



Cabinet

Date:	Thursday, 11 July 2013
Time:	6.15 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Cabinet are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting have been printed and published. Any matters called in will be reported at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the minutes be approved and adopted.

FINANCE

3. REVENUE MONITORING 2013/2014 - MONTH 2 (MAY 2013) (Pages 1 - 34)

4. CAPITAL MONITORING 2013/2014 - MONTH 2 (MAY 2013) (Pages 35 - 48)

5. DEPARTMENT OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES - WRITE OFFS (Pages 49 - 54)

6. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY (Pages 55 - 58)

GOVERNANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

- 7. COUNCIL SHARED SERVICES (Pages 59 - 68)**
- 8. CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (Pages 69 - 78)**
- 9. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE IMPROVEMENT BOARD (Pages 79 - 98)**

ECONOMY

- 10. BROADBAND DELIVERY UK (Pages 99 - 104)**

CENTRAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- 11. RENEWAL OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT (Pages 105 - 108)**

NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT

- 12. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY (Pages 109 - 120)**
- 13. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY (Pages 121 - 162)**

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- 14. PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (Pages 163 - 170)**

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

- 15. CHARGING FOR SERVICES (Pages 171 - 194)**

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

- 16. REPORT ON CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF FOXFIELD SCHOOL (Pages 195 - 200)**
- 17. HOME TO SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRANSPORT POLICIES CONSULTATION (Pages 201 - 244)**
- 18. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 1)**

To consider any other business that the Chair accepts as being urgent

- 19. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following items contain exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: That, under section 100 (A) (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 I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

ECONOMY

20. HOYLAKE GOLF RESORT (Pages 245 - 248)

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

To consider any other business that the Chair accepts as being urgent

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11 JULY 2013

SUBJECT	REVENUE MONITORING 2013-14 MONTH 2 (MAY 2013)
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the revenue position for 2013-14 at Month 2 (May 2013) and actions to minimise risk.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

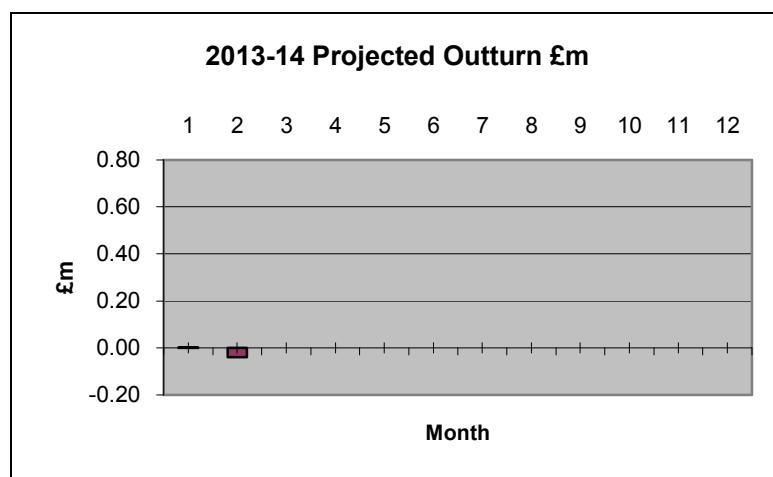
Cabinet is asked to note:

- 2.1 at Month 2 (May 2013), the full year forecast projects a General Fund underspend of £41,000.
- 2.2 there were no rejected freeze items in the month;
- 2.3 that Strategic Directors are to find compensatory savings for budgetary issues (Annex 12) not covered from corporate resources for Month 3.

3 OVERALL POSITION AT MONTH 2 (MAY 2013)

- 3.1 The projected revenue forecast for the year at Month 2 shows a projected underspend General Fund position of £41,000. A number of departmental underspends have been earmarked against ongoing or emerging financial issues. An allocation of £1.8 million against the £2 million savings profiling account (page 7 of the Budget Book and Forecasts 2013/16) has been assumed based upon latest estimates of the delivery of staffing savings.

Graph 1: Wirral Council – 2013-14 General Fund Variance, by month



4 CHANGES TO THE AGREED BUDGET AND VARIATIONS

- 4.1 The Budget for 2013-14 was agreed by Council on March 5, 2013 and is detailed in [Annex 2](#); any increase in the Budget has to be agreed by full Council. Changes to the budget have occurred since it was set and these are summarised in the table below. These are detailed in [Annex 3](#).

Table 1: 2013-14 Original & Revised Net Budget by Department £000's

	Original Net Budget	Approved Budget Changes Prior Mths	Approved Budget Changes Month 2	Revised Net Budget
Chief Executive	8,240	-4,602	-	3,638
People - Adult Social Services	82,951	-	-	82,951
People - Children & YP, & Schools	91,738	-1,180	-5,534	85,024
People – Asset Mgmt & Transport	-	-	5,534	5,534
People – Safeguarding	685	1,396	-	2,081
People – Sports and Recreation	8,904	-	-	8,904
Places - Environment & Regulation	79,651	-	-	79,651
Places – Housing & Comm Safety	15,342	-569	-	14,773
Places – Regeneration	5,134	-	-	5,134
Transformation & Resources	12,424	4,955	-	17,379
Corporate Growth & Savings	-3,252	-	-	-3,252
Net Cost of Services	301,817	0	0	301,817

- 4.2 A new council structure has been introduced for 2013/14. The Budget Book and forecasts 2013/16 was published with a number of assumptions regarding service splits which were to be refined. A number of changes have since been identified. To improve clarity, from Month 2, Infrastructure Services and Transport are shown separately from Children and Young People.
- 4.3 The main report will only comment on large variations (Red and Yellow items). The 'variations' analysis, over 27 budget areas, distinguishes between overspends and underspends. The 'risk band' classification is:
- Extreme: Overspends - **Red** (over +£301k), Underspend **Yellow** (over -£301k)
 - Acceptable: Amber (+£141k to +£300k), Green (range from +£140k to -£140k); Blue (-£141k to -£300k)

Table 2: Extreme Departmental Projected Budget variations

	Chief Exec	People	Places	Trans & Res	Total	Percent of total
Red Overspend	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Yellow Underspend	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

The full Table is set out at [Annex 4](#)

- 4.4 The reporting process identifies over or underspends and classifies them into risk bands. The projection is for no over or underspend for 2013-14, as set out in the table below, which records no departments as red or yellow:

Table 3: 2013-14 Projected Budget variations by Department £000's

Department	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	(Under) Overspend Month 2	RAGBY Classification	Change from prev mnth
Chief Executive	3,638	3,638	0	G	-
People - Adult Social Services	82,951	82,951	0	G	-
People - Children & YP, & Schools	85,024	85,024	0	G	-
People – Asset Mgmt & Transport	5,534	5,534	0	G	-
People – Safeguarding	2,081	2,081	0	G	-

People – Sports and Recreation	8,904	8,904	0	G	-
Places - Environment & Regulation	79,651	79,651	0	G	-
Places – Housing & Comm Safety	14,773	15,064	291	A	-
Places – Regeneration	5,134	4,843	-291	B	-
Transformation & Resources	17,379	17,338	-41	G	-41
Corporate Growth & Savings	-3,252	-3,252	0	G	-
TOTAL	301,817	301,776	-41		-41

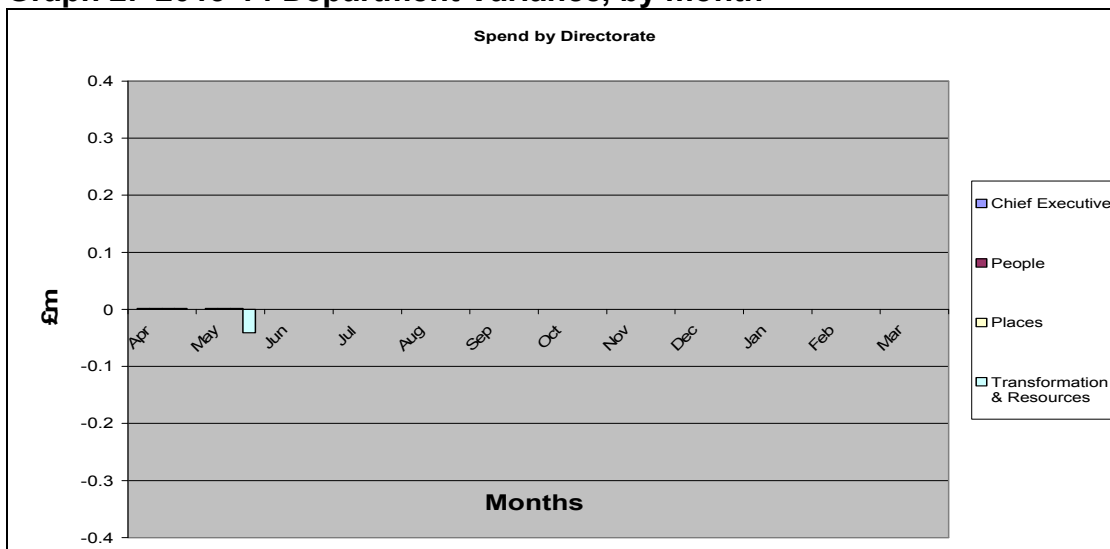
4.5 Within the various departments there have been the following developments:

- **Chief Executive:** No variations are forecast at present (no change from Month 1).
- **People:** No overall variance is forecast at present (no change from previous month). Early implementation in 2013/14 of some measures to repay one-off funding supporting the 2013/14 budget has occurred. These were originally scheduled to commence in 2014/15 and have enabled monies to be used as follows:
 - Adults: Monies have been earmarked to cover an adjustment to income of £2m to reflect the actual in year performance, and a further £0.5m has been earmarked against liabilities relating to past Social Services debt. A further £0.9m has been earmarked against repayment of the one-off funding provided in 2013-14.
 - Childrens: A number of variances are assumed covered by the corporate savings profiling account whilst £0.7 million has been earmarked against repayment of the one-off funding provided in 2013-14.

Month 2		Adults	Children	Total
Saving 2013-14		3.430	1.500	4.930
Use in 2013-14	-2.000			
Use in 2013-14	-0.500	-2.500	-0.800	-3.300
Carried forward to 2014-15		0.930	0.700	1.630

- **Places:** The Housing and Community Safety variance is mainly a result of a grant which has previously been incorporated into formula grant and is detailed in Annex 12. If not fixed, the variance will be covered on a temporary basis from the Regeneration business area.
- **Transformation & Resources:** A £41k underspend is currently forecast, due to insurance fund contract savings.

Graph 2: 2013-14 Department Variance, by month



- 4.6 To complete the analysis, the table below sets out the position by category of spend/income. The largest area of variance remains supplies and services which incorporates the cost of care for adults and children.

Table 4: Projected Departmental Variations by Spend and Income

	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	RAGBY	Change from Previous
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross Expenditure					
Employees	139,176	139,445	269	A	-
Premises	16,954	17,076	122	G	-
Transport	7,680	7,681	1	G	-
Supplies and Services	128,539	126,117	-2,422	Y	-40
Third Party Payments	122,242	122,342	100	G	-1
Transfer Payments	141,010	141,010	0	G	-
Support Services	73,778	73,799	21	G	-
Financing Costs	58,406	58,406	0	G	-
Schools Expenditure	211,961	211,961	0	G	-
Total Expenditure	899,746	897,837	-1,909		-41
Gross Income					
Schools Income	209,366	209,366	0	G	-
Government Grants	183,193	182,972	-221	A	-
Other Grants and Reimbursements	19,631	19,631	0	G	-
Customer/Client Receipts	47,695	45,904	-1,791	R	-
Interest	872	892	20	G	-
Recharge Other Rev A/c	137,172	137,296	124	G	-
Total Income	597,929	596,061	-1,868		-
Net Expenditure	301,817	301,776	-41		-41

- 4.7 Schools expenditure is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant. As this grant is ringfenced any over/underspend will not impact on the General Fund.
- 4.8 Since agreeing the 2013/14 budget, a number of budgetary issues have arisen which may require further corrective action. Work is underway to verify the values concerned and where possible reduce their impact. A number of items have been dealt with within this monitor. Details of these issues are detailed in [Annex 12](#). Strategic Directors are currently identifying the funding of these items and this will be reported back in the Month 3 monitor.

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF 2013-14 SAVINGS – THREE TYPES

- 5.1 The delivery of the **March 5 Council** savings (Type 1) is so key to the Council's financial health, that they are being tracked at Council and Directorate level. The assumption is that, where there is slippage, the Strategic Director will implement replacement savings. The detail is at [Annex 5](#).

Table 6: Budget Implementation Plan 2013-14 whole Council (£000's)

BRAG	Number of Options	Approved Budget Reduction	Amount Delivered at May	To be Delivered
B - delivered	22	16,744	16,744	0
G – on track	32	19,813	2,630	17,183
A - concerns	16	11,788	0	11,788
R - failed	0	0	0	0
P – replacements for Red	0	0	0	0
Total at M2 May 13	70	48,345	19,374	28,971
<i>Total at M1 April 13</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>48,345</i>	<i>9,927</i>	<i>38,418</i>

Note: Budget Book page 56-58.

- 5.2 There are currently no savings options identified as red rated.
- 5.3 The **one-off funding** in 2013-14 for Adults and Children, requires that they identify equivalent savings (Type 2) during 2013-14 for 2014-15. It is expected that some of the savings will start in 2013-14. As this is identified, it will be presented in Table 7 below and detailed in Annex 6:

Table 7: Replacing £13.7m one-off 2013-14 funding (£000's)

BRAG	Brought forward from previous years	Number of Options	Saving Proposed 2013-14	Saving Delivered 2013-14	Saving Proposed 2014-15	Saving Proposed 2015-16	Total Saving Proposed 2013-16
Adults 8.8	622	30	3,430	0	3,689	1,689	8,808
Children's 4.9	473	7	1,500	950	0	0	1,500
Use of 2013/14					1,630		1,630
Total 13.7	1,095	37	4,930	950	5,319	1,689	11,938

Note: Further proposals require identifying. Total proposals may end up being greater than target to allow for slippage. Any savings achieved in 2013/14 will reduce the agreed call on reserves in 2013/14. Assumed £1.6 million of 2013/14 savings can be used to fund 2014/15 target.

- 5.4 The **spending freeze** (Type 3) has been extended for April-June 2013, for the three reasons set out below:
1. **Risk.** The increased level of financial risk in 2013 included items that introduced change from April 2013 for which there was no evidence on which to judge that the risk had diminished, remained the same, or increased. Therefore the prudent response, whilst waiting for evidence to emerge, was to reign in expenditure;
 2. **Closedown.** The outturn for 2012-13 would not be available to Cabinet until June 13th. To cover the possibility that it could be worse than the M11 forecast, of an overspend of £7.4m, the prudent response was to continue the spending freeze;
 3. **Change.** The 2013-14 budget has built into a greater level of savings than has ever been attempted in the Council's history. Although reasonable assumptions have been made, there is the danger that a worse case could occur. Cover for that eventuality, via a spending freeze, would be prudent until there is evidence of successful implementation.

- 5.5 The detailed freeze items are set out at [Annex 7](#). The purpose of the exercise is to reduce any projected overspend, which by Section 28 of the Local Government Act 2003, is the duty of the Council, that is, all of its Members.
- 5.6 The 2013-14 Revenue Budget resolved a number of Bad Budgets that were identified during the year. This has been done in a number of ways:
- Base budgets were increased by £8.0 million;
 - One-off funding of £13.7 million (see paragraph 5.3 above);
 - Suppressing Demand by £3.4 million.

Suppressed demand in Children and Young People totals £1.9m which will be managed during the year. 2012-13 saw improvement in care costs and transport, which resulted in bad budgets and budget growth pressures being less than anticipated. Budgets were also reduced where savings were achieved in 2012-13 in areas such as Children in Need, Traded Services, and general expenditure controls.

The remaining suppressed demand of £1.5million relates to DASS. Future monitors will detail actions being put into place to deliver this.

- 5.7 The 2013-14 budget includes a savings profiling account of £2 million and a Change Management Implementation Fund of £4 million. The majority of savings included within the budget were calculated on a full year basis. However it was known that a number of savings would only achieve a part year impact in 2013/14. This is particularly the case where staffing reductions were required. The delivery of savings is under constant review and Directorates are examining ways of funding any slippage before a call on central funding is requested. The latest forecast staffing savings slippage is estimated at £1.8 million and, should this not be financed internally by Directorates, will be earmarked against the Savings Profiling account (page 7 of the Budget Book and Forecasts 2013/16). This figure will be updated as the year progresses.

6 CONTROL OF GROWTH

- 6.1 The impact of demographic change and financial cover for risk - that is outcomes that could be worse than assumed - was built into the budget as set out in Tables 8 and 9, and is detailed at [Annex 8](#). It is important that estimates of growth for 2013-14, made in November 2012, are checked against actual demand so that any over-estimate is revised accordingly. Equally, the funding to cover risk can only be accessed for 2013-14 where evidence can be adduced for that funding.

Table 8: Growth £000's

Department	2013/14 Budget	2013/14 Release	2014/15 Budget	2015/16 Budget
CYP Total	1,230	-	-	-
DASS Total	3,717		2,202	1,805
LHRAM Total	-		-	573
RHP Total	-		-	1,000
Technical Total	12		72	72
Finance Total	237		-	-
	5,196		2,274	3,450

Table 9: Risk £000's

Corporate Growth (Budget Book page 7)	2013/14 Budget	2013/14 Release	2014/15 Budget	2015/16 Budget
Pay Inflation	1,700	1,000	3,400	5,400
Superannuation Revaluation	0		2,500	2,500
Change Management Implementation Fund	4,000		-	
Savings Profiling	2,000	1,800	-	
Price inflation unallocated				1,000
Growth unallocated			726	-
	7,700	2,800	6,626	8,900

Notes: inflation incorporated into departmental budgets amounts to £2.464m. £1m pay inflation against T&Cs – investigation of alternative savings to allow pay award continue. £1.8m against employee profiling.

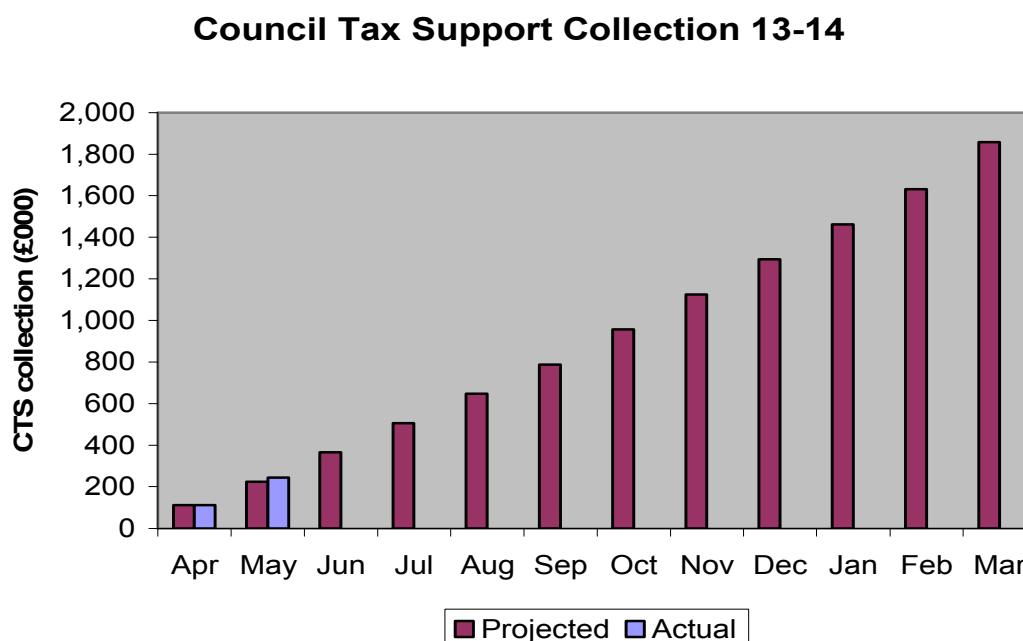
7 INCOME AND DEBT

- 7.1 The Council's income arrangements with regard to non Council Tax and Business Rates were reviewed and reported to the May 23 Cabinet. Revenue and Income falls into the four broad areas shown below for reporting purposes, which will be developed:

Table 10: Amount to be collected in 2013-14 £000's

	2013-14 Collectable	2013-14 Collected	%
Council Tax	135,419	25,680	19.0
Business Rates	70,396	13,749	19.5
Fees and charges – Adults	30,795	7,569	24.6
Fees and charges – all other services	21,464	11,980	55.8

- 7.2 There is a backlog of Accounts Receivable debt to be processed in the last two areas. Reporting will continue until a normal level of debt is reached. The detail is at [Annex 9](#).
- 7.3 A high risk income item is that required from residents who previously paid no Council Tax. The graph below will track collection performance against the budget assumption.

Graph 3: Projected / Actual Council Tax Support Collection by month £000

- 7.4 The council tax support scheme was introduced in April. As this involves billing a large number of properties who have not previously paid Council Tax, having previously received benefit at 100%, an overall collection rate of 75% generating £2.8 million has been assumed. The forecast is that £1.86 million (66%) will be collected by 31st March with recovery actions post 31st March increasing the collection to the target figure. At 31st May collection was slightly ahead of the profiled forecast
- 7.5 Recovery from non Working Age debtors is continuing as normal. Action taken to recover from those of Working Age that previously received 100% Council Tax Benefit was delayed by a month to allow for late payments or any queries caused by having to pay for the 1st time. 6,750 reminders were issued on 10th May, the response to which was low although in line with our forecast profile.
- 7.6 Repayment plans offering weekly/fortnightly instalments were offered to those contacting the Council. The 1st court hearing is due on 9th July, although a relatively low number of cases will be taken for this hearing. Assuming Liability Orders will be granted by the courts, we will look to apply for deduction of benefits or attachment of earnings wherever possible. For benefit claimants this allows for £3.65 per week to be deducted from the claimants benefit which, for a Band A property, will take in excess of 18 months to collect. It is inevitable some customers will refuse to engage with the Council, or deductions or an attachment is not possible, and we will have no alternative other than to use bailiffs to attempt to collect this debt. Discussions have been held with bailiffs explaining the circumstances that have led to the debt and likely collection profiles. These new debtors will be identified to the bailiff.
- 7.7 Issues regarding the collection of sundry debt were reported to Cabinet on 23 May 2013. The use of reserves had been earmarked to fund any increased need for debt write offs or increase to the bad debt provision. A significant amount of income has been received to reduce the level of debt and therefore the call on reserves. There is a need to fund the costs of severance and associated increased pension costs in the year of up to £5.5 million. It is proposed that any unused reserves will be used for this purpose.
- 7.8 The delivery of permanent savings on staffing budgets requires initial costs to be incurred for redundancy costs and where applicable pension. Provision of £5.5 million has been made for these costs and this remains the latest estimate for the implementation of the 2013/14 savings. Payments of £3.7 million have so far been incurred for these costs. The remaining costs will be incurred as staff leave the authority during 2013/14.
- 7.9 Business Rates income collection was 19.5% during May. This was approximately £760,000 less than at the equivalent period in 2012-13. Comparisons will fluctuate as some payments received early last year in respect of Health Authority payments amongst others are awaited this year. The timing of refunds may also skew the comparison. Recovery procedures have been tightened with debt being pursued earlier and the position is being closely monitored.

8 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

- 8.1 The Departmental Directors and the Chief Executive's Strategy Team will seek to identify actions to keep spend within the Budget allocated – these actions are

detailed in Annex 10. The spending freeze agreed decisions are reflected within the tables above.

- 8.2 It is proposed that, as part of the budget architecture, prudent budget management is rewarded at the year-end, with the ability to carry forward underspends. Equally, less than prudent budget management will require that departments fund any overspending from the following year's budget. The detailed guidance will be presented for approval at Month 3.

9 CASHFLOW

- 9.1 As part of the development of monitoring, cost centre managers are embarking on the profiling of their budgets to reflect how spend actually occurs. Eventually we should be able to be proactive in deciding when spend will take place, and get income to arrive earlier to improve the Council's cashflow and earn more income from interest. This section will develop over the year.

10 RELEVANT RISKS

- 10.1 The possible failure to deliver the Revenue Budget will be mitigated by:
- The training of cost centre managers to improve skill levels; four events on profiling and forecasting budgets have been delivered to over 160 cost centre managers with the next event planned on building next year's budget.
 - A specific tracking system of savings to ensure delivery;
 - Improvements to procurement compliance, to generate more savings and better monitoring information;
 - A monthly review by Chief Officers, and Cabinet, together with an improved Scrutiny regime, and greater transparency;
 - Individual monthly review by Cabinet Portfolio holder at portfolio meeting;
 - Agreement that Strategic Directors are to 'consume their own smoke' regarding slippage not covered from central funds;
 - A successful capitalisation submission will reduce the call on revenue resources.

11 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.1 Any option to improve the monitoring and budget accuracy will be considered.

12 CONSULTATION

- 12.1 No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report.

13 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 13.1 As yet there are no implications for voluntary, community or faith groups.

14 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 14.1 Cabinet 18 February 2013 agreed a revised 2013/14 General Fund balance risk calculation of a minimum of £13 million. The level to be achieved by March 2014 is £17.7m.

Table 11: Summary of the projected General Fund balances

Details	£m	£m
Projected balance 31 March 2014 when setting the Budget 2013-14		+13.6
Add: Estimated increase following completion of 2012-13 revenue accounts	+3.6	+3.6
Add: Potential underspend, at M2		0.04
Projected balance 31 March 2014		17.24

Note: these figures may be subject to change as the 2012/13 accounts were being finalised as this report was written.

- 14.2 The current levels of Earmarked Reserves are shown in Table 12 with a full listing included at Annex 11. Earmarked Reserves are currently forecast to be £64.9 million which compares to £86.2 million reported in the June 2012 Revenue Monitor.

Table 12: Earmarked Reserves 2013/14

	Balance at 1 April 2013 £000	Movement in year £000	Current Balance 31 May 2013 £000
Housing Benefit Reserve	10,155	-	10,155
Insurance Fund	7,820	-	7,820
Working Neighbourhoods Fund	761	-	761
Redundancy Fund	5,500	-	5,500
Grant Reserves	1,108	-	1,108
Management of other risks	25,898	-	25,898
School Balances and Schools Related	13,684	-	13,684
Total Reserves	64,926		64,926

Note: these figures are subject to change as the 2012/13 accounts were being finalised as this report was written.

15 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 The entire report concerns the duty of the Council to avoid a budget shortfall as outlined at paragraph 5.5. This is not just an academic exercise in balancing the books. The Chief Finance Officer is under a personal duty under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 section 114A to make a report to the executive if it appears to him that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure.
- 15.2 If the Chief Finance Officer reports that there are insufficient resources to meet expenditure, the Council is prevented from entering into any new agreement which may involve the incurring of expenditure at any time by the authority, until the report is considered, and if the problem is ongoing until it is resolved. It is remarkably broad in its prohibition of new agreements, no matter what their scale. It would not only prevent the authority from hiring new staff or letting new construction contracts, but from ordering minor office supplies.

16 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 This report is essentially a monitoring report which reports on financial performance. Any budgetary decisions, of which there are none in this report would need to be assessed for any equality implications.

17 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

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

18 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

19 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 19.1 The Council, having set a Budget at the start of the financial year, needs to ensure that the delivery of this Budget is achieved. This has to be within the allocated and available resources to ensure the ongoing financial stability of the Council. Consequently there is a requirement to regularly monitor progress so that corrective action can be taken when required which is enhanced with the monthly reporting of the financial position.

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Annexes

- Annex 1 Revenue Monitoring and Reporting Timetable 2013/14.
- Annex 2 General Fund Revenue Budget for 2013/14 agreed by Council.
- Annex 3 Changes to the Budget 2013/14 since it was set.
- Annex 4 RAGBY Full Details
- Annex 5 Savings tracker
- Annex 6 Adults/Children's Replacing one-off 2013-14 funding
- Annex 7 Freeze Outcomes
- Annex 8 Growth and Risk
- Annex 9 Income and Debt
- Annex 10 Management actions
- Annex 11 Earmarked Reserves – General Fund
- Annex 12 Budgetary Issues

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
From September 2012, the Revenue monitoring reports are being submitted monthly.	
Budget Council	5 th March 2013

Annex 1

REVENUE MONITORING AND REPORTING TIMETABLE 2013/14

Period Number	Month	General Ledger Updated and Reports Available To Be Produced	Reports Available For The Executive Strategy Group	Reports Available For Cabinet	Reports Available For Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee
			Monthly	Monthly	Quarterly
1	April	May 8	May 28	June 13	-
2	May	Jun 7	June 18	July 11	-
3	June	Jul 5	Aug 13	Sept 5	01-Oct
4	July	Aug 7	Sept 24	Oct 10	-
5	August	Sept 6	Sept 24	Oct 10	-
6	September	Oct 7	Oct 22	Nov 7	27-Nov
7	October	Nov 7	Nov 26	Dec 12	-
8	November	Dec 6	Dec 17	Jan 16	-
9	December	Jan 8	Jan 21	Feb 11	26-Mar
10	January	Feb 7	Feb 25	Mar 13	TBC
11	February	Mar 7	TBC	TBC	TBC
12	Outturn (Provisional)	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

AGREED BY COUNCIL ON 5 MARCH 2013

Directorate/Service Area	Current Budget
Expenditure	£
Chief Executives	8,239,800
Families and Well Being	
Children and Young People	89,143,300
- Adult Social Services	82,950,800
- Safeguarding Plus Schools and Schools Grant	3,280,500
-Sports and Recreation	8,904,000
Regeneration and Environment	100,127,300
Transformation and Resources	12,423,500
Net Cost of Services	305,069,200
Corporate Growth	7,700,000
Corporate Savings	10,952,000
Budget Requirement	301,817,200
Income	
Local Services Support Grant	45,000
New Homes Bonus	2,119,500
Revenue Support Grant	106,968,000
Business Rtes Baseline	31,424,000
Top Up	39,739,000
Council Tax Requirement	111,357,800
Contribution from General Fund Balances	10,163,900
Total Income	301,817,200
Statement of Balances	
As at 1 April 2013	23,800,000
Contributions from Balances to support budget	10,163,900
Forecast Balances 31 March 2014	13,636,100

Annex 3 CHANGES TO THE BUDGET AGREED SINCE THE 2013-14 BUDGET WAS SET

These comprise variations approved by Cabinet / Council including approved virements, budget realignments reflecting changes to the departmental structure and responsibilities, and expenditure freeze decisions, as well as any technical adjustments.

Table 1: 2013-14 Original & Revised Net Budget by Department

	Original Net Budget	Approved Budget Virements Mth 1	Previous Freeze Decisions	Approved Budget Virements Mth 2	Revised Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive	8,240	-4,602	-	-	3,638
People - Adult Social Services	82,951	-	-	-	82,951
People - Children & YP, & Schools	91,738	-1,180	-	-5,534	85,024
People – Asset Mgmt & Transport	-	-	-	5,534	5,534
People – Safeguarding	685	1,396	-	-	2,081
People – Sports and Recreation	8,904	-	-	-	8,904
Places - Environment & Regulation	79,651	-	-	-	79,651
Places – Housing & Comm Safety	15,342	-569	-	-	14,773
Places – Regeneration	5,134	-	-	-	5,134
Transformation & Resources	12,424	4,955	-	-	17,379
Corporate Growth & Savings	-3,252	-	-	-	-3,252
Freeze decisions	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost of Services	301,817	0	0	0	301,817

Relating to the completion of the 2012-13 accounts

Cabinet	Items	£m

Variations to the approved budgets 2013-14

Cabinet	Items	£m
n/a	Corporate and Democratic Services to be grouped within the Transformation and Resources Directorate where Direct management control for these areas lies	4.639
n/a	The Anti-Social Behaviour team is part of the Families and Well Being Directorate - Children and Young People and the budget has therefore been transferred from Housing and community safety.	0.569
n/a	Quality Assurance and Family Group Conferencing have been transferred from Specialist Services in Children and Young People to the Joint Safeguarding unit where direct management control lies.	1.396
n/a	A support post has also been transferred from Transformation and Resources to the Chief Executive's Directorate.	0.037
n/a	A number of training and legal posts have been transferred from Children and Young People to Transformation and Resources	0.353
	OVERALL IMPACT OF THESE DECISIONS	0.0

Virements below level requiring Cabinet approval

Cabinet	Items	£m

Annex 4 - RAGBY FULL DETAILS

Department	Number of Budget Areas	Red	Amber	Green	Blue	Yellow
Chief Executive	4	0	0	4	0	0
Adult Social Services	2	0	1	0	1	0
Children & Young People, & Schools	7	0	0	7	0	0
Safeguarding	1	0	0	1	0	0
Sports & Rec	1	0	0	1	0	0
Environment & Regulation	2	0	0	1	1	0
Housing & Comm Safety	1	0	1	0	0	0
Transformation & Resources	7	0	0	7	0	0
Corporate Growth & Savings	2	0	0	2	0	0
Total	27	0	2	23	2	0

RAGBY REPORTING AND OTHER ISSUES

The Red and Yellow RAGBY issues that are the subject of corporate focus are detailed in the following sections by

- Business Area (by Department identifying the service in the Council Estimates (Green Book).) and,
- Subjective Area (by the type of spend / income).

Business Area Reds

	Chief Exec	People	Places	Trans & Res	Total	Percent of total
Red Overspend	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

Business Area Yellows

	Chief Exec	People	Places	Trans & Res	Total	Percent of total
Yellow underspend	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

Subjective Area Reds

Expenditure

Customer/Client Receipts: The forecast of £1.8 million below budget is due to the £2m income adjustment referred to in paragraph 4.5 in the main report.

Subjective Area Yellows

Expenditure

Supplies and Services: The forecast £2.4 million underspend is a result of various savings within Adult Social Services, Children and Young People, and Regeneration and Environment.

Annex 5 SAVINGS TRACKER

1 Summary

BRAG	Number of Options	Approved Budget Reduction	Amount Delivered at May	To be Delivered
B - delivered	22	16,744	16,744	0
G – on track	32	19,813	2,630	17,183
A - concerns	16	11,788	0	11,788
R - failed	0	0	0	0
Total at M2 May	70	48,345	19,374	28,971
<i>Totals at M1 April</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>48,345</i>	<i>9,927</i>	<i>38,418</i>

P – replacements for R	0	0	0	0
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2 Detail

SAVINGS (TYPE 1) TARGETS – ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SAVINGS (2013-14)

Families and Well Being - DASS

Details	£000	Comments / progress on implementation	BRAGP (see note below)
Community Meals	169	Contract to cease at the end of tenure in June 2013.	G
Charging for Non Residential Services	880	Implemented	G
Targeted Support through NHS Contracts	1,828	All clients no longer requiring double handling identified contract performance to be monitored. (£83k)	G
		Use of Social Fund Grant Allocation.(£800k)	A
		Service specifications and procurement schedule for re-ablement and domiciliary care in progress to enable contracts to be let from 1st October 2013. (£84k)	G
		Targets being prepared for residential placement numbers. Need to reflect the new neighbourhood structures. (£454k)	A
		Continuing Health Care – correct application of law and policy. (£377k)	A
Extra Care Housing/External Respite and Short-term Provision	300	Extra Care Housing Provider Negotiations continue.	G
		Revised Respite Policy to be produced and review the feasibility for block contracts for respite	A
Residential and Respite Care	160	Ongoing review of 4 clients transferring to supported living	G
Day Care and Day Services Transformation	750	Consultation completed and service proposals finalised	G

Review of Support for Carers	250	Letter issued and reviews planned for one-off payments, payments not related to client assessed need, and payments to related individuals	G
Assistive Technology	150	Charges to be introduced 1st July 2013	A
Review of VCF Sector Grants	705	Implemented	B
Review of Residential Care for Learning Disabilities	300	Overarching general framework, fee structures and outcomes approach agreed. Provider Consultation started	G
Review of Equipment Service	100	Revised S75 in place for 2013-14 with Community Trust. Discussions to commence with NHS re revised hosting arrangements	A
Modernisation of Leisure	429	Revised shift rotas to match programme changes at each of the Swimming Pools are expected to be fully implemented by July 2013. The initial delay in implementation is expected to result in slippage of £125k on this budget savings option.	A

Families and Well Being - Childrens

Details	£000	Comments / progress on implementation	BRAGP (see note below)
Education Psychology Service	80	This has been achieved through existing vacancies in the service.	B
Schools Budget	250	Reduction in Council contribution towards Schools PPM	B
School Improvement and Income from Schools	160	The review of the school improvement programme is on track, as is anticipated buy back of services from Academies.	G
Careers, Education and Advice	700	Contract renegotiation has achieved this saving for the full year.	B
Transport Policies	250	Implementation of changes in DASS transport delayed until after consultation on Day Care. DASS are taking the lead on this saving.	A
Area Teams for Family Support	200	Restructure is underway, but anticipated slippage of £30k.	A
Schools Music Service	21	Saving achieved.	B
Oaklands Outdoor Education Centre	23	Subsidy has been removed, saving has been achieved.	B
Foundation Learning	121	Reduced commissioning has achieved this saving	B
Commissioning of Parenting Services	700	Reduced commissioning has achieved this saving	B
Youth and Play Services	687	Restructure underway, but slippage of £100k is anticipated.	G
Youth Challenge	200	Reduced provision has achieved this saving	B

Children's Centres and Sure Start	1,576	Slippage in transfers and restructure is anticipated at 241k. However this figure may increase to 441k if procurement forecasts of a delay in completion to January prove accurate.	A
Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities	150	Reduced commissioning has achieved this saving	B
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	250	Restructure is underway, but anticipated slippage of £13k	A

Regeneration and Environment

Details	£000	Comments / progress on implementation	BRAGP (see note below)
Pre-Planning Advice	10	On target to be achieved	G
Home Insulation	926	Programme ended saving achieved	B
Pest Control	30	There is some of slippage on this budget saving due to a delay in the departure of an employee and the associated costs. It is expected that this slippage will be managed within existing budget resources.	G
Invest Wirral	352	This saving is on target - the funding related to economic activities that are no longer continuing.	G
Car Parking	281	There is a small amount of slippage on this budget saving due to a delay in the departure of an employee. It is expected that this slippage will be managed within existing budget resources. The bulk of this saving will be achieved from an increase in income generated from the review of car parking charges. The income target will be closely monitored throughout the year and currently there are no problems envisaged to achieving this saving.	G
Garden Waste Collection	582	The garden waste subscription service starts from June and to date over 30,000 residents have signed up for the service. At present, there are no immediate concerns to achieving this budget saving.	G
Household Waste Collection	80	An increase in the charge for the ERIC service has been agreed and the budgeted income target increased accordingly. However, increasing the range of charges for replacement wheelie bins has not yet been implemented due to resource problems within the CRM. This delay in implementation creates £4k of slippage per month on this budget saving.	A

Apprentice Programme	420	Savings achieved	B
Handyperson Scheme	209	There is some slippage on this budget saving due to a delay in the departure of employees. It is expected that this slippage will be managed within existing budget resources. Services to the general public ceased trading in April/May after scheduled works had been completed. Any new referrals have been directed to the Local Authorities Approved Contracted List held by Trading Standards.	G
Trading Standards	71	This budget savings option involved the reduction of two posts within the section. One of these posts was already vacant and so the saving will be achieved. There will be some of slippage with the saving on the other post due to a delay in the departure of an employee. It is expected that this slippage will be managed within existing budget resources.	G
Highway Maintenance	588	There is a small amount of slippage on this budget saving due to a delay in the departure of an employee. It is expected that this slippage will be managed within existing budget resources. The bulk of this saving will be achieved from a reduction in maintenance works. This reduction has already been built into the works plan of the service and will therefore be achieved.	G
Street Cleansing	1,000	A reduction in cleansing frequency has been negotiated with the Council's contractor. These changes take affect from July 2013. A July commencement date will result in £250K of the saving being delivered from 2014/15 onwards. This is in accordance with the plan which envisaged use of the Efficiency Fund or Savings Profiling budget to bridge the gap. Once formally agreed this will result in a green rating.	A
School Waste	180	An income target has been created which will be monitored throughout the year. Currently there are no problems envisaged to achieving this saving.	G
Street Lighting	265	There is a small amount of slippage on this budget saving due to a delay in the departure of an employee. It is expected that this slippage will be managed within existing budget resources. The bulk of this saving will be achieved from a reduction in maintenance works. This reduction has already been built into the works plan of the service and will therefore, be achieved.	G

Highway Drainage	106	There is a small amount of slippage on this budget saving due to a delay in the departure of an employee. It is expected that this slippage will be managed within existing budget resources. The bulk of this saving will be achieved from a rationalisation of inspections. This rationalisation has already been built into the inspection programme and will therefore, be achieved.	G
Reduction in Parks Maintenance	450	There is a small amount of slippage on this budget saving due to a delay in the departure of an employee. It is expected that this slippage will be managed within existing budget resources. The bulk of this saving will be achieved from a reduction in maintenance works. This reduction has already been built into the works plan of the service and will therefore, be achieved.	G
Housing Support for BME Communities	111	There is some of slippage on this budget saving due to a delay in the departure of employees. It is expected that this slippage will be managed within existing budget resources.	G
Dog Fouling Enforcement	97	On target to be achieved.	G

Transformation and Resources

Details	£000	Comments / progress on implementation	BRAGP (see note below)
Efficiency Investment Fund	4,400	Cabinet 8 th November 2012 agreed to elimination of fund and growth and replacement by rolling fund	B
Local Council Tax Support Scheme	2,785	Scheme introduced and progress being monitored as per section 7.3 above	G
Reducing Council Management	5,000	Broken down as: £318k LHRAM Senior Mgmt – £23k slippage against the target due to people still in post until mid-May. £110k Regulatory Services – slippage of £21k against the target due to people still in post until mid-May.	G G
Reducing the numbers of Agency workers	500	A corporate saving. This is to be allocated to Directorates during the year.	A

Service Restructures	905	Broken down as: £50k Asset Mgmt – delayed restructure but the full £100k should be achieved during 2013-15 £292k HR delayed restructure but it is envisaged that the full saving of £584k will be achieved over the course of 2013-15. £263k related to RHP £300k for Legal Services, of which £100k relates to employees which is expected to be achieved through compensatory budgets with the restructure helping to achieve the £200k that is currently set aside Legal/Court costs which are a very volatile area.	G A G A
Trade Union funding	- 270	The funding for the Trade Unions has been built in with the costs to still be recharged across business areas at the end of the year.	G
Reducing the Cost of Democracy	100	The cost of the Members Allowances has been reduced and the saving is expected to be achieved in this area.	G
The Mayor of Wirral	50	It is expected that Civic Services will be able to achieve this saving from June 2013 and there will be a drive to reduce overtime and supplies to achieve the saving.	G
Procurement	320	This saving has not progressed as anticipated, but compensatory savings are expected to be made during the year.	A
Treasury Management	1,700	Built into budget to reflect the revised Capital Programme	B
Information Technology Service	210	Full savings for this budget option delivered in year one.	B
Better Use of Buildings	100	Details as to how this saving will be achieved are to be finalised as there are also savings that have rolled forward from previous years relating to assets.	A
Transforming Business Support	500	Saving has been incorporated into the budget. Staff savings are expected and some have already been achieved. Further work is taking place to develop saving.	G
Revenues and Benefits	550	This saving has been built into the budget and staffing levels are in line with its achievement.	B
Marketing and Public Relations	167	Funding removed from budget	B
Tranmere Rovers Sponsorship	135	Sponsorship has ended.	B
Power Supplies - Contract Saving	11	A new supply contract is in place.	B
Reduction in External Audit Fees	140	The budget has been reduced to reflect the new contract and is expected to be fully realised in year.	G

Workforce Conditions of Service	3,800	Negotiations with TUs are concluding. Target saving likely to be £3.7 million. Slippage depending upon agreement is likely	A
Area Forum Funding	391	Savings achieved	B
Libraries and One Stop Shops	391	Staff savings at the budget level are evident in April monitoring.	G
Housing Benefits – Maximisation of Grant	2,000	Saving has been incorporated into the budget and is expected to be achieved.	G
Council Tax Increase	2,600	Saving has been incorporated into the budget and is expected to be achieved.	B
Council Tax: Discounts and Exemptions	2,284	Saving has been incorporated into the budget and is expected to be achieved.	B
Council Tax: Court Costs	2,429	Saving has been incorporated into the budget and is expected to be achieved.	G

Annex 6 ADULTS/CHILDREN'S REPLACING ONE-OFF 2013-14 FUNDING

ADULTS

Details	Proposed 13-14 (£000)	Delivered 13-14 (£000)	Proposed 14-15 (£000)	Proposed 15-16 (£000)	Comments / progress on implementation
Live savings					
Service Reviews (for development and future discussion with members)	1,143		2,536	665	
Management action	2,340		1,714	1,004	
Total all categories	3,430		3,689	1,689	

Children

Details	Proposed 13-14 (£000)	Delivered 13-14 (£000)	Proposed 14-15 (£000)	Proposed 15-16 (£000)	Comments / progress on implementation
Commissioning (saving achieved in advance)	250	250			Saving achieved in advance of 14-15 requirement
Connexions/CEIAG (saving achieved in advance)	300	300			Saving achieved in advance of 14-15 requirement
Transfer Pension costs to Schools Budget	100				Costs to be transferred as in 2012-13
Uncommitted Adoption Grant	200				As per cabinet report June 2013
Further reduction in PPM programme for schools	200				Reduction to be taken into account in the available programme
Springboard / School Readiness additional budget	400	400			Budget not committed
YOS bring forward service review	50				To be met from

					vacancies and spend controls
Total	1,500	950			

Annex 7 FREEZE OUTCOMES

No decisions have been made in 2013/14 which result in monies being transferred from directorate budgets to the freeze holding account.

