

WIRRAL COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

2021-2026

Anti-Social Behaviour

Violent Crime

Domestic Abuse

Drugs and Alcohol

Hate Crime

Modern Slavery

Prevent

Road Safety

Emergency Planning

Coastal and Inland Water Safety

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INTRODUCTION

As required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Wirral Council and Merseyside Police have worked together with key partners and organisations to develop and implement local crime reduction strategies. In developing such strategies, partners must identify key local crime and disorder priorities through consultation and by analysing crime levels and patterns in the area. Wirral Council came together with Merseyside Police, Mersey Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS), Public Health, voluntary/community sector organisations and housing providers, to form The Safer Wirral Partnership Board (SWPB).

Community Safety is one of five key themes of the wider Wirral Plan 2021-2026 and the Wirral Community Safety Strategy and the work of the SWPB has one key objective - to make Wirral a safe place to live, work and visit.

The previous chair of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee was keen to ensure that we co-produced this strategy, holding five separate on-line workshop sessions with key stakeholders, crime prevention organisations and elected members. The workshops led to the development of ten Priority Themes, with an action plan for each. The strategy will be taken to the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee and then, to Full Council for approval.

This strategy sets out the priorities for the next five years and I am honoured to have been a part of the strategy development, confident that it will have a lasting, positive impact on communities across Wirral.

Cllr Helen Cameron
**Chair of Tourism, Communities,
Culture and Leisure Committee**

DEVELOPING A SAFER WIRRAL

Wirral is undergoing significant change, with large-scale regeneration programmes planned across the borough. Aligned to this, Wirral Council and partners have been developing infrastructure projects to ensure Wirral continues to be safe.

Funding from the Home Office, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Violence Reduction Partnership are helping to keep Wirral safe. Projects include upgrades to CCTV cameras and software, a new improved Emergency Control Room, Safer Streets in North Birkenhead which has installed new alleygates, new street lighting, CCTV and home security.

In line with the government target to reduce neighbourhood crime by 20% we will continue to work with colleagues from the National Probation Service and Merseyside Police to support their Integrated Offender Management refresh strategy.

Across Wirral, a range of projects working with early years, young people and adults have been developed to help them better understand behaviours and consequences, to prepare them better for the challenges that life will inevitably bring.

