



Policy and Resources Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 21 November 2023
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Birkenhead Town Hall

Contact Officer: Dan Sharples
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PLEASE NOTE: Public seating is limited therefore members of the public wishing to attend are encouraged to arrive early.

Wirral Council is fully committed to equalities and our obligations under The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. If you have any adjustments that would help you attend or participate at this meeting, please let us know as soon as possible and we would be happy to facilitate where possible. Please contact committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk

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AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
- 2. APOLOGIES**
- 3. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

- 4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**
 - 4.1 Public Questions**

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by Thursday 16 November to the Council's Monitoring Officer (via the online form here: [Public Question Form](#)) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question by the deadline for submission.

For more information on how your personal information will be used, please see this link: [Document Data Protection Protocol](#)

4.2 Statements and Petitions

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Thursday 16 November to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.1.

Petitions may be presented to the Committee if provided to Democratic and Member Services no later than 10 working days before the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding three minute) to outline the aims of the petition. The Chair will refer the matter to another appropriate body of the Council within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion, unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. If a petition contains more than 5,000 signatures, it will be debated at a subsequent meeting of Council for up to 15 minutes, at the discretion of the Mayor.

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your statement/petition by the deadline for submission.

4.3 Questions by Members

Questions by Members to dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders 12.3 to 12.8.

SECTION A - KEY AND OTHER DECISIONS

- 5. NEW COUNCIL PLAN (Pages 1 - 32)**
- 6. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER - BRACKENWOOD GOLF COURSE WOODCHURCH LEISURE CENTRE (Pages 33 - 42)**
- 7. BIRKENHEAD, WALLASEY AND NEW FERRY SIMPLIFICATION PATHFINDER PILOT BOARD (Pages 43 - 52)**
- 8. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PARTNER (Pages 53 - 60)**

SECTION B - BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 9. 2024/25 BUDGET REPORT UPDATE (Pages 61 - 88)**

SECTION C - WORK PROGRAMME / OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

- 10. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 89 - 96)**
- 11. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following item contains 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

- 12. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER WOODCHURCH LEISURE CENTRE - EXEMPT APPENDICES (Pages 97 - 188)**
- 13. 2024/25 BUDGET UPDATE REPORT - EXEMPT APPENDICES (Pages 189 - 208)**

Policy & Resources Committee Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for this committee can be found at the end of this agenda.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 November 2023

REPORT TITLE:	NEW COUNCIL PLAN
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out a new Council Plan which will run for the four-year electoral term from 2023 to 2027 following the local government elections earlier this year. The Council Plan is the primary document in the Council's Policy framework. It has been developed to align with the Council's refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). In this regard, it supports the Council's progress towards financial stability and continuous improvement in response to the External Assurance Review commissioned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in November 2021 and Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge in April 2022.

The new Council Plan builds on and replaces the existing Wirral Plan 2021-26 which was approved by Council 6 September 2021 and refreshed on 11 July 2022. It also supersedes the Council's Improvement Plan which was approved by Council 11 July 2022. The new Plan acts as a single plan for the organisation, articulating a vision and priorities for the next four years to deliver in line with the needs of residents whilst transforming and modernising the Council to maximise opportunities for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The Council Plan impacts on all wards in the borough and is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Policy and Resources Committee is requested to recommend the new Council Plan to Council for approval at its next meeting on 4 December.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Council Plan is the primary document in the Council's Policy Framework as set out in Part 3 Section A of the Council's constitution. The Council Plan drives all of the Council's operational activity in terms of the day-to-day management and delivery of Council services. It also sets out the plans for organisational change and improvement.
- 1.2 The Policy and Resources committee is requested to recommend the Plan to Council for approval so the Council Plan can be adopted for the four year term of this electoral cycle. This will enable the organisation to have clear focus on the priorities for delivery in line with the needs of Wirral residents.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 As the Council Plan is a central component of the Council's policy framework, it is a constitutional requirement and therefore no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The current Wirral Plan 2021 – 26, was approved by Council on 6 September 2021. It was developed as the Council emerged from the pandemic and transitioned from the emergency response system onto a more business-as-usual footing. A one-year refresh of the Wirral Plan was approved by Council on 11 July 2022 in advance of the Council moving to a four-year, whole Council election scheme from May 2023. A summary of Wirral Plan performance in 2022/23 is included as Appendix 2 to this report. Wirral Plan items still in train or outstanding have been incorporated into the new Council Plan 2023-27. The performance report includes the key achievements in year against the five Wirral Plan priorities.
- 3.2 The Wirral Improvement Plan was approved by Council on 11 July 2022. The Improvement plan was developed in response to the recommendations from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' External Assurance Review reports published on 2 November 2021. The plan also took account of the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge and return visit undertaken in April and November 2022 respectively. Improvement Plan progress has been reviewed by the Independent Assurance Panel to ensure the Council has been responding positively to the recommendations from the External Assurance Review and Peer Challenge. An update on progress against the Improvement Plan is included as Appendix 3 to this report. It is intended that any items outstanding from that plan will be incorporated within the new Council Plan specifically under the Efficient, Effective and Accessible Council theme.
- 3.3 The new Council Plan has been developed over the last 3 months and following engagement with Group Leaders, all political groups and Policy & Service committees. The plan is developed around a new vision: Working Together to Promote Fairness and Opportunity for People and Communities. This acknowledges the need to work collectively in the best interests of the whole borough and to meet

the diverse needs of all communities. The plan sets out 7 priorities to focus our work over the next 4 years:

- Deliver high quality, efficient, universal services to all residents,
- Prioritise those with the greatest needs,
- Deliver Council services within the means of the Council budget,
- Be prepared to innovate and face the future,
- Play our part in addressing the climate emergency and protecting our environment,
- Work across communities with third-sector organisations and partners to improve all residents' life chances,
- Continue our ambitious regeneration programme through increased investment, jobs and new businesses throughout the borough.

3.4 The Council Plan is built around 6 themes which align with the Council's governance and committee system:

1. Early help for children and families – aligns with Children's, Family & Education Committee.
2. Promoting independence and healthier lives – aligns with Adult Care and Public Health Committee.
3. People-focussed regeneration – aligns with Economy, Regeneration & Housing Committee
4. Protecting our environment – aligns with Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee.
5. Safe and resilient communities – aligns with Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee.
6. An efficient and effective Council – aligns with Policy & Resources Committee.

3.5 A performance management framework is being developed that will ensure the ability to measure progress against the new Council Plan over the next four years. For each theme, the following has been developed:

- A set of outcomes which articulate the benefits the Council is seeking to achieve.
- A series of deliverables i.e. what the Council is planning to do to meet those outcomes.
- A set of measures and performance indicators that will be developed and used to monitor progress.

Following plan approval, further engagement will be scheduled in January and February to enable committees to input into the performance management framework. Once approved, the framework will be regularly reviewed and reported to Policy Committees alongside quarterly financial performance reporting.

3.6 All Members of the Council have been given the opportunity to feed into the new plan through group and committee briefings and question and answer sessions. Once approved, a programme of further Elected Member and staff engagement will be delivered to ensure there is Council-wide understanding and support for the plan.

The Plan will provide the framework for annual business planning and performance management at the directorate, team and individual level.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report. The Council Plan has been developed alongside a draft refresh of the Council's MTFS that will be approved as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process in the New Year. The alignment of the Council Plan with the MTFS provides the opportunity to ensure there is a more joined up approach to performance reporting in respect of budget performance and Council Plan delivery.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no direct resource implications arising as a result of this report. The Council plan has been developed alongside a draft refresh of the MTFS which reflects the assumed resources available to the Council over the next four years.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Failure to have an effective Council Plan in place would result in the Council not having an identified vision or clearly stated priorities. This would undermine Council governance, decision-making and would be damaging to the Council's reputation in the context of external scrutiny in the Council's improvement progress. This report mitigates this risk by proposing a new plan.

7.2 Subject to the approval of the new Council Plan by Council 4 December, the Corporate Risk Register will be reviewed and refreshed.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The Council Plan has been developed in consultation with the Council's political leadership. This has involved a series of Group Leader workshops from July through to September.

8.2 There has been wider engagement with Elected Members through dedicated briefings and question and answer sessions for each of the political groups and with Policy Committees throughout October. An all-Member briefing was provided on 30 October as a means to secure any final input before the final draft of the Council Plan has been worked up.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. The Council Plan seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for delivering inclusive services that benefit all residents in the borough. Specific Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken

against all new initiatives and projects developed to support implementation of the plan.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct environment or climate change implications arising directly from this report. However, the Council Plan will ensure the Council plays its part in responding to the climate emergency by supporting initiatives that protect the environment or the achievement of the Council's net zero target.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Council Plan will provide a framework for ensuring that opportunities to secure community wealth benefits can be realised systematically across all plan themes and activities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Council Plan 2023-27
Appendix 2 – Wirral Plan 2021-26 Monitoring Report
Appendix 3 – Wirral Improvement Plan Progress Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

External Assurance Reports (Ada Burns / CIPFA)
LGA Corporate Peer Challenge outcome and revisit reports.
Wirral Plan 2021-26
Wirral Improvement Plan

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Policy & Resources Committee in accordance with Section (a) of its Terms of Reference, "formulate, co-ordinate and implement corporate policies and strategies".

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy & Resources Committee	March 2023

Council	11/07/22
Policy & Resources Committee	27/06/22

APPENDIX 3 – WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Wirral's Improvement Plan was drafted in Spring 2022 in response to the External Assurance Review Reports (November 2021) and the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge (March 2022). The Plan sets out a narrative for improving Wirral Council as a means to Improve Wirral - the Place. The Improvement Plan was signed by all political group leaders and was approved by Council on 11 July 2022. The Plan is broken down into 4 areas:
- Financial Stability
 - Effective Organisation
 - Effective Services
 - Resilient Communities
- 1.2 This paper sets out progress against the Council's Improvement Plan up to 30 September 2023. The report includes a general narrative in support of progress against the four Improvement Plan themes. It also includes a more detailed review of activities in the Improvement Action Plan. An earlier version of this paper was reported to the Independent Assurance Panel in June 2023. The Panel was appointed by the Chief Executive in December 2021 to act in an advisory role in support of the Council's improvement progress. The Panel provides a report to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) every six months. The Panel has noted the Council's progress in delivering the Improvement Plan and has requested the Council now focuses on Developing a new Council Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan with clarity on how future saving will be delivered to balance the budget.

2.0 IMPROVEMENT THEME 1 - FINANCIAL STABILITY

- 2.1 Financial stability continues to be the Council's number one priority. The refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy highlights the importance for the Council to replenish its general reserve to 5% over the medium term in line with good practice guidance.
- 2.2 The Council has improved its savings performance with 85% of the £18.2m target being realised in 2022/23. In terms of 2023/24, £26m of the £28m savings target are either delivered or on track to be delivered, representing 93% of the total savings target with a further 7% or £2m anticipated to be delivered through alternative means.
- 2.3 The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been refreshed to demonstrate there are sufficient savings to meet forecast pressures in the short to medium term. Like all Council's, the one-year budget settlement arrangements with the government limit the scope of longer-term financial forecasting and planning.

- 2.4 From 1 April this year, a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Oracle Fusion, was launched. This system will enable improved financial planning, management and control.
- 2.5 A new Asset Management Strategy was approved in November 2022 which establishes a Corporate Landlord model to better control and manage the Council's property and land assets. In July Policy & Resources Committee approved a programme of asset disposals that will reduce the estate and realise capital receipts to support service transformation and the payback of the capitalisation loan. In 2024 all office-based staff will move into new accommodation that will enable the Council to divest itself of its old office buildings.

3.0 THEME 2 - EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION

- 3.1 Over the last 18 months, significant steps have been taken to support improvements in governance, strategic planning and leadership. Whole Council elections were held in May 2023 which will provide continuity for four years in support of longer-term planning and strategic decision-making.
- 3.2 The constitution was refreshed in Spring 2022 to streamline the committee system, assert the primacy of Policy and Resources Committee in the budget process and speed up and improve decision-making. Improvements to forward planning, drafting and quality assuring committee reports have delivered more consistency and better information to support key decisions.
- 3.3 A restructure of Member and democratic services has been implemented this year which improves support for the Leader of the Council and all Members. A Member Development Strategy, Induction and Training Programmes, Well-Being Policy and Enquiries Portal have all be introduced over the last 12 months.
- 3.4 A refreshed Council Plan has been developed that provides a new vision and set of priorities for the next four years. The Plan has been developed to align with the refreshed MTFP and performance will be monitored alongside quarterly financial monitoring.

4.0 THEME 3 - EFFECTIVE SERVICES

- 4.1 In the last year, the Chief Executive has implemented a new, senior structure with Directors being appointed to the Law & Governance, Finance and Regeneration & Place and Neighbourhood Services Directorates. This has brought additional experience and capacity into the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT).
- 4.2 Overall service performance is reviewed through an established Operational Performance Group which reports through to the Strategic Leadership Team monthly by exception. Bespoke service performance reports have been developed with and provided for Policy and Service Committees.

- 4.3 The Council's Change Programme has been reviewed to ensure alignment with the Council Plan and MTFP. The Change Programme incorporates all programmes and projects that support improved service efficiency and effectiveness. The Enabling Services Programme will ensure all back-office services provide value for money and are proportionate to front line delivery services.
- 4.4 The Enabling Services programme aims to secure a clearly defined and effectively resourced corporate core in direct response to a recommendation of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. It will also drive the Council's IT and digital transformation through the appointment of a digital partner to support the Council deliver increased IT solutions and automation of processes to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
- 4.5 In December 2022, a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of Wirral's multi-agency response to children and families was carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The inspection feedback highlighted a sophisticated and well-developed early help offer in Wirral to support families early and avoid increased demand on statutory services. There was recognition of the strength of leadership and the positive collaboration and relationships from different agencies across the partnership.

5.0 THEME 4 - RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

- 5.1 The Council provides strong place leadership through statutory forums the Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Partnership. A range of partnership strategies are in place that support the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and other strategic priorities such as regeneration. A partnership summit was convened in Autumn 2022 to review Wirral's collective response to cost of living challenges. A new Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF) Sector Infrastructure Contract has been commissioned with Wirral CVS to support continued improvement and engagement with our third sector partners.
- 5.2 A new model of Neighbourhood working is being brought forward through the Integrated Health Partnership. Neighbourhoods are based upon a population of 30-50,000 people and there are 9 identified across Wirral. Two locations defined as Birkenhead A and Wallasey C have been identified as trailblazer neighbourhoods where local VCF partners have been encouraged to lead on community engagement to define local priorities with the aim of improving population health outcomes through reducing inequalities. The Health and Care system also continues to work in tandem to respond to demand pressures in hospital care and to redesign the system to improve flow through the hospital into the community.
- 5.3 The Council is recognised for its innovation in respect of the Cradle to Career project that has been supported by DLUHC who wish to use this as an example of good practice in their Supporting Families Review. This pilot targets one of Wirral's most deprived neighbourhoods Bidston and St James and puts residents at the heart of planning local services with community and faith groups. Its effectiveness

has been evidenced through inspection and the impact it is having on children in need performance data locally. This work is now gaining wider recognition and the intention is to roll this out more widely across the borough and the City Region.

6.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

- 6.1 The Improvement Plan, approved in July 2022 has now largely been implemented. However, it is recognised that improvement is a continuous process and should now be embedded as part of the new Council Plan. To achieve this, a dedicated theme – Efficient, Effective and Accessible Council – is included in the Council Plan. Any outstanding elements of the Improvement Plan will be incorporated in the Council Plan alongside the implementation of continuous improvement and transformation through the Change Programme.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

ACTIVITY	MILESTONE	COMMENT
Theme A – Financial Stability (Financial Recovery Plan)		
Priority 1 – Strengthen Medium Term Financial Planning		
1.1 Robust financial planning & forecasting	MTFS in place to inform financial planning	MTFS refreshed in 2022. Further refresh drafted for 2023/24.
	Funding projections and analysis	All elements now incorporated as standard as part of the MTFP review and annual budget build process.
	Financial scenario planning	
	Review of pressures	
	Enterprise Resource Planning Financials roll out	ERP roll out commenced from 01/04/23.
1.2 Improved Member financial oversight	Primacy of P&R in budget planning process	Adopted as part of the Spring 2022 governance review.
	Dedicated finance sub-committee	Finance sub-committee in place annually.
	Regular Group Leader briefings	Monthly Group Leader briefings and Finance Sub-Committee meetings.
1.2 Improved Member financial oversight	All Member briefings	Provided as required. 2024/25 budget briefings are being provided to all groups and Policy Committees.
	Star Chamber oversight of savings	This role is adopted by the Finance Sub-Committee.
1.3 Better knowledge / understanding of Local Gov Finance	Programme of Training for Members	Training delivered 2022 and 1 June 2023
	Programme of officer training	Officer training aligned with ERP roll out from April 2023.
1.4 Improved financial assurance	Recruit Financial Assurance Manager	Financial Assurance Manager recruited in Spring 2022.
	Re-fresh Corporate Governance Group	Officer Group refreshed in Spring 2023.
	Compliance with CIPFA financial management code	Review of compliance completed summer 2022, further review by January 2024.
	Report Audit findings report to Policy & Resources Committee	Grant Thorntons 21/22 Audit report went to A&RM Committee on 24 October 2023. The Value for Money Statement is to follow. Both will be reported to P&R committee 13 December 2023.
	Implement programme of internal review & assurance	Directorate challenge sessions to inform budget process and quarterly

		budget monitoring.
Theme A – Financial Stability (Financial Recovery Plan)		
Priority 2 – Implement Robust Planning & Monitoring of Savings		
2.1 Better planning / QA of savings	Strengthen formulation of business cases	Improved governance arrangements of new business cases by Chief Officers through Investment and Change Board.
	Financial assurance and QA	Savings proposals reviewed and validated by Assurance Manager.
2.2 Improved financial accountability	P&R oversight of service committee financial performance	Regular reporting of financial performance through all committees.
2.3 Timely budget planning	Budget process as part of Committee work programmes	Regular reporting of budget performance through committees.
	Budget workshops	Budget workshops incorporate as standard element of the annual budget process.
	23/24 timetable and plan in place	Plan implemented and legal budget agreed to timeframe.
	Budget consultation	23/24 budget consultation implemented in line with statutory requirements.
Theme A – Financial Stability (Financial Recovery Plan)		
Priority 3 – Reserves		
3.1 Appropriate earmarked reserves in place	Review of earmarked reserves	Reviewed as part of annual MTFP build and assumptions.
	Reserves Strategy	Incorporated as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
3.2 General fund balance replenished to 6% by 2025	Policy defined in MTFS	Incorporated as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
	4% of net budget in 2022/23	Allocated in 2022/23 budget by £2.5m
	5% of net budget in 2023/24	Paused in 23/24 due to scale of the budget gap.
Theme A – Financial Stability (Financial Recovery Plan)		
Priority 4 – Improve Financial Governance & Oversight		
4.1 Improve reporting of financial implications	Committee Coordination & Oversight Group (CCOG)	CCOG introduced to support report consistency and quality.
	Section 151 oversight of key decisions	Reviewed through Committee Coordination & Oversight Group and through SLT.
4.2 Commercial risk exposure independently verified and reported	Review of Council companies and associated risks	Review completed in July 2023, further governance work to commence.
	Review of risks relating to financial investments	External commission completed and reported to Audit & Risk Management Committee October 2023.

Theme A – Financial Stability (Financial Recovery Plan)		
Priority 5 – Capital & Assets		
5.1 Assets optimised to support Council business	Asset Strategy renewed and implementation Plan agreed	New Asset Strategy approved by P&R committee in November 2022.
5.2 Disposal opportunities fully realised	CBRE Commissioned	CBRE commissioned following disposals programme update reported to P&R 12 July 2023.
5.2 Disposal opportunities fully realised	Disposals Strategy and Programme	Disposals programme approved by P&R committee in July 2023.
5.3 Capital financing optimised	Regeneration financing and resourcing model in place	Model developed in 2022 and currently being reviewed and refreshed and will be reported to committee.
	Regeneration delivery model business case development	Partnership Delivery Model to be reported to P&R committee Autumn 2023.
	Capitalisation of salaries process and method agreed by External Auditor	Process agreed Spring 2022.
	Updated Flexible Use of Capital Receipts policy	Policy reviewed and applied.
	Review of treasury management and funding sources	Treasury management update to be reported to P&R committee in Autumn 2023, new strategy will be updated in Spring 2024.
	Review of capital programme	Capital Programme reviewed annually as part of budget process. 24/25 challenge to be completed by 31 December 2023.
Theme B – Effective Organisation		
Priority 1 – Strong Political and Officer Leadership and Accountability		
1.1 Improved support for Council Leader and political groups	Review / refresh arrangements for Member support	New structure and arrangements implemented Spring 2022.
	New Leader briefing group arrangements	New arrangements implemented Spring 2022.
1.2 Improved Member / Chief Officer collaboration & relationships	Group Leaders' Strategy & Planning Sessions	Programme of sessions implemented post-election 2023
	Joint Member / Officer development programme (including Group Leaders, Committee Chairs and SLT).	LGA committee chair's training Summer 2023 LGA Top Team sessions Autumn 2023.
1.3 Improved Member effectiveness	Develop Member Support Steering Group	Steering Group refreshed Spring 2023
	Member Induction Programme	Induction programme designed and implemented 2022 and 2023.

	Member Development Strategy 2023 - 27	Member Development Strategy developed approved at Constitution and Standards Committee February 2023.
1.4 Strong Corporate Leadership & Accountability	LGA Review of Resources, Legal & Assets	LGA review completed Spring 2022. Restructures implemented Autumn 2023.
	Leadership Development Programme (People Strategy)	Officer Leadership Programme implemented Autumn 2023.
	SRO training for Chief Officers	Delivered by Elite Training Spring 2021. Refresh to be scheduled Autumn 2023.
1.5 Improved Risk Management	Audit & Risk Management committee training programme	Annual training delivered by CIPFA, last session was 7 June 2023.
	ARM committee improvements - Forward Plan	Annual forward plan agreed from start of new municipal year.
	Independent ARM Members appointed	Independent Members appointed January 2022. Currently a vacancy exists and recruitment is in train.
	All Member Risk Management Training	Delivered by CIPFA in January 2022. The session was recorded and is available on the Member portal.
	Risk Register Reporting to P&R from 2022/23	A risk workshop was conducted with P&R on 1 November 2023 and quarterly reporting will be provided to align with budget/performance reporting.
	Reporting on Regeneration and Investment risks in line with external audit guidance	Completed and reported to Audit & Risk Management October 2023.
Theme B – Effective Organisation		
Priority 2 – Improved Governance & Decision-Making		
2.1 Streamlined Committee System	Committee system review reported to Standards and Constitution Committee	Review completed and implemented Spring 2022.
	Constitution refreshed and reported to Council Annual Meeting	Review completed and implemented Spring 2022.
2.2 Move to Whole Council Elections	Council decision to move to Whole Council Election Scheme	Council decision March 2022. Whole Council elections May 2023.
2.3 Improved Committee Reporting	Committee Coordination & Oversight Group	CCOG introduced to support report consistency and quality.
	Officer Training	Report writing and presenting training delivered and available as on line resources.
Theme B – Effective Organisation		
Priority 3 – Defined Strategic Plans and Priorities in Place		

3.1 Business plans reflect priorities	2022/23 Directorate Plans in place	Directorate Plans in place and reported on through Operational Performance Group.
	Wirral Plan refreshed with 22/23 priorities	Wirral Plan refreshed July 2022.
	Supporting staff engagement & communications plan	Roll out of refreshed plan through management and staff forums Autumn 2022.
	2023/24 Wirral Plan 4 year refresh timetable developed	New Council Plan being developed to timeline for approval December 2023.
	Corporate Performance Framework in place	To be in place quarter 4 for reporting from 1 April 2024.
3.2 Wirral Plan Delivery strategies	Review Wirral Plan delivery strategies	Strategies to be reviewed in Spring 2024 along with Wirral Place Plan/Strategy.
	Defined schedule for strategy refresh	Will be completed along with Place Strategy in Spring 2024.
Theme B – Effective Organisation		
Priority 4 – Optimise Council Operating Model		
4.1 Member support for Strategic Change and new operating model	Regular reporting on progress	Change Programme being refreshed to align with Council Plan and MTFP. To be reviewed through Finance Sub-Committee.
	P&R committee approval of change programme	To be approved alongside MTFP November 2023.
	Defined committee reporting arrangements	Regular reporting through Finance Sub-Committee.
4.2 Strategic capability defined and in place	Operating model principles agreed	Operating model principles approved with Change Programme update to P&R committee, December 2021.
	Operating model strategies developed: MTFS	MTFS refreshed 2022 and currently as part of revised MTFP.
	Operating model strategies developed: Customer Experience Strategy finalised	Strategy approved through Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee March 2023
	Operating model strategies developed: Asset Strategy	Strategy approved by P&R committee, November 2022.
	Operating model strategies developed: People Strategy	People Strategy completed Spring 2023.
Theme C – Effective Services		
Priority 1 – Chief Officer Structure		

1.1 Chief Officer structure optimised to support corporate priorities	LGA DMA review completed	Review completed Spring 2022.
	New Chief Officer Structure	New structure and appointments 2023.
Theme C – Effective Services		
Priority 2 – Prioritised Service Review Programme		
2.1 Services re-designed to deliver better outcomes and efficiencies	Service review methodology developed	Methodology developed and piloted with Revenue and Benefits service.
	Revenues and Benefits prototype delivered & evaluated	Re-design and restructure completed Spring 2023.
	Programme prioritisation finalised	Change Programme reported to P&R committee December 2021. Change programme refresh Autumn 2023 to align with new Council Plan and MTFP.
	Programme Initiated	Subject to approval of MTFP November 2023.
Theme C – Effective Services		
Priority 3 – Digital Strategy and Transformation Programme		
3.1 Digital strategy and priorities defined	Digital Strategy in place	Digital strategy and roadmap to be developed in partnership with a strategic partner to be confirmed. Paper to P&R in November 2023.
	Digital Transformation Programme scoped and planned	To be implemented through the Enabling Services Programme and the appointment of an external digital partner.
	Strategic Partner procurement	To be appointed Spring 2024.
	2023/24 quick wins identified and delivered	These will now be delivered in 2024/25.
Theme D – Resilient Communities		
Priority 1 – Strategic Partnership Framework		
1.1 Effective strategic partnerships	Review of existing arrangements	Review completed Autumn 2022.
	New model / arrangements agreed by SLT	To be determined alongside new Place Plan/Strategy Spring 2024.
	Wirral Partnership Summit	Completed November 2022.
1.1 Effective strategic partnerships	Strategic partnership - new arrangements launched	To be rolled out alongside new Wirral Place Strategy Spring 2024.

Theme D – Resilient Communities		
Priority 2 – Voluntary Community & Faith Sector		
2.1 Compact with VCF sector	VCF collaboration framework developed	New infrastructure contract let with Wirral CVS who are now developing this framework and arrangements.
2.1 Compact with VCF sector	Implement new arrangements	Implementation through new contract.
Theme D – Resilient Communities		
Priority 3 – Working with Communities		
3.1 Developing resilient communities' model	Implement Neighbourhood Model	Neighbourhood Model being brought forward as a strategic programme under the Integrated Care Partnership.

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POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday 21 November 2023

REPORT TITLE:	COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER BRACKENWOOD GOLF COURSE WOODCHURCH LEISURE CENTRE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks:

- (1) A variation of the Heads of Terms for the transfer of Brackenwood Golf Course to Brackenwood Community Golf Limited to enable the transfer to progress and
- (2) A decision on the transfer of Woodchurch Leisure Centre

This report meets the following priorities in the Wirral Plan 2021-26

- Safe, vibrant communities where people want to live and raise their families.
- A prosperous inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations.

This matter has the potential to affect all wards.

This is a Key Decision

The Business Plan submitted by Woodchurch Wellbeing, referred to in this report, was submitted confidentially for commercial reasons. Therefore, Appendix 1 of this report is exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Policy & Resources Committee is recommended to resolve that:

1. the Heads of Terms for transferring Brackenwood Golf Course to Brackenwood Community Golf Limited are varied to two full-sized playing pitches (11-a-side), rather than four full-sized pitches to enable the transfer to progress.
2. Woodchurch Leisure Centre is not transferred to Woodchurch Wellbeing.

3. The Director of Finance be authorised to procure the demolition of Woodchurch Leisure Centre and to accept the most economically advantageous tender provided he is satisfied that the cost can be met within the Council's budget.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 In relation to Brackenwood Golf Course to enable the transfer to progress.
- 1.2 In relation to Woodchurch Leisure Centre to enable a decision to be made on the community asset transfer.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 There are no other options to progress the transfer of Brackenwood Golf Course as the Heads of Terms must be varied to enable the transfer to progress for the reasons set out in this report.
- 2.2 This report requires a decision on the business plan submitted by Woodchurch Wellbeing before any other options are considered as Members have put this asset into a Community Asset Transfer process which needs to be concluded.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Brackenwood Golf Course

- 3.1 This Committee on 27 July 2023 unanimously agreed a Heads of Terms document for the transfer of Brackenwood Golf Course to Brackenwood Community Golf Limited. Amongst other things, this included four full-size playing pitches with changing facilities and car parking. Members may recall that the Heads of Terms in the published report was for two full-size playing pitches, but this was increased to four, as Brackenwood Community Golf Limited advised that they could provide space for these two additional pitches alongside operating an 18-hole golf course.
- 3.2 Brackenwood Community Golf Limited have now done more work on this and advise that they can only provide two full-size pitches, changing facilities and car parking without impacting significantly on the operation of the 18-hole golf course. They will still provide the 2 mini-5-a-side pitches. Council officers concur with this view. Space for the other two full-sized pitches can be accommodated on other sites and therefore, this will not impact on the Council's Brown Field First Strategy set out in the Local Plan.
- 3.3 It is therefore recommended that the Heads of Terms is varied from four full-size playing pitches to two full-sized playing pitches (11-a-side). This will enable the transfer to progress.

Woodchurch Leisure Centre

- 3.4 Woodchurch Leisure Centre was built in the 1960's and has now operated for over 60 years. It is a building with a swimming pool, a theatre space, community rooms and spaces that can be used for offices. It is constructed using the methods of the time and has lacked significant investment over the years. It is a costly building to operate because of its construction, layout and condition.

- 3.5 It was closed during Covid and became a vaccine centre. It then permanently closed as part of the 2022/23 Budget process due to very high operational costs and deficits. Since its closure the building has remained vacant and secure. However, in the past few months there has been wanton vandalism of the building by local gangs. Despite the building being secure at ground level they accessed the building through one of the skylights using mechanical tools. The Council has resecured the building on several occasions and is working with Merseyside Police on this matter. The internal damage that has been done to the building from this vandalism is considerable. It will inevitably increase the costs of bringing the building back into use, adding to the reopening costs already identified.
- 3.6 Following closure, Members decided to put this asset into the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process. Two expressions of interest were received, and Members decided to progress with both of these (Helen Diamond Swimming Limited and Woodchurch Wellbeing) to the detailed business planning stage. From the outset of this process, the Council made it clear that there is a maximum capital sum of £330,000 allocated to support any transfer of this asset and that this sum alone would not be sufficient, in the opinion of Officers, to reopen the whole of the centre because of the construction, layout and condition of the building. Therefore, if submitted business plans for the asset were to be viable, secured additional capital funding would be required alongside secured start-up revenue costs.
- 3.7 The original business plans that were submitted were not viable and considerable detailed work was undertaken by Officers with both parties to seek clarifications, explore options, to enable a transfer to be considered. Several versions of the business plans have been submitted by both groups over the last 12 to 18 months. The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee on 22 June 2023, concerned by the length of time being required for this process, asked the Director of Finance to review both business plans and to report to the Policy and Resources Committee so that a decision could be made on this transfer. Helen Diamond Swimming Limited withdrew their interest on 4 July 2023 because of a commitment they had taken on with another venue and other projects.
- 3.8 This Committee on 27 July considered the report from the Director of Finance and agreed the following recommendation in relation to Woodchurch Leisure Centre; Resolved (unanimously) That (1) Committee notes and concurs with the key objectives set out in the business plan. (2) Committee is minded to support the Community Asset Transfer of Woodchurch Leisure Centre to Woodchurch Wellbeing with capital funding up to a maximum of £330,000 and to that effect will issue a letter of intent accordingly. (3) Such a letter is subject to [a] receipt of additional grant funding by Woodchurch Wellbeing to match Council capital contribution of £330,000 plus 20% revenue costs by 27 October 2023, [b] receipt of a revised business plan for consideration by Policy and Resources Committee on 8 November 2023. (Minute 38 refers)
- 3.9 The revised business plan was submitted on 27 October 2023 and is in the exempt Appendix to this report. Woodchurch Wellbeing's revised business plan is improved on previous versions in terms of the organisations and personnel involved (several of these organisations use space in Council or other venues so there would be some displacement of activity which would impact on Council income), the range of potential community activities identified and more detailed financial projections. In

doing this work, the Plan advises that a different approach is now required to this asset because of costs and funding availability. Initially, it was proposed to open the pool and then the other spaces within the building on a phased basis. However, due to the costs associated with the pool reopening and the additional costs caused by recent vandalism, it is now proposed to open up some of the spaces for offices and community use in the first three months using the Council's capital funding of £330,000 and then generating income from these spaces to fund the on-going revenue costs. The business plan identifies that Woodchurch Wellbeing have been able to secure revenue funding for the first three months of operation and then will be entirely dependent on income, in-kind support or other grant sources (for which they are applying) for their revenue costs. This represents a significant risk to the business plan.

- 3.10 Woodchurch Wellbeing have not be able to meet the Council's requirements in securing match funding of £330,000 by 27 October 2023. They are applying for funding from a variety of sources set out in the exempt appendix to this report. The major funding sources have a decision period of around 3 to 4 months and there is no guarantee of funding being granted. (The funding source identified as "imminent" in the exempt appendix has decided not to invest in this project and the Council has received written confirmation of this from both the organisation and Woodchurch Wellbeing). Therefore, in their business plan, the opening of the pool, they estimate will be delayed by 3 to 6 months (because of the cost and vandalism) and this will be dependent on securing this grant funding. They aim to have the centre fully open in 12 months, but this is totally dependent on grant funding and they will have to allow time for procurement processes and for the works to be undertaken, which may make 12 months ambitious. If grant funding is not secured, then only part of the building (office and community spaces) will be open using the Council's capital funding and this would not be viable. Without additional grant funding the pool will not be able to reopen. In these circumstances, the Leisure Centre would be returned to the Council resulting in the loss of the £330,000 and the added cost of demolition.
- 3.11 Due to the increased costs to the pool area and as a result of the wanton vandalism, Woodchurch Wellbeing have also asked if the Council can consider providing "some additional capital or resource contribution to expedite the building remediation and improvement works". In discussion with them, they are not able at the time of writing this report to advise what additional capital they may request but have advised that if the Council could assist with clearing the broken glass and support repairs it would be very much welcomed by the Board.
- 3.12 Woodchurch Wellbeing's business plan identifies the lack of secured capital and revenue funding as a weakness and identifies energy and utility costs, construction costs and the cost-of-living crises (impact on income generation) as key risks.
- 3.13 The Director of Finance has assessed the revised business plan. The purpose of making the Council's capital funding available was to secure the reopening of the pool for the community. However, the revised business plan is not supported by match funding by Woodchurch Wellbeing and therefore the pool will not be able to reopen without this. He recognises the work that has been done by Woodchurch Wellbeing in revising the business plan. However, in its present form, he advises that the business plan is not viable and that transferring this asset on the basis of it would be a very high risk for the Council. The Council would be tied down to a long lease to

an organisation which did not have a viable business plan and which might struggle to find the resources to keep the premises safe for public use over the duration of the lease.

- 3.14 The considerations are as follows. (1) Woodchurch Wellbeing have had more than 18 months to develop their proposals for the Leisure Centre but in this time they have only secured revenue funding for the first three months of operation of part of the building. They have not secured any external large funders to match the Council's capital contribution. Although they have funding applications on-going, decisions on these will not be known for 3 to 4 months and there is no guarantee of these being successful. This presents a very high risk to any transfer of this asset failing and the asset being returned to the Council with a loss of the £330,000 and then the demolition costs required for the building (2) The Council has allowed significant time for the business plans to be developed over the last 12 to 18 months and Members recognise that there is a need to decide on this transfer given the significant holding costs of this asset. The recent vandalism is resulting in additional money being spent on the security and monitoring of the building. The holding costs set out in the financial section of this report are very likely to increase significantly the longer this asset remains without a decision.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is a maximum capital sum of £330,000 allocated to support the transfer of this asset. If this transfer fails then the £330,000 will be lost
- 4.2 Holding cost expenditure between April 2023 and September 2023 is £133,087. This equates to approximately £22,181 per month. If this is projected for a 12 month period, the cost would be £266,172. These holding costs are expected to increase given the recent vandalism and the need for additional security measures to secure the building.
- 4.3 The financial implications of the Woodchurch Wellbeing business plan are outlined above and detailed in the exempt appendix of this report. They only have three months revenue funding secured. The full reopening of the centre is dependent on grant funding decisions which are expected in the next three to four months. There are no guarantees of these applications being successful.
- 4.4 The cost of demolition will be dependent upon the tenders received for the works but is likely to increase the longer a decision is delayed because of continuing inflation.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The terms of reference for the Policy and Resources Committee include to, amongst other matters, consider disposals of assets above £500,000 in value.
- 5.2 In general the Committee in reaching a decision must consider all relevant considerations and disregard irrelevant considerations and come to a reasonable conclusion. Not to consider alternative uses would expose any decision to legal challenge.

- 5.3 A relevant consideration is the Council's fiduciary duty to the Council Taxpayer to take account of its interests in maximising income or savings and obtaining the best price reasonably obtainable for the disposal of any asset. The Committee should therefore consider any income or capital receipt forgone because of transferring an asset for community use. Any financial loss would have to be clearly outweighed by the strength of the community benefits. The Council's current financial position is a relevant factor.
- 5.4 In this regard it is important to ensure that the terms of a community asset transfer do not significantly reduce the savings made, or increased income achieved as a result of the measures already taken by the full Council to fulfil its legal duty to balance its budget.
- 5.5 If the community benefits are unlikely to be realised by a CAT transfer because, for example, of a lack of financial viability or necessary expertise, then they should be given little or no weight in the decision-making process.
- 5.6 The Council is under an additional duty under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to obtain the best price reasonably obtainable for the disposal of any interest in its land unless the disposal is for a lease for less than seven years. If the proposed lease is for a longer term, then a less than market rent would be lawful if the value of the community benefits outweighed any loss of income.
- 5.7 A further consideration is the Subsidy Control Act 2022 which prohibits subsidies by public bodies to an enterprise (even if not for profit) that offers goods or services on a market. If the financial assistance (e.g. charging a below market rent in a lease) conferred an economic advantage on the selected enterprise that might distort competition with other providers, it would be unlawful unless the advantage were below the "de minimis" level of £315,000 (measured over the length of the proposed lease) or the rigorous requirements for a lawful subsidy under the Act were satisfied. The figure of £315,000 includes any previous financial assistance provided to the recipient by a public body during the past three financial years. Financial assistance would include any future discretionary business rates relief which is not given to its competitors.
- 5.8 Any proposed disposal by the Council of an interest in land that is public open space (i.e. land held for the purpose of public recreation such as public parks or golf courses that are open to the public and not restricted to a private membership) must be advertised in local newspapers for two successive weeks. Any objections received would have to be considered by the Committee before any decision were made on the disposal.
- 5.9 The grant of a lease to a CAT transferee would confer exclusive possession of the land to the organisation. The Council could impose covenants on the lessee e.g. to keep the property in good repair or not to use it for any purposes other than those specified. Those covenants would be enforceable but any decision by the Council to forfeit the lease for non-compliance could be overturned by the Court in its discretion if the lessee sought relief from forfeiture. The Council would in effect lose control of the land for the duration of the lease (and the lessee would have the right to a renewal of the lease on its expiry unless its right were excluded pursuant to the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954).

- 5.10 Any disposal of the land for a different use than the one formerly established by the Council would have to be compliant with any legally enforceable covenants imposed by previous owners or current landlords and with any requirements for planning permission.
- 5.11 If the Committee decided not to proceed with a CAT transfer, decisions on the next steps would then be required.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Council has existing resources in place to progress the decisions of this Committee with regard to these assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Transferring any asset carries a risk that it may not be successful. The submitted business plan identifies capital and revenue funding as a weakness. The business plan is dependent on external grant funding which is not secured or guaranteed. There is no mitigation to cover a situation where grant applications are unsuccessful. Therefore, transferring the asset in these circumstances is very high risk and not recommended.
- 7.2 The business plan requires the Council's capital funding of £330,000 to be spent before the outcome of other funding applications is known and this carries the high risk that if these grant applications are unsuccessful the Council will have committed its resources which will not be recoverable.
- 7.3 The business plan identifies that the cost-of-living crises will have an impact on the potential of generating income from the users of the centre. It is difficult to mitigate this as it is unclear how long this situation will continue for and the full implications it will have. However, spending on Leisure activities does reduce in times of economic constraint and rising prices, as people focus on the essentials.
- 7.4 Given the age, condition and construction of the building, the reopening costs will be significant as well as the on-going energy costs (even if costs reduce. It has been suggested that parts of the building could be operated without heating but this has issues for the structure of the building). As the building is nearing the end of its life, the ongoing planned maintenance costs will increase year on year. It is a risk that the cost of these will have a significant impact on future years of the business plan. There is limited mitigation regarding this risk given the building's age, condition and construction.
- 7.5 Under the CAT proposals the Council would be leasing the assets to the relevant organisation and if any transfer failed the asset would return to the Council but only after possible litigation and the Court or the lessee agreeing to the forfeiture of the Lease. Consideration could then be given to the options for the future of the site.
- 7.6 A communications strategy is in place to manage any reputational risks associated with the CAT project.

- 7.7 Any post transfer risks (e.g. ensuring compliance with the lease, maintaining the property etc) will be dealt with by lease provisions and regular annual monitoring of these matters.
- 7.8 A register of all assets transferred will be kept by the Asset Management Team. The annual report to members on the Asset Strategy 2022-27 will report progress on CAT.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Extensive engagement has taken place with Brackenwood Community Golf Ltd regarding the playing pitch issues and with Woodchurch Wellbeing in the revision of their business plan and funding profiles.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 It is not considered that the proposed transfer or its alternative will adversely affect any section of the community having protected characteristics.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Woodchurch Leisure Centre was built in the 1960's and is now over 60 years old. It is a building of its time in terms of construction, and it is difficult to meet modern environmental requirements. Pool covers will be used to reduce energy costs but the efficiency of the other spaces in the building will be difficult and costly to address. This may have an effect on the operational costs of the building in terms of energy and other utilities. The business plan submitted identifies these as areas of "risk".

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Transferring both assets has community benefits. This will provide new opportunities within those communities for community wealth building. The local focus of activity within those communities has the potential to complement existing facilities and create new economic opportunities for local groups.

REPORT AUTHOR: Matthew Bennett
Director of Finance

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Woodchurch Wellbeing Business Plan – 27 October 2023 - EXEMPT

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Community Asset Transfer Policy 2022

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with section (iv) of its Terms of Reference:

iv) regarding land and property including major acquisition and disposals, which includes reserved decision making concerning any purchase, sale or transfer of a value in excess of, or likely to exceed, £500,000, unless the Committee has delegated this function in relation to a specified area or business plan as the Committee may determine.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Tourism Communities Culture and Tourism Committee	16 June 2022
Report on CAT (stage 1)	
Report on CAT	25 October 2022
Report on CAT	2 February 2023
Report on CAT	9 March 2023
Report on CAT	22 June 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	27 July 2023



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 November 2023

REPORT TITLE:	BIRKENHEAD, WALLASEY AND NEW FERRY SIMPLIFICATION PATHFINDER PILOT BOARD
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the progression to establish a successor to the Town Deal Board to reflect the wider role of the Simplification Pathfinder Pilot and to build upon the positive role of the Town Deal Board to date. This is further to and a requirement of the submission of the Councils Investment Plan ancillary the DLUHC Simplification Pathfinder Pilot. The successor body would be known as the Birkenhead Wallasey and New Ferry Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board.

The Birkenhead 2040 Framework details a comprehensive regeneration vision that will deliver 21,000 new homes and 6000 new jobs in Birkenhead over the next 20 years and will transform Birkenhead and parts of Wallasey and also New Ferry, building on Government funding support secured over the past 3 years to support infrastructure improvements and town centre intervention, creating new neighbourhoods and driving economic growth.

A Framework of this scale and the emerging Masterplans requires a joined-up approach to a number of regeneration-based activities, with a delivery plan led strategy that prioritises projects in a logical way on a business case by business case basis.

The Wirral Plan 2021 - 2026 has been developed and the focus covers the following five themes:

- Safe & Pleasant Communities
- Brighter Futures
- Active and Healthy Lives
- Sustainable Environment
- Inclusive Economy

The recommendations within this report support the delivery of all above themes.

This means that this matter more immediately affects Birkenhead and Birkenhead & Tranmere, Claughton, Bidston & St James, Seacombe and Liscard and Bromborough Wards.

This is not a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to approve the indicative Birkenhead Wallasey and New Ferry Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board membership and terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Council is the accountable body for funds within the Pathfinder Simplification Pilot (“the Simplification Pilot”) and all relevant decisions will be taken for approval via the Council's current democratic decision making as set out in the constitution. However, the Council is required to establish a consolidated governance structure to reflect the wider scope of the pilot and DLUHC advise participating Councils to build on the positive role of the Town Deal Boards to date. As such, the scope and membership of the Birkenhead Town Deal Board needs to be revised to reflect the wider geographical remit of the Simplification Pilot. This successor body will have no decision-making power but will exercise strategic oversight over the funds within the scope of the Simplification Pilot.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Council has been invited to join the Simplification Pilot and Policy and Resources Committee has already approved this approach at its meeting of 13 September 2023. Furthermore, on 4 October 2023, Policy and Resources Committee authorised the Director of Regeneration and Place to submit the accompanying Investment Plan and in accordance with an Officer Decision Note made on 27 October 2023 the Director of Regeneration and Place has submitted an Investment Plan. There are no other options but to set up an advisory Board albeit there are a myriad of different approaches that could be taken as to the membership and terms of reference. The approach set out within this report is considered to be appropriate and proportionate.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 13 September 2023, Policy and Resources Committee resolved to accept an invitation to participate in the DLUHC Simplification Pilot. This pilot streamlines the delivery of 3 growth funds overseen by it, namely Town Deal, Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) and the Council’s Levelling Up Round 1 (LUF1) allocation which currently deliver various regeneration programmes in Wirral up to a value of £72,443,405.
- 3.2 The pilot allows the council to amalgamate these funds into one large regeneration fund within a single claim process. It also revises the spend deadlines for all funds to 31 March 2026. The FHSF spend deadline was 31 March 2024 and LUF1’s deadline was 31 March 2025. The pilot has enabled increased flexibility to re-allocate money between the projects previously funded by these three funds.
- 3.3 The Council has submitted an Investment Plan to DLUHC. This plan details how the Council will use the funding with high-level information on the projects, as well as an aggregate set of outcomes and outputs and an annual funding forecast across set intervention themes.
- 3.4 The Council remains the accountable body for the Simplification Pilot, however DLUHC has outlined that, building on the positive local role of Town Deal Boards it

requires the Council to establish a consolidated governance structure which will oversee the total portfolio of projects. The successor board will have no decision-making power but will exercise strategic oversight over pilot activity. The Council has the flexibility to set out how its proposed consolidated governance will work, providing an overview of the chosen approach in the submitted Investment Plan. DLUHC is comfortable with Town Deal Boards being re-constituted or expanded into this consolidated governance and in doing so the Council is required to consider the successor Board's scope and membership to reflect any wider geographical remit.

- 3.5 DLUHC have therefore imposed a condition that a review/refresh is undertaken to the existing Town Deal Board. The review/refresh is to reflect the combination of two additional funding streams with the Town Deal funds. Current arrangements for the Town Deal Board can be found in the following link:
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/business/regeneration/town-deal>
- 3.6 Proposed membership and Terms of Reference for the Town Deal Board Successor to be known as the Birkenhead Wallasey and New Ferry Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board are set out within this report as Appendix 1.
- 3.7 It is not possible at the time of preparing this report to suggest a finalised membership of the Birkenhead Wallasey and New Ferry Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board as there has been insufficient time to fully engage with current and potential future members of the Board on the issue. If Members agree with the recommendations within this report the Director of Regeneration and Place will engage with the existing Town Deal Board membership and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and submit a further report to a future meeting of Policy and Resources Committee on the proposed finalised membership of the Board.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposals within this report are designed to deliver operational efficiencies and mitigate the risk of clawback or withheld funds with regards to the challenging delivery timetables of the Council's regeneration ambitions. There are no additional financial implications of adopting the recommendations within this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Birkenhead Wallasey and New Ferry Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board would be an unincorporated association. An unincorporated association is not a discrete legal entity. People who are members of the entity, agree, usually in a written constitution/memorandum of understanding etc, to co-operate in furthering a common purpose. The Council would be the accountable body with responsibility for arranging meetings of the Board.
- 5.2 The Council or the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority would be responsible for making any applications for grant funding given that public grants are in general only available to incorporated bodies. Whichever route was used for grant

applications, the Council would remain the accountable body. As accountable body, the Council would have the choice whether to act on any recommendations the Board might make.

5.3 Minutes of the Board would be referred as required to either the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee, or Policy and Resources Committee for a decision as appropriate (with reference to the Council according to the circumstances and in accordance with the constitution).

5.4 The approach advocated within this report would be to avoid organisations which are very likely to be eligible to apply for grant funding under the provision of the funds covered by the Simplification Pilot. Whilst they would be able to make submissions to the Board, they would not be part of the decision making.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no significant impacts in terms of staffing, ICT or assets arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The proposals within this report mitigate against the risk of the Council's regeneration ambitions not being aligned to those of other stakeholders. Specifically, the establishment of the Board would mitigate the following risks:

- a) of not deploying grant funding from multiple sources within the spend profile timetable;
- b) of delivering competing or conflicting proposals across the priority project areas;
- c) of not securing future private sector investment for future projects through a coordinated approach to procurement and marketing strategy; and
- d) of not delivering a coordinated approach to cross cutting themes of transport, health and education.

7.2 The proposals within the report would also enable better management of financial delivery to reduce risk of cost overruns. They would also enable better oversight of procurement and project management to reduce risk of programme slippage.

7.3 A risk register will be maintained and will be scrutinised by the Board.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The proposals within this report outline a clear mechanism for consulting with key stakeholders in terms of the Council's overarching Regeneration programmes and in terms of its Investment Plan pursuant to the Pathfinder Simplification Pilot.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a

tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2. Whilst there are no direct equality implications arising from this report, the associated actions arising from the delivery will need to assess any equality issues and mitigate any negative impact that may emerge.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Any proposals resulting from this report would be progressed in line with the Council's Climate Change Strategy and would contribute to the aim of Wirral becoming net zero and climate resilient.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

11.1 The aim of this report is to secure the best possible outcome for the future of the areas covered by the pilot. This represents a vital step in the delivery of a sustainable regeneration for the relevant area for the benefit of the wider community.

REPORT AUTHOR: David Hughes, Director of Regeneration and Place

APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Terms of Reference and Membership of Birkenhead Wallasey and New Ferry Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Plan 2021 - 26

Birkenhead 2040 Framework

[Birkenhead 2040 Framework | www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)

[Wirral Local Plan](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

APPENDIX 1- BIRKENHEAD, WALLASEY AND NEW FERRY SIMPLIFICATION PATHFINDER PILOT BOARD

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Purpose	To provide a vehicle through which the vision of the Simplification Pilot Investment Plan and the projects within it are delivered.
Role	<p>To make recommendations and give advice to Wirral Borough Council as regards matters within its scope</p> <p>To support the activities within scope of the Investment Plan.</p> <p>To ensure that the projects benefit the communities within which they are delivered.</p>
Membership	<p>Selection and appointment of the Board will be led by Wirral Borough Council. The Board shall comprise of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of Economy and Regeneration and Housing Committee; • Ward members – 1 member from each ward within the scope of the Simplification Pilot; • Local business and investors; • Community representatives; and • Local MPs • Job Centre Plus; • Anchor Institutions; and • Arms-length bodies and other non-governmental agencies. <p>It is envisaged that membership can be drawn from the existing Town Deal Board who have successfully overseen the partnership in Birkenhead and have considerable historical experience of the process and projects. However, in finalising membership the following guiding principles should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of the Board; • Balance with number of elected members; and • Conflicts of Interest
Chair	<p>Chair of Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee.</p> <p>*In absence of the chair, chair will be selected from the Board membership for the duration of the meeting only.</p>
Responsibilities	<p>The Board brings together private, public and voluntary sectors to provide the strategic leadership required to deliver the Investment Fund objectives. The responsibilities of the Board are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure progress is being made on delivery of the projects; • Propose 'change control' options where necessary; • Oversee programme Assurance; • Ensure involvement of key stakeholders in the development of projects; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Task and Finish Groups to develop agreed activities, reviewing and reporting on progress as necessary.
Decision Making	<p>All Board Members have a responsibility to ensure that adequate discussion of issues occurs before recommendations are made. There is a strong presumption, if at all possible, that decisions should be reached by consensus.</p> <p>If consensus cannot be agreed by the Board in the first instance, the Chair will mediate towards satisfactory resolution, based on an evidenced-led approach.</p> <p>If the Board still cannot reach consensus, decisions will be made on the basis of voting.</p> <p>Whilst the Board does not have formal delegated decision-making powers, its decisions will be in the form of independent advice, and recommendations to the Council in the spirit of consultation and collaboration. The Council will be responsible for making formal decisions in relation to matters within the scope of the Board, informed by input from the Board in accordance with the Council's constitution and decision-making processes.</p>
Voting Arrangements	<p>All Board Members shall have one vote each, which may be cast on matters considered at the meeting. Any decision taken by the Board must be a majority decision. Where a conflict of interest exists, a Board Member may not take part in the debate and should leave the room when the matter is being discussed. Save where they have a prejudicial interest, the Chair will have a casting vote. Members are not entitled to cast a vote if they are not in attendance when the decision is formally agreed.</p>
Delegating Tasks and Powers	<p>Task and Finish Groups may be established by the Board for specific and appropriate elements of the Board's business. The Board should agree what Task and Finish Groups are required. Additional members may be invited to provide skills, resources, insight and capacity to the task but must abide by the decision-making structures, Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference of the Board.</p> <p>Each Task and Finish Group should be chaired either by a Board Member or a Board approved nominated representative. Progress on tasks of the Task and Finish Group should be updated and reported to the Board, to a schedule agreed by the Board as appropriate to its agenda. Procurement processes will be governed by the Financial Regulations and Procurement Procedures for any goods or services procured by funds for which the Council is the accountable body.</p>
Reporting	<p>The proceedings and resolutions of the meetings of the Board, including names of those present, shall be minuted by the</p>

	secretariat. Draft minutes will be circulated promptly to all Board members. Minutes, or extracts thereof, will be published as part of reporting to the relevant Council committee.
Governance	The Board and its members shall use the pre-existing governance structures of Wirral Borough Council. The Board and its members shall align with the governance standards and policies of Wirral Borough Council.
Confidentiality	Members of the Board are required to preserve the confidentiality of information presented, discussed or considered by the Board if necessary. The meetings will not be open to attendance by the press or public.
Meetings	<p>Meetings will be scheduled on quarterly basis or as required by the development of business cases and implementation of projects. This will be kept under review to ensure progress. Board Members are expected to attend regularly, and meetings will be diarised to ensure optimal attendance. However, if Board Members are not able to attend, they are still required to read the Board papers and make their views known to the Chair of the Board in advance of the Board meeting.</p> <p>Duration of the Board Membership will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of Council members for the duration of their terms of office; • In the case of other members (i.e. non council members) until 31 May 2024 whereupon the Council will be at liberty to make a re appointment for a term of up to 4 years. <p>Secretariat for the Board will be provided by Wirral Borough Council.</p>
Quorum	At least 5 members.
Code of Conduct	Board Members will be required to adhere to the governance standards and policies of Wirral Borough Council. One Code of Conduct will cover all Members of the Board with respect to its purpose and objectives, its Task and Finish Group all public sector officers supporting the development and delivery of the programmes and projects within scope of the Investment Plan. The Board will be made aware of the importance and significance of upholding these standards at their inaugural Board Meeting and through regular training processes if required.
Declaration of Interest	At every Board meeting, Members will be asked to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest, and these will be publicly recorded. Where the Board agrees that a conflict is inappropriate, the member should be excused from both the discussion and decision making. Particular care will be taken where Board

	<p>Members have a live, concurrent post which could give rise to conflicts of interest.</p>
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Any conflict of interest of Board Members will be established at the start of the selection process and actively managed to ensure there are no material factors impeding independence of judgement. Board Members will demonstrate visible independence which is vital to ensure that there is no bias or favouritism towards or against particular Board Members.

This freedom of action is needed to reassure investors, competitors, residents, employees and all tiers of government. Wirral Borough Council, as the Lead Authority, will publish the list of Board Members and registered Conflicts of Interest. Members of the Board agree to comply with the Nolan Principles, the 7 principles of public life which apply to anyone who works as a public office holder.



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 November 2023

REPORT TITLE:	DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PARTNER
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

Digital transformation supports a customer focussed, digital-first approach to customer experiences, business processes and operations. Digital transformation is about embedding and adopting technologies across the Council to drive change and deliver efficiencies.

On 1 December 2021, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the Strategic Change Programme that set out the Council's plans for delivering the objectives within the Wirral Plan and the required efficiencies to deliver the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). As detailed within the report for Policy and Resources Committee in December 2021, digital transformation is one of the key components of the Strategic Change Programme.

Since the approval of the Strategic Change Programme by the Policy and Resources Committee in December 2021 digital transformation has started across the Council but as part of the new Council Plan, IT and digital transformation will accelerate to further improve automation of processes and customer access.

This report seeks the approval of Policy and Resources Committee to progress with a competitive tender to procure a partner to support the acceleration of the IT and digital transformation. This partner will be referenced in this report as the Digital Transformation Partner.

The Digital Transformation Partner will work with all services across the Council to understand how they operate and identify opportunities for digitalisation to modernise the service and deliver efficiencies. These opportunities will be detailed in a business case and signed off by the Investment and Change Board (ICB) which includes all members of the Senior Leadership Team prior to any project being commenced.

The proposed action affects all wards in the Borough.

This is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Director of Finance in consultation with the Committee Chair and Group Spokespersons to commence the competitive commission of a Digital Transformation Partner for a period of up to 3 years with the option of two one-year extensions. The expenditure will not exceed £5m for the first 3 years.
2. Agree that delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance to appoint the successful bidder following the commissioning process.
3. Authorise the Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Director of Finance to finalise the associated legal documentation associated with the commission.
4. Following appointment of the successful bidder, request the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Committee Chair and Groups Spokespersons, to formulate options to oversee the work of the bidder and present a report to the Committee accordingly.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The appointment of a Digital Transformation Partner will support the modernisation of services enabling them to be delivered in more effective and efficient way.
- 1.2 As part of the 2023/24 budget a saving of £3.0m was agreed over two years (£2.3m 24/24 and £0.7m 24/25) from the Enabling Service Review. Digitalisation and automation are a fundamental building block as to how this saving will be achieved. Transforming the way services are provided will also support the closure of any future budget gaps.
- 1.3 The council does not have the digital capacity or capability in house to support such a large transformation.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Not to appoint a Digital Transformation Partner has been considered but discounted as the Council does not have the capacity or the capability in house to support the work required around digital transformation.
- 2.2 To recruit staff to the council on permanent contracts to be able to fulfil the work. This option has been discounted on the basis that full time permanent posts are not required.
- 2.3 To engage external staff on short, fixed term or agency contacts as an when required. This option will provide the resources to deliver against defined deliverables but with the requirement to identify opportunities and the scale of change required, a partner with a breadth of skills is the preferred option.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Over the past few years the Council has increased its adoption of digital technologies to modernise services which directly link to the prioritise of the Wirral Plan or indirectly improve services for residents including:
 - 130,000 people have created a MyWirral account, providing a single front door to multiple online Council Services
 - Introduction of kiosks in OneStop shops to enable residents to have video calls with relevant Council services.
 - Integration of the Council IT and CCTV network, providing for increased network coverage across the borough enabling over 40 additional CCTV cameras to be installed without an increase in network costs. This integrated network is starting to utilise the Liverpool City Region Full Fibre Network (LFFN and now called the LCR Connect) in which the Council is a partner.

- Adoption of Microsoft Teams and other digital technologies to enable hybrid work which facilitates the reduction in council's physical office estate.
- Improved protection against Cyber Security attacks, for example the use of Multi-Factor Authentication, which further protects residents' information.

3.2 Digital transformation needs to be delivered on a secure, resilient, and compliant platform and the method of delivery needs modernising. Earlier this year, in conjunction with Microsoft, the Council implemented changes to ensure this foundation is in place. This includes:

- Adoption of an Agile methodology for the delivery of projects.
- Enhancement of the Council's Cyber Security technologies and internal capabilities
- Adoption of digital information governance features to help ensure the ongoing compliance of council information against regulatory requirements.
- Improving engagement with staff for the adoption of new digital technologies
- Modernising how the council delivers IT Service Management and increasing the governance around change management.

3.3 Over the next 4 years the Council faces significant savings that need to be found to enable a balanced medium term financial strategy. These savings will be achieved in numerous ways with digitalisation and automation being one of the highest value areas, with opportunities including:

- Automated data entry and case creation for current paper-based forms.
- Channel shift to online enabling staff and residents to self-serve, reducing the number of telephone contacts, while providing residents with a single integrated front door for Council services.
- Virtual assistants to sign-post residents to online information and services for repetitive queries, providing access 24*7*365.
- Automating of manual processes
- Increased integration of online forms with backend systems.
- Development of a data platform to support predictive analytics utilising Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Introduction of smart city technologies to improve efficiency of services.

3.4 The scope of the tender will be to commission a partner to support the delivery of the digital transformation across the Council as the digital capacity and capability is not currently available within the Council. The successful partner will be utilised on a call-off basis as and when required within a specific scope to ensure costs are kept to a minimum.

3.5 The Digital Transformation Partner will be required to develop a business case for all projects that will require approval, prior to commencement of any work, of the

Investment and Change Board (ICB), which is made up of the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). Where capital funding and Flexible Use of Capital Receipts (FUCR) are required, this will need approval of the Policy and Resources Committee and potentially Full Council.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is currently a reserve established to fund digital transformation at a value of £1.566m. This will be used to fund part of the contract with the remainder being funded from capital, where appropriate and within the capital guidelines, and from capital receipts under the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts (FUCR) eligibility.
- 4.2 The cost of any work carried out under the proposed contract will be determined on a per project basis and detailed within a business case following an initial discovery stage and would be monitored in line with any agreed budget position.
- 4.3 Therefore at this stage, it is not possible to fully understand how much the cost of digital transformation will be. It is planned that the cost of any new IT systems to support the digital transformation will be funded from savings achieved through efficiencies.
- 4.4 Each project will have a benefits realisation plan to deliver on the benefits detailed within the business case. Progress of the delivery of these benefits will be monitored and, where cashable, will contribute to closing the budget gap.
- 4.5 The digital transformation will be incorporated into the ongoing service reviews within the Enabling Service Review programme of work. This will help ensure an overarching programme of work focussed on delivering a more efficient, effective, and accessible Council.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Digital Transformation Partner will be procured utilising a relevant procurement framework that will be agreed with the Council's Procurement team.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no additional implications from the commissioning of this contract. Relevant advice and guidance will be provided as part of business as usual.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Digital transformation is a fundamental part of the Council's strategic change journey to ensure it provides efficient and effective services to residents of Wirral. The way the council currently provides these services is not affordable. By not transforming the way we work, savings will not be achieved, and the budget gap will not be met.
- 7.2 All risks will be captured within the Digital Programme risk log or individual project risk logs and managed through the project and programme boards.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 No engagement or consultation has been required and therefore not taken part in the request for this commission. SLT have been informed and have agreed to the commission.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to ensure its policies and the way it operates to not discriminate against anyone.

9.2 Equality Implications will be assessed as part of the tender process and as part of any projects delivered by the successful bidder as part of the Strategic Change Programme.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 During the procurement process, bids will be evaluated on any social value added to the service. Bidders will need to consider and demonstrate how they can have a positive impact on Wirral's environment and climate.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Council encourages bids from local organisations that can fulfil the aspirations included within the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Change Programme report – December 2021:

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50083549/Change%20Programme%20PR%20Report%20Final.pdf>

- 2023/24 Budget Report:

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/g9535/Public%20reports%20pack%2015th-Feb-2023%2018.00%20Policy%20and%20Resources%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

- Enabling Services EIA

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Section 1.2(f) of its Terms of Reference,

(f) undertake responsibility for developing and monitoring the enabling corporate services, including, finance and investment, project support and risk management, strategic procurement and commercial strategies, ICT, property and asset management, human resources and organisational development, law and governance, communications and public affairs, emergency planning and business continuity.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	1 December 2021
Policy and Resources Committee (budget)	15 February 2023
Full Council (budget)	28 February 2023

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 November 2023

REPORT TITLE:	2024-25 BUDGET REPORT UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to set out progress made by the Council to deliver a balanced budget. The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year and set a Medium Term Financial Plan which considers the future pressures and savings options that will be taken forward to result in a balanced budget position.

This report is an officer assessment of the capability of achieving balance and does not address itself to, nor pre-empt, the political decision making that must properly take its course moving forward including consideration of the Budget at Policy & Resources Committee and ultimately Full Council in February 2024.

The Council faces a challenging financial outlook due to inflationary and demand pressures alongside the previous significant reductions in Government funding and uncertainty around the future financial settlements.

The Council is developing a change programme which supports delivery of the medium-term financial plan and the expected savings required to deliver a balanced budget. The Change Programme is aligned to the overall priorities within the Council Plan, focussing on delivering operational efficiencies and better outcomes for residents through promoting independence and improving outcomes.

This report provides an update for the Committee on potential pressures and proposed savings in both 2024-25 and future years.

The Committee is asked to note the report and agree the indicative resources, pressures and required savings.

The report contributes to the Wirral Plan 2021-2026 in supporting the organisation in meeting all Council priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Policy and Resources committee is recommended to:

1. Note the report.
2. Note the indicative resources, pressures and required savings detailed in the report.

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. This report highlights the external challenges impacting the 2024/25 budget setting process and proposes options to address the challenges faced.
- 1.2 Setting a budget, especially in the context of largely uncontrollable, macro-economic pressures, requires challenging decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Members are engaged in the process through the work of this Committee, the Finance Subgroup and Policy and Service Committees.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The setting of a legal budget is a statutory requirement and therefore no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. To do this effectively requires engagement with staff, elected members and residents along with other stakeholders. Previous reports to the Committee have highlighted the external challenges that are impacting on the 2024/25 budget setting process and have highlighted the extent of the financial challenge faced. This report presents the culmination of the work undertaken to present options for budget formulation and to ensure the necessary preparations to facilitate a budget recommendation to Council on 26 February 2024.
- 3.2 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 4 October 2023, a potential budget gap of £14.9m for 2024/25 was presented. Members will be aware that the budget gap is an ever-moving target due to a number of factors; these include:
 - Ongoing Government announcements of funding, including specifically the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2024/25
 - A process of challenge and refinement within the Council to ensure that the proposals are evidence based. Addition of new pressures that continue to materialise as further local and national evidence comes to light.
 - The continuing refinement of budget assumptions including inflation.
 - The development and refinement of budget options.
- 3.3 As a result of these factors, the budget forecast presented in October 2023 has been updated and a more robust position is now available. An accurate appraisal will not be possible until details of the financial settlement for Local Authorities is received in December.
- 3.4 Following budget challenge sessions with Directors and a review of the Q2 budget monitoring information, a position around the current and future pressures has been ascertained. This represents the best available information at this point in time and forms the baseline for the pressures within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for current and future years.

3.5 This information will be updated periodically as a significant element of the pressures is linked to inflation. Assumptions have been made that inflation will continue to fall between now and the 24/25 financial year and that this will be reflected in pay and contract negotiations for 24/25. The Asset Disposal strategy, agreed at the start of the year, is assumed to repay the Council’s capitalisation directives. There remains an ongoing risk that there will be variance within these assumptions that may subsequently need to be managed in year.

Pressures

3.6 Demographic changes have been incorporated within the pressure figures based on the current trend data and the available datasets for Adults and Children’s services. It is anticipated given the national pressures within these areas that ongoing work will be required to find efficiencies within service delivery and continue the focus on enablement and early intervention to minimise the impact of these pressures.