Annex 8 GROWTH AND RISK

Growth £000's

		2013/14	2013-14
Ref	Department/ Option Title	Budget	Release
	CYP		
5	Independent Reviewing Officers	90	
6	Additional Social Worker Capacity in Wallasey District	315	
7	Social Workers in Schools	75	
8	Family Justice Review	100	
9	Staying Put Policy	100	
12	Foster Care	500	
13	Youth Justice Board Costs	50	
	CYP Total	1,230	
	DASS		
2	Increase in Fees for Residential & Nursing Care to reflect a Fair Price for Care	1,000	
4	Increase in Demand (Young Adults with Learning Disabilities)	944	
5	Increase in Demand (Older People)	1,773	
	DASS Total	3,717	
	Technical		
3	Annual Property Uplift Biffa contract	12	
	Technical Total	12	
	Finance		
1	Reduction in HB Admin grant 2013/14	237	
	Finance Total	237	
		5,196	

Risk £000's

Corporate Growth (Budget Book page 7)	2013/14 Budget	2013-14 Release
Pay Inflation	1,700	1,000
Superannuation Revaluation	0	
Change Management Implementation Fund	4,000	
Savings Profiling	2,000	1,800
Price inflation unallocated		
Growth unallocated		
	7,700	2,800

Annex 8 (Continued)

Inflation Allocated to Departments 2013-16			
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000	£000
CYP			
PFI	140	140	140
Retirement Costs	80	80	80
Foster/Adoption	190	190	190
CYP Total	410	410	410
DASS			
Placements	15	15	15
Residential and Nursing Care	1,518	1,518	1,518
Transport	60	60	60
Total	1,593	1,593	1,593
Families and Well Being Total	2,003	2,003	2,003
Regeneration and Environment			
Biffa	413	413	413
Colas	48	48	48
Regeneration and Environment Total	461	461	461
Grand Total	2,464	2,464	2,464

Annex 9 INCOME AND DEBT

Council Tax

The following statement compares the amount collected for **Council Tax** in the period 1 April 2013 to 31 May 2013 with the amount collected in the same period in 2012/13:

	Actual 2013/14 £	Actual 2012/13 £
Cash to Collect	135,419,165	125,899,000
Cash Collected	25,680,000	24,706,000
% Collected	19%	19.6%

Council Tax benefits has been abolished and replaced by Council Tax support and the numbers and awards as at 31 May 2013 are as follows:

Number of Council Tax Support recipients	38,660
Total Council Tax Support expenditure	£28,140,000
Number of pensioners	16,544
Number of vulnerable	6,141
Number of working age	15,975

The level of collection reflects the increased charges to those charge payers now in receipt of Council Tax Support and having to pay a minimum of 22% of the annual charge as well as the increase charges in respect of reduced discounts and exemptions.

Business Rates

The following statement compares the amount collected for **National Non-Domestic Rates** in the period 1 April 2013 to 31 May 2013 with the amount collected in the same period in 2012/13:

	Actual 2013/14 £	Actual 2012/13 £
Cash to Collect	70,395,933	69,064
Cash Collected	13,748,993	14,514
% Collected	19.5%	21.02%

Accounts Receivable

The table below shows the new department names and the split at what stage of the recovery cycle they are.

Description	Less than 28 days	1 st Reminder	2 nd Reminder	3 rd Reminder	Total as at 31.05.13
Chief Executive	39,169	2,353	0	14,031	55,553
People	4,232,140	694,830	151,743	3,368,825	8,447,538
Places	1,000,064	107,559	156,345	2,565,775	3,829,743
Transformation & Resources	7,321,716	3,000,670	754,634	7,530,835	18,607,855
Total	12,593,089	3,805,412	1,062,722	13,479,466	30,940,689

The above figures are for invoices in respect of the period up to the end of May 2013. Payments and amendments such as write offs and debts cancellations continue to be made after this date on these accounts.

BENEFITS

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 2013:

	2013/14	2012/13
Number of Private Tenant recipients	31,391	29,562
Total rent allowance expenditure	£22,937,159	
Number under the Local Housing Allowance Scheme (<u>included in the above</u>)	11,965	9,883
	£9,570,692	
Number of Council Tax Support recipients	38,660	
Total Council Tax Support expenditure	£28,140,000	
Total expenditure on benefit to date	£51,156,833	

The following statement provides information concerning the breakdown according to client type as at 31 May 2013

Private Tenants

Claimants in the Private Rented Sector	14,584
Claimants in the Social Rented Sector	16,807
Owner Occupiers	10,668
Total claimants by age group	
under 25 years old	2,689
25 – 60 years old	21,754
over 60 years old	17,616

There are **42,059** benefit recipients in Wirral as at 31 May 2013.

Under Occupancy regulations

From 1 April 2013 property size criteria was introduced to working age tenants of social housing (Registered Providers). Where a claimant is deemed to be occupying

accommodation larger than they reasonably require, Housing Benefit (HB) levels have been restricted as follows:

- One “spare” bedroom incurs a 14% reduction. In Wirral the current average is £12 weekly & there are 3,247 households affected;
- Two or more spare bedrooms incurs a 25% reduction – the Wirral average is currently £21 weekly & there are 919 affected;
- Out of a total social sector HB caseload of 16,807; 4,166 are currently affected by this
- Cases that are deemed exempt from the reduction is 3,376

Housing Benefit Fraud and Enquiries - 1 April 2013 to 31 May 2013

New Cases referred to Fraud team in period	193
Cases where fraud found and action taken	6
Cases investigated, no fraud found and recovery of overpayment may be sought	77
Cases under current investigation	192
Surveillance Operations Undertaken	0
Cases where fraud found and action taken:	6
Administration penalty	0
Caution issued and accepted	1
Successful prosecution	5
Summons issued for prosecution purposes	7

Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) may be awarded to provide short term financial assistance to Housing Benefit claimants who are experiencing difficulty meeting a shortfall in their rent because maximum benefit is not being paid. DHP is not a payment of Housing Benefit and is funded separately from the main scheme.

The Government contribution for 2013/14 is £917,214 with an overall limit of £2,293,035 which the Authority must not exceed. These levels have increased significantly this year as part of central government's measures to help alleviate hardship resulting from the major welfare reforms, such as under occupancy as well as ongoing Local Housing Allowance issues. In April £27,093 was paid, however there were at month end 745 claims to be considered. These new applications are mainly due to those affected by the under occupancy sanctions and additional information has been sought to allow assessment to proceed. It is expected that Wirral will use up the full government contribution by year end.

Local Welfare Assistance

From April 2013, the discretionary Crisis Loans for Living Expenses and Community Care Grant elements of the Social Fund were abolished and replaced in Wirral by our new Local Welfare Assistance Support Scheme (LWA). For 2013/14 Wirral's scheme is supported by a £1,345,925 Government Grant. Wirral's scheme replaces cash

payments in favour of suitable alternatives where at all possible e.g. through the provision of pre payment cards for food and fuel and direct provision of white goods. The scheme is to be reviewed after six months to see how implementation has gone and for possible scheme alterations. The number of applications is rising on a week by week basis. LWA applications for May 2013 average 77 per week

LWA details for period from 02 April 2013 to 31 May 2013

Number of Awards Granted	594	£ 41,463
Number of Awards not qualifying	361	

Annex 10 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE TEAM/DIRECTORATES TO REDUCE SPEND / INCREASE INCOME

Department	Items	£000
All	Spending freeze to continue during first quarter.	
All	Introduction of Concerto system to monitor progress against savings targets.	
People	Reviews by Adults and Children to identify measures to fund pay back of 2013/14 one-off funding (£13.7 million).	

Annex 11 EARMARKED RESERVES - GENERAL FUND £000's

	Balance 1 April 13 £000	Movement £000	Balance 31 May 13 £000
School Balances	11,937	-	11,937
Housing Benefit	10,155	-	10,155
Insurance Fund	7,820	-	7,820
Redundancy Fund	5,500	-	5,500
IT/Intranet	3,161	-	3,161
Local Pay Review	2,296	-	2,296
Community Fund Community Asset Transfer	2,146	-	2,146
Efficiency Investment Rolling Fund	2,000	-	2,000
One Stop Shop / Libraries IT Network	1,878	-	1,878
Worklessness Programme	1,084	-	1,084
Supporting People Programme	996	-	996
Stay, Work, Learn Wise	908	-	908
Intensive Family Intervention Project	871	-	871
Working Neighbourhoods Fund	761	-	761
Schools Harmonisation	668	-	668
Children's Workforce Development Council	559	-	559
Apprentice Programme Phases 2&3	546	-	546
Home Adaptations	518	-	518
Planned Preventative Maintenance	463	-	463
ERDF Match Funding	444	-	444
Schools Automatic Meter Readers	415	-	415
Schools Contingency	370	-	370
Child Poverty	350	-	350
Business Improvement Grant	342	-	342
Local Area Agreement Reward	322	-	322
Group Repair	307	-	307
Schools Service IT	294	-	294
Homeless Prevention	271	-	271
New Homes Bonus	260	-	260
Strategic Asset Review	251	-	251
Other Reserves	<u>7,033</u>	-	<u>7,033</u>
Total Reserves	64,926	-	64,926

Note: Figures are subject to change as at time of writing the 2012/13 accounts were being finalised

Annex 12 BUDGETARY ISSUES

	Service area	Issue	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Resolution
People							
	Adults overstated income	Income was included at 100% of billed, rather than at the (lower) level of collection. Improved collection would reduce the loss but this should be evidence led.	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	Entered into M1 Monitor
	Legal Fees ex CYP	Foster Care placements - with improved work routines, amenable to reduction.	100	50	0		Funding to be identified by Strategic Director
Places							
	RHP	Homeless Grant rolled into Formula Grant, but not taken out of budget. No solution.	221	221	221	221	Funding to be identified by Strategic Director
	Willowtree	Shortfall in accommodation budget; resolution depends on service and asset disposal	33	33	33	33	Agreed can be met from permanent budget reduction
Transformation							
	Market Supplements	Single Status is unimplemented. Until then, grade mismatches can only be 'fixed' by market factors. Estimated has reduced from £1m in M1 to £490k excluding any additional cover. Long-term option to resolve SS.	490	450	450	0	Reduced from £1m M1 Monitor based on latest estimates.
	2012-13 T&C's	Non-achievement; count as part of 2014-15 target	300	0	0	0	Funding to be identified by Strategic Director
	2012-13 Trans Bus S	Non-achievement; count as part of 2014-15 target	300	150	0	0	Funding to be identified by Strategic Director
	2013-14 T&Cs	Shortfall in achievement; count as part of 2014-15 target	90	0	0	0	Funding to be identified by Strategic Director
	Facilities Management	Shortfall in achievement on closure of buildings; count as part of 2014-15 target	250	0	0	0	Agreed can be met from permanent budget reduction
Totals			3,784	2,904	2,704	2,254	
Solutions			2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
	Agreed redns	Willowtree Facilities Management	-33 -250	-33	-33	-33	Agreed can be met from permanent budget reduction
	In M1 monitor	Adults income – in 2013-14 funded from unbudgeted income budgeted for in later years	-2,000				
Current additional resource required from savings			1,501	2,871	2,672	2,335	

WIRRAL COUNCIL CABINET

11 JULY 2013

SUBJECT	CAPITAL MONITORING 2013-14 MONTH 2 (MAY 2013)
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF FINANCE COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report sets out the capital position for 2013-14 at Period 2 (May 2013) and actions to minimise risk.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That Cabinet is asked to note:

- a) the spend to date at Month 2 of £1.964m, with 16.7% of the financial year having elapsed.

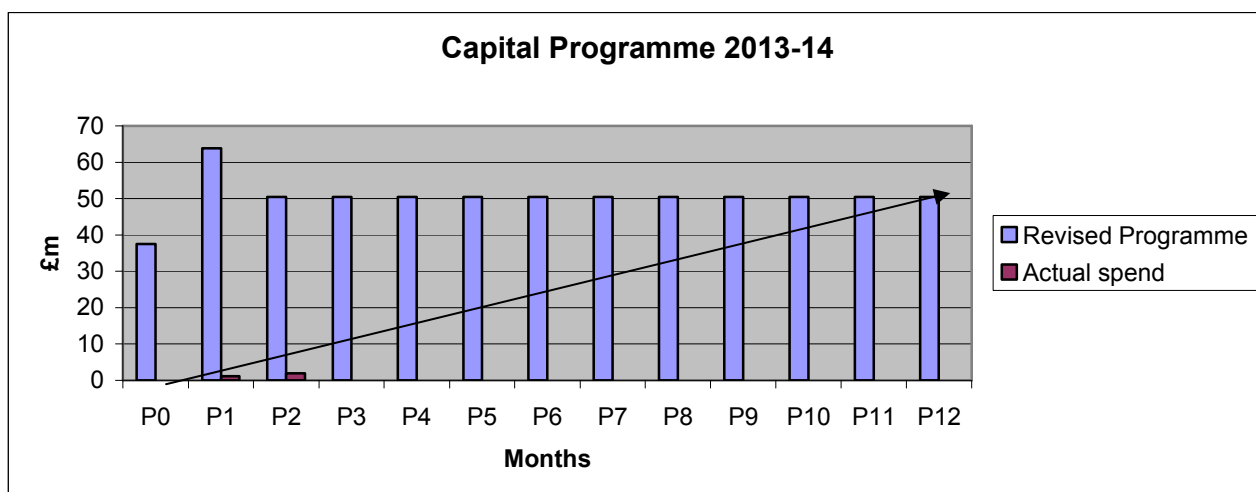
2.2 The Cabinet is asked to agree:

- b) the revised Capital Programme of £50.457m (Table 1 at 4.1);
- c) the additional slippage from 2012-13 of £0.246m and the anticipated slippage of £1.150m into 2014-15;
- d) the re-profiling of two major schemes into 2014-15, totalling £12.6m; and
- e) the receipt of additional Local Sustainable Transport grant of £0.100m.

3 **OVERALL POSITION AT PERIOD 2 (May 2013)**

- 3.1 The projected capital forecast for the year, at Month 2 shows a potential outturn of no overspend or underspend but includes the slippage and re-profiling referred to above. The issue of re-profiling has been introduced to try and more accurately reflect how major schemes are progressing compared to the newly introduced "Gateway" system for capital schemes. Feasibility studies have not been completed and such the first gateway has not been reached.

Chart 1: Capital Programme spend below line of best fit



4 ORIGINAL AND PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2013-14

- 4.1 The capital budget for 2013-14 is subject to change. The Period 2 monitor shows the programme agreed by this Committee on 13th June. Further approval is requested for additional slippage (£1.150m) and re-profiling (£12.6m).

Table 1: Capital Programme 2013-14 at Period 2 (May) £000's

	Capital strategy	Changes approved by Cabinet	Slippage to be approved by Cabinet	Other changes to be approved	Revised Capital Programme
Invest to save	1,400	0	0	0	1,400
Bids to release assets	1,053	2,457	0	0	3,510
People - Adults	11,025	625	-1,150	-8,600	1,900
People - CYP	10,286	9,925	0	-4,000	16,211
Places - Regeneration	5,979	6,408	246	0	12,633
Places - Environment	7,196	5,772	0	100	13,068
Trans & Res -Finance	210	0	0	0	210
Trans & Res - Asset Mgt	315	1,210	0	0	1,525
Total expenditure	37,464	26,397	-904	-12,500	50,457

- 4.2 A summary of the variations to be approved by Cabinet for Period 2 is set out below.

Table 2: Requests to vary the 2013-14 programme £000's

	Changes to be Approved By Cabinet	Explanation (A) Policy (B) Items previously deferred (C) Additional funding (D) Slippage (E) Re-profiling
People – Adults	-750 -400 -8,600	The development of the transformation of day service programme was dependent on the outcome of the budget option report presented to this committee on 13th June. (D) The integrated I.T. Scheme is now expected to commence in September. (D) The L.D. Extra Care Housing scheme is currently at the planning stage involving discussions with housing and private sector providers of learning disability care. (E)
Places - Environment	100	Additional local sustainable transport grant has been received. (C)
People - Children's & Young People	-4,000	DFE capital maintenance allocation. The receipt of one year allocations will again result in the need to re-profile a number of schemes to allow for consultation, design, scoping and procurement before commencement. (E)
Places - Regeneration	246	Following the closure of the 2012-13 accounts there are a number of additional schemes that require additional slippage in order for them to progress e.g. New homes bonus and empty property interventions (D)
Total expenditure	-13,404	

- 4.3 The Council is awaiting the announcement of a Government scheme to 'capitalise' statutory redundancy costs. As there was no scheme in 2012-13, the amount held by the DCLG will be over-subscribed. There is no certainty that the Council will succeed in its bid. If the bid was successful it would add to the programmed spend, which would be funded from Capital Receipts.
- 4.4 The latest position regarding the co-location of Pensby/Stamley schools was reported on 13 June. It highlighted the reason for the anticipated additional cost of £1.038m and how these costs would be accommodated - £0.833m grant, £0.120m council resources and £0.085 school contribution. Weekly risk management meetings are being held to monitor and mitigate against the effects of any further increases to the project costs.

5 PHASING OF THE PLAN – THE USE OF GATES

- 5.1 Since February, officers have embarked on implementing a system – Concerto - that will tell them how all the schemes in the capital programme are progressing. Instead of only having two scheme measures, being 'start' and 'completed', we will be able to look 'inside the box' and see the progress of a scheme. The aim is

to have it working by end-July. Table 3 examples the Gates for the Capital Receipts programme.

Table 3: example of five Gates for Capital Receipts

Gate	Activity by Quarters
Conceptual Stage	Identification of potential disposal
Approval Stage	Agreement in principal by Asset Review Board
Delivery Stage	Approval to disposal and method of disposal
Finished Stage	Agreement to final terms
Closure Stage	Legal completion and receipt of monies

- 5.2 The benefit of the system is that each scheme will be planned across the year(s), initially in Quarters, and progress can be tracked. Further, all the schemes can be 'added up', so we will have a predicted phasing for the whole capital programme, over three years.
- 5.3 Having this information will enable us to intervene where schemes are slipping, navigate around 'choke points' where everything is happening at once, and plan the funding of the programme, so we can manage to finer tolerances. For example, historically, the Council has always carried a high level of capital receipts, to cover risk, rather than using them.

6 ACTUAL SPEND TO DATE – IS THE PROGRAMME 'ON PLAN'?

- 6.1 Until the Concerto system is in place, we will continue to use the general measure of progress introduced last year. The actual capital expenditure at Period 2 is £1.964m with 16.7% of the financial year having elapsed. .

Table 4: Spend to date May (2/12 = 16.7%)

	Spend to date		Comments on variation RAG
	£000	%	
Invest to save	0	0	Green -acceptable
Bids to release assets	34	1.0	Green -acceptable
People - Adults	0	0	Green -acceptable
People - Children's & Young People	858	5.3	Green -acceptable
Places - Regeneration	579	4.6	Green -acceptable
Places - Environment	182	1.4	Green -acceptable
Trans & Res -Finance	99	47.1	Green -acceptable
Trans & Res - Asset Mgt	212	13.9	Green -acceptable
Total expenditure	1,964	3.7	

- 6.2 The table below will be updated with more detailed forecasts in subsequent reports.

Table 5: Projected Outturn compared to Revised Budget £000's

	Revised	Projected	Variation
	Budget	Outturn	
Invest to save	1,400	1,400	0
Bids to release assets	3,510	3,510	0
People - Adults	1,900	1,900	0
People - Children's & Young People	16,211	16,211	0
Places - Regeneration	12,633	12,633	0
Places - Environment	13,068	13,068	0
Trans & Res -Finance	210	210	0
Trans & Res - Asst Mgt	1,525	1,525	0
Total Expenditure	50.457	50,457	0

7 SCHEMES THAT ARE NOT KEEPING TO PLAN.

- 7.1 The purpose of this section is to highlight schemes that are not keeping to plan and the range of responses that are needed. At this point in the cycle there are no such schemes.

8 FINANCING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 8.1 Table 6 summarises the financing sources and changes made to Period 2. The major changes proposed, since the capital programme was approved in March 2013 are:

the use of unsupported borrowing to finance slippage and new schemes;
the use of grant funding not required in 2012-13 which will fund the associated slippage in expenditure; and
to deploy spare capital receipts.

Table 6: Revised Capital Programme Financing 2013-14 £000's

Capital Programme Financing	Capital Strategy	Changes approved by Cabinet	Budget changes to be approved by Cabinet	Revised 2013-14 Programme
Unsupported Borrowing	7,920	10,764	-2,467	16,217
Capital Receipts	3,121	4,075	0	7,196
Revenue and Reserves	888	1,243	82	2,213
Grant – Education	8,786	7,746	-4,000	12,532
Grant – Integrated Transport	1,136	0	0	1,136
Grant – Local Sustainable Transport	695	295	100	1,090
Grant – Local Transport Plan	2,864	522	0	3,386
Grants – Other	12,054	1,752	-7,119	6,687
Total Financing	37,464	26,397	-13,404	50,457

9 PROJECTED LONGER TERM CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 9.1 Funding for the forecast 2013-14 to 2015-16 capital programme is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Capital Programme Financing 2013-14 to 2015-16 £000's

Capital Programme Financing	2013-14 Revised Estimate	2014-15 Revised Estimate	2015-16 Original Estimate	Total Programme
Unsupported Borrowing	16,217	5,327	1,300	22,844
Capital Receipts	7,196	2,838	1,000	11,034
Reserve Reserves	2,213	0	0	2,213
Grant – Education	12,532	5,607	357	18,496
Grant – Integrated Transport	1,136	1,155	0	2,291
Grant – Local Sustainable Transport	1,090	676	0	1,766
Grant – Local Transport Plan	3,386	2,699	0	6,085
Grants – Other	6,687	7,850	0	14,537
Total Financing	50,457	26,152	2,657	79,266

10 SUPPORTED AND UNSUPPORTED BORROWING AND THE REVENUE CONSEQUENCES OF UNSUPPORTED BORROWING

- 10.1 The cost of £1 million of Prudential Borrowing would result in additional revenue financing costs of £100,000 per annum in the following year. As part of the Capital Strategy 2013-14 to 2015-16 the Council has included an element of prudential borrowing. At Period 2 there is a sum of £22.8m of new unsupported borrowing included over the next three years, which will result in approximately £2.8m of additional revenue costs detailed at Table 8, if there is no change in strategy.

Table 8: Unsupported Borrowing Forecasts & Revenue costs £000's

	2013/14	2014/15	2015-16	2016-17	Total
New Unsupported borrowing	16,217	5,327	1,300	-	22,844
Cumulative		21,544	22,844		
Cumulative Annual Revenue repayment costs		1,622	2,154	2,284	

- 10.2 However, the Unsupported Borrowing has to be divided into that for which there is planned support – a spend to save scheme – and the truly unsupported schemes.

Table 9: Analysis of Unsupported Borrowing

	2013/14	2014/15	2015-16	TOTAL
Spend to save	6,510	420	300	7,230
Other borrowing	9,707	4,907	1,000	15,614

11 CAPITAL RECEIPTS POSITION

- 11.1 The Council has worked with the LGA to review the Assets – a report was presented to Chief Officers on May 7. A stand out comment was that the Council could realise £20m from asset disposals by 2015, some of which has already been counted into Table 10 below. Work is being undertaken to identify which of the receipts in the table below are included in this assessment.

- 11.2 The capital programme is reliant on the Council generating capital receipts to finance the future capital programme schemes. The Capital Receipts Reserve at 1 April 2013 contained £8.1m of receipts. The table assumes the proposed spend, set out at 4.1 is agreed.

Table 10: Projected capital receipts position – funding requirement £000's

	2013/14	2014/15	2015-16
Capital Receipts Reserve	8,100	2,404	7,016
In - Receipts Assumption	1,500	7,450	n/a
Out - Funding assumption	-7,196	-2,838	-1,000
Closing Balance	2,404	7,016	6,016

- 11.3 At the end of May the Council had received £0.823m usable capital receipts which are detailed in Annex 4.
- 11.4 Details of the schemes to be funded by capital receipts in 2013-14 can be found in Annex2.
- 11.5 Paragraph 4.3 noted the possibility of more spend - Redundancy costs – which would be funded from capital receipts.

12 RELEVANT RISKS

- 12.1 The possible failure to deliver the Capital Programme will be mitigated by the fortnightly review by a senior group of officers, charged with improving performance.
- 12.2 The generation of capital receipts could well be influenced by factors outside the authority's control e.g. ecological issues.
- 12.3 Capacity shortfalls are being addressed though the development of closer working with the LGA and Local Partnerships.

13 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 13.1 None.

14 CONSULTATION

- 14.1 No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report.

15 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 15.1 As yet, there are no implications for voluntary, community or faith groups.

16 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 The whole report is about significant resource implications.

17 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 17.1 There are no legal implications.

18 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

18.1 An Equality impact assessment is not attached as there are none.

19 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

19.1 None.

20 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

20.1 None.

21 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

21.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the capital programme will enable decisions to be taken faster which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of the programme.

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SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Capital monitoring reports, from September 2012, are being submitted monthly.	
Capital programme submitted to Council	5 th March 2013

Annexes:

- Annex 1 Capital monitoring and reporting timetable 2013/14**
- Annex 2 Revised Capital programme and funding source**
- Annex 3 Deferred unsupported capital schemes**
- Annex 4 Capital Receipts**

Annex 1

CAPITAL MONITORING AND REPORTING TIMETABLE 2013/14

Period Number	Month	General Ledger Updated and Reports Available To Be Produced	Reports Available For The Executive Strategy Group	Reports Available For Cabinet	Reports Available For Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee
			Monthly	Monthly	Quarterly
1	April	May 8	May 28	June 13	-
2	May	Jun 7	June 18	July 11	-
3	June	Jul 5	Aug 20	Sept 5	01-Oct
4	July	Aug 7	Sept 24	Oct 10	-
5	August	Sept 6	Sept 24	Oct 10	-
6	September	Oct 7	Oct 22	Nov 7	27-Nov
7	October	Nov 7	Dec 2	Dec 18	-
8	November	Dec 6	Jan 19	Feb 4	-
9	December	Jan 8	Feb 1	Feb 17	26-Mar
10	January	Feb 7	Feb 25	Mar 13	TBC
11	February	Mar 7	TBC	TBC	TBC
12	Outturn (Provisional)	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

ANNEX 2 PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND FUNDING CABINET 11 JULY 2013

Department	Programme manager	Capital Strategy	Changes approved	Slippage to be approved	Re-profiling to be approved	Other changes to be approved	Total Programme	Borrowing	Receipts	Revenue / Reserves	Education Grants	Integrated Transport	Local Sustainable Transport	Local Transport	Other Grant	Total Funding
Invest to save or core efficiency																
Replace Integrated Childrens System	Mark Ellis	1,000					1,000	1,000								1,000
Energy schemes	Hazel Edwards	400					400	400								400
Invest to save or core efficiency Total		1,400	-	-	-	-	1,400	1,400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,400
Bids that release redundant council assets																
Demolish Stanley Special	Mike Woosey	275					275	275								275
Demolish Bebington Town Hall and Liscard Municipal	Neil Corser	378					378	378								378
Demolish former Rock Ferry High	Mike Woosey	400					400	400								400
Strategic Asset Review	Jeff Sherlock		457				457	457								457
Fund to assist land assembly and re-sale			2,000				2,000		2,000							2,000
Bids that release redundant council assets Total		1,053	2,457	-	-	-	3,510	1,510	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,510
Transformation & Resources Finance																
West Kirby and Conway Centre OSSs	Malcolm Flanagan	210					210			210						210
Transformation & Resources Finance Total		210	-	-	-	-	210	-	210	-	-	-	-	-	-	210
Transformation & Resources Asset Management																
The Priory	Gwenda Murray		25				25	25								25
Rock Ferry Centre	Gwenda Murray	315	141				456			456						456
Cultural Services Assets	Jeff Sherlock		220				220	220								220
Wallasey Town Hall	Gwenda Murray		810				810	810								810
Liscard Hall	Jackie Smallwood		14				14			14						14
Transformation & Resources Asset Management Total		315	1,210	-	-	-	1,525	1,055	-	470	-	-	-	-	-	1,525
People - Children & Young People																
Children's centres	Jeanette Royle		231				231				231					231
Aiming Higher for Disabled Children	Dawn Tolcher	240	267				507				507					507
Condition/Modernisation	Jeanette Royle	4,500	5,350			-4,000	5,850	407		21	5,422					5,850
Family Support Scheme	Simon Garner		115				115	115								115
Formula Capital Grant	Mike Woosey	2,000	535				2,535			42	2,493					2,535
Schools- Access Initiative	Jeanette Royle		66				66				66					66
Woodchurch One School Pathfinder	Jeanette Royle		132				132	21		8	103					132

Birkenhead High Girls Academy	Jeanette Royle		229				229			69	160					229
Private Finance Initiative	Tom Quigley		205				205			150	55					205
Pensby Primary School	Mike Woosey	1,510	267				1,777			85	1,692					1,777
School Meals Uptake	Mike Woosey		120				120				120					120
Co-Location Fund	Matthew Humble		89				89				89					89
SEN and Disabilities	Jeanette Royle		738				738				738					738
Vehicle Procurement	Nancy Clarkson		158				158			158						158
Park Primary	Jeanette Royle	-	180				180				180					180
Rosclare Childrens Hotel	Mike Woosey		5				5			5						5
Early years access	Jeanette Royle		78				78				78					78
Youth Capital	Lindsay Davidson		160				160	98			62					160
School remodelling and additional classrooms	Mike Woosey	586					586	300			286					586
Somerville primary school mobile replacement	Mike Woosey	450					450	200			250					450
Wirral Youth Zone	Dawn Tolcher	1,000	1,000				2,000	567	1,433							2,000
People - Children & Young People Total		10,286	9,925	-	-4,000	-	16,211	1,708	1,433	538	12,532	-	-	-	-	16,211
People - Adults																
Transformation of Day Service	Paula Pritchard	625	625	-750			500								500	500
Integrated IT	Sandra Thomas	1,400		-400			1,000								1,000	1,000
LD care housing	Mike Houghton-Evans	9,000			-8,600		400	400								400
People - Adults Total		11,025	625	-1,150	-8,600	-	1,900	400	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,500	1,900
Places - Environment																
Congestion	Simon Fox	-	5				5	5								5
Road Safety	Simon Fox	1,155	103				1,258	83			1,136	39				1,258
Air Quality	Simon Fox	-	245				245	245								245
Local Sustainable Transport	Simon Fox	676	275			100	1,051					1,051				1,051
Transportation	Simon Fox	-	34				34	34								34
Street Lighting	Simon Fox	-	229				229	229								229
Bridges	Simon Fox	-	811				811	811								811
Highways Maintenance	Simon Fox	2,864	992				3,856	992				2,864				3,856
Additional Highways Maintenance Funding	Simon Fox		522				522					522				522
Asset Management	Shaun Brady	-	84				84								84	84
Coast Protection	Neil Thomas		186				186	186								186
Wheelie Bin Buyout	Tara Dumas	-	1,600				1,600	1,600								1,600
Parks Plant and Equipment	Bill Hancox	1,498					1,498		1,498							1,498
Parks vehicles replacement	Anthony Bestwick	440					440		440							440
Park depot rationalisation	Mary Bagley	500					500		500							500

Landican Cemetery	Mary Bagley	-	82				82	82								82
Birkenhead Park Restoration Fees	Mary Bagley	-	97				97	97								97
Hoylake Golf Course	Mary Bagley	-	30				30	30								30
Park Outdoor Gyms	Jackie Smallwood	-	167				167						167			167
Reeds Lane Play Area	Jackie Smallwood	-	61				61						61			61
Eastham Country Park	Christine Smyth	-	36				36						36			36
Royden Park	Christine Smyth	-	20				20						20			20
Floral Pavilion Stage & Orchestra Pit	Kate Carpenter	-	37				37	37								37
Cemetery Improvements	Mary Bagley		80				80	80								80
Birkenhead Tennis Courts	Mary Bagley		90				90	90								90
Leisure Equipment	Damien Walsh	63	-14				49			49						49
Places - Environment Total		7,196	5,772	-	-	100	13,068	4,601	2,438	49	-	1,136	1,090	3,386	368	13,068
Places - Regeneration																
Think Big Investment Fund	Alan Evans		434				434	434								434
Clearance approved Cabinet	Alan Lipscombe		2,110	89			2,199	830	560	47				762		2,199
Home improvement approved Cabinet	Alan Lipscombe		1,057	65			1,122	573	390	159						1,122
Disabled Facilities – Adaptations	Greg Cooper	2,929	939	-35			3,833	1,904		300				1,629		3,833
Improvement for sale grants	Lisa Newman		200	180			380			380						380
Heather Thomas	Heather Thomas		107	-107			-									-
Wirral Healthy Homes	Ed Kingsley	250	149	-30			369	119	250							369
Cosy Homes Heating	Ed Kingsley	250	149	-30			369	119	250							369
Empty Property Interventions	Paul Jackson		297	37			334	121	125	60				28		334
New Brighton	David Ball		1,115	47			1,162	1,162								1,162
Maritime Business Park	Alan Evans	2,800					2,800	400						2,400		2,800
Places - Regeneration Total		5,979	6,408	246	-	-	12,633	5,543	1,325	946	-	-	-	-	4,819	12,633
Grand Total		37,464	26,397	-904	-12,600	100	50,457	16,217	7,196	2,213	12,532	1,136	1,090	3,386	6,687	50,457

Annex 3

Deferred Unsupported

Summary

	2013-14 £000	2014-15 £000	2015-16 £000	Totals £000
Invest to save or core efficiency	0	0	0	0
Bids that release redundant council assets	0	0	0	0
DASS	0	0	0	0
Finance	0	0	0	0
CYP	680	700	0	1,380
Law, HR & Asset Management	1,025	1,500	1,500	4,025
Regeneration	2,080	1,250	300	3,630
Technical Services	2,405	2,119	397	4,921
Total	6,190	5,569	2,197	13,956

Detail

Invest to save or core efficiency

0	0	0	0
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Bids that release redundant council assets

0	0	0	0
---	---	---	---

DASS

0	0	0	0
---	---	---	---

Finance

0	0	0	0
---	---	---	---

CYP

Schools Development Programme

Woodchurch Rd primary Foundn 2 classrooms	80	700	0	780
Woodslee Primary school ***	600	0	0	600
	680	700	0	1,380

Law, HR & Asset Management

Cultural Services Assets	1,000	1,500	1500	4,000
The Priory	25	0	0	25
	1,025	1,500	1500	4,025

Regeneration

Think Big Investment Fund	300	300	0	600
Improvements to Stock ***	950	950	0	1,900
Wirral Healthy Homes	105	0	0	105
Empty Property Interventions ***	125	0	0	125
Hoylake	600	0	0	600
	2,080	1,250	300	3,630

Technical Services

Street Lighting	200	0	0	200
Bridges	250	0	0	250
Capitalised Highways Maintenance	1,000	1,000	0	2,000
Coast Protection	47	55	0	102

Parks, Cultural Services and Roads

Arrowe Park changing facilities	500	800	0	1,300
Birkenhead tennis court ***	90	7	0	97
Cemetery infrastructure and landscaping ***	50	50	0	100
Birkenhead Park drainage	238	57	0	295
Frankby cemetery extension ***	30	150	0	180
	2,405	2,119	397	4,921

Less schemes now approved

(1,845)	(207)	(2,052)
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Funding type:

Unsupported Borrowing	4,345	5,362	2,197	11,904
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*** Represents schemes now included in the Capital Programme.

Annex 4**CAPITAL RECEIPTS AT MAY 2013****£000**

6, The Grove, Wallasey	10
Land at the Carr	12
Stringhey Road Car Park	19
Thurstaston Rangers Cottage	<u>309</u>
	350
Right to buy proceeds (WPH and BBCHA)	473
A. Total usable receipts	823

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11 JULY 2013

SUBJECT	DASS WRITE-OFFS
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report recommends the writing off of £512, 573.73 in outstanding client contributions.
- 1.2 This is part of the process of cleansing the long outstanding DASS debt indentified in the Independent Report considered by 23rd May 2013 Cabinet.
- 1.3 The reasons for write-off demonstrate the need for radically improved procedures in DASS and the PFU to avoid similar problems in the future. This is the purpose of the DASS action plan approved by Cabinet on 23rd May 2013.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the report be noted.
- 2.2 That the debts be written-off as detailed in the report.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The total historical debt processed by the Collection and Recovery Team within the PFU so far amounts to £1,319,665.80

Table 1: Analysis of debt destination, including paid and write-off

Processed debt since 4.2.13	£1,319,665.80
Submitted for write off	£512,578.73
Awaiting submission for write off	£189,789.42
Paid In Full	£218,312.79
Part Paid	£315,770.37
Instalments arranged	£59,001.60
Cancelled Debt	£24,212.89
	£1,319,665.80

- 3.2 Progress on the historical debt will be monitored in order to establish the optimum structure for a permanent recovery team.
- 3.3 Temporary resource has now been recruited to enable telephone contact to be made with clients at the stage they first fall into arrears.
- 3.4 Write-off values are summarised below, and show that just under 84%, by value, are in the first Category, being No Trace, Irrecoverable, Statute Barred or Deceased. The category Department Advice includes predominantly cases

where the client's estate had been distributed before contact was made with recovery action. or there is insufficient proof of debt on file.

Table 2: Summary Total of three bands of cases by Number and Value

Write off description	Total Number of cases	Total % of cases	Total Value of cases (£'s)	Total % of cases (£'s)
<i>Category 1</i>				
No trace	3	1.0	754.20	0.1
Irrecoverable	140	47.5	261,112.67	50.9
Statute barred	16	5.4	25,116.92	4.9
Deceased	81	27.5	140,990.25	27.5
<i>Sub-total</i>	240	81.4	427,974.04	83.5
<i>Category 2</i>				
Department advice	49	16.6	63,765.99	12.4
Other	6	2.0	20,838.70	4.1
Total	295	100.0	512,578.73	100.0

- 3.5 The cases are now shown in three bands being under £1k; between £1k and £5k; and over £5k.

Table 3: Under £1000.00

Write off description	Number of cases	Value (£'s)
Write off – no trace	3	754.20
Write off - irrecoverable	90	35,640.77
Write off statute barred	8	2,605.05
Write off – dept advice	30	10,872.28
Write off - deceased	51	2 3,222.04
Write off - other	4	2,129.74
Total	186	75,224.08

Table 4: Over £1000.00 but under £5000.00

Write off description	Number of cases	Value (£'s)
Write off - irrecoverable	38	88,452.90
Write off statute barred	6	11,947.26
Write off – dept advice	17	35,510.13
Write off - deceased	22	52,506.90
Total	83	188,417.19

Table 5: Over £5000.00

Write off description	Number of cases	Value (£'s)
Write off - irrecoverable	12	137,019.00
Write off statute barred	2	10,564.61
Write off – dept advice	2	17,383.58
Write off - deceased	8	65,261.31
Write off - other	2	18,708.96
Total	26	248,937.46

Table 6: Total of all three bands

Write off amounts	Number of cases	Value (£'s)
Over £5000.00	26	248,937.46
Over £1000.00	83	188,417.19
Under £1000.00	186	75,224.08
Total	295	512,578.73

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 If debts are not written off they have the potential to inflate what might be thought collectable.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The CART has already endeavoured to recover these debts without success..

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Relevant officers of the Council have been consulted in preparing this report.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

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

- 8.1 Following the reports to Cabinet on 23 May 2013 staffing resources within the Social Services PFU Team are being increased in order to improve income recovery.
- 8.2 Debts written off as irrecoverable are charged against the Council provision for bad debts which is reviewed annually in accordance with the requirements of accounting practice. As detailed in the revenue out-turn report the provision at 31 March 2013 was £10.9 million which compares to the £7.6 million at 31 March 2012.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Those debts recommended for write-off have been agreed by the Head of Legal and Member Services.

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 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 So Members are aware of the collection activity undertaken in these areas.
- 13.2 Sums written off are approved either under delegation or by Cabinet.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet - Collection Summary 2009/10	24 June 2010
Cabinet - Collection Summary 2010/11	24 June 2011
Cabinet - Collection Summary 2011/12	21 June 2012

DASS CLIENT CONTRIBUTIONS

WRITE OFF OF DEBTS OVER £5,000

Debt	AR Write Off reason	Case Number
Outstanding		
£35,822.08	Unrecoverable	1
£21,252.97	Unrecoverable	2
£15,044.54	Deceased no monies in account	3
£14,654.15	Unrecoverable	4
£12,504.47	Unrecoverable	5
£9,630.25	Not known	6
£9,342.58	Dept Advise	7
£9,078.71	Not known	8
£9,011.75	Deceased no monies in account	9
£8,574.93	Unrecoverable	10
£8,507.47	Deceased no monies in account	11
£8,041.00	Dept Advise	12
£7,939.75	Deceased, no monies in estate	13
£7,513.05	Unrecoverable	14
£7,227.44	Deceased, no monies in estate	15
£7,188.09	Unrecoverable	16
£6,807.52	Irrecoverable	17
£6,491.27	Deceased - no monies in estate	18
£6,393.53	Unrecoverable	19
£6,006.73	Unrecoverable	20
£5,743.90	Deceased, no monies in estate	21
£5,356.89	Statute Barred	22
£5,295.19	Deceased - no monies in estate	23
£5,269.96	Irrecoverable	24
£5,207.72	Statute Barred	25
£5,031.52	Unrecoverable	26
Case Number	Further Details	
1	Past Representative of Client 1 has moved to Philippines and his current address is unknown. There is protracted correspondence on this case in which Past Representative of Client 1 advises he sold his mother's (the Client's) property and paid off all her debts with proceeds. The Council is now appointee for Client so the debt is not accruing. As we cannot trace Past Representative of Client there is little prospect of recovery. This is also the advice from Legal Services	
2	No estate per probate search, final account sent to son who is Representative of Client 2, no trace of son at that address now, only other relative is daughter living in Turkey. No prospect of recovery.	
3	Final account sent to son. Son not executor of estate, and advises in any case that the only asset is Client's home which Client 3's partner (widow) still lives in. Debt is from 2007. OPG search reveals no-one with Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) or Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) and even if there was, the estate would have been dispersed some years ago. No prospect of recovery.	

- 4 Final account sent to daughter's last known address in Kensington, returned marked gone away. Enquiries to solicitor on case paper ascertained no estate to speak of. Case at a dead end.
- 5 Made bankrupt Feb 12. No funds to repay creditors
- 6 Recommended for write-off no information on file
- 7 Deceased - no monies in estate
- 8 Recommended for write-off no information on file
- 9 Evidence provided to show no funds in estate.
- 10 Son & DWP appointee was not paying care charges so Wirral Council took over appointeeship. Final account sent to address held for son in Sep 09 but occupier returned post saying he had lived there since Feb 09. Nursing Home report family as notoriously hard to contact. No prospect of recovery.
- 11 Evidence provided to show no funds in estate.
- 12 No monies; due to case management issues within PFU this debt was allowed to accrue. Former PFU manager paid visit to family to attempt to resolve.
- 13 Final account sent to incorrect address, executors not notified of debt and estate dispersed.
- 14 Client 14 was billed £63.95 per week for residential care based on her entitlement to Income Support, but her husband never claimed it for her. No prospect of recovery now.
- 15 Family represent that they were misinformed that care wasn't charged until £23k capital limit. Also no money left in estate.
- 16 No capital and on basic welfare benefits prior to Wirral Council becoming appointee in 2010. No next of kin. No prospect of recovery.
- 17 Recommended for write-off no information on file
- 18 No next of kin no-one has EPA/LPA, case at a dead end
- 19 Client 19 deceased 15.8.07, final account not issued until 23.4.08, addressed to deceased wife. Solicitors queried account June 2008, WBC took 3 months to respond to query then did not follow up. Debt close to statute barring, estate will have been distributed some years ago, little prospect of recovery.
- 20 Debt not pursued and Client 20 is now in long term residential care has no capital and only receives his personal allowance which cannot be used to pay instalments. No prospect of recovery.
- 21 Final account sent to deceased at nursing home 11 months after death. No prospect of recovery
- 22 Statute barred
- 23 Unable to pursue as advised by Legal Services. Letter on file from son to say no monies left to pay debt after funeral. Son does not hold any responsibility for payment as debt in mother's name.
- 24 Recommended for write-off no information on file
- 25 Statute barred
- 26 No next of kin known to address debt with. Next of kin vacated Wirral address and cannot be found.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11th JULY 2013

SUBJECT	LIVERPOOL CITY REGION - COMBINED AUTHORITY
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the proposal to create a Combined Authority for the Liverpool City Region in order to improve governance in the sub-region and access national funding opportunities that will be devolved from central government.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to support in principle the agreement by Liverpool City Region Council leaders and the Mayor of Liverpool to conduct a review and progress proposals to establish a Combined Authority across the sub-region, subject to further detailed discussions on the power and functions of a Combined Authority between constituent local authorities.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The recent spending review announced the creation of a £2 billion Single Local Growth Fund to be operation in April 2015 in response to the recommendations outlined within the Heseltine Review. Central government has outlined that access to this funding will be devolved to Local Enterprise Partnerships through a 'single pot' and will require strong governance arrangements to be in place at a sub-region level to manage the 'single pot' and access national funding.
- 3.2 The Liverpool City Region is in a position to take advantage of the Government's policy reform agenda, enabling it to perform to its full potential. However, this will require a new model of governance that demonstrates strong financial and democratic accountability and, creating a robust legal entity for the LCR and allowing long-term strategic decisions to be taken at the city region level.
- 3.3 Given these circumstances, maintaining present governance arrangements in the Liverpool City Region is not an option: the rebalancing of the City Region economy is not happening quickly enough; historic structural challenges, a better collective view on resource allocation is required; and there is a lack of coordination of delivery structures and bespoke solutions at the right regional level.
- 3.4 It should also be noted that other City Regions are in advanced discussions in developing their governance arrangements facilitated by existing legislation and

there is a risk that the Liverpool City Region will miss out on development opportunities and access to national funding opportunities if action is not taken.