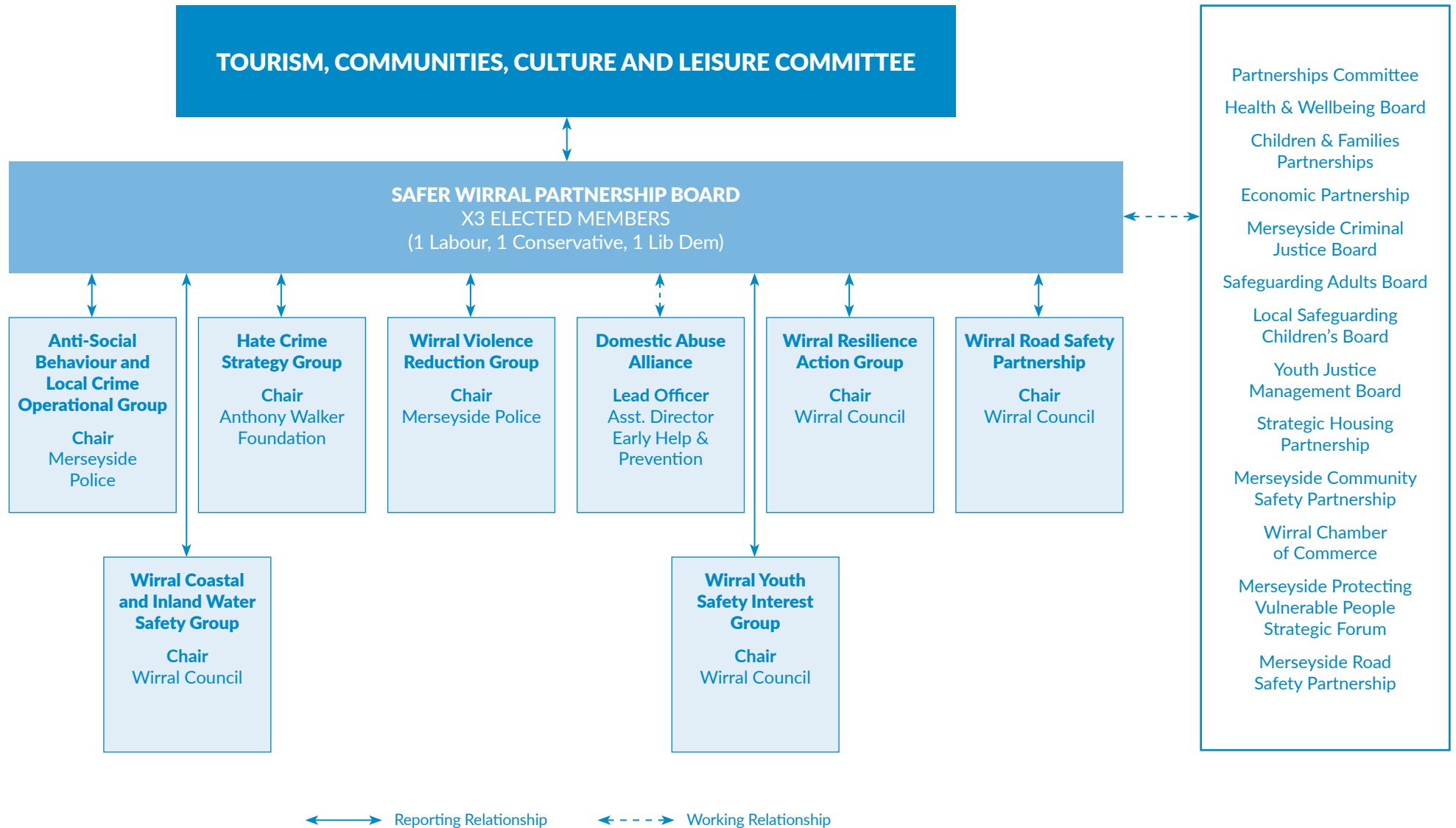
Recognising the role community safety plays in safeguarding and making Wirral safer for children and young people, this strategy has been developed with the support of safeguarding partners. Delivery around this strategy will seek to coordinate with relevant wider strategic forums. Coordination with the Youth Justice Management Board and the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership's work will be central to this.

To help monitor and evaluate progress Wirral has developed a monitoring tool, the Safer Wirral Tracker, which monitors and reports on all crime patterns and trends across Wirral. The tracker enables SWPB partners to respond to adverse patterns and deploys resources and actions to alleviate any pressures.

In 2021, overall crime has reduced compared to 2020, correlating with a year of living with the impact of COVID. However, ASB, Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse have seen increases, again perhaps as a result of intolerance due to COVID restrictions.

This year, in a positive move, the strategy has expanded to include Road Safety and Coastal and Inland Water Safety to bring together all the key elements to help keep Wirral safe.

SWPB GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGY

The following principles will guide our strategic approach throughout this 5 year strategy.

1. A public health approach

Focus on early intervention and prevention, and the wider determinants of crime and community safety, including social inequalities, employment, skills, health, housing and environment.

2. Resident engagement

Work with the local community to understand local priorities and develop an approach that is responsive and effective in increasing feelings of safety.

3. Collaboration

Share data and intelligence and work across agencies to facilitate an efficient and effective approach and better targeted interventions.

4. Supporting victims

Ensure a focus on victims and strengthen local systems to support victims, reduce repeat victimisation, and recognise that perpetrators of violence can often be victims too.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Wirral is committed to a joined-up approach that addresses the underlying issues that affect levels of crime and reoffending, and will reflect these cross-cutting issues in all our work. This includes:

Substance Misuse

We know that a significant proportion of crime is linked to substance misuse, from acquisitive crime to serious violent offending and gang crime linked to drug markets. This will be an important cross-cutting theme within all our priorities, and partners will seek to reduce substance misuse through health interventions and treatment; supporting repeat offenders out of substance misuse and addiction through targeted interventions; and disrupting drug markets through enforcement activity.

