



BUSINESS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2017

REPORT TITLE:	THE ROLE OF COUNCILLORS IN WIRRAL'S ASSET STRATEGY
REPORT OF:	JEANNETTE ROYLE, SENIOR MANAGER, ASSET MANAGEMENT

REPORT SUMMARY

Following the meeting of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 29 November 2016, members asked that a report be brought to the next meeting to describe and confirm the role of a Councillor in the Wirral Asset Strategy process.

The proposals support the recognition that Members act to ensure that any new developments deliver the greatest benefits for their communities and helping shape major schemes.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Members consider and accept the proposed new arrangements for member engagement when considering proposed asset changes.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To allow sufficient information regarding Council Assets to be shared with Ward Members and permit appropriate dialogue.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 None.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

- 3.1 The Wirral Asset Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 27 June 2016. The strategy provides the in-sight on the importance of Wirral's public sector assets and how they support the delivery of the Wirral Plan by generating income and capital receipts for reinvestment and ensuring best value for money from our assets. The strategy document identifies 5 priority areas:

- (i) Place Shaping
- (ii) Asset Policy and Strategy
- (iii) One Wirral Public Estate
- (iv) Financial Efficiency
- (v) Managing the Corporate Portfolio

The scope of the strategy extends to closer partnership working, commercial approach, enabling growth, modernising the estate including digital connection, rationalisation of assets and financial control for both revenue and capital requirements.

It is set against these priorities and scope that Councillors play an important role in the future of Council assets and the financial stability of the Council.

- 3.2 A number of forums currently exist at which Assets are discussed these are:

Forum Name	Purpose	Attendees
Wirral Property Board	Co-ordination of asset activity between all Wirral Partnership members working to the national One Public Estate agenda. Meets quarterly.	CCG, Police, Fire, Ambulance, Magenta Living, Wirral Met College, HCA, Chamber of Commerce
Growth and Property Board	Weekly meeting to monitor the progress of key asset related projects particularly those within the key development areas	Council staff from the Strategic Hub, Business Services and Delivery. Chaired by Alan Evans.
Assets Transformation Programme Board	Monthly meeting to monitor key transformation projects, including Commercialisation	Chaired by David Armstrong, officers from the transformation team and senior manager

		across Strategic, Business and Delivery.
Assets and Capital Group	Monthly meeting to coordinate asset activity across the Council, including service demands, future needs, monitoring of Capital projects, assets disposals	Officer representatives from all Council departments. Chaired by Finance department.

- 3.3 The Assets and Capital Group provide the forum for early discussions on any asset proposals and a representative from each Council department is present. This membership allows a thorough discussion to take place on any issues which could arise out of a proposed disposal, change of use, co-location opportunities and future service needs which have asset implications including housing and extra care needs.

A template is used at these meetings to assess any proposals brought forward and referred to as the Asset Challenge document, this allows the officers to assess the proposal to achieve the best outcome for the asset. One example could be a plot of waste land which has no current benefit to the Council, a number of options depending on the size, location and value could include: housing, retail, community use, extra care or a mix of options. Considerations are based around delivering the Wirral Plan, financial, service requirements, growth etc. It is proposed that this is shared more widely with ward members, portfolio holders and specific member interest groups prior to a Cabinet or delegated report being written. This will provide members with the background information to the assets under consideration.

- 3.4 Asset disposals, change of use, acquisitions, transfers etc are considered either by Cabinet or through delegated authority, the route of approval will be determined by the content of the report i.e.

Delegated Authority

These reports are not key decisions but have been considered to be of significant interest.

- The disposal of surplus land, buildings and other assets up to the value of £2,500,001 by sale or lease.
- The purchase or lease of land, buildings and other assets up to a value of £1,250,000.
- The removal of restrictive covenants on land, in consultation with the Director of Business Services (or nominee), where the increase in land value as a result is less than £250,000.

Cabinet (Key Decision)

All executive functions/matters may be referred by the Leader and/or Cabinet Members and Officers to Cabinet for consideration, determination and/or decision. Generally only those executive functions/matters that fall into one or more of the following categories should be referred to Cabinet:

- The matter under consideration is a high profile matter;
- The decision has a significant budgetary impact;

- There is a need or it is considered prudent to engage the public and/or raise public awareness; and/or
- The function/matter provides important performance management information.

In both these cases ward members will be privy to the content of the report prior to publication, the portfolio holder will ask for ward member comments on the recommendations being put forward.

- 3.5 There are a number of significant development areas across the Borough which are likely to be brought forward for consideration, these could impact on the locality, it is therefore prudent that ward members are aware of these proposals. It is proposed that when these schemes/developments are identified that ward members be briefed by the Asset Management team. The level of consultation required will vary from project to project and this will be communicated to ward members as soon as the scope of the project is drawn up. Statutory consultation will of course be undertaken as per planning regulations.

ASSET INFORMATION SHARING

- 3.6 There are a number of existing arrangements by which Members are informed of changes to assets within their constituency areas. It is proposed that some additional information sharing stages are introduced which will better inform Members of the suggested changes.

Small disposals, transfers, change of use	Delegated report circulated to Ward Members by Portfolio holder prior to final sign-off of the report giving authority for the transaction to proceed.	Existing arrangement
Key decisions	Cabinet report will be shared with Ward Members prior to publication i.e. declaring sites surplus	Existing arrangement
Area reviews	It is proposed that area reviews as they are worked up by officers, consultants etc these are shared with Ward Members; particularly with regard to the desired outcomes for the area e.g. retail, community, housing, open space. This will allow Members to obtain local opinions of businesses and members of the public prior to any formal statutory consultation.	Proposed
Asset Challenge Document	This document assists the Assets and Capital Group reach preferred options for an asset under review. It is proposed that this document is shared with ward members at the earliest opportunity following the Assets and Capital Group recommendations.	Proposed
Engagement Strategy (review)	Review the information available for when community engagement will take place; it is proposed that a joint review is undertaken by the constituency team, planning and asset management.	Proposed

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None arising from this report.

6.0 RE SOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The Wirral Asset Strategy provides the vision and details the actions to deliver the strategy.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 None

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 This report outlines the routes of consultation and discussion available to members.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 No as there are no implications for equal opportunities arising from this report.

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APPENDICES

1. Asset Challenge document

REFERENCE MATERIAL

1. Wirral Asset Strategy.