- 3.5 The model proposed for review by Council leaders and the Mayor of Liverpool for future City Region governance is the Combined Authority; a sub-regional governance structure that enables relevant local authorities to work jointly to deliver improvements in economic development, regeneration and transport across a sub-region.
- 3.6 A Combined Authority, where established, will take on the functions and responsibilities for economic development and regeneration from the relevant Councils and, where one exists, the functions of the Integrated Transport Authority. It provides a mechanism for governing and managing these functions across the sub-region.
- 3.7 A Combined Authority will deliver greater transparency in the decision making process in the Liverpool City Region. Meetings of the Combined Authority will be held in public and minutes will be published. It will strengthen collaboration and joint working between local authorities in order to promote economic growth and also allow Wirral to better establish its position and interests within the LCR. A Combined Authority will also give the City Region a more effective voice in influencing Government policy and investment decisions, as well allowing for greater freedom and flexibilities from Government.
- 3.8 Cabinet are requested at this stage to agree in principle to conduct a review and progress proposals to establish a Combined Authority across the sub-region. Cabinet will be kept regularly updated on relevant discussions and negotiations that take place across the city region, and a report will be presented to a future Cabinet meeting which will outline the details of the final proposed model for approval as part of the Council's decision making process/

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 There is a risk that the Liverpool City Region will miss out access to major funding opportunities and other development opportunities should the appropriate action not be taken to strengthen its existing governance arrangements.
- 4.2 This report requests Cabinet to agree in principle the proposal to create a Combined Authority. A report will be prepared for a future Cabinet meeting that will outline in detail the proposals and a full assessment of relevant risks.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Governance within the Liverpool City Region (LCR) is in need of change and improvement in order to fully access future devolved funding from central government. Retaining City Region governance in its present form has been considered by the sub-region leaders and the Liverpool Mayor and not considered appropriate for the following reasons; current governance is not helping rebalance the LCR economy quickly enough; the structural issues highlighted remain issues; a more collaborative approach is required for change; and there is a lack of coordinated delivery structures at present.

- 5.2 Other options considered include the creation of a 'Supervisory Board'- a formal joint committee of Council leaders intended to provide democratic oversight to funding allocated to a LEP area, and the creation of a Liverpool City Region or Conurbation Mayor.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with the Liverpool City Region Leaders and the Mayor of Liverpool who have requested agreement in principle from individual local authorities to the creation of a Combined Authority at sub-region level.
- 6.2 Further consultation and engagement will take place with Elected Members regarding the final proposed model to establish a combined authority.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

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

- 8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 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 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 Governance within the Liverpool City Region (LCR) is in need of change and improvement in order to access future devolved funding opportunities. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet agree in principle to the creation of a Combined Authority across the Liverpool City Region, as an appropriate model for future governance.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11TH JULY 2013

SUBJECT:	SHARING SERVICES BETWEEN CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER AND WIRRAL COUNCILS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	JOE BLOTT, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR ANN MCLACHLAN GOVERNANCE AND IMPROVEMENT
KEY DECISION	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report covers the potential for sharing back office services between Wirral Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council.
- 1.2 The decision would promote both value for money and best practice, and underpin the delivery of services

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Cabinet received a report in May 2013 which outlined plans for our Transformation Programme. Cabinet confirmed one area to explore was the notion of shared services with other Councils shared services can mean many things. Often thought of as back office arrangements (transactional, operational or professional), councils and other public services are increasingly looking to share senior management, consider joint venture relationships with other public sector bodies and the private sector, and also move to shared front office services such as adult's and children's services.
- 2.2 Officers of both councils have been discussing the scope of potential sharing initially across a range of back office functions covering Finance, HR, Procurement, IT and Legal services.
- 2.3 An information 'baselining' exercise has been undertaken, covering these areas which will be used to support specific savings targets for Wirral Council, (including a delivery plan), and to highlight savings arising from sharing these services.
- 2.4 The two councils have already begun to share management of procurement services. Over the coming weeks we will determine the strategy & plan for a Collaborative Procurement Unit.
- 2.5 There is scope for further sharing across the entire back office, which if it is merged can give considerable savings. Following Cheshire West's local government reorganisation in April 2009, savings in corporate services exceeded 25%, and in recent years as further efficiencies have been made this has increased to over 40% of the original total.

- 2.6 Taking a similar approach to service design and delivery within Wirral would not only help to deliver the savings for Wirral already identified in a manner which supports and enhances a strong culture of governance and corporate delivery to underpin savings plans in other areas of the council and would add additional savings to both councils directly resulting from taking a shared approach to systems, people, buildings, working practices and the internal control environment. Work is underway with support from the LGA to achieve this.
- 2.7 Further work is needed to identify a detailed plan and timetable for the delivery of the savings, and it is envisaged that this would be provided for members in October of 2013, underpinning savings plans across a two or three year period.
- 2.8 One of the underlying principles of setting a strategy and delivery plan for shared Corporate Services will be to consider economic benefits for both councils, as well as delivering savings, together with a strong control environment and governance framework.
- 2.9 Cheshire West and Chester already share some back office services (ICT and transactional HR and Finance) with Cheshire East Council, and this will need to be considered and included within the future plans. Savings from sharing these services will of course accrue to all councils involved.
- 2.10 The shared service would be covered by a legal agreement, and in due course potentially utilise company or mutual structures.
- 2.11 Governance would be by establishing a joint committee of members, comprising three members from each Council, with full delegated Executive/Cabinet powers supported by a joint board of officers to oversee progress in achieving the plan and progression towards establishing a fully merged corporate service within the identified three year timescale. Decisions of this Board would be publically available and subject to scrutiny/challenge in the normal manner.

It is envisaged that the lead officers would be the two Directors of Resources, responsible for the implementation of the plans, with representation from legal, finance, HR and procurement to oversee progress. Progress would be overseen by the two Chief Executives.

- 2.12 Each council would clearly identify the relevant costs and liabilities. These would be shared on an equitable basis, and once agreed, this would be set out in the proposed report to members in October 2013.
- 2.13 There is considerable scope for expansion of the merged service for it to trade with/ provide services for other councils, either as full partners or on a service by service basis.

3.0 FURTHER AREAS OF SCOPE

- 3.1 There is also considerable scope for collaboration and sharing in a range of other services, and the latest position and potential is outlined below:

3.1.1 Community Budgets

The work Cheshire West & Chester Council have done on recently on Community Budgets, through the nationally recognised All Together Better programme, will also help us explore and develop new ways of integrated working for families with complex needs and frail elderly services. They have developed new designs and delivery models from which we can gain insight and learning to help the Council deliver improved outcomes and efficiencies in the Wirral.

3.1.2 People Commissioning & Public Health

There are likely to be opportunities for sharing scarce resources and for collaborative commissioning of public health across the two local authorities (and indeed with other local authorities). We will be exploring the potential afforded by the Cheshire and Merseyside collaborative public health service to develop these ideas. Combined spend and joint commissioning across the councils will lead to additional savings. It is both a unique and timely opportunity for both councils to drive a joint commissioning agenda for Public Health where the combined spend is estimated to be in the region of £20m. Knowledge and intelligence services are another area where we could look to identify where we can support the local authorities in strengthening their overall commissioning activity. We should seek to maximise all opportunities available to us through our collaborative commissioning work with the NHS. Areas for exploration are highlighted in Appendix 1.

3.1.3 Economic Development and Prosperity

There is much collaboration that takes place currently and will continue. Many residents of both Councils work in the adjoining area, with GM Vauxhalls as an example, employing significant numbers of Wirral residents. There is clear, positive promotion of areas for inward investment building on the success of the Wirral Waters project and job creation in Ellesmere Port.

Equally, both Councils are members of the Mersey Dee Alliance, which is a strategic partnership between Wirral, Cheshire West and Chester, Flintshire, Wrexham, Denbighshire, Merseytravel, Taith and the Welsh Assembly Government.

Opportunities are being investigated for potential collaboration around environmental and technical functions, but at this stage, none are proposed.

We continue to work together around the Mersey Dee Alliance and its significant contribution towards the Atlantic Gateway. To that extent we are already collaborating on some of our Prosperity agenda in supporting this activity. There will be opportunities to increase this collaboration and we will look at ways to work more collaboratively with the Cheshire and Warrington LEP. Broader opportunities are possible around asset management, property services and professional services around capital and project delivery. This area could bring some synergies and mutual support benefits.

A further area for examination could surround our mutual culture and leisure programmes. For example the Open golf tournament, a world recognised event, being hosted at Royal Liverpool, Hoylake in 2014 has great economic benefit to the whole region and that needs to be maximised. Event management to maximise the benefit across the area is something that we continue to work on and there is a real role for collaboration via Marketing Cheshire and working closer with Wirral.

4.0 TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGE AWARD

- 4.1 The Challenge Award, (Appendix 2), is available to support local authorities that are at the cutting edge of innovation for service transformation so that they are going further and faster in reengineering service delivery and achieving efficiency savings.
- 4.2 DCLG are looking to provide support (**major multi-authority awards**) for radical innovations involving two or more local authorities combining their operations across all or a major part of their service delivery and back office, whilst maintaining their separate identity and political representation. The combined arrangements meriting support could, for example, involve several local authorities coming together to create shared arrangements over their major services of adult social care and children's services, perhaps linked with novel approaches on commissioning, procurement and the use of assets. A further example might be where several local authorities decide to move to a single operation across all front-line service delivery and back office, coming together to share a single chief executive and management team, a single workforce, common IT systems, joint procurement and contracting and shared service delivery.
- 4.3 Given the nature of the proposals contained in this report it is believed we would have a strong case for success in this Challenge Award. The bid submission deadline is 14 July 2013. Members are asked to endorse the submission of a bid to this Fund to reflect the proposals set out in this report and the associated impact on the existing shared services arrangement between Cheshire West & Chester and Cheshire East.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 There is a range of risks associated with progressing the merged services, but all of these will be covered by a project risk register and managed appropriately.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Each council can choose to stand alone and continue with its existing plans.
- 6.2 Cheshire West and Cheshire can progress sharing of services with Cheshire East alone, which will also produce savings.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation at this stage has been limited to the Executives and senior officers of both Councils, however further consultation will be undertaken as the proposals progress.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 There are none specifically arising from this report.

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

- 9.1 There will be some upfront initial investment, and the details of this, plus the related savings arising will be included within the October report.

- 9.2 Both Councils are currently undertaking a baseline assessment to determine the level of activity and cost of back office processes and third party spend across their organisations. From this the Councils will develop detailed plans for sharing services and delivering financial benefits. These will be reported in October.

In broad terms, the level of current corporate services function cost for the two councils is some £68m.

The potential for generating efficiencies across finance, HR, payroll, procurement, ICT and other corporate processes, and their related areas of support administration, is very significant. We need to evaluate each service but savings could be as high as 10%- 25% of these costs, when taking into account the benefits of simplifying, standardising and sharing processes and ICT platforms across both councils. The sharing of these services with Cheshire West & Chester Council gives us the option to rapidly accelerate the delivery of financial efficiencies whilst maintaining our business critical services. In Cheshire we have a potential partner who has proven they can deliver this scale and pace of change.

Work is ongoing to firm this up. This will cover specific areas of saving, timing and values. It will also identify to which Council the savings will appropriately accrue recognising relative levels of resourcing and investment in shared activities.

- 9.3 To realise the very significant financial benefits set out above will require shared leadership, management and service operations to be established across corporate services and supporting process areas. The plans to be developed and reported in the October report will set out the organisational options and designs for how the shared service could be structured and the mechanisms for achieving this. These plans will enable high quality corporate services to be maintained for both organisations whilst ensuring that the benefits of process standardisation, economies of scale, flexibility of resource deployment, and shared IT platforms can be secured.

These plans will set out how, when and where we can integrate the Council's corporate services operations with those of Cheshire West & Chester Council. It will also set out where it may be appropriate for our transactional services to be provided through the current Cheshire Shared service operation (that is the shared service operation currently in existence between Cheshire West & Chester and Cheshire East Council).

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There will be a legal agreement covering these arrangements, which protects the interests of both councils.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 No impact specifically identified at this stage, but this will be considered as the project develops and is implemented.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 No impact specifically identified at this stage.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 No impact specifically identified at this stage.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 14.1 That the proposal to explore sharing all back office services (BOS) be approved, with the medium term aim of a fully merged shared corporate service;
- 14.2 That a report with detailed proposals and indicative timescales be brought back to members in October to provide assessment of financial and service impact and potential benefits for both councils.
- 14.3 That both councils endorse a concordat, setting out the direction of travel.
- 14.4 To approve a joint submission for funds from the DCLG's Transformation Challenge Award.
- 14.5 That no vacancies arising in a BOS area be automatically advertised without prior reference to the shared arrangements. Further, consideration is given to 'one lead' in each BOS area, with the successful candidate spending their first six months in the Council of the unsuccessful candidate. Consideration also to other relevant posts, possible areas of shared responsibility.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 15.1 Sharing a corporate services office between the two councils will enable strong financial, resource management and governance for both councils, and will provide a stronger platform for the development of shared back office services with Cheshire East, and in due course other councils.
- 15.2 This is an opportunity for both councils to make savings whilst prioritising strength and excellence in joined up corporate services, improving services, the customer experience and at the same time allowing some protection for frontline services in the face of continuing austerity in public services.

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APPENDICES

Appendix One – Potential for Shared Commissioning or Shared Services

Appendix Two – Transformational Change Award – DCLG

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

APPENDIX 1

Potential areas for shared commissioning or shared services between Wirral's People Directorate and CWAC's Strategic Commissioning Directorate.

Strategic Level

To undertake some early work to utilise collective intelligence and knowledge to collaborate. This could be done through joining up our Public Health activity. Work with health colleagues in CCGs, AT and CSU to better understand and influence a whole systems approach to the local issues impacting upon health and social care services. Learning from Altogether Better could inform this work. This would include developing the role as joint commissioners or enabling lead commissioning arrangements to be considered in some areas.

To engage health colleagues with the concept of developing a community asset approach which would influence a broader public sector reform agenda encouraging behavioural change and delivering improved outcomes with a lower cost base. Pioneer bids start to articulate this and although we do not have a joint bid with Wirral patient flows could present us with an opportunity to explore the potential for integrated teams.

Shared Learning and experience

To map the priority areas of focus which would yield maximum outcomes and benefits to include sharing intelligence, IT systems to influence the thinking about developing new delivery models, cultural change and multi agency working. This approach would also provide benefit to partners who need to move quickly to improve in particular areas.

To learn from differing approaches to changing organisational cultures for example in social care but also in encouraging mind set change in other parts of the organisation and with partner agencies. Liquid Logic is a good example of this and we have an officer working with Wirral now for 2 days a week initially.

Children's and Adults Services - Potential areas for further collaboration

Early discussions have been held to explore potential opportunities to deliver collaborative efficiencies across authorities, including Halton, to identify alternative delivery models and broader synergies across the organisations both at back office and front facing service level. The approach to schools - the statutory requirements placed on LA's but also a collaborative approach to a traded service offer.

Public Health

Shared commissioning - commissioning for outcomes and as we share the same health provider drugs and alcohol re-commissioning could be explored.

Public health services re-commissioning – to review re-commissioning plans to explore whether there is the potential to re-commission on either a wider footprint or to utilise resources jointly to re-commission (eg drugs and alcohol services, sexual health, school nursing, infection control etc)

Knowledge, intelligence and consultation – to identify the potential to use KIC services collectively or collaborate.

Core offer to NHS commissioners – to map key areas of work and to understand whether a 'core offer' could be undertaken to CCGs on a wider footprint

It needs to be borne in mind that we collectively already collaborate and contribute to the CHAMPS service which undertakes elements of the above so we need to exercise caution that we do not duplicate further.

Operational activity

Transport - there could be options different outcomes for Children, Adults and the fleet we both use.

Public Sector Mutual – We are exploring if you have services that you might fit with the public Sector Mutual.

Commissioning for transitions in Learning Disability particularly autism could be explored.

This approach would require managers and staff to collaborate and share approaches to service transformation to not only share learning but to consider current delivery models which could be enhanced by scaling up across authorities and deliver greater benefits for all.



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Brandon Lewis MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

*Department for Communities and Local
Government*
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

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Our Ref: ER/BL/001969/13
Your Ref: RWP/TK
Date: 27 March 2013

To: The Leader
Local authorities in England

Dear Leader,

TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGE AWARD

I wrote to you on 21 March inviting expressions of interest from areas for support from the new network we are establishing to spread learning from the four Whole-Place Community Budget pilots and to work directly with local areas to co-design practical public service reforms. When announcing the network I also set out our plans for the new £9 million Transformation Challenge Award to support local authorities that are radically overhauling how they do business. I am now writing to invite bids from local authorities, either individually or from groups of two or more authorities, for support from the Challenge Award

The Transformation Challenge Award

This Challenge Award is available to support local authorities, including fire and rescue authorities, that are at the cutting edge of innovation for service transformation so that they are going further and faster in re-engineering service delivery and achieving efficiency savings. Such authorities can be exemplars for other local authorities across the country.

Accordingly, we are looking to provide support (**major multi-authority awards**) for radical innovations involving two or more local authorities combining their operations across all or a major part of their service delivery and back office, whilst maintaining their separate identity and political representation. The combined arrangements meriting support could, for example, involve several local authorities coming together to create shared arrangements over their major services of adult social care and children's services, perhaps linked with novel approaches on commissioning, procurement and the use of assets. A further example might be where several local authorities decide to move to a single operation across all front-line service delivery and back office, coming together to share a single chief executive and management team, a single workforce, common IT systems, joint procurement and contracting, and shared service delivery.

We also recognise that local authorities may wish to develop such combinations as part of wider public service reforms in their area, involving other public and private sector service providers and drawing on support from the new network.

We are also prepared to provide support (**authority awards**) for local authorities (either individually or jointly), which are pursuing particularly innovative measures for delivering efficiencies, increasing resilience, and giving better value for money for taxpayers. In addition we are also making funds from the Transformation Challenge Award available to support local authorities in receipt of Efficiency Support Grant.

Accessing the Transformation Challenge Award

Local authorities (either individually or jointly), or groups of two or more authorities, wishing to take advantage of either **major multi-authority awards** or **authority awards** should by 14 July 2013 submit to the Department their bid for funds from the Award, setting out the innovative proposals for which they are seeking support. Bids should include a description of the proposed innovations and why the authority or group of authorities considers them to be at the cutting edge of innovation, estimates of the transitional costs of implementing the innovations and of the expected resulting savings, and in the case of a group of authorities, details of council resolutions confirming support for creating the group and implementing the proposed innovations.

We will select bids for awards, and the amount of any award, having regard to the total resources available, the number and nature of proposals received, including the scale of combination in group proposals and the level of innovation, and the estimates of costs and savings of each proposal. The intention, if sufficient bids meriting support are received, is to provide several major multi-authority awards and up to 30 authority awards. Major multi-authority awards may be up to £2m., with authority awards in the range £50k to £500k.

Further information on the Transformation Challenge Award, particularly on making bids and the basis of selection is set out in the annex to this letter

This is an important opportunity for your authority and I look forward to receiving your bid.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

BRANDON LEWIS MP

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING

11TH JULY 2013

SUBJECT:	CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	FIONA JOHNSTONE (DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEAD OF POLICY & PERFORMANCE)
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR ANN MCLACHLAN (GOVERNANCE AND IMPROVEMENT)
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The aim of this report (Appendix 1) is to outline the proposed performance management report to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan for 2013/14.
- 1.2 It translates the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan into a coherent set of performance outcome measures and targets. They will be used to evaluate the achievement of strategic priorities over the next year of the plan.
- 1.3 It is anticipated that the development of the Corporate Plan will be an iterative process during 2013/14 based on the feedback and requirements of elected members and portfolio leads. It will run in parallel to the wider development of the underpinning business planning and performance management infrastructure within the council (e.g. Performance Management Framework Policy, electronic provision of performance information to elected members, transition from targets to outcomes).

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 As part of the second phase of the development of the Corporate Plan, a set of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time related) outcome measures have been developed with each of the three Strategic Directorates and the Corporate function (Neighbourhoods & Engagement and Public Health, Policy & Performance).
- 2.2 A series of business planning sessions were organised with each Strategic Directorate designed to convert the objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan into a set of strategic outcome measures aligned to organisational resources, systems and employees.
- 2.3 To ensure alignment of outcome measures to organisational resources, systems and employees the planning sessions were comprised of a multi-disciplinary team of corporate support services (e.g. HR, Risk, Finance, Policy and Performance & Business Intelligence).
- 2.4 Strategic Directors determined the outcome indicators contained within the performance report and agreed (and signed off) the following parameters (developed by their teams) which underpin their on-going performance management:

- 2013/14 Plan
 - 2013/14 Plan trajectory (see Appendix 2)
 - 2013/14 Performance tolerance levels (determine RAG [Red, Amber, Green] status)
 - Head of Service responsible for delivery of target
- 2.5 Corporate Plan performance will be monitored on a monthly basis against the parameters agreed as part of the business planning process (e.g. RAG tolerance levels). A number of indicators are only available on a quarterly basis, in line with the availability of data.
- 2.6 The outputs from this monitoring process will be performance managed proactively on an exception basis. The system is designed to promote a “no surprises” approach to performance management.
- 2.7 Heads of Service responsible for the delivery of targets must complete an exception report and delivery plan for all indicators which are under performing (e.g. red RAG rated indicators). Appendix 2 illustrates the pro-forma which will be used to capture this information.
- 2.8 Monthly Corporate Plan performance reports will be produced and made available (to support corporate challenge) in line to support:
- Monthly DMTs
 - Monthly Portfolio Lead briefings
 - Quarterly Audit, Risk, Governance and Performance meetings
 - Quarterly Policy and Performance Committees
- 2.9 The corporate plan will be underpinned by a hierarchy of metrics captured in Directorate, Service and Team plans.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The performance management framework is aligned to the risk management strategy. At present no risks are identified in relation to the latest version of the Corporate Plan performance report.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 N/A

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Corporate plan drafted based on the feedback generated by the What Really Matters public consultation.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 N/A

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

- 7.1 Financial implications of undertaking the actions to deliver the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate. Financial approval of the contents of this report will be sought following the initial review at CESG.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Legal implications of undertaking the actions to deliver the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate. Legal approval of the contents of this report will be sought following the initial review at CESG.

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 N/A

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 N/A

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 12.1 Cabinet are requested to indicate their agreement with the proposed dashboard, and to refer this proposal to Council for approval.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 13.1 To ensure that the report provides elected members with the information required to evaluate the delivery of the three strategic priorities identified by the Corporate Plan.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Tony Kinsella**
Head of Performance
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan Performance Report (2013/14)
Appendix 2 – Corporate Plan Performance Report (2013/14) Technical Specification
Appendix 3 – Exception/Delivery Plan Template

REFERENCE MATERIAL

N/A

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet and Council meetings (agreement of the Corporate Plan)	February 2013

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WIRRAL COUNCIL
Corporate Plan Performance Report as at 31st May 2013



No.	Description	Data Source	Performance 2012/13	Target/Plan 2013/14	YTD Target 2013/14	YTD Performance	Monthly Trend	Reporting Period	Accountable Officer (Head of Service)	Comments
DOMAIN 1: FAMILIES AND WELLBEING										
Children and Young People Department										
1	Rate of Children Looked After (per 10,000 population 0 – 17)	SSDA 903 Return	100.1	95.7	99.7	98.9		Apr - May	S Garner (Acting)	
2	Rate of Children in Need (per 10,000 population 0 – 17)	Children in Need Census	415.5	396.8	420.3	435.6		Apr - May	S Garner (Acting)	
3	Preventative Services – Qualitative Measure (Placeholder)	A qualitative outcome metric to evaluate the impact of redesigning Family Support Services (as a result of a Peer Review by the Children's Improvement Board) on the experience of families is currently being developed (during Q2). It will examine the experience of users and staff.							S Pimblett	
Department of Adult Social Services										
4	Safeguarding: % of Safeguarding Referrals actioned within 24hrs	SWIFT	98.2%	100%	100%	97.9%		May	J Evans	
5	Permanent admissions of older people (aged 65 and over) to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population	Office for National Statistics (ONS)	909	695	835	816		May	C Beyga	2012/13 performance previously a forecast outturn (835). Performance now ratified and updated.
DOMAIN 2: REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT										
Environment & Regulation										
6	Number of interventions put in place for travel plans and transport (to improve accessibility to employment & opportunities)	Travel Solutions	868	1,000	142	334		Apr - May	M Smith	
7	To maintain local environmental quality (LEQ) of litter, detritus, & dog fouling in main gateways and shopping areas	Local Survey Data	92%	92%	90% actual (90% cumulative)	NYA		-	M Smith	Quarterly measure.
Housing & Community Safety										
8	Number of new affordable homes	Housing Strategy Team (Homes & Communities Agency MIS)	202 (forecast outturn)	322	40	NYA		-	I Platt	Quarterly measure.
9	Number of empty properties returned to use or demolished through local authority action	M3 Northgate Database	250 (forecast outturn)	255	10	NYA		-	I Platt	Quarterly measure.
10	Number of interventions to improve private rented sector properties	MVM Database	New Indicator	400	100	NYA		-	I Platt	Quarterly measure.
11	Number of adaptations completed	MVM Database	1,523	1,860	465	NYA		-	I Platt	Quarterly measure.
Regeneration										
12	Jobs created and safeguarded (via Invest Wirral)	Invest Wirral	1,580	925	110	173		Apr - May	D Ball	
13	Apprenticeships supported (Wirral Apprentice Programme)	Hanlon Information System	New Indicator	50	TBC	NYA		-	D Ball	The Wirral Apprentice Programme is still under development. It is anticipated that it will be completed and agreed between July and August 2013. Initial programme results are expected by September 2013.
14	Number of working age people claiming out-of-work benefits (economic in-activity)	NOMISWEB	16.1%	15.6%	15.8%	NYA		-	D Ball	This is a 6-monthly measure. Performance data will be available in August 2013.

WIRRAL COUNCIL
Corporate Plan Performance Report as at 31st May 2013



No.	Description	Data Source	Performance 2012/13	Target/Plan 2013/14	YTD Target 2013/14	YTD Performance	Monthly Trend	Reporting Period	Accountable Officer (Head of Service)	Comments
DOMAIN 3: TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES										
Resources										
15	Chargeable Services (% achievement versus best practice)	KPMG Annual Study	TBC	Upper Middle Quartile (Feb 2014)	-	-		-	P Timmins	Following a report presented to the Chief Executive Strategic Group (5/06/2013), it was agreed; - to trial Trading Accounts in a central service; - to implement Trading Accounts for Legal Refresh (the recharge system), and - to commission an external company to recommend appropriate recharge system.
16	Adult Care Packages supported by Direct Debit (as a %)	Accounts Payable Ledger	NIL	30%	0%	0%		May	P Timmins	Department on target to have the system available by the end of September 2013, to support the introduction of direct debit payments from October 2013.
17	Establishment reduction compared to savings assumption	Establishment List	N/A	100%	-	-		-	P Timmins	The process of aligning finance salary budgets and Human Resource establishment records has commenced (first meeting on 11/06/2013). Performance will be measured from July 2013.
18	Budget savings achieved	General Ledger	N/A	£48.4m (100%)	£9.90m	£9.90m		Apr	P Timmins	April savings are in line with forecast. May savings will be available following the Chief Executive Strategic Group meeting on 18/06/2013.
Human Resources										
19	Agency/Consultancy costs	General Ledger	£2,000,000	£1,500,000	£166,667	NYA		-	C Hyams	Human Resource are currently developing a process that will enable them to provide this data accurately on a timely monthly basis.
20	Sickness absence: The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	M44 Form	10.50 days	10.50 days	0.73days	0.75days		Apr	C Hyams	April is a provisional figure as data is still being collated. Performance data for May will be available around 20th June 2013. The sickness level overall has improved from March 2013, when it was 0.81days.
DOMAIN 4: CORPORATE										
Public Health, Policy & Performance										
21	Alcohol-related admissions to hospital	Secondary User Service (SUS)	2,486.9	2,355.2	2355.2	2283.5		Apr	J Webster	2012/13 performance previously a forecast outturn (2,296.50).
22	Smoking quitters (4 weeks)	Stop Smoking Service	2,738 (forecast outturn)	3,500	204	NYA		-	J Webster	By the nature of this indicator, the results are always 4 weeks behind and the reporting of the data is a further 4 weeks behind (8 weeks in total) because the interventions are carried out in the community, and the paperwork is sent to the Stop Smoking Service to input onto database. The provider is in the process of working with both intermediates and pharmacy to implement outcome based/real-time reporting systems.
23	Under 75 mortality rate from all cardiovascular diseases (including heart disease and stroke)	Office for National Statistics (ONS)	68.7	64.0	68.0	NYA		-	J Webster	Awaiting access to mortality files to be able to report this measure. This is a national problem that is currently being resolved.
Neighbourhoods & Engagement										
24	Constituency plans in place for 2014/15	-	-	Mar 2014	Mar 2014	-		-	E Degg	Annual measure.
25	Partial devolution of services to be delivered at constituency level	-	-	Sep 2013	Subject to agreement.			-	E Degg	6-monthly measure -performance data will be available in September 2013.
26	Full devolution of services to be delivered at constituency level	-	-	Mar 2014	Subject to agreement.			-	E Degg	Annual measure.
27	Local Government Equality Framework: 'To be an 'excellent council'	-	-	Amber (Mar 2014)	Mar 2014	-		-	E Degg	Annual measure.

Corporate Plan Performance Report: Technical Specification Part 1



Indicator		Frequency	Performance 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14
1	Rate of Children Looked After (per 10,000 population 0 – 17)	Monthly	100.1	95.7	100	99.7	99.2	98.8	98.3	97.9	97.5	97	96.6	96.1	95.7	95.7
2	Rate of Children in Need (per 10,000 population 0 – 17)	Monthly	415.5	396.8	420.8	420.3	419.7	419.1	418.5	417.9	415.7	413.2	410.4	407.4	403.7	396.8
3	Preventative Services – Qualitative Measure (Placeholder)	Monthly	New Indicator	TBC	Qualitative Indicator to be determined											
4	Safeguarding: % of Safeguarding Referrals actioned within 24hrs	Monthly	98.2%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
5	Permanent admissions of older people (aged 65 and over) to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population	Monthly	909	695	835	817	799	780	758	743	732	724	718	710	703	695
6	Number of interventions put in place for travel plans and transport (to improve accessibility to employment & opportunities)	Monthly	868	1,000	65	142	205	265	318	403	545	652	703	795	897	1,000
7	To maintain local environmental quality (LEQ) of litter, petritus, & dog fouling in main gateways and shopping areas	Quarterly	92%	92% (cumulative)	90% actual (90% cumulative)			88% actual (89% cumulative)			94% actual (90.1% cumulative)			96% actual (92% cumulative)		
8	Number of new affordable homes	Quarterly	202	322	40			117			220			322		
9	Number of empty properties returned to use or demolished through local authority action	Quarterly	250	255	10	20	30	40	60	80	100	120	160	200	240	255
10	Number of interventions to improve private rented sector properties	Quarterly	New Indicator	400	100			200			300			400		
11	Number of adaptations completed (and average cost of adaptations for year)	Quarterly	1,523	1,860	465			930			1395			1860		
12	Jobs created and safeguarded (via Invest Wirral)	Quarterly	1,580	925	20	110	231	296	351	462	562	639	693	748	836	925
13	Apprenticeships supported (Wirral Apprentice Programme)	Monthly	New Indicator	50	TBC											
14	Number of working age people claiming out-of-work benefits (economic in-activity)	6-monthly	16.1%	15.6%					15.8%					15.6%		
15	Chargeable Services (% achievement versus best practice)	Monthly	TBC	Upper Middle Quartile	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Upper Middle Quartile	Upper Middle Quartile
16	Adult Care Packages supported by Direct Debit (as a %)	Monthly	NIL	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	20%	25%	25%	30%	30%

Corporate Plan Performance Report: Technical Specification Part 1



Indicator	Frequency	Performance 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14
17 Establishment reduction compared to savings assumption	Monthly	N/A	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
18 Budget savings achieved	Monthly	N/A	£48.40m	£9.90m	£14.90m	£16.70m	£18.60m	£20.60m	£23.60m	£26.60m	£29.90m	£33.20m	£36.50m	£39.80m	£48.40m
19 Agency/Consultancy costs	Monthly	£2,000,000	£1,500,000	£166,667	£333,333	£500,000	£666,667	£833,333	£1,000,000	£1,100,000	£1,200,000	£1,300,000	£1,366,667	£1,433,333	£1,500,000
20 Sickness absence	Monthly	10.50days	10.50days	0.73days	1.78days	2.58days	3.37days	4.01days	4.75days	5.74days	6.82days	7.70days	8.75days	9.68days	10.50days
21 Alcohol-related admissions to hospital	Monthly	2486.9	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2	2,355.2
22 Smoking quitters (4 weeks)	Monthly	2,738 (forecast outturn)	3,500	204	416	608	761	891	1,051	1,261	1,420	1,549	1,818	1,995	3,500
23 Under 75 mortality rate from all cardiovascular diseases (including heart disease and stroke)	Monthly	68.7	64.0	68.0	68.0	68.0	67.0	67.0	66.0	66.0	66.0	65.0	65.0	64.0	64.0
24 Constituency plans in place for 2013/14	Monthly	-	Mar 2014												Mar 2014
25 Partial devolution of services to be delivered at constituency level	Monthly	-	Sep 2013						Sep 2013						
26 Full devolution of services to be delivered at constituency level	Monthly	-	Mar 2014												Mar 2014
27 Local Government Equality Framework: To be an 'excellent council'	Monthly	-	Amber (Mar 2014)												Mar 2014

PERFORMANCE ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

This template is to be completed for ALL measures showing **RED** status of non-compliance against the specified target reported.

INDICATOR OVERVIEW	
Indicator Title	Rate of Children in Need (per 10,000 population 0 – 17)
Strategic Director Lead	C FISH
Departmental Lead	S Garner
Target	407.7

CURRENT SITUATION: Detail what the performance is for this measure and reason/s for non-compliance		
Performance this Period	428.2	+ / - Target : +5.05% (Tolerance RED=+2.5%)
Non-compliance reason		

ACTIONS: This describes what's necessary or how to achieve a 'green' score. This way everyone is clear on what is required and when; knows the expected outcome and how to achieve it .	
What (is required)	
How (will it be achieved)	<i>Are there any resource allocation required for specific activities?</i>
Who (will be responsible)	
When (will results be realised)	<i>Date required.</i>

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LGA Wirral Improvement Board

Key Messages

An update against outstanding actions was provided and key messages agreed. New members of the Improvement Board were welcomed by the Chair.

Councillor Ann McLachlan reported on progress, highlighting key developments in improving governance with key changes to the constitution now adopted by the Council. The scrutiny model has been strengthened, with all parties holding a Chair of each Policy & Performance Committee further progress has been made to develop the new neighbourhood model.

The Board were provided with the initial findings of the recent Peer Challenge. The review found that significant encouraging progress had been made but significant risks and challenges remain. A copy of the initial findings can be found below.

The Peer Challenge had highlighted the importance of Member and Officer development, the Board emphasised the importance of support for Councillors in their neighbourhoods and the community representatives.

The Board further highlighted the importance of the Shared Services work currently under way.

The Chief Executive provided an update on progress including the budget and corporate planning process. Plans to develop key transformational projects which are currently being considered were also outlined, a number of which are being supported with external expertise and partners. The Chief Executive also updated the Board regarding the management restructure and changes to terms and conditions.

Improvement Plan progress update

Fiona Johnstone updated the Board on both progress made against the Improvement Plan and the proposed approach to shaping future improvement plans that will be focussed on outcomes.

The Improvement Board are keen to ensure that consideration is given to the future role of the Improvement Board in continuing to support change. They also highlighted the importance of focussing on culture change moving forward.

The Board stressed the importance of shaping plans around the Council's long term future vision.

The Board agreed to review progress on constitutional changes and to examine members' involvement in risk management as part of the Boards future plans.

The Board's next meeting in July will receive a report that will consider what the high level outcomes should be for the Council to be able to show its effectiveness. These would be used by the Improvement Board to consider progress and to assess how best it can give support. A small working group led by the Chair of the Improvement Board will take this work forward prior to the meeting.

Change Management / Transformation – Presentation

Joe Blott, new Strategic Director of Resources and Transformation gave a presentation on his plans to deliver fundamental service reviews and transformational improvement. This can be found below.

The Board welcomed the presentation and highlighted the importance of building neighbourhood and customer resilience and ensuring outcomes, particularly around financial targets.

Transformation and Resources Improvement Journey

Presentation to **Wirral/LGA Improvement Board**

17 May 2013

Joe Blott
Strategic Director Transformation and Resources



Taking us from where we are now...

Our present state

Some good:

- Improved focus on customers
- Recognising our residents' complex needs
- Better partnership working
- Increasingly nimble/flexible/agile
- Being challenged to find more creative solutions
- Earlier intervention and prevention

But still more to do:

- Directorate silos and inward focus
- Isolation and lack of integration
- Not enough regard for customers
- Too easily tempted to take the path of least resistance
- Disempowered – can't do attitude
- Excuse of financial pressures

...to where we want to be

Our future state

- Elected Members play an active role as community leaders
- Employees are engaged and empowered – can do attitude
- We offer more personalised and customised services for the public – and work with partners to provide a seamless transition between different organisations
- People are able to help themselves and access support in ways that meet their needs
- We have efficient support services but the focus is on the frontline, providing services that make a positive difference to the lives of people across Wirral

Key challenges remain:

- Our budget
- Local, national, international financial position
- Impacts on our citizens:
 - Welfare Reforms
 - Complex needs
 - Skills and employment
 - Rising public expectations
 - Resources must be in a good position to enable us to be the Council we want to be
- A Council for the future – close working with Members to determine
- The key is Transformation

Changing the way we do things

- A Fundamental review of what services we provide
- How we provide them – who is best placed to deliver them?
- Continuous improvement

Our business approach:

- Lean and simple
- Value for money
- Short-term savings but focussed on the big picture
- Strong leadership

Our services:

- Organised around citizens, customers and communities
- Designed to catch problems early
- Delivered according to need and delivered by the 'best'
- Commissioned with partners

Our people:

- High performers
- The right people for the right jobs
- Contributors to change
- Challenge themselves and others
- Working flexibly
- A different culture

Our transformation programme

- Asset Management
- Technical Functions
- Neighbourhood Working
- Transforming Business Support
- Strategic Review of Leisure Services
- Strategic Commissioning
- Transforming Children's and Adult Services

Underpinned by:
values, principles and a customer focus

The challenge – creating the conditions for success

- Capacity to deliver
- Workforce – leadership and culture
- Business intelligence
- ICT – self serve ‘only one way’
- Governance

Transforming Adult and Children’s Services – Presentation

Clare Fish, new Strategic Director of Families and Wellbeing provided an overview of the challenges and opportunities for Families & Wellbeing Services, highlighting the four key themes that will underpin future work.

Julie Hassall, Director of Children’s Services then provided detailed presentations on work that is underway.

The Board welcomed the presentation and highlighted the following:

- Ensuring the future delivery model is aligned with the Council and partners budget planning process.
- Ensuring integration with the corporate culture change programme for both staff and residents.

Clare Fish highlighted the Improvement Plan that is in place for the Strategic Directorate that provides further details; this will be brought back to the Board. In addition, to allow full debate on the Adult Social Care element of the presentation, this will be considered at the next meeting.

Families and Wellbeing Improvement Journey

Presentation to
Wirral/LGA Improvement Board

17 May 2013

Clare Fish
Strategic Director Families and Wellbeing

Children and Young People Improvement Journey

Julia Hassall
Director of Children's Services

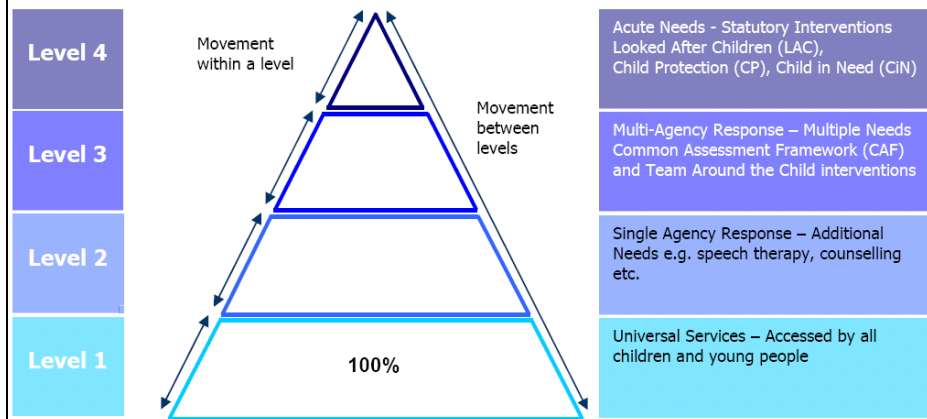
Where will we be by 2016....

- More children cared for at home
- More children in mainstream schools
- More children and families access local services through a single gateway
- More children ready for school
- More children achieving equally well
- More children who are in care are settled, secure and achieving good outcomes
- Children and young people with a disability & their carers experience a seamless, integrated service into adulthood
- All children feel safe and are safe

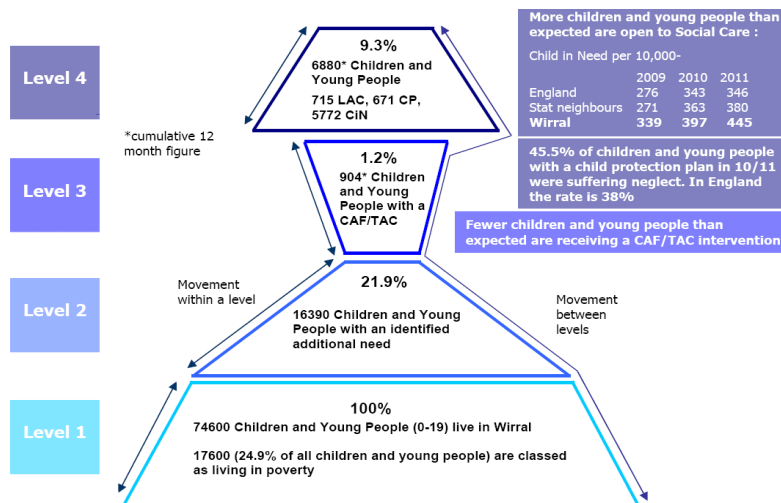
What
needs to
change and
why



Typical pyramid of need



Wirral 'pyramid' of need



Organising Children's Services differently.....

- **Universal Services** – partnerships & effective commissioning; champion of children, parents, communities. Core statutory functions & traded services; significantly reduced direct service provision
- **Targeted Services** – transparent and coherent approach to Early Help and preventative services; keep our robust approach to school improvement, but make it cross phase.....
- **Specialist Services** – joint SEND service (> all age disability service), social work emphasises the child's journey & impact of interventions to safeguard / improve children's life chances
- **Corporate Safeguarding** – robust partnership systems / arrangements to keep children, adults and families safe.

Priorities

- Implement the new structure (Universal / Targeted / Specialist services)
- Get the right people, in the right seats on the bus to drive the change
- Make the agreed savings to re-profile spend, re-prioritise service delivery and return a balanced budget
- Confirm transformational change to drive improvements and efficiencies
- Develop performance frameworks..... to be confident we will get to where we need to be!