3.7 An assessment of the in-year budget variances has necessitated the inclusion of pressures to negate existing income targets and some additional funding for service pressures. These amounts have been minimised in recognition of previously agreed savings which are still to be delivered.

3.8 The pressures also recognise the one-off funding that was applied to balance the 23/24 budget of £5.6m. It is imperative that these one-off measures are significantly reduced to enable the Council to reach a sustainable budget position. A contribution towards the replenishment of the general reserves has also been targeted in line with previous audit recommendations and good practice.

TABLE 1: REVISED PRESSURES FORECAST*

Pressures	Year				
	24-25 £m	25-26 £m	26-27 £m	27-28 £m	28-29 £m
Inflation	18.19	16.24	16.21	16.80	17.68
Demographics	3.66	4.50	4.64	4.79	4.95
Service Pressures	5.48	-0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00
Corporate Items	9.07	1.68	3.72	1.42	0.92
Policy Changes	1.80	3.26	6.90	2.00	0.00
Removal of 23-24 one off items	5.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	43.80	25.58	31.47	25.01	23.55

*Dedicated School Grant (DSG) deficit due to the High Needs Block demand is not included in table above at this point in time. There is currently a statutory override in place that separates DSG deficits from the authority’s wider finances which is due to expire at the end of 2025/26.

3.9 Appendix 1 provides further detail on the pressures included, the key assumptions include:-

- A minimum 5% inflation increase within social care services.
- A 4% increase in pay costs
- A £2m contribution to the general reserves
- Funding gap for the BCD will be met from the WGC profits in year.

Funding

3.10 The resources available to fund these pressures has also been reviewed, this constitutes the assumptions around Business Rates, Council tax and Government Grants.

Business Rates

3.11 Given that there has been no announcement to date around the ending of the current business rates retention scheme it has been assumed that this will continue for the next three years. This provides a benefit of c.£7m in comparison to the potential impact if the scheme ceased.

3.12 Inflation has also been assumed to be applied to the funding received in the same manner as 22/23 and has been updated to reflect the September CPI announcement.

Council Tax

3.13 The potential for Council Tax increases was agreed in the financial settlement for 23/24 and is up to a maximum of 4.99%. This is constituted of 3% for discretionary services and 1.99% specific to adult social care. It is assumed that this will reduce back down to a total of 3% from 25/26 onwards.

3.14 The position around grants will not be known until December when the settlement from government is announced. Assumptions have been made around the potential increase in the social care grant for 24/25 to reflect the figures stated in the Local Government finance policy statement 23-24 to 24-25 published on the 12th December 2022. The announcements that have previously been made around the new grants, such as the Market Sustainability Fund have also been incorporated.

TABLE 2: FUNDING CHANGES 2024/25 TO 2028/29

Summarised Funding	Year					
	23-24 £m	24-25 £m	25-26 £m	26-27 £m	27-28 £m	28-29 £m
Business Rates	-135.73	-142.84	-148.00	-152.89	-157.50	-162.17
Council Tax Base	-171.91	-172.53	-173.32	-174.44	-175.61	-176.79
Better Care Fund	-19.24	-19.24	-19.24	-19.24	-19.24	-19.24
Social Care Grant	-32.14	-40.00	-41.20	-42.44	-43.71	-45.02
Additional Social Care Grants	-6.91	-11.67	-14.93	-18.57	-11.67	-11.67
Services Grant	-3.30	-3.30	-3.30	-3.30	-3.30	-3.30
Other	0.63	-1.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	-368.60	-390.97	-399.98	-410.87	-411.02	-418.19
<i>(Increase) / decrease</i>		-22.37	-9.01	-10.88	-0.16	-7.16
Council Tax		-5.14	-3.60	-3.73	-3.86	-3.86
Adult Social Care Precept		-3.44	-1.81	-1.87	-1.94	-1.94
Total	0.00	-8.58	-5.42	-5.60	-5.80	-5.80
<i>(Increase) / decrease</i>		-8.58	-5.42	-5.60	-5.80	-5.80
<u>Total (Increase) / decrease</u>	-	<u>-30.95</u>	<u>-14.43</u>	<u>-16.48</u>	<u>-5.96</u>	<u>-12.97</u>

- 3.15 The table above illustrates the significance that the potential increase in Council Tax has on the level of resources available. The overall uncertainty around the level of funding that local authorities will receive makes medium and long-term financial planning almost impossible.
- 3.16 There is a growing disparity between the resources available to local government and the demand pressures that the sector faces. The growing demand for social care for both Adults and Children’s services cannot be sustained over the MTFP period without either additional funding or the long awaited review of local authority funding.
- 3.17 The difference between the pressures facing the Council in 2024/25 and the available resources will require a number of difficult decisions to be made around the level of support that can be provided and a continued focus on increasing efficiency and reducing costs. It will require the organisation to shrink overall in terms of the number of people employed and a reorganisation of how some services are provided.
- 3.18 The overall budget gap is summarised in Table 3.

TABLE 3: BUDGET GAP 2024/25 TO 2028/29

	Year				
	24-25 £m	25-26 £m	26-27 £m	27-28 £m	28-29 £m
Pressures	43.80	25.58	31.47	25.01	23.55
Funding (increase) / decrease	-22.37	-9.01	-10.88	-0.16	-7.16
Gap	21.43	16.57	20.58	24.86	16.39
Potential Savings	-12.39	-9.85	-8.29	-6.01	-6.12
Revised Gap	9.04	6.71	12.30	18.85	10.27
Cumulative Position	9.04	15.76	28.05	46.90	57.18
Potential Council Tax increase	-8.58	-5.42	-5.60	-5.80	-5.80
Final Gap	0.47	1.30	6.70	13.05	4.47
Cumulative Position	0.47	1.76	8.46	21.51	25.98

- 3.19 The budget gap for each year of the MTFP is shown in the table above with, and without, the assumed potential increases in Council Tax. The position for the next three years remains challenging even with the maximum increase in Council Tax applied due to the assumed imbalance in pressures and funding for social care.
- 3.20 There is a significant increase in the deficit forecast in 26/27, when the current 3-year pension surplus provision is reversed, and 27/28 due to the assumption that the Business rates retention scheme could end. This is compounded by assumptions around when the proposed policy changes around social care come into force. As it currently stands, these assumptions would potentially make it impossible to balance the budget at this point given the low level of reserves that are currently held. Increasing the overall position around financial resilience through achieving a balanced budget and making the planned contributions to reserves must therefore remain a priority.

Sensitivity Analysis

- 3.21 The budget gap for future years is largely driven by the potential imbalance between the assumptions that are being made around inflation and demographic growth and the available funding to meet these pressures.
- 3.22 The recent announcement around the increase in the Real Living Wage (RLW) from April 2024 would have a significant impact on the current forecast if payments to the Adult Social Care sector continued to reflect the commitment to paying the RLW within the sector. The increase for next year is c.10% and would therefore require a significant increase on the assumed inflation rate around care sector payment. This would add a further c.£5m to the pressures for next year if there is no corresponding increase in government funding for the sector.
- 3.23 The funding from Business rates and Council Tax follows historic trends and the growth in both are largely dictated by Government policy. Although reform of the Council Tax system currently appears unlikely, a greater flexibility around the increases that could be applied that reflect the increase in general inflation would have a significant impact. Increasing the maximum rate to 5% per annum each year would add an additional £3m per annum to the funding position of the Council from 25/26 onwards.
- 3.24 The most significant element of the pressures and funding imbalance comes from social care through demographic and inflationary pressures. The pressures around demographic growth are forecast over the MTFP taking account national population statistics and the historical trend analysis for the borough. This is combined with the data from Health and the shared understanding of the overall system pressures. The other key driver within this area is the increase in the national minimum wage and real living wage, as observed above, which directly impact on the cost base within the care sector. This is driving inflationary costs beyond the level of general inflation and the current assumptions for specific grant funding.
- 3.25 The new social care grants introduced in 23/24 relating to Market Sustainability and the Discharge Fund added almost £7m of additional resources to the social care budget that helped fund the inflationary and demographic pressures. The assumption for 24/25, based on government announcements, is for these social care grants to increase by a further £5m. If these grants were to be increased by a similar amount in future years to reflect the ever-increasing costs and demographic pressures faced within the service, alongside a minimum inflationary increase in the overall social care grant then the outlook for the MTFP would be far more positive.
- 3.26 The other significant factor in the forecast longer term deficit is the assumption around loss of Business rates income (£7m) from the ending of the business rates retention scheme. Confirmation that this potential reset in funding will not occur or would not lead to a decrease in current funding would also improve the longer-term assumptions.
- 3.27 The overall position despite these changes would remain challenging and would still require the ongoing efficiency and transformation programme to reduce unit costs, improve productivity and introduce new ways of working. Digital transformation

remains critical to implementing these changes and reducing the overall cost base within the Council.

- 3.28 Increasing the resources available remains a key activity through the ambitious regeneration programme in place. Delivery of the Local Plan and the current regeneration programme is crucial to the growth in the housing stock and increased economic activity that will grow the funding from Council tax and Business Rates.

Savings

- 3.29 The budget proposals, which have been produced with the engagement of Policy & Resources Committee and other Service Committees and are required to produce a stable, prudent and sustainable financial basis to operate from, recognising the finite resources available and prioritising them for the best outcomes for Wirral, with the ongoing aim of delivering better services.

TABLE 4: POTENTIAL SAVINGS 2024/25 TO 2028/29

Potential Savings	Year				
	24-25 £m	25-26 £m	26-27 £m	27-28 £m	28-29 £m
Increasing Business Efficiencies	-8.61	-7.37	-5.46	-5.56	-5.67
Increasing Income	-0.75	-0.60	-0.45	-0.45	-0.45
Changing how we fund or provide services	-3.03	-1.89	-2.38	0.00	0.00
Reducing or stopping services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	-12.39	-9.85	-8.29	-6.01	-6.12

- 3.30 There are a number of transformation themes that are designed to deliver these savings over the MTFP period. Work continues to be undertaken to expand and extend these proposals, where possible, to further close the forecast budget gap.

Efficient and Effective Services

- 3.31 The focus on savings from this area will be on cross cutting initiatives through the expansion of the enabling services review. This will continue to review the provision of back office and support services but will expand to include the customer journey and the opportunities for the integration of the digital transformation opportunities. An additional **£2.16m** of savings is targeted from this area in 24/25 and a further £2m the year after. This is in addition to the existing planned savings in this area.
- 3.32 Other savings include the annual increase in fees and charges to match inflation, generating **£750k** in 24/25, and the withdrawal from some traded services with schools that currently require a subsidy of **£350k** to maintain.
- 3.33 A proposal to modify the Kingsway PFI agreement should generate **£500k** of savings and the continuing reduction in teachers' pension liabilities will provide a further **£200k**.

- 3.34 The programme of asset disposal and the continued implementation of the corporate landlord model is expected to deliver savings over the medium term. The savings for 24/25 are set at a modest level of **£50k** in year whilst the new operating model is embedded. Further savings target will be applied to asset management as the overall position becomes clearer.

Early Help for Children and Families

- 3.35 The main themes within Children's Services relate to early intervention and opportunities to work across the city region in relation to high cost / demand services such as Children's Home placements, fostering and home to school transport. Savings of **£1.1m** are targeted from a reduction in high-cost placements, **£300k** from increasing independence and **£330k** from the projected number of children that will leave care placements.
- 3.36 Reorganisation of the Early Help, Family Support and Social Care into locality based teams is expected to deliver savings of **£550k**. This approach offers a relationship-based practice whilst also building on strong links and working relationships with communities, schools and partners in a defined area, leading to better results for children.

Promoting Independence and Healthier Lives

- 3.37 The focus within Adult's continues to be around assistive technology and enhancing the offer around alternatives to residential and nursing care, such as extra care housing and reablement services. Although the number of people being supported by the service continues to increase significantly, the average weekly cost of placements is increasing at a lower rate as a result of the interventions and alternatives that have been developed. The planned savings from these measures will collectively save **£2.95m** in 24/25.
- 3.38 Further savings will be delivered through increased use of Direct Payments and Shared Lives placements, these alternative forms of support are anticipated to save **£0.95m**.
- 3.39 The final element of these savings is the proposed reduction in costs for young adults from care package efficiencies and employment schemes, these are expected to save **£0.90m** in 24/25.

Protecting our Environment

- 3.40 The principal saving from this area at this time will be around the future waste and street cleansing arrangements. Work has started to explore the options available in readiness for the potential tendering exercise which will incorporate any new requirements around food waste collections and strategies to increase recycling rates.
- 3.41 Asset management will have a key role to play in the decarbonisation of the current estate, this will form part of future capital investment considerations and potential revenue savings.

Safe and Resilient Communities

- 3.42 The Neighbourhood Services will focus on efficiency of front-line delivery, such as Maintenance Services and efficiencies within waste collections and street cleansing. Any savings from these will be reinvested into the services to improve standards.
- 3.43 A revised Leisure offer will be brought forward that focuses on increased efficiencies within the delivery model, an investment strategy around the asset base and a focus on a 'Health First' approach to delivery. 'Active Wirral' will be a key initiative, but it is not expected to deliver any savings before 25/26.
- 3.44 Savings are being considered from options around how the Floral Pavilion is operated. This is currently assumed to save **£1.3m** against the current operating subsidy of the building (£1.8m), leaving a target operating subsidy of £0.5m per year for the continued operation of the building in some format.

People Focussed Regeneration

- 3.45 Regeneration activities aligned to the Local Plan are taking place in a number of areas leading to the creation of new homes and businesses. These contribute significantly to the future resources of the Council in the form of income from Business Rates and Council Tax. The creation of new employment opportunities and housing options, such as extra care housing, are an integral element of the savings proposals in other areas.
- 3.46 There will be a review of the Town Halls which will culminate in an options appraisal for their future use and the potential opportunities. This will be linked to the future capital investment proposals and regeneration plan.
- 3.47 Appendix 2 provides further detail on the proposed savings identified to bridge the gap and Appendix 3 outlines the change programme adopted to deliver these savings. Appendix 4 provides feedback from each of the Service & Policy Committee budget workshops.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report is part of a programme of activity to ensure that a fully balanced, legal budget can be recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee to Full Council at its meeting of 26 February 2024.
- 4.2 The programme to develop a robust budget position, of which this report is a part, will support the Council in demonstrating compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code, specifically in relation to Section 4 of the FM Code which refers to the Annual Budget.
- 4.3 The FM Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes used satisfy the principles of good financial management, based on the following six principles:
- Organisational Leadership – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into organisation culture.
 - Accountability – based on Medium-Term Financial Planning, which derives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
 - Financial management - undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer actions and elected member decision making.
 - Professional standards - Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
 - Assurance - sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool and are mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, Internal Audit and inspection.
 - Sustainability: issues around sustainability of local services are at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.
- 4.4 Delivering financial sustainability is vitally important for the Council and the budget options presented have been drawn up with this in mind, consideration is given to areas of discretionary expenditure that could be curtailed along with demonstrating savings that can be delivered from statutory components of the Council.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 5.2 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates

made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

- 5.3 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no additional resource requirements directly from this report, however the implications for the proposals included within the 2024/25 budget and MTFP will be assessed at the time of implementation. For budget proposals that may result in reductions to the workforce, the Council have consulted with trade unions and relevant staff groups as required and in accordance with section 188(1A) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act (TULRCA) 1992).

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's ability to close the funding gap is highly dependent on the accuracy of assumptions used for Government funding and levies from other bodies, as well as demand estimates for Council services. As the Local Government Finance Settlement only covers one year, the uncertainty around future funding over the MTFP period remains high.
- 7.2 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget is dependent on a proactive approach due to estimated figures being provided in the calculation for the budget, albeit the best estimates available at the time, plus any amount of internal and external factors that could impact on the budget position in year. Examples of which are new legislation, increased demand, loss of income, increased funding, decreased funding, inability to recruit to posts, etc.
- 7.3 A robust monitoring and management process for the budget is in place. If at any time during the year an adverse position is forecast, remedial action must be agreed and implemented immediately to ensure the budget can be brought back to balanced position.
- 7.4 Failure to achieve a balanced budget would lead to the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice and potential ministerial intervention under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 In December 2022, consultation took place in respect of the priorities and views of the public in formulating budget plans.
- 8.2 Statutory budget consultation will commence subject to agreement by the Committee. This will take place in January 2024 and feedback will be taken into consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee when recommending a budget to Full Council at its meeting of 13 February 2024.
- 8.3 The Council has engaged regularly with trade unions about the Council's financial position.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 The equality implications will be included within the individual savings proposals currently being developed and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The environment and climate implications will be considered within the individual savings proposals currently being developed and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The community wealth implications will be considered within the individual savings proposals currently being developed. The budget proposals under consideration will take account of related matters across headings such as:
- **Progressive Procurement and Social Value**
How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
 - **More local & community ownership of the economy**
Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses.
Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses.
Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.

- **Decent and Fair Employment**
Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
- **Making wealth work for local places**

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Budget Pressures
Appendix 2: Potential Savings
Appendix 3: Change Programme
Appendix 4: Service & Policy Committee workshop feedback

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This matter is being considered by the Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with section 1.2(b) provide a co-ordinating role across all other service committees and retain a 'whole council' view of [budget monitoring].

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CIPFA's Financial Management Code

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	4 October 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	14 June 2023
Council	27 February 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	15 February 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	17 January 2022

APPENDIX 1 – Budget Pressures

Pressure	24/25 (£m)	25/26 (£m)	26/27 (£m)	27/28 (£m)	28/29 (£m)
Inflation					
Adult Social Care: Cost of care inflation	10.453	7.900	8.300	8.700	9.200
Social Care Contract Increases	0.330	0.340	0.360	0.380	0.400
Looked After Children (LAC) placement & allowances price uplifts	1.890	2.000	1.300	1.300	1.400
Home to School Transport price uplifts	0.550	0.280	0.380	0.310	0.320
Private Financing Initiative (PFI) Schools contract inflation	0.663	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150
Refuse & Street Cleansing contract inflation (CPI)	0.800	0.630	0.655	0.681	0.708
Pay & Pensions	5.000	3.500	3.600	3.800	4.000
Energy Costs	-3.500	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350
Waste Levy	1.310	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.380
Transport Levy	0.690	0.711	0.732	0.754	0.777

Demographics					
Adult Social Care: Growth in Adults 18-64	1.000	1.500	1.540	1.590	1.650
Adult Social Care: Growth in Older People 65+	2.000	3.000	3.100	3.200	3.300
Potential growth in numbers of Looked After Children (LAC)	0.660	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Service Pressures					
Increased demand for social care assessments	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
LAC budget adjustment for in-year (23/24) pressures	1.900	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Enforcement income	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Provision of replacement wheeled bins	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
West Kirby and Hoylake Beach ecology support	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Heswall Boat removal	0.100	-0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000
Underachievement of Community Patrol income	0.370	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Car Parking income shortfall	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Floral Pavilion	1.800	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Europa Centre Income	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Assets: Maintaining statutory maintenance and health & safety requirements	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Pressure	24/25 (£m)	25/26 (£m)	26/27 (£m)	27/28 (£m)	28/29 (£m)
Corporate Items					
Treasury management	0.120	0.380	0.120	0.120	0.120
Capital Financing	3.500	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Pension surplus	0.000	0.000	4.300	0.000	0.000
General Fund Balances contribution	2.000	0.000	-2.000	0.000	0.000
Cyber Security	0.450	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Birkenhead Commercial District	2.000	-0.500	-0.500	-0.500	-0.500
Public Health	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.000
Increase to Business rates costs on Council Properties	0.500	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300

Policy Change					
Social Care charging reforms	0.000	3.260	6.900	0.000	0.000
Reducing delayed transfers of care.	1.800	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Food waste collections	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.000	0.000

Removal of One-off Items					
Use of NNDR reserve	3.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Insurance reserve	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Recharging of staff costs where eligible grant funding is in place for Economic Growth projects	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Lease income from rental of floors 4 & 5 at Marris House	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
One off rental income for partial leasing of Cheshire Lines office space	0.146	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Recharging of staff costs where eligible grant funding is in place for Homes for Ukraine Resettlement Programme	0.600	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Capitalisation of salaries	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Standing down of Wallasey Town Hall for a 12-month period	0.400	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
TOTAL PRESSURES	43.802	25.581	31.467	25.015	23.555

APPENDIX 2 – POTENTIAL SAVINGS

Budget Saving Proposals can be placed into the following categories:

- **Increasing Business Efficiencies:** This approach will identify efficiency measures that will result in more effective ways in which services are currently provided and may include cost reduction.
- **Increasing Income:** The Council will look to identify areas where it can raise income through fees and charges.
- **Changing how we fund or provide services:** We aim to ensure that the right service reaches the right resident when and where they need it, for the best cost. This may mean changing how we fund or provide services so that we are able to reduce costs and maintain services by becoming more efficient and by doing things differently.
- **Reducing or stopping services:** Although all efforts will be made to keep service reduction to a minimum, the scale of the financial challenge means that not all reduction proposals can be avoided.

Committee: Adult Care & Public Health							
Theme	Option	Description	24/25 Saving (£m)	25/26 Saving (£m)	26/27 Saving (£m)	27/28 Saving (£m)	28/29 Saving (£m)
Page 62 Increasing Business Efficiencies	Review of Adult Social Care cost-effectiveness	There is a need to continuously review the cost effectiveness of Adult Social Care (ASC) Services against: Learning Disability costs, NHS funding, locations and supporting workstreams. To achieve this, a range of initiatives have been developed that support the overall reduction in unit cost of the service which support ASC to manage an increasing number of service users in line with demographic change and service demand.	-4.800	-5.040	-5.292	-5.557	-5.668

Committee: Children, Families and Education								
Theme	Option	Description	24/25 Saving (£m)	25/26 Saving (£m)	26/27 Saving (£m)	27/28 Saving (£m)	28/29 Saving (£m)	
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Reduction in teachers pension liabilities	This saving reflects a reduction in Teacher's pension liabilities for the Council.	-0.200	-0.075	-0.050	0.000	0.000	
	Kingsway PFI buy out	This proposal is to buy out part of the PFI contract which will result in an ongoing revenue saving.	-0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Re-organisation of Early Help, Family Support and Social Care into locality teams.	This option proposes that the current Early Help, Family Support and Social Care services move into a locality-based model, supporting multiagency teams to offer support to children and families at the earliest opportunity.	-0.550	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Changing how we fund or provide services	Reduction in looked after children (LAC) numbers	This saving reflects a reduction in Wirral's Looked After Children numbers as historic high levels align more with other authorities following practice improvements since 2019	-0.330	-0.439	-0.375	0.000	0.000	
	Reducing High Cost Residential Care	This option aims to ensure that more children remain within Wirral in more cost-effective foster placements and less children have to go into higher cost residential care.	-1.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Promoting Independence	The review will consider current practice including all guidance and best practice nationally to look at how service models could change to promote independence.	-0.300	-0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	

Committee: Economy, Regeneration & Housing							
Theme	Option	Description	24/25 Saving (£m)	25/26 Saving (£m)	26/27 Saving (£m)	27/28 Saving (£m)	28/29 Saving (£m)
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Implementation of Corporate Landlord model.	This option targets greater efficiencies through the centralisation of all functions relating to property management. Including review of asset management, repairs and maintenance and Facilities Management. Also includes incorporating options around outsourcing some / all of these functions.	-0.050	-0.250	-0.120	0.000	0.000

Committee: Tourism, Communities Culture & Leisure								
Theme	Option	Description	24/25 Saving (£m)	25/26 Saving (£m)	26/27 Saving (£m)	27/28 Saving (£m)	28/29 Saving (£m)	
Changing how we fund & provide services Page 65	Active Wirral Strategy	This option builds on the Active Wirral Strategy to review the options for modernising the Council's existing leisure offer. This will include delivery arrangements, opportunities for greater partner and service integration and an associated investment programme in new or retained facilities to ensure the future provision effectively delivers better outcomes.	0.000	-1.000	-2.000	0.000	0.000	
	Review library provision and location of Birkenhead and Wallasey libraries.	This option involves the identification of alternative locations for Birkenhead and Wallasey libraries, potentially as part of an integrated offer with other services.	0.000	-0.250	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Floral Pavilion - Re-provision to alternative operator with budget to subsidise operator in addition to building costs.	This proposal involves pursuing an option to identify an alternative operator for the Floral Pavilion to secure this facility for the long term.	-1.300	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

Committee: Policy & Resources								
Theme	Option	Description	24/25 Saving (£m)	25/26 Saving (£m)	26/27 Saving (£m)	27/28 Saving (£m)	28/29 Saving (£m)	
Increasing Income	Increase in Fees and Charges	The option involves increasing the Council's standard fees and charges each April, in line with September's CPI inflation rate, as an automatic annual exercise.	-0.750	-0.600	-0.450	-0.450	-0.450	
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Enabling Services	This option is an extension of a current programme of to review all enabling (back office) services across the whole organisation to identify economies of scale and opportunities for greater centralisation of these services.	-2.160	-2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Cease subsidised traded services.	This option gives consideration to ceasing non-statutory IT traded services for cabling and installations, repair shop, software support and technical support, along with telecoms in Schools	-0.350	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Council Tax	Increase Council Tax	This option involves increasing Council Tax to the assumed maximum limit over the Medium-Term Financial Plan period.	-8.578	-5.415	-5.601	-5.801	-5.801	

TOTAL POTENTIAL SAVINGS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	20.968	15.269	13.888	11.808	11.919		

APPENDIX 3 – CHANGE PROGRAMME

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Alongside the refresh of the Medium-Term Financial Plan, the Council's Change Programme is being reviewed to ensure it supports projected savings in future years. This includes all the Council's strategic programmes and projects that seek to transform our business model and deliver better outcomes for residents as well as improved cost-effectiveness across front line and back-office services. The Change Programme provides a framework for the governance and control of these programmes and projects that sit outside normal business-as-usual operations and the Council's core revenue budget.
- 1.2 The Change Programme has evolved over the time. The current review and re-set will ensure the programme is re-focussed to:
- Support the delivery of the MTFP and the Council's financial sustainability,
 - Deliver the priorities set out in the refreshed Council Plan,
 - Deliver improved outcomes for residents,
 - Modernise and reform the organisation to optimise efficiency and effectiveness.

2.0 PROGRAMME DEFINITION

- 2.1 The Change Programme incorporates all strategic programmes and projects that have previously been approved into a single Council-wide programme of transformational activity. The aim is to ensure there is a single point of governance and control over the Council's total overall investment in change. This aligns with the Enabling Services Review agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget process which aims to centralise corporate and back-office activities as far as possible to create clear visibility and economy of scale over all support services. There should be no other programmes of change within the business competing for resources as this would risk undermining delivery success.

3.0 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The structure of the Change Programme has been re-set to ensure it aligns with the new Council plan priorities and themes. The Council Plan is developed around the six distinct themes which align with the Council's governance and committees:
1. Early help for children and families – Children's, Family & Education Committee.
 2. Promoting independence and healthier lives – Adult Care and Public Health Committee.
 3. People-focussed regeneration – Economy, Regeneration & Housing Committee
 4. Protecting our environment – Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee.
 5. Safe and resilient communities – Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee.
 6. Efficient, effective & accessible Council – Policy & Resources Committee.

3.2 Strategic programmes and projects that align with these themes are set out in the table below:

COUNCIL PLAN THEME	PROGRAMMES / PROJECTS		APPROVAL
Efficient, effective & accessible Council	Birkenhead Commercial District	Creation of new town centre office quarter as a central office base for Council staff to enable the rationalisation of our office estate and support improved ways of working.	November 2018 (Cabinet)
	Enabling Service Review Programme	A systematic review of all back-office functions to centralise these services and to secure an IT transformation partner to modernise the customer journey.	February 2022 (Council 23/24 budget)
	Corporate Property Programme	Implementation of a new, corporate landlord model and delivery of our asset strategy.	November 2022 (Asset Strategy)
	IT Infrastructure Programme	A collection of projects that upgrade and transform the Council's IT infrastructure to ensure it is compliant and secure.	Compliance & system support requirements
Early help for children & families	Children's Services Programme	Delivers projects that support early intervention for those in need, promoting better outcomes and more cost-effective solutions for Wirral's looked after children.	Reported through Childrens Committee
Independence & healthier lives	Adult Care & Health Programme	Delivers projects that promote greater independence for vulnerable adults including extra care housing, assistive technology and more cost-effective practices.	Reported through Adults Committee
Protecting our environment	Waste & Street Cleansing Review	This project will review the Council's refuse collection and street cleansing strategy and prepare for the re-tendering of the Council's waste contract.	Pending
Safe and resilient communities	Active Wirral Programme	The programme will modernise a number of Neighbourhood services to deliver better outcomes for residents and more cost-effective models of delivery.	June 2022 (Leisure Strategy)
	Neighbourhoods Programme	Joint Council and NHS integrated care and health programme to tailor interventions towards local need based on a nine neighbourhood's model.	NHS/Council jointly led programme
People-focussed regeneration	Regeneration Portfolio	This will deliver the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and plans across a range of other masterplan areas.	Reported through Economy Committee

4.0 PROGRAMME RESOURCING

- 4.1 The Change Programme is resourced through a mix of core revenue resources combined with the use of capital resources where these can be employed. The funding mix across programmes and projects is determined by the business case in advance of programmes and projects being approved and initiated.
- 4.2 The Business Change & Programme Management Function provides the core revenue resource to support the programme. This is through an established team of programme and project managers deployed across the respective programmes as set out above. There is also a discretionary budget to commission bespoke work or specialist support where this is required. Some project resources are also employed by directorates themselves. All posts delivering project activity across the business are currently under review and will be restructured and streamlined as part of the Enabling Services programme contributing to the overall savings target for that programme.
- 4.3 Capital funding is deployed across projects where they are capital led and project costs can be capitalised such as the Birkenhead Commercial District programme. The guidance around the flexible use of capital receipts to support transformational activity is also used to fund programme/project activity where this can be justified. In some instances, external grant funding is used to fund project activity when this is successfully bid for and secured.

5.0 PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 The Director for Law and Governance has recently undertaken a review of all internal officer governance to support the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). The Investment and Change Board (ICB) provides the required governance over strategic programmes and projects that are outside day-to-day, business as usual operations. ICB meets monthly as part of the SLT agenda and oversees the pipeline of all new project business cases, ensuring these are validated and approved before being escalated through to the appropriate decision pathway. ICB is also responsible for monitoring programme performance and being a point of escalation for any required change control.
- 5.2 The Business Change and Programme Management function provides the Head of Profession role for the Council and adopts good practice in programme and project management methodology using the Prince 2 and Managing Successful Programmes methodologies. The function seeks to promote good practice across the organisation and a consistent level of programme and project assurance. This includes:
- An identified Senior Responsible Owner for each programme and project (for programmes this is usually a member of SLT),
 - Identified programme / project manager,
 - Approved business case,
 - Programme/Project board,

- Define programme/project lifecycle,
- Clear project plan and Risk, Assumptions, Interdependencies and Decision (RAID) logs,
- Highlight reporting,
- Defined benefits and plans to realise them.

5.3 A health check is currently being conducted across all programmes and projects to highlight any gaps in the above to ensure consistency as part of the overall Change Programme definition and re-set.

5.4 In terms of Elected Member and committee involvement, there is a need to ensure greater consistency of Elected Member oversight of programme delivery and performance. Currently this is ad hoc and through individual committees. It is proposed the Policy & Resources Committee Finance Sub-Group is used to review and provide oversight of the Change Programme going forward.

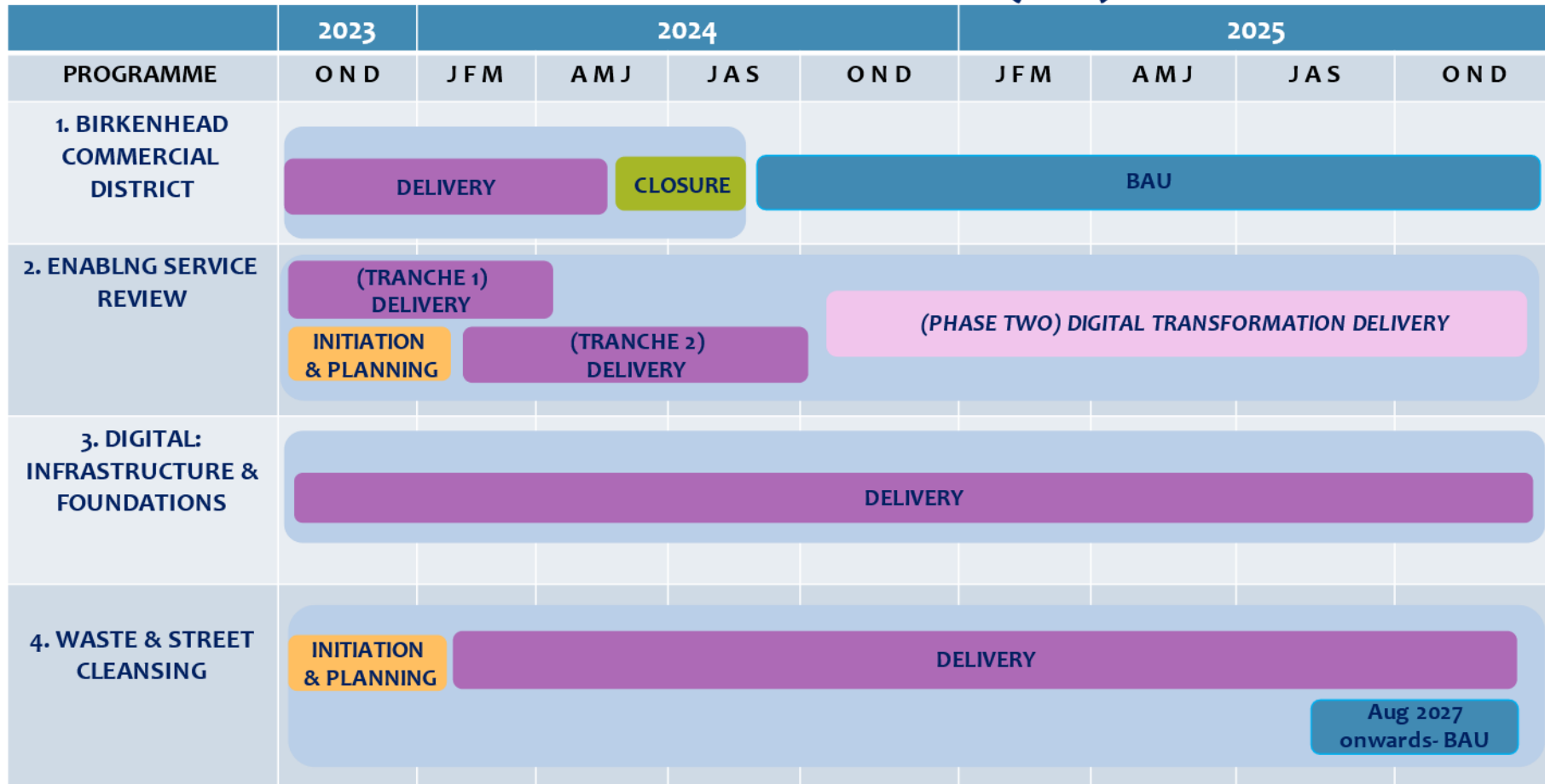
6.0 BENEFITS REALISATION

6.1 Benefit realisation is an area where the Council has not performed well in the past and needs to do more to ensure benefits are clearly defined and there are robust plans in place to realise those benefits. More recent performance in achieving savings plans linked to the annual budget process has seen improvement. However, as part of the health check of all programme and projects within the overall change programme, benefit management arrangements are being reviewed. This will ensure there are more arrangements in place in terms of benefit identification, description, ownership and realisation plans.

7.0 HIGH LEVEL PROGRAMME PLAN

7.1 A high level programme plan is provided below which provides a timeline against the programmes set out in the table above.

CHANGE PORTFOLIO (1/2)



CHANGE PORTFOLIO (2/2)

PROGRAMME	2023	2024				2025			
	OND	JFM	AMJ	JAS	OND	JFM	AMJ	JAS	OND
5. CHILDRENS CHANGE	DELIVERY								
6. ADULTS SOCIAL CARE CHANGE	DELIVERY								
7. ACTIVE WIRRAL	I & P	IN REFRESH							
8. CORPORATE PROPERTY	I & P	DELIVERY							
9. NEIGHBOURHOODS P'SHIP	TBC								

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 November 2023

REPORT TITLE:	WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
REPORT OF:	CHAIR OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Policy and Resources Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

It is envisaged that the work programme will be formed from a combination of key decisions, standing items and requested officer reports. This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The work programme for the Policy and Resources Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Policy & Resources Committee is recommended to comment on and note the proposed Policy and Resources Committee work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Policy and Resources committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Various formats for the workplan were explored. The current format is open to amendment to match the requirements of the committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The work programme should align with the priorities of the Council and its partners. The programme will be informed by:

- (i) The Council Plan
- (ii) The Council's transformation programme
- (iii) The Council's Forward Plan
- (iv) Service performance information
- (v) Risk management information
- (vi) Public or service user feedback
- (vii) Referrals from Council

Terms of Reference

The Policy and Resources Committee has two main areas of responsibility, which is to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, including making decisions on policies and co-ordinating spend not reserved to full Council, and to maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets.

The Committee is charged by full Council to:

- (a) formulate, co-ordinate and implement corporate policies and strategies and the medium-term financial plan (budget), which includes responsibility for any decision:
 - (i) that relates to such matters to the extent that they are not reserved to full Council;
 - (ii) on any cross-cutting policies that impact on other committee areas;
 - (iii) on policy matters not otherwise allocated to any other committee; and
 - (iv) to determine any dispute or difference between committees;
- (b) provide a co-ordinating role across all other service committees and retain a 'whole-council' view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management, which includes responsibility for a decision:
 - (i) that has a major impact on a number of Council services or on the Council as a whole;

- (ii) on any virement between Budget funds (revenue) requested by a Committee or officer in excess of **£500,000**;
 - (iii) on any virement between Budget funds (capital) or any amendment to the Capital Programme requested by a Committee or officer in excess of **£500,000**;
 - (iv) regarding land and property including major acquisition and disposals, which includes reserved decision making concerning any purchase, sale or transfer of a value in excess of, or likely to exceed, **£500,000**; unless the Committee has delegated this function in relation to a specified area or business plan as the Committee may determine.
 - (v) regarding companies or limited liability partnerships including acquisition and disposals; and
 - (vi) which is deemed significant in terms of impact on the Council's revenue or capital (to be determined by the Head of Paid Service and/or Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader);
- (c) without limiting the generality of responsibility for cross-cutting policies (at (a) above), lead on behalf of the Council:
- (i) in matters concerning relationships with HM Government, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and other major public and non-public bodies;
- (d) appoint Council representatives as required;
- (e) nominate councillors and other persons to outside bodies; and
- (f) undertake responsibility for developing and monitoring the enabling corporate services, including, finance and investment, project support and risk management, strategic procurement and commercial strategies, ICT, property and asset management, human resources and organisational development, law and governance, communications and public affairs, emergency planning and business continuity.

3.2 The Constitution sets out that the agenda of any Committee or Sub-Committee shall only include those items of business that require a decision, relate to budget or performance monitoring or which are necessary to discharge their overview and scrutiny function. Matters not relating to these functions may be dealt with via task and finish groups, workshops and briefing notes at the request of the Committee.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is for information and planning purposes only, therefore there are no direct financial implication arising. However, there may be financial implications arising as a result of work programme items.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, there may be legal implications arising as a result of work programme items.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no direct implications to staffing, ICT or Assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Committee's ability to undertake its responsibility to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, make decisions on policies, co-ordinate spend, and maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets may be compromised if it does not have the opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Not applicable

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.

This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct environment and climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

11.1 This report is for information to Members and has no direct community wealth implications.

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email: stevefox@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Policy and Resources Committee Work Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council Plan
The Council's Transformation Programme
The Council's Forward Plan

Subject History (last three years)

Council Meeting	Date
Each Policy & Resources Committee meeting	

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BETWEEN DECEMBER 2023 AND MARCH 2024

Item	Brief Description	Committee Meeting	Lead Departmental Officer
13th DECEMBER			
Sale of Land at Arrowe Park Road, Upton		13 December 2023	Director of Regeneration and Place
External Audit Report Action Progress Non-key	To report progress on the implementation of the Auditors recommendations	13 December 2023	Director of Finance
Introduction of ERP System Non-key		13 December 2023	Director of Finance
17th JANUARY			
Council Tax Base Calculations		17 th January 2024	Director of Finance
Council Tax 2024/25 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Discounts and Exemptions		17 th January 2024	Director of Finance

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS – WAITING TO BE SCHEDULED

Item	Brief Description	Date Requested	Approx. timescale	Lead Officer

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Officer
Performance Monitoring	As required	Director of Finance
Financial Monitoring	Quarterly	Director of Finance
Work Programme Update	Every Meeting	Director of Law and

		Governance
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WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Requested	Timescale	Lead Officer
Working Groups/ Sub Committees				
Task and Finish work				
Spotlight sessions / workshops				
Governance of Council Companies	Workshop	12 July 2023	November	Director of Finance/ Director of Law and Governance
Briefing Notes				

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