



Council Supplement

Town Hall
Wallasey

2 December, 2013

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at **6.15 pm on Monday, 2 December 2013** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects : -

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AGENDA

3a CORPORATE PLAN

Elected Member feedback report.

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Head of Legal and Member Services

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

2 DECEMBER 2013

SUBJECT:	CORPORATE PLAN – ELECTED MEMBER FEEDBACK
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with a summary of the feedback received from the all-member event to scrutinise the content of the draft Corporate Plan 2014-2016, in advance of the meeting of Full Council on 2 December 2013.
- 1.2 The event was attended by 38 members in total. Members were provided with a presentation, delivered by the Council Leader, which highlighted the main points within the plan. Members were then invited to join smaller working groups, focussed on the three strategic directorate areas described within the Plan and chaired by the relevant Policy and Performance Committee Chair, which discussed the contents of the plan in more detail.
- 1.3 Members were then given the opportunity to further feedback and give general comments as to the contents within the draft Corporate Plan at the end of the event.
- 1.4 Cabinet is requested to consider the findings from the event and approve the proposed amends to the corporate plan as provided at appendix 1 of this report.

2.0 OVERARCHING COMMENTS

- 2.1 Members were generally in agreement with the direction of travel described within the Plan, particularly in relation to the appropriateness of the overall vision for the Council. Members suggested some new areas of focus and also highlighted some areas of the plan which should be enhanced and receive greater emphasis.
- 2.2 Members agreed that while the contents of the Corporate Plan were generally appropriate, it was important that work was done to focus on the culture of the organisation to ensure that the activity within the plan were delivered. Members also stressed the importance of communicating clearly to residents, staff and other stakeholders the Council's changing role and focus.

- 2.3 It was also proposed that the Corporate Plan be extended to cover a three year period - 2014 to 2017, to ensure that the activity outlined within the plan reflects the long term vision and has an impact on the Council's priorities.

3.0 REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1 Members felt that resources should be directed at improving and promoting Wirral as a good place to live; in terms of focussing on new and affordable homes. Members felt that more prominence should be given to housing issues within the Plan.
- 3.2 Opportunities for improving the Birkenhead and Hamilton Square areas were mentioned as areas for further development within the Plan. Members also identified the need to develop a formula to determine future car parking charges through the borough.
- 3.3 Members highlighted the importance of Wirral increasing the skills of local people to improve the potential workforce in the borough, and suggested that should be the focus as the Council attempts to reduce levels of youth unemployment.
- 3.4 A general theme of the discussion was that Wirral should use its position as one of the leading authority in the region to lobby in the City Region and nationally on matters important to the borough.

4.0 FAMILIES AND WELLBEING

- 4.1 Members were supportive of the content of the Plan, particularly in relation to its focus on early intervention and prevention, and encouraging community resilience and independence. Members also welcomed the focus on reducing social isolation and supporting mental health and wellbeing, and highlighted the role which can be played by communities in addressing this.
- 4.2 Members supported the need for better integration of health and social care, and also requested more work and information on the Single Gateway approach.
- 4.3 A number of areas were highlighted by Members as being appropriate for a larger emphasis within the Plan. These included tackling domestic abuse, child abuse (including bullying) school readiness and supporting young people to tackle alcohol abuse. Members also highlighted the role that communities can play in safeguarding and prevention of abuse.
- 4.4 It was suggested by Members that the pace of implementing early intervention and prevention approaches should be increased and highlighted a number of small, low cost community initiatives which are working well currently.

5.0 TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- 5.1 Members particularly focussed on the shared services project within this strategic area and were generally in agreement with the approach. Members sought reassurance on the timescale of the project, and the arrangements in terms of staff transfers and governance of the project and the new company.

5.2 Members believe the Council should adopt a more business-focussed approach to generating revenue, particularly in relation to our assets, and requested that opportunities be investigated. Members also discussed the need to become more efficient in certain areas and to remove unnecessary bureaucracy.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The Corporate Risk Register will be completed in line with the new Corporate Plan to ensure that any risks to delivering the objectives are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 As outlined, the Corporate Plan is the organisation's key policy document and drives all other business planning processes and is therefore vital for the Council's development in the coming year. Therefore no other options were considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 The content of the Corporate Plan 2013-2016 was subject to extensive consultation with residents, partners, staff and other stakeholders throughout 2012. The recommendations outlined within this report are following consultation with Elected Members on the Corporate Plan.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 The Corporate Plan makes reference to working closely with VCF sector organisations for the benefit of Wirral residents and communities and this partnership approach will continue to be a key priority for the Council.