Mental Health

A significant proportion of those in contact with the criminal justice system suffer from mental health problems, with people particularly at risk during and after contact with criminal justice system. Evidence suggests that 33 per cent of male and 51 per cent of female prisoners suffer from depression, compared to 9 per cent and 13 per cent in the general population. By identifying and addressing mental ill health at the earliest opportunity we can aim for the best outcomes for those people experiencing mental health issues and provide holistic support for people with complex and challenging needs.

Housing and Homelessness

Wirral has a persistent small cohort of homelessness and rough sleeping has been increasing year on year prior to Covid pandemic. This has a significant impact on the health of those individuals involved, while homelessness can also be linked to vulnerability and victimisation, as well as anti-social behaviour and substance misuse. The council is developing strategies to step-up the delivery of genuinely affordable homes, and to tackle homelessness with compassion and care. The Safer Wirral Partnership Board will also consider homelessness as a cross-cutting issue as part of a holistic approach to improving community safety.

Social integration

A thriving, cohesive and well-integrated community can help to reduce the risk of hate crime and the risk of extremism taking root. However, there is a role for the local authority and partners to continue to monitor and promote social-integration and provide an environment where people of all backgrounds come together regularly as one community. The Safer Wirral Partnership Board will consider social integration and community engagement cutting across the priorities in this plan.

SAFER WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD PRIORITIES

The ten priorities set out below have been developed as a result of feedback from the numerous SWPB's stakeholder workshops and the priorities set by the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner.

1. Anti-Social Behaviour
2. Violent Crime
3. Domestic Abuse
4. Drugs and Alcohol
5. Hate Crime
6. Modern Slavery
7. Prevent
8. Road Safety
9. Emergency Planning
10. Coastal and Inland Water Safety

PRIORITY THEMES

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The ASB theme was the number one issue on the feedback from the consultation workshops and on our residents' surveys in 2015 and 2017, as it is often a blight on the majority of law-abiding residents. We will tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, using the appropriate powers and legislation.

ASB is categorised as Personal (broken windows, cars vandalised, threats, harassment etc), Nuisance (group gatherings, loud/rowdy behaviour, alcohol/drug misuse etc) and Environmental (littering, graffiti, urinating in public etc).

Priorities in Wirral sit under four broad headings:

1. To strengthen and reassure

- Identify and support vulnerable victims and witnesses.
- Work with residents, local communities, elected members, businesses and partner agencies.
- Provide guidance and advice to assist residents to resolve low level neighbour disputes.

2. To prevent and deter

- Promote and publicise successful ASB case outcomes.
- Use of CCTV in hot spot areas.
- Use of community action days/events.
- Attendance at public meetings.
- Promote diversionary activities for young people.
- Use overt patrol deployment to ASB hot spot areas.

3. To conduct timely and appropriate enforcement

- Manage ASB cases, interventions, mediation and enforcement activities.
- Utilise legal and statutory powers to tackle anti-social behaviour including Public Safety Protection Orders (PSPOs e.g. New Brighton and West Kirby).

4. Support to tackle the cause of anti-social behaviour

- Offer support to people to change their behaviour. We are committed to providing a balance between enforcement action and support.



DID YOU KNOW?

Between 2016/17 and 2019/20 ASB incidents in Wirral have fallen by 47%.

VIOLENT CRIME

Violent crime includes knife and gun crime, use of corrosive substances, violence and gang activity, and other violent offences such as Robbery and non-domestic violence with injury

Merseyside Police are working collaboratively with the Safer Wirral Partnership Board to deliver a number of different initiatives across the borough aimed at preventing violent crime, pursuing offenders and protecting victims in order to make the Wirral a safe place.