Adults Improvement Journey

Graham Hodgkinson
Director of Adult Services

Improvement Journey

- 2010 CQC “adequate” in safeguarding and learning disability services
- Improvement Programme 2010-2013 to address safeguarding and personalisation issues
- May 2012 Safeguarding Peer Challenge undertaken
- June 2012 Adult Social Care Peer Review undertaken
- Jan 2013 Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care (TEASC)
- The Board endorsed the assessments of progress made to date.
- “Wirral’s willingness to access peer support and rigorous peer challenge has been evident.”

What needs to change and why

- Spend on Adult Social Care relatively low (bottom 25%) against comparators
- But; reflects mixed picture and opportunities for more creative working
- Older People
 - Relatively low spend, but high numbers supported
 - Too much reliance on residential and nursing care
 - Poor range of cheap low quality domiciliary care
 - Very low direct payments
- Disabled People
 - Relatively high spend, high unit costs
 - High numbers accessing day services
 - High numbers accessing nursing and residential care
 - Transition arrangements ineffective

Where will we be in 2016

- More effective care and health system
- Emphasis on neighbourhood delivery model
- Ambitious transformation programme
- Embedded co-production at strategic and operational level
- Clear targeted commissioning focus
- Coordinated and effective delivery to people across the whole Council

Organising services differently

- 3 to 5 year business model focus on changing the care offer
- Deliver ambitious transformation projects on budget
- Greater integration with NHS partners
- Identify 2014-16 savings to replace one-off 2013-14 support additional £8.8M
- In addition to 3 year Savings of £10.6M

Progress so far

- Improved culture and transparent leadership
- There is self-awareness, self assessment and openness to external challenges
- Improved commissioning capacity and plans
- Increasingly personalised approaches and a workforce up for change
- Commitment to improve services together in health and social care
- Safeguarding people more effectively across organisations

Peer Challenge Feedback, May 2013



Wirral Council Corporate Peer Challenge: follow up visit

Feedback from the peer team
May 2013

09.05.13

www.local.gov.uk

The peer challenge team

- Rob Vincent – former Chief Executive of Kirklees Council and Doncaster Council
 - Councillor Peter Smith – Leader of Wigan Council
 - Councillor Michael White – Leader of Havering Council
 - Jamie Morris – Executive Director, Walsall Council
 - Ian Simpson – Performance Improvement Consultant
 - Andy Bates – Principal Adviser (Peer Support) LGA
 - Paul Clarke – LGA Peer Challenge Manager
-

The process & purpose of peer challenge

Peer challenges are improvement-focussed and tailored to meet individual council's needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. The peers used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read. The team provide feedback as critical friends, not as assessors or inspectors.

Scope and 'brief' for the visit

- Follow up visit by the peer challenge team (from October 2012)
- Purpose of our visit is to help check and recognise progress made since the peer challenge by identifying:
 - notable successes since the peer challenge in Oct/Nov 2012
 - areas for further attention, improvement and development
- Particular emphasis on:
 - Financial risk management
 - Organisational development and transformation
 - Governance and decision-making

www.local.gov.uk

Messages from the peer challenge in October 2012

- You have a good grasp on the scale and urgency of the challenges you face.
 - The overall strategy you are working to is appropriate.
 - The approach, pace and sequencing of change makes sense. There are significant risks but no alternatives.
 - There is clear and visible leadership and an organisation that is up for the change.
 - There are underlying strengths in the organisation
 - Keep sharpening your strategic planning, risk management, and thinking ahead
-

Our recommendations – October 2012

1. Keep to your approach and sustain the pace. Keep tightening the programming and delivery. Hold your nerve.
 2. Keep the focus and pace on the budget challenges. Keep going on the long term vision in parallel (not in sequence).
 3. Make sure you have the capacity and skills when and where you need them – look within the organisation, plan ahead for filling gaps, continue to draw on the willingness of the sector and partners to support.
 4. Further develop your approach to asset management, office accommodation strategy, agile working (supported by effective ICT) and performance management, all of which will help to maximise your organisational capacity.
-

Our recommendations – October 2012

5. Continue your emphasis on good communications, plan ahead so that communications are timely and ensure an open dialogue. Ensure it is built into the way you do business.
6. As you strengthen the corporate capacity seize the opportunity to create a collective and cohesive leadership.
7. Keep assessing your risks. Review your corporate risk register and use it to inform planning and decision-making
8. Accelerate ground work on radical options for service delivery. Use learning from others in the sector.
9. Take the urgent steps you have identified to strengthen governance. Make sure you complete the full review of governance and decision-making thoroughly.
10. Don't take your eyes off the quality of the services you provide to the people of Wirral.

Overall impressions – May 2013

- Notable progress since the peer challenge in Oct 2012:
 - Organisation feels more confident and decisive about the issues it faces
 - External recognition of improvement and greater role in city region
 - Significant headway has been made to identify savings and begin to stabilise finances
 - Key changes to governance are being implemented and/or proposed
 - Learning and challenge has been sought from others
 - New corporate plan with clear priorities
- BUT significant challenges and risks remain.

Financial risk management

- You have rightly given intense attention to and got a better grip of the budget position. Significant headway on identifying savings.
 - But you still face major challenges during this year in delivering the identified savings. There remain substantial risks.
 - New savings options and decisions will become harder – don't underestimate the challenge.
-

Organisational development and transformation (1)

- Changes in attitude and behaviours
- Increased corporate leadership capacity. New director appointments seen as positive. Be visible.
- Strengthen corporate support functions (finance, HR, ICT, legal) for the long term. In moving forward consider the future style of the finance function.
- Important now to fully implement a performance system and culture
- There will be fewer managers – take care that they are well supported
- Keep an eye on indicators of organisational health, e.g. staff morale

Organisational development and transformation (2)

- Not yet a fully formed vision of the council of the future that drives and informs the transformation programme.
 - Programme needs further development:
 - Is it ambitious enough?
 - Are linkages, sequencing, and inter-dependencies clear?
 - Is their sufficient capacity to deliver?
 - Programme management and governance
 - Contribution to budget strategy
 - Ownership from the whole organisation
 - Let staff know what is happening and it how impacts on them
 - Take residents with you
-

Governance and decision-making

- Steps have been taken to improve and strengthen governance, e.g. scheme of delegation, constitutional changes, strengthened scrutiny
 - Openness and transparency in dealing with debts issue
 - Constituency committees – ambitious plans, good progress and partner buy-in.
 - Keep under review the constitutional changes to ensure genuine opportunities for debate and holding to account
 - PSB looks like it will work well. But think through how it relates to your ambition for the HWB and how partnerships fit together
-

Key issues to take forward

1. Continue emphasis on financial management – robust monitoring to ensure that savings are delivered
 2. Progress the thinking on the council of the future so that it drives and informs the transformation programme.
 3. Strengthen corporate functions to enable change to be delivered
 4. Continue to do things at pace, hold your nerve and be prepared to take the tougher decisions ahead
 5. Use your political and managerial leadership to promote cultural change
-

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET 11TH JULY 2013

SUBJECT:	<i>BROADBAND DELIVERY UK (BDUK)</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>HEAD OF REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>REGENERATION, HOUSING & PLANNING CLLR PAT HACKETT</i>
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update as to the progress of the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) project and seeks agreement on implementation issues that are needed to enable the project to proceed. The next steps are also outlined.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 It is Government policy to ensure the UK has widespread access to superfast broadband services. Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) is the body charged with delivering this aspiration through Local Authorities. The Government define widespread access as 90% of people receiving services at speeds in excess of 24 Mega bits per second (Mbps). Standard broadband is generally classed as 2 Mbps and that is the level of broadband required, for example, to use programmes such as BBC i-player. BDUK aims to ensure all communities have access to at least this level of broadband.
- 2.2 To this end BDUK has allocated £530m to fund infrastructure works across the country. This funding is focused on addressing what are called “white areas” where existing provision does not meet the superfast requirements and where the market is not able to deliver without public intervention. In the so-called white areas there is usually no commercial case for suppliers to invest in broadband technology and so public money is being used to ‘fill the gap’ to make the infrastructure investment plans commercially viable. This project will be providing what is essentially an open platform from which retail services can be offered by service providers. The project will not be operating or intervening in the retail service market.
- 2.3 BDUK have calculated an allocation to Merseyside of £5.4m based on the level of existing superfast provision. The ‘Merseyside’ area consists of Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral (excluding Halton). The Government’s allocation comes with a requirement that public match funding must be found and approval was granted on 26th March 2013 for £5.5m of ERDF monies giving the project a total of £10.9m. A private sector contribution, typically around 20% of the total investment will also be made the details of which will be known following the procurement process.
- 2.4 There are many benefits to the City Region in having greater access to superfast broadband. In summary it will:
- Improve the attractiveness of Wirral to inward investment;
 - Help improve business productivity and services;
 - Generate additional GVA for the City Region of around £50m;
 - Help bridge the digital divide and provide a platform for more efficient delivery of public services.

- 2.5 On 30th April 2012 Merseyside local authorities prepared and submitted a Local Broadband Plan (LBP). It was subsequently approved subject to resolution of the funding issues detailed below. The LBP details the investment plan for Merseyside and has been produced by a steering group of officers from partner Authorities and the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). With approval for the project to proceed there are now certain governance issues that need to be addressed. These are, the appointment of a lead contracting authority as the Accountable Body to act on behalf of all partner authorities, the delegation of decision making to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment to allow the project board to appoint an infrastructure supplier and the signing of a project consortia agreement.
- 2.6 For legal and procurement reasons a lead contracting authority is required. Liverpool City Council has agreed to undertake this role, subject to the agreement of the other Authorities and agreement that the costs for doing this will be funded largely through ERDF. This arrangement would need to be set out in an appropriate legal agreement between all Authorities, which also sets out the joint liability to all LAs arising from any litigation as a result of the procurement process or implementation of the project.
- 2.7 Liverpool have committed to the creation of a team consisting of a Programme Manager, a Programme Support Officer, a Procurement Lead, a Financial Lead, a Technical Adviser and a Legal Adviser. Based upon its experience with similar schemes BDUK recommended the creation of the team for an initial 12 month period although some resource will need to be maintained for years 2 and 3 of the project. Advice has been taken from BDUK on the roles and scale of resource required.
- 2.8 The team would work to a Project Board made up of representatives from all Authorities and would operate using Prince 2 project management principles. Most of this cost should be eligible for ERDF purposes and will be reclaimed through that process. Any non-eligible element of this would need to be found by individual Authorities.

3.0 DELIVERY ISSUES AND ERDF MATCH FUNDING

- 3.1 When this project was first muted there were two infrastructure suppliers, BT and Fujitsu available on the BDUK's procurement framework. Fujitsu have subsequently made a commercial decision to withdraw from the process leaving BT as a single supplier. BT are concerned about the time constraints placed on them for delivery by ERDF. The ERDF team in Communities and Local Government (CLG) are seeking practical completion of the project by December 2014 although possibly this may be extended to June 2015.
- 3.2 The ERDF application was designed to firstly match the £5.4m BDUK resource and secondly to fund business support activity and project management costs on a 50-50 basis. The approval in total amounts to £5.5m and includes;
- £4.4m Capital Infrastructure – tendered as part of the BDUK framework process,
 - £1.1m of revenue funding in total with £650k allocated for a business support / demand stimulation programme (to be tendered separately) and £450k for programme office costs.
- 3.3 A number of actions are being taken in order to determine the best way forward and to better position the project in terms of fast-tracking delivery works. This includes meetings with BT to understand their capacity issues and concerns. In addition options around phasing of ERDF match funding are being explored so that some

funding could potentially be used 'up front' to better fit with ERDF spending timeframes.

- 3.4 For the purposes of the project the start date was April 2013 with the actual likely contracting date of August 2013. The practical completion date for the project is June 2015 with financial completion as July 2015. The ERDF funding element has added a layer of complexity to the programme with regard to timing, eligibility and contractual issues. These are being dealt with but they remain delivery risk factors.
- 3.5 BDUK funding is available only to fund capital costs and is expected to be matched in its entirety by other public funding. The approach adopted has been to cover the vast majority of all other costs through ERDF so as to reduce the need for Local Authority support. However it has not been possible to include all costs. While the ERDF application is being appraised (January – March) there have been project management, technical support, legal, financial and procurement costs to cover. Liverpool Council are asking each partner Local Authority to reimburse those costs which it is not able to absorb or cover elsewhere. These total an amount of £50,542 including the above work areas and general costs relating to engagement in BDUK training sessions. These costs have been split on a pro rata basis as shown, the principle of which was agreed by the Liverpool City Region Cabinet 25 January 2013. The split is based on the estimated percentage of investment to be received by each Authority.

Authority	Shared Costs Pro Rata on Investment Share
Wirral	£17,690
Liverpool	£15,163
St Helens	£6,065
Knowsley	£6,065
Sefton	£5,560

- 3.6 Management Costs April - August 2013. The ERDF funding is eligible from April 2013 however since there is no BDUK match funding until August when the capital contract is expected to be signed it has been necessary to utilise Liverpool and Knowsley staff as match to meet this gap. Consequently there is no anticipated cost to the other Local Authorities for this period.

4.0 TIMETABLE AND NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 As the delivery timetable is extremely challenging all avenues are being explored to fast track the preparation for procurement and to put in place all the necessary approvals and to lobby for greater flexibility with regard to funding constraints. The indicative timetable is as follows:

- Invitation To Tender (ITT) issued April 2013,
- Supplier response due to be returned within 10 weeks (at latest w/c 24th June),
- Tender Evaluation including a Value for Money Assessment,
- Partnership Consortium Agreement to be agreed and signed,
- Supplier contract agreed July 2013,
- Award of Contract August 2013
- Project delivery end of August 2013 to end of 2015,
- Engagement with BT and BDUK on timing and funding issues – ongoing.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 A broadband infrastructure supplier will be procured and this contracted supplier will take on the risk of surveying then designing, building and maintaining the new infrastructure. Local Authorities are not buying the physical assets and will not be responsible for managing or maintaining them. The supplier will model expected customer take-up and state aid regulations allow that where this exceeds planned uptake the Local Authority can claw-back excess profit and reinvest in additional infrastructure capability. This clawback mechanism operates for 7 years. Additionally poor take-up is a risk the supplier takes on not the Local Authorities.
- 5.2 The constraints of the ERDF deadlines pose a serious risk to the project. Any loss of funding due to delays will mean the project will have to be re-profiled and possibly the coverage reduced. Similarly the ability of the private sector supplier to roll out the physical works in time will be the subject of detailed discussions as there are questions about capacity. The project will have to obtain state aid approval in due course however it is an important milestone that national approval is now in place.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The project could be terminated but this is considered not to be beneficial as the funding allocation would be lost and there would be other possible wider implications that could jeopardise future projects and joint working arrangements.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 A four week consultation period was undertaken via a project web site commencing 8th February 2013. Other bespoke demand stimulation work will be undertaken with businesses while links with the partners delivering Wirral's Go On Campaign have already been established. These individuals and organisations will be kept informed and involved in any future consultation exercises or communications.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 All groups and their clients operating or living in areas that will receive this investment will benefit from much improved broadband communications and the improved access to services that will follow.

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

- 9.1 The headline BDUK grant available is set out in this report as are the implications of funding non-eligible ERDF expenditure. This represents a significant, multi-million pound investment across Merseyside. The associated risks have been assessed and all project costs have been modelled based on the best information available and the experience of other successful BDUK procurement exercises. Further detail will emerge particularly post tender when roll out costs can be tested against the proposed coverage. Once the project has been implemented there are likely to be efficiency savings to be made in the delivery of Council services by utilising the new and improved digital infrastructure.
- 9.2 The funding for the management costs in the sum of £17,690 will be met from Wirral Neighbourhoods Fund reserves.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 A partnership consortium agreement will need to be agreed and signed to take the project forward. This will set out how the costs and liabilities are to be shared and how the project will be administered generally throughout the operation of the project board. A non-disclosure agreement has already been signed with the framework supplier to facilitate discussions.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The equality implications arising from this report are highlighted in the following Equality Impact Assessment <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/regeneration-housing-planning>. The BDUK project is likely to have very positive impacts on all identified groups across Wirral regardless of their age, gender, race, disability or sexuality. Digital inclusion for all will provide better and more efficient services, have educational benefits, improve social and community cohesion and benefit those people most in need.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The BDUK project will contribute towards achieving the aims and objectives of the climate change agenda by providing the digital infrastructure that will help to reduce greenhouse emissions by, for example, reducing the need to travel by facilitating home working and providing a platform enabling residents and businesses to run energy and cost saving systems.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Consultation and engagement with Development Control Officers and Highway Engineers has taken place with a view to agreeing working protocols for the approval of all civil engineering works and broadband apparatus. These works include the installation of new generation street cabinets usually situated close to existing street furniture if possible. The schedule of works will be discussed in detail and the necessary approvals programmed accordingly. The effectiveness and cost of CCTV systems are likely to be enhanced to the general benefit of community safety.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 To confirm that Liverpool City Council undertakes the role of lead contracting Authority or Accountable Body for the Merseyside Connected BDUK project.

14.2 Agree that the management of the BDUK procurement process including supplier appointment, entering into a partnership consortia agreement and future implementation is delegated to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

14.3 With reference to the cost table in paragraph 3.6 agree to underwrite the potential project management costs that are not eligible for ERDF funding from Wirral Neighbourhoods Fund reserves. Wirral's maximum share of ineligible costs, using the pro rata method, has been estimated to be £17,690.

14.4 Future process reports on this subject will be brought to Cabinet as the project progresses.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 The recommendations are made in order that the BDUK project can move forward and enter the national procurement framework as soon as possible in 2013.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

JULY 11, 2013

SUBJECT:	Renewal of Computer Equipment
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR ADRIAN JONES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals to refresh obsolete IT access devices to improve productivity, reduce the risks to security and permit new ways of working.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Cabinet approves the plans to refresh the obsolete IT access devices and associated equipment, as set out at paras 4.3 and 4.4.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 Wirral Council MBC posses over 2,400 old IT access devices, PCs, Laptops and handheld devices, which is just under 70% of its devices. This is unprecedented.

- 3.2 The problems that occur include:

- They create access problems to the users, for they are slow to respond, and frequently fail, incurring high maintenance costs to keep them going;
- Maintenance is difficult. Parts are difficult to source and it is not possible to load new software onto these old devices;
- The out of date software also allows security standards to be breached. This puts the Council at risk of failing its security accreditation;
- It locks the Council into old ways of working, denying access to the advantage of mobile working.

In 2010 this Council took the decision to refresh all its machines, and allocated funds to achieve this. Unfortunately the project never started.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Most of our data access equipment runs on the Microsoft's XP Windows package which has been available since 2001. Microsoft will stop supporting XP on April 8th 2014. Although it can still be used, the particular problem for the Council (and all other Government departments using computers) is the Security accreditation. This depends on us having supported software on all our equipment.
- 4.2 A survey of all the access computers in the Wirral shows that just under 70% of the devices are substandard, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Risk analysis of access devices

		Number	Percentage
Red	Obsolete	1300	37.1
Amber	Hardware upgradable, but the cost is almost equal to replacement and has a shorter life	1100	31.4
		2400	68.6
Green	Acceptable	1100	31.4
Totals		3500	100.0

- 4.3 Of the 3500 devices reviewed, 1,300 are obsolete (red) and cannot be upgraded to the new operating system Windows 7. Although 1,100 of them are hardware upgradeable (amber) and would be able to take Windows 7 after a hardware upgrade, the cost is almost equal to replacement, which also gives a longer life. The remaining 1,100 are of an acceptable specification (green).
- 4.4 IT will take ownership of all currently used access devices in the Authority. By implication this corporate decision requires IT to maintain the age of access devices at less than 5 years, and to achieve as quickly as possible. Much flexibility will be needed as Departments replace obsolete PCs with laptops, or tablets. Further, there is a request to replace specific functions kit, such as non-access devices like 10 year old scanners.
- 4.2. Most organisations refresh their access devices every 4 or 5 years but this has not happened here. Many machines are seven years and older. To replace the hardware and upgrade to Windows 7, three factors have to be considered
- the applications currently running on the old equipment have to be checked against Windows 7. It is a business decision to decide which applications need transferring to Windows 7;
 - The cost of replacing machines and migrating to Windows 7;
 - The best process to upgrade thousands of machines to the new specification.
- 4.3. It is proposed to engage a company with experience of doing this work, to lead the implementation with a combination of our staff and supplier staff. The reason for this approach is that it is a process we have never done before, and one which is critical to the continued operation of the Council. The process is complex and time consuming. Other Councils that have already been through the process recommend this approach.
- 4.4. It is proposed that Phase 1 of the refresh will start with the 500 access devices which threaten the Council with a failure of the Security Code. Phase 2 will address the red devices, the largest proportion of which are in CYPD and DASS. The programme will need to mesh with the preparation work for the new Social Care application. Phase 3 will address the amber machines. Users with specific early problems, including members, will have their machines replaced in Phase 2

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 IT has already started the preparations to deliver the project. This includes listing all the applications. The number now exceeds 700. IT will be asking Directors and Heads of Service to ensure all applications have been identified and which

applications are essential to their business. Even with this analysis it can still be the case some applications cannot be transferred to the new operating system. Given the security accreditation issue these problems will need to be resolved with alternative software.

- 5.2 The scheduling of work is complicated by the changes taking place. Staff are moving office and we won't want to install equipment more than once.
- 5.3 New Applications are being procured, in particular the new Social Care solution with over 800 users. The new requirements will need to be integrated with the refresh objectives.
- 5.4 Finally, the BT telecoms access technique IP Stream, which links 200 staff and members from their homes into Council systems, is being withdrawn by BT. IT is developing a secure solution to allow users of Council machines at home, to access Council information over their own Broadband system. For those staff and members without their own Broadband access, it is proposed the Council install it for them if the need is agreed with the Director.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 No other options were identified.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The staff and members have been involved in the compilation of this report, which then progressed through the normal consultations channels, DMT's and CESG.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 None, other than improved response times from the Council.

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

- 9.1 There is an ongoing revenue budget of £675k to cover the cost of replacing all obsolete equipment including access devices, held by IT. This coupled with the use of an IT leasing contract will cover the costs of the annual renewal programme.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal implications.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no equalities implications.

- 11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 All new equipment uses less energy than the old equipment in the Council. This will be beneficial to the carbon targets for the Council.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are no planning or community safety implications.

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email:

APPENDICES - none

REFERENCE MATERIAL

- IT research data
- File: 130619

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11TH JULY 2013

SUBJECT:	PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING AND REGENERATION ASSISTANCE POLICY 2013/14
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Council's revised Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy (referred to as "*the Assistance Policy*") following a consultation exercise. The Assistance Policy is provided using statutory powers. Any revisions approved will be implemented with immediate effect.
- 1.2 This report also advises members of minor changes made to *the Assistance Policy* since the last formal review. Members will be aware Cabinet approved any minor changes made under delegated authority should be reported back to Cabinet at the next formal review.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (referred to as *the RRO* in this report) gave Local Authorities the power to provide assistance to improve living conditions in their area. This assistance can be provided in any form and can include such things as advice about property improvements and financial assistance in the form of grants and/or loans. This power cannot be used unless a policy for the provision of such assistance has been adopted. Once adopted, the policy should be monitored, reviewed and amended (if necessary) to take into account changes in local circumstances and government policy. In this way, the policy should evolve over time to meet the needs and aspirations of Wirral residents. Any significant changes should be subject to consultation prior to being adopted and the public should be notified about the revised policy. In addition to *the RRO*, Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 allows Local Authorities to give financial assistance to any person in order to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of an area. This power supports the use of products aimed at non-residential interests involved in regeneration activity connected with housing schemes. Related products involving non-housing interests are also included in Wirral's policy.
- 2.2 On the 21st June 2012, Cabinet Members agreed to allow officers to make minor changes to the *Assistance Policy* without having to undertake a full consultation

exercise. Such changes are to be reported to and agreed by the portfolio holder for Housing and Community Safety at the time the changes are made and will be reported to Cabinet at the next annual review of *the Assistance Policy*. Since the last review a number of minor changes were agreed and made to Empty Property Grants, Home Repair Assistance Loan and Cosy Homes Heating financial products in June, September 2012 and April 2013. These changes were subsequently incorporated in the Policy document and referenced to show the date when the changes were made. Please see internet link in 2.3 below. Any changes made are to be summarised and reported to Cabinet at the next formal review.

- 2.3 The current *Assistance Policy* was adopted by Cabinet on 13th October 2011 at can be accessed using the following internet link:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/housing/housing-strategies-policies-partnerships/housing-regeneration-assistance-policy>

It should be noted that the assistance provided is and has always been subject to sufficient resources being available. The Council-wide freeze on all non essential capital and revenue expenditure in September 2012 has had implications for the provision of financial assistance provided under the current *Assistance Policy*. This resulted in a delay in processing new applications for financial assistance involving capital expenditure. Following submissions to continue expenditure in relation to the provision of Home Repair Assistance (HRA), Renovation Loans, Healthy Homes (HRA), Empty Property Grants and Cosy Homes Heating Grants, the Executive Team approved this expenditure using available capital resources for 2012/13.

- 2.4 In light of the financial constraints facing Wirral Council, this review has taken the opportunity to rationalise the assistance available to residents and owners to reflect the limited resources available and the ending of some of regeneration schemes originally started as part of the former Housing Market Renewal Initiative.

3.0 SUMMARY OF MINOR CHANGES MADE SINCE THE LAST REVIEW

- 3.1 The following table summarise the minor changes made to the assistance policy since the last review:

Assistance amended	Amendments Agreed	Date Amendment Made
Empty Property Grant	Vacancy eligibility period reduced from 12 to 6 months	22 nd June 2012
	Grant limit increased from £2000 to £3000	“
	The use of a contractor from the Trading Standards Business Approval Traders Scheme is now a recommendation	“
	Environmental Responsibility Policy is now incorporated	“

Home Repair Assistance Loan	Eligibility excludes applicants having bankruptcy order, debt relief order or similar arrangements restricting powers to deal with assets.	13 th September 2012
	Power to accept a restriction if lender refuses consent for a legal charge to protect the loan	“
	Eligibility altered to reflect changes to benefits, including Council Tax Benefit replaced with Council Tax Support and the removal of Income Support	24 th April 2013
Cosy Homes heating Grant	<p>Eligibility altered to reflect changes to benefit system and cessation of the Cosy Homes Insulation Programme. Changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the replacement of Warm Front Grant with Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation, • increasing the Child Tax Credit Income threshold to £15,910, • Replacement of Council Tax Benefit with Council Tax Support • The introduction of the Personal Independence Payment and Income Support that includes a disability premium <p>The compulsion to obtain a minimum insulation standard is now a recommendation</p>	24 th April 2013

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 The draft revised policy was subject to public consultation via the Council's website, local press and bespoke leaflets distributed via the Council's One Stop Shops. Council staff were also invited to comment on the proposed changes. At the time of writing this report no comments have been received.

5.0 SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO THE EXISTING POLICY

5.0 Wirral's policy is currently split into 3 distinct sections covering:

- Assistance for relocation (in connection with demolition schemes)
- Assistance for renovation
- Other (help for first time buyers, Handyperson Service, CAB advice etc)

5.1 Assistance for relocation

This consists of a range of financial and advisory assistance targeted at residents and home owners involved in housing demolition schemes. The ongoing clearance schemes were started in connection with the former Housing Market Renewal

Initiative. A range of capital resources has been secured to fund these schemes, including the funding of relevant financial assistance currently provided in *the Assistance Policy*. The introduction of an interest free relocation loan at the last review has been utilised to assist the remaining owner-occupiers wishing to stay in home ownership to move from clearance areas and does not require any alterations. The Relocation Rent Support Grant was originally introduced to assist businesses move from the Cavendish Enterprise Centre in connection with the Bray Street demolition scheme. Ongoing payments continue to be made in connection with the original approvals, have decreased over time and will eventually cease in the next couple of years. There are no known businesses left to relocate in the remaining clearance schemes that would qualify for this support.

Proposal

It is suggested that Relocation Rent Support grant assistance be removed from *the Assistance Policy*.

5.2 Assistance for renovation

This consists of a range of financial and advisory/supervisory assistance targeted at improving poor quality privately owned houses (and business premises involved in demolition action) in disrepair and include the following:-

- ◆ Two of the financial assistance products support larger scale block repair programmes which normally form part of area based renewal schemes. These include both Group Repair and Neighbourhood Facelift Scheme grant support. The Council does not currently have any Group Repair or Neighbourhood Facelift Schemes and no new schemes are proposed.
- ◆ The existing Handy Person Service provides assistance to the elderly, disabled and vulnerable people in their homes. This service formed part of the options for savings proposals in relation to the Regeneration and Environment and has subsequently been withdrawn.
- ◆ HMO Fire Safety Loans are available for landlords of houses in multiple occupation to undertake essential fire safety works. No interest in HMO Fire Safety Loans has been received since the last review

Proposals

- ◆ It is suggested that both Group Repair and Neighbourhood Facelift grant assistance be removed from *the Assistance Policy*.
- ◆ It is suggested that the Handy Person Service be removed from *the Assistance Policy*.
- ◆ It is suggested that the HMO Fire Safety Loans be removed from *the Assistance Policy*.

5.3 Other

A range of assistance is available to support action involving Empty Properties, Energy Efficiency Improvements, Debt and Housing Advice and the ability to introduce new assistance to secure additional grant funding to support carbon reduction measures (in this last case, as and when resources are made available).

- ◆ There is currently no administration fee charged for processing Empty Property Grants and Cosy Homes Heating Grants.
- ◆ The Empty Property Grant product has been piloted for over 12 months now and a number of minor operational refinements are considered necessary. These changes are incorporated in the revised wording in Appendix 1 to this report.
- ◆ The Home Insulation Programme (known as Cosy Homes Insulation in *the Assistance Policy*) provides financial assistance towards improving levels of loft and cavity wall insulation throughout the Borough, as part of the wider Warmer Wirral Programme. The Council has decided not to continue funding this programme from 2013/14.

The Healthy Homes Programme is now fully operational across Wirral and provides linkages to the Public Health responsibilities that have transferred to the Council earlier this year. It will continue to evolve over time maximising the available opportunities to reduce health inequalities. The existing policy makes a limited reference to Healthy Homes.

Proposals

- ◆ To bring the Empty Property and Cosy Homes Heating grants into line with other financial products it is suggested that an administration fee of £200 be charged. The slightly lower fee reflects the lower grant limit when compared with other products.
- ◆ Review of eligibility and condition criteria, see Appendix 1 for details proposed revised wording.
- ◆ It is suggested that the Cosy Homes Insulation be removed from the policy.
- ◆ Further to the transfer of the public health function to the Council and the linkages between health outcomes with housing conditions, it is suggested that *the Assistance Policy* formally include the Healthy Homes Programme as a form of assistance.

The proposed changes have been incorporated into the draft revised policy and can be seen using the link in 2.3.

6.0 RESOURCES

- 6.1 The revised *Assistance Policy* will continue to make reference to the current financial climate and the steps being taken to reduce Council expenditure over the next 3 years. It will also make it clear that any assistance available through *the Assistance Policy* will be subject to resources being available.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Reducing the range of assistance available will restrict the ability of the Council to help with poor housing conditions. This situation reflects the economic reality at this moment in time and will reduce the likelihood of expectations being raised.

Urgent disrepair cases breaching the statutory minimum standards can be dealt with using statutory powers, if deemed necessary.

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 Making no changes to *the Assistance Policy* was considered, however, this was ruled out on the grounds that the changes above would facilitate more efficient programme management and delivery and support operating costs. In addition, all of the assistance currently set out in the policy is now not available and/ or has substantially changed as a result of changes to Council budgets and/or national policy direction.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 The policy revisions set out in this report have been subject to public consultation via the Council's website and local press. A consultation leaflet summarising the proposed revisions was made available in the Councils One Stop Shops throughout the 4 week consultation period.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

10.1 None.

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

11.1 The introduction of further administration fees will provide an income to the Council. The exact amount will depend on both the number and size of grants processed in any one year. Any income received will be recycled into the provision of future assistance through the assistance policy, as per the agreement of members at Cabinet on the 21st July 2011.

11.2 The tables below provide the update position on the programme.

Programme Scheme	Capital Strategy	Additional Slippage 2012-13	Other changes approved	Slippage/commitment to be approved	Other changes to be approved	Total Programme
Places - Regeneration						
Clearance		1,550	560	89		2,199
Home improvement		667	390	65		1,122
Disabled Facilities – Adaptations	2,929	939		- 35		3,833
Wirral Healthy Homes		107		- 107		-
Cosy Homes Heating	250	149		- 30		369
Empty Property Interventions		172	125	37		334
Places - Regeneration Total	3,179	3,584	1,075	19	-	7,857

Funding Borrowing	Funding Borrowing	Receipts	Revenue Reserves	Grant	Total
Clearance	830	560	47	762	2,199
Home improvement	573	390	159		1,122
Disabled Facilities – Adaptations	1,904		300	1,629	3,833
Wirral Healthy Homes					-
Cosy Homes Heating	119	250			369
Empty Property Interventions	121	125	60	28	334
Places - Regeneration Total	3,547	1,325	566	2,419	7,857

11.2 No new IT investment is required as a result of this report

11.3 There are no staffing implications to this report

11.4 There are no asset implications to this report.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The review undertaken and proposed changes are consistent with the guidance to the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The suggested revisions to *the Assistance Policy* will continue to help those members of society least able to afford to undertake improvements or move to alternative accommodation. In addition, *the Assistance Policy* will assist private landlords to improve housing conditions for some of the most vulnerable members of society. *The Assistance Policy* targets assistance towards low income households. Those applicants deemed to have the ability to afford improvements or relocation by other means will be sign-posted accordingly.

13.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has previously been completed for the Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy and minor changes have been necessary to reflect the removal of the Handy Person Service. The revised EIA can be viewed at:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/regeneration-housing-planning>

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The withdrawal of the Cosy Homes Insulation assistance will reduce the ability of the Council to directly offer assistance to residents to reduce carbon emissions from space heating however other alternative national schemes are available to assist with insulation, including the recently introduced 'Green Deal'.

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 None.

16.0 RECOMMENDATION

16.1 Cabinet agree the revised Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy as set out in this report and that it be implemented with immediate effect

16.2 Members note the minor changes made to *the Assistance Policy* since the last formal review.

17.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

17.1 The current Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy has now been operative for over 12 months, having been approved by Cabinet in October 2011. Guidance recommends that the policy should be regularly monitored, reviewed and amended (if necessary) to take into account changes in local circumstances and government policy and a commitment has previously been given by Members to review the policy.

17.2 Members agreed on the 21st June 2012 that any minor changes made to the Assistance Policy should be summarised and reported to cabinet at the next formal review.

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SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet ‘Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy 2011/12’	21st July 2011
Cabinet ‘Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy 2011/12’	13th October 2011
Cabinet ‘Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy’	21st June 2012

Appendix 1

Proposed revised Empty Property Grant:

4.2 EMPTY PROPERTY GRANT

Grant assistance of £3,000 is available to support the renovation of strategically located long-term (6 months or longer) vacant properties. Assistance is conditional upon the property being brought back into use.

This assistance is not available in conjunction with any other financial assistance product funded and administered through Wirral Council's Capital Programme.

Eligibility

Applicants must have an owner's interest in the vacant property. Where an application for a grant is approved, but before the certified completion date, the applicant ceases to have a qualifying owner's interest (in the case of a joint application this does not apply unless all the applicants cease to have an owner's interest) no grant shall be paid.

Applicants must renovate the property to at least the Decent Homes Standard, including the removal of all Category 1 Hazards in line with the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, as assessed by the Council.

The grant is to be used only for structural/repair/improvement works, and materials. Fees (other than the Land Registry Fee(s) and Council's £200 Administration fee), floor coverings or appliances are not included.

Itemised fixed price quote/s from bona fide contractors with the necessary qualifications and membership to appropriate registered bodies must be submitted by the client, covering the value of all works for which the grant application is made. A recommendation will be made for applicants to seek such quote/s from contractors registered with the Trading Standards Business Approval Scheme.

Applicants will not be allocated any more than three Empty Property Grant Applications per financial year (1st April to 31st March).

The vacant property must exist at the point where an Empty Property Grant application is approved. Empty Property Grants cannot be approved to develop plots of land where no dwelling exists.

Conditions

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment or head of Housing and Community Safety or appropriate authorised signatory will approve grant applications.

Complaints regarding Empty Property Grant will be considered through the procedures set out in the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

Work must not commence until approval has been granted in writing by the council. No grant assistance will be awarded for those works that have commenced prior to the date of the grant approval.

The approval of an Empty Property Grant following receipt of a valid application and satisfactory inspection of the property in question is subject to the availability of sufficient funds.

The Council may require that eligible works are carried out in accordance with any specification the Council decide to impose.

The contract for the undertaking of the works quoted for exists between the Applicant and their appointed contractor with the Council having no role in this agreement. The applicant is wholly responsible for the supervision of the works undertaken by their chosen contractor unless a professional advisor or agent is appointed. The Council is in no way responsible for the supervision of the works in question. Any unforeseen works must be agreed by the Council in writing prior to undertaking them and additional works must be kept to a minimum.

The property must not be occupied until the Council is satisfied that:

- The premises are free from all Category 1 Hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (Housing Act 2004) and the Decent Homes Standard has been achieved, both of which approved following a final property inspection by the case officer.
- Applicants have complied with all necessary Building Control/Planning Regulations.
- Acceptable receipted invoices have been received for the works.
- All relevant certification and documentation in relation to the works has been received and signed off by the case officer.
- Property Accreditation application is approved and satisfactorily inspected if the property is to be let including the provision of a Gas Safe Certificate and a valid Energy Performance Certificate.

Upon the satisfactory completion of the above mentioned tasks, proof of occupation must be provided by the Applicant and payment will be made at this point.

If the grant is approved between 1st April and 31st July within the same year then the works must be completed and the property occupied within six months. Any grant approved after the 1st August must be completed before 31st January of the following year. In exceptional circumstances the Council may extend this period. If an applicant requires additional time, a request must be made in writing to the Housing Standards Team, explaining the circumstances of the case and the reasons why the works cannot be completed within the specified timescale. Any such requests must be made 2 weeks before the end of an applicant's allotted time period in line with this point. If an applicant fails to adhere to these timeframes, the Empty Property Grant offer may be rescinded by the Council subject to review.

Where the Council discovers that an application for assistance has been determined on the basis of inaccurate or incomplete information, the Council can withhold payment or demand repayment of grants monies from the applicant. If an applicant knowingly makes a false statement, in respect of any information they provide as part of an

application for grant assistance or payment, the authority may refer the matter to the police with a view to prosecution.

Fees associated with the application will be deducted from the maximum £3000 grant total on payment of the grant which are Land Registry fees and a £200 administration fee only.

Upon payment of the Empty Property Grant, no further application will be considered for the same property within 5 years of when the Empty Property grant payment was made.

Full compliance by the applicant with the Terms and Conditions shown within the Empty Property Grant application form agreed by the applicant is required.

Method of application

A preliminary enquiry is made by telephone, e-mail or in writing and a formal application is made by completing a prescribed form.

Advice available

Verbal and written advice is available from the Housing Standards Team

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11TH JULY 2013

SUBJECT:	HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2013 – 18
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	GEORGE DAVIES
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval and endorsement of Wirral's Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 following public consultation with stakeholders and service users. The Homelessness Strategy is a statutory requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002 which places a duty on local authorities to adopt a strategic approach to homeless issues by completing a comprehensive review of all forms of homelessness in their area and publishing a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years, ensuring this is taken into account when discharging its homeless function.
- 1.2 This new Homelessness Strategy will support one of the Council's Corporate Plan 2013 – 2016 focuses which is to '*Protect the vulnerable people in our borough*'.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Wirral Council has produced a Homelessness Strategy since 2003 and this third strategy is informed by the findings and recommendations of a comprehensive review of homeless services carried out during 2011/12, along with a review of the effectiveness of the previous Homelessness Strategy.
- 2.2 The Homeless Review was conducted over a period of seven months and involved extensive engagement with service users and service providers. Engagement included customer and agency surveys, one to one discussion with people who have experienced homelessness in Wirral, discussions with staff from organisations who work to prevent or respond to homelessness or who commission services that contribute to these objectives, along with workshops for both service users and stakeholders.
- 2.3 The findings and recommendations of the Review have provided a clear direction for preventing and addressing homelessness in Wirral, reflecting the factors we know will impact on homelessness in the future. These findings and recommendations have formed the basis for the development of the new five year Homelessness Strategy which has been produced.

3.0 WIRRALS DRAFT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2013 – 18 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The draft strategy was approved under delegated authority on 12th April 2013 for publication and public consultation. This consultation took place over a period of four weeks between 10th May 2013 and 7th June 2013. The consultation questionnaire was posted on the Council's website, was publicised directly to all stakeholders via email, in

the local press and via social media to ensure as wide an audience as possible was able to comment.

- 3.2 The questionnaire consisted of four key questions relating to the vision, the strategic priorities, the Strategic Homeless Action Plan and the role respondents could play in addressing homelessness.
- 3.3 In total 25 respondents took part in the consultation although not all responded to every question. Of those 41.2% (7) were service providers, 41.2% (7) were members of the public, 11.8% (2) were social landlords, 5.9% (1) was a service user. The remaining eight did not indicate their interest or role in relation to homelessness .
- 3.4 No adverse comments were received regarding the strategy with overall the majority of responses being very positive and supportive, acknowledging the focus of the strategy and strategic priorities as important in addressing and preventing homelessness in Wirral. These positive comments which reinforced the detail in the strategy ranged from acknowledging the scale of the challenge faced in light of Welfare Reform along with the difficulties in securing accommodation for more vulnerable people, to acknowledging the lack of security of tenure in the Private Rented Sector and general lack of support available for tenants.
- 3.5 Linking in with the comment made acknowledging the lack of security of tenure in the Private Rented Sector, a suggestion was made for the Council to take responsibility for the empty properties in the borough and manage the rental of them. Members will be aware that Wirral Council transferred the remainder of its housing stock in 2005 and therefore no longer has a structure in place to cover housing management functions which would be required if this was to be considered. As a result, this suggestion was not considered feasible to take forward, however the strategy is clear on the importance of developing the private rented sector as an additional solution to address the increased need in the borough for appropriate, affordable housing. It also acknowledges the well established Landlord Accreditation scheme in place which ensures accredited properties and landlords meet all required regulations as well as the need to continue to build on the relationships already established with landlords as a key contributing factor to developing the use of good quality private rented sector stock. Through this continued work, the concerns raised regarding the private rented sector will continue to be addressed by the Council and its partners, ensuring that opportunities, as they arise which could impact on this, are maximised.
- 3.6 Only one issue was raised through the consultation process which required the strategy to be amended and this related to Council Tax. A concern was raised that the *'strategy did not take into account the change in legislation whereby a reduction in Council Tax Support will require a significant contribution for some low income households and therefore may have an impact on homelessness in the borough'*. It is important to stress that the strategy already identifies Welfare Reform as key to impacting on homelessness in Wirral however no specific reference was originally made to the impact of the changes from Council Tax Benefit to Council Tax Support. The strategy has therefore been amended to reflect this, highlighting the key difference between the old Council Tax Benefit Scheme and the new Council Tax Support Scheme along with detail on the type of households and how many will be affected by this. This amendment is addressed in the 'Key Messages' section on page two of the Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 (Appendix Two of this report)

- 3.7 The revised Homeless Strategy with the amendment detailed above is within Appendix Two.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 Without a Homelessness Strategy and Strategic Homeless Action Plan, there is an increased risk of:

a) a breach of the Homelessness Act 2002 which places a statutory duty on local authorities to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years, ensuring this is taken into account when discharging its homeless function.

b) the number of people becoming homeless increasing significantly as a result of the impact of issues such as welfare reform and the current economic climate.

c) the Council and its partners not taking full advantage of new housing policy and investment opportunities to respond to homelessness in Wirral.

d) key partners and stakeholders not being clear on the strategic priorities and responsive actions to support these, that the Council is focusing on and therefore key opportunities for investment and joint working are missed.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Publishing a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years is a statutory requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002 and therefore no other options were considered.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The draft Homelessness Strategy is informed by a comprehensive review of homelessness in Wirral, which was undertaken by an independent consultant over a period of seven months which concluded in 2012.
- 6.2 The review process was informed by an intensive process of active engagement with service users and service providers. Engagement included customer and agency surveys, one to one discussion with people who have experienced homelessness in Wirral, discussions with staff from organisations who work to prevent or respond to homelessness or who commission services that contribute to these objectives, along with workshops for both service users and stakeholders.
- 6.3 The draft findings and recommendations identified through the review process were discussed and agreed in detail with all those who participated in the review. This was done to ensure partner commitment to addressing and preventing homelessness.
- 6.4 Further discussions have taken place with both members of the Homeless Forum, internal Council teams and external stakeholders, to identify the key priorities and recommendations which should be focused upon in the draft strategy and strategic Homelessness Action Plan.
- 6.5 An initial draft Homelessness Strategy was approved under delegated authority to enable some further consultation work to be undertaken with key stakeholders. The action taken in response to the issues raised from this consultation is set out in section three of this report.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 The Government has identified homeless prevention as a priority to be addressed and continues to take forward a range of reforms providing opportunities to access investment to tackle homelessness. Examples of this include initiatives such as the Homeless Transition Fund and the Crisis Private Rented Sector Access Fund which have been made available specifically to the community and voluntary sector, to proactively target vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- 7.2 These opportunities are likely to continue in the future and therefore it is important that community and voluntary groups are encouraged to take up these opportunities and support the Council in addressing homelessness.
- 7.3 Some services which are commissioned by the Local Authority may be provided by the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector. Any changes to services or commissioning will be the subject of a separate consultation process as part of any contractual arrangements which may be in place.

