</p>	
21/09/10	Employee Forums – What issues do they cover? What are the participation levels? What is the cost of providing the Forums?	Officer report (Kevin Adderley)		<p>Issue initially raised by a member at the Committee meeting on 21/09/10.</p> <p>Report produced for the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010. An officer review of Staff Diversity Forums will take place. A further report will be produced for a future meeting.</p>	To be followed up when Committee time is available

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
21/09/10	Income from Golf Courses, to include: Why is projected income not met on an annual basis? Is security of courses a determinant in loss of income?	Officer report (Jim Lester)		Issue initially raised by a member at the Committee meeting on 21/09/10. Report produced for meeting on 18/11/10. Report noted – await the outcome of the PACSPE process. <b>A further report on 'Achievement of Income Targets', was noted by Committee on 26/03/12.</b>	
21/09/10	Reaching Excellent Level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)	Officer report (Kevin Adderley)		Progress report presented to meeting on 21/09/10. Further report, expected 16/03/11, requested in six months time. Report to include the reasons for low levels of Black and Ethnic Minority individuals accessing mainstream services. Subsequent report produced for meeting on 16/03/11. Agreed that a further report should be produced in relation to the Equality Implications of the recent Council Budget, to include information as to what analysis was undertaken and how officers took equality duties into account. Report presented to Committee on 12/07/11.	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
18/11/10	Early Voluntary Retirement / Voluntary Severance (EVR/VS) – Analysis and Restructuring	Officer report (Chris Hyams)		<p>Issue initially raised by a member at the Committee meeting on 18/11/10.</p> <p>Report produced for the meeting on 16/03/11. A further update report will be produced at the end of the EVR process.</p> <p>Committee, on 12/07/11, agreed that this item should be part of the work programme for the forthcoming municipal year.</p> <p>Committee, on 12/07/11, also requested a further report on the “impact on employees of restructuring / redeployment, including the support in place for individuals”.</p> <p>Further report presented to committee on 15/09/11. Committee agreed that a report will be presented to a future meeting in relation to the number of vacated posts as a result of EVR/VS that had subsequently been filled.</p> <p>Further report provided to Committee on 17/11/11. Report noted.</p>	Complete



Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
18/11/10	Proposed changes to Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit system - Impact of the Welfare Reform Bill	Officer report (Ian Coleman)		<p>Report produced for the meeting on 31/01/11. Committee agreed that "the issue of welfare reform and changes to the benefits system announced recently, and its likely impact on local government staffing and finances requires detailed examination and should be the subject of a special study by this Committee".</p> <p>Committee, on 12/07/11, agreed that this item should be part of the work programme for the forthcoming municipal year.</p> <p>A report regarding 'Localising Support for Council Tax in England' was presented to Committee on 17/11/11. Agreed that further progress reports will be presented to future meetings.</p> <p>On 31/01/12, Committee requested an additional report, which is due on 26/03/12. The report will reflect the impact of proposed Welfare changes both on the individual and on the Council.</p> <p>A report was presented to Committee on 26/03/12. Committee resolved: "That in view of the scale of change and the consequential impact on claimants, as well as the compressed timetable proposed by the Government, regular updates be presented to future meetings of the appropriate Committee".</p>	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
12/07/11	Back Office efficiencies and achievements	Officer Report (Ian Coleman)		Committee, on 12/07/11, agreed that this item should be part of the work programme for the new municipal year. Committee agreed, on 15/09/11, that a report will be presented to the next meeting on 17/11/11. Report presented to Committee and noted on 17/11/11. When discussing the work programme on 31/01/12, members agreed that "an update report in relation to the centralisation of the Finance function be presented to a future meeting of the Committee".	
12/07/11	Impact of Localism Bill	Officer Report (Emma Degg)		Committee, on 12/07/11, agreed that this item should be part of the work programme for the new municipal year. A report was requested closer to the time when the Act will be enacted (likely to be late 2011/ early 2012).	
12/07/11	Development of an Outcome-based Commissioning Framework	Officer Report (Ian Coleman)		Committee (12/07/11) agreed that a further report be presented on options for applying a framework to major service reviews emerging from the consultation exercise.	
15/09/11	Customer Access Strategy	Officer Report (Ian Coleman)		Committee (15/09/11) agreed that a further report will be provided. Committee, on 17/11/11, agreed that "the officers be requested to prepare a standard procedure to ensure that ward councillors are updated in relation to changes in the use of libraries and One Stop Shops".	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
15/09/11	Capital Strategy	Officer Report (Ian Coleman)		Committee (15/09/11) agreed that a further report will be presented on 17/11/11. A report was presented to Committee on 17/11/11.	Complete
15/09/11	Balance Sheet Management – Review of Reserves and Provisions	Officer Report (Ian Coleman)		Committee (15/09/11) agreed that a further report will be presented <b>in the future.</b>	
15/09/11	Masters in Business Administration (MBA) Programme	Officer Report (Chris Hyams)		Committee (15/09/11) agreed that a report will be presented to a future meeting. A report was presented to Committee on 17/11/11. Committee requested a further report “upon the issue of senior officer training within the organisation, to include information as to how applications to attend the MBA course are assessed, in relation to the costs and benefits to the Council”. <b>An additional report was presented to Committee on 26/03/12. The agreed resolution included: “That a further more detailed report be presented to the next appropriate meeting, to address the concerns highlighted, and to include also, details of the training budget and the percentage of that budget utilised by the provision of the MBA Programme”.</b>	<b>Continuing</b>