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

7.1 The Corporate Plan is designed to inform the budget setting process for the coming financial year.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Yes.

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

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None arising as a direct result of this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None arising as a direct result of this report

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Cabinet are requested to consider the feedback from the Elected Member event which is outlined within the report, and approve that the proposed amendments as provided at Appendix 1 of this report are incorporated within the Corporate Plan.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 This report presents feedback gathered at an event for all Members on the contents of the 2014-2016 Corporate Plan in order that there has been consultation

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan proposed amends

APPENDIX 1 – CORPORATE PLAN PROPOSED AMENDS

GENERAL AMENDS

The Corporate Plan has a clear long term vision. The plan will be amended to cover a three year period from 2014 to 2017, to ensure that the activity outlined within the plan reflects the long term vision and has an impact on the Council's priorities.

AMENDS TO LEADERS FOREWORD

Last year, we highlighted the importance of Wirral beginning to punch our weight on a regional and national level. We will continue to use our position to lobby across the City Region and nationally to ensure that Wirral's interests are reflected. I am pleased that already we are seeing major developments on this front through the proposal to establish a Combined Authority for the City Region. This will absolutely put Wirral in a stronger position to access funding and influence policy.

AMENDS TO 'HOW WE ARE CHANGING' SECTION

Innovative approaches to services that are delivered in partnership with citizens are essential. We must significantly reconfigure our business and organisational arrangements over the next three years in order to continue to provide services that are good value for money. We will adopt a business-focussed approach to generating income and explore all opportunities to deliver our services differently.

AMENDS TO REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Wirral's local environment and the economy are arguably the two biggest factors in driving the quality of life, health and levels of achievement for our residents. Every year, the Council invests huge resources in both maintaining and improving the local environment, and in stimulating the local economy – through helping our local businesses to succeed and expand, and encouraging businesses to start up or relocate in Wirral.

[Moved] We are determined that Wirral will be a place where businesses flourish and people have access to good jobs, and quality, affordable homes in a pleasant, safe and clean environment.

We have had, and are working towards, huge successes. Projects such as the New Brighton development, the revitalisation of Birkenhead Park, the International Trade Centre, and International Golf Resort and, particularly, Wirral Waters are significant on a national and global scale.

Wirral's economy today has a total value of around £3.4 billion per year and is home to many international businesses. Our tourism economy is worth £310 million with visitor numbers continually rising and outperforming the regional trend. We are at the forefront of developing a globally-significant International Golf Resort in the borough – driving jobs, further investment and hugely increased visitors.

There is a strong track record for securing opportunities for investment in key growth sectors such as the offshore wind energy industry, low carbon economy, advanced engineering, technology and manufacturing services and in particular the automotive supply chain. We remain a strong supporter and key player in the sustainable energy sector – demonstrated by our successful bid for £5 million from the Regional Growth Fund to further develop our offshore wind capacity.

We are leading across the City Region in tackling youth unemployment, through the Youth Unemployment Task Force, and since 2009 have worked with over 300 businesses to employ over 400 young people as Apprentices.

The number of Jobseekers Allowance claimants in Wirral has fallen steadily since March 2013, with 8 consecutive months of falling numbers, outperforming both the regional and national averages; however focus is required on those who are most hard to reach.

Our regeneration projects are underway and will transform our economy, and our physical landscape and location are the envy of the country – proven by the numbers of visitors to Wirral rising at a faster rate than anywhere in the North West.

We are also transforming the way we deliver services at the most fundamental level – giving every Wirral community, every resident and every

group the opportunity to almost design their own Council, in their own street. Our approach to Neighbourhood Working has already received national attention, and will mean residents being able to direct Council funding and resources in their own community towards the areas that matter most to them. We will help to drive continued economic growth in Wirral's economy, prioritising job creation and skills by capitalising on our unique strengths, particularly in green technologies. We will inspire our young people to grasp these opportunities, helping to reduce poverty and securing a healthier economic future for all.

This year, we will:

- Continue to deliver our Investment Strategy
- Provide a clear leadership role within the City Region and Combined Authority and use this role to lobby for Wirral at a regional and national level
- Continue to develop, support and encourage the creation and accessibility to jobs through providing a supportive and enabling environment and continue to focus on developing skills, with our partners, particularly among young people
- Progress the plans to reinvigorate Birkenhead, through a comprehensive redevelopment programme
- Complete a full and robust study of the appropriate level of parking charges
- Maintain and develop further the focus on ensuring Wirral is a place where businesses flourish, supporting the growth of Wirral's economy
- Continue to address the need for quality, affordable and safe homes through the development of partnership working
- Continue to maintain and develop systems to support Wirral's ambitions for economic growth
- Improve our regulation and inspection services
- Continue to explore and maximise appropriate funding opportunities and investment activities to support regeneration and infrastructure priorities to maximise Wirral's economy
- Continue to seek out investment in new and emerging international markets
- Develop alternative models for regeneration, including local asset backed vehicles

AMENDS TO FAMILIES AND WELLBEING

The challenges we are facing, both in a financial and demographic sense, mean that we must change, we must adapt, and we must innovate to ensure that we continue to deliver services which are relevant to those who need them.

We have an ageing population, and more vulnerable adults needing our help. We have more and more children needing our care, we have growing levels of child poverty, and we need to improve Wirral's performance in relation to school readiness.

At the same time, the aspirations of the people we work with are, quite rightly, rising – as are their expectations of us.

However, we have less money than ever to support them. Our challenges are clear – they are significant, but not insurmountable.

We will continue to fulfil our duties to safeguard those who are most vulnerable whilst targeting the resources we have to ensure we achieve maximum value for the Wirral pound. We recognise that our partners and communities also have an important part to play in safeguarding and prevention of abuse.

We will continually adapt and find innovative solutions to make certain the financial restraints being placed on the Council do not impact on our residents' ability to live full lives and achieve their aspirations.

To do this we must adopt a new way of thinking – working with and supporting individuals and communities to become more resilient, thereby reducing dependency, tackling loneliness and social isolation and supporting mental health and wellbeing. This will require residents, people using our services and also our workforce to think and work differently.

We have an agreed approach in place to totally transform our services for children and adults over the next two years. This transformation will implement a change in culture – moving away from social security to social productivity. We will also shift our focus – away from professions and organisations and onto residents and communities. This means we will involve people who use our services in the design, delivery, commissioning and evaluation of the services they use.

We will put more emphasis on early intervention in order to reduce spending on crisis situations. We will work with our partners in the NHS to integrate health and social care in a way which looks at the 'whole person' as opposed to individual elements of an individual's care needs.

It will also mean we will work much more closely with partners looking at how we can deliver services better together. We will also be looking at whether other organisations can deliver services on our behalf.

Every penny we spend will be scrutinised – this will include who is funded for what as well as how that funding is provided. We will commit public resources only where it will have most impact – and ensure that impact is targeted, evaluated and substantial.

We recognise that none of these changes can happen overnight. We have a lot of work to do to ‘get the basics right’ and to bring our finances into line. We have already made a good start – and we will continue to work hard to make sure we get there.

We will strive to ensure all residents, especially the most vulnerable, are given the tools to enable them to make the choices that are right for them and their families. We believe this will help to deliver healthier and happier outcomes for those who need our help the most.

This year, we will:

- Deliver the improvement programme for children’s and adults services including:
 - Remodel the early intervention and prevention services;
 - Develop the All Age Disability service for children, young people and adults
 - Develop a strategic approach for commissioning Council services
- Deliver the transformation programme for leisure services
- Maximise the impact of our public health leadership role
- Create a social enterprise delivery vehicle for disability services
- Expand and enhance the traded services offer to schools; ensuring school resources are used effectively to close the attainment gap, and that the quality of learning and teaching increases.
- Re-model early intervention and prevention services to ensure we manage demand efficiently and community based care effectively e.g. developing services, early help services
- Ensure that safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable children and adults continue to strengthen, informed by national learning.
- Develop preventative approaches to tackle domestic abuse and abuse of children/young people.
- Support young people to reduce risk taking behaviour by tackling alcohol abuse
- Develop the All Age Disability service for children, young people and adults

AMENDS TO TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Wirral Council is already almost unrecognisable from the organisation it was a year ago – the pace of our change, innovation and development has been unprecedented. Our improvements, and the pace at which they have been delivered, have been nationally praised.

Wirral's Improvement Board was established in February 2012 and has fully recognised the significant transformation and improvement that has taken place at the Council over a relatively short period of time. A review of this work has now been concluded which outlines the progress the Council has made so that it can move forward in confidence.

We are committed to learning from past mistakes and the work of the Improvement Board has been essential to provide external challenge and support to the Council as we have taken robust action to put things right. We cannot promise that nothing will go wrong at Wirral Council ever again. However, what we do promise is that all issues we are told about or discover ourselves will be dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively so that they cannot be repeated in the future.

Much of our revenue comes from Government Grant; this has been significantly reduced over recent years. We continue to face bigger and deeper savings targets and we have no choice but to continue to adapt and look for ways of saving money while retaining the quality, the efficiency and the accountability we have committed to.

Last year, we knew we had to save £109 million over the next three years. In 2014/2015 our budget gap is £27.5 million. We have found efficiencies savings and identified assumptions which add up to around £10 million, which do not impact on services.

We are committed to ensuring that the savings we implement are first focussed on the back-office administration of the Council and, as far as possible, protect the front line services residents rely on every day. We are making rapid progress on a whole series of measures to get the most out of every penny of public money we spend.

Most of our back office services are in the process of being merged with [Cheshire West and neighbouring Councils](#) – bringing huge savings through a groundbreaking shared services agreement. These back office services are ones which you, as a Wirral resident, rarely see but which are essential to the running of the organisation – things such as finance, IT, human resources and procurement. We will make these functions as efficient as possible, and ensure that they provide residents with the best value for money.

We are continuing to make sure Council management is stripped down and streamlined – last year we saved £5 million from reducing management, and this year we will go even further – making sure as much of our resources as possible are committed to the front line.

We have made significant progress to review our governance arrangements, including strengthening the internal audit functions. We intend to reconfigure the Council's Audit and Risk Management Committee by ensuring that a majority of members are independent.

This will provide a valuable element of challenge going forward.

We have also taken robust action to improve the way we respond to freedom of information requests ensuring that this Council is open and transparent. This progress has been recognised by the Information Commissioner's Office who has acknowledged that we are meeting our targets and, based on this good performance, the ICO has concluded its specific monitoring of the Council.

We will focus on the culture and accountability of our workforce. We will work hard to make sure that even with vastly reduced resources, our workforce remains as committed to public service as ever and our focus on delivering the very highest level of performance never wavers.

We will adopt a business-focussed culture within the Council, and encourage our workforce to always seek to deliver new and innovative ways of delivery, ensuring our residents have access to the services, advice and guidance that help to improve their quality of life. We will harness new technologies in the most cost effective way. Wirral will, even at a time of unprecedented financial pressures, prioritise the safety of the most vulnerable residents.

We will develop a culture of responsibility, accountability and pride across the whole of the Council. We will be a confident organisation that is risk aware rather than risk averse. We will reduce demand for services and increase community resilience by focussing on building upon the great assets that exist at the heart of all our communities.

Our staff structures and organisational systems will be stable and designed to ensure that Wirral becomes an organisation that is focussed on identifying innovative solutions, with a workforce that operates flexibly, has the right skills and delivers what residents need.

Our back office costs and processes will be both affordable and examples of national best practice. Wirral Council will be one organisation working in collaboration with our partners wherever we can.

At all times we will be focussed on outcomes for residents and not on organisational distinctions.

This year, we will:

- Remodel the Council to ensure that our workforce arrangements reflect organisational changes

- Make sure Wirral Council becomes more efficient and streamlined, removing unnecessary bureaucracy wherever it exists.
- Establish a Leadership Academy to develop capacity and drive change throughout the organisation
- Progress the work to transfer our corporate support services to a newly established company fully owned and operated by Wirral Council and partner authorities
- Review our policies and procedures to support staff to work differently
- Implement the culture change programme
- Implement a new asset management strategy to maximise both efficiency and savings
- Complete a review of our procurement processes to ensure that our contracts deliver value for money and are fit for purpose
- Maximise the benefits of new technologies through new IT Strategy and investments
- Deliver 2014/15 savings through a clearly defined programme
- Develop a three-year medium-term financial plan to put in place a robust approach for dealing with our financial challenges in 2015-17
- Transform our business support functions to deliver savings and maximise efficiency
- Develop and improve our use of technology so residents are enabled to use the most appropriate, cost effective and efficient method to access services
- Review our approach for the ways in which our residents are able to access services
- Continue to improve governance and decision making, building on the revised constitution and scheme of delegation
- Continue our programme of Member Development
- Continue our programme of visits to other local authorities to identify examples of good practice.