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

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications at this stage in respect of the draft Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 18. Any future requirements and actions that have any financial implications, would be subject to further consideration by members prior to implementation.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The legal implications are set out in the main body of this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 18 seeks to address homelessness and those who are vulnerable and subject to social exclusion and equalities issues.

(a) Yes and impact review is located –

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/regeneration-housing-planning>

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are none directly arising from this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are none directly arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 13.1 That Cabinet approve the Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 18 detailed in Appendix Two to this report.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 The recommendation is key to the publication of a Homelessness Strategy. The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to adopt a strategic approach to homeless issues by completing a comprehensive review of all forms of homelessness in their area and publishing a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years, ensuring this is taken into account when discharging its homeless function.

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APPENDICES

Appendix One – Consultation summary on Wirral’s Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 18
Appendix Two – Homelessness Strategy 2013-18

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Review of Homeless Services in Wirral	23 rd June 2011
Cabinet - Appointment of consultants for Review of Homeless Services in Wirral	3 rd November 2011
Cabinet (delegated approval) – Approval for draft strategy to be publicised for consultation	12 th April 2013

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Appendix One - Consultation Summary on Wirral's Homelessness Strategy 2013-18

Wirral's Homelessness Strategy sets out the Council's vision for the way homelessness is addressed and focuses on continuous evaluation and improvement of homelessness services to meet local needs.

Following approval from Wirral Council's Cabinet under delegated authority on 12th April 2013, the draft Homelessness Strategy was made available for consultation. The consultation took place between 10th May and the 7th June 2013.

The questionnaire was placed onto an online survey website and a specific invitation to participate in the consultation was sent to the following stakeholders: internal Council Teams, Senior Council Directors, Councillors, Members of the Strategic Housing Partnership and Members of the Homelessness Forum. The consultation was advertised on the Council's website, in the local press and via social media such as Twitter and Facebook in order that as wide an audience as possible were able to comment on the draft Strategy.

The Questionnaire was made up of four questions, each with an opportunity to provide a detailed response where the respondent felt it appropriate.

In total 25 respondents took part in the consultation although not all responded to every question. Of those:

- 41.2% (7) were service providers
- 41.2% (7) were members of the public
- 11.8% (2) were social landlords
- 5.9% (1) of those who responded was a service user
- The remaining eight did not indicate their interest or role in Homelessness.

Question 1:

*We think Wirral's vision for addressing homelessness in the borough is '**That no one needs to be homeless and partners will work together to make this a reality**'. To what extent do you agree?*

24 out of 25 consultees responded to the question:

- 95.8% (23) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the vision
- 4.2% (1) disagreed with the vision

Specific comments received for this question noted the scale of the challenge faced in light of Welfare Reform, the difficulties in securing accommodation for more vulnerable people and the fact that there will always be homelessness for one reason or another.

Other comments were more general and included the requirement to tailor provision to address specific need and partnership working

The comments made are already reflected in the draft Homelessness Strategy and therefore no amendments are necessary.

Question 2:

Following the outcome of the Homeless Review 2012 and consultation to date, we have identified the following strategic priorities to take forward our Homelessness Strategy Vision. Please tell us how relevant you feel each of the following priorities are to tackling homelessness in Wirral today.

Preventing Homelessness

23 out of 25 respondents scored this priority a relevance:

- 73.9% (17) who scored this priority for relevance felt that it had high relevance to tackling homelessness in the borough.
- 17.4% (4) felt that preventing homelessness had low relevance to tackling homelessness,
- 8.7% (2) selected neither high nor low relevance,

The comments received regarding low relevance, indicates that one respondent felt it low because they feel that other issues have higher priority (security of tenure and ongoing support needs for tenants with complex needs, both of which are covered in other strategic priorities)

Other comments received were more general.

No further amendments to the Strategy were necessary following these responses as the draft strategy addresses both security of tenure and ongoing support needs for tenants with complex needs within the other three strategic priorities.

Strengthening Partnership Working

22 out of 25 respondents scored this priority for relevance:

- 86.4% (19) respondents felt this had high relevance to tackling homelessness
- 9.1% (2) respondents felt that this priority had low relevance
- 4.5% (1) felt it had neither high nor low relevance

As no comments were received specifically for this priority, no amendments were necessary.

Evaluating and realigning homelessness and prevention

21 out of 25 respondents scored this priority for relevance:

- 71.4% (15) felt this priority had high relevance
- 19.1% (4) considered this priority to have low relevance
- 9.5% (2) felt this had neither high nor low relevance

As no comments were received specifically for this priority, no amendments were necessary

Increasing access to the Private Rented Sector

22 out of 25 respondents rated this priority for relevance:

- 59.1% (13) felt this priority had high relevance
- 18.2% (4) considered this priority to have low relevance
- 22.7% (5) felt this had neither high nor low relevance

Two comments were provided quantifying the responses:

One questioned *the security of the Private Rented Sector and lack of support available for tenants*. The draft strategy recognises that demand for appropriate, affordable housing to meet local need has increased and therefore it is important to develop the private rented sector further as another solution for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Wirral Council has a well established landlord accreditation scheme which ensures accredited properties and landlords meet all required regulations, and the draft strategy is clear that we need to build on and expand the relationships already established with Private Landlords and this is key to developing the use of good quality private rented sector stock over coming years.

In terms of support, the draft strategy is clear that Wirral has already increased and improved the provision of support for households who are vulnerable to homelessness using floating support services, and will ensure the Council continues to take a strategic commissioning approach to homelessness to increase the multi-agency partnership working.

The second comment was a suggestion for an *empty property scheme where the Council takes responsibility for empty properties and manages the rental of them*. The draft Strategic Homeless Action Plan already includes an action to develop a multi-agency approach for bringing empty properties back into use under this Strategic Priority.

No further amendments were necessary following these comments.

Question 3

Do you agree the solutions and associated actions in the Strategic Homeless Action Plan will help meet the Strategic Priorities?

22 out of 25 respondents answered this question:

- 63.6% (14) agreed with this statement.
- 18.2% (4) of those strongly agreed with this question
- 18.2% (4) held no strong opinion.
- 0 respondents disagreed with this question.

Comments received to quantify these results were more general, supporting the draft Strategic Homeless Action Plan, but one comment in particular noted that the draft strategy does not take into account the change in legislation whereby a reduction in Council Tax Support will require a significant contribution for some low income households and therefore may have an impact on homelessness in the borough. Following this comment, the Homelessness Strategy has been amended to reflect the changes from Council Tax Benefit to Council Tax support as part of overall Welfare Benefit Reform.

Question 4

Do you feel your organisation has a role to play in addressing any of the solutions and associated actions in the Strategic Homeless Action Plan?

19 out of 25 respondents answered this question:

- 68.4% (13) felt that their organisation did have a role in addressing solutions and actions
- 31.6% (6) felt that their organisation did not have a role.

Eight respondents quantified their answer with further information on how they see the role of their organisation in addressing homelessness in line with the solutions and actions detailed in the draft Strategic Homeless Action Plan. These organisations have and continue to be key partners working with the Council to address and respond to homelessness and the Council will continue to work closely with them over the coming years as the strategy is progressed.

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Appendix Two

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2013 - 18

Contents

Section	Page
Key Messages	1
Foreword and vision for Wirral	6
Introduction and Background	8
Strategic Links	11
Understanding Homelessness and Housing Need in Wirral	12
Strategic Priorities:	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preventing homelessness• Strengthening Partnership Working• Evaluating and Re-aligning Homelessness and Prevention Services• Increasing Access to the Private Rented Sector	
Our Success So Far	14
Resources	18
Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 – Action Plan	21

KEY MESSAGES

Wirral's Stock Profile

- The total dwelling stock in Wirral is 142,000, with over 84% designated as privately owned (72% owner occupied and 12% privately rented). The proportion of private tenures is high, when compared regionally and nationally.
- There are approximately 17,450 homes in the social housing sector with a further 680 units planned for development up to 2015.

Wirral's Homeless Profile

- The number of homeless applications has risen considerably since 2009 with a corresponding rise in acceptances of people as being statutory homeless (71% increase in acceptances and a 43% increase in the number of homeless decisions in the first three quarters of 2012/13 compared to the same period of the previous year.). This increase in levels of homelessness, arising from the economic downturn and the reductions in availability and affordability of housing, is reflected nationally.
- The profile of individuals making homeless applications has changed. There is a large increase in the proportion of lone female parents and a smaller increase in the proportion of lone males.
- Between April 2010 and March 2012, 4,927 housing advice cases were opened with the Council's Housing Options Team, and between 1st April 2012 – 31st December 2012 a further 2534 cases were opened.
- Of those, the number of older people who have presented as threatened with homelessness has increased and the 18 to 24 age group has been identified as at most risk of homelessness.
- Of those threatened with homelessness, approximately 30% lived in private tenancies, 24% were resident in other people's homes and people with 'No Fixed Abode' accounted for 20% of those presenting to the Council's Housing Options Team.
- The Supporting People Programme continues to invest in housing-related support services for the homeless, with over half of the overall programme budget allocated to services for people experiencing, or at risk of social exclusion.
- The numbers of vulnerable people accessing supported housing has remained largely static since 2009; however Figure 1 opposite shows that the number of people refused access to these services as a result of full capacity has notably increased indicating that there remains a problem with 'move-on' from homeless services.
- For some groups within the homeless demographic, the current configuration of homeless services is no longer relevant to their needs, with the largest gap existing for people that have a range of issues that are more complex to meet, including chaotic

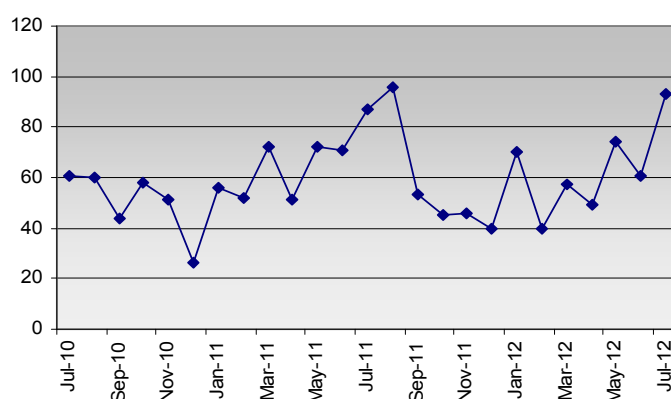


Figure 1: Supported Housing Refusals - Lack of bed-space

behaviour related to substance misuse and undiagnosed or unresolved mental health problems and mild to moderate learning disabilities.

- More people are attempting to access supported housing, solely because there is nowhere else for them to live. Since 2010, 16% of people accessing supported housing were identified as homeless but with no additional support needs.

Welfare Benefit Reforms

- Reforms to Welfare Benefit are likely to lead to an increased call upon homeless services, in particular:
 - The restrictions to Housing Benefit for people under-occupying social housing will affect 27% of the Borough social housing tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit (a total of 4500 households).
 - The increased age threshold for the Shared Room Rent means the maximum Local Housing Allowance (LHA) that can be paid for a single person under 35 is limited to the rate for a single room in a shared property or bedsit. Currently, there are 892 single people under 35 claiming LHA in Wirral.
 - The restriction of LHA to four bedroomed accommodation will affect large families in five bedroomed or bigger properties. The maximum rate of LHA that can be claimed by a large family has reduced from £862.51 per month in March 2011, to £613.21 per month in April 2013.
 - The Benefit Cap will be implemented on 15th July 2013. Under the Benefit Cap, the total amount of benefits that can be received by any individual or family will be limited to a maximum amount of £500 per week for single parents and couples with children and £350 per week for single people. The amount of the cap will be applied to Housing Benefit which will be reduced to prevent the total benefits received going above these limits. Current figures show 220 claimants in Wirral will be affected by the Benefit Cap. The introduction of Universal Credit (UC) will consolidate a range of existing benefits into one payment, including Housing Benefit. From October 2014 all new claims for Housing Benefit from working age people will be included in Universal Credit. Existing claims will be transferred through a phased approach from then until October 2017.
 - The replacement (April 2013) of Council Tax Benefit with the new localised Council Tax Support scheme. The key differences in the new scheme compared to the old Council Tax benefit scheme is that it will impact on working age people, who will be asked to pay towards their Council Tax bill for the first time or pay more than they used to. In Wirral, over 16,000 low paid working age households will be affected and will have to pay at least 22% of the Council Tax charge

Resources currently in place through Wirral Council to prevent and address homelessness

Wirral Council is facing unprecedented challenges. Our 2013 – 2016 Corporate Plan clearly recognises that Wirral Council' budget is reducing, whilst at the same time demand for our services is rising, as are residents' expectations.

In order to address this, we are looking at everything we do in a new light, working to become more innovative and transform the way we deliver and provide services, with the 2013 – 2016 Corporate Plan focusing our limited resources on protecting the vulnerable in our borough; tackling health inequalities and driving growth in our economy.

We will 'protect the vulnerable people in our borough' by making sure that our system and procedures help us to always identify and mitigate problems before they develop, safeguard the vulnerable effectively, working together across Council and agency boundaries and delivering our systems with empathy at all times. Simply doing nothing is not an option.

Detailed below are the main resources which are used to support the delivery of services to prevent and reduce homelessness and support those people who have become homeless.

Supporting People

The Supporting People programme continues to invest in housing-related support services for the homeless. The programme budget for 2013/14 will be £9.44m with almost 53% allocated to services for people experiencing, or at risk of social exclusion. This includes supporting homeless hostels; dispersed, semi-independent styled supported accommodation and floating support services.

In 2014/15 the Supporting People budget will be reduced to £7.44m which is almost a 24% reduction. It will therefore be a significant challenge to deliver the scale and quality of provision of Supporting People funded services in the future economic environment, particularly in light of increased demand for services arising from the ongoing impact of welfare reforms.

Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention 2012-13 and 2013-14

The Council's Homelessness duties are carried out by the Housing Options Section and partners which are partly funded through Wirral's Community Fund and Homeless Prevention Grant.

Staffing costs for the Housing Options Team for 2012-13 is expected to be £744,800. The Section attracts grant funding from CLG Homeless Grant and Repossession Prevention Grant along with income from Housing Benefit for the use and management of interim and temporary accommodation. The Section also benefits from a £400,000 contribution from the Council's Communities Fund.

In addition, the Housing Options Team projected net expenditure for 2012-13 totals £1,196,878 which includes a contribution to the One Stop Shops for first line Housing Advice.

It is important to note however that expenditure for Bed and Breakfast provision has increased from £36,600 in 2010-11 to £109,600 (projected) in 2012-13. (This does however compare to a maximum spend on Bed and Breakfast provision in 2007-08 of £210,600 in 2007-08. In 2007-08 the Housing Options Team expanded and changed its emphasis from homelessness assessment to prevention, which lead to the significant decrease in expenditure for this provision up to 2010-11)

For 2011-12 and 2012-13 Department of Communities and Local Government increased the Council's Homelessness Grant (not ring fenced) from £51,000 to £221,000 in recognition of the achievement of the temporary accommodation target and success in homelessness prevention. An additional £76,000 was also awarded to Wirral for the Repossession Prevention Grant, to address mortgage repossessions via grants or loans.

These combined funds were made available to the Housing Options service enabling funding for the following initiatives: Housing Options staffing contribution, CAB funding for fast tracking debt and housing advice to prevent homelessness, tenancy fraud, under occupation, hospital discharge homelessness prevention officer (match funded via PCT), mediation to prevent

homelessness, mortgage rescue shortfalls, small grants to prevent homelessness and homeless prevention workshops in schools.

In 2012-13 some of this funding was also used to match fund a successful bid to the CLG Homeless Transition Fund by the Wirral Ark Project and YMCA. This new initiative focuses specifically on engaging with clients with multiple complex needs, a key need identified within this strategy.

In April 2012, there was an earmarked reserve in the Council's General Fund of £271,000 for Homeless Prevention. This included Homeless Grant and Repossession Prevention Fund from previous years, following frugal management of the homelessness budget. This prevention funding was earmarked due to the expectation that welfare reform and austerity measures would place a higher demand on resources in the future when grant may be limited. In November 2012 approval was received for an allocation through this fund to provide an additional Housing Advisor with a domestic violence specialism until March 2014.

At the time of writing we do not know whether or not the Council will be able to sustain this level of homeless grant and funding to the housing options team for 2013-14.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The Government increased Wirral's allocation of funding for Discretionary Housing Payments by 84% in 2012-13 and a further 76% for 2013-14 to enable the Council to mitigate some of the effects of welfare reforms.

These Discretionary Housing Payments are made in cases where individual's circumstances call for additional financial help to meet housing costs. Payments are entirely discretionary and each case is assessed on its individual merits, taking into account individual's finances and personal circumstances.

A Discretionary Housing Payment may be awarded for example, where there is a shortfall in the rent and it would be unreasonable to expect someone to move because the property has been adapted for their needs, they have an established support network in the area or they have children at a crucial stage in their schooling. It can also be awarded in the form of payment for a deposit or removal costs to enable someone to move to more suitable, cheaper accommodation.

Strategic Direction

Wirral Council's Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 has been developed in this challenging climate and in the context of the resources currently available. We know that individually factors such as the economic downturn, high levels of unemployment, government austerity measures including significant reform to the welfare benefit system and difficult housing market conditions can disproportionately affect vulnerable people and increase the risk of homelessness. Collectively, these factors produce an environment that is bound to have a considerable impact locally and nationally. The Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 18 recognises this, and acknowledges that Homelessness is a complex problem with multiple causes requiring flexible solutions requiring the delivery of innovative services in order to reach the increasing number of people affected by the economic climate. The strategy has therefore identified four key priorities to respond to these issues:

- **Preventing Homelessness** wherever possible, through early intervention and effective collaborative work.
- **Strengthening Partnership Working** to ensure that the housing and support needs of those with more complex needs are met.

- **Evaluating and Re-aligning homelessness and prevention services** to ensure continuing strategic relevance and value-for-money within an environment of increasing demand and reducing resources.
- **Increasing access to the private-rented sector** to ensure the best possible use of the range of housing stock in Wirral.

A detailed action plan underpins the strategy, identifying a range of solutions which will contribute to achieving the four high-level priorities. It is intended that the Strategy, and its associated action plan, will be inclusive in approach and that partner agencies continue to work closely with the council to assist in the delivery of its objectives and priorities. In particular the Council will continue to use a range of resources to maximise homeless prevention and minimise incidences of homelessness whilst recognising that commitment from all Local Authority services and key partners is needed to take forward the solutions identified. Key to this is the input of Wirral's charitable, voluntary and community homeless services which are fundamental to addressing homelessness in the Borough.

Wirral's Homeless Forum will monitor the action plan against its outcomes and it will be reviewed annually to ensure it is responsive to emerging need.

Summary

The findings of the Wirral's review of Homeless Services, in conjunction with the priorities of the Homelessness Strategy and its associated strategic action plan, which supports both the overarching Housing Strategy and the Council 2013 – 16 Corporate Plan, provides the basis for the future direction of services for homeless groups. This, coupled with the activity already undertaken to improve services, will help to ensure where appropriate people continue to receive services tailored to meet their specific needs over the coming years and in the process, improve housing outcomes for the Boroughs most vulnerable people.

FOREWORD

Wirral Council is pleased to present its Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 which sets out the key challenges, objectives and priorities for tackling homelessness in Wirral and how these will be addressed over the coming years.

I know that people are facing real financial difficulties as a result of the downturn in the economy and its impact on the housing market, as well as the changes taking place through both social housing reforms and welfare reform. To respond to this and the impact on homelessness, we need to ensure effective joint working between the Council and key stakeholders takes place to ensure people's needs are responded to. The key focus of Wirral Council and its partners will be to continue to work to prevent homelessness wherever possible but acknowledge that in those instances where this cannot be achieved, ensure appropriate housing and support is in place to respond to this.

This Homelessness Strategy is based upon findings and recommendations of a comprehensive review of current homeless services undertaken over a five month period during 2011 and 2012, along with the previous Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011 and involved active engagement with service users and service providers. This Strategy continues to build on the current good practice in place, and strive to meet the gaps in existing service provision to ensure the needs of those individuals who are at risk of homelessness or currently homeless are met.

The Strategy is supported by a five year Strategic Homelessness Action Plan which clearly sets out the short, medium and long term solutions and actions identified to deliver long lasting change to those at risk of, or currently homeless in Wirral.

To ensure this Strategy remains relevant and flexible to change, it will be monitored by Wirral's Homeless Forum and reviewed annually in order that it can be responsive to emerging need.

I would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who have contributed to the development of the Strategy and I truly believe that no-one needs to be homeless and Wirral Council and its partners will work together to make this a reality!

Councillor George Davies

A Vision for Wirral

Wirral's vision for addressing homelessness in the borough is **that no one needs to be homeless and partners will work together to make this a reality.**

Although our strategy focuses on homeless prevention, we acknowledge that there will be instances where homelessness cannot be prevented and we also need to ensure that appropriate housing and support is available to respond to this.

Our vision recognises that combating homelessness is not just about bricks and mortar and that a commitment from all Local Authority services and key partners is needed to prevent and address homelessness. This aligns with the Government drive to prioritise homeless prevention by making sure that every contact local agencies make with vulnerable people and families really counts.

The following strategic priorities have been identified to take this forward:

1. **Preventing homelessness** wherever possible through early intervention and better partnership working
2. **Strengthening partnership working** to ensure that the housing and support needs of more challenging client groups are met when homelessness cannot be prevented including working together to end rough sleeping
3. **Evaluating and realigning homelessness and prevention services** to ensure strategic relevance and the delivery of value for money in a climate of increasing demand and reducing resources recognising the wider costs of homelessness
4. **Increasing access to the private rented sector**

We will work with our partners to deliver a Strategic Homeless Action Plan which is measurable, realistic and achievable. This plan will enable us to deliver our priorities and respond to the changing economic climate and new perspectives as they arise, such as changing legislation and government policy.

To ensure this strategy remains responsive and flexible to change, it will be monitored by Wirral's Homeless Forum and reviewed annually in order that it can be responsive to emerging need.

Introduction and Background

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy at least every five years and take it into account in discharging its functions. Wirral Council has produced a Homelessness Strategy since 2003 and this third strategy is informed by the findings and recommendations of a comprehensive Review of Homeless Services in 2011-2012 and the previous Homeless Strategy (2008-10).

Homeless Review

The Homeless Review was conducted over a period of seven months (November 2011 to May 12) and involved active engagement with service users and service providers. This engagement included customer and agency surveys, one to one discussions with people who have experienced homelessness in Wirral, discussions with staff from organisations who work to prevent or respond to homelessness or who commission services that contribute to these objectives, along with workshops for both service users and stakeholders. The draft findings were discussed and agreed with key stakeholders before the report was finalised.

To read the Review or for further details on the consultation, please go to www.wirral.gov.uk/homelessness.

The Review has provided a clear direction for preventing and addressing homelessness in Wirral, which reflects the factors we know will affect homelessness in the future. The findings and recommendations have formed the basis for the development of this new Homelessness Strategy for Wirral for the next five years.

Homeless Strategy 2008 - 10

This Strategy will build upon the success of the previous Homelessness Strategy 2008-10, which had four clear priorities:

Understanding homelessness and housing need: significant progress has been made in determining the levels of homelessness, the reasons why people become homeless and which household group it affects the most. This has been achieved through a range of measures including analysis of move-on from short-term supported accommodation, the Multi Agency Monitoring project (MAM) and research into households requiring housing resettlement services upon discharge from hospital.

Preventing homelessness: homeless prevention amongst statutory homeless households has been particularly successful; the change in the Council's approach from one of homelessness assessment to a proactive homeless prevention and housing options service rather than a reactive housing options service has been a significant factor in this.

Increasing access to a choice of housing: progress has been made in enabling customers to access properties owned by accredited private sector landlords, and the Pathways Model enables people with support needs to move towards settled accommodation. This progress will continue now that Property Pool Plus has been introduced.

Providing appropriate support: floating support services have been retendered, resulting in more and better support for households who are vulnerable to homelessness, for example miss substances. Health and outreach services funded by NHS Wirral and Wirral Drug and Alcohol Awareness Team also target very vulnerable people and enable them to access housing alongside health and treatment services.

With this successful work already undertaken and acting on board the findings of the review, this new strategy will continue to strive to respond to evolving pressures on existing service provision to ensure that Wirral is best placed to meet the needs of those people at risk of or currently homeless.

The Future

We recognise that people are now facing real difficulties in managing their income and housing as a result of the downturn in the economy and its impact on the housing market, as well as the changes

taking place around the future of social housing and welfare benefits. Homelessness is increasing across the country, and there are fears it will continue to increase. To address this, the Government has published *Making Every Contact Count: a joint approach to preventing homelessness*¹ where it recognises that intervening earlier to prevent homelessness is key to its ambitions on social justice², particularly in terms of supporting the most disadvantaged individuals and families by tackling many of the underlying problems that, if left unchecked, can contribute to homelessness.

The Government is clear that for many people, becoming homeless is not the beginning of their problems; it comes at the end of a long line of crises, a long line of interactions with public and voluntary services and a long line of missed opportunities, which must be changed. Their aim therefore is a simple one; **‘to make sure every contact local agencies make with vulnerable people and families really count’**.

The following ten local challenges have been set, which the government has recommended local authorities should take forward. This strategy recognises the importance of these challenges and acknowledges existing work already undertaken or underway to respond to them. We will ensure that they remain key to the targeted joined up approach we take to addressing homeless prevention and homelessness in Wirral.

1. adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2. actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients
4. adopt a *No Second Night Out* model or an effective local alternative
5. have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support
6. develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords
7. actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs
9. not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks

Supporting this, the new Public Health Outcomes Framework, which sets out the desired outcomes for public health and how these will be measured also includes two indicators on homelessness (Statutory Homeless Acceptances and Households in Temporary Accommodation) as well as others which encourage a focus on the health of the local homeless population. There is real commitment through this framework to ensure health services do more to help identify those at risk of and prevent homelessness by ‘making every contact count’.

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government, *Making Every Contact Count: a joint approach to preventing homelessness* (August 2012)

² Department of Work and Pensions, *Social Justice: transforming lives* (March 2012)

Through engaging with our key partners to develop this strategy, we believe we have secured commitment from everyone who can make a difference to homeless and prevention services to address the challenges identified and build on the Government aim to make sure that *'every contact local agencies make with vulnerable people and families really counts'*

Strategic Links

Wirral's homelessness challenges and the solutions needed to address them need to be considered within the wider context of national and regional policy and across a range of agendas including community sustainability, health and well being and economic regeneration.

To ensure this happens, this new Homelessness Strategy also sits within a framework of policy across Wirral and the wider Merseyside area. It is within this framework that activities for delivering homelessness and other service priorities are shaped through working with partner agencies to ensure the delivery of the most appropriate services to meet the needs of local communities in the most cost effective way. A good example of this is the development in 2011 of the Merseyside 'No Second Night Out' Protocol, the first outside central London.

In particular we also recognise the significant contribution that voluntary and community groups in Wirral make and the opportunities for accessing key funding initiatives they have available to them in terms of helping to prevent and respond to homelessness.

Key targets have been set in Wirral's Housing Strategy 2011–26 Strategic Housing Plan and in its Corporate Plan for preventing and alleviating homelessness, recognising that preventing and alleviating homelessness in Wirral needs to be carried out through targeted early intervention and in partnership with other agencies. This Homelessness Strategy will further develop and expand on those targets and focus the work we need to take forward with our partners to prevent homelessness.

Understanding Homelessness and Housing Need in Wirral

In Wirral, there has been a recent increase in homelessness as a result of the economic environment and reducing availability of affordable housing. The number statutory homeless acceptances in the borough increased from a very low base in 2009-10 by 51% in 2010-11 and a further 30% in 2011-12 which was twice the national rate of increase. These figures include a large increase in the proportion of lone female parents and a smaller increase in the proportion of lone males.³ At the same time the use of the overnight safe refuge operated by Birkenhead YMCA which helps to prevent rough sleeping has seen a high rise in its usage from an average of 44 times per month in 2010 to 140 times per month in 2012.

Wirral data over the three year period from 2009/10 – 2011/2012 shows a shift in the reasons for statutory homelessness, with increases in cases of family or friends unable or unwilling to continue to accommodate, non-domestic violence or harassment, non-violent breakdowns of relationship and people leaving the Armed Forces. There have been decreases in those who are homeless due to mortgage repossession, domestic abuse from a partner and homeless from hospital.⁴

Enquiries from those threatened with homelessness are mostly from those of working age (18-65) (76%) although the age of a large number of cases (21.2%) were not recorded. Singles and couples with no children make up over 69% of all enquirers which could indicate how difficult it is for these customer groups to compete in the Wirral housing market. Where the tenure was recorded, the largest percentage (30%) lived in private tenancies, 24% in other peoples homes and 20% were classified as no fixed abode.

There is an increase in the number of people of all ages with substance misuse and other complex support needs which require multiple skills to address. At the same time there is evidence that more people without any support needs are accessing housing related support services because there is nowhere else for them to live. The difficulty in accessing move-on accommodation also means that people are staying longer which blocks access to specialist accommodation and support for others.

The reduction in housing benefit for working age social tenants who are under-occupying their homes will affect many people: Wirral has completed an assessment which identified that at least 3,900 tenants are under-occupying and will, if they are in receipt of Housing Benefit, have to make up the difference in their rent or alternatively move. This will tie up a high proportion of smaller social housing stock for social tenants who want to down-size.

Evaluating our services based on robust evidence will ensure that our diminishing resources are used in the most effective way. Over the coming years it will also be important for us to work with our partners to ensure we analyse the level of demand for housing information and advice. This will help us understand the impact of changes introduced locally such as the initial point of access for any homeless enquiries being dealt with at One Stop Shops, the impacts of welfare reform and the continued quality of service provided to people by the Council and its partners.

³ Review of Homelessness in Wirral, GLHS, May 2012 pp1

⁴ Wirral P1E data 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12

Strategic Priorities

It is clear that the Council cannot deliver this strategy on its own. **Partnership working** is a cross cutting theme which we see as fundamental to achieving our vision **that no one needs to be homeless**. The relationships between various teams and departments within the Council, key partners, stakeholders and the community and voluntary sector are critical to developing the true partnerships needed which will ensure services and access to appropriate accommodation are targeted to meet people's housing needs.

To do this, we need to continue to focus on working with and ensuring agencies work collaboratively and efficiently to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

1. Preventing homelessness wherever possible through early intervention and better partnership working

Whilst we have, over recent years, significantly reduced statutory homelessness in Wirral through prevention initiatives, demand for services is expected to increase as a result of welfare benefit reform. At the same time access to accommodation is becoming more pressured, as first time buyers are finding it difficult to get on the housing ladder and are competing for housing solutions previously available to those unable to purchase.

It is important to continue to review and improve existing support available to people who are at risk of becoming homeless. This will include putting in place a single gateway for client groups such as 16 and 17 year olds and clients with learning disabilities, helping to identify their needs at an early stage. This will be achieved through a partnership approach will continue to be developed so that support needs are identified early on, providing appropriate intervention and prevention to ensure the best possible outcome.

The Government has been clear to prioritise homeless prevention and continues to take forward a range of reforms and investment to tackle homelessness, for example the No Second Night Out model⁵. Initiatives such as the Homeless Transition Fund and the Crisis Private Rented Sector Access Fund have also been made available to the community and voluntary sector to proactively target vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. From its CLG Homelessness Grant, Wirral has previously funded partners to carry out specialist prevention activity including debt and housing advice through the CAB and family mediation through Involve Northwest however from 2013/14 this funding from central government will no longer be available.

2. Strengthening partnership working to ensure that the housing and support needs of more challenging client groups are met when homelessness cannot be prevented including working together to end rough sleeping

Where key challenges and gaps in services have been identified, a collective approach and appropriate plans will be developed to strategically direct and co-ordinate how we respond. This will include particular plans to respond to a number of issues ranging from personalising responses for the needs of people who are regularly sleeping rough, albeit accessing either night shelter or existing hostel provision, to managing the continued impact of welfare reform and responding to under-occupation in the borough.

We will work to develop joint protocols where appropriate, to ensure partners are aware of the expectations and roles they and the Council have to play in preventing homelessness. Key to this will be making sure that every contact partners make with vulnerable people and families really counts.

With Public Health now at the heart of the Council we will continue to work to ensure health services do more to help identify those at risk and prevent homelessness by referring them on to the appropriate services to address their needs thus 'making every contact count'. Realising key opportunities to work

⁵ Government's No Second Night Out model 2012

with health colleagues to improve outcomes for those who are at risk of or become homeless will be key to our future success. In particular developing housing options for people to move on to after drug or alcohol rehabilitation who may need more intensive support than would normally be provided, which will help them to sustain their tenancies over the longer term.

Where existing partnerships are working well and having a positive impact on preventing and relieving homelessness, such as the jointly funded Hospital Discharge Project, the Mental Health Homelessness Practitioner, the Housing Advisor for Children and Young People's department and the Specialist Homeless Advisor for domestic violence, we will seek to ensure their continuation through the availability of mainstream or grant funding based on outcomes based evidence.

We will seek to ensure solutions to address and prevent homelessness are not developed in isolation, just because this can be seen as the quickest route to success. To do this we will work with partners to develop and agree key outcomes, decide what is required to achieve these and what each agency's role in delivery is, with or without re-targeted resources.

Wirral has already increased and improved the provision of support for households who are vulnerable to homelessness; however we recognise that we must continue to ensure we take a strategic commissioning approach to homelessness which will increase multi-agency partnership working. Key to this is the need to review levels of floating support available in the borough, where it has been recognised that some people have higher needs than current provision allows for.

We will continue to build on the work we have already taken forward in responding to the needs of people with learning disabilities. We will ensure the needs of these individuals who are homeless and living in short term supported accommodation are considered, in any subsequent reconfiguration of non accommodation based services.

Progress has been made in enabling customers to access properties in both the private and social sectors; we need to continue to work with our partners to make use of existing stock, realigning this where appropriate to meet the needs of specific client groups. This will be taken forward by commissioning services, such as those for emergency and respite accommodation for 16/17 year olds and exploring the use of shared tenancies. Supporting this, we will make use of opportunities to secure funding and develop innovative approaches to targeting homelessness by enabling people to access appropriate housing which meets their needs and is sustainable for them in the long term.

Bringing this all together, we recognise that partners need to have a better understanding of housing and the support services the Council provides so that they can clearly help and support their clients when homelessness is an issue. Information sharing between Council teams (such as Housing Options and the One Stop Shop teams) is already underway which has allowed the Council's provision of housing advice to its customers to be developed, enabling specialist staff within the Housing Options Team to focus their time on homeless prevention.

3. Evaluating and realigning homelessness and prevention services to deliver value for money in a climate of increasing demand and reducing resources, recognising the wider costs of homelessness

Services need to be widely accessible across the borough and delivered in a way that ensures customers are at the heart of what we do. However in the climate of reduced resources, services will need to be more focussed and deliver better value for money. We will need to recognise and promote the savings that early intervention and prevention make for other services further down the line. Strong partnership working will be vital in ensuring this happens.

There is a good level of provision of homeless services in Wirral, however we will respond to evidence of a mismatch between need and the services actually provided, particularly when attempts to meet these needs through existing provision is a draw on resources which is unlikely to achieve positive outcomes for the individuals, their families and other service users, especially if they share the same accommodation. We will work to reduce barriers which prevent full use of existing appropriate services,

particularly in relation to the lack of access to settled accommodation. By addressing this we will ensure timely move-on from supported or temporary accommodation for individuals supporting them to sustain their homes in the long term.

We recognise that there is some duplication of existing services and this does not represent value for money, so we need to remove this. We will consider undertaking a value for money assessment of the current prevention tools in place. It is vital that Wirral makes best use of all its resources, across all partners, to intervene in the homelessness system and create opportunities to prevent and resolve homelessness, resource people to enter and retain work and protect the health and wellbeing of those who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless.

The Council has been working with registered providers of social housing to increase the availability of dispersed accommodation, ensuring that no family stays in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than a few nights. Where families do have to stay in this type of accommodation we will ensure they have some stability in terms of ensuring they do not have to move around from one place to another.

4. Increasing access to the private rented sector

The Council recognises the increased demand for appropriate, affordable housing to meet local need, but also acknowledges homelessness in the future will be driven by the continuing changing economic climate and public expenditure changes. Welfare reforms in the private rented sector along with the requirement to meet the housing needs of other priority groups and the understanding that homelessness cannot be an assumed route into a social tenancy for life, means that the private rented sector must be developed as a solution for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Where homelessness is unavoidable, it is important to ensure that alternative innovative solutions are sought in order to secure both the immediate and long term realistic opportunities available to access appropriate housing. Following the Localism Act 2011, the Council is now able to discharge its homeless duty in this sector, which will enhance the options available to the Council to enable those households who are homeless and in priority need to access a sustainable affordable home. Evidence currently shows⁶ that families who need larger homes in the social rented sector usually wait much longer to access them because of the low levels of four or more bedroom properties available. The private rented sector provides an opportunity to help with this, as indications are that there is a reasonable number of larger homes available through this route. Building on and expanding the relationships already developed with private landlords accredited by the Council will be key to this as we look to further develop the use of good quality private rented sector stock over the coming years.

Enabling access to this greater range of accommodation will require the Council and its partners to be innovative and develop appropriate solutions to meet specific needs. We will utilise a range of existing services such as the Council's Bond scheme, which is being developed to become more accessible to wide range of people, as well as supporting our partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector to maximise the use of funding opportunities to bring empty private sector homes back into use.

⁶ The Review of Homeless Services in Wirral 2012 *Gill Leng Housing Associates* p16

Our success so far

A number of significant issues were highlighted in the Review of Homeless Services in Wirral 2012 which the Council and its partners have already worked to address whilst this strategy has been developed, some of which are detailed below:

- The need to increase the availability of more dispersed accommodation has successfully been addressed, following negotiations between the Council and Wirral Partnership Homes.
- The Housing Options Team has set up a pilot Private Sector Leasing pilot scheme which enables the team to place homeless clients to be placed into these properties instead of Bed and Breakfast type accommodation.
- Further work has been carried out with the Registered Providers to clarify their approach to rent arrears and enable customers to be offered a tenancy and this has been reflected in the allocations policy.
- Following the inclusion of statutory homeless households in choice based letting scheme, Property Pool Plus, the Council has put in place measures to enable and support households to bid for available homes rather than occupying temporary accommodation for longer than necessary
- The Council now provides more readily available housing options to prevent people from rough sleeping, sofa surfing or drifting into hostels when they have no support needs through bonds, discretionary housing payments and personalised solutions.
- Regular meetings between the Housing Advice Team and One Stop Shop service continue to help inform how and what housing advice is provided. This has particularly helped with customers who present with challenging behaviour where it can be difficult to clarify their needs and what can be done to help.
- Regular training and access to current information keeps One Stop Shop staff up to date with changes to services and eligibilities ensuring that the correct advice is given to people who need advice and assistance.
- The Council has identified a housing Armed Forces Champion who represents the needs of current and former Armed Forces personnel and their families and is able to influence decisions which impact on this client group.
- The provision of information sessions to volunteers in the veterans contact centre has helped to raise awareness and knowledge of housing options and services for this client group. This has been further enhanced through the production of a leaflet which provides information relating to housing options available in the borough.
- The Council's Finance Department have delivered awareness sessions to a number of external organisations and all front line staff on the Welfare Reform Act 2011 changes and a regular newsletter is also produced to help keep staff up to date. The team will continue to update staff as the Welfare Reform Act is rolled out to ensure accurate and consistent advice is given.
- A joint protocol between Housing and Children and Young People's Department on dealing with 16 and 17 year olds presenting as homeless has been signed and launched.
- Wirral Church Ark project (The Ark) has worked with Birkenhead YMCA (BYMCA), Arch Initiatives and the Council to submit a bid for Homeless Transition Funding which has secured funding, in line with the Councils strategic priorities, to ensure services available for both new and entrenched rough sleepers are available 24 hours per day to increase the level of

intervention and support available to get them off the streets. The Council has provided match funding for this initiative.

- BYMCA has employed a worker to engage with people using the night shelter to increase their connection with services.
- The Ark and BYMCA have extended the programme of activity available through the Crisis Skylight programme, providing purposeful activities to service users, increasing their skills, confidence and engagement.
- Wirral PCT and the DAAT have included street drinkers (some of which are homeless) in their flu vaccination programme, giving 112 flu vaccines to this high risk group.
- The Ark and Wirral Partnership Homes are working in partnership to enable homeless service users to repair and refurbish empty properties for their own future use.
- A multi-agency critical needs group meets fortnightly to share information and co-ordinate intervention activity around a small number of the most complex, resource intensive individuals with multiple needs.

This successful work clearly demonstrates the commitment the Council and its partners has in place to respond to Wirral's vision for addressing homelessness in the borough **'that no one needs to be homeless and partners will work together to make this a reality'**.

Resources

The Council currently utilises a range of resources to target homeless prevention and homelessness as follows:

- Council General Funding
- Homeless Grant Funding through Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG)
- Supporting People Funding
- Partnership funding through other agencies such as Public Health , Homeless Transition Fund, Crisis Private Rented Sector Access Development Programme and 2011 – 15 Affordable Housing Programme (Homes and Communities Agency)

It is however important to stress that the Council is facing unprecedented challenges. Our 2013 – 16 Corporate Plan clearly recognises that Wirral Council' budget is reducing, whilst at the same time demand for our services is rising, as are residents expectations and therefore this will have a significant impact on how we respond to our strategic priorities.

Collectively the Council is looking at everything we do in a new light, working to become more innovative and transform the way we deliver and provide services, with the 2013 – 16 Corporate Plan focusing our limited resources on protecting the vulnerable in our borough; tackling health inequalities and driving growth in our economy.

Below is a brief summary which details how the resources listed above are utilised in targeting homeless prevention and supporting those people who have become homeless.

Supporting People

The Supporting People programme continues to invest in housing-related support services for the homeless. The programme budget for 2013/14 will be £9.44m with almost 53% allocated to services for people experiencing, or at risk of social exclusion. This includes supporting homeless hostels; dispersed, semi-independent styled supported accommodation and floating support services.

In 2014/15 the Supporting People budget will be reduced to £7.44m which is almost a 24% reduction. It will therefore be a significant challenge to deliver the scale and quality of provision of Supporting People funded services in the future economic environment, particularly in light of increased demand for services arising from the ongoing impact of welfare reforms.

Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention 2012-13 and 2013-14

The Council's Homelessness duties are carried out by the Housing Options Section and partners which are partly funded through Wirral's Community Fund and Homeless Prevention Grant.

Staffing costs for the Housing Options Team for 2012-13 is expected to be £744,800. The Section attracts grant funding from CLG Homeless Grant and Repossession Prevention Grant along with income from Housing Benefit for the use and management of interim and temporary accommodation. The Section also benefits from a £400,000 contribution from the Council's Communities Fund.

In addition, the Housing Options Team projected net expenditure for 2012-13 totals £1,196,878 which includes a contribution to the One Stop Shops for first line Housing Advice.

It is important to note however that expenditure for Bed and Breakfast provision has increased from £36,600 in 2010-11 to £109,600 (projected) in 2012-13. (This does however compare to a maximum spend on Bed and Breakfast provision in 2007-08 of £210,600 in 2007-08. In 2007-08 the Housing Options Team expanded and changed its emphasis from homelessness assessment to prevention, which lead to the significant decrease in expenditure for this provision up to 2010-11)

For 2011-12 and 2012-13 Department of Communities and Local Government increased the Council's Homelessness Grant (not ring fenced) from £51,000 to £221,000 in recognition of the achievement of the temporary accommodation target and success in homelessness prevention. An additional £76,000

was also awarded to Wirral for the Repossession Prevention Grant, to address mortgage repossessions via grants or loans.

These combined funds were made available to the Housing Options service enabling funding for the following initiatives: Housing Options staffing contribution, CAB funding for fast tracking debt and housing advice to prevent homelessness, tenancy fraud, under occupation, hospital discharge homelessness prevention officer (match funded via PCT), mediation to prevent homelessness, mortgage rescue shortfalls, small grants to prevent homelessness and homeless prevention workshops in schools.

In 2012-13 some of this funding was also used to match fund a successful bid to the CLG Homeless Transition Fund by the Wirral Ark Project and YMCA. This new initiative focuses specifically on engaging with clients with multiple complex needs, a key need identified within this strategy.

In April 2012, there was an earmarked reserve in the Council's General Fund of £271,000 for Homeless Prevention. This included Homeless Grant and Repossession Prevention Fund from previous years, following frugal management of the homelessness budget. This prevention funding was earmarked due to the expectation that welfare reform and austerity measures would place a higher demand on resources in the future when grant may be limited. In November 2012 approval was received for an allocation through this fund to provide an additional Housing Advisor with a domestic violence specialism until March 2014.

At the time of writing we do not know whether or not the Council will be able to sustain this level of homeless grant and funding to the housing options team for 2013-14.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The Government increased Wirral's allocation of funding for Discretionary Housing Payments by 84% in 2012-13 and a further 76% for 2013-14 to enable the Council to mitigate some of the effects of welfare reforms.

These Discretionary Housing Payments are made in cases where individual's circumstances call for additional financial help to meet housing costs. Payments are entirely discretionary and each case is assessed on its individual merits, taking into account individual's finances and personal circumstances.

A Discretionary Housing Payment may be awarded for example, where there is a shortfall in the rent and it would be unreasonable to expect someone to move because the property has been adapted for their needs, they have an established support network in the area or they have children at a crucial stage in their schooling. It can also be awarded in the form of payment for a deposit or removal costs to enable someone to move to more suitable, cheaper accommodation.

This Homeless Strategy has been developed in this challenging climate. We know that individually, factors such as the economic downturn, levels of unemployment, government austerity measures including significant reform to the welfare benefit system and difficult housing market conditions can disproportionately affect vulnerable people and increase the risk of homelessness. Collectively, these factors produce an environment that is bound to have a considerable impact locally and nationally. This strategy recognises this and acknowledges that Homelessness is a complex problem with multiple causes requiring flexible solutions and the delivery of innovative services in order to reach the increasing number of people affected.

In order to successfully implement our Strategic Homeless Action Plan, we will need to look at how existing and future resources are utilised and where appropriate consider how they could be re-aligned. We will need to work with our partners to ensure alternative and new resources / funding initiatives are accessed and realised by developing innovative solutions to homelessness and homeless prevention which are based on a sound understanding of the issues and demonstrate clear value for money.

The Council and its partners need to recognise that clear value for money is central to all of the work that is undertaken and strategically commissioned, with monitoring of performance targets clearly

supporting a strong culture of value for money and quality services and provision which respond to appropriate needs.

Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018

Action Plan

Key for timescales

Blue	Short Term by 2014	Yellow	Medium Term by 2016	Magenta	Long Term by 2018
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Page 153

This Action Plan sets out the priorities to be delivered in Wirral over the next 5 years, whilst lead teams have been identified to move forward with actions, partners will have a key role in both participating and delivering the actions and solutions to be achieved for the benefit of local people

Strategic Priority 1 : Preventing Homelessness

No.	Solution	Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescales
1	Better services for young people to prevent homelessness	Develop a housing plan for young people including care leavers	Supported Housing and Special Needs Team	
		Explore the development of emergency and respite accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds	Supported Housing & Special needs/CYPD	
		Evaluate existing resources split between accommodation based and floating/outreach services	Supported Housing and Special Needs Team	
2	Develop and deliver a communication plan covering homelessness related issues	Engage with media and relevant partners who could contribute to this and develop the key messages to prevent homelessness eg the importance of seeking early help when faced with rent problems	Housing Strategy Team/Housing Options Team	
		Explore the use of electronic media for remote interviewing	Housing Options Team	
3	Develop a response to the need for gender specific supported accommodation as part of a re-commissioning plan	Consider provision of emergency accommodation for women only	Supported Housing and Special Needs Team	
4	Enable substance misuse clients with complex needs or chaotic behaviour can access appropriate accommodation	Review the training, information and resources available to mentors, treatment and recovery providers for clients with substance misuse	Housing Division	
		Review the range of support which treatment and recovery providers and mentors provide to help their clients maintain their home and tenancy	Housing Division	
		Increase the sustainable housing options for people leaving alcohol detox	Supported Housing and Special Needs Team/DAAT	
		Ensure linkages to the Housing Priority Panel are known	Supported Housing and Special Needs Team	
		Review the existing supported housing provision for people with substance misuse problems to ensure that the needs of the most chaotic are being addressed including access to social care assessments	Supported Housing and Special Needs Team/DAAT	

5	Prevent homelessness amongst offenders who are released or due to be released from prison, and ensure there is access to suitable accommodation	Develop guidelines with supported accommodation providers to minimise placement breakdown within accommodation	Supported Housing and Special Needs Team	
		Work with shelter to maximise the notice period for prisoners requiring accommodation on release and ensure offenders are registered on Property Pool Plus at the earliest opportunity	Property Pool Plus / Housing Options Team	
		Ensure there is a specified Housing Options Team member for liaison and who can attend case meetings	Housing Options Team	
		Identify barriers to settled/supported accommodation and develop a plan to overcome these and enable access to suitable accommodation	Housing Division/Merseyside Probation Trust	
		Develop non-priority information and advice pack	Housing Options Team	
		Ensure there is advice relating to Housing Options, including the Private Rented Sector available to offenders and integrate this with the Merseyside City Region single gateway project	Housing Options Team	
6	Ensure frontline staff are able to deal effectively with all client groups and customers feel welcome to use the Council's One Stop Shops for advice on housing and homelessness	Ensure training for frontline staff is completed and regularly updated in order that frontline staff are able to advise on changes to welfare benefits, in tandem with operational and service delivery needs and ensure staff are able to deal with clients psychological needs	Housing Benefits Team/One Stop Shops, Finance	
		Set up a programme of Mystery Shopping for the One Stop Shops with input from the OSS managers, real customers and agencies	Finance - One Stop Shops	
		Work with the Wirral Veteran Contact Centre to Enable Wirral Veteran volunteers to provide information and training to frontline housing staff on challenges faced by veterans leaving service	Finance - One Stop Shops	
7	Enable homeless people to contribute to meeting their own and other people's housing need through the use of empty properties	Explore the potential to bring empty homes back into use through initiatives and as funding becomes available with Voluntary and Community Sector Agencies	Housing Strategy Team / Private Sector Housing Renewal Team	

8	Review the Council’s Bond Scheme and its effectiveness in homeless prevention	Review existing scheme criteria to ensure meets local need and amend policy as appropriate	Housing Options Team	
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Strategic Priority 2 : Strengthening partnership working

No.	Solution	Action	Responsible Lead(s)	Timescales
1	Continue to address and respond to the needs of rough sleepers and non-priority homeless, tackle entrenched rough sleepers and work to break the cycle of repeated hostel use by other vulnerable people with drug and or alcohol problems	Carry out a cost saving analysis to show the benefits of existing dedicated work which focuses on rough sleepers and non-priority homelessness	Housing Division/Health	
		Develop personalised responses to individual rough sleepers incorporating peer support from people with experience of not just homelessness but also drug and alcohol use	Housing Division/Health	
		Develop and deliver a plan to respond to needs of people who are regularly sleeping rough	Housing Division/Health	
2	Ensure a partnership approach is taken in relation to the housing, support and care needs of people with mental ill health	Carry out a cost saving analysis to show the benefits of existing dedicated work which focuses on mental ill health	Housing Division/Health	
		Develop a protocol with mental health services (health and social care) for referral and joint working for customers who are at risk / actually homeless	Housing Division/Health	
3	Establish the development of a robust evidence base that will inform future housing, support and care requirement of people with Learning Disability and Mental Health problems	Identify intelligence which will identify arising needs for clients with mental ill health	Housing Division/Health/DASS	
		Identify intelligence which will help planning for arising needs for clients with a learning disability	Housing Division/Health/DASS	
4	Develop alternative solutions to the night shelter	Investigate the provision of emergency accommodation in small units and in alternative locations other than Birkenhead.	Supported Housing and Special Needs/Housing Options Teams	
5	Enable Registered Providers to be confident to rehouse offenders into their accommodation	Identify and agree what information is required by Registered Providers to enable them to rehouse offenders	Housing Division	
		Investigate Registered Providers' reluctance to house Schedule 1 Offenders and those subject to MAPPA	Housing Division	

6	Ensure support options are available to offenders and assist in reducing the number of people returning to prison from supported accommodation	Review current housing support available for all offenders to ensure appropriate support is in place and that pathways to specialist services are available in order to reduce the level or reoffending and enable specialise housing advisors to work with offenders as part of a wider package of support	Supported Housing and Special Needs	
7	Ensure households requiring an adaptation are not discriminated against in gaining access to housing.	Agree a protocol between the Council and Registered Providers whilst reviewing the function of the disabled persons housing register	Supported Housing and Special Needs/Property Pool Plus Teams	
8	Ensure we make the best use of existing housing stock in the borough to meet people's needs	Review service level agreement with Property Pool Plus partners regarding labelling of social properties eg age designation and monitor this	Property Pool Plus Team	

Strategic Priority 3 : Evaluating and realigning homelessness and prevention services

No	Solution	Action	Responsible Leads(s)	Timescales
1	For the Council and Registered providers to work together to raise awareness amongst tenants of the housing solutions available	Build on the current understanding of the work being undertaken by Registered Providers on information, advice and support being given to tenants in relation to welfare reform and ensure wherever possible links to the work being undertaken by the Council	Housing Strategy Team	
		Promote Property Pool Plus as a mechanism for moving within the existing social sector and provide advice, support and assistance to promote the use of mutual exchanges for those needing to move	Property Pool Plus	
2	Improve existing services and information available to substance misuse clients	Review existing Supporting People contracts for substance misuse / housing related support services and investigate the feasibility of a single point of contact for agencies to be able to refer and signpost to	Supported Housing & Special Needs Team	
		Develop housing options for substance misuse clients to move on to after rehabilitation and ensure they can sustain a tenancy	Supported Housing & Special Needs Team	
3	Ensure best value for money for specialist support services or floating support for people who experience domestic violence	Review the current partnership between the Family Support Unit, Supporting people and the Housing Options team and realign if required	Supported Housing & Special Needs/Housing Options and FSU	
4	Ensure clients with learning disabilities or those who appear to have learning disabilities are adequately supported and their needs are met	Ensure clients are seen by a care assessor to identify and plan their housing and support needs	DASS	

		Review housing and support options for clients with low to moderate Learning Disabilities to inform future commissioning of support and appropriate housing.	Supported Housing and Special Needs	
		Engage with Registered Providers on models to provide alternative support provision for clients with a learning disability through intensive management functions	Supported Housing and Special Needs	
		Develop a more detailed housing options leaflet as part of the Learning Disability Plan to provide information and advice to clients with Learning Disabilities	Housing Strategy	
5	Seek funding opportunities to address rough sleeping and non priority homelessness through a specific Wirral resource	Bid for funding to deliver a service with a dedicated worker	Housing Strategy	
6	Consider alternatives to street drinking/rough sleeping	Undertake a feasibility study of the viability of a controlled drinking environment and seek funding opportunities	Housing Strategy Team/Supported Housing and Special Needs	

Strategic priority 4 : Increasing access to the Private Rented Sector

No.	Solution	Action	Responsible Leads(s)	Timescales
1	Increase housing supply by making better use of existing stock and wherever possible enable homeless people to contribute to their own housing need through use of empty properties	Develop a multi agency approach for bringing empty properties back into use, exploring the potential to bring empty homes back into use through initiatives and as funding becomes available with Voluntary and Community Sector Agencies	Housing Strategy/Private Sector Housing Renewal Teams	
		Support agencies to help their customers into privately rented homes through better information	Private Sector Housing Renewal/Housing Options Teams	
2	Support vulnerable people to access homes in the private rented sector	Work with supported housing providers to identify Private Sector housing options for vulnerable people	Housing Options Team/Housing Priority Panel	
		Develop guidance on housing options for vulnerable clients	Private Sector Housing Renewal/Housing Options Teams	
		Liaise with floating support providers to ensure access to support is available to PRS tenants	Supported Housing and Special Needs Team	
3	Develop a policy to discharge the Council's homeless duty into the private rented sector	Develop a policy to discharge the Council's homeless duty into the private rented sector	Housing Strategy Team	
		Implement procedures and identify reputable landlords with affordable, good quality properties.	Private Sector Housing Renewal/Housing Options Teams	
4	Develop a plan across agencies to direct and co-ordinate action to assist people to move into the private rented sector	Maintain register of reputable private sector landlords with affordable, good quality properties and publicise with partner agencies	Private Sector Housing Renewal/Housing Options Teams	

		Develop a housing pathway to direct clients into the private rented sector	Private Sector Housing Renewal/Housing Options Teams	
5	Encourage and support private landlords to accept more vulnerable people as tenants	Review the current support available for vulnerable clients living in the private rented sector	Supported Housing and Needs Team	
		Develop a package of measures to encourage and support private landlords to accept more vulnerable tenants	Private Sector Housing Renewal/Housing Options Teams	

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11 JULY 2013

SUBJECT:	PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE PLANT AND EQUIPMENT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	KEVIN ADDERLEY, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR CHRIS MEADEN, HEALTH & WELL BEING
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the purchase of the proposed plant and equipment capital investment programme to modernise the Parks & Countryside Service.
- 1.2 The detail of the plant and machinery this report is seeking permission to purchase in 2013-14 is in **Appendix A**. Due to the efficiency of the tender process the overall cost to the Council is below the £1,498k allocated in the Capital Programme and the £231k saving will result in a revenue saving of £23k in 2014/15.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Parks & Countryside Service Modernisation Project is a complex multi-disciplinary project with the purpose of establishing a modern, cost effective and efficient service.
- 2.2 An Outline Delivery Plan was endorsed by Cabinet at their meeting on 24 November 2011 (Minute 205 refers) and has been set out under four key workstreams all reporting to a Project Board:
 - Policy, Processes and Performance
 - Human Resources
 - Assets
 - Communication and Engagement

This report is a key part of the Asset workstream.

- 2.3 Updates of the Parks & Countryside Service Modernisation Project have been endorsed by Cabinet and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee as listed in the Subject History at the end of the report.
- 2.4 At Cabinet on 12 April 2012 approval was given to invest £2.4m in plant and equipment to enable the modernisation and continuous improvement of the Parks and Countryside Service. During 2012-13 the Council's capital programme was subject to a review, in light of the overall financial position and to reduce the demands of the programme. Subsequently, Cabinet on 18 February 2013 agreed a revised capital programme which included an amended investment profile for parks plant and equipment, £1,498k in 2013-14 and a further £628k in 2014-15. Approval was also granted for £1,040k of investment in Parks vehicles over the next two years and £2,810k of investment in Park Depots over the next three years.

3.0 PLANT AND EQUIPMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

3.1 Justification

New equipment is urgently needed to ensure that we can run the Parks and Countryside Service safely and productively to the highest standards and at the minimum cost both in the short and the long term. This will help the Parks and Countryside Service meet its existing budget targets.

The Parks and Countryside Service fleet is now at considerable age which causes great problems in both maintenance costs and operator safety as detailed in the Cabinet Report on 12 April 2012.

3.2 Proposed Purchase

The detail of the plant and machinery this report is seeking permission to purchase in 2013-14 is in Appendix A. Due to the efficiency of the tender process the over all cost to the council is below the £1,498k allocated in the Capital Programme. This plant and equipment will replace plant and equipment which is not fit for purpose, unreliable and excessively costly to maintain and keep serviceable. This includes new equipment required to reduce risk to operatives and potential claims against authority arising from HAVS. The total amount of plant and equipment that this will provide is 165 items.

3.3 Further Investment

It is anticipated that there will be further capital investment of an estimated £628k in 2014-15 needed for end of life plant and equipment for the Parks and Countryside Service. This will enable the purchase of a further 33 units of plant and equipment.

Further reports will be brought to Cabinet detailing these requirements at a later date.

3.4 Procurement Route

The procurement process for the provision of this equipment and vehicles is fully compliant with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules, UK Procurement Legislation and EC Procurement Directives. The tender procedure followed a two part Restricted Procedure was advertised on the Council's ePortal, the Chest, and the Official Journal of the European Union. The Tender has been evaluated and will be awarded on a 70% price and 30% technical corporate standard.

Once approval is granted it is anticipated that the majority of equipment will be available from late summer 2013. This will lead to marked improvement in service delivery standards with further improvement following the purchase of the remaining equipment in 2014/15.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 Failure to invest in new plant, equipment and vehicles to modernise the service will preclude the achievement of service objectives and could result in increased health and safety risks to the workforce.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 A rigorous exercise has been undertaken to identify the necessary plant, equipment and vehicles required to meet the needs of the service, and a programme of investment has been developed based on a formal assessment of the condition of existing plant and equipment.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 A Consultation and Engagement Plan has been agreed for the Parks and Countryside Modernisation Project ensuring staff and users are fully involved in the project.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 A key part of the Modernisation Project is to increase opportunities for voluntary and community groups in assisting with the maintenance and management of the Parks and Countryside area.

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

- 8.1 The proposed Investment Programme is summarised as follows:

Plant and equipment:

165 units

Capital Purchase – less than £1.498M as outlined in **Appendix A**.

Required to replace equipment which is not fit for purpose, unreliable and excessively costly to maintain and keep serviceable. This includes new equipment required to reduce risk to operatives and potential claims against the Authority arising from HAVS (Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome).

- 8.2 On 18th February Cabinet agreed borrowing of £1,498k to fund the Parks Plant and Equipment capital investment programme in 2013-14. As noted in Appendix A the tender outcome is £1,267k giving a saving of £231k to the Council which will result in a revenue saving of £23k from 2014/15.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none arising from this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

- 10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Parks Modernisation Project as referred to in the progress report dated 21 November 2012 to Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The new plant and equipment purchased will assist in reducing carbon emissions. Additional tree planting on highways and in parks contributes to offsetting carbon emissions.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Cabinet is requested to:

(i) Approve the tender award for the purchase of Plant & Equipment in the total sum of £1,266,978 as outlined in Appendix A;

(ii) Note that the saving of £231k will be removed from the Capital Programme resulting in a revenue saving of £23k 2014/15.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 A comprehensive programme of capital investment in plant and equipment is essential to effectively modernise the Parks & Countryside Service and enable the achievement of service objectives.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Mary Bagley**
Parks and Countryside Service Manager
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APPENDICES

A. Results of Tender Parks and Countryside Plant and Machinery 2013

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Detailed Schedules of plant and equipment requirements.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – PACSPE Contract Award	22 September 2011
Sustainable Communities O&S Committee – PACSPE Contract Award Call in	20 October 2011
Cabinet – PACSPE Contract Award (following Call in)	3 November 2011
Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Services Modernisation Project – Integration of Highway Services and Outline Delivery Plan	24 November 2011
Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Services Modernisation Project – Update	12 January 2012
Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Services Modernisation Project – Purchase of Second-hand	15 March 2012

<p>Vehicles and Equipment</p> <p>Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Parks & Countryside Services Procurement Exercise (PACSPE) – Internal/External Bid Comparison</p> <p>Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Service Modernisation Project – Progress Update including proposed workforce working practices pilot initiatives</p> <p>Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Service Modernisation Project – Plant & Equipment Capital Investment Programme</p> <p>Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Parks Modernisation Progress Report</p>	<p>28 March 2012</p> <p>12 April 2012</p> <p>12 April 2012</p> <p>21 November 2012</p>
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Appendix A

This tender exercise is for the procurement of plant and machinery for the Modernisation Programme of the Parks and Countryside Service.

A Specification of 46 Lots was completed and this was published on "The Chest" for suppliers to respond. A total of 8 Suppliers replied and a table of the plant and machinery and the winning supplier is shown below. The Evaluation criteria consisted of a Quality – Price ratio of 70% Price and 30% Quality.

Quality consisted of the ability of the equipment to meet operational performance requirements – weighted 40%,
Health and Safety risk related matters - weighted 25%,
Delivery Times – 10%,
Warranty back up support and Training – 20%
Value added service – 5%

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Machine Description</u>	<u>Winning Tenderer</u>	<u>Cost as Tendered</u>	<u>Quantity Immediately</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
S2.2 (1)	80HP 4WD Tractor	Turners	£39,573	8	£316,584
S2.2 (2)	Front Loader	Turners	£5,983	2	£11,966
S2.2 (3)	115HP 4WD Tractor	Turners	£46,771	1	£46,771
S2.2 (4)	Pedestrian Mower- Small Rotary	Wirral Tool Hire	£1,032	25	£25,800
S2.2 (4A)	Pedestrian Mower- Small Rotary Mulching	Wirral Tool Hire	£423	0	£0
S2.2 (5)	Small Rotary- Rear Roller	Turners	£677	15	£10,155
S2.2 (6)	Large Rotary- Walk Behind	Gibsons	£4,595	10	£45,950
S2.2 (7)	Large Rotary- Flail Head	Gibsons	£1,999	6	£11,994
S2.2 (8)	Pedestrian Mower- Large Rotary- Stand/ Ride On	Gibsons	£4,495	10	£44,950
S2.2 (9)	Fine Turf Greens Hybrid Mower	Turners	£5,762	5	£28,810
S2.2 (10)	Pedestrian Mower- Fine Turf	Turners	£3,707	15	£55,605
S2.2 (11)	Multi Purpose Utility 4X4 ATV	Turners	£6,286	2	£12,572
S2.2 (12)	4WD Quad Bike	Cheshire Turf Machinery	£6,231	1	£6,231
S2.2 (13)	Rear Tractor Mounted Side Arm Hedgecutter	F.R.Sharrock	£3,995	1	£3,995
S2.2 (14)	Mini Baler	F.R.Sharrock	£7,656	1	£7,656
S2.2 (15)	Mini Bale Wrapper	Cheshire Turf Machinery	£3,650	1	£3,650
S2.2 (16)	Drum Mower	F.R.Sharrock	£2,209	1	£2,209
S2.2 (17)	Rotary Tedder C/W Windrowing Attachment	F.R.Sharrock	£2,378	1	£2,378
S2.2 (18)	Tractor Mounted Heavy Duty Drop Salt Spreader	F.R.Sharrock	£2,967	0	£0
S2.2 (20)	Machine Maintenance Lift	Gibsons	£7,845	1	£7,845
S2.2 (21)	Out Front Rotary Ride-On Mower	Turners	£18,717	6	£112,302
S2.2 (22)	Front Mounted Flail Mower to fit Rotary Traction Unit	Balmers	£3,100	4	£12,400
S2.2 (23)	Small Ride-On Tractor c/w 48" Mid Mount Rotary Deck	F.R.Sharrock	£8,495	4	£33,980
S2.2 (24)	Small Ride-On Tractor c/w 48" Side Discharge Deck and High Tip Collector	Turners	£15,126	1	£15,126
S2.2 (25)	48" Zero Turn Ride-On Mower	Burrows	£10,511	2	£21,022

S2.2 (26)	Golf Course Tees Mower	Turners	£16,478	4	£65,912
S2.2 (27)	Front/ Rear Tractor Mounted Rotary Flail	Turners	£4,949	4	£19,796
S2.2 (28)	Rear Trailed Flail Cutter/ Scarifier c/w High Lift Collector	Sharrock	£13,695	2	£27,390
S2.2 (29)	Rear Tractor Mounted Side Arm Flail	Balmers	£12,250	1	£12,250
S2.2 (30)	Arboricultural Stump Grinder	Gibsons	£9,695	0	£0
S2.2 (31)	Arboricultural Wood Chipper (Towed)	Gibsons	£16,495	2	£32,990
S2.2 (31A)	Arboricultural Chipper/ Shredder (Towed)	Turners	£15,125	0	£0
S2.2 (32)	Arboricultural Wood Chipper (Tractor Mounted)	Gibsons	£8,198	1	£8,198
S2.2 (33)	Compact Utility Tractor	Turners	£8,928	8	£71,424
S2.2 (34)	Compact Tractor Utility Loader	Turners	£2,500	4	£10,000
S2.2 (35)	Compact Utility Tractor 54" Mid Mount Rotary Deck	Turners	£2,343	3	£7,029
S2.2 (36)	Compact Tractor c/w Cab	Clarke & Pulman	£16,910	0	£0
S2.2 (37)	Compact Tractor Trailer	Cheshire Turf Machinery	£1,826	4	£7,304
S2.2 (38)	Vertical Tine Aerator	F.R.Sharrock	£16,160	0	£0
S2.2 (39)	Turf Top Dresser	Cheshire Turf Machinery	£8,339	0	£0
S2.2 (40)	Linear Aerator (Driven) Soil Decompactor	F.R.Sharrock	£8,480	0	£0
S2.2 (41)	Pedestrian Aerator Corer	Burrows	£2,200	0	£0
S2.2 (42)	Towed Behind Core Collector	Turners	£4,842	0	£0
S2.2 (43)	7 Unit Gang Mowers	Cheshire Turf Machinery	£21,705	0	£0
S2.2 (44)	5 Unit Gang Mowers	Cheshire Turf Machinery	£19,760	3	£59,280
S2.2 (45)	Grave Digging Excavators	Burrows	£21,114	0	£0
S2.2 (46)	2000kg 4WD Dumper	Burrows	£16,839	0	£0
A	Hybrid Ride on Greens Mower	Gibsons	£34,227	2	£68,454
B	Machine Trailers	TBC	£3,500	2	£7,000
C	Hand held Equipment	TBC	£30,000		£30,000

Total £1,266,978

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11 JULY 2013

SUBJECT:	<i>CHARGING FOR SERVICES - ADULT SOCIAL CARE</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE JONES</i>
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend a revised and consolidated fairer charging and fairer contributions policy.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Each local authority with social services responsibilities must determine and operate a fairer charging and fairer contributions policy (FCP). It must keep the FCP under review.
- 2.2 Each local authority with social services responsibilities must determine and operate local discretions (CRAGLD) in implementing the Department of Health's charging for residential accommodation guide (CRAG).
- 2.3 It is now necessary to review the Wirral FCP and CRAGLD following the setting of the 2013-14 Council Budget and the Independent Review of Debt (IRD) considered by Cabinet on 23 May 2013.
- 2.4 Maintaining and revising the FCP and CRAGLD is one of the key actions in the DASS debt action plan (DDAP).
- 2.5 The Care Bill – if enacted – will make substantial changes to the charging regime for care. Any implications will be reflected in the policies in due course once full details are available including the implementation schedule. It is expected the first Care Bill charging changes will come into force in 2015-16.
- 2.6 Section 3 below considers the FCP. Section 4 below considers the CRAGLD. Some changes apply to both policies. However each policy needs a separate formal approval so all changes are listed in each section..

3.0 CHANGES FROM CURRENT FAIRER CHARGING AND FAIRER CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY AND CLARIFICATIONS

- 3.1 The FCP is attached at Appendix A. This will be supported by user-friendly guidance available to clients and on the Internet.

- 3.2 The main changes and clarifications are set out in the sections below. Numbers in square brackets are references to the section in the FCP
- 3.3 **Responsibility of self-funders** The responsibility of self-funders to pay providers directly for their care has not been made clear in the past. The Council has a duty to carry out a community care assessment for all clients. Self-funders will therefore continue to be assessed for their service needs by the Council and assisted in organising their care. Self-funders (unless with capacity issues) should however pay providers themselves.
- 3.4 The previous uncertainty over self-funders' financial responsibilities has led to a large volume of unnecessary work in billing and recovery, and examples of non-recovery. These form a significant component of the historical debt cases identified by the IRD. Most clients' financial assessment does not vary from month to month; whereas a self-funder's financial assessment does vary with any changes in the actual provision.
- 3.5 The proposed approach on self-funders will therefore significantly reduce workload in PFU and allow resources to be focused on speeding up assessments and monitoring and recovering arrears. This section will require revision if the Care Bill comes into operation [4.2]
- 3.6 **Commitment to early financial assessment.** This reflects the appointment of more visiting officers on a self-financing basis in accordance with the IRD and the DDAP [4.3]
- 3.7 **Indicative self-assessment and web calculator** Although not formally charging policies, these will improve the user-friendliness of the system. [4.5]
- 3.8 **Appealed charge payable until appeal resolved** This is unclear in the current arrangements. The IRD commented on the excessively large number of cases 'on hold' following appeal. The revised policy will avoid clients falling into arrears; if a repayment of charges is ultimately determined, this will be made promptly by the PFU.
- 3.9 Exceptional cases may arise where undue hardship would be caused by the full charge continuing to be paid pending appeal. Such cases will be referred by PFU to DASS senior management. [4.9]
- 3.10 **Full cost payable in the event of non-cooperation with financial assessment. Revised assessment will only be backdated to the date of cooperation with financial assessment.** This is unclear in the current arrangements. The lack of clarity has led to the considerable delays in resolving historical debt identified in the IRD. [4.11]
- 3.11 **Payment by direct debit promoted** A small proportion of clients currently pay by standing order. From September 2013 direct debit will become available and is the preferred payment option. [4.18]
- 3.12 **Collection by providers** This permits contributions to be collected by providers in appropriate circumstances. This is most likely to arise in the case of low, flat-rate charges. [4.19]

- 3.13 **Deprivation** This clarifies the position in the event of asset disposals with the purpose of reducing client contributions.[4.21]
- 3.14 **Assistive Technology** Implementation of 2013-16 Budget Saving. [5.1.1]
- 3.15 **Care episode not delivered** To clarify the position on whether service is chargeable when declined by the client without notice.[6.5]
- 3.16 **100% of disposable income** Implementation of 2013-16 Budget Saving. [6.8]
- 4.0 **CHANGES FROM CURRENT CHARGING FOR RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION GUIDE LOCAL DISCRETIONS**
- 4.1 The local discretions are attached at Appendix B. This will be supported by user-friendly guidance available to clients and on the Internet.
- 4.2 The main changes and clarifications are set out in the sections below. Numbers in square brackets are references to the section in the CRAGLD
- 4.3 **Responsibility of self-funders** The responsibility of self-funders to pay providers directly for their care has not been made clear in the past. The Council has a duty to carry out a community care assessment for all clients. Self-funders will therefore continue to be assessed for their service needs by the Council and assisted in organising their care. Self-funders (unless with capacity issues) should however pay providers themselves.
- 4.4 The previous uncertainty over self-funders' financial responsibilities has led to a large volume of unnecessary work in billing and recovery, and examples of non-recovery. These form a significant component of the historical debt cases identified by the IRD. Most clients' financial assessment does not vary from month to month; whereas a self-funder's financial assessment does vary with any changes in the actual provision.
- 4.5 The proposed approach on self-funders will therefore significantly reduce workload in PFU and allow resources to be focused on speeding up assessments and monitoring and recovering arrears. This section will require revision if the Care Bill comes into operation [4.1]
- 4.6 **Commitment to early financial assessment** This reflects the appointment of more visiting officers on a self-financing basis in accordance with the IRD and the DDAP [4.2]
- 4.7 **Indicative self-assessment and web calculator** Although not formally charging policies, these will improve the user-friendliness of the system. [4.4]
- 4.8 **Appealed charge payable until appeal resolved** This is unclear in the current arrangements. The IRD commented on the excessively large number of cases 'on hold' following appeal. The revised policy will avoid clients falling into arrears; if a repayment of charges is ultimately determined, this will be made promptly by the PFU.

- 4.9 Exceptional cases may arise where undue hardship would be caused by the full charge continuing to be paid pending appeal. Such cases will be referred by PFU to DASS senior management. **[4.7]**
- 4.10 **Full cost payable in the event of non-cooperation with financial assessment. Revised assessment will only be backdated to the date of cooperation with financial assessment.** This is unclear in the current arrangements. The lack of clarity has led to the considerable delays in resolving historical debt identified in the IRD. **[4.9]**
- 4.11 **Payment by direct debit promoted** A small proportion of clients currently pay by standing order. From September 2013 direct debit will become available and is the preferred payment option. **[4.15]**
- 4.12 **Collection by providers** This permits contributions to be collected by providers in appropriate circumstances. This is most likely to arise in the case of low, flat-rate charges. **[4.16]**
- 4.13 **Deferred payment agreements** Under S55 of the Health and Social Services Act 2001, the authority has the discretion to charge interest in the circumstances outlined (i.e. on any balance outstanding more than 56 days after the death of the client). This discretion is not currently exercised. The application of a 4% rate is now proposed by DASS as one of the measures to generate repayment of the £8.8m 2013-14 temporary budget. This section will require revision of the Care Bill comes into operation. **[7]**
- 4.14 **Land charges in respect of arrears** Under S22 and S24 of the Health and Social Services and Social Security Adjudications Act 1983, the authority has the discretion to charge interest in the circumstances outlined (i.e. from the death of the client). This discretion is not currently exercised. The application of a 4% rate is now proposed by DASS as one of the measures to generate repayment of the £8.8m 2013-14 temporary budget. **[8]**

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 The purpose of seeking approval to the policies is to eliminate the financial risk of challenge to financial assessments, and to maximise collection and recovery.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The proposed policies will not have an adverse impact on clients' assessed contributions. They relate to the efficient implementation of existing policies. No formal consultation is therefore required.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 There are no direct implications for voluntary, community and faith organisations.

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

- 9.1 The implications of the revised Policies have already been assumed in the 2013-14 budget setting, and in identifying measures to repay the £8.8m temporary budget allocation to DASS in 2013-14.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 To be provided

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Policy is in accordance with Fairer Charging and Fairer Contributions guidance and Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide issued by the Department of Health.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 None.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are no planning implications arising directly from this report.

14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agrees the FCP as set out in Appendix A
- 14.2 It is recommended the FCP is put in immediate effect.
- 14.3 It is recommended that Cabinet agrees the CRAGLD as set out in Appendix B
- 14.4 It is recommended the CRAGLD is put in immediate effect

15.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 The Council is required to determine its FCP and CRAGLD in accordance with relevant legislation.

REPORT AUTHOR: Paul Cook
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APPENDICES

- Appendix A Wirral Fairer Charging and Fairer Contributions Policy
Appendix B Wirral Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide Local Discretions

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Fairer Charging and Fairer Contributions Policy Guidance and Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide issued by the Department of Health

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

Wirral Council
Directorate of Adult Social Services
Fairer Charging and Fairer Contributions policy for non-residential services

Effective from 11th July 2013

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. Legislation gives councils the discretionary power to require adults to contribute to the cost of their non-residential services. This document sets out the Wirral policy for assessing the financial contribution to be made by clients. It is effective from 11th July 2013.
- 1.2. The policy is based on the Department of Health's **Fairer Charging** Guidance (2002) and also Fairer Contributions Guidance (2010)

2. **Services covered by this policy**

- 2.1. This policy covers any non-residential community care service.
- 2.2. Examples of the services covered by this policy include but not exclusively:
 - 2.2.1. Community meals
 - 2.2.2. Day care
 - 2.2.3. Domiciliary Care
 - 2.2.4. Assistive Technology
 - 2.2.5. Reablement services that extend beyond 6 weeks
 - 2.2.6. Independent Supported Living Schemes

3. **Application**

- 3.1. The policy applies to all clients unless in the list of exceptions below.
- 3.2. The exceptions are
 - 3.2.1. Support provided under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act
 - 3.2.2. Sufferer of Creutzfeldt Jacobs Disease
 - 3.2.3. Asylum Seekers
 - 3.2.4. Adults in full-time education
 - 3.2.5. Support provided as a Reablement services and for a period of six weeks or less

4. **Principles**

- 4.1. Some low level charges will be made without a financial assessment. These are set out in section 5 below.
- 4.2. Clients that exceed the capital limit of £23,250 are not eligible for council financial support and are self-funders. After their statutory service assessment they will be assisted in identifying service provision. They will then be required to pay providers directly for any commissioned service. This will avoid self-funders building up arrears of charges with the Council and any misunderstandings about their financial responsibilities.
- 4.3. Clients will be provided with an early financial assessment following a visit by a senior assessment officer from the Personal Finance Unit.
- 4.4. Comprehensive benefits advice and assistance will be offered to all service users. This may increase their income, and help meet the cost of contributions. Clients will be assisted in identifying their disability related expenditure necessary to maintain independent living.
- 4.5. Facilities for indicative self-assessment and a web-calculator will be provided from September 2013.

- 4.6. The contributions requested from service users following financial assessment will be fair and reasonable. Due care will be taken in assessing the service user's finances and their ability to contribute towards the cost of their care according to their means.
- 4.7. The objective of financial assessment is that service users retain their Minimum Income Guarantee amount plus a buffer of 25%.
- 4.8. Service users have the right to request a review of their assessed contribution if they feel it is incorrect or if there has been a significant change in their financial situation. Any adjustment over and above this policy will be determined by DASS senior management.
- 4.9. Where the assessed contribution is appealed for review, clients must pay the original assessed contribution until the appeal is determined.
- 4.10. If a client does not wish to undergo a financial assessment the full cost of services will be charged.
- 4.11. If a client does not cooperate in making a financial assessment or fails to provide requested information within the required timescale the full cost of services will be charged. If a financial assessment is later able to be completed, it will only take effect from the date that the client cooperated with the making of the assessment or provided the information requested.
- 4.12. Clients must notify the PFU of any material change in their financial circumstances if this is likely to impact on their assessed contribution.
- 4.13. If a client does not notify the PFU of a material change that would have led to an increased contribution, the increased contribution will be implemented from the date a revised financial assessment is issued that reflects the material change.

- 4.14. Service users and their partners who work will not have their employment earnings included as part of their financial assessment.
- 4.15. Service users who refuse to pay their assessed contribution will not have their services removed.
- 4.16. The Council will recover contribution arrears through the courts in accordance with the Council's recovery policy
- 4.17. All client information (verbal and written) will be treated in confidence and due care will be given to disclosing information that is in the interests of the service user only.
- 4.18. All clients will be encouraged to pay by direct debit once this system is available in September 2013.
- 4.19. Wirral may make arrangements for contributions to be collected by providers in some cases.
- 4.20. Wirral Council is committed to the prevention and detection of fraud.
- 4.21. If a client is demonstrated to have made a significant disposal of their capital within a year of the commencement of the service and the disposal is not expenditure related to their disability, the capital that would have applied had the deprivation not occurred will be used to make the financial assessment.
- 4.22. A client assessment will recognize all capital in which the client has a legal or equitable interest.
- 4.23. Wirral Council will assess whether a client has the capacity to organise the payment of their contributions. If the client has capacity, but wishes another person to manage their payments then the client will remain liable for any contributions due.
- 4.24. Where a person has been legally appointed to manage a client's affairs, the PFU will deal with that person.

5. Services not subject to financial assessment

5.1. The following services are flat rate charges and no financial assessment will be made:

5.1.1. Assistive technology – a charge will be made for the basic service as determined from time to time. There is no charge for the basic service plus any further assistive technology. There is no charge for any assistive technology where the client is in receipt of any other non-residential service.

5.1.2. Community Meals – a charge per meal

5.1.3. Transport – a charge per journey

6. Basis for Financial Assessment

6.1. Service users will retain a level of income equal to their appropriate Minimum Income Guarantee amount, plus a buffer of 25% after any financially assessed charge for support has been made.

6.2. If the user has a partner or spouse, the couple will retain a level of income equal to the couple's Minimum Income Guarantee amount, plus a buffer of 25% after any financially assessment of the client has been made.

6.3. Financial assessments will be based on the actual cost of services as set out in the policy and determined from time to time by Wirral in accordance with proper accounting practices.

6.4. If the full assessed care is not provided, the client financial contribution will only be revised if the cost of the care actually provided is less than the assessed contribution or no care was provided for the week in question.

6.5. If care is unable to be delivered due to the client declining the service, at least 24 hours notice must be given for the service not to be charged. The service will not be charged if there are circumstances beyond the client's control – e.g. admission to hospital.

- 6.6. The maximum service user's contribution per week will be 100% of the cost of their support subject to their assessed ability to pay.
- 6.7. Appropriate Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) will be allowed for all clients making a claim. Supporting evidence of DRE may be required.
- 6.8. Assessments will be based on 100% of the client's disposable income.
- 6.9. If a financial assessment is calculated at £2.50 a week or less it will be reset to nil.
- 6.10. Clients with a partner will be offered a best interest assessment. They will be offered assessment both as a couple and as an individual.

7. **The Financial Assessment**

- 7.1. A written financial assessment will be provided
- 7.2. The rights of appeal set out in section 13 will apply
- 7.3. Services will be billed from the Monday after a client has been provided with a financial assessment.
- 7.4. An assessment will be made for the client and other persons will not be assessed to pay charges in respect of the client's services.
- 7.5. A financial assessment will be based on the benefits in payment to the client at the time of the financial assessment. If other benefits are later received, the financial assessment will be adjusted from the date the benefits come into payment.
- 7.6. Service users will be asked to give consent to authorise the Council to obtain benefits information from the Department of Works and Pensions.

7.7. A client's partner may be approached for information to establish the capital in which the client has a legal or equitable interest.

7.8. The financial assessment will cover:

7.8.1. Benefits

7.8.2. Income

7.8.3. Savings and Capital

7.8.4. Allowable Expenditure

7.8.5. Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)

8. **Income Disregards**

8.1. Certain income received by the client will be disregarded as part of the assessment

8.1.1. Any income from employment

8.1.2. The mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

8.1.3. The DLA and Attendance Allowance (AA) elements that relate to night care, provided only daytime services are provided

8.1.4. The first £10 of any War Pension

9. **Capital disregards**

9.1. Certain capital will be disregarded as part of the assessment

9.1.1. Funds administered by the High Court or the Court of Protection

9.1.2. The home in which the service user resides

10. **Allowable Expenditure**

10.1. The following expenses are allowed as part of the financial assessment:

10.1.1. Council Tax payable after deducting any discount allowed

10.1.2. Rent (net of any housing benefit or universal credit) and any service charge that is eligible for housing benefit

10.1.3. Mortgage interest

10.2. If other adults are living in the property the allowable expenditure may be reduced proportionately

11. Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)

11.1. Clients will be given the opportunity to claim disability related expenditure if they are in receipt of disability related benefits. DRE will be allowed in the financial assessment.

11.2. Clients will be visited by the PFU for the purposes of carrying out a DRE assessment in accordance with the policy set out in Appendix A.

12. Calculation of Contributions

12.1. Clients with capital above £23,250 will be identified as self funders.

12.2. Clients with capital below £23,250 will have an assessment calculated as follows

12.2.1. Income less disregards as per section 8 above, plus

12.2.2. Tariff income from capital as per section 9 above at the rate of £1 a week for every £250 or part of £250 in excess of £14,250, minus

12.2.3. Allowable expenditure in accordance with section 10 above, minus

12.2.4. DRE in accordance with section 11 above.

- 12.3. If the result of the above calculation is less than the minimum income guarantee + 25% the contribution is nil.
- 12.4. If the result of the above calculation is greater than the minimum income guarantee + 25% the contribution will be the difference. The contribution will not in any case exceed the actual cost of the service.

13. Appeals and Complaints

- 13.1. Clients and their representatives should contact the PFU if they have any queries regarding a financial assessment. It is expected the PFU will be able to resolve most issues by discussion with clients.
- 13.2. A client is entitled to appeal their financial assessment on the grounds it has not been correctly calculated in accordance with Wirral's fairer charging policy. If a client wishes to appeal their financial assessment after a preliminary discussion with the PFU, a written appeal must be made stating the grounds.
- 13.3. Any written appeal should be made within 28 days of the issue of the financial assessment.
- 13.4. If the appeal is made more than 28 days from the issue of the financial assessment, any revision will only be implemented from the date of the appeal.
- 13.5. The appeal will be acknowledged in writing. The assessment will be reviewed by a different officer from the one making the original assessment. The client will be notified of the decision within 7 days of the appeal being received.
- 13.6. If a client has a complaint about any aspect of fairer charging then the statutory complaints procedure set out in the Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 will apply and the DASS Complaints Section should be contacted.

14. Current Charges – from April 2013

- 14.1. Domiciliary care £12.28 per hour.

- 14.2. Day Care - £31.22 per day or £15.62 per session
- 14.3. Community and Day Centre Meals £2.68 until 30th June 2013, £3.47 thereafter.
- 14.4. Night sitting £53.28
- 14.5. Transport £4.87 per journey
- 14.6. Basic assistive technology package where no other service provided - £3 per week
- 15. **Disability Related Expenditure**
 - 15.1. Disability Related Expenditure is additional expenditure incurred by a service user as a result of their disability or condition for items or services which cannot be addressed in their personal budget.
 - 15.2. A client may request a full Disability Related Expenditure assessment. They will be required to provide details of the additional expenditure, which will be considered when the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - 15.2.1. The client is in receipt of disability related benefits
 - 15.2.2. The extra cost is incurred to meet a service user's specific need due to a condition or disability recognised in the needs assessment
 - 15.2.3. The cost is reasonable and can be verified (receipts may be required)
 - 15.2.4. If a lower cost alternative item or service could reasonably be used, DRE will be calculated at that lower cost.
 - 15.3. DRE will be paid in the following categories
 - 15.3.1. Payment for any community alarm

- 15.3.2. Any privately arranged care services required, including respite care
- 15.3.3. Specialist washing powders or laundry
- 15.3.4. Additional costs of special dietary needs due to illness or disability; the user may be asked for permission to approach their GP in cases of doubt
- 15.3.5. special clothing or footwear, for example, where this needs to be specially made; or additional wear and tear to clothing and footwear caused by disability
- 15.3.6. additional costs of bedding, for example, because of incontinence
- 15.3.7. any heating costs, or metered costs of water, above the average levels for the area and housing type, required by age, medical condition or disability
- 15.3.8. reasonable costs of basic garden maintenance, cleaning, or domestic help, if necessitated by the individual's disability and not met by social services
- 15.3.9. purchase, maintenance, and repair of disability-related equipment, including equipment or transport needed to enter or remain in work; this may include computer costs, where necessitated by the disability; reasonable hire costs of equipment may be included, if waiting for supply of equipment from the local council
- 15.3.10. personal assistance costs, including any household or other necessary costs arising for the user
- 15.3.11. other transport costs necessitated by illness or disability, including costs of transport to day centres, over and above the mobility component of DLA, if in payment

**Wirral Council
Directorate of Adult Social Services
CRAG local discretions**

Effective from 11th July 2013

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Councils have some local discretion in assessing clients for residential services. This document sets out the Wirral policy for assessing the financial contribution to be made by clients. It is effective from 11th July 2013.
- 1.2. The policy is based on the Department of Charging for Residential Accommodation Guidance

2. Services covered by this policy

- 2.1. This policy covers any residential community care service.

3. Application

- 3.1. The policy applies to all clients unless in the list of exceptions below.
- 3.2. The exceptions are
 - 3.2.1. Support provided under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act
 - 3.2.2. Sufferer of Creutzfeldt Jacobs Disease
 - 3.2.3. Asylum Seekers
 - 3.2.4. Adults in full-time education
 - 3.2.5. Support provided as intermediate care and for a period of six weeks or less

4. **Principles**

- 4.1. Clients that exceed the capital limit of £23,250 are not eligible for council financial support and are self-funders. After their statutory service assessment they will be assisted in identifying service provision. They will then be required to pay providers directly for any commissioned service. This will avoid self-funders building up arrears of charges with the Council and any misunderstandings about their financial responsibilities.
- 4.2. Clients will be provided with an early financial assessment following a visit by a senior assessment officer from the Personal Finance Unit.
- 4.3. Comprehensive benefits advice and assistance will be offered to all service users. This may increase their income, and help meet the cost of contributions.
- 4.4. Facilities for indicative self-assessment and a web-calculator will be provided from September 2013.
- 4.5. The contributions requested from service users following financial assessment will be fair and reasonable. Due care will be taken in assessing the service user's contribution under the CRAG guide.
- 4.6. Service users have the right to request a review of their assessed contribution if they feel it is incorrect or if there has been a significant change in their financial situation. Any adjustment over and above this policy will be determined by DASS senior management.
- 4.7. Where the assessed contribution is appealed for review, clients must pay the original assessed contribution until the appeal is determined.
- 4.8. If a client does not wish to undergo a financial assessment the full cost of services will be charged.
- 4.9. If a client does not cooperate in making a financial assessment or fails to provide requested information within the required timescale the full cost of services will be charged. If a

financial assessment is later able to be completed, it will only take effect from the date that the client cooperated with the making of the assessment or provided the information requested.

- 4.10. Clients must notify the PFU of any material change in their financial circumstances if this is likely to impact on their assessed contribution.
- 4.11. If a client does not notify the PFU of a material change that would have led to an increased contribution, the increased contribution will be implemented from the date a revised financial assessment is issued that reflects the material change.
- 4.12. Service users who refuse to pay their assessed contribution will not have their services removed.
- 4.13. The Council will recover contribution arrears through the courts in accordance with the Council's recovery policy
- 4.14. All client information (verbal and written) will be treated in confidence and due care will be given to disclosing information that is in the interests of the service user only.
- 4.15. All clients will be encouraged to pay by direct debit once this system is available in September 2013.
- 4.16. Wirral is promoting the collection of contributions by providers. No arrangement will be made without the consent of the client.
- 4.17. Wirral Council is committed to the prevention and detection of fraud.
- 4.18. Wirral Council will assess whether a client has the capacity to organise the payment of their contributions. If the client has capacity, but wishes another person to manage their payments then the client will remain liable for any contributions due.

- 4.18.1. Where a person has been legally appointed to manage a client's affairs, the PFU will deal with that person.

- 5. **Basis for Financial Assessment**

- 5.1. Service users will be assessed in accordance with the Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide.
- 5.2. Clients with a partner will be offered a best interest assessment. They will be offered assessment both as a couple and as an individual.

6. **The Financial Assessment**

- 6.1. A written financial assessment will be provided
- 6.2. The rights of appeal set out in section 13 will apply
- 6.3. Services will be billed from the Monday after a client has been provided with a financial assessment.
- 6.4. An assessment will be made for the client and other persons will not be assessed to pay charges in respect of the client's services.
- 6.5. A financial assessment will be based on the benefits in payment to the client at the time of the financial assessment. If other benefits are later received, the financial assessment will be adjusted from the date the benefits come into payment.
- 6.6. A client's partner may be approached for information to establish the capital in which the client has a legal or equitable interest.

7. **Deferred payment arrangements**

- 7.1. On the termination of a deferred payment arrangement interest at the rate of 4% will be charged:
 - 7.1.1. In the event of the client terminating the agreement by giving notice to Wirral Council, at a daily rate from the notified date of termination to the date the amount due under the agreement is repaid
 - 7.1.2. In the event of the death of the client, at a daily rate from 57 days after the clients death to the date the amount due under the agreement is repaid

8. **Arrears of contributions secured by charge on land**

- 8.1. In the event a client is in arrears with contributions for residential accommodation the Council may at its discretion make a charge on any interest in land held by the client. In the event of the death of the client, interest of 4% per annum

will be payable at a daily rate from the client's death until the amount secured by the charge is paid.

9. Appeals and Complaints

- 9.1. Clients and their representatives should contact the PFU if they have any queries regarding a financial assessment. It is expected the PFU will be able to resolve most issues by discussion with clients.
- 9.2. A client is entitled to appeal their financial assessment on the grounds it has not been correctly calculated in accordance with CRAG. If a client wishes to appeal their financial assessment after a preliminary discussion with the PFU, a written appeal must be made stating the grounds.
- 9.3. Any written appeal should be made within 28 days of the issue of the financial assessment.
- 9.4. If the appeal is made more than 28 days from the issue of the financial assessment, any revision will only be implemented from the date of the appeal.
- 9.5. The appeal will be acknowledged in writing. The assessment will be reviewed by a different officer from the one making the original assessment. The client will be notified of the decision within 7 days of the appeal being received.
- 9.6. If a client has a complaint about any aspect of financial assessment then the statutory complaints procedure set out in the Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 will apply and the DASS Complaints Section should be contacted.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11 JULY 2013

SUBJECT:	OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION ON THE POSSIBLE RELOCATION OF FOXFIELD SCHOOL
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR TONY SMITH
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To report on statutory consultations which have been held for the proposal to relocate Foxfield Special School from its current site in Moreton to Woodchurch and to request Cabinet to approve the publication of statutory notices.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Foxfield School is located on Douglas Drive, Moreton, and is a local authority maintained special school for boys and girls aged 11 to 19, who have statements of special educational needs because of complex learning difficulties. The national Priority School Building Programme has given the Local Authority the opportunity to rebuild Foxfield School at a cost in the region of £7.5m. The current school is not purpose built, and increasingly not fit for purpose and the site is too small for a large construction project to be undertaken whilst the school and its pupils remain in its current building.
- 2.2 The Council's Special School Review in June 2010 concluded that any proposals to build new Special Schools for secondary aged pupils would consider the co-location on or adjacent to a Secondary School site. As a result of this recommendation and considering other sites in Wirral, a suitable piece of land owned by the Council has been identified which is adjacent to Woodchurch High School, Birkenhead.
- 2.3 The distance between the two sites is 2.5 miles therefore because it is greater than 2 miles in a straight line; this means that a "prescribed alteration" notice must be issued. Following delegated approval a formal consultation was carried out with the various stakeholders. This consultation ended on 20th June 2013 and the outcome is the subject of this report.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 In order for all stakeholders to have access to relevant background information and have the opportunity to comment and respond, the following methods of consultation have been employed:
 - (i) A consultation leaflet and comments form was sent to all parents/carers of pupils attending Foxfield School. The information was also shared with Meadowside School, feeder Special Primary Schools and relevant Ward and parliamentary representatives.
 - (ii) The Wirral Council web-site dedicated to consultations held all relevant information and comment forms and allowed e-mail responses.

(iii) The consultation leaflet was made available and advertised at local libraries and one-stop shops.

(iv) Two meetings were held at Foxfield School. These comprised a short presentation on the option, followed by audience comments, feedback and questions. The meetings were attended by parents, carers and staff. The dates of the meetings were in the parents' leaflets and a general notice was published in the local press.

(v) Opportunities have been provided for other means of response. Responses to the consultation have been received in paper and e-mail formats and are available prior to and at the Cabinet meeting, in addition to summaries contained in this report.

4.0 OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION

4.1 42 written responses to the consultation were received.

4.2 At the meetings held on 14 and 15 May 2013 a total of 26 people attended the two sessions.

4.3 It is important to note that the intention of the consultation is to seek views on the relocation of Foxfield School from its present site and not on the future of Special Education provision in Wirral or other more general issues.

4.4 Written responses received varied considerably and there were a number of comments raised both positive and negative regarding the proposed location.

Positive responses included:

- (i) purpose built school with new facilities
- (ii) increased partnership with a main stream Secondary school
- (iii) reduced running costs of the building
- (iv) central Wirral location
- (v) easy access to transport routes
- (vi) will remove the small teaching spaces
- (vii) increased outdoor space for play and learning
- (viii) removes temporary accommodation
- (ix) the new building will meet the particular needs of the pupils
- (x) positive opportunities for both student groups through co-location

Negative responses included:

- (i) additional traffic in the Woodchurch area
- (ii) loss of links with the Moreton community i.e. shops, café,
- (iii) additional travelling for cleaning, catering staff at Foxfield
- (iv) would Woodchurch High be able to engage with both Special schools in the area
- (v) longer travel times for some pupils
- (vi) construction inconvenience for the local area
- (vii) Council hidden agenda for Meadowside School
- (viii) excess of Complex Learning Difficulty places for pupils in Wirral
- (ix) no proper consultation with staff of Meadowside
- (x) parental choice affected having two schools in the same area
- (xi) affect on local habitat
- (xii) reduced work placement opportunities for pupils

4.5 The meetings held at Foxfield School were very positive and the questions raised centred around the practicalities of construction and transferring pupils to the new building, ensuring there was adequate parking for staff and visitors, involvement of staff in the design process, timescales for the construction, positive comments on the size of the land available for environmental and play areas for pupils.

4.6 Response to concerns raised during the consultation

Community interaction – Foxfield has enjoyed positive involvement within the Moreton community, the headteacher, governing body and staff will continue with this important aspect of pupil interaction in their new and current location.

Proximity to Meadowside – the two schools are currently 3.0 miles apart, the new proposals will mean that they will be 0.8 miles apart; concerns over the access to shops by an increase population appear to be one of the key concerns.

Travel – almost all pupils are transported from home by minibus from across the Borough, relocating Foxfield brings the travel to a more central location with good links to roads and the motorway. The Woodchurch estate has a number of entry routes and careful travel planning can reduce congestion. This is a matter which will be considered within the planning application.

Impact on Meadowside – indications show the numbers of pupils with CLD will rise therefore, the places available in both schools will meet the needs of the CLD population, and there is no intention to cause a reduction in numbers attending Meadowside. Capital investment will continue at Meadowside to ensure that building condition and suitability requirements are addressed.

Construction disruption – the Capital investment of £7.5m from central government under the Priority School Building Programme is the only opportunity the Borough has for significant investment in its school building stock. Anticipated construction times are less than 12 months, the land identified allows for construction traffic to be located in a dedicated off-road location and because there is no demolition of existing buildings this will reduce disruption to residents.

Links to Woodchurch High – Governors and staff of Woodchurch High school have expressed their delight at the prospect of having Foxfield co-located with them, there is no indication that pupils from Meadowside would have reduced access to Woodchurch High.

Curriculum opportunities – one of the most positive outcomes in having Meadowside and Foxfield school close to one another is the opportunity to share specialist resources particularly at post-16. The viability of specialist rooms may not be realistic for a small number of pupils but a real opportunity when more pupils are sharing the facility.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 Risks associated with obtaining planning permission on the proposed site have been identified. However, initial discussions with the planning authority have been positive given the specialist facilities the new school building would provide adjacent to the high school and improvements planned to the remainder of the site.

5.2 The failure to secure the site for the relocation could result in funding being withdrawn from this scheme.

5.3 The consultation process has raised a number of perceived risks of having two schools in the same locality as identified in section 4.5. These will be addressed by the two schools concerned and officers in the Local Authority to ensure that the proposals add to the overall quality of special education provision on Wirral.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The current Foxfield site was considered for the new building, however this would have meant that pupils would be required to use temporary accommodation and this is not advisable for pupils with complex needs. The site would also have restricted build option for the new school.
- 6.2 Other sites were explored for co-location but various factors such as transport routes, available land, complex PFI contracts and schools' expressions of interest to co-locate with a special school favoured the identified site.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 See sections 3.0 and 4.0 above.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 The new building will provide more opportunities for specialist facilities to be made available to the most vulnerable groups at a location which is central to the Borough.

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

- 9.1 The cost of the new building will be met by the Education Funding Agency with an additional amount being made available from Council Capital for additional hydrotherapy facilities, demolition and additional pupil places. The school will also contribute to the new facility from its delegated budget. It is not planned to automatically increase numbers at the school, the modest proposed increase is to "future proof" the building, given its lifespan.
- 9.2 IT would be provided within the contract to a specification suitable for a special school.
- 9.3 As this is a relocation project, it is expected that all current staff will transfer to the new building.
- 9.4 The new building is being funded via grant and procured by the Education Funding Agency as part of a regional contract and will become a Council asset upon completion. The current site of Foxfield School will be considered for disposal or the possible use by another education establishment. This will be subject to a further report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Council is required to publish statutory proposals for the relocation of school more than 2 miles from its current site.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(a) Yes and impact review can be viewed via the following link:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010-0>

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Increase in Carbon usage will be minimal due to the low energy building components being specified and the transfer from a less efficient building. No other environmental issues have been identified at this stage with the project.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Planning approval will be necessary for the proposed construction.

13.2 Replacement of schools allow the most vulnerable accommodation to be removed and other security improvements carried out to ensure the site is safe and secure.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 That statutory proposals be published in respect of a statutory “prescribed alteration” to transfer the site of Foxfield School from its current site in Moreton to the proposed site at Carr Bridge Road, Woodchurch.

14.2 That the Director of Children’s Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to publish these proposals, ensure the prescribed procedures are followed, including requesting permissions from the Secretary of State in furtherance of the proposal.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 The proposed site is the most suitable in terms of location for Foxfield School and will enjoy benefits from co-location with a main stream Secondary school.

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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Consultation responses

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Delegated Approval	May 2013

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

11TH JULY 2013

SUBJECT:	HOME TO SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRANSPORT POLICIES CONSULTATION
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR TONY SMITH
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Wirral Council is under significant financial pressure and a review of services has been carried out. At Cabinet on 18th February 2013 the decision was taken to review the provision of transport for children and adults provided by the Council. This report is in respect of transport to schools and colleges for children and young people only, transport and budget savings for Adults are being dealt with separately.
- 1.2 Wirral Council has a statutory duty in accordance with section 508B of the Education Act 1996 to provide school transport to assist compulsory school age pupils within certain criteria. The Council currently also provides discretionary transport provision above its statutory duty. The application of new transport policies for students aged 5-16 and post 16 would reduce the level of discretionary transport available whilst maintaining a focus on providing transport to some of the most vulnerable students in order for them to access education. The proposed new policies are included in Appendix 1 and 2.
- 1.3 It is important to note that children and young people who currently receive transport support will continue to do so until they leave or change school, at which point the new policies will be applied. For some young people this will occur when they transfer from their primary school to their secondary school. The proposed changes will therefore be phased over a period of up to 6 school years.
- 1.4 In respect of pupils with special educational needs and / or a disability (SEND) the proposed new home to school transport policies will provide a framework within which proactive work will be undertaken by the Local Authority with head teachers of special schools / colleges and parents of pupils to seek their views about how to jointly shape the service to promote greater independent travel for young people.
- 1.5 The proposals for post 16 SEND transport have been adapted after careful analysis of the consultation responses.
- 1.6 The 2013/14 Budget for Home to School Transport is £5.1 million. The savings target to be delivered in this area is £2 million over the period 2014/20. The proposed actions set out in this report will deliver £1,440,000 savings which will contribute to the target of £2,000,000. The remainder of the savings will be delivered through a range of demand management initiatives, including travel training.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Wirral Council has a statutory duty to provide by law, travel assistance for those pupils who are eligible. If a pupil qualifies under the following circumstances then transport is provided free. This includes pupils who:

- Are between 5 and 16 and go to their nearest suitable school and live at least:
 - 2 miles from the school if they're under 8
 - 3 miles from the school if they're 8 or older
- Are registered at their local school and are unable to walk to school due to a route which the Council has assessed as hazardous.
- Are from a low income family (entitled to free school meals or maximum Working Tax Credit) if they are:
 - aged 8 to 11 and the school is at least 2 miles away
 - aged 11 to 16 and the school is 2 to 6 miles away - as long as there are not 3 or more suitable schools nearer to home
 - aged 11 to 16 and the school's 2 to 15 miles away - if it's their nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief
- Are registered at their local school or the most appropriate school to meet their special educational needs and those needs prevent them from achieving independent travel or walking the statutory distance safely accompanied by an adult.

2.2 The proposed changes to the transport policies are related to three main discretionary areas:

- Removal of non statutory denominational transport
- A change in the assessment of support for free transport for children with special educational needs and / or a disability
- A change in the provision of post 16 transport for SEND students and students from low income families.

2.3 **The removal of free denominational transport to school.**

Currently Wirral Council provides free transport provision through travel passes to both primary and secondary school children related to the religious character of the school. The cost of transport arrangements of children who have to travel more than the qualifying distances to the nearest school of the parent's religion is currently met.

The proposal is to remove this discretionary element of denominational travel. This removes the extra discretionary provision currently in place for students attending Catholic schools and puts students attending all schools on a level playing field regarding eligibility for free transport.

Those pupils who currently receive free denominational transport at their school will continue to do so whilst they attend their current school. This will also apply to Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School and will replace the current interim arrangements.

The Council will provide transport in relation to statutory duties including beyond statutory walking distances and those on low incomes. In addition for secondary school pupils children from low income families who choose a school on the grounds of religion

or belief will continue to receive free transport provision if the school is between 2 and 15 miles away from their home address.

This change is estimated to affect an average of 132 year 7 pupils at 4 secondary / academy schools and 16 reception pupils at 1 primary school. This number will increase each year until covering all year groups. In some cases there may be continuing entitlement if the statutory low income thresholds are met.

The Budget for denominational transport is £180,000 per year, cessation of this discretionary support will save £180,000 per year when fully implemented.

Comparison with other Councils:

Although some Councils retain provision for denominational transport a wide range of Councils have consulted and removed free or subsidised provision.

In 2012 and 2013 Councils that have made the decision to remove free or subsidised denominational transport provision include:

Cheshire West and Cheshire

Cheshire East

Hull

Leicester City Council

Bath City Council

2.4 A change in the assessment of support for free transport for children with Special Educational Needs and / or a Disability (SEND).

The Council currently transports children with a statement and attending a special school or an Education Inclusion Base (EIB) where transport is requested. A proportion of this transport can be classed as discretionary as some students do not live a prohibitive distance from school and could be assessed as safe to walk to school.

Routes transporting students are optimised based on the geographical location of the students and educational establishments and individual student requirements e.g. wheelchairs and specialised equipment space, medical conditions and specialised support. In addition vehicles transporting SEND students may carry both 5-16 and Post 16 students.

Since July 2011 there has been a continuous review of transport routes to make sure that they are the most efficient, this has resulted in savings totalling £180,000 over two years and provides greater value for money from existing contracts

Due to the complexities of this type of transport per trip costs can vary significantly, for example the current most expensive journey per child on specialist contracted transport is £412 and the least expensive £10.40. As a result analysis of reductions in transport is complex and proposed savings are based on estimates.

Using an assessment process to determine transport requirements, it is likely that the number of pupils/students travelling on escorted contracted vehicles would decrease. It is anticipated that bus passes would be appropriate for a larger group of pupils/students given the independent travel support that would be provided. This will therefore reduce costs.

The proposal is to provide transport based on an assessed need rather than provision to all statemented students attending specialist provision. A new assessment process through the Special Educational Needs Assessment Panel (SNAP) will be put in place to identify the transport support that best matches the student's needs. Consideration will be given to the views of professionals working with the student including medical and educational staff as well as the view of the student on their transport arrangements. Where a young person is able to access and use the public transport network safely they will be expected to do so. This will mean that some statemented pupils will not receive free transport, for others a free bus pass may be provided instead of specialised taxi based transport.

It should be noted that through the pathfinder programme relating to the forthcoming changes to SEND through the provisions made in the Children and Families Bill, principles of good practice are emerging. In particular some of these relate to the coordinated assessment and the development of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

Children, families and young people will be at the centre of the assessment and planning process and will be partners in making decisions throughout, making it a co-produced process. The child/young person/family will be able to choose how, when and to what extent they would like to engage in the process to meet desired outcomes.

Effective co-ordination will take place between education, health and care services, working together both to reach agreement on key outcomes with children, parents and young people and to secure the appropriate provision to deliver those outcomes.

It is through such processes that the assessment of travel needs will take place

The budget for Pre 16 SEND transport is £4,010,000 per year. It is estimated that the changes described would reduce costs by £1,030,000 per year when fully implemented

Comparison with other Councils:

Cheshire West and Chester

Entitlement to transport on complex/special needs grounds is based on an individual assessment of need.

Liverpool

Assessment of students with SEND and transport provided based on assessed need to those students attending a suitable qualifying school.

Sefton

Eligibility for free transport is assessed on student need and based on students attending a suitable qualifying school.

2.5 **Post 16 transport**

Currently Wirral Council provides free post 16 transport to students in further education based on low income criteria and also to those who have or had immediately prior to admission to school / college a statement of SEN. This transport provision is discretionary as the Council has no legal duty to provide post 16 transport.

2.6 **Post 16 transport (SEND)**

Option 1 Cease Provision of all Post 16 transport

This proposal, as set out in the budget option, is to cease to provide additional transport support for all post 16 students, where this is provided because of low income criteria or SEND.

The estimated saving from this option is £690,000

Option 2 Provision of SEND post 16 transport based on assessed need

This option, taking account of the consultation findings in response to the proposal to remove free transport related to Post 16 Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND), is to assess children for Post 16 transport based on their needs; this is reflected in the attached policy. This is a similar approach to students with SEND aged under 16 years, and is a consistent approach to providing support to the most vulnerable students.

This option would reduce the proposed savings published in the original budget option of £690,000 by approximately £560,000 to £130,000.

The budget for SEND post-16 students is £690,000. The estimated savings proposal can be summarised as

	£
Original saving proposal to withdraw all provision	690,000
Reduced by the introduction of assessed entitlement	- 560,000
Saving, when fully implemented	<u>130,000</u>

2.7 **Post 16 Transport (Non SEND)**

There are currently 354 students in families with low income who are in receipt of bus passes. This is not a statutory requirement, and it is proposed that in future the Local Authority will not provide travel passes for students attending post 16 provision. The annual cost is estimated to be £100,000.

It is estimated that by withdrawing this discretionary provision there would be a saving of £100,000 per year, when fully implemented. Some students affected by this change will be eligible to apply through their college / school for an award through the Bursary Fund.

Comparison with Other Councils:

Cheshire West and Chester

In September 2012 withdrew subsidised (not free) Post 16 transport provision; a two year transition was put in place with an increase in charges for each year. The subsidy will be withdrawn in 2014.

For Post 16 SEN pupils an assessment of need is carried out based on an application and evidence provided. Transport made be provided to the nearest appropriate college offering the course or similar. Transport may be provided at least up to the age of 21 and for a maximum of three years.

Liverpool

No provision of travel passes for Post 16 students.

Assessment of Post 16 SEND students and transport provided based on assessed need.

Sefton

No provision of travel passes for Post 16 students.

Post 16 students with a SEN statement who remain in school based provision will continue to receive transport if considered to be appropriate. Post 16 students up to the age of 21 who were previously in receipt of a statement of SEN and transfer to a full time course of further education in a college will have their transport requirements assessed and if transport agreed appropriate provision made.

2.8 Continuing entitlement for current pupils and students

The proposal is to phase the introduction of the changes in policies and introduce the changes in the Academic Year 2014-15. This would mean that the new policies would apply to pupils and students commencing in September 2014 onwards at primary and secondary schools and colleges. Students who have been assessed as eligible for free transport under the existing policies would retain their current provision. Changes would therefore be phased over a period of up to 6 school years.

2.9 Learning how to make these changes positively from other local authorities

Many Local Authorities have been reviewing how to make their transport provision more efficient, by working in different ways with parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities, to engage them in shaping services which promote greater independence and choice for pupils and their parents. Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council for example, embarked on a new approach to managing demand. They considered their home to school transport services and found that they had created a dependency on specialist buses among people who may be able to travel in other ways. By putting in place travel training and intensive support with vulnerable children and families, they were able to enhance their confidence and independence. In Calderdale they identified that behaviour change was more likely to be influenced by doctors and teachers and they found engaging these professionals proved invaluable. They found that they could make significant savings as a result, but that children and families reported that rather than taking something away from them, these changes were a positive experience.

Similarly, in Coventry, the Council provided independent travel training for appropriate secondary aged special school aged pupils and they also offered personal transport budgets to parents of pupils in special schools. This work was successful in terms of supporting young people to become independent and gave them valuable skills for life and gave greater choice and control to parents, as well as securing a reduction in spend for the Council. Feedback from focus groups helped to reshape the service, as parents reflected a desire to see a more responsive and empathetic service which understood the needs of families within this area. Participants put significant emphasis on the independence and increased confidence of their child.

In Wirral we will work with head teachers, parents and children, through focus groups to further seek people's views about how we might identify new ways of working, within the revised policy framework.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 A change in the provision of transport may have a number of potential implications. There may be an impact on school attendance and students educational life chances, which would impact on school resources and OFSTED inspection findings. There may also be additional impact on Council services such as Education Social Welfare, Special Educational Needs, Social Work, Youth Outreach and Youth Offending Teams. There could be an impact on student's choice of further education establishments and on parental employment opportunities. The Council needs to anticipate these potential consequences by putting in place a strategy to engage with head teachers, parents and students about how school attendance can be maintained. Within this strategy, schools, parents and the Council need to work closely together to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality and to address any issues arising. The Council will work proactively with all stakeholders throughout the 2013/14 academic year to develop approaches to mitigate the risks.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Council could continue with current transport policies, which would mean the projected savings will have to be found from alternative areas.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 This budget option was originally published and consulted on as part of the 'What Really Matters' consultation that ran from November 2012 until January 2013. Three core principles were consulted on relating to Transport for Schools and Colleges:
- The removal of discretionary denominational transport.
 - The removal of Post 16 transport (non SEN).
 - A reduction in the number of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) eligible for transport. This includes the removal of all Post 16 transport for students with SEN.
- 5.2 The results of this consultation were reported to and considered by Cabinet on February 7th 2013. At Budget Cabinet on February 18th 2013, Cabinet included this option in the budget resolution recommendation, with the caveat that further consultation was completed with people using the services around the details of the new transport policies. This recommendation was agreed by Full Council on March 5th 2013.
- 5.3 The further 28 day (term time) consultation on the new draft policies, took place between 15th April and 24th May 2013. The Director of Children's Services published a report

which outlined the details of the proposed new Transport Policies. This paper explained, in candid terms and Plain English, the reasons for the proposals, their potential impact and the proposed mitigation. The consultation paper is Appendix 3.

This paper was also supported by a simple questionnaire which allowed interested people to feed their views into the decision making process. Both of these documents were distributed in paper and electronic format to all interested parties during the consultation process.

The Council also sought views of organised groups, young people and forums related to the budget option. The following groups were directly contacted:

- Parents/ carers of children and young people who receive transport support
- Young people (via the Teen Wirral website)
- Schools' Forum
- Headteachers and chairs of governors of special schools and mainstream schools
- All Wirral Elected members
- The Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Anglican Diocese of Chester
- Other local authorities bordering Wirral
- Unions and professional associations
- Wirral further education providers
- The Voluntary / Community Sector
- The wider community (via the Internet)

5.4 This activity has resulted in over 600 people completing the consultation questionnaire. Individual named responses were received from organisations including Wirral Association for Special School Headteachers, The Diocese of Shrewsbury, the Chairs of Governors of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, St Marys Catholic College, St John Plessington Catholic College, Upton Hall School, St Anselms College and Foxfield School. Representation was also made from Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School, Birkenhead Sixth Form, Wirral Hospital School and Councillor John Hale.

5.5 The detailed analysis of the questionnaire responses are provided to Cabinet at Appendix 3 of this report.

5.6 A summary of the two consultations can be seen below.

5.7 In terms of the 'What Really Matters' consultation process, the response to the questionnaire demonstrated broad approval from Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders as to the implementation of the Transport Policies option. The table below shows the response to the public consultation:

Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	35.2%	1691
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.1%	1591
I find this completely unacceptable	31.7%	1520

5.8 The latest consultation on the Budget Option - Schools and College Transport Policies attracted responses from the following groups:

Involvement	Response %	Response Count
Students currently receiving transport support	6.1	34
Parents / carers of pupils currently receiving transport support	41.0	229
Parents / carers of pupils NOT currently receiving transport support	12.9	72
Employees or governors of a special school	7.5	42
Employees or governors of a mainstream school	8.6	48
Employees or governors of a further education establishment	3.8	21
Other	20.2	113

5.9 The response to the key questions in this consultation:

Question	I agree		I neither agree nor disagree		I disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
I support the removal of free denominational transport.	63	10.6%	36	6.1%	493	83.3%
I support the change in assessment for eligibility for access to free transport for children with special educational needs.	46	7.8%	47	8.0%	498	84.3%
I support the removal of free post 16 transport provision.	31	5.2%	41	6.9%	520	87.8%

This consultation feedback clearly shows that parents, carers, pupils and other interested parties would not support reductions in support available for school and college transport.

5.10 The difference between the responses to the two consultations is likely to be attributable to the fact that responses to the latest detailed consultation has attracted responses largely from the groups directly affected by these policies. The demographic of the respondents to the transport option in the original 'What Really Matters' consultation is unknown; but it could be conjectured that this consultation drew responses from the wider community.

5.11 The new policies seek to ensure that young people are encouraged, where appropriate, to progress to independent travelling in a phased supported way. This can increase the young person's confidence, participation in community life and help prepare the young person for life beyond school and college.

Further, the proposed new policies both keep Wirral above the statutory requirement for the level of transport support which is provided and also bring the authority in line with comparable Councils. The policies will also be implemented in a phased method over the next six years.

The policies will also seek to continue to protect the most vulnerable, and therefore target the Council's diminishing resources more effectively at those most in need.

The proposed amendment to the initial proposals to continue to assess SEND need Post 16 pays due regard to the consultation findings. Regarding the two proposals

related to denominational and school SEN transport, while paying due regard to the fact that consultees would prefer the existing transport policies to remain unchanged it is felt appropriate to recommend to Cabinet that the new policies be implemented from September 2014.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There is potential that some families may require support or assistance from these groups.

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

- 7.1 In 2013-14 there is a budget of £5.1 million to meet the costs of contracted escorted transport and bus passes. The estimated cost breakdown and comparison with the original and proposed savings is as follows:-

Area	Budget	Original Savings	Proposed Savings
	£	£	£
Statutory travel passes (income / distance)	120,000	0	0
Denominational transport	180,000	180,000	180,000
SEN transport – up to 16	4,010,000	1,030,000	1,030,000
SEND transport – post 16	690,000	690,000	130,000
Post 16 (non SEND)	100,000	100,000	100,000
Total Budget	5,100,000	2,000,000	1,440,000

The number of children and Young people in receipt of transport in 2012-13 were:

Type	Number
Statutory travel passes (income / distance)	554
Denominational transport	776
SEN transport – up to 16	1,036
SEND transport – post 16	170
Post 16 transport (Income non SEND)	354
Total	2,890

The savings below are broken down over academic years and increase each year as another year group enters the school.

Savings by Academic Year (September to August)

Academic Year	Denominational	SEND 5-16	SEND Post 16 (Option 2)	Post 16 (Non SEND)	Total
2014/15	£35,000	£180,000	£52,000	£40,000	£307,000
2015/16	£35,000	£180,000	£52,000	£40,000	£307,000
2016/17	£35,000	£180,000	£26,000	£20,000	£261,000
2017/18	£35,000	£180,000			£215,000
2018/19	£35,000	£180,000			£215,000
2019/20	£5,000	£130,000			£135,000
	£180,000	£1,030,000	£130,000	£100,000	£1,440,000

In the first financial year the savings will be 7/12th of the total above (September to March). Financial year savings compared with the original proposals are:

Financial Year	Original saving	Revised Saving	Variation
2014/15	£306,000	£179,000	- £127,000
2015/16	£525,000	£307,000	- £218,000
2016/17	£460,000	£280,000	- £180,000
2017/18	£299,000	£234,000	- £65,000
2018/19	£215,000	£215,000	
2019/20	£151,000	£169,000	£18,000
2020/21	£44,000	£56,000	£12,000
	£2,000,000	£1,440,000	£560,000

The remainder of the savings will be delivered through a range of demand management initiatives, including travel training.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Recent case law has made it clear that any consultation undertaken must be meaningful, informed and reasonable. Failure to ensure this could lead to legal challenge and any decision taken which takes into account the consultation could be undermined and open to challenge by way of Judicial Review. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 came into force in April 2009 and introduced a duty for local authorities to involve, inform and consult with their communities. The duty is wide-ranging and applies to the delivery of services, policy and decision making and means the Council must consult relevant individuals, groups, businesses, organisations and other stakeholders that the Authority considers likely to be affected by, or have an interest in, their actions and functions.

This School and College Transport Policy consultation worked to these principles, and ensured that all relevant individuals and groups were afforded genuine opportunities to comment on and inform the final decision. The leading judgement regarding consultation is *R v North East Devon Health Authority*, which established that consultation should meet the following principles:

Consultation must take place when the proposals are at a formative stage: relevant individuals were able to comment on and inform the proposal before the initial budget option was published, during What Really Matters stage one, when the proposal was first published, during What Really Matters stage two, and again when the Director of Children's Services published the details of the proposed new Transport Policies during April 2013.

Consultation must provide consultees with sufficient information in support of particular proposals to allow an intelligent response to be made: During What Really Matters Stage Two, consultees were provided with a detailed paper outlining the rationale behind proposing to change the related policies in order to bring Wirral in line with other authorities and to achieve major savings. Further, following the Council decision on March 5 to introduce new policies, the Director of Children's Services published an additional detailed paper outlining the details of the proposals. The paper provides consultees with detailed, substantial and impartial information which informed the recommendation. Consultees were also provided with the opportunity to input into this process through a questionnaire and through existing groups and forums.

Consultation must give sufficient time for responses to be made and considered, and must ensure that the responses are conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken: Consultees were communicated with directly, in writing and

at a series of briefings and consultation events through bodies such as the Children's Trust and Schools Forum(s). These events took place both during the What Really Matters consultation process, which lasted for 90 days and again during the consultation on the specific proposals on the detail within the proposed new policies. Comments received during What Really Matters were provided to Cabinet on February 7th 2013 and comments related to the proposal are provided to Cabinet at Appendix 2 of this report. Due regard has been given to all comments received.

The consultation documents were made available to all, were provided in plain English. The consultation documents further contained a candid explanation for the reasons behind the proposal, and also provided reasons for and against alternative options.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(a) Yes and impact review is attached

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010-0>

Transport (Children's and Adults) - Children's EIA.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 If the new policies are put in place there will be a reduction in the number of Council vehicles taking children to school and there may also be an increased number of children using public transport with reduced carbon emissions. However there may also be an increase in parents driving their children to school which would increase carbon emissions.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Not applicable for this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That Cabinet agree to adopt the new 5-16 Home to School Transport Policy and the new post 16 School and College Transport Policy so that they apply to pupils and students commencing in September 2014 onwards at primary and secondary schools and colleges.

12.2 That Cabinet agrees that pupils and students who have been assessed under the existing policies are to retain their current provision until they leave their current school.

12.3 That Cabinet note the change in budget savings arising from the revised Post 16 SEND policy, and that the remainder of the savings will be delivered through a range of demand management initiatives including travel training.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Taking due regard for the consultation findings the option regarding provision of free transport for Post 16 students with SEND has been reviewed. The new policies ensure transport support will be provided to the most vulnerable students. The budget option savings have been reduced accordingly; the remainder of the savings will be met through a range of demand management initiatives including travel training.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Home to School Transport Policy for Children and Young People Age 5-16 2014-15.
Appendix 2: Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2014-15.
Appendix 3: Analysis of the Budget Option consultation on School and College Transport Policies.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Guidance on home to school travel and transport - Reference: DFE-00023-2013.
16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2013/14 – Education Funding Agency. April 2013.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council	5th March 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabinet	18th February 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12th February, 2013

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HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGE 5-16

2014- 2015

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Entitlement to Travel Assistance
- 3.0 Applying for a free bus pass
- 4.0 Support for Learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
 - 4.1 The Decision to Provide Transport
 - 4.2 The Type of Transport Support
 - 4.3 Children with Complex Medical Needs
- 5.0 Discretionary Travel Support
- 6.0 Transport Safety
- 7.0 Appeals Procedure
- 8.0 Contact Information

1.0 Introduction

This policy document sets out Wirral Council's Home to School Transport Policy for 5-16 year olds including those that have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND). The policy sets out the criteria for eligibility to travel assistance and describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers.

The Education Act 1996 places a legal duty and a responsibility on parents to ensure that their school aged children registered at a school attend regularly.

2.0 Entitlement to Travel Assistance

Under Section 508 (B) of the Education Act 1996 the Council must provide free transport to and from school for a child if they are aged to 16 between home and their nearest suitable school under certain conditions.

A 'suitable' school for transport purposes is the nearest school to the child's home. There is no general legislative requirement for the Council to transport pupils to the nearest school of a particular type e.g. faith school, ability, academy or free school.

Assistance with public transport costs will be provided for pupils who qualify under the following circumstances:

- Pupils are Wirral residents between age 5 and 16 and go to their nearest suitable school and live at least:
 - 2 miles from the school if they're under 8
 - 3 miles from the school if they're 8 or older
- Pupils are registered at their nearest suitable school and are unable to walk to school due to a route which the Council has assessed as hazardous.
- Pupils are from a low income family (entitled to free school meals or maximum Working Tax Credit) if they are:
 - aged 8 to 11 and the school is at least 2 miles away
 - aged 11 to 16 and the school is 2 to 6 miles away - as long as there aren't 3 or more suitable schools nearer to home
 - aged 11 to 16 and the school's 2 to 15 miles away - if it's their nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief
- Children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) are entitled to free transport however far they live from the school if:
 - they have a statement of SEN that says the local council will pay transport costs
 - they can't walk because of their SEN, a disability or mobility problem

The distance from home and the school gate nearest to home by the shortest available walking route will be measured using a computerised mapping system.

As a general guide, we will treat routes without pavements and street lighting as unsafe for children and young people. When assessing the safety of routes, the Authority will assume that the child is accompanied, as necessary, by a parent or other responsible person.

3.0 Applying for a Free Travel Pass

If parents believe their child is entitled to receive a free travel pass based on the criteria above then they can contact:

The Council Call Centre Information and Advice Team 0151 606 2020

Email: hotdesk@wirral.gov.uk

4.0 Support for Learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

Consideration for transport support is provided to children and young people who are resident on Wirral who have complex special educational needs, a disability or mobility problem as identified through the Special Educational Needs (SEN) assessment process.

Not all children with a statement of Special Educational Needs require free transport provision. Where a young person is able to access and use the public transport network safely they will be expected to do so. Where they are unable to walk because of their SEN, a disability or mobility problem they are entitled to free transport.

The assessment for eligibility for free transport is carried out at the Special Needs Assessment Panel (SNAP). The decision will be based on information from health practitioners, educational psychologists, school headteachers, children's social care and the input of the students.

Following the assessment process parents will be notified of the decision regarding transport provision. Eligibility to provision will be assessed annually.

4.1 The Decision to Provide Transport

The decision to provide transport is based on the student's needs. This means that Wirral Council is not able to take the following into account when considering home to school transport entitlement:

- Parents' work or other commitments.
- Attendance by siblings at other schools.
- If a parent chooses to send their child to a provider that is not the nearest appropriate provider to the home address.
- A journey from one educational establishment to another.
- Ad hoc visits to other schools, colleges or other establishments.
- Out of hours clubs (breakfast club, after school activities).
- To/ from dental, clinical, medical or hospital appointments
- At a different time due to detention or exclusion.

In these instances, transport arrangements will be the sole responsibility of the student's parent or carer.

4.2 The Type of Transport Support

If young people are assessed as eligible for free transport the type of transport provided will be based on individual assessment of young people's needs and with regard to the best use of the Council's resources.

This may be in the form of a free pass for use on public transport or transport in a contracted vehicle.

For students travelling in contracted vehicles there is no specific duty on the Council to provide passenger assistants. However, fulfilling a duty of care to passengers and others may involve the provision of a passenger assistant. A passenger assistant may be provided to accompany a young person with significant needs arising from a medical condition or a disability and where there is an exceptional need for care or supervision.

The decision on whether to provide a passenger assistant will be made as part of eligibility assessment taking a number of factors into account. Such factors may include information relating, but not limited, to:

- Medical issues.
- Health and safety related issues, including risk to self or others.
- The young person's mobility.
- Any challenging behaviour arising from the young person's SEN.
- Where a passenger has severe learning or physical difficulties, the need for continual care and supervision.
- Age and capability.
- Length of journey.
- The vehicle type and size.

Transport is allocated on an annual basis and parents and carers will be involved in a discussion regarding the ongoing suitability of the existing transport arrangements during the review of the young person's statement of educational needs.

4.3 Children with Complex Physical or Medical Needs

In cases of students with high risk medical needs (who require additional funding from a number of organisations) decisions regarding transport will be informed by health, education and social care practitioners. If a child is eligible for transport, health professionals will provide recommendations based on the child's specific needs during transport to ensure safety. This will be reviewed appropriately in order to provide a responsive service.

5.0 Discretionary Travel Support

This policy has set out those eligible for free transport to school. In some exceptional circumstances the Council will pay the travelling costs of pupils who do not fall into the categories described. These cases will be short term time defined travel solutions and will be reviewed on an individual basis.

These exceptional circumstances include children with a temporary disability or illness where medical evidence is provided, some children in the care of the Local Authority and those with further special circumstances.

6.0 Transport Safety

The safety of those travelling on Council contracted transport provision is of paramount concern. Wirral Council reserves the right to refuse to provide transport on a contract vehicle where a pupil's behaviour is such that it is unacceptable to the operator, the passenger assistant or other passengers. If a student is suspended temporarily from transport parents and carers will become responsible for transporting their own children to school for the duration of the suspension. Where there are persistent cases of misbehaviour and assurances of good behaviour cannot be obtained or are not fulfilled a travel pass or mileage expenses may be offered.

7.0 Appeals Procedure

Parents or students can appeal in writing within 20 working days of receiving notification of the local authority's decision not to provide transport or against the detailed arrangements made.

Guidance to the appeals process and the relevant forms will be available from our website:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/childrens-services/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/information-parents-and-carers/school-transport>

Or directly from:

Email: CYPD_transport4children@wirral.gov.uk

The Integrated Transport Unit
Children and Young People's Department
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead, Wirral
Merseyside CH41 4FD

8.0 Contact Information

Information regarding home to school and college transport can be obtained from:

For Mainstream school travel pass applications:

The Council Call Centre Information and Advice Team

Email: hotdesk@wirral.gov.uk

Telephone: 0151 606 2020

For Special Educational Needs Transport:

The Integrated Transport Unit

Email: CYPD_transport4children@wirral.gov.uk

Telephone: 0151 666 4697

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POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT 2014- 2015**FOR LEARNERS AGED 16-19 AND 19-24 FOR STUDENTS WITH
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND/OR DISABILITIES****CONTENTS**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Details of Support Available

3.0 Support for Learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

4.0 Independent Travel Training

5.0 Contact Information

Appendix 2a: Transport Support Available to Post 16 Providers

1.0 Introduction

Every Local Authority in England has a duty to prepare and publish an annual Transport Policy Statement which complies with the requirements of section 509 of the Education Act 1996 regarding adequate provision of transport to facilitate the attendance of learners of sixth form age.

The Transport Policy Statement describes the transport support available to young people aged 16-19 years old, and young persons up to 24 years old who have a learning difficulty and /or a disability, who are entering or continuing in further education and learning.

Wirral Council is committed to:

- Ensuring that learners of sixth form age (and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 19-24) are able to access appropriate high quality education and training of their choice; and
- Providing support to those young people who need it most and removing transport as a barrier to participation in learning.