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
17/11/11	Corporate Governance - The Chair requested that the report of the Chief Executive in relation to Work Programme Progress and Associated Issues, considered by the Corporate Governance Cabinet Committee at its meeting on 16th November 2011, be presented for Member's consideration.	Officer Report (Bill Norman)		<p>The report, as requested by the Chair, was presented to Committee on 17/11/11. Committee agreed that a further report "be requested to present an update on the work of the Corporate Governance Committee to the next meeting of the Committee".</p> <p>Further to a report on 31/01/12, Committee requested that a further report be presented to the next meeting (26/03/12) "on how the weaknesses in the Council's Corporate Governance identified in the AKA Report are being addressed, so that this Committee can monitor how the Cabinet Committee is bringing about improvements".</p> <p>An update report was provided to Committee on 23/03/12. Committee resolved: "That the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be requested to keep the Committee up to date by reporting on the improvements being made to strengthen the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements".</p>	
17/11/11	Procurement	Training sessions (Ian Coleman)		Members agreed to instigate "a programme of training and workshops to improve member awareness of procurement issues".	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
31/01/12	Fees and Charges	Officer Report		<p>Committee agreed on 31/01/12 that the Director of Technical Services should be invited to the next meeting to “provide information to Members in relation to the achievement of income targets in those areas within his remit”.</p> <p>The results of the review of fees and charges being undertaken by Chief Officers will also be presented to a future meeting of the Committee. A further report on ‘Achievement of Income Targets’, was noted by Committee on 26/03/12.</p>	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
31/01/12	Destination Excellence	Officer Report		<p>A verbal report on the Destination Excellence staff events was provided at the Committee meeting on 31/01/12. Members agreed that "a report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee, once the analysis of feedback has been completed".</p> <p>An update report was presented to the Committee meeting on 26/03/12. Committee resolved: "That a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee upon how the Council takes into account the views expressed by staff". Committee also resolved "That a report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee to indicate what functions fall within the remit of each Chief Officer, to include also a Council structure with key contacts identified; the information also to be included within the new Members induction packs".</p>	

**REPORT 2**  
**SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME**  
**COUNCIL EXCELLENCE : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR – APRIL 2012**

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Completion Date
Review of the Use of Consultants	Council Excellence meeting (26/03/12) recommended inclusion in the Work Programme for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.		
Office Rationalisation	Council Excellence meeting (26/03/12) recommended inclusion in the Work Programme for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.		
Benefit Reform and its impact on working arrangements	Council Excellence meeting (26/03/12) recommended inclusion in the Work Programme for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.		

**REPORT 3**  
**PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**  
**COUNCIL EXCELLENCE : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR – APRIL 2012**

Meeting Date	Topic Description
12/07/11	Financial Monitoring Statement (Ian Coleman) Revenues Incomes and Benefits (Ian Coleman) Budget Projections 2012/2015 (Ian Coleman) Local Government Resource Review (Ian Coleman) Procurement Strategy (Ian Coleman) Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit Annual Report (Ian Coleman) Customer Services Annual Report (Ian Coleman) Development of an Outcome-based Commissioning Framework (Ian Coleman) Treasury Management Annual Report (Ian Coleman) Equality Implications of Council Budget (Jacqui Cross) Financial Out-turn 2010-11 (Ian Coleman) Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2011 / 2013 (Ian Coleman) Office Accommodation (Bill Norman) The People Strategy 2010-2013 (Chris Hyams) Q4 Performance Monitoring – Report concentrating on red / amber 'exceptions' plus a verbal update on the future (Emma Degg) Work Programme Update Forward Plan
15/09/11	Financial Monitoring Statement (Ian Coleman) Revenues Incomes and Benefits (Ian Coleman) Office Accommodation (Ian Brand) Strategic Change Programme (Dave Green) Impact on employees of restructuring / redeployment, including the support in place for individuals (Chris Hyams) Replacement Programme Control System Software Forward Plan Work Programme Update



Meeting Date	Topic Description
27/09/11	Special Budget meeting: Financial Monitoring Statement (Ian Coleman) Budget Projections 2012/2015 (Ian Coleman) Outcome Based Commissioning Community Budgets Treasury Management (Ian Coleman) Q1 Performance Monitoring – Report concentrating on red / amber ‘exceptions’ plus a verbal update on the future (Emma Degg) You Choose – Budget Consultation Budget Key Issues
17/11/11	Financial Monitoring Statement (Ian Coleman) Revenues Incomes and Benefits (Ian Coleman) Budget Projections 2012/2015 (Ian Coleman) Treasury Management Q2(Ian Coleman) Medium Term Financial Strategy (Ian Coleman) Back Office Efficiencies (Ian Coleman) Customer Access Strategy (Ian Coleman) Capital Strategy (Ian Coleman) Procurement Strategy (Ian Coleman) Internal Audit Review (Ian Coleman) LGRR Business Rates Reform (Ian Coleman) Council Tax Benefit Reform (Ian Coleman) EVR Restructures (Ian Coleman) EVR Capitalisation (Ian Coleman) Q2 Performance Monitoring – Report concentrating on red / amber ‘exceptions’ (Ian Coleman) Office Accommodation / Agile working (Ian Brand) Strategic Change Programme (Ian Coleman) Early Voluntary Retirement / Voluntary Severance and Organisational Changes (Chris Hyams) Masters in Business Administration (MBA) programme (Chris Hyams) Corporate Governance Forward Plan Work Programme Update

Meeting Date	Topic Description
31/01/12	Financial Monitoring Statement (Ian Coleman) Revenues Incomes and Benefits (Ian Coleman) Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement (Ian Coleman) Disposal of Confidential Waste (Ian Coleman) Corporate Governance (Bill Norman) You Choose Budget Simulator (Ian Coleman) Provision for Pay Inflation 2010-11, including referral from Council (Ian Coleman) Corporate Plan – Referral from Council Office rationalisation (Ian Brand) Staff consultation – ‘Destination Excellence’ Forward Plan Work Programme Update Exempt Item: Disposal of Confidential Waste – Tenders (Ian Coleman)
28/02/12	Special Meeting: Budget Proposals (Ian Coleman)
26/03/12	To be confirmed:  Financial Monitoring Statement (Ian Coleman) Revenues Incomes and Benefits (Ian Coleman) Treasury Management Q3 (Ian Coleman) Treasury Management Policy (Ian Coleman) Q3 Performance Monitoring – Report concentrating on red / amber ‘exceptions’ (Ian Coleman) Strategic Change Programme (Ian Coleman) Welfare Reform (Ian Coleman / Malcolm Flanagan) Masters in Business Administration (MBA) programme (Chris Hyams) Corporate Governance – Update (Bill Norman) Achievement of Income targets (Dave Green) Destination Excellence (David Taylor Smith / Chris Hyams) Office rationalisation - ‘What has been done or is in hand since the Cabinet decision in Minute 279’ - (Ian Brand)

**REPORT 4  
 PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS  
 COUNCIL EXCELLENCE : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR – APRIL 2012**

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report to Committee
None at present			

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank