

WIRRAL COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

27 JULY 2012

SUBJECT:	WIRRAL COASTAL STRATEGY – APPROVAL TO GO TO CONSULTATION
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL COASTAL WARDS
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:	COUNCILLOR BRIAN KENNY
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet Member approval to undertake a period of public consultation on the draft Wirral Coastal Strategy.
- 1.2 The Wirral Coastal Strategy sets out how and when coastal defence policy identified in the Shoreline Management Plan can be delivered. The Wirral Coastal Strategy has undertaken detailed economic, environmental and flood and coastal erosion risk appraisal to determine preferred options for policy delivery.
- 1.3 The production of a Coastal Strategy is not a statutory duty but the Council is exercising its powers as a Maritime Authority.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member will be aware that the policies in the Shoreline Management Plan from Great Orme to Southport which relate to Wirral were adopted by Cabinet on 2nd September 2010. The Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is a high-level document that sets out policies based on broad assessments of coastal processes and also broad assessment of flood and coastal erosion risks and benefits.
- 2.2 Following adoption of the SMP policies, an approach was made to the Environment Agency, who administer grant-in-aid for flood and coastal erosion risk management, for funding to undertake a Wirral Coastal Strategy. The strategy was to undertake a review of current flood and coastal erosion risk management at Wirral, review coastal processes which influence that flood and coastal erosion risk, and to undertake a detailed assessment of the environmental and economic impacts of implementing the policies identified in the SMP. The approach was successful and the Environment Agency approved grant, up to £208,000 to carry out the Wirral Coastal Strategy.

- 2.3 Following a tendering exercise the consultants AECOM were appointed to undertake the production of the Strategy which commenced in May 2011
- 2.4 The Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the Wirral Coastal Strategy identified that a public consultation exercise was required at the outset to identify key issues to be addressed throughout the strategy development. This initial phase of consultation was hosted on the “Have Your Say” page of the Council website and advertised in the local media. A good response was achieved with many issues identified. Issues identified have been developed as objectives for the Wirral Coastal Strategy. A consultation list was also formed.
- 2.5 The draft Wirral Coastal Strategy has now confirmed the level of flood and coastal erosion risk for the Wirral coast from Heswall to Eastham and confirmed the business case for investment in these areas. The Coastal Strategy has also identified opportunities for working in partnership with regeneration proposals around the coast. The draft Wirral Coastal Strategy has identified a sustainable plan of management actions that meet current economic, social and environmental criteria.
- 2.6 With the exception of a small length between Rock Ferry and Seacombe, the whole of the Wirral Coast is of International Importance for Nature Conservation. The Shoreline Management Plan assessed the likely impact of the proposed policies on the environment through its Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Wirral Coastal Strategy has developed the Strategic Environmental Assessment further to ensure that any actions undertaken in delivering the SMP policies do not produce adverse environmental impacts, or where impacts are identified they are appropriately mitigated in line with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations.
- 2.7 The Coastal Strategy has also taken into account other strategic initiatives in the region such as:
- Tidal Dee Flood Risk Strategy
 - Mersey Coastal Park Strategy
 - Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
 - Water Framework Directive
 - Wirral Local Development Framework
- to ensure that actions delivered through the Wirral Coastal Strategy are in accordance with these other strategic initiatives.
- 2.8 The draft Wirral Coastal Strategy has identified four locations where intervention in the short term (0-20 years) is required and investment in Wirral’s coastal defences will be necessary. The four areas at
- West Kirby
 - Meols
 - Wallasey Embankment
 - Rock Park
- have been identified as having a business case robust enough to justify future works, subject to obtaining additional partnership funding. Following approval of the Wirral Coastal Strategy by both Wirral Council and the Environment Agency the case for grant-in-aid funding for these four locations can be progressed through Project Appraisal Reporting.

2.9 Adherence to the Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Appraisal Guidance (FCERM-AG), by ensuring that the findings of the draft Wirral Coastal Strategy are subject to public consultation, is a key step to ensuring approval of the strategy by the Environment Agency and approval for grant-in-aid funding.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Public consultation and consultation with key stakeholders is identified as a necessary step within the FCERM-AG. There is a risk that failure to undertake consultation would result in non-approval of the Wirral Coastal Strategy by the Environment Agency and a lost opportunity to secure investment in Wirral's coastal defences.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 No other options have been considered, as public consultation on the draft Wirral Coastal Strategy is a requirement for Environment Agency approval.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation on the draft Wirral Coastal Strategy will be open for 12 weeks. The "Have Your Say" pages on the Wirral website will again be utilised and the consultation list of expressions of interest from the Stage 1 consultation will be referenced. It is also proposed to promote the consultation exercise via press releases. Consultation will also be undertaken with key stakeholders.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are no implications in this report for voluntary, community or faith groups.

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

7.1 An application to the Environment Agency for 100% grant-in-aid funding for the Wirral Coastal Strategy was approved by the Environment Agency at the estimated value of £208,000. The most economically advantageous tender was returned by AECOM and equated to £89,314. Additional works identified as a result of Environment Agency climate change predictions and proposals by Peel Ports for the long-term deposition of dredging arisings have increased the cost of the Wirral Coastal Strategy to £120,100. The variations to the scheme costs as a result of the additional works were reported to Cabinet and received approval on 2nd February 2012.

7.2 Staff costs associated with production of the Wirral Coastal Strategy are subject to Environment Agency grant-in-aid funding.

7.3 The strategy will provide the business case for the future management of Wirral's coastal assets.

7.4 There are no IT implications arising from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

9.2 Yes, the Equalities Impact Assessment is attached.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The policy recommendations from the Shoreline Management Plan and their delivery through the Wirral Coastal Strategy will be taken into account when formulating the policies in Wirral's Core Strategy.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That the draft Wirral Coastal Strategy produced by AECOM is now subject to a period of public consultation for 12 weeks.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 The Wirral Coastal Strategy is the second in a series of hierarchical plans for the management of flood and coastal erosion risk. The preliminary plan, the Shoreline Management Plan, was produced in accordance with Defra guidance and subject to public consultation. The draft Wirral Coastal Strategy has been produced in accordance with the Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Appraisal Guidance. The FCERM-AG advocates consultation at key stages of the Strategy development, including public consultation on the draft Strategy Plan and preferred policies, in order to achieve local "buy-in" of the preferred approach and to mitigate any risk of non-approval of the strategy at a later date.

REPORT AUTHOR: Neil Thomas
Principal Assistant Engineer
Technical Services Department
telephone: (0151) 606 2333
email: neilthomas@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix A – draft Wirral Coastal Strategy for Consultation

REFERENCE MATERIAL

draft Wirral Coastal Strategy (AECOM) July 2012

North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan SMP2 (Halcrow Group Limited) July 2010

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Appraisal Guidance (Environment Agency) March 2010

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Adoption of the Shoreline Management Plan (Minute 118)	2nd September 2010
Cabinet – Wirral Coastal Strategy and Acceptance of Environment Agency Grant (Minute 208)	4th November 2010
Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Decisions Taken Under Delegated Powers – Tender Acceptance (Minute 12)	7th June 2012
Cabinet – Wirral Coastal Strategy Additional Works (Minute 292)	2nd February 2012

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Rob Clifford

Email address: robertclifford@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: Mark Smith

Chief Officer: Director of Technical Services

Department: Technical Services

Date: 16 June 2012

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Approval to undertake a public consultation on the Wirral Coastal Strategy

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee? No

Yes / No **If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date**

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Please add hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website (see your Departmental Equality Group Chair for appropriate hyperlink)

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0>

.....

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

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

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

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

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

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

- No** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5:

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

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

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

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Disability	Potential positive – helps maintain acceptable standard of safety and access. Actions to manage flood and coastal erosion risk.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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

Potential positive impact so no actions required

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

The Wirral Coastal Strategy identifies actions to manage flood and coastal erosion risk.

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

Draft Wirral Coastal Strategy

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?

Yes

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

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

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

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Direct consultation will take place with key stakeholders and consultees identified in the preliminary stages of the Strategy development.
The draft Wirral Coastal Strategy will also be open to wider public consultation via the "Have Your Say" / "Consultations" page on the Wirral website.
A Press Release will publicise the consultation which will run for 12 weeks.

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

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