2.0 Details of Support Available

Government Funded 16-19 Bursary Scheme

The 16-19 Bursary Scheme provides financial support for learners aged 16-19 to access education or training. From 2013-14 the scheme will provide two types of funding, discretionary funding and funding for vulnerable students.

Schools and colleges are responsible for awarding bursaries and verifying eligibility of students. Institutions are free to determine the assessment criteria for eligibility for discretionary bursaries and the amount paid. They can also apply to the Learner Support Service for additional funding for vulnerable students.

Vulnerable students, such as those in care, care leavers, young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit and disabled students in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, or Personal Independence Payments are eligible for a bursary of £1,200 for a full academic year. This amount may be reduced pro-rata for courses of less than a full academic year (less than 30 weeks) at the discretion of the school or college.

Details of the bursary scheme are available on the Directgov website at:
www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

Further information can be obtained directly from the school or college on how to apply for a bursary.

Schools and Colleges

The websites of many schools and colleges provide comprehensive information on the transport assistance provided by the educational settings. Appendix 1 outlines the support

available from the principal Post 16 providers in Wirral. Students are advised to contact the institution directly for more detailed information as transport plans may be subject to change.

Merseytravel

Merseytravel offer a range of concessionary passes and pre-paid tickets.

A range of Term Time Tickets are available for young people and adults in full time education or work based learning who do not receive another allowance that covers the cost of travel. Trio tickets can be used on buses, trains and ferries, Solo tickets are for bus travel only and Railpass tickets are for train travel. The cost depends on the area that they cover and the age of the student.

The tickets are also available to be purchased on a weekly, monthly or annual basis. Students who reach their 18th birthday during a term are required to purchase an adult ticket for the whole of that term.

Merseytravel offers free travel to Merseyside residents with certain disabilities on buses, trains and Mersey Ferries. The disabilities include:

- Are registered blind or partially sighted
- Are registered profoundly or severely deaf
- Are without speech
- Have a disability or suffered an injury which has a substantial effect on ability to walk.
- Does not have arms or use of arms
- Have a learning disability
- Would be refused a license to drive a motor vehicle because of epilepsy, severe medical disorder, sudden attacks of dizziness or fainting or diagnosed dementia conditions
- Severe mental health issues

Students are advised to seek advice for the most appropriate ticket from any Merseytravel Centre or to telephone Merseytravel Hub Support on 0151 236 6056.

Further information can be found on the Merseytravel website: www.merseytravel.gov.uk

Arriva

Students travelling to full time education or placement outside the Merseytravel area may be able to purchase a bus only travel pass from Arriva.

Arriva offer a range of student passes, both annual and termly, for use on Arriva buses in the North West Area, valid throughout Cheshire, Halton, Lancashire and Manchester as well as Wirral and Merseyside.

Further information can be found on the Arriva website:
www.arrivabus.co.uk/student-saver-tickets-in-north-west/

Rail Services

The 16-25 Railcard offers one third discount for those aged 16-25 and students on a range of journeys. For the best offers students should check with operators what choices are available for their journey at the time they want to travel.

Information on Student Railcards can be obtained via the Railcard website at: www.railcard.co.uk.

Additional information on rail fares and services can be obtained through National Railcards: 08448 714036.

3.0 Support for Learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

The Council has a duty to encourage, enable and assist participation of all young people with special educational needs difficulties and/or disabilities (SEND). However, there is no automatic entitlement to free home to school transport for students over 16 at the beginning of the academic year (1 September).

Post 16 SEND students who continue their education can apply for transport support. An individual assessment process to determine eligibility to transport support and the type of transport required will be carried out.

This will apply to Post 16 students who were previously in receipt of a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) prior to admission to school/college where the following criteria are also met:

- the journey must be more than three miles from home to school/college.
- the student must be enrolled on a full-time course (above 15 hours per week) for a whole academic year at a school or college.
- the student must be following his/her course at the nearest school or college where that course is provided.

For those individuals who are assessed as qualifying for transport this will be provided at no cost to the family.

Each application will be individually assessed. Students/parents/carers will need to re-apply for transport on an annual basis.

The term "16 to 19" for the purpose of determining entitlement to travel under this section is defined as the beginning of the academic year following a student's 16th birthday to the end of the academic year in which the student's 19th birthday falls.

Parents or students can appeal in writing within 20 working days of receiving notification of the local authority's decision not to provide transport or against the detailed arrangements made.

Guidance to the appeals process and the relevant forms will be available from our website:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/childrens-services/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/information-parents-and-carers/school-transport>

Or directly from:

Email: CYPD_transport4children@wirral.gov.uk

The Integrated Transport Unit
Children and Young People's Department
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead, Wirral
Merseyside CH41 4FD

Support for young people aged 18 years and above may be available if Critical and Substantial Fair Access to Care criteria is met following an assessment of need by the Department of Adult Social Services (DASS). Please refer to the DASS Transport Policy for further details.

4.0 Independent Travel Training

A number of schools and colleges provide travel training and support to students; schools can be contacted directly for details of their provision.

Bus Confidence is a website designed to help young people with special educational needs travel to school or college on their own. The on-line training package is available at Bus Confidence free of charge to students, parents & schools.
For further details: <http://www.busconfidence.com/>

The Council Integrated Transport Unit provides travel training assistance to support users to travel independently to a regular visited destination and back. To access travel training assistance please contact the Integrated Transport Unit (contact details below).

5.0 Contact Information

Information regarding home to school and college transport can be obtained from:

The Integrated Transport Unit
Email: CYPD_transport4children@wirral.gov.uk
Telephone: 0151 666 4697

Appendix 2a: Transport Support Available to Post 16 Providers (May 2013)

Note: information and web links may be subject to change by the provider.

Transport Support Available	Provider
<p>Merseytravel operate a range of bus services (700 series) to the school from local areas. Bus routes, timings & ticket costs may vary from year to year; information can be obtained from Merseytravel. The buses are open to members of the public to travel on. Daily Ticket prices presently cost 0.50p per journey for a pupil under 16 & £1.20 for 16+ Solo tickets (bus only) are available at a cost of at £8.80 per week or £79.20 per term</p> <p>1 Zone Trio tickets (bus & rail) cost £8.40 per week & £79.90 per term</p> <p>2 Zone Trio tickets (bus & rail) cost £11.20 per week & £100.60 per term</p>	<p>Merseytravel operate the 700 series for Birkenhead High School Academy</p>
<p>Birkenhead High School Academy Devonshire Place Claughton Wirral, CH43 1TY Email: m.wainwright@birkhs.gdst.net</p>	<p>Tel : 0151 652 5777 Fax : 0151 670 0639 Web: http://www.birkenheadhigh.gdst.net</p>
<p>The college provides a double deck vehicle from Hamilton Square each morning (8.30am) free of charge with a 2nd collection at Birkenhead Park, there is no return journey. The vehicle predominantly is to provide a link between the railway station & school for those students who are travelling from further afield.</p> <p>The college is introducing buses from Wallasey – Seacombe, Liscard, New Brighton, Wallasey Village and Heswall, Pensby, Gayton, Irby. Route Year Pass: £150, Term Time Pass: £55.</p> <p>Individual bus tickets will also be available to purchase in advance. Equivalent one year young person's SOLO travel pass £230, term time SOLO travel pass £76.70.</p>	<p>Birkenhead Sixth Form College</p>
<p>Birkenhead Sixth Form College Park Road West Claughton Prenton Merseyside, CH43 8SQ Email: email@bsfc.ac.uk</p>	<p>Tel : 0151 652 5575 Fax : 0151 653 441</p> <p>Web: www.bsfc.ac.uk</p>
<p>The C and W bus services operate for students of Calday Grange and West Kirby Grammar schools who live in New Brighton, Liscard, Wallasey, Leasowe, Chester and North Wales. These buses operate on a daily basis and timetables for these routes are available from the school. The cost of a pass for the C Series (Wallasey) service is £145.00 per term and for the W Series (North Wales and Chester) is £275.00 per term. Students who do not wish to use the bus every week are able to purchase a day pass if space is available on the bus. These passes cost £1.50 (C Series) or £2.50 (W Series) per one way journey and may be obtained from the Administration Office at Calday Grange Grammar School or Reception at West Kirby Grammar School.</p> <p>Merseytravel also operate a range of bus services to the school from local areas. Bus routes and timings may vary from year to year; information can be obtained from Merseytravel.</p>	<p>Calday Grange Grammar School and West Kirby Grammar School for Girls</p> <p>Merseytravel</p>
<p>Calday Grange Grammar School Grammar School Lane</p>	<p>Tel : 0151 625 2727</p>

Wirral, CH48 8GG Email: theschool@calday.wirral.sch.uk	Fax: 0151 625 9851 Web: http://www.calday.wirral.sch.uk/home
West Kirby Grammar School For Girls Graham Road West Kirby Wirral, CH48 5DP Email: office@wkgs.net	Tel : 0151 632 3449 Fax: 0151 632 1224 Web: http://www.westkirby-grammar.wirral.sch.uk
Merseytravel operate a range of bus services (600 series) to the school from local areas. Bus routes, timings & ticket costs may vary from year to year; information can be obtained from Merseytravel. The buses are open to members of the public to travel on. Daily Ticket prices presently cost 50p per journey for a pupil under 16 & £1.20 for 16+ Solo tickets (bus only) are available at a cost of at £8.80 per week or £79.20 per term. 1 Zone Trio tickets (bus & rail) cost £8.40 per week & £79.90 per term. 2 Zone Trio tickets (bus & rail) cost £11.20 per week & £100.60 per term.	Merseytravel operate the 600 series for a range of providers listed below.
Bebington High Sports College Higher Bebington Road Bebington Wirral, CH63 2PS Email : schooloffice@bebingtonhigh.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151 645 4154 Fax: 0151 643 8065 Web: http://www.bebingtonhigh.com
Hilbre High School Frankby Road West Kirby Wirral, CH48 6EQ Email: schooloffice@hilbre.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151 625 5996 Fax: 0151 625 3697 Web: http://www.hilbre.wirral.sch.uk
Pensby High School for Boys Irby road Wirral, CH61 6XN Email : schooloffice@psf.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151342 0570 Fax: 0151 342 0571 Web: http://www.boys.psf.wirral.sch.uk
Pensby High School for Girls Irby road Wirral, CH61 6XN Email: schooloffice@psf.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151342 0570 Fax: 0151 342 0571 Web: http://www.girls.psf.wirral.sch.uk
St Anselms College Manor Hill Prenton Merseyside, CH43 1UQ Email: headmaster@st-anselms.com	Tel : 0151 652 1408 Fax :01516 521957 Web: www.st-anselms.com
St John's Plessington Catholic College Old Chester Road, Bebington Wirral, CH63 7LF Email: schooloffice@stjohnplessington.com	Tel : 0151 645 5049 Fax: 0151 643 1516 Web: http://www.stjohnplessington.com
St Marys Catholic Aided College Wallasey Village Wallasey	Tel : 0151 639 7531 Fax: 0151 210 4514 Web:

Wirral, CH63 7LF Email: schooloffice@stmaryscollege.wirral.sch.uk	http://www.stmaryscollege.wirral.sch.uk
South Wirral High School Plymyard Avenue Eastham Wirral, CH62 8EH Email: schooloffice@southwirral.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151 327 3213 Fax: 0151 327 7798 Web: http://www.southwirral.wirral.sch.uk
The Wallasey School Birkett Avenue Moreton Wirral, CH46 1RB Email: schooloffice@stmaryscollege.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151 677 7825 Fax: 0151 605 0238 Web: http://www.wallaseyschool.co.uk
Wirral Grammar School For Boys Cross Lane Bebington Wirral, CH63 3AQ Email: schooloffice@wirralgrammarboys.com	Tel : 0151 644 0908 Fax: 0151 643 8317 Web: http://www.wirralgrammarboys.com
Wirral Grammar School for Girls Heath Road Bebington Wirral, CH63 3AF Email: schooloffice@wirralgrammar-girls.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151 644 8282 Fax: 0151 643 1332 Web: http://www.wirralgirls.co.uk
Public Transport Provision	Public Transport provision is available for the providers below
Wirral Metropolitan College Conway Park Campus Europa Boulevard Conway Park Birkenhead, CH41 4NT 12 Quays Campus Shore Road Birkenhead, CH41 1AG	Tel : 0151 551 7777 Fax: 0151 551 7001 Web: http://www.wmc.ac.uk
Mosslands School Mosslands Drive Wallasey Wirral, CH45 4RJ Email: admin@mosslands.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151 638 8131 Fax: 0151 639 1317 Web: http://www.mosslands.co.uk
Oldershaw School Valkyrie Road Wallasey Wirral, CH45 4RJ Email: schooloffice@oldershaw.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151 638 2800 Fax: 0151 691 1581 Web: http://www.oldershaw.wirral.sch.uk
Weatherhead High Media Arts College Breck Road Wallasey Wirral, CH44 3HS Email: schooloffice@weatherhead.wirral.sch.uk	Tel : 0151 631 4400 Fax: 0151 637 1805 Web: http://www.weatherhead.wirral.sch.uk

Public Transport provision is available for the provider below	
Wirral Metropolitan College Conway Park Campus Europa Boulevard Conway Park Birkenhead, CH41 4NT 12 Quays Campus Shore Road Birkenhead, CH41 1AG	Tel : 0151 551 7777 Fax: 0151 551 7001 Web: http://www.wmc.ac.uk

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SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRANSPORT POLICIES CONSULTATION FINDINGS**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an analysis of the consultation completed in relation to the specific proposals for the changed School and Transport Policies, to be implemented in September 2014.
- 1.2 Extensive consultation has taken place in relation to this proposal, providing opportunities for all relevant individuals, groups and members of staff affected by this proposal to make their views and suggestions known.
- 1.3 The feedback contained within this report demonstrates that consultees would prefer all School and Transport Policies to remain unchanged.

2.0 CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The recommendation from officers to implement the proposed new policies followed an intensive period of consultation on a series of Council budget options, 'What Really Matters'.
- 2.2 As part of that process, a budget option was published which proposed the development of new transport policies to make significant budget savings while still providing transport support at a statutory level. This was supplemented by a report which outlined the rationale behind this option.
- 2.3 A series of events and meetings related to this option were held with interested groups across the borough, and everyone potentially affected by the option was provided with the opportunity to have their say. The consultation findings were reported to Cabinet on February 7 2013, who in turn included the option in the Budget Resolution on February 18 2013. This budget was approved by Council on March 5 2013, which led to the Director of Children's Services publishing a detailed report in April 2013 which outlined the proposed new policies and thereby commencing this final round of consultation.
- 2.4 This recommendation was published on the Council website, and sent to relevant individuals, in April 2013. The Director of Children's Services further commenced a series of meetings with interested groups, including the Wirral School's Forum, the Children's Trust and groups of Head teachers.
- 2.5 At these briefings, people attending were provided with detailed information as to why the option was proposed, and the rationale behind the individual changes which are being proposed. People were also provided with a report which contained detailed information on this rationale in plain English.
- 2.6 People at the events were provided the opportunity to ask questions of the Director and other senior officers, and were also provided with questionnaires in order to provide their feedback at any point throughout the 90 day consultation. These questionnaires, and reports, were provided to everyone potentially affected by the budget option, irrespective of whether they attended the consultation event.

3.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 3.1 Over 600 people completed a consultation questionnaire in relation to this proposal. These responses came from a range of sources, including teachers, governors, students and parents. The full breakdown of who responded is provided below.

Are you?	%	Count
A student currently receiving transport support	6.1%	34
A parent/carer of a pupil currently receiving transport support	41.0%	229
A parent/carer of a pupil NOT currently receiving transport support	12.9%	72
An employee or governor of a special school	7.5%	42
An employee or governor of a mainstream school	8.6%	48
An employee or governor of a further education establishment	3.8%	21
Other (please describe your connection to the consultation):	20.2%	113
Other (please specify)	129	
answered question	559	
skipped question	48	

- 3.2 Where people have stated 'other' in response to this question they primarily stated they were governors, students not receiving transport or otherwise employed in services or roles related to this service. The responses received were predominantly from female consultees, 68.5%, and came from a broad range of age groups. The age breakdown of the response can be shown in the table below.

Your age:	%	Count
Under 16	5.4%	25
16-24	7.3%	34
25-44	37.6%	174
45-64	39.1%	181
65+	5.0%	23
Prefer not to say	5.6%	26
answered question		463
skipped question		144

- 3.3 The consultation highlighted specifically the changes to the proposed new policies and asked consultees to identify if they supported the changes. The results of these questions are provided in the three tables below.

I support the removal of free denominational transport.	%	Count
I agree	10.6%	63
I neither agree nor disagree	6.1%	36
I disagree	83.3%	493
answered question		592
skipped question		15

I support the change in assessment for eligibility for access to free transport for children with special educational needs.	%	Count
I agree	7.8%	46
I neither agree nor disagree	8.0%	47
I disagree	84.3%	498
<i>answered question</i>		591
<i>skipped question</i>		16

I support the removal of free post 16 transport provision.	%	Count
I agree	5.2%	31
I neither agree nor disagree	6.9%	41
I disagree	87.8%	520
<i>answered question</i>		592
<i>skipped question</i>		15

- 3.4 Specific responses received from key stakeholders included: Wirral Association for Special School Headteachers, The Diocese of Shrewsbury, The Chairs of Governors of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, St Marys Catholic College, St John Plessington Catholic College, Upton Hall School, St Anselms College and Foxfield School. Representation was also made from Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School, Birkenhead Sixth Form, Wirral Hospital School and Councillor John Hale. A number of specific responses are included below:

Wirral Special Schools Headteachers Association (WISPHA)

"We have concern that the withdrawal of transport for pupils at the age of 16 will:

1. dramatically affect pupils' attendance at school
2. cause more special schools who have previously had excellent Ofsted inspections to be down graded as a result of a lower level of attendance
3. put far more pressure on vulnerable families especially those living in poverty who do not have access to a car to get their child to school
4. place unrealistic expectations on some pupils and their families where the pupil's needs are such that they could not travel to school on public transport.
5. Increase the likelihood of pupils with SEN becoming NEET above the age of 16
6. Increase the demands on ESW time as schools ask that service to address more non attendance issues.
7. create issues where families have a number of children attending different schools or the same school e.g. the younger pupil gets transport to a school but their older sibling does not; families may be unable to take their child to a special school if they have to wait for a transport bus to come and collect their other child.

We recommend that more work is done in Wirral on independent travel training for pupils with SEND.

We also recommend that transport is not withdrawn from any pupil who attends a special school or mainstream SEN base. This should be recognition of their

additional needs. If they are able to attend a mainstream school then the child's needs should be assessed as it is likely to indicate that transport is unnecessary."

Birkenhead Sixth Form College

Birkenhead Sixth Form College is particularly concerned that the removal of free transport may have considerable implications for students with learning difficulties and disabilities(LDD). Our concerns are that:

1. all students should have the freedom of choice as to which Post 16 institution they attend. For students with LDD travelling can be a major barrier. If all transport costs are taken away then the choice of institution / programme of study may be compromised for a Post 16 student with LDD needs.
2. Students that have LDD may not be able to overcome the initial difficulties of travelling to a Post 16 institution, especially if they are moving to a new institution. Therefore there is a danger that the student may take the decision to stay at home and not pursue his/her education and ultimately become a NEET figure. This has greater cost implications in the longer term and is certainly not in the interests of the individual student.
3. For students with LDD transport can be a barrier to progressing to the next stage unlike students who do not have such issues. Therefore the utmost should be done to ensure that such students have equality of access and so we should be working towards ensuring any barriers are removed and not erecting them.

If the assessment of students with LDD as to whether they require free or reduced cost training is to be reviewed, the College would urge that the assessment should be objective, have clear criteria but take into account individual needs and that it should be undertaken in consultation with the relevant Post 16 provider.

Additionally the College would suggest that although some students will require assistance with transport throughout their post 16 studies there is the possibility of reducing the dependence on this for some students as they progress through their programme. We would ask that strong consideration is given to providing funding support for travel training. This would ultimately reduce expenditure on transport costs but more importantly it would enable more young people to become independent travellers and prepare them for entering a working environment.

I would also ask for consideration for some subsidy for transport to be given to those students whose parents are on a low income. It is only right that students choice of where to study should not be impeded because of financial difficulties. In fact there should be a greater emphasis on raising the aspirations and widening the horizons of those students from families where there are financial difficulties. Bursary funding is made available to students on low income and can be used to help with transport costs but it should be remembered that bursary funding is limited and not all students have access to the higher levels. The amount of bursary funding awarded by government to institutions is not sufficient to cover all needs and certainly not all transport costs for students from low income families. This is only going to be exacerbated further as the compulsory staying on age is raised to 18. In areas where there are high levels of deprivation, thought and support has to be given to how we ensure that these students that have financial difficulties have the same access to all Post 16 provision and that barriers to them progressing in education are removed.

Upton Hall Chair of Governors

"As Chair of Governors of Upton Hall School FCJ, I write to formally lodge my strongest objection to the proposals to remove entitlement to transport support for pupils enrolling at Catholic schools from September 2014. Parents sending their children to the nearest Catholic school deserve to maintain their existing rights to transport support and should not have an additional financial burden placed upon them.

Under these proposals children accessing their nearest Community schools, Academies and Church of England Controlled schools will continue with their present support whilst those looking to attend this Catholic school may well be penalised. These same parents already create additional savings for education in Wirral via their contributions to building and maintenance costs and as tax and rate payers should be entitled to retain their existing transport support.

The proposals threaten long established practices and arrangements in Wirral to provide transport support for eligible parents seeking a Catholic education for their children. Such well established practices should not be disturbed and parents deserve the opportunity to choose a school or college in accordance with their religious convictions.

In addition, any change if introduced will make it harder for parents, particularly those just above the income thresholds for transport support or families with two or more children to access popular and successful Catholic schools in the Authority. This runs counter to Government policy on extending choice for parents and preventing transport costs from being a barrier to educational choice.

I recognise the financial constraints upon the Authority but do not understand why the Authority seeks to undermine its Catholic schools which are making such a positive contribution to standards of education, community service, diversity of choice and social cohesion in Wirral.

When the Authority introduced similar proposals as recently as 2008 they were withdrawn as a result of the opposition against them and the arguments presented at that time. Those arguments are equally valid in 2013 and the current proposals should also be withdrawn. Please ensure that my views are made available to elected members as is my full backing for the submission put forward by the Diocese of Shrewsbury in opposition to any changes to the school transport policy. Yours sincerely Professor James Keaton MBE BSc LLD, Chair of Governors
(transcribed from letter sent, received 17th May 2013)"

We also recommend that transport is not withdrawn from any pupil who attends a special school or mainstream SEN base. This should be recognition of their additional needs. If they are able to attend a mainstream school then the child's needs should be assessed as it is likely to indicate that transport is unnecessary."

Our Lady of Pity unsigned

"Our Lady of Pity school provides education for 3 to 11 years with children from Meols, Hoylake and West Kirby using school buses from the age of 5 to 11. For children who live in these areas there is no feasible way they could walk or cycle to school each day. Most would access the Greasby school site via Heron Road, a very busy commuter route with no pavement facility the entire length of the road

through to Greasby. The loss of the buses would see an extremely high increase in the number of parents/carers driving their children to school each day. The site of OLOP in Greasby means access is particularly difficult being at the end of a residential cul-de-sac whilst sandwiched between Greasby Infants and Greasby Juniors schools and all the parents and children attending both of those sites on a daily basis. I know that a number of local residents already complain about the cars that come to take children to school each day at OLOP, the loss of the buses would only exacerbate this issue.

Last but not least this policy will clearly discriminate against Catholic families and children in west Wirral of which OLOP is the only Catholic school serving those areas of Hoylake, Meols and West Kirby."

St Anselm's College Chair of Governors

The Director of Education, As a member of the Wirral Schools Forum I have previously voiced my concerns over this issue and now wish to confirm in this e mail my views as Chairman of Governors at St. Anselm's College. The Headmaster and Governors do understand the financial difficulties faced by the Local Authority and sympathise with the decisions having to be made regarding savings. This was a major issue many years ago when similar savings were proposed. Thankfully at that time the strong views of parents were taken into account and the proposals dropped. I was at that time a parent with a leading role in changing the decision of the then Local Authority and as a consequence became a Local Councillor. Today's problems are similar and again appear to discriminate against (in our case) boys choosing a Catholic Education. The fact that some, but not all, may pass a Catholic School to attend St. Anselm's is incidental as those who choose St. Anselm's, and their parents, believe that the College provides an all round education which meets their needs. As you must be aware many boys, not of the Catholic Religion also opt for St. Anselm's for a number of reasons. Are they to be discriminated against also? St. Anselm's is a thriving School with a glowing reputation and a warm and valued relationship with the Education Authority. I must point, however, that these proposals should they be enacted could have a devastating effect on the future of the well-being of the College as currently 25% of our students receive free bus passes. It appears to me that while all the Wirral Schools may be affected, St. Anselm's, because of its outstanding reputation for offering all round educational excellence to boys throughout Wirral and beyond will be handicapped more than any others. This really cannot and should not be allowed to happen. I urge the Education Authority, therefore, as you did thirty years ago to think again and reject this proposal in its present form.

Brian Cummings MBE Chairman of Governors.

St John Plessington Chair of Governors

"As Chair Of Governors at a Catholic Secondary School, I feel I, and all our governors, have a responsibility towards pupils and their parents, in respect of the matter of home to school transport.

Parents choose St John Plessington Catholic College, when deciding on the best secondary school for their children, for its exceptional academic performance as well as for its Christian ethos and pastoral care. We are told that parental choice is held in high regard.

It is well known that our entry cohort is drawn from wide and diverse socio-economic areas in the Borough of Wirral, many of our pupils coming from the most deprived parts of the peninsula. We believe that these children deserve the best we can offer them. On being awarded the TES Secondary School of the Year award, in 2010, the citation commended the school for its support for underprivileged children. Free transport to and from the school of choice has given parents freedom from concern about the cost of travel for their children. To remove this benefit would have serious consequences, for the school as well as, importantly, for many of the children of Wirral.

We realise that savings must be made, but we would ask you to retain the status quo and find savings elsewhere."

Foxfield School Chair of Governors

"At Foxfield we have a relatively large post -16 group, of whom only a select few are able to use public transport. We have a proportion of autistic and other pupils with ""challenging behaviour"" in the post-16 group who could not under any circumstances use public transport without putting themselves and/or the wider public at risk.

There is no realistic alternative for pupils such as Foxfield's post 16 group other than the present system of them being bussed into school with escorts, especially when you consider they come from virtually the whole of Wirral. Public transport is simply not an option, regardless of budgetary requirements.

If the proposal of stopping post 16 transport for special schools is implemented, I can foresee a lot of pupils finishing school prematurely, because of an inability to attend.

Keith Martingell
Chair of Governors Foxfield School"

"DIOCESE OF SHREWSBURY EDUCATION SERVICE

DIOCESAN COMMENTARY: CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS BY WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR CHANGES TO HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

The Diocese of Shrewsbury is very concerned that Wirral Council is once again considering proposals to change its policy of transport support for pupils accessing denominational schools. The Diocese believes the parents choosing such should have transport support to the nearest denominational school in just the same way as those accessing the nearest Community, Academy or Foundation school. As recently as 2008 the Council withdrew proposals to remove transport support based upon oppositions to the proposed policy change and the arguments presented. Those arguments are equally valid in 2013 and there is a strong case against ending the entitlement to support not only legally and in principle but because the proposal runs contrary to nationally and locally agreed policies and lacks clarity.

1. Looking first to both principle and law, the Diocese would identify consideration of the following:

1.1 Assistance with travel costs to denominational schools was enshrined within Section 55 of the 1944 Education Act. It was reinforced in Schedule 19, paragraph 15 of the 1993 Education Act and Section 509 of the 1996 Education Act. The latter states at 509(1) that “A Local Education Authority shall make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as they consider necessary, or as the Secretary of State may direct, for the purpose of facilitating the attendance of persons receiving education.” Section 509(4) then looks to enlarge on the responsibilities of the Local Authority ... “In considering whether they are required by subsection (1) to make arrangements in relation to a particular person, a Local Education Authority shall have regard (amongst other things) –

(a) to the age of the person and the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which he could reasonably be expected to take; and

(b) to any wish of his parent for him to be provided with education at a school or institution in which the religious education provided is that of the religion or denomination to which his parent adheres.”

This requires any school transport which is provided by a Local Authority because it is ‘necessary’, to be so provided, free of charge. In 2008 the Council determined that the provision of free transport under 509(4)(b) was deemed as necessary in Wirral Borough and financial penalties should not be imposed on parents seeking such an education.

1.2 The 2006 Education and Inspections Bill specifically aimed to reduce the impact of transport as a barrier to parents exercising their education preferences and also improved and extended the offer of free transport originally set out in the 1944 Education Act. As a result the Government is funding Local Authorities to provide secondary age pupils from low-income families with transport to the nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief where this is between 2 and 15 miles from the pupil’s home.

1.3 The maintenance of support for transport where it currently exists is also reinforced via conventions developed by the United Nations on Human Rights (1948), Civil and Political Rights (1996) and the Rights of the Child (1989). All three have been ratified by the UK Government in 1951, 1976 and 1991 respectively. The European Convention on Human Rights, incorporated into UK Law in 1998, guarantees that the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms to education shall be secured without discrimination on religious grounds.

1.4 If the proposals are implemented then children accessing their nearest Community school, Controlled C.E. School, Foundation school or Academy will continue with their present support whilst those looking to the nearest Catholic school may well be penalised and so subject to discrimination. Add to this that the parents who will be most heavily hit in Catholic schools are likely to be those just over the income thresholds and may well find expression of their preferences a financial impossibility especially in these difficult economic times. This discriminates against such parents on both religious and socio-economic grounds.

1.5 The ending of transport entitlement will also lead to the Authority disrupting well established practices and arrangements. The Diocese would suggest that withdrawal from these arrangements is not acceptable. This view has been echoed by successive Secretaries of State who have expressed the hope that Authorities will continue to think it right not to disturb well established practices, some of which have been associated with local agreements or understandings about the siting of Catholic schools. Most recently the Authority’s closure of St Benedict’s Catholic

Secondary School with the consent of the Diocese was undertaken on the understanding that transport support would be available to enable pupils to attend alternative Catholic secondary schools.

1.6 The Council's documentation refers to the potential impact of the changes including the educational attainment of students, their life chances, OFSTED inspections and DfE assessments. No evaluation of this impact has been made available but I am certain that all parties concerned would not wish to see changes in school transport which might disrupt the excellent educational standards achieved by pupils in Catholic schools. Any proposals that would lead parents to withdraw their children from or decline to send their children to a Catholic school on the grounds of the cost of transport only to have them transported at the Council's expense to the nearest Community school that may be a similar or further distance away is educationally and economically perverse and discriminatory.

1.7 Conclusion

Restrictions on transport provision to Catholic schools runs contrary to the thrust of legal obligations and the principles therein plus long standing practices in Wirral so the conclusion is that a reasonable Local Authority properly directing itself as to its legal obligations and the principles of public service should find it necessary to continue the relevant free or subsidised transport in order to facilitate attendance at Catholic schools. On an associated legal point it is worth noting the provisions of the Education Act 1996 section 444. Under this section a parent commits an offence if his child, being of compulsory school age and registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at that school. The parent however has a defence to that charge under sub-section (4), if, amongst other things:

- (a) ... the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home, and
- (b) ... no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Education Authority for ...
- (c) his transport to and from school.

2. Other Nationally Agreed Policies. The Diocese suggests that the ending of entitlement contradicts:

2.1 The promotion of educational diversity to enhance the range of preferences available to parents. For many of the latter the lack of transport support to Catholic schools will necessarily diminish that range.

2.2 Government policy to generate a modal shift from car to bus. It is estimated that 20% of morning rush hour traffic is attributable to the school run. For children entering denominational schools in the future and lacking transport support to those schools the outcome could be an unacceptable increase in car use, with increased parking problems at schools effectively undermining the Council's environmental objectives. The removal of buses as mass transport alternatives to car use will have a significant impact on CO2 emissions and result in an increase in the carbon footprint of Wirral Council. This runs entirely counter to the Council's carbon reduction aims and its Climate Change Strategy. The Council's own documentation identifies potential increased car usage. This may also be accompanied by increases in the number of children walking longer distances to school resulting in more accidents or safeguarding concerns from parents. No evaluation of the environmental and safety impact of the policy change has been published and no definitive proposals have been presented or costings given for any strategies being

considered by the Council that are intended to secure pupils' safety or minimise the environmental impact of any policy change.

3. Lack of Clarity

3.1 Catholic schools serve individual parishes or groups of parishes so if a Baptised Catholic pupil accesses their designated Parish School as previously agreed between the Council and the Diocesan Authority has that not been defined as their nearest suitable school? The nearest non Catholic schools within the Authority for many Catholic families will not be offering Collective Worship and Religious Education in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, disciplines and norms of the Roman Catholic Church and may not therefore be deemed as the nearest suitable school.

3.2 For admissions in 2014/15 Admissions Authorities completed consultations on March 1st 2013 and had to determine policies by April 15th 2013. These are statutory processes and were in part predicated on the continuing support for transport provision to denominational schools. These processes should not be set aside and any potential changes to that support should wait for their introduction until September 2015.

3.3 The Council document 'TRANSPORT POLICIES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS' refers to a budget saving of £2,000,000 over 6 years for home to school transport. Later in the same document the removal of discretionary denominational transport is to save £180,000 phased over six years. It is unclear how the estimated savings on removing denominational transport contribute to the £2,000,000 or whether the estimated saving on £180,000 is the annual saving in year 6. We seek assurances that respondents and elected members will be advised of the relevant sums. Leaving aside for the moment uncertainties as to the savings involved and looking to the options instanced for future denominational transport the proposal is to withdraw support save for students from low income families. Though not apparent in the documentation the Diocese assumes that the Authority will still cover the costs of transport to denominational schools for children deemed as vulnerable and hard to place:

- Pupils permanently excluded from other schools
- Children who have been out of education for longer than one school term and where attempts at 'normal' admission have so far failed
- Children of registered refugees and asylum seekers where previous attempts through 'normal' admissions have failed
- Children of military personnel
- Children returning from secure units or otherwise having serious offending issues.
- Catholic children with a statement of special educational need.

Added to these are pupils for whom a denominational school is their closest school and over the statutory distance from their home. Taken together the cost of exemptions and their administration may well offset any savings, particularly when added to these are those expenses arising from appeals by parents against the decision to withhold transport support. The Local Authority is under a duty to consider each appeal on its facts and therefore cannot fetter its discretion by stating that it has a blanket policy that it will not provide transport in certain cases e.g. to a particular school. In essence the balance of financial advantage may lie with leaving the present arrangements undisturbed.

3.4 The provision of schools by the Diocese of Shrewsbury has saved the Authority millions of pounds and that parents at Catholic schools are still heavily subsidising the public purse by a 10% contribution to building and repair costs in those schools. These same parents, as tax and rate payers, are also contributing to Wirral Borough's school education budget and if additional charges were introduced or financial support was to be withdrawn they will continue to do this and subsidise the transport of pupils to many schools and Academies whilst being denied adequate transport support to their nearest Catholic school. An outcome which is contrary to natural justice and clearly undermines the concept of 'free' Catholic education.

3.5 In reacting to the proposal the Diocese would have expected to see some projections from the Authority as to the likely impact on admissions to Catholic schools within the consultation documentation. The complete lack of such leaves decision makers with limited evidence to proceed even if not already convinced to resist any changes in principle. The impact on Catholic Schools will be very disruptive and destabilising if a number of parents determine that they can no longer afford to send all their Catholic children to the nearest suitable Catholic school. The proposed changes in policy may have the unintended consequence of destabilising very effective educational institutions and disrupting the education of the students they serve.

4. Consultation

4.1 The Council's documents offer an estimate of potential savings following the withdrawal of discretionary travel support but it is not clear if these are 'final' annual savings. Therefore it is not possible for respondents to calculate potential savings with any accuracy if support is withdrawn in respect of denominational education. The letter to parents dated 16 April provides no information in this respect.

4.2 Any action to change transport policy in the way envisaged is a "key decision" as per the regulations under the Local Government Act 2000. Taking the previous points together the Diocese again anticipates that parents would have had the opportunity to question elected members on the proposal previous to any decision on its enactment.

4.3 The consultation exercise makes no reference to the government guidance in respect of changes to home to school travel and transport and the good practice contained therein. The information on appeals procedures is inadequate when compared with this guidance. It is not clear as to whether the statements under the Budget Option document heading 'Can I appeal against the proposed changes?' refer to the policy change itself or the way in which the policy has decided a parental application. If they refer to the latter it is not sufficient to simply state that concerns may be raised with the Director of Children's Services.

4.4 No proposals have been brought forward to introduce charging for subsidised transport and no explanation has been offered as to why this option has not been considered.

4.5 When Wirral Council brought forward proposals to change its school transport policy in 2008 it withdrew them due to the weight of opposition from many sources including Wirral's Admissions Forum. The latter passed without dissent a resolution that "The Admissions Forum contend that the proposals to end transport support to denominational schools are unjust and unacceptable and should be

withdrawn.” If it were possible to consult the Forum it is our belief that a similar resolution would be forthcoming.

4.6 The Council’s 2008 proposals to change school transport policy were opposed by Wirral’s SACRE. Under the chairmanship of Canon Paul Robinson of St Hilary’s Church of England Parish in Wallasey the SACRE listed the following amongst seven objections to the Council’s proposals:

- “SACRE consider the admissions provisions of the 1996 and 2006 Acts are intended to ensure that no child is disadvantaged by transport costs from attending the nearest faith high school of their choice. The proposed policy will create that disadvantage.
- SACRE consider that those parents disadvantaged by any changes to the transport policy would find it difficult for their children to be taught RE as they would wish and that their children would be disadvantaged by being unable to attend Collective Worship according to their faith.

The Diocese believes that had the Council undertaken consultation with SACRE similar arguments and objections to its proposals would have been put forward.

5. Impact on Families

5.1 It is those families with an income just high enough to ensure they are not eligible for the statutory subsidies that will be most badly affected by the withdrawal of support for home to school transport. These are often hardworking families on low incomes, and the prospect of having to find several hundred of pounds in order to enable their children to travel to their school would cripple them financially.

5.2. Families with two or more children attending Catholic schools will be particularly hard hit by the proposed changes. If the proposed policy changes are implemented the Council should exercise the limited discretion it intends to maintain in respect of such families to provide transport.

5.3. Changes to the school transport policy will lead to increased numbers of Catholic Primary School pupils transferring at age 11 to the nearest Community School or Academy due to the lack of affordable transport to enable them to attend the nearest Catholic Secondary School. Increased numbers of pupils from Community or Controlled Primary Schools may transfer at age 11 to local Catholic Secondary Schools. The governing bodies of Catholic Schools will exercise their legal responsibility to determine their holiday dates and may be expected to continue to align their spring term and holiday dates with the Easter period. As a result an increasing number of families will find that their children attending primary and secondary schools in Wirral will have different holiday dates. This is not recognised within the school transport consultation documentation. The Diocese suggests that it behoves the Council to take this factor into account when making its decisions and to alert all parents likely to be affected of the potential disruptive effect on family life if these school transport proposals are implemented.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined here the Diocese of Shrewsbury and indeed the whole community served by Catholic schools within the Diocese likely to be affected by these proposals ask that the Council withdraws any proposal to penalise parents for seeking places at schools for their children on the grounds of religion or belief. The proposal could put at risk the value of Catholic schools to the diversity, choice and quality of provision in Wirral and the Diocese strongly encourages the Local

Authority not to disturb the existing well established arrangements and not to proceed with changes to its home to school transport policy.

As per its remit the Diocese has largely advanced its arguments on behalf of those schools which fall to the responsibilities of the Bishop of Shrewsbury but equally feels that the case presented applies with the same force to parents seeking places in all denominational schools for their children.

A Scott, May 2013"

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 It is clear from the consultation questionnaire findings, and the group responses received from various groups, that consultees would prefer transport policies to remain unchanged.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – JULY 11TH 2013

SUBJECT:	HOYLAKE – ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	HOYLAKE & MEOLS AND WEST KIRBY & THURSTASTON
REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To note the delegated decision taken by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment to accept specialist external legal and technical advice tenders in the sum of £178,823 to support the Council in procuring a development partner for the Hoylake Golf Resort using the OJEU Competitive Dialogue process. This Report is exempt on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that the concept of a high quality golf resort in Hoylake has been the aspiration of the Council since 2004 and a number of previous reports have been considered by Members on this subject.
- 2.2 The golf resort proposals will lead to a number of significant benefits for Wirral and include
- Multi-million pound investment by the private sector in the golf resort proposals in Hoylake and West Wirral contributing to the area's regeneration
 - The golf resort will offer an international standard facility and the opportunity to regularly attract a variety of major golf competitions to Wirral
 - The creation of direct and indirect jobs through the supply chain which will be needed to support the golf resort
 - The securing of the golf resort has the potential to significantly enhance the image of Wirral as a destination for leisure and business
 - The resort will increase the attraction of Wirral to the golfing sector and allow Wirral to develop specific golf related activities as well as using the golf to generate complementary activities in the Borough which will have the potential to increase the number of tourists and increase visitor spend
 - The development will improve the environmental and landscape quality of the land on which it is to be built

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Members will be aware that given the potential benefits of the golf resort and an increasing interest being paid to the proposal from the private sector the concept was re-launched on Friday 14th September 2012 at the Ricoh Women's British Open which was held at the Royal Liverpool Golf Course.
- 3.2 Cabinet had previously agreed in 2008 that due to the complexity of the proposal and after exploring other procurement routes that the securing of an appropriate development partner should be procured using the OJEU Competitive Dialogue process.
- 3.3 As the Council has never used the Competitive Dialogue process before and therefore does not have the in-house experience or expertise to manage a project of this nature it was felt that the only way to successfully manage the risk was to secure external legal and project management expertise from consultants that had experience of using the EU Competitive Dialogue process. This external resource can be funded from a planned reserve that the Council had set aside for this project within the Regeneration and Environment budget.

4.0 TENDER EVALUATIONS

- 4.1 The commissioning of external legal and technical advice was completed in June 2013. The legal brief was tendered using the North West Legal Consortium (NWLC) framework which resulted in 4 bids being received. Following a detailed evaluation of the submissions it was resolved to award the tender to Pinsent Masons LLP in the sum of £55,000.
- 4.2 The technical support work was tendered via the Chest using the Consortium framework for North West Construction. The exercise only produced 1 tender return by Davis Langdon (An AECOM company) in the sum of £123,823. Procurement has advised that as the company has already been vetted and approved through the North West Consortium Framework the Council is able to accept a single tender return. Nevertheless a full evaluation of the bid was undertaken to ensure that it represented value for money. David Langdon scored highly on all aspects of their submission and a separate check showed that they were one of the highest performing companies on the North West framework. Following these checks it was resolved to award Davis Langdon the contract for the technical support work in the sum of £123,823.
- 4.3 It is important to commission this work as soon as possible as it has been advised that the OJEU Competitive Dialogue process will take up to 12 months to complete. Compliance with this timetable should allow a development partner for the golf resort to be identified prior to the Open which is returning to Hoylake in July 2014.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The most appropriate procurement method is through Competitive Dialogue and this option was approved by Cabinet on July 9th 2008.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 This proposal has been developed through initial public consultation, in 2004, as part of the Hoylake and West Kirby Master-plan work prior to the return of the Open Championship in 2006.
- 6.2 It has been the subject of a detailed Needs Assessment undertaken in 2006, followed by a Technical Assessment in 2007.

6.3 Any future public consultation will be carried out in accordance with Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are none specifically arising from this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING AND ASSETS.

8.1 The tender sums which total £178,823 can be funded from a planned reserve of £230,000 that has been set aside to deliver the procurement process. Indications from other examples of Competitive Dialogue have shown, however, that the process can become protracted and in such circumstances additional costs may be incurred. Whilst every effort will be taken to keep costs within budget it is considered prudent that to manage this risk that the balance of the budget £51,177 should be used as a contingency sum if required, to cover any future additional work as the OJEU process progresses.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report seeks the endorsement of the decision by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment under paragraph 14 of the Contract Procedure Rules which requires that a report on such use of these powers is reported to the next available meeting of the Executive.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS.

10.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from this particular report. Should the project develop and implementation details emerge future reports will include a full EIA.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The facilities associated with the proposed golf resort would be located within the Green Belt and within an Area Requiring Landscape Renewal

11.2 Any future planning application for a golf resort will be assessed against the Council's Unitary Development Plan the emerging Core Strategy Local Development Framework and the National Planning Policy Framework.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 Cabinet is recommended to note the decision of the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment to procure Pinsent Masons LLP in the sum of £55,000 to provide the legal advice and Davis Langdon in the sum of £123,823 to provide the technical advice in connection with the OJEU Competition Dialogue Procurement process for the Hoylake Golf resort using the delegated authority given to him under paragraph 14 of the Contract Procedure Rules.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION.

13.1 To allow the Council to proceed with the procurement of a development partner to deliver the Hoylake Golf Resort proposal.

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