Wirral has completed the second year of Home Office-funded violent crime intervention programmes commissioned through the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership. The programme aims to follow the successful 'Glasgow Model' a health-based approach which is recognised as best practice across Europe and is proving successful across Merseyside and Wirral.

There is new legislation for Serious Violence putting more emphasis and responsibility on partner organisations to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Priorities in Wirral for Violent Crime include:

Operation Target

- Targeting suspects and locations
- Acting on and developing intelligence
- Reducing and preventing serious violent crime
- Gaining confidence through reassurance
- Engaging partners and communities
- Teaching, learning and sharing.

Disruption and targeted action against serious violence offenders and networks.

Build resilience and defence for vulnerable people, communities and businesses, including improved street lighting, CCTV and improved home security.



DID YOU KNOW?

There were 73 fewer violent offences recorded in Wirral in 20/21 compared to 19/20 and a reduction in knife crime by 24 offences.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

In Wirral over the last year there has been an increase in Domestic Abuse, a reflection of the nation-wide pattern and often pinned on a year of the added stresses and strains of living with COVID.

We want Wirral to be a place where, as few people as possible are affected by domestic abuse, but those who are, can get help to end the abuse and go on to live the lives they want and deserve.

Wirral's ambitious strategy, 'Domestic Abuse - No Excuse', shifts the focus towards those directly and indirectly affected, victims, survivors, perpetrators, their children, friends and families and intends to lead to improved experiences and better outcomes for Wirral residents.

Projects underway include intensive work with young victims and perpetrators, early years work in schools, TRAUMA and ACES training, drugs and alcohol interventions and work to address Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). These projects are partnerships between the Council, Public Health, schools and the voluntary and community sector.

Priorities in Wirral for Domestic Abuse include:

Be there when we are needed.

Increase safety for those at risk, without adding to their trauma.

Reduce opportunities for perpetrators to abuse.

Support people to live the lives they want after harm occurs.

Build a better, kinder future for the next generation.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Wirral in 2019/20 over 8000 individuals are known to have been affected by Domestic Abuse.



DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Wirral data on drug and alcohol-related crime is, to some extent, reflective of the national trend which shows an increase in drug and alcohol related deaths and crimes. Drugs and alcohol have well-recognised causal link to ASB and crime and in Wirral we are increasingly aware of the impact drugs and alcohol has on the exploitation of our younger generation through County Lines and other activities.

Priorities in Wirral for Drugs and Alcohol include:

Reduce drug related deaths - strengthening the links between specialist drug services and Primary and Secondary health care.

Reduce Drug and Alcohol related crime - supporting those that need help and build the connections between specialist drug and alcohol treatment services and the criminal justice system, custody suites, the courts, prison and Merseyside Police.

Reduce the prevalence of misuse - focus on education, adopting an early intervention approach and provide consistent quality information and messaging through the most appropriate channels.

Protect children, young people and families.

Create safe environments.



DID YOU KNOW?

12% of all crime in Wirral is alcohol related.

26% of all violent crime with injury, in Wirral is alcohol related.

HATE CRIME

Hate crime has increased across Wirral and on Merseyside. This is reflected across England and again as with other offences, COVID related stresses are highlighted as a likely contributory factor in the increase.

Hate crime takes many forms including race, disability, gender, sexuality, religious beliefs and can be verbal, physical and increasingly perpetrated via social media.

In Wirral, key agencies are part of a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and meet to consider hate crime incidents.

Agencies include Anthony Walker Foundation, Daisy UK, Citizens Advice, Police and Crime Commissioner, Police, ASB Team, Housing, Irish Community Care, Wirral Change, Deen Centre, MEAS (Merseyside Educational Achievement Service), Tomorrow's Women Wirral.

Priorities in Wirral for Hate Crime include:

Tackling race and religious hate crime. This accounts for 80% of hate crime in Wirral.

Continue to act on every instance of hate crime.

Develop and support campaigns and events to educate and inform to reduce hate crime incidents. On-going campaigns include Black Lives Matter, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Hate Crime Awareness Week, Wirral Remembers Srebrenica, Show Racism the Red Card, LGBT History Month, Pride, Schools/Borough of Sanctuary.

Work with schools and young people to provide quality interventions to educate and inform to prevent Hate Crime.



DID YOU KNOW?

In March 2021 Religious/Race Hate Crime increased by 30% in Wirral, compared to March 2020.

MODERN SLAVERY

Modern Slavery includes forced sexual exploitation, domestic slavery or forced labour on farms in construction, shops, nail bars, car washes or manufacturing. A growing form of slavery is trafficking young people into crime, often via County Lines drugs operations and/or production (e.g. cannabis farms).

Wirral developed a comprehensive Modern Slavery Strategy in 2019 and embarked on training a host of safeguarding and regulatory agencies across the Safer Wirral Partnership.

In addition, Wirral Council Procurement guidelines overtly refer to Modern Slavery policy and guidelines to ensure the drive to ensure value for money does not compromise the employment standards or ethics of its suppliers.

Priorities in Wirral for Modern Slavery include:

Protecting Vulnerable people - includes Operation Sanctuary, a Police-led multi-agency team working with partners such as Immigration, Red Cross, Salvation Army to prevent and recognise modern slavery

Child Exploitation Team - a multi-agency team tackling County Lines as a high priority issue as well as safeguarding, violence, and drug and alcohol themes.

Homelessness - the oppression and exploitation of our most vulnerable residents is a critical part of the modern slavery issue. An awareness raising campaign - Invisible People, which will include a conference, a workshop and a strategy and action plan will help tackle the exploitation of this vulnerable group

Coordinating Partners - Embedding awareness and best practice among key agencies and giving those agencies with the tools and powers - Regulatory bodies - Environmental Health, Licensing, Trading Standards, Councillors and even building control and development control, the knowledge of the issues that help them to recognise the signs and address the issues of modern slavery.

Procurement Rules - Embedding awareness of Modern Slavery within procurement regulations and practise to ensure the efforts made to reduce costs, do not compromise the rights of our service providers/users and that they sign up to minimum standards.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2020/21 there were 24 recorded Modern Slavery crimes in Wirral.

PREVENT

PREVENT is about safeguarding and supporting those most vulnerable to being radicalised into extremism/terrorism.

Wirral has a strong partnership approach to the PREVENT agenda as part of the overall Home Office CONTEST strategy which follows the 4 P's, Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare.

Priorities in Wirral for PREVENT include:

Tools to Resist Radicalisation - a schools' programme in primary schools across Wirral to educate children to prevent grooming by sexual predators. The programme ensures children are able to practise and demonstrate critical thinking and build a 'digital resilience' to the online world which they increasingly inhabit.

Grassing and Grooming Programme - this work feeds into County Lines work led by Merseyside Police and is supported by local head teachers. Already delivered 6 events for 27 schools across Wirral and is being delivered by Ariel Trust in 2021.

Channel Process - this ensures all the correct agencies are around the table and follow best practice - funded by Home Office for nine Local Authorities across Merseyside and Cheshire and includes:

- Counter Terrorism Local Profile
- Counter Terrorism Police give an annual update on the extremism terrorism status of Wirral and how it compares to the national picture.

Continue to endorse the Home Office best practice hallmarks guidance, including:
local risk assessment, operating an effective multi agency group, Prevent partnership plan, monthly referral process, monthly Channel panel, problem solving process, training programme, policies for venue hire and IT policies, voluntary and faith sector engagement.

Develop a clear Communications Plan to communicate the need and impact of Prevent, to frontline staff and communities.



DID YOU KNOW?

We work in schools across Wirral to prevent grooming into any form of extremism.

ROAD SAFETY

Improving road safety continues to be an essential priority in Wirral. Despite overall ongoing improvements and casualty reduction on our road network there is still much more to be achieved.

Travel on our road network is essential for our everyday lives. An effective and safe transport system is essential to support our communities, for people to access employment and education services, leisure activities and to assist driving economic growth and we need to continue to support the ongoing increase in active travel as part of our Climate Emergency.

We will continue to use and develop a range of sources of information to expand on our Statutory Duty to improve road safety. However, it is important to recognise that the responsibility for road safety is not simply one just for the Council's Road Safety Team, but cuts across a range of Council departments, partner agencies, businesses, educational settings and indeed, our community, as a whole. It is a shared responsibility, and everyone will need to play their part.

We will adopt the approach of **Vison Zero** and aspire to an overarching goal that nobody should be hurt whilst using our road network. Using our ongoing analysis of road casualty types, listening to community concerns and working with partners we have identified a number of issues and road user groups as our strategic priorities.

Priorities in Wirral for Road Safety include:

Develop & encourage key stakeholder partnership working to improve road safety, including communities and community concern groups.

Continue to develop programmes of intervention, education, training & publicity for key casualty groups such as Children & Young People; Pedestrians; Cyclists; Motorcyclists; Young Drivers and Senior Road Users.

Take steps to introduce more widespread 20mph speed limits on non-major residential roads, roads near educational and shopping areas.

Support policies and programmes to increase 'active travel'.



DID YOU KNOW?

Between the year 2000 and 2019 the number of recorded road traffic collisions reduced from 1,379 to 417.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Wirral has a number of key challenges around Emergency Planning which include the impact and response to COVID, but also around coastal flooding and, being a popular visitor destination, around event and crowd management. There are also control and regulatory planning/exercises with key local industrial and chemical plants.

It is important that on Wirral we have resilient communities who understand the risks they face and are prepared to respond as and when the need arises. Examples include signing up to Flood Watch, engaging in public information updates, having emergency supplies to hand for power/food supply disruptions.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires Local Authorities to prepare, plan and exercise for emergency response and recovery; similar to 'Blue Light' emergency services.

The below functions are carried out within the Local Resilience Forum, locally known as the Merseyside Resilience Forum (MRF), where responders work in a collaborative basis to plan, train, exercise and debrief our response and recovery arrangements.

Priorities in Wirral for Emergency Planning include:

Assess local risks and use this to inform emergency planning.

Put in place emergency plans.

Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements.

Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.

Share information with other local responders (Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Ambulance Service, RNLI, Environment Agency and voluntary sector agencies) to enhance co-ordination.

Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.

Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management. (Local Authorities only).



DID YOU KNOW?

Merseyside has 10 upper tier COMAH Sites (Control Of Major Accidents Hazards). 40% are located on Wirral.

COASTAL AND INLAND WATER SAFETY

Wirral Council is responsible for the borough's coastline, which is made up of a range of different sites including beaches, coastal paths, recreational and commercial marine operations and activities.

We work in partnership with Coastal Management and Environmental Health departments, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and Marine Coastguard Agency. Together they coordinate a joint response through a collaboration of resources, shared practise, guidance and expertise to ensure effective water safety management is achieved along Wirral's coastline. There is also the vital working partnership between Wirral Council and RNLI who are contracted to provide lifeguard services at key locations.

The overall strategy for Wirral will focus on what will save the most lives.

Priorities in Wirral for Coastal and Inland Water Safety include:

Public Rescue Equipment - ensure the quality and availability of appropriate resources.

Edge Protection - maintain and protect our shores and coastline.

Coastal Path Maintenance - maintain safe access along Wirral's coastal pathways.

Signage - ensure adequate signage alerting users to follow guidance and/or hazards

Education - develop a communications plan to enable the safe use of our waterways beaches and coastline.



DID YOU KNOW?

Wirral has four beaches designated by the Environment Agency as good/excellent for the quality of the bathing water at West Kirby, Meols, Moreton and Wallasey.

To discuss or ask questions, please contact:
Mark Camborne, Assistant Director Neighbourhoods, Safety & Transport
markcamborne@wirral.gov.uk

www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments

