



Economy Regeneration & Housing Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 16 July 2024
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	Wallasey Town Hall – Committee Room One

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This meeting will be [webcast](#)

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. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 16)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee held on 27 March 2024, attached.

5. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

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

5.1 Public Questions

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Thursday 11 July 2024, to the Council's Monitoring Officer via this link: [Public Question Form](#) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

For more information on how your personal information will be used, please see this link: [Document Data Protection Protocol for Public Speakers at Committees | Wirral Council](#)

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

5.2 Statements and Petitions

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Thursday 11 July 2024 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 no later than 12 noon on Thursday 11 July 2024. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding one 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. Please give notice of petitions to committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

5.3 Questions by Members

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

SECTION A - KEY AND OTHER DECISIONS

6. APPROVAL OF MASTERPLANS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD FRAMEWORK – CLEVELAND STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD, NORTHSIDE, DOCK BRANCH NEIGHBOURHOOD & NEW BROUGHTON MARINE PROMENADE (Pages 17 - 26)

Please note that due to the number and size of the appendices for this report, they have been provided on a supplemental agenda pack.

7. REALLOCATION OF TRANSPORT SHED TOWN DEAL GRANT FUNDING (Pages 27 - 42)

The appendix files may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact Luke Bithell (lukebithell@wirral.gov.uk) if you would like this document in an accessible format.

8. MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB (Pages 43 - 60)

9. THE HYTHE: PUT/CALL OPTION (Pages 61 - 66)

10. CHESHIRE & MERSEY LEARNING DISABILITY & AUTISM HOUSING STRATEGY (Pages 67 - 138)

The appendix files for this report may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact Jayne Marshall (jaynemarshall@wirral.gov.uk) if you would like this document in an accessible format.

SECTION B - BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

11. 2023-2024 REVENUE OUTTURN (Pages 139 - 150)

12. BUDGET MONITORING AND BUDGET SETTING PROCESSES (Pages 151 - 176)

13. 2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER ONE (THE PERIOD TO 30 JUNE 2024) (Pages 177 - 188)

SECTION C - WORK PROGRAMME / OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

14. APPOINTMENT OF PANELS, STATUTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES 2024/25 (Pages 189 - 202)

15. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 203 - 216)

16. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following items contain 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve 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.

17. REALLOCATION OF TRANSPORT SHED TOWN DEAL GRANT FUNDING - EXEMPT APPENDIX (Pages 217 - 286)

18. MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB - EXEMPT APPENDICES (Pages 287 - 316)

Terms of Reference

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

ECONOMY REGENERATION & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 27 March 2024

Present:

Councillor T Jones (Chair)

Councillors	GJ Davies	A Gardner
	R Pitt	J Bird
	M Skillicorn	E Lamb
	G Wood	E Tomeny
	A Hodson	S Kelly (for H Raymond)

67 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair opened the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast and a copy would be retained on the Council's website for two years.

68 **APOLOGIES**

Councillor Helen Raymond sent her apologies. Councillor Stuart Kelly substituted.

69 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any items on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

70 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

71 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

71.1 **Public Questions**

David Byrne was not in attendance and the Lead Principal Lawyer read his question on his behalf, He asked for details of the number of traders and the footfall of customers at Birkenhead Market.

The Chair responded that at the time of the meeting, there were 34 traders operating in the market, with a further 2 traders joining the market shortly. He also noted that there had been approximately 250,000 footfall events in the market for 2024 up to the meeting on 27 March 2024. There had been a total of 1.1 million footfall events for 2023.

Mr Joe Orr asked a question relating to the current area rented by stallholders at Birkenhead Market of 17,006 square feet and the proposed site at Princes Pavement having a much smaller retail space of 2163 square feet. He wished to know how there would be space to hold the current traders in the new site.

The Chair responded that the report on Birkenhead Market noted that the Princes Pavement option had a total of 11,528 square feet at the front of house, with 2163 allocated specifically to retail. He noted that it was suggested that smaller stalls would be used within the new site and that further consultation work was to be carried out with the public and market traders before a final design was settled on.

Mr Orr had a supplementary question, asking whether a final decision should be made before any consultation was made with traders.

The Chair responded Mr Orr would receive a written response within 10 working days.

Mr Terry O'Reilly asked whether the Chair felt it was fair or reasonable to expect traders to read a 144-page report, such as the Birkenhead Market Options report, within 2 days in order to be able to submit their questions to the committee.

The Chair responded that the level of detail within the report was necessary and that traders were aware of when the report would be brought to committee that a significant amount of work had been undertaken. Overall, it was preferable to present the committee with as much information as possible.

Mr O'Reilly had a supplementary question, he stated that a report on Birkenhead Market from October 2023 had been withheld from Councillors and asked why.

The Chair noted that this was not related to Mr O'Reilly's original question, and was not therefore a supplementary question, however he stated that a written response would be provided for Mr O'Reilly within 10 working days.

Mr Mike Eccles stated that the Birkenhead Market Options report did not identify how the Council intended to work with its key stake holders going forward and asked the Chair to outline how market traders could trust council officers to communicate with them in future.

The Chair responded that the Birkenhead Market Options report was being brought to committee due to engagement between the Council and the Birkenhead Market Tenants Association (BMTA) and that their views were listened to. He noted that the Council had met with the BMTA on a regular basis and had provided updates on progress.

Mr Eccles asked a supplementary question, he stated that the Assistant Director had previously stated that there would be clear and transparent communication with the Birkenhead Market traders, he felt that this had not been the case and asked who would be accountable for the delivery of the appraisal within the Birkenhead Market Options report.

The Chair indicated that Mr Eccles would receive a written response within 10 working days.

Mr Greg McTigue asked whether the Chair was worried that due to a lack of consultation with traders and a rushed report on the Birkenhead Market Options, that significant items may have been missed or wrong conclusions made.

The Chair responded that due to engagement with the BMTA, three options had been considered at the December 2023 meeting of the committee. There followed an intensive period of work, where a range of technical disciplines delivered the outcome within the Birkenhead Market Options report.

71.2 Statements and Petitions

Mr Joe Orr presented a statement in respect of agenda item 10, Birkenhead Market Options. He stated that as Chair of the Birkenhead Market Tenants Association, he represented all of the market traders. He noted that the original announcement for a new market was for a state of the art new building and that traders now felt let down with the offer to re-house them in a site previously used as an Argos shop as it was not what was initially promised. He stated that the offered site was significantly smaller than what he felt was needed. He felt that communication from the Council had been poor and that information had been kept from the traders and Councillors. He felt that other viable options had been overlooked and asked the committee to consider delaying a decision on the future site of the Birkenhead market.

Mr Terry O'Reilly presented a statement in respect of agenda item 10, Birkenhead Market Options. He noted that as a representative of the Birkenhead Market Tenants Association, he spoke on behalf of all the traders there. He noted that many of the traders had contributed to the local economy for decades and felt sidelined by the proposed site of the market. He stated that traders felt betrayed by the decisions made to date relating to the market and felt that the full impact to the community's heritage and economic

diversity by the decision to move to the Princes Pavement site had not been fully considered. He asked the committee to reevaluate the proposed site for the Market. He also noted that Mick Whitley MP had echoed similar feelings in the press.

Mr Greg McTigue presented a statement in respect of agenda item 10, Birkenhead Market Options. He stated that he was Vice-Chair of the Birkenhead Market Tenants Association. He noted that the original announcement to re-house Birkenhead Market was to be a flagship development which was to kickstart the regeneration of Birkenhead. He stated that there had been a number of alternative proposals made since the original announcement, all at a significant cost, while he felt that the value of the offer had diminished with each new proposal. He felt that the Council did not see that many of the traders relied on their stalls for their livelihoods. He asked the committee to reconsider the proposals before them.

71.3 Questions by Members

The Chair noted that no such questions had been submitted.

72 CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSAL TO IMPLEMENT SELECTIVE LICENSING IN PATERSON STREET AND ALL OF PARK CLOSE

The Assistant Director of Housing presented the report on behalf of the Director of Regeneration and Place. The report noted that in December 2023, a report was brought to the Committee on Selective Licensing Scheme (Scheme 4) in four Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) from 1st April 2024 until 31st March 2029. Paterson Street and Park Close were within one of these LSOAs, known as Birkenhead West (code E01007127 / Wirral 016B), however the whole of Paterson Street and the even numbered properties of Park Close were absent from the list of properties included in the report presented to Committee on 6th December 2023 and therefore were not included within the Scheme 4 area. As a result, there were a number of properties within the Scheme 4 Area which could not be subject to Selective Licensing requirements which would lead to an absence of Selective Licensing in part of the LSOA which had been identified through the evidence base previously presented to the Committee as a whole LSOA requiring a licensing scheme.

Due to the omission of Paterson Street and the even numbers of Park Close from the list of addresses presented to this Committee for inclusion in Scheme 4, a further decision by Committee was required to approve the application of Selective Licensing in these streets in a further Scheme (Scheme 4A) to ensure the designation applies under Section 80 of the Housing Act 2004.

The streets would be subject to a designation notice period to commence within 7 days of decision of Committee and would last for 3 months. The

designation would commence immediately after this notice period ended and would end on 31 March 2029.

Resolved – That

- 1. Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Regeneration and Place to take all necessary action to implement Selective Licensing Scheme 4A as set out in the report;**
- 2. Selective Licensing Scheme 4A shall run until 31st March 2029; and**
- 3. The selective licence fee shall be at the rate of £585.**

73 **UPDATE TO HOUSING & REGENERATION ASSISTANCE POLICY 2024 AND THE FIT AND PROPER PERSON POLICY**

The Assistant Director of Housing presented the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place. The report sought approval for the proposed revisions to both the Council's Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy (referred to as the Assistance Policy) and Policy on the test for meeting a fit and proper person and satisfactory management arrangements for the granting of a House in Multiple Occupation Licence and/or Selective Licence (referred to as the Fit and Proper Person Policy).

The report noted that the Council has had a Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy providing a range of assistance, including grants and loans for over 20 years. As with any policy, it was considered best practice to review, monitor and update the policy considering changes in local circumstances, need, service demands and government policy and as such it was proposed the policy be updated to reflect the necessary changes identified within the report and ensure it was fit for purpose.

The report also noted that it was good practice to regularly monitor, review and amend (if necessary) both the Fit and Proper Person Policy to take into account changes in local circumstances, service delivery, increased needs and / or Government policy. The report set out the changes required to respond to those identified needs.

Members thanked the Assistant Director for the report. They queried the Fit and Proper Person Policy and what the criteria would be for revocation of a licence. Officers clarified that revocation would happen after an overall assessment of factors leading to it.

Members raised the Air Source Heat Pumps / Low Carbon Heating Systems Pilot and in particular the intention to provide 12 properties over the next 2 years with air source heat pumps. They asked how those properties were determined. Officers responded that it was not something that would be

forced on anyone and would be done in consultation with potential owners and tenants of eligible properties. It was noted that any findings from this pilot scheme would be reported back to the Committee.

Resolved – That

- 1. The proposed revisions to the Council’s Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and**
- 2. The Policy on tests for ‘fit and proper person’ and satisfactory management arrangements for a House in Multiple Occupation Licence and/or Selective Licence as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved.**

74 HOMELESSNESS IN WIRRAL AND THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Assistant Director for Housing presented the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place. The report sought to inform members on the current picture regarding homelessness in the borough, and more specifically in relation to the rising number of households in Temporary Accommodation, Bed and Breakfast, and the financial pressures arising from this. The report also provided Members with an update on the progress made to respond to Homelessness in Wirral.

The increase in numbers of households in Temporary Accommodation was resulting in the need to review the existing service provision and had required the introduction of additional mitigating measures.

The report also informed Members of the initiatives taken to maintain the existing service provision, but also Wirral’s approach to reducing the need for Bed and Breakfast placements.

The report noted that In Wirral, the current homelessness situation was exacerbated by wider features of the national housing market and national policy context around housing. There was a national crisis in homelessness and rough sleeping that had seen a rise across the country with regard to homeless presentations and the use of temporary accommodation.

Members thanked the Assistant Director for a comprehensive report. The Chair raised the wording of recommendation three as referring to reports on Homelessness being “presented to future Committees...” and queried whether this implied that reports might be brought to committees other than the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee, in particular, the Audit and Risk Management Committee. He stated that if this were the case, he

would prefer the report to come before the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Report before any others.

The Lead Principal Lawyer stated that while this committee could not make decisions on the work programme of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, officers would discuss the Homelessness report with the Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

Officers further noted that the wording of recommendation 3 was intended to only refer to this committee and the following wording was suggested by the Lead Principal Lawyer to be included by the proposer of the recommendations to clarify the matter;

“3. Approve that a 6-monthly performance report on Homelessness to be presented to future meetings of the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee as part of a wider Housing Services Update Report.”

Members queried whether there were details on the number of rough sleepers choosing not to engage with Council services. Officers stated that they would provide members with further information and that Outreach officers had a good handle on who is being offered help. Members requested further information on who in Wirral are most likely to become homeless, with a breakdown of age and demographics with a particular concern for the future of older people. Officers stated that this could be included in the next report to Committee.

Councillor mentioned the work done by the YMCA and noted that the work that they have done, as well as the work from Council officers was great,

On a motion by Councillor George Davies and seconded by Councillor Gill Wood, it was:

Resolved – That

- 1. The progress being made to address Homelessness in Wirral and the increases seen in the use of temporary accommodation and mitigations in place, as contained within this report be noted and endorsed.**
- 2. The undertaking of the 5-year review of homelessness in Wirral during 2024, with the findings used to support the development of a new Wirral Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2025 onwards be endorsed.**
- 3. A 6-monthly performance report on Homelessness be presented to future meetings of the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee as part of a wider Housing Services Update Report.**

75 **GREATER INSULATION PROGRAMME NEEDED FOR WIRRAL'S HOUSING**

The Principal Housing and Investment Officer presented the report on behalf of the Director of Regeneration and Place. The report was in response to a motion agreed at Council on 20th March 2023 entitled “Greater Insulation Programme Needed for Wirral’s Housing” and also provided an update on a separated motion agreed by Council on 10th October 2022 entitled “Energy Efficiency / Residential”.

Members discussed the responses to the Council Motions and stated that they were happy to see progress on the area but that quicker progress was needed. They noted that heating technology had moved on quickly in the past 4 years. Members queried the lines of communication between officers in Housing and Planning, particularly in relation to the planning requirements for cladding. Officers assured Members that communication was strong between the two departments.

Members queried who sat on the Residential Retro Fitting Task and Finish Group and were informed that there were members from Magenta Living housing association, Port Sunlight Village Trust, the Chair of the Wirral Private Landlords Forum, the Chief Executive of Projects Plus, the Retrofit Manager from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Principal Housing and Investment Officer from Wirral Council.

Members stated that they had reports from tenants of old, cold and mouldy properties and residents and landlords were struggling to access funding for improvements. Officers noted that funding was provided by national programmes but that Wirral officers were encouraging residents and landlords to take up any funding that’s on offer.

Resolved – That

- 1. The asks of the Council Motions be noted; and**
- 2. The responses to the Motions as outlined in Section 3 of the report be approved.**

76 **BIRKENHEAD MARKET OPTIONS**

The Assistant Director for Property and Regeneration presented the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place. The report noted that the current Birkenhead Market Hall was an aging building, operating inefficiently and the Council had been considering options to re-locate the market to an alternative

market site for several years. The report noted that at a meeting of the Committee in December 2023, the Committee had agreed the recommendations of a report to progress the development of the design of the Princes Pavement option to RIBA Stage 3, appoint a market consultant to further develop the market operating model and then bring back the outcome of this work to the Committee for a decision. The report set out other options that had been considered in the past, discounting them for practical reasons. The Committee had also reviewed the capital cost of re-locating the existing market to a new purpose-built market hall on the site of the former House of Fraser Store (HOF). The capital cost of delivery for the HOF proposal was £31.6 million based on July 2023 figures and there was an emerging funding gap which could have a significant impact on the Council's financial position. Furthermore, Policy and Resources Committee on 17 January 2024 resolved amongst other matters to reduce the capital budget for the new market project making the HOF proposal unaffordable. The report made recommendations regarding the feasibility of the House of Fraser options.

In recognition of recent engagement with Birkenhead Market Tenants Association, Committee also agreed that further feasibility work would be undertaken on two options, the St John's Pavement option and a refurbishment of part of the existing Birkenhead Market site. The Committee also agreed to pause market development work on the House of Fraser site whilst this work was undertaken. Issues associated with the development of the HOF site for the purpose of a market were reported, including its financial viability.

The report considered by the Committee at this meeting reported back on those details.

Raymond Linch of Market North West Ltd, who had been employed as a market design consultant, attended the meeting and gave some personal background, noting that he had helped develop around 300 markets in the UK and had worked around markets for most of his life. He stated that looking ahead 10 to 20 years was important to how market design would be led. He noted that there was a smaller cohort of shoppers using markets currently and that it was important to try and increase appeal to a wider base of shoppers without alienating the current base. He summarised the findings of the report regarding the other potential sites for a market in Birkenhead and explained why they had been discounted in the recommendations due to size, logistics and money. He noted that the designs shown within the report were not final and that further consultation with traders would be made before a final design was agreed.

Members discussed the findings of the report, with some stating that they were sceptical of them, querying whether the alternative options to the Princes Pavement site were as un-viable as the report suggested. They also raised that Mick Whitley MP had stated publicly that he was not in favour of

the Princes Pavement option and questioned how the proposed option could deliver on the ambitions of the people of Birkenhead.

Officers responded that a market in Birkenhead was central to the Council's regeneration strategy and that it linked to the Birkenhead 2040 Framework. The Council's intention was for the new market to be there for the next 50 to 70 years.

Councillor Stuart Kelly made a proposal which was seconded by Councillor Ewan Tomeny as follows:

- “1. The Director of Regeneration and Place reports back with a more detailed report to the next convenient meeting of this Committee to develop the option of refurbishing the existing Birkenhead Market Hall, such report to include;
 - i. A detailed cost appraisal of refurbishment option tailored to align with available resources,
 - ii. A detailed business plan for the operation of the market to include how new businesses can be attracted to the market and add to its vitality.
 - iii. A detailed analysis of how the market contributes to the regeneration aspirations of the Council having regard to the principle of the Birkenhead 2040 strategy.
 - iv. Details of a proposed consultation exercise with the public to inform the design and to integrate any feedback into the potential development of a refurbished market.
2. The Director of Regeneration and Place continues to liaise with funding bodies including LCR and DLUHC in order that they are fully informed of the Council's ambitions for regenerating Birkenhead in line with the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and the emerging Local Plan.
3. The Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to notify Wirral Growth Company LLP that it does not wish to proceed with the development of the House of Fraser site pursuant to the relevant Development Service agreements that have been entered into between the Council and Wirral Growth Company LLP.”

Members raised concerns regarding Councillor Kelly's recommendations around the delays that would come if they were agreed and the risk to the capital funding that this might cause. Officers noted that the Council had until March 2026 to spend the money provided by the Pathfinder Programme for the market, if the proposed option in the report was not agreed, it could mean that the funding would be lost. It was also noted that if Members agreed to Councillor Stuart's recommendations, market traders would have to be rehomed while refurbishment work was undertaken at the current market site at a cost of up to £3 million.

Members noted that there was a high degree of opposition to the Princes Pavement proposal from traders, local residents and local politicians.

The motion from Councillor Stuart Kelly was put and lost (4:7).

Councillor Jo Bird proposed that the debate on this matter be adjourned to a future meeting and this was seconded by Councillor Ed Lamb. The motion from Jo Bird was put and lost (4:7).

The Chair proposed the recommendations as laid out in the report and this was seconded by Councillor Andrew Hodson.

Members continued the debate based on these recommendations. They noted that very few negatives for the Princes Pavement option were listed in the report and did not make reference to the fact that a lot of the current traders were against it. They queried the costs of the proposal, suggesting that the cost of demolition for the current market should still be included within the proposal for Princes Pavement.

Officers noted that all proposals had been carefully considered and the best option recommended to Members.

Resolved (7:4) – That

- 1. The Princes Pavement option to deliver a new market for Birkenhead, which will require remodelling, refurbishment and fit out of the interior and some changes to its external façade and outside areas be approved;**
- 2. The Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to:**
 - a. Notify Wirral Growth Company LLP that it does not wish to proceed with the development of the House of Fraser site pursuant to the relevant Development Service agreements that have been entered into between the Council and Wirral Growth Company LLP;**
 - b. Allocate up to a maximum of £13.7m towards the costs of the delivery of the new market;**
 - c. Using an appropriate procurement pathway:**
 - i. procure and appoint a design team to complete the design for the new market;**
 - ii. place the physical works to deliver the new market out to tender; and**

- iii. let the contact to deliver the works to remodel, refurbish and fit out the interior of the new market and make changes to its external façade and outside areas as required to deliver the scheme;
 - d. Progress any applications for planning, building control or highways approval that may be required to progress the new market scheme;
 - e. Undertake a consultation exercise with the public to inform final design / integrate feedback into the development of the design for the new market;
 - f. On completion of the new market, progress with the decant of the old market; and
3. In taking forward the proposal for the market, it be endorsed that the Council shall work in close collaboration with key stakeholders, as appropriate, as part of a partnership-based approach. This will include other events and activities related to the market in collaboration with stakeholders, including market traders as part of the delivery of the scheme.

77 MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB

The Head of Asset Management presented the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place. The report sought authorisation to further develop proposals for the development of a Maritime Knowledge Hub on the derelict Grade II listed hydraulic tower on Tower Road, Birkenhead.

The report noted that the site was the subject of a proposal that would generate some 56,000 sq. ft of accommodation to deliver a Maritime Knowledge Hub. It stated that bringing this building back into use was of significant value to the regeneration of the wider area. The development of the Maritime Knowledge Hub at this location presented a significant economic growth opportunity as it aimed to deliver approximately 58,756 sq ft of new commercial floorspace and generate additional business rates within the Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone from practical completion until 2037. The project had the potential to create up to 1,062 gross direct and indirect jobs, with 621 Full time equivalent (FTE) jobs following practical completion and 22 FTE jobs during the construction phases. These outputs were based on the original business plan of 2021 and needed to be reviewed; however significant change was not expected as the overall vision remained the same. Development of the building for other uses had previously been considered and ruled out. The landowner (Peel) had confirmed that the development of

the Maritime Knowledge Hub was its priority, and it was not currently considering any other options.

Members noted that it was a difficult proposition, being a derelict, listed building in a unique position, they questioned whether designating it as a maritime hub restricted its likelihood of success as it would limit its use. Officers noted that a further business case would be brought back to committee before a decision was to be made.

Councillor Jo Bird asked the Head of Asset Management if he would consider other options to bring the listed building back into use that reduce financial risks to the Council, including a heritage solution, anchor tenants, increased rent headroom, asset acquisition, loan finance and special purpose vehicle in the event members endorsed the recommendation. The Head of Asset Management indicated that he would be prepared to consider these matters in the further developing the proposals.

Resolved – That the Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to further develop the proposals for the development of a Maritime Knowledge Hub on the derelict Grade II listed hydraulic tower on Tower Road, Birkenhead within the parameters set out in sections 3.1 to 3.10 of the report with a view to bringing back a more detailed report to a future meeting of this Committee.

78 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HOMES ENGLAND COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

The Principal Housing and Investment Officer presented the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place. The report sought acknowledgement of Homes England's Compliance Audit Report outcome. The audit was to ensure compliance with Homes England funding requirements for the 2021-26 Affordable Homes Programme. This related to a previous decision made by Housing Committee on 10th March 2021 to approve the purchase of six new Council homes in Rock Ferry. The Council was awarded grant from the above Homes England programme to support the development.

The report noted that Homes England required that the Council bring the outcome of this audit, any breaches, and recommendations to this committee's attention within three calendar months of receipt of the report. The last date on which this could be done was 24th April 2024.

Resolved – That the outcome of the Homes England Compliance Report 2023/24 as outlined within the report be noted.

79 **2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER THREE**

The Director of Regeneration and Place presented the report which set out the financial monitoring information for the Economy Regeneration & Housing Committee as at Quarter 3 (31 December) of 2023/24. The report provided Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2023/24 saving programme and a summary of reserves and balances, to enable the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

The report noted that managing a budget required difficult decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Regular Member engagement, which the report formed part of, was considered essential in delivering effective governance and financial oversight.

At the end of Quarter 3, there was a forecast adverse position of £0.7m, with spend of £15.479m against the £14.779m budget.

Members noted that the Council had borrowed around £10 million to purchase the Grange and Pyramids shopping centres and asked when they would see the income and expenditure for this investment. Officers stated that there would be transparent reporting routes and that a report was being prepared on the income and expenditures of those sites, but that the committee it would be submitted to had not yet been decided but would likely be through the Policy and Resources Committee.

Resolved – That

- 1. The adverse revenue forecast of £0.7m as at Quarter 3 be noted.**
- 2. The progress on delivery of the 2023-24 savings programme at Quarter 3 be noted.**
- 3. The level of reserves at Quarter 3 be noted.**
- 4. The capital programme of £49.556m for 2023-24 be noted.**

80 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Lead Principal Lawyer presented the report on behalf of the Chair of the Committee. Members were informed that the 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.

Members raised some discrepancies with the name of officers listed against reports that had either left the authority or were due to shortly, as well as an item that was listed twice.

Resolved – That the Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee work programme for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year be agreed.

81 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved – That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the following appendices be deemed to be exempt from publication on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

Birkenhead Market Options - Exempt Appendix 3.

Maritime Knowledge Hub – Exempt Appendix 1.

Acknowledgement of Homes England Compliance Audit Report – Exempt Appendix 1.

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ECONOMY REGENERATION & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 16th July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	ADOPTION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD FRAMEWORKS & MASTERPLANS (CLEVELAND STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD, NORTHSIDE, DOCK BRANCH NEIGHBOURHOOD, NEW BRIGHTON MARINE PROMENADE)
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Council has been developing its regeneration strategy for Wirral Left Bank for a number of years. The Birkenhead 2040 Framework was endorsed by this Committee as the interim Regeneration strategy for Wirral in March 2022. This document set out that delivery of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework will be supported by more detailed Neighbourhood Frameworks and Masterplans setting out the regeneration objectives and strategies for specific areas. Policy WS6.3 of the emerging Local Plan also requires Masterplans to be approved for specified areas to ensure that development is coordinated and comprehensively planned.

Five of these documents are detailed in this report, four of which are recommended for adoption:

1. Cleveland Street Neighbourhood Masterplan
2. Northside Neighbourhood Framework
3. Scott's Quay Neighbourhood Framework
4. Dock Branch Neighbourhood Masterplan
5. New Brighton Marine Promenade Masterplan

The adopted masterplans will be a material consideration in the consideration of any planning applications submitted within the masterplan boundary, with all new development expected to conform to the masterplan proposals and requirements.

The adopted Neighbourhood Framework will be a material consideration in the determination of development in the area and will help guide future development.

The Scott's Quay Neighbourhood Framework is recommended for withdrawal as the council's regeneration strategy for the area, following the proposed modification to the Local Plan withdrawing the Regeneration Area and associated site allocations (see document

DSH26 on Local Plan examination web site - <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/files/dsh26-note-ra2-scotts-quay.pdf/download?inline>). Further work will be undertaken to explore the constraints and work with stakeholders to determine a sustainable regeneration strategy for the area.

Wirral Working Together – A Council Plan 2023 - 2027 sets out the Council’s vision to secure the best possible future for our residents. The Neighbourhood Frameworks and Masterplans supports the delivery of the key themes:

- Early help for children and families
- Promoting independence and healthier lives
- People focussed regeneration
- Protect our environment
- Safe, resilient and engaged communities

This matter affects Bidston & St James ward (Cleveland Street Neighbourhood Masterplan), Seacombe ward (Northside and Scott’s Quay Neighbourhood Frameworks), Birkenhead & Tranmere ward/Bidston & St James ward (Dock Branch Neighbourhood Masterplan) and New Brighton Ward (New Brighton Marine Promenade Masterplan).

This is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee is recommended to:

1. Adopt the Cleveland Street Neighbourhood Masterplan as the council’s approved planning strategy for the area;
2. Approve the Northside Neighbourhood Framework as the council’s approved regeneration strategy for the area;
3. Withdraw the Scott’s Quay Neighbourhood Framework and authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to continue to work with Stakeholders to develop a regeneration strategy for the area;
4. Adopt the Dock Branch Neighbourhood Masterplan as the Council’s approved planning strategy for the area; and
5. Adopt the New Brighton Marine Promenade Masterplan as the Council’s approved planning strategy for the area.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The proposals within this report are intended to ensure that the Neighbourhood Framework and Masterplans are duly adopted as the regeneration strategies for the areas that they relate to and are used as material considerations in the determination of planning applications where appropriate.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Neighbourhood Frameworks and Masterplans were developed to better inform the regeneration delivery strategy for the Wirral Left Bank and support the Local Plan and the Council's Brownfield first housing strategy. The only other option would be to not take the Neighbourhood Frameworks and Masterplans through an approval process, but this would undermine the importance of these documents in outlining the council's regeneration strategy and would meet the requirements of the Local Plan.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Context

- 3.1 Masterplan areas are defined in the Local Plan in policy WS6.3. Masterplan areas are areas where significant change is expected and a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to development is required. Masterplans are planning documents and should be in place before development in the area can be approved. Neighbourhood Frameworks align with regeneration areas in the Local Plan and set out the regeneration objectives and development potential of an area. The Neighbourhood Frameworks and Masterplans are essential to underpinning the Council's brownfield first housing strategy. They set out a clear approach to the regeneration strategy for the Left Bank and underpin the approach to housing delivery in the area.
- 3.2 The work on masterplans and neighbourhood frameworks has helped support and inform the evidence base for the Local Plan. The documents specifically help support the housing numbers that have been attributed to the "other developable area" or non-allocated sites in regeneration areas in the Local Plan.

Cleveland Street Neighbourhood Masterplan

- 3.3 The Cleveland Street neighbourhood today is predominantly employment focussed, but our approach is to introduce new homes to create a vibrant, mixed-use neighbourhood. The aspiration is to establish a place where families want to live, embracing the concept of a neighbourhood where residents can walk or cycle to a range of local facilities. New public realm and green streets will significantly improve the appearance of the area and support wellbeing. Some businesses will remain, but new developments will provide opportunities for new businesses to locate in the area in order that the place continues to support a high number of jobs.

- 3.4 The masterplan has identified the opportunity to provide up to 1,200 new homes in the area, with the aim of at least 60% of these being family sized (3-bedrooms or more) alongside a mixture of smaller one and two bedroomed dwellings to encourage people with different needs and ages to live in the area.
- 3.5 The Masterplan sets out the approach to comprehensive and coordinated development within the area and supports WS6.3 and RA 7 in the Local Plan. A delivery strategy will be prepared to support the implementation of the Masterplan.
- 3.6 The masterplan document is attached as Appendix 1, along with an Executive Summary (Appendix 2), Consultation Report (Appendix 3) and a Consultation Analysis Report (Appendix 4). The recommendation is to adopt this masterplan.

Northside Neighbourhood Framework

- 3.7 The Northside area is currently dominated by occupied employment sites and vacant sites. The vision for Northside is to retain the area in employment use, but develop new accommodation on vacant plots and under-developed sites to improve the visual appearance and attract new businesses into the area, thereby increasing the number of jobs and job density. The document supports policy RA8 in the Local Plan.
- 3.8 Northside is within the Freeport area which will act as a catalyst for employment related development of the area. Discussions are ongoing with landowners, developers and businesses seeking sites/new accommodation, and the financial incentives associated with the Freeport status should help overcome development viability issues that are likely to arise as a result of previous land uses.
- 3.9 The neighbourhood framework document is attached as Appendix 5, along with an Executive Summary (Appendix 6), Consultation Report (Appendix 7) and a Consultation Analysis Report (Appendix 8). The recommendation is to adopt this Neighbourhood Framework.

Scott's Quay Neighbourhood Framework

- 3.10 The vision for Scott's Quay was to redevelop vacant and/or under-utilised plots for a mixture of new residential and compatible commercial uses, changing the balance from industry to residential and more generally to improve the visual appearance and condition of buildings within the area. However, through various investigations and studies undertaken to support the development of the Neighbourhood Framework a number of significant development constraints were identified being:
- poor air quality near the dock edge associated with ships running their engines whilst berthed;
 - noise issues relating to some existing employment uses; and
 - an odour issue associated with the storage tanks by the docks.
- 3.11 Several of the existing businesses in the area also objected to the proposals for significant residential development as they felt it could adversely impact on their current operations. These constraints resulted in the proposed modification to the Local Plan withdrawing the Regeneration Area and associated site allocations (see document DSH26 on Local Plan examination web site).

- 3.11 Rather than adopt the Neighbourhood Framework, given the constraints and the Local Plan proposed modification it is proposed to undertake further work to explore the constraints and work with stakeholders to determine a sustainable regeneration strategy for the area. The draft neighbourhood framework document is attached as Appendix 9, along with an Executive Summary (Appendix 10), Consultation Report (Appendix 11) and a Consultation Analysis Report (Appendix 12). The recommendation is to withdraw this Neighbourhood Framework.

Dock Branch Neighbourhood Masterplan

- 3.13 Dock Branch Neighbourhood Masterplan focuses on the area around the former Dock Branch railway line, for which there is a separate project to create a new linear park, which is one of nine catalyst projects which form a key part of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework. The ambition is to deliver the transformation of the area into a thriving residential led mixed use urban community at the heart of Birkenhead.
- 3.14 The masterplan has identified the opportunity to provide up to 1,200 new homes in the area, proposing a mix of typologies including terraces, townhouses, maisonettes and apartments.
- 3.15 The Masterplan sets out the approach to comprehensive and coordinated development in the area. It supports policy WS6.3 of the Local plan. The Masterplan covers part of RA3 (Birkenhead Waterfront Regeneration area) and RA 4 (Central Birkenhead). A delivery strategy will be developed to support the implementation of the Masterplan.
- 3.16 The masterplan document is attached as Appendix 13, along with an Executive Summary (Appendix 14), Consultation Report (Appendix 15) and a Consultation Analysis Report (Appendix 16). The recommendation is to adopt this masterplan.

New Brighton Marine Promenade Masterplan

- 3.17 The Marine Promenade Masterplan focuses on the area extending from the Floral Pavilion to the west of Union Terrace in New Brighton. The Masterplan sets out a framework to deliver a high-quality, attractive and vibrant mixed-use area comprising a mix of cultural, hotel, leisure and residential uses which support the regeneration of neighbouring areas and facilities including the Floral Pavilion Theatre and the Local Centres at Victoria Road and Seabank Road. The Masterplan identifies potential for one or more appropriately designed landmark buildings and seeks to encourage active (e.g. commercial) uses at ground floor level.
- 3.18 The Masterplan identifies potential for up to 495 new homes focused on apartment typologies with at least 30 per cent 3-bed units to encourage a diverse mix of household types.
- 3.19 The Masterplan sets out design parameters for a range of site-specific proposals in order to provide flexibility regarding the form of new development. The Masterplan supports policy WS6.3 and RA10 of the Local Plan.

3.20 The masterplan document is attached as Appendix 17, along with an Executive Summary (Appendix 18), Consultation Report (Appendix 19) and a Consultation Analysis Report (Appendix 20). The recommendation is to adopt this masterplan.

Other Masterplans

3.21 The Local Plan identifies a requirement for the further following masterplans:

- West Kirby – further development, in consultation with Elected Members, is required on this masterplan but note that this masterplan does not impact on Local Plan housing numbers.
- Wallasey Town Hall Quarter – comments from the consultation process are being assessed and it is anticipated that the document will be ready for consideration by ERH committee in September 2024.
- Birkenhead Waterfront (Woodside) Masterplan – consultation on this masterplan has closed. Once the comments received have been analysed the document will be amended accordingly and should be ready for consideration by committee at the September 2024 ERH meeting.
- Birkenhead Town Centre - It is anticipated that this document will be issued for consultation in the summer and it will be ready for consideration by this committee in Autumn 2024.
- St Werburgh's Masterplan – further work is required on this masterplan following the recent committee decision on the relocation of Birkenhead market. It is anticipated that the document will be ready for consideration by ERH committee in September 2024.

3.22 Birkenhead 2040 Framework

Following the development of the masterplans and neighbourhood frameworks the Birkenhead 2040 Framework will require amending and adoption to reflect the current position. It is anticipated that this work will be undertaken this calendar year and be ready for committee consideration by March 2025.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no further costs associated with the development of these documents post adoption. Further development of the Scott's Quay neighbourhood framework will require additional financial resources and the delivery of the proposals within the masterplans and neighbourhood frameworks will require significant public investment to address viability issues and other constraints. Officers will continue to work closely with funding bodies, primarily Homes England and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, to secure the funding required to deliver.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The purpose behind the seeking of Members' approval to the Neighbourhood Framework and Masterplans is to provide weight to the documents as points of reference in programme planning for the various regeneration projects within their scope. The documents will provide strong supporting evidence for future grant

applications to the government and public bodies. Members' endorsement will give the documents weight to support the Local Plan.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no significant impacts in terms of staffing, ICT or assets in relation to the adoption of the masterplan /neighbourhood framework documents. Scott's Quay neighbourhood framework and the review of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework require further consideration and work which will have an impact on staff resources, and clearly the delivery phase of all masterplans and neighbourhood frameworks will have a significant impact of staff resources.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The process of approving Neighbourhood Frameworks and Masterplans does not in itself present any significant risks. However, in relation to their subsequent delivery the following key risks have been identified:

- Resourcing delivery – the staff resource required to deliver the proposals set out within the masterplans and neighbourhood frameworks is significant. This is mitigated by the additional resources for regeneration delivery secured at Policy & Resources Committee of 20th March 2024; and
- Securing external funding to deliver – the funding required to deliver the proposals set out within the masterplans and neighbourhood frameworks is significant. The Council has an excellent track record in securing external funding and has robust programme and project management arrangements in place to support the development of the necessary business cases and funding applications.

7.2 Key regeneration risks are detailed within the Directorate Risk Register and are regularly reviewed at the Regeneration & Place Departmental Management Team.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 In developing the Frameworks and Masterplans the Council has sought to engage as fully as possible with residents and key stakeholders. For most of the projects there was initial engagement work carried out before the first draft of the plans are created. This was to ensure that people's feedback was used to design the planning process and to enable the collective co-production of plans to ensure that community need is factored in.

8.2 In order for the engagement to be as inclusive and accessible as possible a wide range of different engagement methods have been used. These include in person events in different venues including schools, opportunities for full day Virtual Reality events using 3D models, walking tours, and use of BirkenEd's Place in Birkenhead Town Centre for people to take part in activities and talk to all involved. In addition, online engagement materials have included Ideas Boards, Mapping Tools as well as questionnaires. All the engagement was supported with multi-channel communications to ensure as many people as possible were aware of the

engagement opportunities. Reports of Consultation for each stage are published on the Council's "Have Your Say" webpage.

- 8.3 All the information from these initial engagement activities was then reviewed and shared with commissioned architects, planning teams and development specialists to enable the draft Masterplans and Frameworks to be produced for the next phase of engagement.
- 8.4 Once the Masterplan or Neighbourhood Framework was drafted each was required to go through two stages:
- Masterplan / Framework Phase 1 – Consultation with draft document published on the Council's "Have Your Say" webpage for a minimum of 6 weeks. Additional consultation exercises took place in the same period that the documents are on the Have Your Say website, with all the masterplans and neighbourhood frameworks subject to the recommendations in this report having exhibitions and consultation events in Ed's Place, with the exception of New Brighton Marine Promenade Masterplan where this in person exhibition was held at Wallasey Central Library; and
 - Masterplan / Framework Phase 2 – The comments and suggestions from the first stage of plan consultation were analysed and reviewed. The feedback was then used to amend the draft documents. It is the final version following this stage that this committee is being asked to consider.
- 8.5 Reports on the consultation for each masterplan and neighbourhood framework have been published on the Council's "Have Your Say" webpage and are appended to this report (appendices 3, 7, 11, 15, 19). These responses have been analysed and details of how responses have been addressed are detailed in the Consultation Analysis reports appended (appendices 4, 8, 12, 16, 20).

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. A comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in relation to the Local Plan, of which the Masterplans and Neighbourhood Frameworks form part, which can be viewed at: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/files/wirral-local-plan-eia-pre-submission.pdf/download?inline>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Neighbourhood Frameworks and Masterplans are premised on the concept of creating low carbon neighbourhoods with energy efficient homes and densities that encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport rather than the car. Improved landscaping and public spaces will create the opportunity for biodiversity net gain.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Delivery of the Neighbourhood Frameworks and Masterplans will generate a significant number of jobs in the construction process itself, and the new neighbourhoods will provide opportunities for new jobs and social interaction.

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APPENDICES

Please note that due to the number and size of the appendices for this report, they have been published separately as a supplement to the main agenda pack:

Appendix 1 – Cleveland Street Neighbourhood Masterplan
Appendix 2 - Cleveland Street Neighbourhood Masterplan – Executive Summary
Appendix 3 – Cleveland Street Neighbourhood Masterplan Consultation Report
Appendix 4 - Cleveland Street Neighbourhood Masterplan Consultation Analysis
Appendix 5 – Northside Neighbourhood Framework
Appendix 6 - Northside Neighbourhood Framework – Executive Summary
Appendix 7 – Northside Neighbourhood Framework Consultation Report
Appendix 8 - Northside Neighbourhood Framework Consultation Analysis
Appendix 9 – Scott’s Quay Neighbourhood Framework
Appendix 10 - Scott’s Quay Neighbourhood Framework – Executive Summary
Appendix 11– Scott’s Quay Neighbourhood Framework Consultation Report
Appendix 12 – Scott’s Quay Neighbourhood Framework Consultation Analysis
Appendix 13 – Dock Branch Neighbourhood Masterplan
Appendix 14 – Dock Branch Neighbourhood Masterplan – Executive Summary
Appendix 15 - Dock Branch Neighbourhood Masterplan Consultation Report
Appendix 16 – Dock Branch Neighbourhood Masterplan Consultation Analysis
Appendix 17 – New Brighton Marine Promenade Masterplan
Appendix 18– New Brighton Marine Promenade Masterplan – Executive Summary
Appendix 19 – New Brighton Marine Promenade Masterplan Consultation Report
Appendix 20 - New Brighton Marine Promenade Masterplan Consultation Analysis

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Working Together – A Council Plan for 2023-2027

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50108688/Appendix%201%20Council%20Plan%202023-27.pdf>

Birkenhead 2040 Framework

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

Wirral Local Plan 2021 – 2017 Submission Draft May 2022

[file:///s02vs-uenv01.core.wcent.wirral.gov.uk/user\\$/bootyt/Downloads/SD1%20-%20Wirral%20Local%20Plan%202021-2037%20Submission%20Draft%20May%202022%20for%20Reg%2019%20Publication-Final%20260422-compressed%20\(19\).pdf](file:///s02vs-uenv01.core.wcent.wirral.gov.uk/user$/bootyt/Downloads/SD1%20-%20Wirral%20Local%20Plan%202021-2037%20Submission%20Draft%20May%202022%20for%20Reg%2019%20Publication-Final%20260422-compressed%20(19).pdf)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Economy, Regeneration & Housing Committee in accordance with 4.2 (g) of its Terms of Reference, overseeing the progress of major projects (including major building, infrastructure or other projects involving the erection or significant alteration of major permanent structures or landmarks) undertaken by the Council directly or as enabler, funder or joint enterprise partner, including but not limited to the Wirral Growth Company LLP.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
ERH: NEIGHBOURHOOD FRAMEWORKS & MASTERPLANS APPROVAL PROCESS	6th December 2023



ECONOMY REGENERATION & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	RE-ALLOCATION OF TRANSPORT SHED TOWN DEAL GRANT FUNDING
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Transport Shed was a project involving the creation of a facility to exhibit the transport collection of National Museum Liverpool (NML). The project has been found to be undeliverable for the £6.35m budget in the timeframes required.

This report outlines an alternative proposal of a comprehensive redevelopment and expansion of the existing Wirral Transport Museum. The aim would be to greatly enhance the existing heritage visitor attraction, meet the outputs of the funding grant and ensure that the building is sustainable and fit for purpose for generations to come.

This report proposes allocating £4,500,000 to this expansion, with any funds remaining on the original allocation made available to other regeneration projects.

This report is a key decision and affects Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee is recommended to approve;

1. The Full Business Case attached as exempt Appendix 1 of this report; and
2. The re-allocation of £4,500,000 by way of grant funding to Big Heritage CIC for the delivery of the expansion and renovation of Wirral Transport Museum as set out in the Full Business Case; and
3. That the Director of Law and Corporate Services be authorised finalise any associated grant agreement with Big Heritage CIC

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Transport Shed is undeliverable for the £6.35m budget in the timeframes required for the grant.
- 1.2 The expansion of the Wirral Transport Museum will provide similar outputs to the Transport Shed proposal and this would encompass the following advantages:
 - Big Heritage as the new operators of the Wirral Transport Museum has the capacity and expertise to deliver this project. It has an extensive background in running sustainable business models for museum and visitor attraction across the region. It has prepared a business plan to support the development of the museum and secured the backing of the Heritage Lottery Fund with £230,000 to contribute to project development costs;
 - This Town Deal funding would enable the expansion and renovation of the building to facilitate more of the current collection being on display in addition to space dedicated to attracting families and young children, creating an attraction that appeals to a wide demographic; and
 - Numerous heritage visitor attractions can be linked within Birkenhead into a single effective package. These attractions are the International Battle of the Atlantic Centre (a new attraction due to replace the U-boat story), The Grasshopper (a working example of a giant steam pump used to clear water from the Mersey Railway Tunnel) and the Wirral Transport Museum.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Project funds could be reallocated to other Town Deal projects or projects within the Simplification Pathfinder Pilot. This option was discounted. The revised project at the Wirral Transport Museum has very similar outputs to the original Transport Shed project, therefore it is considered that the reallocation is the most appropriate approach in order to deliver the agreed outputs. In addition, without investment, the existing museum will remain as it is, facing challenges related to financial sustainability and its capacity to attract new visitors. This would result in Birkenhead lacking a museum capable of showcasing its full transport heritage, and the existing collection will not fulfil its potential.
- 2.2 An option considered originally in 2018 was to purchase the adjacent building to develop and expand the transport museum into it. This option was discounted in 2018 as being financially unviable, and again in 2024 for the same reasons.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Transport Shed project was one of 12 projects that forms part of the Town Deal programme. The project involved the creation of a facility to be located in Dock

Branch Neighbourhood to exhibit the transport collection of National Museum Liverpool (NML).

- 3.2 The feasibility work revealed a number of delivery challenges and had clearly demonstrated that the costs to build the new facility in this location exceeded the budget. Several alternative options have been considered with the NML team for the Transport Shed location, but delivery challenges have been encountered due to third party land ownership and cost inflation. A joint project with NML is undeliverable for the £6.35m budget in the timeframes required.
- 3.3 The proposal is that £4.5m of the £6.35m Towns Deal budget is allocated towards a project that will deliver similar outputs to the Transport Shed. The option would see the Wirral Transport Museum expanded onto the adjacent car park in a double storey extension. This could be delivered for £4.5m, with no land ownership challenges attached to this option.
- 3.4 The Wirral Transport Museum, following a decision by the Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee in March 2023, is now operated by Big Heritage CIC. This asset transfer had the full support of The Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society, with their board unanimously agreeing to support the proposal.
- 3.5 The Full Business Case (FBC) has been updated to reflect the changes detailed in this proposal (see exempt Appendix 1). The FBC gives a clear indication that the new proposal meets the outputs needed to satisfy the grant providers. The FBC sets out that the museum space is to increase to 4,000 sq m, with the area renewed and extended to be approximately 2,500 sq m. Big Heritage is confident that these measures can achieve an annual footfall of 100,000 visitors and attract 200 annual school class visits. The FBC sets out that 10 jobs are to be created by Year 1 rising to 18 jobs by Year 5, with a minimum of 40 temporary jobs created during construction process. In addition to this Big Heritage has set an ambition to have at least one apprentice post per year, and that volunteer roles are safeguarded and created with a target of 15-20 volunteers from Year 1. Appendix 1 was submitted confidentially for commercial reasons and is therefore exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 3.6 The expansion and reinterpretation of the Wirral Transport Museum collection will highlight the value of regional transport history. If revamped to modern standards and properly marketed, the museum has the potential to attract a large number of families and enthusiasts. Furthermore, the new re-development of the museum will not occur in isolation but will be part of Birkenhead's broader regeneration initiative outlined in the 2040 Framework. This framework provides a forward-thinking plan to modernise the town's-built environment in accordance with contemporary needs. This substantial investment programme, grounded in the town's heritage, aims to tailor development to the specific requirements of each neighbourhood.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 From the £6,350,431 Towns Fund allocation for Transport Shed, £456,109.90 has been spent on feasibility and design work (March 2024). If £4,500,000 is allocated to the Wirral Transport Museum, then this leaves £1,394,321.10 available for

reallocation to other projects. The process of reallocation will be considered by the Pathfinder Simplification Board in due course.

- 4.2 If the proposals within this report are approved, a Grant Funding Agreement will need to be put into place with Big Heritage, as the proposal sees the grant funding change from being Council led to third party delivery.
- 4.3 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) has confirmed that as the Council is now part of the Simplification Pathfinder Pilot programme and the sum in question falls below the £5million threshold, that no further approval is required from DLUHC for the reallocation of funds. In addition, DLUHC have confirmed that the £456,109.90 incurred on feasibility and design work as part of the original proposal is not subject to clawback.
- 4.4 There is no impact on the capital programme and no virement is required.
- 4.5 Big Heritage is currently in receipt of a grant from Central Government (Levelling Up Fund for the creation of a new attraction at Woodside called The Battle of the Atlantic Centre) and therefore have already been through the Council's financial due diligence process.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 To protect the interests of the Council and to ensure that the grant recipients utilise the grant funding as agreed, the Council will enter into a grant funding agreement with Big Heritage CIC following the approval of the full business case.
- 5.2 The flow of funds from the Council to Big Heritage will need to comply with the regime applicable to state subsidy and project proposers will be responsible for ensuring that they comply with State Subsidy Control obligations. Any offer of financial assistance to project proposers will be subject to the Subsidy Control regime.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Due to the project shifting from primarily a Council led project to delivery via Third Party this should free up resources within the Council's Regeneration Delivery Team, and therefore this proposal should not have any negative impacts on Council resources or staffing.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The grant funding needs to be delivered by March 2026. There is a risk that planning permission and other delays may cause the funding deadline to slip. This risk will sit with Big Heritage to manage, however the Council will monitor this to ensure that delays are kept to a minimum and that milestones are set and adhered to.
- 7.2 There is a risk relating of the financial stability of Big Heritage CIC, in that they do not fulfil their obligations to deliver on the outputs of this fund. This is mitigated against as the terms of the lease include reversion of the asset back to the Council or to a similar CIC if that situation occurs. If the Museum did revert back to the Council, the

Council would then be responsible for its repair and maintenance again. However, the lease contains details that Big Heritage should carry out all necessary repairs and maintenance, with checks in place to ensure it meets these requirements. The Council has undertaken due diligence on Big Heritage and have entered into a grant agreement with them as part of levelling up funding grant agreement for the transformation for the U-boat Museum at Woodside.

- 7.3 There is a risk that the redesign for the museum does not match the stakeholder expectations, and as such could lead to reputational damage to the Council. However, mitigation is in place with Big Heritage CIC being a local organisation which has delivered similar tourist attractions in the region and are therefore familiar with the area and local stakeholders. As part of the planning application process, local residents consultation will be undertaken. Design plans will be displayed in the entrance to the museum with comment slips for visitors to provide feedback on designs and plans. In addition, a working group is setup within the council, with members of Museum Service within The Council providing advice and guidance on the direction of development.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Museums Service Strategy consultation included comments such as “the Priory, Williamson and Transport Museum are jewels in the crown of the borough and should be cherished and looked after for future generations”. This proposal seeks to ensure that the Museum is here for future generations.
- 8.2 The Town Deal Board and the Council Leader have been consulted on this proposal. The viewpoints acknowledged that although the unfeasibility of a new museum with NML’s collection is a not the outcome that was envisioned, it is a positive that the funds will be going towards creating an enhanced heritage attraction within Central Birkenhead.
- 8.3 The Heritage Champion for Wirral Council would welcome the additional financial support to the Museum, which would complement the investment already secured into many other heritage attractions in Birkenhead, including the Birkenhead Priory, Hamilton Square and the ambition to achieve UNESCO World Heritage Status at Birkenhead Park.

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 (EIA) 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 project has conducted an equality impact statement, see appendix 2.
- 9.3 An overarching equality impact assessment has also been completed in regard to The Local Plan. This report makes no material changes at this stage, the document can be viewed here:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The implications of changing the proposal from constructing a new building to an extension onto an existing building is likely to decrease the environmental impacts of the project.
- 10.2 The reimagined facility is also committed to working towards a carbon-neutral future, incorporating alternative energy sources and actively reducing its carbon footprint.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Museum will lead to creation of local employment. As a CIC all profits made by Big Heritage will be either reinvested into the Museum itself or into other Birkenhead attractions.
- 11.2 The Museum contributes to the wider visitor attractions of Birkenhead. One of the key objectives of The Birkenhead Framework 2040 is to ensure all our communities share more fully in the wealth we generate and in the economic assets that the Council house. Creating a new and improved museum seeks to improve conditions, create jobs and higher skill levels and to ultimately improve the community wealth of all that live and work in the area.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Luke Bithell**
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Full Business Case (Exempt)
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 3: Wirral Transport Museum (Building Plan)

Appendix 1 was submitted confidentially for commercial reasons and is therefore exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The appendix files may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact Luke Bithell (lukebithell@wirral.gov.uk) if you would like this document in an accessible format.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Birkenhead Framework 2040
Museums Service Strategy consultation
Big Heritage Woodside Proposal
Wirral Plan (2021-2026)
Wirral Transport Museum Full Business Case

Officer Decision Notice: A TOWN DEAL FOR BIRKENHEAD – APPROVAL OF FULL BUSINESS CASES

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee in accordance with Section C of its Terms of Reference in, “economic development, including but not limited to infrastructure, enterprise, skills and seeking, securing and managing external funds to achieve that, directly or in partnership with joint ventures and external companies or bodies as well as with the Combined Authority and government bodies”.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE : ASSET TRANSFER OF WIRRAL TRANSPORT MUSEUM	9 March 2023

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Wirral Transport Museum



Introduction

This document serves as the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the planned redevelopment of Wirral Transport Museum. The project aims to modernise and expand the museum's facilities to improve educational offerings, accessibility, and overall visitor experience. This EqIA assesses how the redevelopment plans will impact various groups, particularly those with protected characteristics, to ensure the museum serves as an inclusive public space.

This assesment has been conducted to Identify and address potential impacts of the redevelopment on diverse groups, ensuring no group is disproportionately disadvantaged, to comply with legal frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010 and to promote inclusivity and accessibility in all aspects of the museum's redesign and programming.

We have worked with key stakeholder groups to gather information on current museum usage and accessibility needs.

Interviews with special education experts and representatives from disability advocacy organisations have also been conducted to provide us with a set of guidelines to maximise accessibility throughout the redevelopment programme and in the running of the museum.



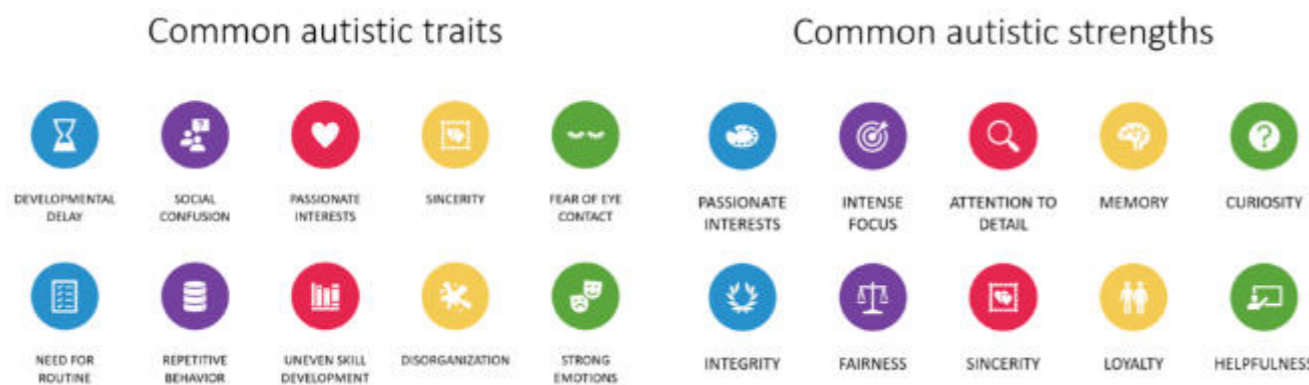
It's not just about travel. It's about *people*.

Wirral Transport Museum houses a remarkable collection, but struggles to engage with marginalised audiences and currently has a number of barriers to inclusion for people with physical and learning disabilities . Our goal is to create not just a sustainable museum, but a community asset that accessible to all.

Disability Access study:

A member of the Big Heritage staff with experience in accessibility - herself disabled - conducted a thorough assessment of the Transport Museum project. Her findings and suggestions are covered in detail on the following pages.

A quick note on terminology: in this document we refer to *neurodivergent* museum visitors. This includes individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ADHD, ADD, dyslexia or other neurological or developmental conditions that cause the brain to work in a different way to the vast majority of people (classified as 'neurotypical'). This differs from the term *neurodiversity* which encompasses all individuals, both neurodivergent and neurotypical.



Key take-aways:

1. The single most important thing we can ensure is staff training on accessibility. An informed and educated staff is our most valuable asset. This can comprise showing staff videos to familiarise them with different disabilities and typical access requirements, alongside a breakdown of what accessibility features our company and museums have available so they are able to answer questions and offer support to museum visitors.
2. Disabled people should be consulted directly. The 'Nothing about us, without us' approach is best practice.
3. Disability access should be embedded into the entire museum experience and disabled museum visitors shouldn't be made to feel any different from non-disabled visitors due to their access needs. There should not be a 'mainstream' museum experience and a disabled museum experience, they should be one and the same (i.e. disability-inclusive, not disability-specific programming).
4. When it comes to neurodivergent accessibility in particular, many museums focus mainly on children and families and fail to address the access needs of adults.
5. There is no one-size fits all when it comes to disability access. This means implementing a range of features and being open to feedback from museum visitors.

Common ways to improve access

Below are some of the common accessibility features that are taken into consideration for disabled museum visitors, which many people will be familiar with:

1. Level access for wheelchair users and people who use mobility aids like walkers, canes, and crutches. This includes alternative routes, such as ramps or lifts, where stairs are required to access areas of the site and museum (c.f. tram-lines and dropped curbs in the transport museum will need to be taken into consideration). Stair climbers may be used where ramps/lifts are not possible.
2. Automatic doors or door stays for maintaining door opening hands-free and all doors of sufficient width for wheelchair access.
3. Accessible design for any installations and exhibition spaces to ensure adequate manoeuvring space for wheelchairs, heights of text/displays, access to hands-on elements.
4. Wheelchairs and walkers with fold-out seats or portable seating available to borrow.
5. Hearing loops and subtitles or text copies of audio installations for d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing museum visitors.
6. Regularly scheduled BSL guided tours for Deaf museum visitors (BSL lead is preferred, over translated tours, but requires a larger project).
7. Braille, described audio, audio tours, and tactile access for blind and visually impaired museum visitors.
8. Accessible design for installations; in particular text-size, contrasting colours (for cases, walls, floors, not just text), for maximum legibility and maneuverability for blind and visually impaired museum visitors.
9. Adequate lighting and clearly identified routes through any areas of low-light.
10. Information welcoming users of assistance dogs, and any potential information required for their navigation of the museum site (e.g. in the transport museum in-situ road markings, in-use tram lines, etc).
11. Multiple methods to contact museum staff (e.g. telephone, contact form/e-mail, live chat, etc).
12. Disabled toilet facilities, including changing table facilities for older children and adults with disabilities than can be used independently and by carers if possible (see: [Changing Places Toilets \[changing-places.org\]](http://changing-places.org)) If one is not provided, then the location of the closest one should be noted
13. Benches and seating opportunities through the museum for individuals with limited mobility and who require regular opportunities to rest (e.g. people with chronic pain).
14. Tickets for carers/companions of d/Deaf and disabled museum visitors.





Additional ways to improve access

Although not yet standard, there are also several features that can - and should - be considered to make museums more accessible for neurodivergent individuals:

1. Resources to help people prepare for their visit ahead of time (e.g. visual stories), maps of museum layouts available for download (with sensory information and routes included), a list of typical busy and quiet times, FAQs to cover common information requests (e.g. what you can expect when you visit, how to identify staff, etc). This should include:
 - 'How to get to the museum' and a local public transport guide.
 - Multiple ways to get in touch with the museum (e.g. telephone, e-mail/contact form, etc).
 - Specific opening sessions with low-sound, low-light, limited numbers, sensory activities etc (c.f. there are pros and cons to these sessions which should be discussed and considered).
2. A dedicated quiet room for individuals to access at any time.
3. Menu of any on-site cafes and facilities and whether bringing your own food is allowed.
4. Ear defenders and sunflower lanyards for hidden disabilities that can be borrowed without requiring pre-booking.
5. Sensory backpacks that can be borrowed (often include maps, activity suggestions, (stim) toys, ear defenders, lanyards, communication cards, dark glasses, etc).
6. Museum programming designed for specific neurodivergent groups (c.f. there are pros and cons to these sessions which should be discussed and considered).
7. Simplified interpretation available and embedded within displays and exhibitions.
8. Alternatives for queuing during busy times for entry or activities (e.g. sunflower lanyards or a quiet room with a waiting time system).
9. Dedicated apps for museum accessibility (e.g. Infititeach).

How do we make getting to the museum more accessible?

1. We need to review all current methods of getting to the museum site (e.g. walking, cycling, driving, public transportation, etc) and provide detailed information on how to use them, where to park car, nearest accessible parking, etc.
2. Do we consider a shuttle from the ferry terminal (during peak times)?
3. They may be a divisive subject in some areas, but rentable e-scooters and similar personal mobility vehicles may be an option for some museum visitors to get between sites.
4. Research travel mentors and travel guides. Could we help to offer sessions on how to familiarise yourself with public transport, how it's used, etc? Many people with disabilities rely on public transportation, but many neurodivergent people find using public transportation a particularly stressful and overwhelming experience. [It's everyones journey - making transport more inclusive](#) (autism.org.uk)
5. The IWM Duxford offers accessible on-site transportation, available by request on the day. Beamish does similarly and their WAVs are historic vehicles, rather than modern ones: [Accessibility at Beamish. The Living Museum of the North](#)
6. On open days, when parking may be limited, offering a disabled persons drop-off point close to the museum would be recommended.
7. A map with recommended accessible routes both to and on site should be provided.

How do we make heritage transport more accessible? How have others done this?

1. Due to the age, design and historic nature of trams in the collection, there is likely to be a high step to board, between 30 to 40cm above the ground and there will often be one further step inside the tram of around the same height. We will need to research whether a level access platform can be provided, as well as a temporary ramp (such as those used at National Rail stations) to make any trams/buses wheelchair accessible. This may not be possible for all vehicles currently in use.
2. Evacuation procedures would need to be considered for visitors with limited or restricted mobility.
3. Crich Tramway Village requires booking ahead of time for their wheelchair accessible tram (which uses a wheelchair lift installed in the tram): [Access-Information-for-Visitors-2023-Review.pdf \(tramway.co.uk\)](#) Booking in advance is not ideal, but if required due to limits of staffing etc it should be considered as an option.
4. Crich also provide a buggy park for those riding the tram, which is a great idea.
5. In addition to level access, internal seating should be reviewed and assessed, where possible accessible seating should be made available (e.g. in trams where only narrow wooden benches currently exist). These adaptations can potentially be removable to be fitted only when required.
6. The historic trams on-site can be quite an intense sensory experience; they can be very loud and ear defenders should be available for anyone wanting to visit the outside of the museum and for those riding the trams. We should also provide a detailed 'what to expect' when on the trams guide (e.g. you may feel it shudder or thump, explain track points, etc). However, it should be noted that not all neurodivergent people experience sensory stimulus the same way and for many museum visitors these loud noises are a big part of the fun!
7. Dedicated viewing points for the moving trams with a key/legend on what to look out for, where to get the best views, etc.
8. For the stationary vehicles within the transport museum, for those that will be open for the public to access, we should ensure level access where possible and alternative methods to view any inaccessible areas (e.g. second levels that require the use of stairs that cannot be made accessible due to the historic nature of the collections).

Is there a known link between people with autism and an interest in transport?

The focus of special interest subjects is wide-ranging, however some sources report that approximately 20% of autistic children would consider 'transportation and vehicles' one of their special interests. There are less specific figures available for autistic adults, it would follow that it would be 20% or less and anecdotally it remains a common enough special interest subject to often be a stereotype of ASD. There is some research to suggest that autistic men are more likely to have a special interest subject in transportation, but this is not to say that autistic women won't also have an interest in this subject!

Special interest subjects are a key feature of autism and research shows that engaging with special interest subjects (when not excessive) was significant for the self-reported wellbeing of autistic adults (Special interests and subjective wellbeing in autistic adults - PubMed (nih.gov))

There are many features of transport that might interest autistic individuals:

1. Wheels and mechanised parts with repetitive motions may appeal to sensory interests, such as watching them and stimming objects similarly.
2. Many vehicles can be categorised into different models, types, sizes, etc. For some individuals with ASD, the ability to organise objects into categories is very appealing.
3. Transport often comes with schedules, routes, and timetables. This, too, appeals to many people with ASD and is in line with a need for predictability and the inclination to memorise and recite information.
4. Transportation has features that can support an enduring and developing interest across a lifetime. For instance, many children love the train characters in videos and TV shows such as Thomas the Tank Engine (which is its own area of special interest for many autistic children). For older children and adults, model trains can be fun to build and have mechanical features that can be interesting to take apart and reassemble.
5. Plus, transport is ubiquitous and can be accessed in some form relatively easily on a day to day basis.

For individuals who do have a special interest in features of the Transport Museum (be it buses, trams, engines, transport routes, timetables and schedules, etc) every person will want to engage with those subjects in different ways. Some people may be interested in speaking with others about them, interacting with them in a tactile way, reading and learning as much as possible, completing collections of models, drawing and making their own records, etc.

Autistic museum visitors should be able to indulge in their special interests comfortably and we should provide a way for them to express their desires if we are not fulfilling those needs (e.g. a way to tell us 'I would like to be able to...').

Individuals with a special interest in transportation who are made to feel welcome at the Transport Museum may be interested in a type of entry ticket that allows for multiple visits, rather than single one-off entry as they are likely to want to return again and again.

There's no real digital presence for the site, will changing this help with access? Live streaming?

In recent surveys on museum accessibility, 95% of disabled respondents report seeking access information ahead of time and 85% of those respondents first point of enquiry is a museum's website. If access information is unavailable or unsuitable, the majority of these individuals may change their intention to visit the museum, particularly neurodivergent individuals.

This suggests it is very important that we provide an online presence for the site and one which addresses the needs of potential museum visitors.

YouTube is an incredibly popular platform for people with specialist interest subjects, which includes transportation. YouTube videos can easily be shared on other social media platforms, directing people to a single resource rather than splitting production across different profiles. A regular online presence, even with a simple production value, can increase both museum visitors but also raise the profile of the museum with an online audience who may not be able to access the museum site itself.

(For reference: [Cultural Content - Good YouTube, Bad YouTube](#) (substack.com))

However social media platforms such as TikTok should not be discounted either, each platform meets a target different audience although there is some overlap. A great example is the meteoric rise of 'celebrity trainspotter' Francis Bourgeois, from geeky beginnings to his own star-studded TV show and railway-themed Gucci collaborations. His infectious enthusiasm (and good looks) has had a profound effect on the public perception of 'trainspotters', making it seem like a classically quirky British pastime rather than a niche interest with no wider appeal.

YouTube allows for livestreaming and given the popularity of channels belonging to individuals with special interest subjects in transportation, it may be that having 'guest streamers' is a possible collaboration to explore (e.g. plane and train spotters). Many neurodivergent individuals also experience and seek out ASMR, which has large presence on YouTube, and there may be aspects of the Transport Museum that can fulfil this remit as well (e.g. 'slow television' of engine re-building, the repetitive sound of machines, etc). There's a new wave of both professional presenters and amateur content creators challenging the 'geeky' perception of hobbies. From legendary names like James May and Bruce Dickinson to breakout Youtubers like Mark Rober, Simone Giertz, engineering, history, and the love of giant machines are no longer of the preserve of a small minority. The trick for our museum is simply making it accessible, fun, and...endearingly quirky enough to attract a wider audience.

A recent report looked into the reasons why people follow museum and heritage organisations on social media across different platforms, so we may want to consider this when developing any strategies: [TEA Break | Following Arts and Cultural Organisations on Social Media](#)



Thoughts from a potential volunteer

JAMES LONGMAN

James is a young adult from Birkenhead with a passion for trains, trams and buses. James has Autistic Spectrum Disorder and lives with his parents. He is now too old to access many of the activities and services he used to enjoy provided by the local authority. He works one day a week in a Café, but struggles to find other meaningful activities throughout the week.

James has visited Wirral Transport Museum on many occasions and would love to be able to volunteer his time and knowledge if the infrastructure was in place to support him to do this. We invited James and his older brother Dan to look around the museum, and tell us what things he liked and disliked, how we could make all aspects of the museum and its collection more accessible to him.

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IN JAMES' WORDS:

“ I like being able to sit on all the buses and trams, even when they are not moving. I'd like to come here every week and help out. I am very good and cleaning things carefully, so I would like to come and clean the buses and make them shiny. I would be proud of my work. I would make new friends here and would like to have a pint in the pub over the road after work was done. ”

IN HIS BROTHER DAN'S WORDS:

“ James' passion since childhood is transport, and we've taken him all over the UK to enjoy this hobby. It's always been a disappointment that he can independently travel to Wirral Transport Museum, but no provision exists to allow him to volunteer in some capacity. He puts 100% effort and focus into any task he's given, so he would be an asset to the museum if there was some basic structure in place for him to follow.

Big Heritage's intentions for the museum collection are exciting for all Birkenhead residents, but especially the many people with ASD like James who have an affinity for transport. It's the first time anyone has ever meaningfully asked James for his opinion and advice on something like this. What a refreshing approach. ”



Thoughts from a current volunteer

DAVE BIRCH

Dave is a retired bus driver who currently volunteers at Wirral Transport Museum. Dave brings over decades of bus experience to the table and was awarded multiple national awards by Arriva and Crosville before retirement, making him one of the safest bus drivers who's ever worked in the UK.

In recent years, Dave's wife and son have both passed away. He has a daughter who he still sees regularly, but his two days a week volunteering at Wirral Transport Museum are his main social activity during the week.

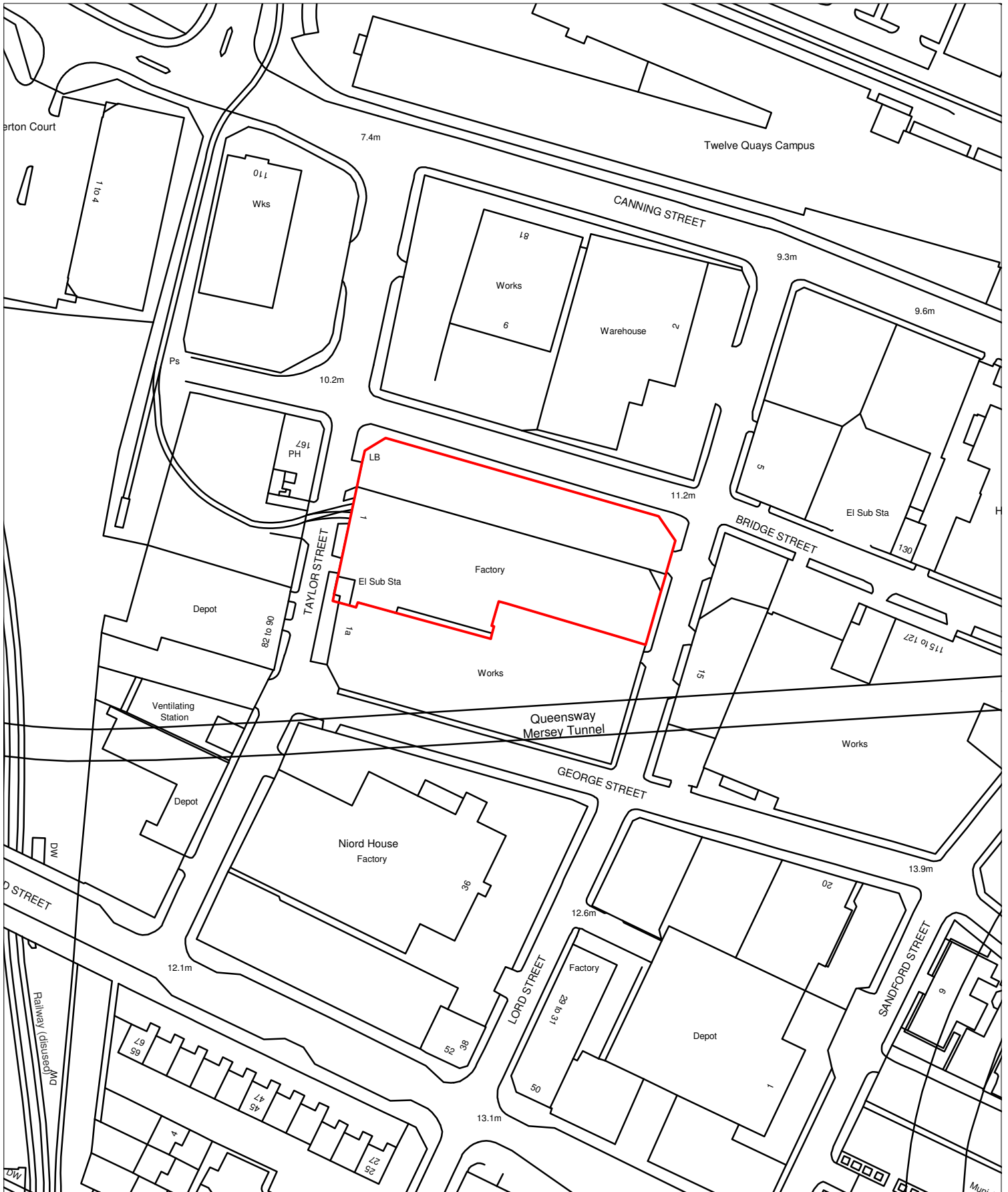
Older Men at the Margins was a two-year study to understand how men aged 65 and over from different social backgrounds and circumstances experienced loneliness and social isolation. It also explored the formal and informal ways they sought to stay connected with others and feel less lonely.

For all of our plans to bring new volunteers into the museum, it is for these reasons that we are committed to supporting the current volunteer group.

IN DAVE'S WORDS:

“ I get so much out of volunteering here, and it allows me to meet up regularly with friends to work on a project together. I'd love to do more though. I spent my life driving buses, and I would happily volunteer to drive the vintage buses every day of the week for my own enjoyment and for the enjoyment of visitors.

I'm excited about the future plans....the place needs new young members, some new ideas. It's looking tired, but just needs some care to bring it back to life. ”



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ECONOMY REGENERATION & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	MARITIME KNOWLEDGE HUB
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The derelict Grade II listed Hydraulic Tower on Tower Road, Birkenhead is the subject of a proposal from the landowner (Peel) to deliver a Maritime Knowledge Hub (MKH) which seeks to create a BREEAM Excellent, industry-led, world class centre of excellence for maritime business growth, innovation and sector development. The investment sought will seek to repurpose an existing water-side asset which sits at the heart of the Left Bank regeneration area to create a destination for maritime collaboration, with water access for R&D, testing and training and views across to Liverpool's iconic skyline. The economic impact assessment contained in the Outline Business Case (OBC) appended to this report identifies that the scheme could deliver net economic benefits of £18.18m, creating 48,750 sq ft of business, teaching and workspace and 275 jobs.

This Committee considered the subject matter on 27 March 2024 when it agreed to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to further develop the proposals for the development of a Maritime Knowledge Hub on the site of the hydraulic tower with a view to bringing back a more detailed report to a future meeting of this Committee. Members also requested more information on a number of matters including a heritage solution, changing the arrangements around the rent headroom, asset acquisition, loan finance and the creation of an SPV (Special Purchase Vehicle).

This report sets out the outcome of this work for members consideration. Specifically, the committee is being asked to consider the transaction set out in the report and choose whether or not to agree to the heads of terms.

The ability to proceed with this development is reliant on getting to a position of an agreed Heads of Terms with the Council, an agreed funding model with the LCRCA which will then be subject to passing the public sector subsidy assessment. In addition, due to a change in circumstances, the developer, Peel, will need to revisit the issues relating to planning consent. Following Committee's decision there will be a requirement for the LCRCA to consider the matter and consider whether or not it wishes to invest in the scheme. The report proposal directly supports the Council Plan (2023-27) through the key theme of working together to deliver people focused regeneration.

This decision affects Seacombe Ward, but the subject asset is close to Bidston and St James and Birkenhead and Tranmere Wards.

This is a key decision.

Appendices 2, 3 and 4 of this report are exempt from publication pursuant to paragraph 3 of the part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) because it contains or refers to information relating to the financial and business affairs of Peel and the Council and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee is requested to:

- (1) note the work completed since the previous update to Committee on this matter.
- (2) note the regeneration benefits that the delivery of a Maritime Knowledge Hub on this site would deliver along with the risks to the Council should the committee choose to progress with the proposal.
- (3) note the risks to the Council should committee choose to progress the proposal.
- (4) direct the Director of Regeneration and Place to bring discussions on this matter to a close with Peel LLP and not proceed to agree the Heads of Terms.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Council is working with Peel and partners to explore delivery of a Maritime Knowledge Hub.
- 1.2 Based on the information provided and due to the structure of the proposal, the Council would be exposed to the risk of operating the asset and servicing the proposed lease over a period of 50 years.
- 1.3 The risk placed on the Council's finances is not justified in comparison to the benefits outlined in the report.
- 1.4 It is not at all likely an alternative transaction structure, or proposal, would be developed that would mitigate the Council's risk that would be within the time horizon needed to access funding that is available to the LCRCA.
- 1.5 Should the Committee agree the proposal the expectation would be a contractual agreement would follow and at that stage the Council would be contractually bound to the scheme, subject to the terms. The Council cannot be legally bound to the Heads of Terms before consideration by the LCRCA or before the transaction has been considered by the Government's Subsidy Advice Unit and their advice received and taken into account by the Council before a final decision is made. This would delay any final decision and may impact the LCRCA's ability to deliver freeport seed funding to the region.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A range of options have been considered in preparing this report and these are set out in more detail in Appendix 1. These include a do nothing option, a third party investing in the property, the council acquiring the property, a different transaction, a different solution on the same site, delivery of a Maritime Knowledge Hub on a different site.
- 2.2 In summary the Council and partners have looked carefully at a range of other options over a prolonged period of time to bring forward a scheme on this site, however these have not been successful. Therefore, the only realistic options in front of the Committee are a 'do nothing' option or to progress with a scheme. Following a 'do nothing' option alternative solutions may be found in due course.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The project is proposed to deliver 48,750 sq ft (gross) collaboration hub, comprising of a technology lab, training centre and dedicated workspace and will be built to a BREEAM Excellent standard.
- 3.2 Since the last report to committee, the amount of grant funding that is possible to be accessed has varied and as a result the scheme has been reduced in size by c10%. This will mean that the planning consent for the scheme will need to be revisited. Grant funding is proposed to be £8m Freeport Seed Fund and £1.7m of Wirral

Waters Investment Fund, subject to LCRCA approval. The balance of the capital needed will be obtained by accessing private finance. The proposal will see £21.1m of funding being put into the scheme. The private funding would be secured by the Council taking a 50 year head lease of the finished building with the Council paying a rent to the funder but gathering a rent from the occupiers of the building. This is known as a lease wrap transaction. This in effect creates an annuity for the funder and it is not uncommon for the initial funder to sell this as a commodity, given that the level of return is guaranteed into the future as the Council is be compelled to pay its rent, regardless of the level of rent it collects from the occupiers, and is a good covenant.

- 3.3 Peel would assign a long lease to the Funder and receive a sum of money based on the value of the headlease to the Funder. This is estimated to be £11.4m. The net realisation value is £21.1m of which £9.7m would be found from the Council and the Combined Authority with the balance being Peel's responsibility. Any surplus for Peel should be added to the subsidy for the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and should be deducted from the grants in order to comply with the legislation. Grants cannot exceed the amount of the viability gap being the estimated costs of construction less the value of the asset to Peel when completed. Although this is the best transaction that is acceptable to Peel and the LCRCA, subject to their approval, at this time, there are still very significant risks to the Council should the Committee choose to agree to the proposal. It is clear that the reasons for considering the investment are one of regeneration, and this would not therefore equate to a transaction at best consideration for the Council.
- 3.4 The accommodation is proposed to be a mix of office suites, suitable for a range of uses including education, flexible space, and a Café. Peel have worked to identify several organisations that are interested in taking space within the proposed building. These are from the maritime sector. Should the matter go forward then these would be converted to pre-lets which would, once a threshold of 80% occupation at certain specific terms was reached, would then trigger the scheme build. This threshold is common for a pre let scheme.
- 3.5 Following the committee meeting in March, Peel have further developed their proposals for the site and have presented an Outline Business Case (OBC) to the Council. This is contained in Appendix 2 to this report. Appendix 2 is exempt from publication pursuant to paragraph 3 of the part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains or refers to information relating to the financial and business affairs of Peel and the Council. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.
- 3.6 Peel will not be able to progress the proposals further without the guarantee that the Council will, if the parameters of the heads of terms are met, commit to the scheme. The reason for this is that to progress beyond this point they would have to significantly invest in the scheme and start to incur significant costs. Therefore, should the Committee agree to the proposal then it would commit the Council to the scheme to permit its progress, but then also expose the Council to all the risks that are set out in the report. It would however also release the regeneration opportunity.

- 3.7 As set out in the March report, there are several very significant risks that the Council would be exposed to if the Committee chose to accept the heads of terms and the transaction continued to a contractual commitment.
- 3.8 The mechanism of how rent increases would be calculated is different for the rent the Council would pay the investor and the rent paid to the Council by occupiers. Rent to the investor would be protected by a capped and collared upward only rent, which would be linked to RPI (Retail Prices Index) and therefore guaranteed to grow, whereas the rent reviews of occupiers of the assets would reflect market rent at the time of negotiation. It is not at all possible to be definitive about the amount of deficit that the Council would face in this scenario as the period of the lease is long (50 years) and the Council would not be able to calculate future growth of RPI or market rent.
- 3.9 The normal mitigation for this would be to set a significant gap between the rent in and rent out to provide sufficient buffer over the term of the lease. It is not the case in this proposal. This level of rent is at the very top end of the market in the area and the differential between this and rent out to an investor is not sufficient to give the Council comfort that this will be sufficient to cover this risk for the lease period. The Council will be bound by the agreement for a period of 50 Years. Fluctuations in the economy would also generate risks for the Council. The Council would also be exposed to other risks, such as changes in working practices, this industry and other societal and environmental factors such as climate change. Any estimated losses to the Council over the 50 year period would have to be added to the value of the subsidy for the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- 3.10 The Council has been provided with good information about how the project would be funded, the Council's role in this. Setting aside the issue of finance and the risks therein, it is reasonable to anticipate that the physical scheme is practically achievable, and Peel have a track record of delivery of BREEAM Excellent schemes in the area. There is risk that the scheme once in detail design has been worked up, increases in cost. There is limited information about how the property would operate. The intent is to deliver a Maritime Knowledge Hub and not just deliver another office building. There is limited understanding in the OBC, about how the Maritime aspect of the building would be developed beyond that of similar businesses being in the same building and having access to the docks system.
- 3.11 The property would also see a mix of occupation styles, including flexible space and a Café. There is no modelling to demonstrate if these types of uses would be profitable or would receive sufficient take up to be commercially viable. Other accommodation within the building may be set out for specific uses, which if brought to an end may mean in the future that the building would need to be reconfigured, which would have cost and rent implications.
- 3.12 The rent out to the investor would grow within set parameters. It is extremely likely that rent from occupiers would grow at a slower pace than this. In large part this will be due to the very different nature of the rents.
- 3.13 There is a value to the lease because the Council, with its strong covenant, will pay rent at set parameters over a period of 50 years. For the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 the economic advantage to Peel of obtaining from the Funder funds

in excess of the market value of the completed MKH would be added to the value of the public subsidy already comprised in the grants.

- 3.14 The Council has previously invested in the Hythe Building and Millars Quay to support the regeneration of the area. It is noted that the Council has by the nature of these investments accepted a range of risks that will take time to crystallise or not. At the end of the 50 year period the Council would have the option to purchase the Maritime Knowledge Hub or not for a limited period.
- 3.15 The Council has experience of delivery of a specialist building, a Maritime Knowledge Hub in Tranmere, focused on the Maritime industry already. This was developed in 2000 and is currently not used by marine industry. Although the settings and buildings are different it does give a clear indication of the type of issues and risks the Council could face in the future, noting that the lease terms are for a period of 50 years and that the grant funding would likely focus the use of the asset to a specific business sector.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Section 151 officer has reviewed the proposed scheme and the associated financial consequences. Although it is anticipated that the scheme could generate economic growth the overall costs of the scheme to the Council mean that it does not represent value for money. The current, challenging, financial position of the Council must also be considered in respect of both the revenue budget and the availability of reserves to smooth any unexpected costs. Given these considerations and the overall financial viability of the scheme it is not currently possible to recommend proceeding with the proposed scheme.
- 4.2 Consultant costs have been incurred in assessing the viability of the scheme and the-long term financial implications for the Council due to the complex nature of the proposed arrangements.
- 4.3 The proposals would result in the Council taking on the liability for a headlease on the site for a period of 50 years. This would require the Council to pay rent at an initially agreed level that would increase annually by RPI with a cap/collar mechanism limiting the changes. The Council would be responsible for void costs (rent and service charge), unrecoverable service charge costs and refurbishment as required in the future. The Council would need to accept the risk around lettings and voids which could have a significant financial impact over the proposed term depending on both the macroeconomic conditions and the overall success of regeneration within the area.
- 4.4 The proposed terms of this lease expose the Council to a significant degree of risk. Although there are provisions within the agreement with Peel in relation to the initial occupation of the building.
- 4.5 The Council would benefit from any business rates generated by the site, however in considering the merits of the scheme and its financial implications the Council is not able to consider business rates as part of the transaction for the purpose of the Subsidy Control legislation. There is also no future certainty around the business

rates retention pilot which supports Wirral Waters Investment Fund (WWIF) funding or indeed the overall future of business rates.

- 4.5 All reasonable financial projections in relation to the scheme demonstrate there would be a net cost to the Council over a significant period of time. It is unlikely that a position would be realised which would not lead to an ongoing subsidy being required. Although this assumption needs to be balanced against the wider economic and regeneration benefits of the scheme it must also be cognisant of the current financial position of the Council and its limited capacity to absorb any additional costs in the short term. The future financial implications must also be considered alongside the other commitments that have already been made, such as Wirral Waters, and the risks the Council is already subject to.
- 4.6 This report identifies the risks around income streams not being sufficient to cover the buildings costs. This has the potential for significant financial risk if this is deemed an onerous contract. This is where unavoidable costs outweigh the economic benefits and would result in an immediate charge to revenue for the full period to set up a provision to cover the expected costs of those future financial liabilities. This would be fully explored as part of the recommended future report on the details of the proposal. It is, however, likely that the MKH would be deemed an onerous contract because over 50 years the rental income received is unlikely to cover the outgoings. Members are referred to information in Appendix 3.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is a legal requirement in the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (“the Act”) for the Council to refer all proposed subsidies that exceed in total £10m to the Subsidy Advice Unit (SAU) of the Competition and Markets Authority for an advisory report on whether the grants would comply with the 7 Principles of the Act. The difference between the cost to deliver the scheme and the likely market value of the building on completion could be more than £10m and therefore, the subsidy (i.e., economic advantage to Peel) would exceed £10m. That report would have to be considered by the Council before it decided whether or not to agree to its share of the total subsidy which would enable Peel to construct the buildings so as to lease them to the Council for the purpose of use by advanced maritime technology firms.
- 5.2 The SAU would require the Council to draw up its own written Assessment of Compliance with the 7 Principles of the Act which are summarised in appendix 6:
- 5.3 The Assessment of Compliance document for the SAU would have to be accompanied by a business case, a value for money assessment and an independent valuation of the viability gap. A reliance on Peel’s own surveyors would not be regarded as due diligence by the SAU. Additional costs would be generated by undertaking this further work.
- 5.4 Prior to entering into an agreement the Council would have to consider whether it was a transaction at best value / consideration given the risk that rent payable to the funder would exceed the market rent. The Council would need to understand what the proposals for the operation of the asset were and what procurement route would be required to identify an operator to manage the asset together with the likely costs.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Council would benefit from the lease of the building for a period of 50 years. Currently, the Council does not have a team available that would operate the Maritime Knowledge Hub in terms of overseeing tenant's arrangements etc. Therefore, additional resource would be required to operate it. It would be likely that the Council would seek a third-party operator with the appropriate skills to operate a Maritime Knowledge Hub. The detail of the operation of the hub and costs is not clear in the OBC.
- 6.2 The Council would be accepting the whole risk of owning and operating the Maritime Knowledge Hub and the inherent risk of a lease wrap transaction, this is magnified by the closeness of rent in and out, risk around voids, operating costs, and rent frees in the future to facilitate lettings. The implications of which are set out in the report. The LCRCA to protect its investment is likely to restrict the use of the asset. Future refurbishment of the building would be a Council cost, either by investment of Capital or provision of future rent free periods.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 In March the committee was advised of the risks known at that time when the matter was previously considered. Peel have now provided more information about the scheme and as a result information about the risks of the project has been updated. Due to the commercial nature of the project these risks are contained within Appendix 3. Appendix 3 is exempt from publication pursuant to paragraph 3 of the part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains or refers to information relating to the financial and business affairs of Peel and the Council. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.
- 7.2 The Committee when considering this proposal need to balance these risks against the potential regeneration benefits of the proposal. It will also need to take a careful view about the Council's finances and whether the opportunity of delivering this scheme outweighs the risk to the Council's finances, particularly in the short term. The Director of Finance would need to be satisfied that investment in the MKH on the terms proposed would meet the tests for prudential borrowing.
- 7.3 To do nothing would mean that the Grade II listed Hydraulic Tower would not be brought back into an economic use. Although the Council has an interest in listed buildings, due to its statutory duties, it does not have a direct responsibility at present towards this building as an owner of land. The regeneration benefits associated with the scheme would not be crystallised at this time. On the other hand, the money borrowed to meet the cost of the grant could be redeployed for other purposes e.g. to facilitate the performance of its statutory duties and the Council would avoid the risk of MKH running at a loss for some or all of the 50 year arrangement.
- 7.4 The Council will be exposed to all the usual risks of operating the asset from when it takes the lease. Although Peel has done a good piece of work to articulate how the asset would operate, it remains unclear as to the detail of how the Council as the owner of the asset would deliver a Maritime Knowledge Hub and what services and additional activity beyond occupation of the building by complementary occupiers

would take place. It would be likely that the Council would have to commission or otherwise enable this additional activity as it does not have the expertise to deliver this.

- 7.5 The Council has been asked to agree to the Heads of Terms prior to the matter been considered by the LCRCA. This is based on an outline and not a detailed business case. Should the Committee agree the Heads of Terms the expectation would be a contractual agreement and at that stage the Council would be contractually bound to the scheme, subject to the terms. The Council cannot be legally bound to the Heads of Terms before consideration by the LCRCA or before the transaction has been considered by the Subsidy Advice Unit and their advice received and taken into account by the Council before a final decision is made.
- 7.6 The detail of what a Maritime Knowledge Hub's offer is has yet to be determined in detail and it is likely that this would evolve as discussions with tenants evolved and they enter into agreements to lease. There is a risk that the building would simply be leased to a particular category of tenant, which would miss the opportunity that this proposal represents.
- 7.7 The LCRCA understand the proposal and are encouraged that as a concept it is good. However, to protect their investment, specifically in this sector they will look to restrict the use of the asset. Given the lease to the council is for a period of 50 years this presents a risk to the Council, which would only be able to let the building to a certain category of business or those associated with that category. It is also likely that the LCRCA will also seek further controls.
- 7.8 The space that will be provided will be of a high quality. Accordingly, the terms offered for the space will be reflective of this quality and its high construction cost and therefore will not be set at an average for the market in the area. Although the Council does not wish to aim for mediocrity, a higher level of rent, justified by a better-quality product may present a challenge in terms of letting. It is noted that the restrictions likely to be placed on the asset will further restrict the market for this building.
- 7.9 The proposed development would be funded in part by grant funding and in part by a third party investor providing funding. This latter part will be assured by the Council taking a lease and then paying the investor over the period of the lease. The Council would benefit from the rent it receives from tenants in the building. The profile of rental growth of these rents is different and there is a real risk in the future that the Council will have to pay more rent than it receives. Once the agreements are in place the conditions for this will be set and the Council will not be able to exit the agreement, should it find that in the future the position is not favourable. Issues such as any costs that the Council would have to pay, and not pass onto occupiers, would also directly impact this arrangement. Periodically the Council would be responsible for refurbishing the asset, either capital investment or through rent free periods to tenants. This would directly and significantly impact the position as well.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Council has engaged extensively with the LCRCA and Peel as part of this proposal. Peel have engaged with a range of businesses associated with the

Maritime Industry as part of their work to bring the proposal forward. The Council has not had sight of the detail of these discussions but understand that they are favourable but further engagement is dependent on the Council agreeing the Heads of Terms.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it conducts 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. It is unlikely that MKH Project would affect adversely persons with protected characteristics.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Council as part of this intervention would bring a derelict building and site back into economic use, generating environmental benefits. This will reuse the carbon tied up in the fabric of the existing building.
- 10.2 The proposal would see the delivery of a BREEAM Excellent building. It would be reasonable to expect that the building would be able, with modification to access any future heat network, although there would be a cost associated with this.
- 10.3 The building would be used to deliver innovation in the Marine industry and as a result it is likely that it would be used to explore issues such as decarbonisation, giving it potential beyond its own footprint.
- 10.4 Environmental issues about design, sustainability, and site use have already been considered at planning, however it is understood that planning would need to be considered again due to the overall variation in the size of the building.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The OBC sets out a range of positives relating to regeneration and community wealth. Principally the asset will generate the opportunity to create bespoke accommodation for a specific business sector, which is cited to be of national significance. It will provide opportunities for employment and education, and it would be logical to assume act to attract similar businesses to the area.
- 11.2 The reuse of the iconic Hydraulic Tower, emblematic of the rise and fall of Birkenhead of the past, could act as a totem for the future and the rise of Birkenhead again. It will also help the regeneration journey of the area, generating employment during construction and building the place for the future. However, this also needs to be set against the very significant risks that the Council would take, which could impact the Council's overall financial position, which in turn could impact its ability to deliver services which benefit the community.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Alternative Options
- Appendix 2 - Outline Business Case (Confidential)
- Appendix 3 - Relevant Risks (Confidential)
- Appendix 4 - Heads of Terms (Draft) (Confidential)
- Appendix 5 - Property Advice (Confidential)
- Appendix 6 - Seven Principles of Subsidy Control Act 2022

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Subsidy Control Act 2022

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee in accordance with section (f) of its Terms of Reference, “the promotion and development of the economic factors in the area, such as seeking to ensure sufficient and appropriate employment sites, investment, adult skills, apprenticeship schemes, productivity, development sites and so forth”.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
<u>ER&H Committee 27 March 2024</u>	27 March 2024

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Appendix 1 – Detail of alternative options

Do nothing.

- 2.1 The Committee could choose not to progress with the proposal (the do-nothing option). This would mean that a Maritime Knowledge Hub would not be developed, the funding identified by the LCRCA would not be invested in this project and the vacant listed building would not be brought back into repair, at least until another proposal came forward for the site, or the building owner chose to bring it back into condition. It is entirely possible that another scheme could come forward, however the level of funding that is being placed at the current scheme would be challenging to replicate.
- 2.2 The Council has explored a number of alternative options to bring a scheme forward on the site and they have not progressed. The principal reason for this is the significant gap in funding needed to make a proposal on this site progress.
- 2.3 Some options set out below would be dependent on the Council choosing not to invest in a Maritime Knowledge Hub. This option will result in the LCRCA considering alternative schemes for investing the £8million being considered for MKH. There is no guarantee this funding will be invested in Wirral. However, officers are working on alternative proposals that will be brought forward for consideration in the event of this option being supported by Committee.

A third party invests in the asset.

- 2.4 A third party such as another government body, or a private sector developer, or a charity may wish to invest in the MKH. It is however not at all likely that another government body would intervene directly on the site. This is in part due to the limited number of bodies that invest in land and property assets and those that do, prefer a cleared, de-risked site to develop.
- 2.5 There is a significant gap between the value of any asset developed and the cost of developing that asset, which is a factor in the Council seeking to deliver this scheme for regeneration reasons and supporting Peel in their exploration of accessing LCRCA grant. A third party, for example a company, would not take this risk, for practical commercial reasons. In addition to this a private party would not be able to obtain finance at the level that the Council is able to achieve in the open market, making their investment more unsuitable for this option. The significant gap between the end value of the asset and the investment that would be required does not make options such as an SPV a viable option.
- 2.6 A party, for example a specially created charity, may wish to bring forward a heritage scheme on the site, using the building and its previous history as the basis for their proposal. It is most likely that any proposal of this nature would seek to rely on Heritage Lottery Funding as a component of the investment structure. Such funding is very competitive, and a very robust business case, business plan and additional match funding would be needed to make this

proposal competitive. Presently there is no live proposal to do this, and this would only come forward should the Council chose the do-nothing option. This approach would face the issues around construction cost but also the revenue cost of operating the asset into the future.

- 2.7 Irrespective of the routes set out above Peel as landowner would either have to engage with the proposals above or dispose of the asset to those parties. It is understood that there are no live alternative proposals at this time.

Council acquires the property.

- 2.8 The Council could acquire the property, should Peel be supportive of this. The Council would then have all the liability of the vacant asset, which is in poor condition. Peel is currently responsible for the asset. All the costs of protecting the asset would fall to the Council at a time it faces a wide variety of fiscal challenges, not dissimilar to a range of other businesses and comparable local authorities. This is distinctly different to the main proposal in front of the Committee, where the Council would only be granted a lease and be possession of the asset when it has been brought back into repair. Should the Council choose to acquire the vacant and listed asset it would have to have clear reasons to do this, given it would release a private company of its land and property obligations at public expense and would have to demonstrate best value. Taking this step would expose the Council to the risk of precedent where it would be exposed to similar asks.

- 2.9 The Council would have to invest in the property. Because there would be a delay the LCRCA would not be able to fund the scheme, with the current round of funding. Any investment from them would be dependent on a future funding round and the Council having developed a proposal for the site. It is likely that grant funders would be able to provide all the funding for a proposal. Should the Council wish to develop the building it would cost it more to borrow than the route presented to the council at present, significantly increasing the fiscal risk of the investment.

- 2.10 The Council would have greater leeway, potentially, to develop the property however the Council would have to be mindful for the specific reasons it is interested in bringing forward a scheme on the site, which is to deliver regeneration outcomes. The Council does not have any plans developed for alternative proposals and it would cost the Council to develop these options and it is likely that some of the challenges and risks facing this proposal would affect any other proposal.

A different transaction

- 2.11 The current transaction proposed to the Committee is not the first iteration of this proposal and each of the preceding methods considered to bring forward a proposal have not been successful. The proposal is limited by the amount of grant funding that the LCRCA can provide the scheme. If a larger sum was available, then in theory a private investor would not have to asked to fund as much. The LRCA grant which may be attracted to this scheme is limited in part due to limits on funding but also reasons around subsidy control. A private investor will seek to create an annuity, in granting a 50 year lease to

the Council. There is a threshold level for the size of lot that they would be willing to create. The proposal also needs a building of a certain scale and quality to make the proposal work and clearly the Council would rely on lettable floor area to maximise the amount of rent it can receive. There is also a maximum rent that can be reasonably achieved in any market. These factors are at a headline level decisive in determining the rent out to an investor and the rent into the Council and the reasons why the gap between rent in and rent out cannot be materially changed. The Council could seek other investment routes, but these would be either through the market or PWLB and both would prove to be more expensive than the transaction presented.

- 2.12 The Council could look to loan money to a third party to enable the scheme, for the purposes of regeneration. It would not be able to offer a rate different to the market and therefore would make this approach not worthwhile.

A different solution on the site.

- 2.16 The proposed LCRCA funding is predicated on the delivery of a Maritime Knowledge Hub. This would mean any alternative proposal would need to seek fresh funding to deliver a scheme. It is likely any proposal at the same scale would have similar viability challenges and smaller schemes would also have similar challenges.

Deliver at a different location.

- 2.17 Maritime Knowledge Hub is of interest at this location, as the site has direct access to the docks and can gain access to the river Mersey via the dock gates. It would be difficult to find a site that would replicate this specific opportunity. The Council has already invested in a Maritime Knowledge hub, based in Tranmere, however this is currently not used for this purpose. Other options may be available, but would need direct access to the docks or the river Mersey to be a comparable location.

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Appendix 6 - Seven Principles of Subsidy Control Act 2022

- (1) The subsidy should pursue a specific policy objective i.e., a financially viable advanced maritime knowledge centre in order to remedy an identified market failure or address an equity rationale (e.g., a local or regional disadvantage, social difficulties or distributional concerns). A market failure occurs when the private market does not take account of costs or benefits which are external to those operating in it or where there is asymmetrical information;
- (2) The subsidy must be proportionate to the specific policy objective and must be limited to what is necessary to achieve it i.e., the grants must not exceed a reasonable share of the total cost (be value for money) and must be no greater than the viability gap between the estimated total cost and the value to Peel of the amount received from the Funder for the assignment to the Funder of the benefit of the head lease to the Council);
- (3) The grants must be designed to bring about a change of economic behaviour in Peel i.e., the Maritime Knowledge Hub (MKH) would not be built without the subsidy;
- (4) The grants must not compensate Peel for costs it would have funded in the absence of a subsidy e.g. expenditure it had already incurred prior to any offer of a grant;
- (5) The grant must be an appropriate policy instrument for achieving the specific policy objective which cannot be achieved through other less distortive means (on competition) e.g., by making the grant conditional on Peel (not the Council) taking the commercial risk of not finding the tenants and rents required to make the investment viable. In other words, the LCRCA and the Council would subsidise Peel to construct the buildings, but Peel, not the Council, would let out the premises to technology tenants; Peel are not prepared to take on that risk which they expect to be borne by the Council Tax Payer (through the Head Lease)
- (6) The grants must be designed to achieve the specific policy objective whilst minimising any negative effects on competition and investment within the UK. In this regard the Assessment would have to show that the grants were likely to bring forth a viable maritime knowledge centre even though it would not be viable for the Council unless it were able to let it out at £18 per sq. ft., which is unlikely to be achieved in the present circumstances. In this regard if the Council sought to make the investment viable by supplementing its rental income with business rates from the property, that would likely be considered by the SAU as highly distortive of competition since other commercial landlords would not have the advantage of having a head tenant willing and able to pay the rent partially out of taxation. Furthermore, business rates are intended to pay for the statutory services arising from regeneration e.g., maintaining and cleaning highways, ensuring safety in office premises, safeguarding, trading standards etc. Business rates are not intended to pay for investments that are likely to be loss making from the outset; that could be regarded as a breach of the Council's fiduciary duty to its ratepayers to carry

out its investment functions prudently and economically unless the external social benefits e.g. increased employment in an economically depressed neighbourhood, were likely to be substantial and long lasting .This is arguably not the case with MKH. There is also the question whether the Council could afford to sustain significant financial losses over a long period of time without adversely affecting its ability to finance the performance of its statutory duties (a matter for the Director of Finance to give advice on).

- (7) Finally, the beneficial effects of achieving the policy objective must outweigh the negative effects on competition within UK of favouring one corporate landlord (i.e., Peel) over others in Wirral. The bigger the subsidy and the more uncertain the prospects of a viable MKH, the less likely it is for the subsidy to Peel to be lawful.



ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 16th July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	THE HYTHE: PUT/CALL OPTION
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Hythe Put/Call option that the Council entered into with Peel Land and Property (intermediate) in September 2020 (which was subsequently novated to Peel L&P (Ports No3) Limited) and sets out a series of options that are available to the Council in the event that Peel exercise it's put option which will commit the council to purchase a 250 year leasehold interest in The Hythe from Peel.

Cabinet on 30th September 2019 approved the Council entering into a put/call option with Peel to enable them to nullify the risk of them constructing The Hythe, a speculative 3,116sq.m Grade 'A' office on Tower Road.

The project which achieved practical completion in December 2021 has been successful from a regeneration perspective as it has resulted in:

- The construction of a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) excellent rated Grade 'A' office building in the Four Bridges neighbourhood of Wirral Waters;
- An office space which has the potential enable up to 280 gross direct and indirect jobs;
- 1 acre of brownfield land developed;
- 150 college students being assisted in their skills development; and
- Support for the development of the Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone by attracting occupiers to Wirral Waters.

This matter affects the ward of Bidston St James and is a key decision given that the value is more than £500,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee is recommended to note the potential increase to the capital programme of £4.985m (plus, if applicable, associated purchaser's costs including Stamp Duty Land Tax and legal and surveying fees estimated to be £270,000) for the potential purchase of the Hythe.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council entered into a Put/Call option with Peel L&P Investments (Intermediate) Limited on 17th September 2020 which, based on the future value of the building, committed the Council to purchase a 250-year lease in the property in the event that the Put /Call option value of £4.985m was not achieved. This was subsequently novated to Peel L & P (Ports No3) Ltd.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options can be considered as the Put /Call option obliges the Council to purchase a long leasehold interest in the Hythe if it does not reach its pre-determined value of £4.985m. The Put/Call option will be determined by the final valuation of the office building which is scheduled for December 2024.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Peel approached the Council in 2018 to enquire as to whether the Council would be prepared to share the commercial risk of them constructing the building which subsequently become known as the Hythe, a Grade 'A' office development on Tower Road South that, given its speculative nature, would have been commercially unviable even with a £3m gap funded grant that they had secured from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) .
- 3.2 The Council, recognising the need to kick start the regeneration of Wirral Waters and grow its non-domestic rates revenue stream agreed to explore a variety of options that could be made available to Peel to help them de-risk the construction of a speculative office building in a location where traditionally commercial developments were unviable as end values were less than the actual costs of development.
- 3.3 The business case that was produced to support the 2019 Cabinet paper outlined the options that were available to the Council at the time which included, as well as the Put /Call option, the do-nothing option or that the Council took out a 25-year head lease on the completed office to enhance its commercial value based on the covenant strength of the Council.
- 3.4 Cabinet subsequently agreed that the Put/Call arrangement was the most commercially viable option to pursue, and the subsequent option agreement was duly entered into on 17th September 2020, being subsequently novated to Peel L & P (Ports No3) Ltd (Peel No 3).
- 3.5 The Put/Call option works by both Peel No 3 and the Council entering into an agreement that allows for Peel No 3 to require the Council to purchase via a 250 year lease the development from them, in this case from three years from the date of the practical completion of the office scheme at a pre-determined price (the put option), or for the Council to require Peel No 3 to sell them the property within the same timescale at the pre-determined price (Te call option). The completed value of the building (£4.985m) was determined by an independent surveyor as part of the

cost appraisal that was carried out by the LCRCA when determining the 'gap' funded grant that they made available to be used by Peel No 3 to help to support the project.

- 3.6 The Put/Call option has a definitive end date of 3 years from practical completion (PC) of the office building, which is 6th December 2024 and the agreement called for the Hythe to be valued on the anniversary of PC and for that valuation to be shared with the Council. If, at any time during this 3-year period The Hythe was valued at a sum equal or greater than the Put option (£4.985m) then the Council's obligation to have to purchase the leasehold of the building from Peel would fall away. Notwithstanding this scenario and depending on valuation Peel can only trigger the put option at 3 years from the practical completion of the building that is 6th December 2024. As part of the same option agreement the Council had negotiated a right to exercise its call option any time during the 3-year period meaning that if market conditions strengthened over the period and the value of the asset increased above the option price then the Council had the right to purchase the Hythe from Peel at the pre-determined figure of £4.985m.
- 3.7 Since the Hythe was completed in December 2021 two valuations have been undertaken in December 2022 and December 2023. Despite the project being successful from a regeneration point of view, with two of the three floors fully let creating 120 new jobs, the yields in the office market generally have deteriorated over the last two years due to general economic pressures, the war in Ukraine and rising interest rates. This has resulted in the building being valued in December 2022 at £3.9m and the most recent valuation in December 2023 at £3.45m.
- 3.8 Clearly these valuations are lower than was expected at the time of the put/call option being entered into and with the final valuation of the Hythe scheduled for December 2024 there is a strong possibility that it will still be valued at a figure below the trigger value of £4.985m.
- 3.9 It should be noted that at the time of writing this report Peel No 3 has not taken a formal position as to whether it intends to trigger the Put option which will commit the Council to purchase a long leasehold in the building, but it is a possibility given the current state of the market. For reference when the scheme was originally appraised in 2020/21 to establish its value a yield of 7.75% was used as the benchmark which was considered prudent at the time. Unfortunately, the economic down-turn experienced over the last two years and in particular the global rise in inflation has pushed yields out to 9 - 9.5% which has resulted in the lower valuations reported in paragraph 3.6 of the report.
- 3.10 If Peel No 3 does trigger its Put option there is a potential that the 250-year leasehold of The Hythe will need to be purchased in the current financial year and the options open to the Council in this scenario are set out in the finance section of the report below. A full approval process will proceed in accordance with the Council's constitution within an appropriate timescale to enable the funding to be in place to enable any such purchase.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If the Put option is triggered the Council would be required to purchase the property at £4.985m. As this was entered into to support regeneration of the area, this would

be classed as borrowing for regeneration purposes. It would be funded from Council Borrowing at 5% over 50 years of £0.250m per annum. Together with the statutory charge for Minimum Revenue Provision of £0.100m per annum, this would mean a total charge to revenue of £0.350m per annum that would need to be funded. The Council would then have two potential options:

- to continue to operate the property (whether internally or through an alternative delivery method), or
- to dispose of the property (as a going concern to another party).

4.2 The running costs of the property are currently unknown. If loss making this would increase revenue pressure on the Council further. Further information is being sought in this regard. However, the best understanding that the Council has is that the rent into the Council, unless the ground floor is let, will be less than the money that it will have to pay for interest payments for any loan. Other costs such as rates and landlord costs of managing and maintaining the asset would also have to be considered.

4.3 If the Council decided to sell the long leasehold, then the disposal would be classed as a capital receipt, but the revenue cost of the initial borrowing would remain and still need to be financed (either in full or in part, as the capital receipt does not have to be used for repayment of the loan).

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The arrangements that are set out in this report were at the time that they were entered into in satisfaction of what was at the time described as the Market Economy Principle (MEOP) Test pursuant to the rules of State Aid that applied at the time. In broad terms an economic transaction carried out by a public sector body did not constitute State Aid if it was in line with normal conditions and a market operator, of similar standing, could have been prompted to enter into the transaction on the same terms. The Council, to ensure compliance, commissioned independent property experts Cushman and Wakefield to assess the project and they confirmed that the appraised put/call option was MEOP State Aid compliant. This conclusion has been further endorsed by legal advice that was procured at the time.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 If the property has to be purchased it will be managed using existing staff resources supplemented by external specialist support. There will be additional resources and cost to the management of the asset, both in terms of the asset and facilities management of the asset. Any voids would have revenue implications and it is currently understood that the ground floor is not currently let.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The risk of purchasing the long leasehold of The Hythe is that the building is not yet fully let. It currently has tenants occupying floors one and two, but the ground floor remains vacant and this would have a long term revenue implication for the Council.

7.2 To minimise this risk the Council would, via its Asset Management team, commission its property agent to create a lettings strategy and working with the Council's communication team undertake a marketing exercise to raise the buildings profile to identify occupiers for the ground floor. This work will be regularly evaluated and reviewed to try to ensure that the Hythe reaches full occupancy as soon as is practicable.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Planning consent was granted for the Hythe in 2019. The application for its development was widely consulted upon and Peel, at the time held a number of community engagement and consultation events to publicise its plans for the Tower Road area of Wirral Waters.

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 (EIA) 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 implications arising directly from this report, the associated actions arising from the delivery may need to assess any equality issues and mitigate any negative impact that may emerge. Any associated EIA will be done at the earliest possible stage.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Hythe has been constructed to a BREEAM excellent standard which is the world's leading sustainability assessment for measuring commercial buildings.

10.2 The development resulted in the re-use of 1 acre of previously used land which supports the Council's Local Plan brownfield first aspirations.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Community Wealth Building reorganises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of communities. Striving for a prosperous and inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations, the Council aims to create an economy that benefits all of our residents and one which keeps money within Wirral. The Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy is a key part of how this is achieved and makes a major contribution to improving the economic, social and health outcomes of the borough.

11.2 The job opportunities that have been created by The Hythe will help to revitalise the local economy and ensure that more wealth is invested and stays within our Borough.

REPORT AUTHOR: Marcus Shaw
Assistant Director Property and Regeneration Investment.

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Hythe PUT/CALL Business Case 2019

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This matter is being considered by Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee in accordance with section (g) “overseeing the progress of major projects (including major building, infrastructure or other projects involving the erection or significant alteration of major permanent structures or landmarks) undertaken by the Council directly or as enabler, funder or joint enterprise partner, including but not limited to the Wirral Growth Company LLP.”

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	30/09/2019



ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

16 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE LEARNING DISABILITY AND AUTISM HOUSING STRATEGY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CARE AND HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the Cheshire and Merseyside commissioning work programme for “Independent and Fulfilling Lives” and the development of a Learning Disability and Autism Housing Strategy. The strategy has been jointly produced with the Housing Learning and Improvement Network and will support a framework for all commissioners when assessing local housing need for this cohort of people and supporting new developments, alongside general housing to meet those needs.

The report supports the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27, specifically the 'Promoting Independence and Healthier Lives' theme.

The report went before the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee on 5 March 2024. The committee resolved that:

1. The Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability and Autism Housing Strategy as set out in Appendix 2 to this report be approved; and
2. The report be considered for information at the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee and the Children, Young People and Education Committee at a future date to be agreed

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee is recommended to note the Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability and Autism Housing Strategy as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 There has been an absence of a coordinated regional policy, and this brings the commissioning intentions in to one key document, which can be shared with key stakeholders.
- 1.2 Some support and care providers work across local authority boundaries, and the strategy will ensure a consistent approach when cross boundary working
- 1.3 There may be a future requirement to jointly commission services across local authority areas within Cheshire and Merseyside, especially where there are low volume but highly complex cases, and this strategy will support any joint developments.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To have a single strategy for each local authority, but this would not have supported any cross boundary working, or the regional requirements on an NHS Integrated Care system region.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The 9 local authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside (Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Warrington and Wirral) with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care System (ICS) work together in order to commission and deliver the right mix of housing, care and health services required by people with learning disabilities and autistic people who have care/support needs.
- 3.2 The purpose of this Housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and autistic people is to set out the requirement for and the opportunities to develop good quality housing and supported accommodation to meet the needs of the population of people with learning disabilities and autistic people in Cheshire and Merseyside. This includes people who are living with their families/informal carers, people living in supported housing, people living in care homes, people who are inpatients, and young people who are known to the local authorities and NHS and who will become adults over the next 5 years.
- 3.3 We want to encourage the development of housing and supported accommodation options that are available for people who need housing to rent and for some people who may benefit from home ownership. We intend to co-produce the delivery and implementation of this strategy with the people who will be living in this housing and supported accommodation.

3.4 By working together through this strategy, the local authorities and the NHS will ensure that:

- Housing, health and care services for people with learning disabilities/autistic people are proactively commissioned to meet peoples' needs;
- People will in most cases have a tenancy with associated tenure rights;
- Housing will be well designed to meet people's needs as appropriate;
- People will have access to personalised care and support as well as access to 'core' support services where this is appropriate; and
- Capital funding for housing development will be sought through NHS England and/or Homes England as appropriate.

3.5 This strategy is aimed at:

- Housing organisations that provide mainstream and supported housing, including those currently operating in the Cheshire and Merseyside area and those who may consider operating here in the future;
- Support and care organisations that provide services for people with learning disabilities and autistic people with care/support needs; and
- Community organisations in the Cheshire and Merseyside area with an interest in housing and supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities and autistic people with care/support needs.

3.6 Through this strategy we will commission and enable a wide range of housing and supported accommodation, including specialist and supported housing, that enables people to live independently in their communities, including:

- Mainstream housing for individuals with personalised care and support;
- Supported housing that is suited to people who need their own self-contained accommodation or shared housing, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support but are able to live in close proximity to other people who may have care/support needs and within local communities; and
- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of people who need an accessible home and/or a home that is adapted to meet their support needs, as well as personalised care/support.

3.7 In 2022, Cheshire and Merseyside Association of Directors of Adult Social Services Commissioners worked with Campbell Tickell, a Business Management Consultancy in London, to produce a report on the future numbers of Adults with Learning Disabilities and Autism who may require care with accommodation as an alternative to acute based hospital care within a community setting. In 2023, Cheshire and Merseyside Commissioners used the data from the Campbell Tickell exercise to work with the Housing Learning and Improvement Network to develop a gap analysis to inform the development of the Learning Disability and Autism Housing strategy. The Gap analysis showed for Wirral for Supported Living between 2022-2033 that an additional 259 units of accommodation would be required to meet demographic demand.

3.8 In Wirral we anticipate that the 259 figure will be covered by some relets of existing schemes, with new schemes being developed and new style accommodation (own front door) being commissioned and that some of the need for supported living will be met differently by an increase in shared lives placements or general needs housing with support as follows:

Increase in shared lives	Increase in use of general needs housing
26	46

3.9 Where possible, residential homes for adults with learning disabilities will not be used, other than for the most complex people, working in collaboration with NHS ICB commissioners.

3.10 Future monitoring of the strategy and governance oversight will be agreed with Council officers across departments and an implementation plan agreed.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the learning disability and autism housing strategy.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to ensure that there is sufficiency within its local provision to meet local assessed needs, and this includes working in collaboration with housing colleagues to ensure accommodation is in place for this cohort of people.

5.2 Adult Social Care commissioners are working closely with Housing colleagues to ensure that specialist supported housing meets the requirements for housing benefit purposes.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no resource implications as a result of this report. The ensuing work from the delivery and implementation of the strategy can be managed within available staffing resources.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 There is a risk that people will not have suitable and timely accommodation to meet local needs. This risk is mitigated by having the strategy in place and ensuring that capacity and demand modelling is in place to ensure sufficiency of accommodation for this cohort of people.

7.2 There is a risk that if the strategy is not approved, that a local one will need to be developed which could delay improved outcomes for local people, and also not ensure consistency with regional local authorities.

7.3 There is a risk that the implementation is not managed. This risk will be mitigated by the implementation being managed by Adult Social Care working in liaison with operational services and other Council departments.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The draft strategy was shared with some targeted local support and specialist Autism providers for feedback, alongside local self-advocacy groups. Feedback was given to the Housing Learning and Improvement Network and Cheshire and Merseyside colleagues to inform the strategy. A draft strategy has also been shared in an easy ready format (appendix 1) and officers have been in place to support conversations and meetings with people who use services and care providers had this been requested.

8.2 The draft strategy was discussed at the Wirral Supported Living Provider Forum which is led by the Contract Management team.

8.3 The draft strategy was shared with colleagues from Housing and Regeneration who also provided feedback to the Housing Learning and Improvement Network. Housing and Regeneration colleagues.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and can be accessed by the following link: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Any new build housing developments and existing scheme remodels will be considered for environmental impact and support requested from Council specialists in that area.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Housing developers, Registered Landlords and care and support provider employ local people for Wirral and therefore bring social value to the Borough.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 DRAFT Easy Read Version Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability and Autism Housing strategy

Appendix 2 DRAFT Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability and Autism Housing strategy

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Campbell Tickell report 2022

Cheshire and Merseyside Housing Gap analysis 2023

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee in accordance with paragraph H (i) and (viii), “the Authority’s role and functions in relation to strategic and private sector housing policies and as the housing authority, including but not limited to: (i) the Council’s Housing Strategy; (viii) housing related support services.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee (Update on Extra Care Housing)	19/09/2023



Cheshire and Merseyside Housing Strategy for people with learning disabilities and autistic people-Summary

Cheshire and Merseyside Housing Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities and Autistic People-Summary

In this document you will find:



Introduction

About this **strategy**



Vision

What we aim to achieve through this **strategy**



Needs

What the housing needs are over the next 10 years



Delivery

How we will achieve our aims and meet the housing needs over the next 10 years:

- A. Commissioning**
- B. General Needs Housing**
- C. Quality Assurance**
- D. Housing Providers**
- E. Capital Funding**
- F. Governance**



Introduction

When we say **strategy** we mean a big plan of what we need and how we will make it happen.



This is an easy read **summary** of the full **strategy**. That means it does not have all of the details but it does have enough information for you to understand what we need and how we will make it happen.



This strategy has been developed by NHS Cheshire, Merseyside Integrated Care System and the 9 local authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside.

The 9 local authorities are:

- ✓ Warrington
- ✓ Liverpool
- ✓ St Helens
- ✓ Halton
- ✓ Knowsley
- ✓ Cheshire East
- ✓ Cheshire West
- ✓ Sefton
- ✓ Wirral





The Vision

Vision means what we are hoping to see:



The best quality of life we can get for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people.

We will do this by:



- making sure we have enough good quality housing and supported housing



- making Cheshire and Merseyside a place where people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people with care and support needs can live well and **thrive**

Thrive means that you do much better than okay, you do well and you succeed in life.



Needs

This strategy will support us to **commission** a wide range of housing and supported housing so that people can live independently in their communities.



To **commission** is to provide the funding for a service or a piece of work. It involves finding out what is needed and a contract for the organisation that is chosen to do the work.



The range of housing will include:

- **General needs housing** for individuals with personalised care and support.

General needs housing is housing that is available to anyone in the community.



- Supported housing that is suited to people who need to live on their own or in shared housing in the community, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support.



- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet people's needs. This might mean adaptations for accessibility. It might mean that it is adapted to meet support needs.



- To meet the housing needs of people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people over the next 10 years we will need:



X 1,700

- Around 1,700 supported housing homes across Cheshire & Merseyside



X 400

- Around 400 general needs homes, usually social housing for rent



Delivery

Achieving our aims and meeting the housing needs over the next 10 years.



A. Commissioning

We will **commission** and provide a mix of housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people by:



- Reviewing the use of shared supported housing



- **Commissioning** the new supported housing that is required to meet the need that we know about



- Increasing the number of Shared Lives carers



- **Commissioning** the housing needed by people who are living in hospital settings at the moment



- Making Home Ownership for people with Long – term Disabilities (**HOLD**) more available

HOLD is a home ownership scheme for people with long term disabilities.



B. General Needs Housing

We will secure extra general needs housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people by:



- Using social housing that we already have access to



- Working with local **Registered Providers** to meet the wider housing needs in this big plan

Registered Providers are the social landlords that we know and work with.



- **Leasing** from private landlords
Leasing is a type of renting agreement.



- Supported housing providers developing and/or buying more housing to help people move in to permanent homes.



- Reviewing the use and suitability of **Property Pool Plus or Choice Based Lettings** for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people

Property Pool Plus or Choice Based Lettings is the scheme that allows you to choose where you live and the type of property you live in if you are on the housing register.



C. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance means how we will make sure that the services and homes we have are good enough.



We will put in place a **quality assurance** framework for supported housing commissioned by local councils which measures how the housing and support makes things better for people living in supported housing.

We will do this by:



- Identifying all supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people that has the status of 'supported exempt accommodation' in the Supported Housing Act



- Developing quality **assessment and assurance criteria**, that demonstrate the Councils' expectations in relation to the quality of supported housing including value for money

Assessment and assurance criteria means a list of things that we will check are in place and being done well.



D. Housing Providers

Housing Providers are organisations that build, own and rent housing in our communities.



We will support and encourage **housing providers** to deliver a wide range of housing and supported housing options that meet the needs we know about.

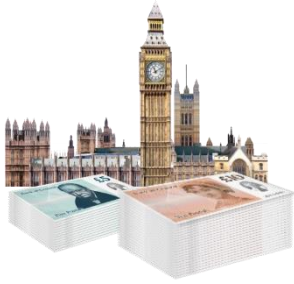
We will do this by:



- Talking with **housing providers**, including the largest social housing providers in the Cheshire & Merseyside area. This might be through supported housing or **general needs housing**.



- Finding the gaps in the supported housing provider market. This includes what providers are able to do and how many properties they have. Contact providers from outside of Cheshire/Merseyside to encourage them to develop their offer into this area.



E. Capital Funding

Capital Funding is money available from the government, banks and other organisations in this case for the development of housing.



We will make the most of the use of a wide range of **capital funding** for development of adapted and supported housing.

We will do this by:



- Working with providers to make the most of the capital funding that they can bring to the area to develop the housing and supported housing we need



- Developing our relationship with Homes England to make the most of investment from the Affordable Homes Programme for the supported housing we need



- Look at where it is possible for supported and adapted housing to be part of the **affordable housing contribution** on development sites

The **affordable housing contribution** is the housing that organisations are made to include when they are building a new development of houses. This is to make sure that we do not **ONLY** have very large and expensive homes.



F. Governance

Governance means the things we will put in place to make sure things are run properly. To make sure the rules are followed and no laws are broken.



We will put in place governance and decision-making **processes** that make it possible for the local authorities in Cheshire Merseyside with their NHS partners to work together well. This is needed to make what is in this housing strategy possible.

Processes are the details of how things should be done.

Housing strategy: people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to 2032/33

Cheshire and Merseyside

Version: Second Draft

January 2024

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Executive summary

Introduction

The 9 councils in Cheshire and Merseyside with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care System have developed a *Housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism*. Our vision is:

To achieve the best quality of life we can for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to live independently, with personalised support and care.

We will do this by securing the provision of good quality housing and supported housing and making Cheshire and Merseyside a place where people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs can live well and thrive.

What we mean by housing and supported housing

Through this strategy we will facilitate and commission a wide range of housing and supported housing that enables people to live independently in their communities, including:

- General needs housing for individuals with personalised care and support.
- Supported housing that is suited to people who need their own self-contained housing or shared housing within local communities, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support.
- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of people who need an accessible home and/or a home that is adapted to meet their support needs.

Over the next 10 years, it is estimated that Cheshire and Merseyside will need approximately 1,700 additional supported housing dwellings to meet the identified housing needs of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. It is estimated that there is also a need for approximately 400 general needs homes, typically social housing for rent over the same period.

Delivery

To deliver this *Housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism* we will:

- A. Commission and enable a mix of housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism by:
 - Reviewing the use of shared supported housing.
 - Commissioning new supported housing that is required to meet identified need.
 - Increasing the number of Shared Lives carers.

- Commissioning the housing required by people currently living in inpatient settings.
 - Making Home Ownership for people with Long – term Disabilities (HOLD) available.
- B. Secure additional mainstream, general needs housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism through:
- Direct provision by Councils with retained housing stock.
 - Working with local Registered Providers to meet the wider housing need as identified in this strategy, including using existing stock where appropriate.
 - Leasing from private landlords.
 - Supported housing providers developing and/or procuring additional move on accommodation.
 - Reviewing the use and suitability of Choice Based Lettings for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.
- C. Put in place a quality assurance framework for supported housing commissioned by the Councils which measures the benefits and impact for people living in supported housing:
- Identifying all supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism people that has the status of 'supported exempt accommodation' in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.
 - Develop regionally agreed quality assessment and assurance criteria, that demonstrate the Councils' expectations in relation to the quality of supported housing including value for money.
- D. Facilitate and encourage housing providers to deliver a wide range of housing and supported housing options that meet identified need, including:
- Discussing/agreeing with housing providers, including the largest social housing providers in the Cheshire & Merseyside region, how they can contribute to the delivery of the housing strategy, both in relation to supported housing and access to general needs housing.
 - Identifying gaps in the supported housing provider market (in terms of capability and capacity) and approach potential providers from outside of Cheshire/Merseyside to encourage new 'entrants' into the local supported housing market.
- E. Maximise the use of a wide range of capital funding for development of adapted and supported housing, by:
- Engaging with supported housing providers and other Registered Providers to maximise capital investment that they can bring to the development of the housing and supported housing required.
 - Developing a strategic relationship with NHS England and with Homes England to maximise investment from the Affordable Homes Programme in the supported housing required.

- Considering the potential for supported and adapted housing to form part of the affordable housing contribution on larger development sites, including in relation to section106 agreements.
- F. Put in place governance and decision-making processes that enable the Councils in Cheshire and Merseyside with their NHS partners to collaborate effectively to implement this housing strategy.

DRAFT

1. Introduction

Our intentions

The 9 councils in Cheshire and Merseyside (Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Warrington and Wirral) with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care System (ICS) work together in order to commission and deliver the right mix of housing, care and health services required by people with learning disabilities and/or Autism who have care and support needs.

The purpose of this *Housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism people* is to set out the requirement for and the opportunities to develop good quality housing and supported housing to meet the needs of the population of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism in Cheshire and Merseyside. This includes:

- people who are living with their families/informal carers,
- people living in supported housing,
- people living in care homes,
- people who are inpatients, and
- young people who are known to the councils and NHS and who will become adults over the next 5 years.

We want to encourage the development of housing and supported housing options that are available for people who need housing to rent and for some people who may benefit from home ownership.

We intend to consult on the delivery of this strategy with the people who will be living in this housing and supported housing.

Intended benefits of this strategy

By working together through this strategy the councils and the NHS will ensure that:

- Housing, health and care services for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism are proactively commissioned to meet peoples' needs.
- People will in most cases have a tenancy with associated tenure rights.
- Housing will be well designed to meet people's needs as appropriate.
- People will have access to personalised care and support as well as access to 'core' support services where this is appropriate.

- Capital funding for housing development will be sought through NHS England and/or Homes England as appropriate.

Context

There are a number of local and national policies that affect the supported housing sector and which will influence the delivery of this strategy in terms of the types of housing and supported housing that are commissioned and developed. Key relevant national policy includes:

- The recent Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act¹ including new National Supported Housing Standards.
- The *Building the Right Support Action Plan*², published in 2022, updates the original *Building the Right Support*³ from 2015, reinforces the importance of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism having a good home.
- *Building the Right Home*⁴ sets out guidance and principles for housing for people with a learning disability and autistic people that need specialist and supported housing.

This is shown in detail at annex 1.

Housing and care and support providers should ensure they are aware of and take account of these local and national policies in relation to developing housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism people.

Our intended audience

This strategy is aimed at:

- Housing organisations that provide mainstream and supported housing, including those currently operating in the Cheshire and Merseyside area and those who may consider operating here in the future.
- Support and care organisations that provide services for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs.
- Community organisations in the Cheshire and Merseyside area with an interest in housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs.

¹ [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

² [Building the Right Support for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People Action Plan - July 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

³ [NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right support](#)

⁴ [NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right home](#)

2. Vision and ambition

Our vision

Our vision is *to achieve the best quality of life we can for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to live independently, with personalised support and care.*

We will achieve our vision by:

- Securing the provision of *good quality* housing and supported housing where people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs can live well and thrive.
- Developing a *range* of housing and supported housing over the next 5 years and beyond, that are tailored to reflect the identified needs within our local communities.
- Ensuring that *support and care services*, delivered to people within supported housing and those living in general needs housing, are effective in promoting people's wellbeing and independence.

This strategy will make a *positive difference* to the lives of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism by having a greater mix and range of housing options, including:

- General needs housing for individuals with personalised care and support.
- Supported housing that is suited to people who need their own self-contained accommodation or shared housing, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support, but are able to live in close proximity to other people who may have care and support needs and within local communities.
- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of people who need an accessible home and/or a home that is adapted to meet their support needs, as well as personalised care and support.
- Housing for people who have a live alone plan for a variety of reasons and who need an individual property either with or without specialist features to enable them to live in the least restrictive way.

3. Strategic objectives

To achieve our vision, the strategic objectives of this housing strategy are:

A. To improve the range of housing and supported housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

Over the next 5-10 years we will encourage a mix of housing and supported housing that meets the needs identified in our local communities. This will involve providing a spectrum of housing options and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, including:

- renovating existing properties and
- developing new homes.

B. To influence the design and quality of housing and supported housing

The councils with their NHS partners want to influence the design and delivery of the types of housing and supported housing that are developed in the following ways:

- We will work with housing providers to identify the most suitable locations based on local intelligence about where people want to live.
- We want to facilitate and encourage a range of housing and care and support providers to work in Cheshire and Merseyside to ensure the mix of housing and supported housing services delivered reflects local needs.
- Housing and supported housing should be of the highest quality standards and have care and support services from providers who are registered with the CQC as appropriate.

C. To plan for and manage demand for housing and supported housing

We are planning ahead to meet the changing and future needs of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. To do this we will:

- Influence the development of housing and supported housing to ensure there is the right mix of accommodation available to meet people's current and future needs.
- Include the development of and access to additional housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

- Aim to ensure that Local Plans to incorporate the need for specialist and supported housing and that these housing needs are part of local housing strategies and planning policies.

D. To encourage opportunities to invest and develop

The councils with their NHS partners want to promote investment in housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. To make this happen we will:

- Share our market intelligence to inform and influence the decisions of housing and care and support providers.
- Where possible, seek to use local authority and NHS resources, such as land and buildings, to facilitate the development of housing and supported housing.
- Engage in a dialogue with housing and care and support providers about the types of housing and supported housing required by people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.
- Seek to create a business environment where housing and care and support providers have the confidence and assurance to invest in Cheshire and Merseyside.
- Support housing providers to remain viable and deliver growth plans that include provision for adapted properties and supported housing in recognition of the higher costs of delivering and maintaining this type of accommodation for housing providers.

4. Contemporary housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

To promote contemporary practice in the development and delivery of a range of housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, we have set out design guidance to influence future housing development.

Design guidance to housing and support providers

To assist housing and support providers we have provided guidance in relation to some of the characteristics of the housing and supported housing that we are seeking:

- Some individuals may find it difficult to live with others in a shared setting and therefore there is the need for self-contained accommodation, including separate front doors, ideally built in a cluster model to enable efficiencies around the care delivery.
- We encourage housing providers to deliver homes to space standards that are consistent with suggested space standards (54m² for a 1-bed dwelling) within extra care housing/supported housing⁵. It is important to note that some people with learning disabilities and/or Autism may need homes that exceed these space standards.
- New accommodation may need to include a staff sleep in space, to allow night-time staff to be accommodated.
- Some people need more bespoke accommodation; whatever housing is developed will need to be adaptable to meet diverse needs. Accommodation needs to be future proofed so that it can be used for a range of people and is able to accommodate innovative technology. The use of assistive technology (AT) should be promoted to ensure that people are able to be as independent as possible; it could in turn help to reduce care costs. Assessments for the use of AT should form part of people's care and support assessments and plans.
- Locations for developments are important in order that people can be supported to access the community. Therefore, we suggest that most new developments should be based in proximity to semi-urban / urban areas, which would provide ease of access to transport and activities. However, a small number of people may not be able to cope with suburban / urban environments and may need the peace and tranquillity of a more rural setting.

⁵ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Factsheets/Design-Principles-For-Extra-Care-Housing-3rdEdition.pdf

- Some of the people we are seeking to commission housing and support for have experienced trauma in their lives. Good design can mitigate the negative effects of trauma⁶.

Examples of contemporary practice in housing and support for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

We have identified a range of contemporary practice examples in relation to the design of housing and support that reflects the needs of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs, including the need for a range of housing adaptations and the creation of trauma informed environments for some people.

These are shown at annexe 3.

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⁶ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Events/HAPPI-Hour-Trauma-Informed-Design-within-Learning-Disabilities-Environments/>

5. Need for housing and supported housing

The estimated need for housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism is based on evidence from:

- Analysis of work undertaken by Campbell Tickell for Cheshire & Merseyside ADASS in 2022.
- Qualitative evidence from commissioners from the councils in Cheshire & Merseyside.

Detail in relation to evidence of need for housing and supported housing is shown at annex 4.

Quantitative evidence of need

Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership commissioned Campbell Tickell in 2002 to undertake an assessment of the need for 'future accommodation with support needs' over a 10 year period from 2022/23 to 2032/33.

This assessment identifies need for 'accommodation with support needs' to 2032 for each of the nine councils and at Cheshire & Merseyside level. Based on the report from Campbell Tickell, 'Accommodation with support needs' is taken to mean 'supported housing'.

Table 1 shows the estimated level of need for supported housing for each local authority and for Cheshire & Merseyside to 2032/33. The table below shows that a total of 1,679 supported housing units will be required across Cheshire & Merseyside over the period to 2032/33 to meet the needs that have been identified (including some adjustments to take account of the projected learning disability population). This is an indicative number of units and the actual number required could vary upwards or downwards, depending on the number of relets and other factors (Campbell Tickell, 2022).

In addition there are 54 'patients' in hospital settings who are NHS 'Specialised Commissioning Patients'.

Table 1. Estimated need for supported housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for Supported housing by 2032/33
Cheshire East	160
Cheshire West & Chester	261
Halton	189
Knowsley	152
Liverpool	104
St Helens	160
Sefton	246
Warrington	148
Wirral	259
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	1,679

Source: Campbell Tickell, 2022

It is possible that some of this estimated need for supported housing could be met through the use of Shared Lives accommodation. This is shown in table 2. This suggests a need for c.165 additional Shared Lives places over the period to 2032/33.

It is estimated that there is a need for c.380 additional general needs housing units over the period to 2032/33. This is shown in table 2.

It should be noted that the estimated need for additional Shared Lives accommodation would reduce the estimated need for supported housing over the period to 2032/33.

Table 2. Estimated need for Shared Lives and general needs housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for general needs housing 2032/33
Cheshire East	58
Cheshire West & Chester	58
Halton	12
Knowsley	30
Liverpool	108
St Helens	28
Sefton	16
Warrington	26
Wirral	46
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	382

Qualitative evidence of need

Qualitative evidence of need has been derived from insights and evidence from commissioners about local trends and the nature of future need for supported housing and housing in their area for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. This is shown at annexe 4.

Gap analysis: Summary

The quantitative and qualitative evidence of need for housing is summarised below.

The total estimated need is for an additional 1,679 units of 'supported housing' by 2032 across Cheshire & Merseyside, the equivalent of 120 additional units per annum (since 2022). This is taken to mean increased need predominantly for self-contained supported housing.

It is estimated that there is a need for an additional c.165 Shared Lives places by 2032.

It is estimated that there is a need for c.380 units of general needs housing by 2032.

All councils in Cheshire & Merseyside have a need for additional supported housing over the period to 2032.

Qualitative local evidence indicates the following *trends* in relation to current and future need for housing:

- There is evidence of increasing need for general needs housing, generally 1 bed units to rent from social landlords.

- There is a need for additional self-contained supported housing.
- There is limited evidence of additional need for shared supported housing. Any shared supported housing commissioned in future needs to be well designed and future-proofed, for example to accommodate people with reduced mobility. Some existing shared supported housing is likely to be decommissioned.
- There is some evidence of need for additional Shared Lives places.
- There is a need for additional respite accommodation for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. Some of this need could be met through the development of 'clusters' of self-contained flats where a dwelling is used as respite accommodation.
- There is very limited evidence of need for either residential care or nursing care as people live in suitable housing in the community. However, some people with very complex support needs, for whom a housing based option is not appropriate, are likely to live in residential/nursing care settings. Councils will determine locally with their partners and stakeholders any transition required from the use of residential care to supported housing or other housing options.
- The number of people currently living in acute hospital settings is low but will continue to decline as people move to housing based alternatives in the community.

Developing a housing pathway

To meet this range of housing needs, we have identified the need for a *housing pathway* which includes a mix of housing and supported housing options, which offer people different housing choices, from general needs housing with packages of care and support tailored to individuals' needs through to supported housing options with 24/7 support.

This pathway of housing and supported housing options is required, in part, to reduce the use of inpatient settings and residential care, as well to maximise the range of housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. The councils and their NHS partners want to make it easier for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to access these housing options.

It should be emphasised that a move to one housing option may not be permanent and there is an assumption that some people will move between different housing options in response to changing needs and circumstances.

A wider range of housing and supported housing options will include:

- A. General needs housing where a person receives personalised care and support.
- B. Accessible housing, for example bungalows, for people who need an adapted home along with personalised care and support.

- C. Small 'clusters' of flats where a person has their own self contained home with some communal spaces, such as a shared lounge, with personalised care and support alongside shared care (for example in relation to overnight support).
- D. 'Step down' supported housing, particularly for younger people.
- E. In the majority of cases we would expect people to rent their homes and be tenants; in some cases access to home ownership, such as through the Home Ownership for people with Long Term Disabilities (HOLD) scheme⁷, may be appropriate. The councils and their NHS partners will seek to identify people with learning disabilities and/or Autism who may benefit from the HOLD option and housing providers that are willing and able to deliver this option.
- F. Other housing that may be relevant to some people with people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, such as extra care housing and co-housing.
- G. In a minority of cases, shared supported housing where a person has a room (which may have an ensuite shower/bathroom) and shares the other facilities with other residents.
- H. Short term 'crisis' supported housing, for example to facilitate inpatient admission avoidance.

Housing option D and H are important as they may be used to facilitate short term housing needs and/or 'transitions' between different accommodation/housing options.

To access any form of housing and supported housing people should be:

- Registered with the local authority responsible for housing so their housing need is formally recorded and recognised. This may require a degree of flexibility in relation to local connection policies as some people with learning disabilities and/or Autism may need to live in an area that is different to where they currently live or originally came from.
- Assessed by the relevant local authority and the NHS in order that appropriate care and support can be commissioned and provided.

To facilitate this housing pathway, particularly for people who are in inpatient settings, it is recognised by the councils and their NHS partners that through this strategy:

- There is a need to develop a smoother pathway and encourage a multi-agency approach for people who are inpatients and identified as being clinically ready for discharge. This will be guided by the NHS England *Brick by Brick*⁸ report.
- There is a need to meet the accommodation needs of the most challenging groups to house, for example people with forensic needs. This may require consideration of the needs of individuals to live in areas where, for example, they may not have a local connection.

⁷ <https://www.ownyourhome.gov.uk/scheme/hold/>

⁸ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/brick-by-brick/>

- In relation to people who are on the discharge pathway and do not have a home to return, the councils will seek to prioritise people in these circumstances within each authority's homelessness policy in a consistent way.
- The councils and their NHS partners will seek to develop specialist housing advice and advocacy for people to assist in understanding and navigating the housing options available to them.

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6. Supporting and facilitating the housing market

The local authority commissioners want to strengthen their relationships with housing providers, particularly Registered Providers in the North West, who wish to collaborate with us to help fulfil our strategic ambitions:

- Widening the housing choices for people with a learning disability and autistic people and improving the quality of housing available, especially by improving the supply of supported housing and general needs housing.
- Promoting a coherent approach between local provision of housing, care and health as an integrated system.
- Commissioning and facilitating support for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to rent or buy their own home.
- Considering and meeting the sensory needs of autistic people in relation to housing; actively drawing attention to sensory considerations that can be made to an environment to improve the sensory experiences and wellbeing of autistic people.

Our approach to working closely with a range of providers of housing and supported housing is set out below.

Access to general needs housing

Commissioners across Cheshire and Merseyside are seeking to work with housing providers to secure increased access to general needs housing, both in the social housing sector and private rented sector (recognising that there are different housing benefit implications of these approaches), for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. This involves working directly with Registered Providers and through councils' Housing Options Strategies.

This may be an option for people who no longer need to live in a supported housing setting and/or for people who don't need supported housing in the first instance. We are keen to avoid an assumption that supported housing is the 'default' housing option.

We are aware that there is considerable demand in many areas for social rent and affordable rent general needs social housing and that in some areas the private rented sector is not affordable.

We are also aware that access routes into general needs social housing, such as choice based lettings systems, too often don't enable people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to have fair access or quick access, where this may be necessary. The councils will seek to ensure that choice based lettings systems recognise that people may require reasonable adjustments linked to their sensory or physical needs and support needs to be recognised in the application process.

We know from discussion with housing providers that there is an opportunity to work together and collaborate with them and with councils' housing options teams, to identify and secure additional opportunities for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to have improved access to general needs social housing and housing in the private rented sector .

Developing supported housing

The councils recognise the need for housing providers to have long term funding confidence, particularly when investing in supported housing.

Local authority commissioners will collaborate with ICS commissioners on joint opportunities to deliver new schemes and review existing provision reflecting a cohort of people who have jointly funded care and health services.

We are seeking innovative approaches from our housing partners, for example, delivering a range of housing sizes, types and tenures, including potentially remodelling existing supported housing, that will be appropriate to the needs of various groups in the community, in line with our strategic aims.

When working with housing providers and care and support providers the local authority partners would like:

- To be involved at an early stage in considerations and discussions regarding the reconfiguration or disposal of existing supported housing provision.
- To agree priority notification/nomination rights on existing and new supported housing. This may include developing local lettings and allocations policies for specialist and supported housing schemes to manage allocations and make best use of the resources.
- To understand whether you own and/or lease housing for the purposes of providing supported housing and to understand your funding model. Where housing is leased we want to be satisfied that this model is sustainable and in the interests of the intended residents.
- In response to our commissioning intentions/plans, we are seeking providers to develop proposals for housing and supported housing which are effectively tailored to meet local need and to consult with us and relevant professionals prior to and during the implementation of these proposals.
- In response to our commissioning intentions/plans, supported housing providers who are not currently operating in the Cheshire and Merseyside area to get in touch with us and talk through their plans for development of supported or specialist housing so we can advise on what our needs are and how you might be able to meet them.

The councils with their NHS partners will seek to work with a range of capital funding partners to deliver this strategy, including Homes England and NHS England. Where possible, we will also seek to use local authority and NHS resources, such as land and buildings, to facilitate the development of housing and supported housing.

The councils with their NHS partners will undertake ongoing market engagement to:

- Build strong relationships with housing and supported housing providers.
- Stimulate and encourage the local supported housing market.
- Work with housing and supported housing providers in a collaborative way.
- Understand how we can work with supported housing providers to jointly manage market risks and challenges.

The councils will work closely with providers of residential care services to understand the long term need for residential services and where appropriate, work with providers to:

- Maximise the opportunities for people living currently in residential care to move to housing based alternatives with personalised care and support.
- Work with organisations that provide residential care services who are interested in opportunities to transition to the provision of housing based alternatives with personalised care and support.

7. Ensuring the quality of housing and support

The councils and their NHS partners want to ensure that all supported housing services are of good quality. This means both the accommodation and the care and support services (as applicable) being of good quality.

This will include supported housing providers and care providers meeting legislative and regulatory requirements as appropriate (Charity Commission, Regulator of Social Housing, the Care Quality Commission and Community Interest Companies regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority).

The councils will draw on the Government's guidance *National Statement of Expectations for Supported Housing*⁹ as a basis for expectations of supported housing providers in terms of contemporary practice in the delivery and management of accommodation with support services.

The councils' approach to ensuring that supported housing is of a good quality anticipates the intent of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.¹⁰ The councils anticipate that their approach to ensuring the quality of accommodation with support services will likely include:

- A licensing scheme for all supported housing providers. The licensing scheme will be developed by all the councils. All providers of supported housing in Cheshire and Merseyside will be required to be licensed by the relevant local authority in order to provide supported housing.
- Only providers of supported housing that are licensed by the councils will be able to access specified and exempt accommodation housing benefit status.
- The councils will also review the quality of the provision of support/care in supported housing services to ensure customers are getting the support they need and require.
- Assessment of the value for money provided by supported housing services, ensuring they are affordable for the councils and for the people who live in them.

In the meantime, before the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act is implemented, the councils will draw on the evidence and learning from the Government's Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)¹¹ to working with providers of supported housing services to ensure that both the quality of accommodation used for supported housing and the support services provided are of a good quality.

⁹ [Supported housing: national statement of expectations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672123/national-statement-of-expectations-for-supported-housing.pdf)

¹⁰ [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act 2023 publications - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](https://www.parliament.uk/business/bills/public-bills/2023-24/supported-housing-regulatory-oversight-act-2023-publications/)

¹¹ [Supported Housing Improvement Programme prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672123/ship-prospectus.pdf)

8. Delivery of this strategy

The councils will work jointly, focussed on enabling the development of and access to housing and support options across Cheshire and Merseyside to meet identified need.

The councils will work in partnership with Registered Providers and other housing developers/providers to develop specialist and supported housing to meet the needs of local people identified in this strategy.

Our summary action plan to deliver this strategy is at Annexe 1.

The councils with their NHS partners are committed to working alongside people who need housing and supported housing identified in this strategy. We aim to:

- Co-produce with a range of people with lived experience the commissioning of housing/supported housing services, and
- Work with people with lived experience in relation to managing the quality of supported housing and measuring the impact it has on people's lives.

This strategy is part of a dialogue with the organisations and individuals that are interested in delivering housing and supported housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

If you want to find out more or have a discussion about any aspect of developing housing/supported housing to meet the needs identified in this strategy, please get in touch with us:

Email: [insert]

Phone: [insert]

Write: [insert]

Annexe 1 Delivery plan

Introduction

This implementation plan sets out the suggested actions and approaches to be taken by the Cheshire & Merseyside Councils and their partners to deliver the *Housing strategy: people with learning disabilities and/or Autism 2024-2030*.

Responsibility is identified in terms of 'place', i.e., at individual local authority level or at Cheshire & Merseyside level.

Timescales have been left to be completed by the Cheshire & Merseyside councils and their NHS partners.

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Addressing the need for additional mainstream, general needs housing

Increasing the provision of, predominantly, 1-bedroom self contained housing to rent in the social housing sector and private rented sector can help to both mitigate the need for supported housing (with floating support as necessary) as well as enabling the most effective use of supported housing in terms of facilitating appropriate move on to general needs housing, including for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism who don't need/no longer need supported housing.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	<p>Given the overall level of demand for affordable general needs housing, this is likely to require a level of strategic intervention by Councils to generate more affordable housing to rent for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism through, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct provision by Councils with retained housing stock • Leasing from private landlords. • Working with local Registered Providers to meet the wider housing need as identified in this strategy, including using existing stock where appropriate. • Supported housing providers developing and/or procuring additional move on accommodation. 	Place	
2	<p>Review the use and suitability of Choice Based Lettings for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether there is a role for 'sensitive' lettings and use of local lettings plans to enable some people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to access general needs social housing. • To recognise and take account of the adaptations for people who may have sensory environmental needs. 	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
3	Determine the level of floating support services and similar community support services (e.g. KeyRing type models) required to support people living in general needs housing.	Place	
4	Councils to consider planning policy and delivery mechanisms to support the delivery of more 1 bed dwellings as part of the housing development mix	Place	

Commissioning and delivering housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale																						
1	Review the use of shared supported housing. Identify shared supported housing that is no longer fit for purpose and requires replacement with other housing options for residents.	Place																							
2	<p>Identify and commission new supported housing that is required to meet identified need drawing on good practice from the region and from elsewhere. Targets over the period to 2032/33</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Local authority</th> <th>Need for Supported Housing by 2032/33</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cheshire East</td> <td>160</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cheshire West & Chester</td> <td>261</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Halton</td> <td>189</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Knowsley</td> <td>152</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Liverpool</td> <td>104</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Helens</td> <td>160</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sefton</td> <td>246</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warrington</td> <td>148</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wirral</td> <td>259</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)</td> <td>1,679</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Local authority	Need for Supported Housing by 2032/33	Cheshire East	160	Cheshire West & Chester	261	Halton	189	Knowsley	152	Liverpool	104	St Helens	160	Sefton	246	Warrington	148	Wirral	259	Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	1,679	Place	
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3	<p>Increase the number of Shared Lives carers who can support people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. Targets over the period to 2032/33</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Local authority</th> <th>Need for Shared Lives 2032/33</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cheshire East</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Local authority	Need for Shared Lives 2032/33	Cheshire East	16	Place																			
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	Knowsley	15		
	Liverpool	10		
	St Helens	16		
	Sefton	24		
	Warrington	15		
	Wirral	26		
	Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	167		
4	<p>Housing/supported housing for current inpatients and people who maybe at risk of inpatient admission:</p> <p>Identify and commission the housing required by people currently living in inpatient settings.</p> <p>As part of commissioning this housing, develop accommodation with design features and services that will support people outside of hospital and reduce admissions to acute services.</p> <p>Where appropriate, for some people leaving inpatient settings, it will be necessary to ensure that their housing/supported housing is consistent with any restrictions linked to Court of Protection Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and/or Ministry of Justice requirements.</p> <p>Where people are at risk of losing their current accommodation on being admitted to an acute hospital setting, the councils will work with housing and accommodation providers, as part of their homelessness prevention activities, to try to ensure that people do not lose their housing at point of admission.</p> <p>Where people are already in an acute setting and they are on a pathway to clinical discharge, the councils and their NHS partners will collaborate in relation to the Duty to Refer arrangements where a person may be at risk of homelessness if the housing/supported housing</p>		<p>Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS</p> <p>Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS</p> <p>Place/NHS</p> <p>Place/NHS</p> <p>Place/NHS</p>	

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	<p>they need is unavailable.</p> <p>The councils and their NHS partners, if necessary to meet need, will jointly commission specialist short term 'step down/step through' accommodation to support people out of hospital settings whilst their long term housing is being arranged/developed. This facility may also support people living in the community but who may be at risk of inpatient admission in their current accommodation setting.</p> <p>Where housing and support/care provision is required to meet very specialist need/s, develop agreements in relation to joint funding and commissioning for these specialist services.</p>	<p>Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS</p> <p>Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS</p>	
5	Identify people for whom home ownership through the HOLD programme is a potential options and identify a Registered Provider partner/s to work with to deliver this housing option (Home Ownership for people with Long – term Disabilities).	Place	
6	Make best use of existing and future development of extra care housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.	Place	
7	Consider utilising Councils' and NHS surplus land and property to support the delivery of supported and specialist housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.	Place	
8	Councils to have oversight of all sites and planning applications for specialist/supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.	Place	
9	Put in place arrangements to deliver these housing and supported housing requirements with a range of partners including Health and Social Care Commissioners, Housing Providers, Homes England, and NHS England.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
10	The councils will aim to ensure that Local Plans incorporate the need for specialist and supported housing and that these housing needs are part of local housing strategies and planning policies.	Place	
11	The councils and their NHS partners will update the assessment of need for housing and supported housing	Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS	

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	on a regular basis. The assessment will include evidence of young people (from school year 9) who may transition to eligibility for adult social care at 18 years and who may need housing/supported housing.		
12	Put in place arrangements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-produce with a range of people with lived experience the commissioning of housing/supported housing services, and • Work with people with lived experience in relation to managing the quality of supported housing and measuring the impact it has on people's lives. 	Place	

DRAFT

Quality assurance framework for supported housing commissioned by the Councils which measures the benefits and impact for people using supported housing as well as value for money

To deliver the proposed approach to supported housing quality assurance as set out in the housing strategy, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Identify all supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism that has the housing benefit status of 'specified accommodation' including the categories of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exempt accommodation • Managed properties 	Place	
2	Develop a shared set of quality assessment and assurance criteria, that demonstrates the Councils' expectations for specialist and supported housing including value for money. This should cover both support services and accommodation standards drawing on the learning from the Supported Housing Improvement Project to date (for example in St Helens), the National Statement of Expectations for Supported Housing, Building the Right Home and Building the Right Support, as well as any locally specific factors. Draw on in-house contractual and performance management standards and procedures that apply to existing supported housing.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
3	In anticipation of the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, bring together a group of Council colleagues from revenues and benefits, adult social care (including safeguarding expertise), housing standards (environmental health/private sector housing standards), children's services (in relation to vulnerable young people) and planning and housing to consider a shared approach to licensing supported housing (including for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism) and the implementation of supported housing quality standards.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
4	Through this group (above) risk assess existing supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism in terms of either known or likely risk/s in relation to poor quality support and/or accommodation.	Place	

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
5	The Councils to engage with supported housing providers in planning for the implementation of the Supported Housing Act and assess the risk of providers potentially withdrawing from the market and Councils' responses to this.	Place	

DRAFT

Facilitate the supported housing market to encourage the delivery of a wide range of supported housing options that meet identified need.

To deliver the proposed approach to facilitating the supported housing market as set out in the housing strategy, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Hold a 'launch' event for the housing strategy with housing providers and care and support providers.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS	
2	Hold meetings with a range of housing providers, including the largest social housing providers, in the Cheshire & Merseyside region to discuss/agree how they can contribute to and support the delivery of the housing strategy, both in relation to supported housing and access to general needs housing.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
3	Meet with representatives of the private rented sector in Cheshire/Merseyside to discuss/agree how they can contribute to and support the delivery of the housing strategy	Place	
4	Establish a learning disability supported housing provider forum/fora that will meet regularly with Council Officers to discuss supported housing development and operational practice issues.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
5	Identify gaps in the supported housing provider market (in terms of capability and capacity) and approach potential providers from outside of Cheshire/Merseyside to encourage new 'entrants' into the local supported housing market.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	

Funding of supported housing development

To deliver the proposed approach as set out in the housing strategy, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Maximise the use of a wide range of potential capital funding sources for supported housing development including:	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the proposed engagement with supported housing providers and other Registered Providers to maximise capital investment that they can bring to the development of the supported housing required. 	Place	
1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to develop a strategic relationship with NHS England and with Homes England to maximise investment from, respectively, the NHS capital programme and the Affordable Homes Programme in supported housing, including consideration/discussion of grant rates for supported/specialist housing. 	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the potential for supported and adapted housing to form part of the affordable housing contribution on larger development sites, including in relation to s.106 agreements. 	Place	
1d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage RPs to engage with NHS England about using the NHS capital grant funding to develop the most specialist forms of housing 	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS	
1e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree with ICS partners the most effective use of the Better Care Fund to support delivery of the housing strategy. 	Place	
1f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital funding from Councils (subject to appropriate business cases). 	Place	

Governance and decision-making

To deliver the proposed approach as set out in the housing strategy, ensuring that the Councils have the necessary governance and decision-making structures in place to facilitate a coordinated approach to commissioning, funding and reviewing supported housing, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Develop a Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability Strategic Housing Delivery Group, with appropriate representation from the Councils, as the regional steering/decision making group for housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. Ensure the membership also includes representatives from relevant external partners, e.g. the NHS/ICS and housing providers.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
2	Establish reporting arrangements into this Group to oversee the delivery of the housing strategy.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	

Annexe 2 National and local context

There are a number of local and national policies that affect the supported housing sector and which will influence the delivery of this strategy in terms of the types of housing and supported housing that are commissioned and developed.

Housing and care and support providers should ensure they are aware of and take account of these local and national policies in relation to developing housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

Local context

Cheshire East

The *Learning Disability Strategy 2019-2022 (My life My Choice)*¹² identifies the Council's intentions are to:

- Work with local housing and social care providers to provide a range of housing and care options for people to choose from. This includes adapting their current home, living alone with support, living with a small number of people in shared housing, or moving outside their local area only if they want to or if it's necessary to meet their needs.
- Collect resources to help councils transform the local housing offer for people with a learning disability or autistic people.
- Reduce the number of people in permanent residential settings and supporting them to live in the community
- Develop a plan for children and young people in residential settings to return to their family home or move to greater independence
- Work with partners to ensure appropriate housing options and support are available

Cheshire West and Chester

The aims of the *Cheshire West Place Joint Health and Social Care Commissioning Strategy for Adults with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism 2021-2025*¹³ are that:

- More people with learning disabilities and/or Autism will be supported to live a good quality and meaningful life

¹² [Cheshire East Council My Life, My Choice: A Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities in Cheshire East 2019-2022.](#)

¹³ [Cheshire West Place Joint Health and Social Care Commissioning Strategy for Adults with a Learning Disability and/or Autism 2021 - 2025](#)

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- People with a learning disability and/or autism will be supported to live, work, socialise and be as independent as possible throughout their life, within the local community, close to family, and friends.
- Support for people with a learning disability and/or autism will be person-centered and effective to help ensure that they can achieve their goals, aspirations, and person-centered outcomes.
- People with a learning disability and / or autism and their carers can access the appropriate level of information and advice when they need it.
- People with a learning disability and/or autism feel safe in their Community

Halton

Halton's Market Position Statement 2023-2026¹⁴ identifies that:

"It is anticipated the number of 'own front door' schemes will increase, as demand for this housing option is high as it provides individuals with their own self-contained accommodation but within a wider, safe and supported environment. Discussions are currently taking place for another 'own front door' scheme in Runcorn to provide a further 10 individual tenancies.

We will also look at opportunities for core and cluster developments as demand shifts for individuals with more complex needs from shared supported tenancies to individual tenancies."

Knowsley

Through the *2022-2026 ASC Market Position Statement*¹⁵, the Council is seeking to work with and encourage a range of providers to support people with learning disabilities – it is encouraging a mixed market of providers who can deliver personalised support and accommodation. The Council will be particularly focusing on encouraging small and local providers to enter the market.

Liverpool

¹⁴ <https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/files/market-position-statements/Halton-Adult-Social-Care-Market-Position-Statement-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁵ [Knowsley Council: Market Position Statement 2022-2026](#)

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The *Liverpool 2020-25 Market Position Statement*¹⁶ sets out the intention to develop a minimum of 400 independent homes with support for adults with learning disabilities and other people, by 2025. It states "All adults with learning disabilities should have the opportunity to live as independently as they are able to, within their own tenancies or accommodation where possible with packages of care that they have full control over and that meet their individual needs, supporting them at different ages and stages of life to live full lives".

Sefton

The *Sefton 2019/20 Market Position Statement*¹⁷ states "All existing and new accommodation needs to reflect the increasing incidence of physical disability and mobility difficulties amongst those with learning disabilities and appropriate sensory adaptations undertaken for individuals with Autism. It states "Adults with learning disabilities will be supported to be as independent as possible. Primary consideration is for people to be offered excellent care at home supported within their own communities. If a higher level of care is required, then alternatives such as extra care schemes should be available and lower-level supported housing services such as KeyRing type schemes."

St Helens

The *People's Plan 2021-2026*¹⁸ has an objective to expand and improve mental health services and services for people with a learning disability and/or autism. The Adult Social Care Integrated Commissioning Strategy 2022-2024¹⁹, identifies that:

"By September 2023, we will have a costed housing and support plan that delivers a suitable range of housing options for the next five years, in partnership with a preferred housing provider."

Warrington

The *2021 Learning Disability Strategy*²⁰ seeks to provide a range of appropriate and quality housing options that allow individuals to choose a home that meets their changing needs. The strategy also aims to promote independence, choice and control for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. The council will annually review the Warrington Housing Strategy (2018-28) to ensure appropriate housing is delivered locally, and it will ensure the commission of appropriate, supported housing provision to meet local need.

¹⁶ [Liverpool City Council: Market Position Statement: Adult Social Care and Homelessness 2020 - 2025](#)

¹⁷ [Sefton Council: Adult Social Care Market Position Statement](#)

¹⁸ [St Helens Council: St Helens People's Plan 2021-2026](#)

¹⁹ https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/5892/P2-ASC-Integrated-Commissioning-Strategy/pdf/P2_Adult_social_care_IC_strategy.pdf?m=638170897815870000

²⁰ [Warrington Borough Council: Learning Disability Strategy](#)

Wirral

The *Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Autism strategy 2022-2027*²¹ reflects the NHS Long Term Plan and the Transforming Care programme, which aim to improve and widen access to mental health support, reduce health inequalities, and provide community-based care for autistic people and those with intellectual disabilities. It also aims to:

- Support more autistic people to live in the community, with the right support, and close to home
- Working with partners to ensure appropriate housing options and support are available
- Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care
- Reducing reliance on specialist hospitals and inpatient care

National context

There are a range of national policies that will influence how the Cheshire and Merseyside councils commission and regulate supported housing, including for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

In October 2020 the Government published the *Supported housing: national statement of expectations*.²² This set out the expectations of councils and of providers of supported housing in relation to, for example, understanding the need for supported housing and ensuring that supported housing is of a good quality, both in terms of the accommodation and the service. This was for guidance only, however since this was published, the Government has set out its intention to deliver improvements in supported housing the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act (below).

More recently the Government has established the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)²³ and made available funding to a number of Councils to deliver this programme locally, including in Cheshire and Merseyside (St Helen's Borough Council). The programme is intended to support Councils to improve the quality of supported housing, both the accommodation and support services, through greater local scrutiny.

The recent Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act²⁴ makes provision for the regulation of supported exempt accommodation, and makes provision for local authority oversight of, and enforcement powers relating to, the provision of supported exempt accommodation. It is expected that Councils will have new statutory powers and duties to regulate supported housing locally. The Act provides new powers to councils in relation to:

²¹ [NHS Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Autism Strategy 2022 – 2027](#)

²² [Supported housing: national statement of expectations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²³ [Supported Housing Improvement Programme prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁴ [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

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- A licensing scheme for providers of supported housing.
- Producing local assessments of need for supported housing and developing strategic plans based on that evidence.

The Act also sets that there will be new National Supported Housing Standards that will apply to providers of supported housing and councils' role in checking these standards are being met.

This will mean that all supported housing that is developed for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism where it falls within the definition of 'supported exempt accommodation' (which is likely to be the majority of housing developed through this strategy) will be subject in the future to regulation by the Cheshire and Merseyside councils, including licensing housing providers to permit them to develop and operate supported housing.

Over recent years long lease-based models of supported housing have come under scrutiny by the Regulator of Social Housing, particularly the governance and financial arrangements of some Registered Providers that lease all or most of their supported housing stock from other organisations. The Cheshire and Merseyside councils will take account of the regulatory status of providers of supported housing in its approach to managing the quality of supported housing services, including in relation to housing providers' access to higher rates of housing benefit

In addition there is a range of national policy and practice that housing and support providers should be aware of in relation to developing housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

The *Building the Right Support Action Plan*²⁵, published in 2022, updates the original *Building the Right Support*²⁶ from 2015, reinforces the importance of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism having a good home.

*Building the Right Home*²⁷ sets out guidance and principles for housing for people with a learning disability and autistic people that need specialist and supported housing.

The Care Quality Commission's Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture (RSRRC)²⁸ published in 2018 sets out more clearly than in any previous CQC guidance what the specific expectations are of care providers both in terms of registration of supported housing services and inspection. As well as meeting the standard CQC regulations that apply to care providers there is an explicit focus on the service model, i.e. the model of care. This is influenced by the *Service model for commissioners of health and social care services*²⁹. This

²⁵ [Building the Right Support for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People Action Plan - July 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁶ [NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right support](#)

²⁷ [NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right home](#)

²⁸ [Right support right care right culture \(cqc.org.uk\)](#)

²⁹ Supporting people with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition. (2015). LGA/ADASS/NHSE

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sets out 9 principles that commissioners should apply in commissioning and contracting for services for people with learning disabilities, and by implication, that care providers will need to deliver. CQC emphasises that it expects providers to comply with the guidance in *Building the Right Support*. In addition, in RSRCRC, CQC is clear about its other requirements and expectations of care providers, specifically:

- Providers need to be able to evidence that there is a need for a service, in this case supported housing, and that local commissioners have agreed to the service being developed.
- Providers need to be able to show that the size, setting and design of the service (this means the setting as well as the design of the care service) meets peoples' expectations and is aligned with current best practice.
- The service needs to enable people to have access to their local community. The care model and the location of the service mean that people are supported to access ordinary community life in response to their needs and wishes.
- Providers need to be able to evidence that the model of care and the associated policies and procedures are in line with best practice. This is reinforcing that CQC expects providers to avoid care practices that are reliant on restrictive practices or seclusion and instead are focussed on promoting people's strengths.

All housing and supported housing services which provide CQC regulated care, developed through this strategy, will need to be consistent with *Building the Right Support* and *RSRCRC*.

Annexe 3 Examples of contemporary practice in housing and support for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

We have identified a range of contemporary practice examples in relation to the design of housing and support that reflects the needs of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs, including the need for a range of housing adaptations and the creation of trauma informed environments for some people.

Review of existing shared supported housing services

Commissioners across Cheshire and Merseyside are seeking to work with housing and support providers to review existing supported housing services, particularly 'shared' supported housing services (i.e. where a person has a room in a house and shares the communal areas with other tenants).

We have identified an over supply of shared housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism across Cheshire and Merseyside, particularly small scale shared housing with 24/7 support. Problems with this type of supported housing include:

- Properties that are no longer fit for purpose, e.g. they may not be accessible.
- Relatively high void rates and prevalence of long term voids.
- A reducing preference for shared types of housing amongst people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, for example in relation to compatibility issues including issues regarding young people sharing with older people. However, Some recent consultation outcomes with young persons indicate that they are more inclined to be comfortable with the principle of a shared property with fellow young people as a step-up to independence and preparing for them moving on to independent homes.
- Poor value for money.

However, we are also aware that through some recent consultation with young persons, some people are more inclined to be comfortable with the principle of living in a shared property with fellow young people as a step-up to independence and preparing for them moving on to independent homes

We know from discussions with housing providers that there is an opportunity to review their existing portfolios of shared supported housing.

As a guide, we have provided some examples of councils that have worked with supported housing providers to review and in some cases reconfigure or decommission existing supported housing to address these types of issues.

These reviews have typically involved:

- A review of the long term suitability of the properties as supported housing.

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- Consideration of costs to adapt and modify properties and whether this is feasible and realistic.
- Undertaking up to date care assessments of tenants, including by trusted assessors from care providers.
- Discussions with tenants, advocates and families about alternative housing options.
- Identification of housing options that reflect tenants' needs and that will better suit people's needs in the longer term.
- Commissioning and development of alternative housing options.

Oxfordshire County Council. Shared supported housing services were developed as an alternative to residential care in the 1990s and 2000s. This had become the default housing option for many people with learning disabilities. The County Council with its NHS and housing partners, undertook a strategic review of the portfolio of shared supported housing and at the same time has been developing a wide range of new build supported housing and extra care housing services, alongside supported housing options for people with the most complex support needs. This has resulted in a wider range of housing options being available for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with shared supported housing no longer being the predominant housing model.

Worcestershire County Council. Since 2015, the County Council has had a programme of developing new build supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism which has resulted in over 400 new homes being developed. These have been developed in partnership with a range of housing providers including large Registered Providers and smaller, specialised housing providers. This has included supported housing options for people with moderate support needs (not requiring 24/7 support) as well as people with complex support needs who need bespoke supports including 24/7 support. This housing development programme has meant that fewer people have moved to shared supported housing, as most new development has been of self-contained dwellings, and some people have been able to move from shared supported housing and residential care, into new self-contained supported housing.

New supported housing development

Commissioners across Cheshire and Merseyside have commissioned a range of high quality housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, including people with complex support needs.

There is identified need for additional types of self-contained supported housing that meet the housing and support needs of a range of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

As a guide to the types of future housing development, we have provided examples locally and from elsewhere of housing and supported housing that is effective in meeting the needs

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of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, including people with complex support needs.

An example of new build accommodation for people with learning disabilities is Anvil Court³⁰ a scheme in Hampshire directly developed, financed and owned by Hampshire County Council. It is a block of 10 1-bed flats with an additional 3 wheelchair adapted bungalows. This supported housing scheme has 24/7 care on site and is aimed at people with learning disabilities with a range of care and support needs.



In relation to people with very complex support needs an example of a bespoke supported housing scheme has been developed by Choice Support³¹ in Kirklees with capital funding from NHS England. This is an example of a supported housing scheme, including 6 self-contained units with staff facilities, designed for people with complex needs which includes features such as curved (and removable) internal walls, and soft impact finishes to floors and walls.

³⁰ <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/adultservices/Extra-Care-Younger-adults-Brochure-2020.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.choicesupport.org.uk/stories/transforming-care-mayman-lane>



Oxfordshire County Council has commissioned two purpose-built supported housing schemes for people with complex needs³². These have been directly developed and are managed by Cherwell District Council. Each scheme has 6 self-contained units and is designed for people with an autism diagnosis who require specialist accommodation and support and they are intended for people with complex support needs who find it difficult to share support or accommodation.



Karbon Homes' development of five supported two-bed bungalows in Walker, Newcastle are designed specifically for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. The kitchen of each bungalow leads on to a private patio area with bedrooms on the most private and quietest side of the buildings. Externally, the layout includes secure external gardens and allotment areas with the bungalows positioned as far as possible from any noise in the parking area and access road.

³²https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Practice_examples/Housing_LIN_case_studies/HLIN_CaseStudy_151_Oxfordshire.pdf



Access to general needs housing

As a guide, we have provided examples of councils and housing providers that have worked with housing providers and other organisations to improve access to general needs housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

ForHousing has designated a block of general needs social housing in Salford for use by people with learning disabilities. This is creating both 'low level' supported housing and 'move on' housing for people who no longer need to live in supported housing where higher levels of care and support are provided. This is making general needs social housing available to people with learning disabilities and/or Autism who need a self-contained home that is managed in a sensitive way by a social landlord.

Golden Lane Housing (GLH) is a Registered Provider (of social housing) and a charity that specialises in providing housing for people with learning disabilities. GLH operates a scheme that it refers to as 'Great Tenants'. This is a scheme where GLH takes out a lease on a privately owned property that will meet the housing needs of a person with learning disabilities/autistic person (or a group of people). GLH 'vets' private landlords and their properties to ensure that they are compliant with relevant standards (such as having gas and electrical safety certificates and appropriate smoke and carbon monoxide alarms) and then acts as the landlord to the tenant/s (which also helps to resolve any housing benefit related issues). GLH typically takes out leases of up to seven years with private landlords; whilst it does not provide permanent housing, it is often a medium to long term housing option which, in effect, turns a private sector let into a social housing let (typically as a form of supported housing).

https://www.glh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/GLH_GT-for-professionals.pdf

Annexe 4 Need for housing and supported housing

The estimated need for housing and supported housing is based on evidence from:

- Work undertaken by Campbell Tickell for Cheshire & Merseyside ADASS in 2022.
- Qualitative evidence from commissioners from the councils in Cheshire & Merseyside.

Quantitative evidence of need

Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership commissioned Campbell Tickell in 2002 to undertake an assessment of the need for 'future accommodation with support needs' over the 10 year period from 2023 to 2033.

This assessment identifies need for 'accommodation with support needs' to 2033 for each of the nine councils and at Cheshire & Merseyside level. Based on the report from Campbell Tickell, 'Accommodation with support needs' is taken to mean 'supported housing'.

The Cambell Tickell needs assessment for supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism is focused on those individuals who are inpatients or at high risk of inpatient admission and/or those who are eligible for adult social care services. The cohorts are:

- Inpatients in hospital or specialist units.
- Those on the Dynamic Support Databases who are high risk.
- Residents in care homes.
- Young people who are transitioning to adult services.
- People living with a family carer.

The method used estimates future need for 'accommodation with support needs' net of 'relets' within existing supported housing services.

Tabel 1 shows the estimated level of need for supported housing for each local authority and for Cheshire & Merseyside to 2033.

The table below shows that a total of 1,679 supported housing units will be required across Cheshire & Merseyside over the next 10 years to meet the needs that have been identified (including some adjustments to take account of the projected learning disability population). This is an indicative number of units and the actual number required could vary upwards or downwards, depending on the number of relets and other factors (Cambell Tickell, 2022).

In addition there are 54 'patients' in hospital settings who are NHS 'Specialised Commissioning Patients'.

Table 1. Estimated need for supported housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for Supported housing 2032/33
Cheshire East	160
Cheshire West & Chester	261
Halton	189
Knowsley	152
Liverpool	104
St Helens	160
Sefton	246
Warrington	148
Wirral	259
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	1,679

Source: Campbell Tickell, 2022

It is possible that some of this estimated need for supported housing could be met through the use of Shared Lives accommodation. Based on work undertaken by the Housing LIN with other councils to estimate need for different types of housing and accommodation for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, it is assumed that approximately 10% of the identified need for supported housing could be met through the provision of Shared Lives accommodation. This is shown in table 2. This suggests a need for c.165 additional Shared Lives places over the period to 2032/33.

It was outside the scope of the assessment undertaken by Cambell Tickell to estimate the need for mainstream 'general needs' housing amongst people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. However, the assessment by Cambell Tickell did identify/estimate the level of 'relets' within supported housing as being 7% per annum, which identified an overall level of relets within supported housing services across all councils of c.190 per annum (shown at Campbell Tickell report in table at paragraph 6.2.12).

Based on work undertaken by the Housing LIN with other councils to estimate need for different types of housing and accommodation for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, it is assumed that approximately 20% of relets may relate to a need for general needs housing. This is shown in table 2. This suggests a need for c.380 additional general needs housing units over the period to 2032/33.

It should be noted that the estimated need for additional Shared Lives accommodation would reduce the estimated need for supported housing over the period to 2032/33.

Table 2. Estimated need for Shared Lives and general needs housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for Shared Lives 2032/33	Need for general needs housing 2032/22
Cheshire East	16	58
Cheshire West & Chester	26	58
Halton	19	12
Knowsley	15	30
Liverpool	10	108
St Helens	16	28
Sefton	24	16
Warrington	15	26
Wirral	26	46
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	167	382

Qualitative evidence of need

Qualitative evidence of need has been derived from insights and evidence from commissioners about local trends and the nature of future need for supported housing and housing in their area for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

This is summarised below in relation to different 'cohorts' of people and their circumstances from evidence from all nine councils.

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/accommodation
--	--

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/accommodation
People living with family carers/informal carers	<p>Trends are mixed. Some councils (LAs) have seen an increase in numbers of adults aged 18 moving away from a family setting, and/or support of informal carers, into supported housing with care services. However, other LAs have continued to see informal carers providing a home and care and support for their family member with learning disabilities/autism.</p> <p>For those informal carers who do wish to retain their caring responsibilities, LAs recognise the need to provide support to those carers in order for this to be sustainable.</p> <p>To support these carers there is a need for provision of additional respite accommodation.</p> <p>Most LAs are experiencing older carers being concerned about what will happen to their family member of they are no longer able to care for them.</p> <p>Some LAs are seeing fewer older carers who are retaining caring responsibilities, into older age. LAs recognise that there is a need to plan with older carers to avoid crisis situations from arising, for example where there may be a cohort of people who are aged 50+ living with older family carers who will need a range of housing options to move to over the next 5-10 years.</p>
Young people in transition to adult social care eligibility	<p>Many LAs are experiencing increasing numbers of young people in transition to eligibility for adult social care who will need housing, including supported housing. Trends amongst this cohort include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater complexity of support needs • More people who have needs linked to autism
People living in Shared Lives	<p>Some LAs have identified modest increases in need for Shared Lives accommodation.</p> <p>Some LAs have plans to either maintain current capacity or develop and grow their Shared Lives services.</p>
People living in residential care	<p>All LAs have seen a reduction in the number of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism living in residential care. This reflects people moving to supported housing, extra care housing and Shared Lives instead of residential care.</p> <p>Some LAs are also identifying people who are currently living in residential care who may benefit from a move to supported housing.</p> <p>LAs are now only developing or funding residential care models for those individuals with the most complex needs.</p>

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/accommodation
People living in nursing care	<p>The majority of LAs have very small numbers of people placed in a nursing setting.</p> <p>In some instances NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) teams and Integrated Care Board (ICB) partners commission these services.</p> <p>LAs are not seeing individuals with learning disabilities and autistic people requiring general nursing care at an older age.</p>
People living in hospital settings	<p>There are relatively low numbers of people in hospital settings/assessment and treatment beds.</p> <p>LAs recognise that some people moving from hospital require larger and/or adapted properties to meet their needs.</p> <p>LAs are working with their NHS partners to support discharges from these acute settings for people to return to community based accommodation.</p> <p>LAs also recognise that there are also people who are in community settings or other forms of accommodation settings who also need very robust specialist accommodation.</p>
People living in shared supported housing	<p>Most LAs are seeing some evidence of decreasing demand for the use of shared supported housing, particularly amongst younger people.</p> <p>However, LAs recognise that there is an ongoing role for shared supported housing and that for some people this works well, for example, where people are very settled and/or would be at risk of potential social isolation in self-contained housing.</p> <p>Some LAs are actively looking to decommission some shared supported housing services, particularly where there are 'matching' and compatibility issues, that are creating long term voids and/or voids that cannot be filled, and/or where the properties are of poor quality or not 'future proofed' (i.e. in terms of adaptability for people with mobility related needs).</p> <p>In these circumstances, some LAs are working with housing providers to decommission or remodel shared housing, for example where the properties are no longer fit-for-purpose.</p> <p>Most LAs are not seeking to commission new shared supported housing services.</p>
People living in self contained supported housing	<p>All LAs are experiencing increasing preference/need for self contained forms of supported housing.</p> <p>Most LAs have already either developed this type of supported housing and/or have plans to develop/commission further capacity of this type of supported housing, in response to</p>

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/accommodation
	<p>increasing need.</p> <p>LAs are finding that individuals are preferring this model of housing as it provides a higher standard of living, with greater privacy, better accessibility and dwellings that are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant.</p> <p>LAs are also experiencing increased need for the use of technology enabled care in this type of housing, to complement staff support, which allows individuals a much greater sense of independence and these models allow for a better economy of scale with the delivery of the core care.</p>
<p>People living in general needs housing with support</p>	<p>There are typically fewer people living in general needs housing than in supported housing services.</p> <p>However, the majority of LAs are experiencing increasing and unmet need for people to live in general needs housing, typically in social housing, with an appropriate care and support package.</p> <p>This increased need is coming from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who do not want or need supported housing in the first place • People who no longer need to live in supported housing, i.e. they wish/need to 'move on' from supported housing to general needs housing • People with very complex support needs who need to live alone and for whom supported housing is often not appropriate in meeting their needs. <p>LAs recognise that there is scope to improve the application process for and allocation of social housing through Property Pool Plus or other Choice Based Lettings systems in order for it to work more effectively and sensitively for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.</p> <p>Most LAs are working with Registered Providers to develop an increased supply overall of general needs social housing (typically 1-bed units).</p>

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ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	2023/24 REVENUE OUTTURN
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the year-end revenue and capital position for the 2023/24 financial year as at the end of March 2024. The report provides Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2023/24 saving programme and a summary of reserves and balances, to enable the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

The year-end revenue outturn for 2023/24, represents a favourable variance of £41k against directorate revenue budgets of £14.779m, which is a £0.7m improvement from the quarter 3 forecast, largely due to use of reserves and maximising the use of grants. Capital outturn was £35.898m.

The report contributes to the Wirral Plan 2023-2027 in supporting the organisation in meeting all Council priorities.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and is a non-key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy Regeneration and Housing committee is recommended to note:

1. the draft, unaudited 2023/24 outturn favourable Directorate variance of £0.041m.
2. the progress on delivery of the 2023/24 savings programme.
3. the transfer to and use of earmarked reserves, as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.
4. the draft, unaudited 2023/24 capital outturn position of £35.898m.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the revenue and capital budgets and savings achievements enables decisions to be taken in a timely manner, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of the Council.
- 1.2 This report presents timely information on the full year financial position for 2023/24, prior to final audit engagement.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee has previously determined the budget monitoring process and this report details the agreed course of action.
- 2.2 In striving to manage budgets, available options have been evaluated to maintain a balance between service delivery and a balanced budget.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the meeting on 27 February 2023, the Council agreed a net revenue budget for 2023/2024 of £366.6m to be met by government grants, council tax, and business rates. In quarter 1, a favourable £2.000m variation against the funding relating to an adjustment of Business Rates Section 31 grants, increased the revenue budget to £368.6m.
- 3.2 The Council's Quarter 1 monitoring report, presented on 12 July 2023 to the Policy & Resources Committee, highlighted growing in-year pressures of £3.6m, which had risen to £7.2m by Quarter 2 and £7.97m by Quarter 3. Several potential mitigations were identified that could be used to present a balanced budget at the end of the year. This report sets out the updated revenue financial position for the Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee at the end of the year.

Economic Context

- 3.3 Throughout 2023-24 the headline consumer price inflation (CPI) continued to decline from 8.7% at the start of the year to 3.4% in February but was still above the Bank of England's 2% target.
- 3.4 Having begun the financial year at 4.25%, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased the Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023 and it has remained at this level through to March 2024. Although financial markets have shifted their interest rate expectations downwards, with expectations of a cut early in the new year, the MPC's focus remains on maintaining the current interest rate in order to control inflation over the medium term.
- 3.5 The overall risk environment remained particularly challenging throughout 2023-24, with subdued economic activity, poor outlooks for growth and inflation and increased geopolitical tensions, all placing significant pressures on finances and restricting the ability to forecast and plan, with confidence.

Revenue Outturn Position

- 3.6 At the end of 2023/24, against the Committee's net revenue budget of £14.779m, there is a favourable variance of £0.041m, which has supported the overall council position through efficient grant and reserve management.

TABLE 1 2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET & OUTTURN

	Budget	Outturn	Variance	
	£000	£000	(+ Adv / - Fav) £000	%
Regeneration	956	452	-504	-53%
Housing	5,841	4,914	-927	-16%
Development & Investment	6,114	7,000	886	14%
Chief Planner	1,218	1,626	408	33%
Special Projects & Regeneration	250	250	0	0%
Local Plan	400	496	96	24%
Net Committee Expenditure	14,779	14,738	-41	0%

Significant aspects of revenue variances by directorate

Regeneration & Place favourable variance of £0.041m

- 3.7 Regeneration : The regeneration team has a favourable variance of £0.500m, which is an increase of £0.300m from quarter 3 due to maximising the use of grants to help fund staff costs working on the grant areas.
- 3.8 Local Plan: The local plan has adverse spend of £0.100m, which is an improvement from the £0.200m reported at quarter 3, due to the release of £0.100m of reserves to help the position.
- 3.9 Assets : There is an £0.800m adverse spend on Assets, which has increased from £0.300m reported at quarter 3. The adverse spend on commercial income has increased by £0.200m, with the need to cover potential bad debts, especially in relation to the Europa Building. Winter also saw an increase in repairs and maintenance across the Council's assets with an adverse position of £0.100m. This also meant the Wallasey Town Hall Standby saving, of which £0.200m was expected to be mitigated from the maintenance budgets could also not be covered and so has added to the adverse spend in Assets.
- 3.10 Housing : Housing has a favourable position of £0.900m. This is due to contract efficiencies on Private Sector Housing (£0.200m), maximising grants to help Supported Housing (£0.500m) and also the release of reserves (£0.200m).
- 3.11 Planning : Planning has an adverse outturn of £0.400m, in line with quarter 3 forecasts due to planning fee income shortfalls.

Action plan

- 3.12 It is recognised that there are a number of issues within the Councils overall outturn position, and particularly the variances between quarter 3 and the final outturn, which will impact on the position in 24/25.

- 3.13 In order to ensure that these issues are appropriately managed, actions for each directorate have been recorded in conjunction with the Director and progress against these will be monitored monthly.
- 3.14 The issues that have emerged during the outturn process are largely relating to business as usual activities that fall outside the main Change Programme. The resourcing of these required activities will be considered alongside the existing transformation resource in place to support the Change Programme.
- 3.15 The issues that have emerged during the outturn process are largely relating to business as usual activities that fall outside the main Change Programme. The resourcing of these required activities will be considered alongside the existing transformation resource in place to support the Change Programme.
- 3.16 The outputs of this work and the proposed corrective action will feed into the budget setting process for 25/26 and the next iteration of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 3.17 Enhanced procedural rigour in relation to the budget monitoring process is set out in the report titled 'Budget Monitoring and Budget Setting Processes' found later in the agenda. This outlines the stringent processes implemented for the upcoming fiscal year. The recent reorganising of financial operations has bolstered financial support and resources across the entire organisation to support these processes alongside the implementation of Oracle Fusion. This has equipped the Council with an accessible financial analysis tool. The enterprise resource planning software provides enhanced data integration, processing capabilities and reporting functionalities. With Oracle Fusion now operational, comprehensive insights can be derived from financial data through in-depth analysis, enabling more informed decision-making and strategic planning based on accurate, real-time financial information across all business units and operations.

Progress on delivery of the 2023/24 savings programme.

- 3.18 Table 2 presents the progress on the delivery of the 2023/24 approved savings. In terms of savings, £2.46m of the £2.66m savings targets were delivered, representing 92% of the total savings. The table below summarises the progress by Directorate:

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF DELIVERY OF 2023/24 SAVINGS

Directorate	Approved Saving £m	Delivered £m	Delivered through mitigation £m	Delayed/ unachieved in year £m
Regeneration & Place	-2.660	-2.460	0.000	-0.200

Significant variances by directorate.

Regeneration & Place: £0.2m of delayed/ unachieved in year savings

- 3.19 £0.2m adverse pressure relates to the Wallasey Town Hall Standby saving (which is a £0.4m saving). The saving was based on the building being in standby mode for the full year. However, the building has been used for the local plan consultation and the public enquiry. Consequently, only half of the saving was achieved in year.

Reserves and Balances

- 3.20 Table 3 shows the opening and closing balances of the Committee reserves.

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF EARMARKED RESERVES

Directorate	Opening Balance £000	Use of Reserve £000	Contribution to Reserve £000	Analysis of Forecast Closing Balance £000		
				Ring-fenced	Non Ring-fenced (committed)	Non Ring-fenced
Regeneration and Place	16,173	-3,897	7,122	17,482	250	1,666

3.21 The contribution to earmarked reserves in 2023/24 includes the establishment of the following new reserves:

- Super Squad Planning: £0.25m of grant funding towards helping Local Authorities, Local Planning Authorities, developers, and the wider market to unlock, unblock and support large scale Housing and Regeneration programmes and projects.

3.22 Material contributions to reserves included Resettlement Programme Grant (£3.546m) and Wirral Growth profits (£3.071m).

3.23 Appendix 1 provides a full list of all earmarked reserves.

Capital Programme

3.24 Capital spend for 2023/4 was £35.898m as shown in Appendix 2.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This is the Quarter 4 budget monitoring report that provides information on the revenue outturn for the Council for 2023/24. The Council has robust methods for reporting and forecasting budgets in place and alongside formal Quarterly reporting to Policy and Resources Committee, the financial position is routinely reported at Directorate Management Team meetings and corporately at the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of any early warning highlighting pressures and potential overspends, the SLT take collective responsibility to identify solutions to resolve these to ensure a balanced budget is reported at the end of the year.

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 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 At this time, there are no additional resource implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there will be resource implications, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget for 2023/24 was dependent on a stable financial position. The delivery of the budget was subject to ongoing variables both positive and adverse which gave a level of challenge in achieving this outcome.

7.2 In any budget year, there is a risk that operation will not be constrained within relevant budget limits. Under specific circumstances the Section 151 Officer may issue a Section 114 notice but that position has not been reached at the present time. The issuing of a Section 114 notice bans all new spending with the exception of protecting vulnerable people and statutory services and pre-existing commitments.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in arriving at the governance process for the 2023/24 budget monitoring process and the 2023/24 budget setting process.

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 At this time, there are no further equality implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be equality implications associated with these, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report has no direct environmental implications; however due regard is given as appropriate in respect of procurement and expenditure decision-making processes that contribute to the outturn position.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 In year activity will have incorporated community wealth implications. Consideration would have taken account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- **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 – Earmarked Reserves

APPENDIX 2 – Capital Programme

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Policy & Resources Committee Report 14 Jun 23: 2023/24 Budget and Budget Monitoring Processes Report

Bank of England – Monetary Policy Report

CIPFA's Financial Management Code

Guidance on flexible use of capital receipts

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	13 February 2024
Policy and Resources Committee	8 November 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	12 July 2023
Council	27 February 2022

Policy and Resources Committee	15 February 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	18 January 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	9 November 2022
Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee	27 March 2024
Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee	22 January 2024
Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee	6 December 2023

Appendix 1 – Earmarked Reserves 2023/24

Regeneration and Place

Reserve	Opening Balance £000	Use of Reserve £000	Contribution to Reserve £000	Closing Balance £000
Selective Licensing	1,433	-81	8	1,360
Wirral Ways to Work	625	-250	20	395
Regeneration and Inward Investment	1,385	-650	0	735
Urban Development Corporation Bid	77	-34	0	43
Building Control Fee Earning	420	-175	00	245
HMO Licence Fees	164	0	13	177
Major Infrastructure Project Development	62	0	0	62
Property Repairs rental income	276	0	106	382
DCLG Empty Shops Grant	41	0	0	41
ERDF 4.2 Match Funding	18	0	0	18
Emergency Maintenance and Work in Default	274	0	39	313
Resettlement Programme Grant	1,786	0	3,546	5,332
Homelessness	166	-166	0	0
Domestic Abuse Bill Grant	602	0	69	671
Economic Growth	342	-168	0	174
Birkenhead Future High Street funding	447	0	0	47
Wirral Growth Company Profit	8,455	-2,373	3,071	9,153
Super Squad Planning	0	0	250	250
Total	16,173	3,897	7,122	19,398

Note on New Reserve:

1. Super Squad Planning: £0.25m of grant funding towards helping Local Authorities, Local Planning Authorities, developers, and the wider market to unlock, unblock and support large scale Housing and Regeneration programmes and projects.

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Appendix 2 – Capital Programme 2023/24

Economy, Regeneration and Housing	Q4 Forecast	23/24 Actual	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants	6,493	6,492	- 1
Birkenhead Market Construction	1,930	1,017	- 913
Birkenhead Regeneration Delivery Fund	1,999	1,997	- 2
Birkenhead Regeneration Framework	194	89	- 105
Birkenhead Town Centre Masterplanning & Housing Delivery	286	248	- 38
Birkenhead Town Centre Sub-Station	10	10	0
Birkenhead Waterfront Programme	1,124	227	- 897
Capitalisation of Regen Salaries	1	- 0	- 1
Clearance	160	7	- 153
Empty Property Grant Scheme	267	267	- 0
FHSF New Ferry 21-22	1,036	134	- 902
Future High Streets - Birkenhead	8,687	340	- 8,347
Hind Street Programme	1,955	1,790	- 165
Levelling Up Fund 3 - Liscard	1	0	- 1
Liscard Town Centre Delivery	25	15	- 10
Local Authority Housing Fund 2	4,225	973	- 3,252
Maritime Knowledge hub	19	19	- 0
New Brighton Masterplan for Marine Promenade	62	62	- 0
New Ferry Regeneration Strategic Acquisitions	503	429	- 74
Office Quarter Building Fit-Out	9,398	6,150	- 3,248
Property Pooled Plus I.T System	10	7	- 3
Strategic Acquisition Fund	12,415	12,409	- 6
Strategic Acquisitions - Capital Enhancements	475	474	- 1
The Hythe	-	-	-
Town Centre - New Ferry	15	15	- 0
Town Centre scheme - New Ferry	12	9	- 3
Town Deal Fund - Birkenhead	2,656	2,655	- 1
Town Fund B'head	35	-	- 35
West Kirby Masterplan	64	62	- 2
Wirral Waters Investment Fund	-	-	-
Total Economy, Regeneration and Housing	54,057	35,898	- 18,159

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ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	BUDGET MONITORING AND BUDGET SETTING PROCESSES
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out how the 2024/25 budget will be monitored through the Committee system, which will facilitate the Policy and Services Committees (the Committees) to take ownership of their specific budgets and present appropriate challenge and scrutiny of Officers on the management and performance of those budgets.

The concurrent activity of budget setting for 2025/26, and how this will be approached, is also set out in this report; incorporated in which are:

- revisions to the approved Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) – the formulation of savings proposals and presentation of pressure/growth items
- the application of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) principles that underpin the budget process and decision-making, with links to the Council Plan
- how savings plans are to be configured
- considerations of requisite consultation exercises
- the role of the Finance Working Group

This matter relates to all Wards within the Borough and is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee notes:

1. the process for in-year monitoring of the 2024/25 budget; and
2. the proposed approach to 2025/26 budget setting and the key assumptions that will be used.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The 2024/25 Council budget was agreed at Full Council on 26 February 2024. This budget was made up of savings proposals, pressures/growth items and funding that were based on actual known figures or best estimates available at the time. At any point during the year, these estimated figures could change and need to be monitored closely to ensure, if adverse, mitigating actions can be taken immediately to ensure a balanced budget can be reported to the end of the year.
- 1.2 The Council has a legal responsibility to set an annual balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. In order to successfully do so, engagement with members, staff and residents is undertaken. The recommendations in this report inform that approach.
- 1.3 Managing and setting a budget will require difficult decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Regular Member engagement, which this report forms part of, is considered essential in delivering effective governance and financial oversight.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The proposals set out in this report are presented to allow for efficient and effective budget monitoring activity that can be conducted in a timely manner. As such, it is considered that to meet the business needs and address the challenges that the Council faces that no alternative options are viable or appropriate at this time.
- 2.2 Not engaging with the Committee at this time, on the matters set out, was an option that was available, however it is considered that involvement of Committees as soon as practical after the agreement of the 2024/25 budget will best assist in delivering the benefits detailed in paragraph 2.1.
- 2.3 In the event of the Section 151 Officer determining that a balanced financial position could not be presented, the Section 151 Officer would be required to issue a section 114 notice and report this to all Members of Full Council. The outcome of which could result in intervention by the Government.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Budget Monitoring Process

- 3.1 On 26 February 2024 Full Council approved the 2024/25 budget, which included significant budget savings/efficiencies (details provided at Appendix A) in order to present a balanced position for the year.
- 3.2 The calculation of the 2024/25 budget was prepared using known figures or best estimates available at the time. At any point during the year, internal or external factors may influence a change in these estimates which could either have a favourable or adverse impact on the ability to deliver a balanced position at financial year-end.
- 3.3 In order to ensure that a balanced position can be achieved, it is imperative that a robust process for monitoring and managing the budget is in place.

- 3.4 An internal officer governance process is in place, in line with past activity, to scrutinise and challenge budget performance in advance of financial forecasts being presented to the Committees. This process includes:
- Officers responsible for managing budgets (Budget Holders) should regularly examine financial data and transaction records within the Oracle finance system to ensure their accuracy and completeness.
 - Budget Holders and finance staff should convene frequent meetings to rigorously assess current income and expenditure levels, as well as determine future financial obligations. This analysis will facilitate the provision of dependable forecasts within the Oracle EPM finance system.
 - Directorate Management Team (DMT) review of the outcomes of the budget holder and finance staff meetings.
 - Scrutiny and challenge by DMTs as to the robustness of the figures and forecast presented in the context of Directorate-wide activity.
 - DMT agreement on appropriate remedial action where necessary.
 - Operational Performance Group (OPG) review and challenge of the forecast position.
 - Progress on approved savings items monitored through OPG.
 - Regular updates to Strategic Leadership Team for Senior Officer scrutiny and agreement on latest Council financial position.
 - Referral and/or escalation to SLT of potential financial pressures to provide organisational oversight in conjunction with other corporate initiatives.
 - Presentation to Committees.
- 3.5 To facilitate an understanding of income and expenditure levels against operational activities, Appendix B of this report provides the Committee with a detailed breakdown of their 2024/25 budgetary status, organised by functional area.
- 3.6 Once the Annual Budget and related policy framework is approved, it becomes the Council's decision and is effective immediately in respect of the relevant financial year in scope. The Council's Constitution provides that Policy and Service Committees and Officers are required to implement the Council's budget and policy framework as set out at Budget Council. In normal operating conditions, a Policy and Service Committee may only take decisions which are fully consistent with the Council approved budget and policy framework. Chief Officers must ensure that no commitments are made that would result in an approved budget being exceeded.
- 3.7 Each Committee will be responsible for:
- Ensuring that the committee budget is utilised effectively and responsibly and remains within the relevant budget envelope,
 - Implementing corrective measures, when appropriate, to address any adverse financial situations that may arise during the fiscal year. Such actions could include curtailing expenditure or reassessing spending priorities.
- 3.8 Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the entire budget will be in balance, including providing mitigating actions to bring the budget back in line from any adverse variance position that may be forecast, which may take the form of providing direction to other Service Committees. Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for advising Full Council on organisation-wide financial activity.
- 3.9 To enable the Committees to manage and monitor budgets effectively in-year, a suite of detailed information will be provided on a quarterly basis, comprising:

- A report monitoring the revenue budget, including the most recent full-year financial forecast and evaluation.
 - Full list of budget savings proposals and the progress for their achievement.
 - A report monitoring the capital budget, including the most recent full-year financial forecast and evaluation.
 - Other specific financial information relevant to the individual committee's decision-making process.
- 3.10 This information will be made available at the earliest committee meeting, following the quarter end and completion of the internal governance process, detailed in paragraph 3.4. The anticipated timetable for reporting quarterly financial information to committee is:
- Quarter 1 (1 Apr – 30 Jun): July 24
 - Quarter 2 (1 Jul – 30 Sep): November 24
 - Quarter 3 (1 Oct – 31 Dec): February 25
 - Quarter 4 (1 Jan – 31 Mar): June 25
- 3.11 Each Committee should have established a Budget Oversight Panel to facilitate regular space to review the budget position in between scheduled committee meetings during stages of the financial year.
- 3.12 The Budget Oversight Panel will comprise the Committee Chair and Spokespersons, the relevant Director and Assistant Directors (as required), Finance and Democratic Service representative.
- 3.13 The purpose of this group is to:-
- Ensure that Members are receiving the most current financial data and are monitoring the budget throughout the year.
 - Question the Director on implications of the financial data ahead of the scheduled Committee meeting.
 - Seek further information from the Director/Assistant Director where necessary.
 - Make reasonable requests for certain additional information to facilitate strategic decision-making.
 - Make links between financial performance and activity, to inform decision-making of the Committee.
 - Inform the process of efficiency target setting and monitor performance against delivery of efficiency targets agreed.
- 3.14 The Committees have the autonomy (subject to delegation levels) to enact budget virements (transfers) from one function to another within their overall committee budget envelope. Virements will also need to be agreed by the Section 151 Officer as there are certain conditions where budgets are not allowed to be transferred for the purposes of gaining a specific benefit.
- 3.15 The Committees will be responsible for containing net expenditure within their overall budget envelope and not overspending. Where an adverse variance is forecast, each committee will be required to take remedial action, with detailed plans and timeframes, to bring the budget back in line and ensure that overspends are mitigated. Where a committee has taken all possible steps for remedial action and is unable to fully mitigate an overspend, this must be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee who will then take an organisational-wide view of how this adverse variance will be managed. There must be immediate action agreed to ensure a deliverable, balanced forecast position can be reported, and this will be monitored on a regular basis by the Policy and Resources Committee.

- 3.16 Whilst each committee is required to remain within its annual budget envelope, situations may transpire that demonstrate an in-year favourable forecast variance being reported to a Committee. Committees wishing to use any forecast underspend, must have approval from the P&R Committee.
- 3.17 The Council must not be in a situation where one Committee is forecasting an overspend, unable to mitigate it, and another Committee is forecasting an underspend and takes a decision to utilise this for unplanned growth purposes. The Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for ensuring that operating in silos does not occur and that resources are aligned to Council objectives at all times.
- 3.18 The Policy and Resources Committee has ultimate responsibility for taking any necessary steps required to ensure a whole Council budget can report a balanced position throughout the year. The Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, will be responsible for ensuring that any budget actions, proposals and mitigations are achievable and legal.
- 3.19 The Finance Working Group will meet to support the Policy and Resources Committee in its aims of providing strategic direction to the operation of the Council, to maintain a strategic overview of budgets and to provide a coordinating role across all other service committees through a 'whole council view' of budget monitoring.

Budget Setting Process

- 3.20 The process for setting the budget for 2025/26 will commence immediately, building on the MTFP that was approved by Full Council on 26 February, as recommended by Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.21 The most recent version of the MTFP contains a number of financial pressures and savings for 2025/26 (and beyond) that illustrate a budget gap of £3.191m. The budget setting process will need to close the budget gap, which will fluctuate during 2024/25 subject to further information and analysis of potential financial pressures as well as obtaining clarity on government and other funding available to the Council.
- 3.22 Included within the MTFP for 2025/26 is a suite of proposals for consideration in the proposed budget setting process. Officers will develop business cases for these proposals which will be shared with the regular committee Budget Oversight Panel meetings, concurrently serving as budget workshops for the Committees.
- 3.23 The budget workshops, a number of which will be convened between now and August in line with individual committee requirements, will allow current budget intelligence to be reviewed, challenged and modified. In order to close the budget gap, it will be necessary to consider a number of approaches, which will include:
- reviewing budget pressures with the aim of reducing them
 - reviewing income streams to ensure that maximum benefits are being obtained and that achievable targets are set.
 - reviewing opportunities for budget efficiencies and savings
- 3.24 It is considered vital that clear direction is given by Policy & Resources Committee to each Committee in respect of their budget setting objectives. To facilitate this, it is recommended that budget envelopes are constructed for each Committee to work to in order to provide a framework and clear goals to the approaches noted in paragraph 3.22. These envelopes will take account of the work of the change programme and any justifiable budgetary

pressures or additional factors that necessitate strategic management and mitigation. The Finance Working Group will play a key role in this process.

- 3.25 The methodology for constructing budget envelopes will follow the convention adopted for 2024/25, whereby MTFS principles were aligned to Directorate activity through targets that:
- Will produce a balanced budget and MTFP.
 - Prioritise statutory services and objectives in line with the Council Plan
 - Ensure that non-statutory services that are not supporting statutory services will be delivered only where there is no net cost to the Council.
 - Facilitate a strengthening of our reserves to ensure we have funds for the future to support the Council Plan
 - Demonstrate an appropriate approach to corporate risk.
 -
- 3.26 Each Committee, via the budget workshops, will be accountable for identifying, developing and agreeing reductions in pressures and deliverable savings proposals to close the 2025/26 budget gap and ensure a draft balanced budget can be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee in November 2024, to enable budget consultation to start in a timely manner. See Appendix C for a flow chart of the process for the 2025/26 budget and timeline.
- 3.27 In developing budget proposals, and reviewing budget activity, each Committee must adhere to the MTFS guiding principles, including the overarching principle that all investment and savings decisions will be aligned to the priorities within the Council Plan:
1. Fees & Charges will be reviewed annually and adjusted for inflation, regulatory guidance, and competitiveness. When setting charges, the impact on vulnerable groups will be considered.
 2. Capital decisions will be based upon strong business cases, taking account of invest to save principles where appropriate. Whole life capital financing costs impacting the net revenue position of the Council will be fully considered and reflected in the MTFP.
 3. Service level spend will be benchmarked with suitable peer groups and regularly reviewed to ensure the principle of an efficient Council is being achieved.
 4. The Council will maximise the opportunities from automation and a policy of 'Digital First' in service delivery.
 5. Service reviews will be undertaken Council wide within the timeframe of the MTFS. This will ensure that operating models, organisational design and costs are subject to regular reviews and adjustment.
 6. Service development, savings, and investment will be brought forward based on business cases that must demonstrate alignment to the Corporate Plan, feasibility, deliverability and value for money.
 7. The Council will consult with stakeholders across the borough in forming budget proposals.
 8. The Council will review alternate delivery models and seek joint working and management initiatives with regional and other partners to align to the Wirral Plan.
 9. The Council will continually review its Earmarked Reserves for appropriateness and purpose. Unearmarked reserves will be brought to a level of 5% of net expenditure by 2026/27.
 10. Given the challenging financial position of the Council and the need to maintain key statutory services. The Council will seek to maximise receipts from all funding streams, including Council Tax over the period of the MTFS.
- 3.28 Further to these guiding principles the following specific key assumptions will be used for the initial formulation of 2025/26 budget figures:

- Council Tax increase of 2.99% (1.99% general fund 1% Social Care Precept)
- A minimum 3% inflation increase within social care services (largely linked to RLW).
- 2% Increase in pay costs
- 2% Contract inflation.
- Levies to be increased in line with levying body forecasts.
- £2m contribution to the general reserves
- The financial pressures faced by the Adults and Children's Directorates must be addressed within their existing budgetary allocations, supplemented by any funding increases derived from the social care precept and any other additional grant funding enhancements.
- Any funding gap for the BCD will be met from the WGC profits in year.
- Remaining Budget Gap will be bridged from savings identified via Change Programme and Strategic Transformation activity.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report sets out the 2024/25 budget monitoring process and 2025/26 budget setting process and has no direct financial implications. The outcome of the processes will, if not adhered to or a suitable alternative process agreed, will have significant financial implications. However, the proposals set out control environments and a timeline of activity deemed necessary as part of sound financial management regime.
- 4.2 If the annual budget cannot be balanced, this may result in a Section 114 report being issued by the Section 151 Officer - once issued there are immediate constraints on spending whereby no new expenditure is permitted, with the exception of that funding statutory services, including safeguarding vulnerable people, however other existing commitments and contracts can continue to be honoured.
- 4.3 The Council delivers both statutory and non-statutory services at present – the requirement to eliminate subsidies provided to non-statutory services is considered to be a key requirement in delivering value for money and ensuring that finite resources are targeted on beneficial outcomes.
- 4.4 The Financial Management Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes they have in place 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, that 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 mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, internal audit and inspection.
 - Sustainability - The long-term sustainability of local services is at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 Once a budget is in place, Council has delegated responsibility to the Policy and Services Committees to implement it. The Committees may not within, normal business operating conditions, act contrary to the Budget without consent of Council other than in accordance with the Procedure Rules set out at Part 4(3) of the Constitution.
- 5.4 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 agreed 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 At this time, there are no additional resource implications. There may be resource requirements of any action resulting in remedial or mitigating tasks if an adverse forecast is reported with regards the 2024/25 budget in year, however these will be reported at the appropriate time.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 The risk of this not being able to be achieved could mean that the Council does not have enough funding to offset its expenditure commitments for the year and therefore not be able to report a balanced budget at the end of the year. This could result in the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice.
- 7.4 A key risk to the Council's financial plans is that funding and demand assumptions in particular can change as more information becomes available. As such, the MTFP is regularly reviewed and updated as part of routine financial management.

- 7.5 Under the system of retained Business Rates, Authorities benefit from a share of any increased revenues but are liable for at least a share of any falls in income (subject to safety net triggers) and any non-collection. This includes reductions arising from appeals relating to past years which partially fall on the Authority. These risks are mitigated through a combination of the operation of the Collection Fund and General Fund Balances.
- 7.6 Assumptions have been made in the current budget outlook for income and funding from business rates and council tax and social care grants as the main sources of funding. If there is an adverse change to these assumptions as a result of government announcements, additional savings proposals or reduced expenditure would need to be identified as soon as possible to ensure a balanced five-year MTFP can be achieved. Committees will be kept updated with any announcements regarding the local government finance settlement through the year.
- 7.7 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.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Senior Leadership Team in arriving at the governance process for the budget monitoring and setting processes.

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 There are no specific equality implications of this report regarding processes, however, it is recognised that some of the developing proposals for budgets could have equality implications. Any implications will be considered and any negative impacts will be mitigated where possible.
- 9.3 Equality implications will be assessed during planning, decision and implementation stages and will be recognised as an ongoing responsibility. Any equality implications will be reported to the Committees. Equality issues will be a conscious consideration and an integral part of the process.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 At this time, there are no additional environmental and climate implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be environment and climate implications associated with these that will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report has no direct community wealth implications however any budget proposals to be developed should take account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- **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. Savings agreed at full Council for 2024/25

Appendix 2 Committee Budget Book details

Appendix 3. Flow chart of the process for the 2025/26 budget setting.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Pressure and Growth Proposals

Savings and Income Proposals

CIPFA's Financial Management Code

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Full Council	26 February 2024
Policy and Resources Committee Environment, Climate	13 February 2024
Emergency and Transport Committee	29 January 2024
Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee	2 February 2024
Children, Young People & Education Committee	1 February 2024
Economy Regeneration & Development Committee	22 January 2024
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	23 January 2024
Policy and Resources Committee	8 November 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	4 October 2023

Appendix 1: Savings Agreed at Full Council for 2024/25

Theme	Option	24/25 Saving (£m)	25/26 Saving (£m)	26/27 Saving (£m)	27/28 Saving (£m)	28/29 Saving (£m)
Committee: Adult Care & Public Health						
Changing how we fund or provide services	Review of Adult Social Care cost-effectiveness	-4.800	-5.040	-5.292	-5.557	-5.668
Committee: Children, Young People & Education						
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Reduction in teachers' pension liabilities	-0.200	-0.075	-0.050	0.000	0.000
	Kingsway PFI buy out	-0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Re-organisation of Early Help, Family Support and Social Care into locality teams.	-0.550	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Changing how we fund or provide services	Reduction in looked after children (LAC) numbers	-0.330	-0.439	-0.375	0.000	0.000
	Reducing High Cost Residential Care	-1.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Promoting Independence	-0.300	-0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000
Committee: Economy, Regeneration & Housing						
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Implementation of Corporate Landlord model.	-0.050	-0.250	-0.120	0.000	0.000
Committee: Tourism, Communities Culture & Leisure						
Changing how we fund or provide services	Active Wirral Strategy	0.000	-1.000	-2.000	0.000	0.000
	Review library provision and location of Birkenhead and Wallasey libraries.	0.000	-0.250	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Floral Pavilion	-1.300	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Committee: Policy & Resources						
Increasing Income	Increase in Fees and Charges	-0.750	-0.600	-0.450	-0.450	-0.450
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Enabling Services	-2.160	-2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Cease subsidised traded services.	-0.350	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
TOTAL SAVINGS		-12.390	-9.854	-8.287	-6.007	-6.118

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Appendix 2. Committee Budget Details

Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee

Contents

- A. Introduction and 2024-25 Budget Summary
- B. Service Area Summary Narratives
- C. Key Priorities for 2024-25
- D. 2024-25 Subjective and Objective Budgets
- E. 2024-25 Approved Savings
- F. Capital Budgets
- G. Reserves

A. Introduction and 2024-25 Budget Summary

Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee 2024-25 Budgets

This Committee is responsible for formulating the Council's planning policies and for the Council's housing policies and statutory functions, development projects and growth and the economic development of the Borough.

The tables below breakdown and explain the financial resources available to the Committee in 2023-24

Revenue Budgets

Revenue Budgets are the monies the Council allocates for its day-to-day expenditure. It is the amount of money the Council requires to provide its services during the year.

TABLE 1 2024/25 Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee Budget

Service Area	Budget
Development & Investment	£6,926,108
Housing	£6,433,620
Director of Regeneration & Place	-£1,249,760
Regeneration Strategy	£1,864,875
Planning	£1,218,465
Local Plan	£400,000
Special Projects & Regeneration	£250,138
TOTAL BUDGET	£15,843,446

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B. Service Area Summary Narratives

The Directorate is organised in to five service areas:

Development and Regeneration Investment, including Asset and facilities Management, Community/ Asset Transfer and Regeneration delivery.

Housing, including Strategic Housing, homelessness and delivery of housing with partners.

Regeneration Strategy, including Economic Growth, Strategic Transport and Infrastructure, and Place and Partnerships.

Planning, including Local Plan and Forward Planning, Development Management and Building Control.

Special Projects – Regeneration of New Ferry, Cross Directorate working on co-location projects, delivery of playing pitch facilities and implementation of community asset transfer.

The collective overview aims across our services are:

Housing

- Improve the quality of Wirral's Housing offer for our residents building more homes and improving the existing stock to meet our economic growth ambitions and support neighbourhoods,
- Meet the housing and support needs of our most vulnerable people to enable them to live independently and reach their full potential through provision of affordable specialist housing, support services and through the provision of aids and adaptations
- Support and assist those who need rehousing including those households at risk of/or homeless'
- Deliver and respond to National Resettlement Programmes for those fleeing persecution.

Planning

- The adoption of the new Local Plan, setting out the vision for Wirral for the next 15 years, that is in line with national policy and legislation and is forecast for adoption in this business year.
- Re-establish the speed and responsiveness of local searches function.
- Sustaining market share of Building Control competitive searches and establishing as a lawfully regulated service in accordance with the provisions of the Building Safety Act.
- The implementation of the Local Plan by the Development Management and Planning Enforcement Service.

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- Balancing a wide number of statutory requirements such as Biodiversity Net Gain legislative and requirements of organisations such as Sport England to enable development to progress.

Regeneration Strategy

Economic Growth

- **Thriving Business:** provision of quality business support services; intensifying the innovation and growth capacity of target sectors; promoting a stronger, more inclusive entrepreneurial culture; increase our focus on inward investment; and enabling first class business infrastructure in Wirral.
- **Inclusive Economy:** prioritising initiatives that tackle the deep-rooted levels of worklessness in our most deprived neighbourhoods; ensuring the most effective and responsive labour support mechanisms are in place to guard against economic shocks/structural economic challenges; securing relevant, accessible and high-quality essential skills programmes in Wirral that match the needs of our businesses; working with a wide range of partners to tackle skills and education inequalities; and delivering first class skills and employment infrastructure in Wirral.

Strategic Transport

- To create a new active mobility culture in Wirral to enhance the health and well-being of our residents by developing a network which prioritises healthy forms of travel, especially for short journeys in order to enable more efficient highway conditions for those who need to rely on motor vehicles (i.e. emergency service, servicing vehicles and buses).
- To develop a transport network that seeks to address the climate and environment emergency through a complete shift to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030 and the move to a zero carbon Liverpool City Region (LCR) by 2040
- To support inclusive economic growth across Wirral by developing a transport network that effectively and efficiently connects people, freight, businesses, and visitors to opportunities in education, employment, training, leisure, and culture.

Place and Partnerships

- Delivery of wider Wirral area masterplans in accordance with the emerging Local Plan.
- Establishment of partnership models of working to ensure local communities and business benefit from growth.
- Development of pipeline growth projects and identification of funding opportunities.
- Delivery of meanwhile activity to support place-making in regeneration areas.

Development and Regeneration Investment

Asset Management

- Implementation of Asset Strategy 2022-27
- Develop and embed a Corporate Landlord model across the Council

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- Work with services to understand their future property needs to inform a detailed Asset Strategy, resulting in a strategy for the management of council assets to 2027, aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the One Public Estate (OPE) agenda
- Provision and delivery of a comprehensive Capital Programme to support key service strategies across the Council
- Ensuring strong Health & Safety and compliance arrangements for our people and our assets
- Support the Council's Net Carbon Zero targets and relevant sustainability policies.

Regeneration Delivery

- Delivery of the Birkenhead 2040 strategy to achieve a 'Birkenhead that has been connected, re-imagined and rediscovered'
- Delivery of funded capital programmes across Birkenhead.

Regeneration Programme Management Office

- Provision of an information hub for programmes and projects across Regeneration Delivery
- Provision of a single source for Reporting, Planning, Assurance, Risk, Communications and Resource management.

Special Projects

- The Regeneration of New Ferry and support for the New Ferry Community Land Trust
- Cross Directorate delivery of projects
- Implementation of agreed community asset transfer projects

C. Key Priorities for 2024/25

KEY OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2024/5

Council Plan Theme	Create a more efficient, effective and accessible council		
Activity	Key milestones	Delivery Dates	Responsible Officer
Reduction in subsidy loss for response to Homeless emergency placements	Delivery of Extra care units and occupation of units	2024/25	Lisa Newman
Achievement of Income, Fees and Charges	Roll out and training for all budget Holders within the Directorate Budget performance Quarterly Monitoring with Finance Business Partner	2024/25	Director of Regeneration and Place
Review of Homelessness	Appointment of independent agency to undertake review	2024/25	Lisa Newman

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Rehousing Services			
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Council Plan Theme	<i>People Focussed Regeneration</i>		
Activity	Key milestones	Delivery Dates	Responsible Officer
Deliver high quality, all-inclusive support services for businesses	Quarterly performance for delivery of universal and bespoke business support services.	Quarterly	Helen Carney
Prioritise initiatives that tackle worklessness in deprived neighbourhoods	Quarterly performance for delivery of a worklessness support service for those most disadvantaged in the borough.	Quarterly	Helen Carney
Deliver the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme	Quarterly performance and monitoring	Quarterly	Helen Carney
Deliver the Liscard Regeneration Programme via capital improvements and town centre initiatives	Quarterly performance and monitoring	Quarterly	Hannah Austin
Deliver Affordable Housing Programme	Quarterly performance and monitoring	Quarterly	Emma Foley

Council Plan Theme	<i>Early Help for Children and Families</i>		
Activity	Key milestones	Delivery Dates	Responsible Officer
Children and young people stay safe and are protected from harm	Delivery of 16=17 year old joint assessment process for young people – audit and monitoring of response and outcomes	Quarterly	Sheila Jacobs

Council Plan Theme	<i>Promoting Independence and healthier lives</i>		
Activity	Key milestones	Delivery Dates	Responsible Officer
Increase housing options for older people	Delivery of Extra care units and occupation of units	2024/25	Lisa Newman

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Promote Independence	Quarterly Performance KPIs reported to JHHEG	Quarterly	Emma Foley
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Council Plan Theme	<i>Protect our environment</i>		
Activity	Key milestones	Delivery Dates	Responsible Officer
Development and delivery of high quality and compliant infrastructure to support active travel movements	Annual performance of active travel movements	Annual	Julie Barnes
Development and delivery of Electric Vehicle infrastructure	Annual performance of on street infrastructure	Annual	Julie Barnes
Reduce emissions from our homes and buildings eg by retrofitting and reducing energy usage	Delivery of retrofit Programmes Increase in EPC levels from Band E Measures installed to improve energy efficiency within domestic homes	204/25	Lisa Newman

D. 2024-25 Subjective and Objective Budgets

TABLE 2 2024/25 Economy, Regeneration and Housing Subjective Budget

Subjective	Budget
INCOME	-£13,839,999
EXPENDITURE	
Employee	£13,819,555
Non Pay	£15,863,890
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£29,683,445
TOTAL BUDGET	£15,843,446

Appendix 2. Committee Budget Details

Table 3 below, provide a further detailed breakdown of the service budgets.

TABLE 3: 2024/25 Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee – Service budgets

Directorate	Income (£000s)	Employee (£000s)	Non Pay (£000s)	Grand Total (£000s)
Development & Investment	-6,474	5,196	8,204	6,926
Housing	-2,803	4,086	5,150	6,434
Director of Regeneration & Place	-1,423	173	0	-1,250
Regeneration Strategy	-1,345	1,342	1,867	1,865
Planning	-1,796	2,772	242	1,218
Local Plan	0	0	400	400
Special Projects & Regeneration	0	250	1	250
TOTAL BUDGET	-13,840	13,820	15,864	15,843

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E 2024-25 Approved Savings specific to Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee service areas

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

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F CAPITAL BUDGET

Capital budgets are the monies allocated for spend on providing or improving non-current assets, which include land, buildings and equipment, which will be of use or benefit in providing services for more than one financial year.

TABLE 5 2024/25 Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee – Capital Budget

Capital Scheme	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 Budget £000	2028/29 Budget £000
Economy, Regeneration and Housing					
Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants	6,524	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700
Birkenhead Market Construction	3,000	8,800	0	0	0
Birkenhead Regeneration Delivery Fund	2,000	0	0	0	0
Birkenhead Regeneration Framework	105	0	0	0	0
Birkenhead Town Centre Master planning & Housing Delivery	97	0	0	0	0
Birkenhead Town Centre Sub-Station	2,250	2,250	0	0	0
Birkenhead Waterfront Programme	8,000	11,970	0	0	0
Business Investment Fund	585	0	0	0	0
Capitalisation of Regen Salaries	984	0	0	0	0
Changing Places Toilets	46	0	0	0	0
Clearance	30	195	0	0	0
Community Asset Transfer	500	0	0	0	0
Concerto Asset Management System	8	0	0	0	0
Demolitions	1,479	0	0	0	0
Empty Property Grant Scheme	310	0	0	0	0
Emslie Morgan (Solar Campus)	149	0	0	0	0
Future High Streets Fund New Ferry	1,000	1,112	0	0	0
Future High Streets - Birkenhead	4,903	1,170	0	0	0

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Health & Safety - Condition Surveys	700	700	700	700	772
Heswall Day Centre	17	0	0	0	0
Hind Street Programme	5,000	18,528	18,528	0	0
Levelling Up Fund 3 - Liscard	634	751	0	0	0
Liscard Town Centre Delivery	3	0	0	0	0
New Brighton Masterplan for Marine Promenade	15	0	0	0	0
New Ferry Regeneration Strategic Acquisitions	842	0	0	0	0
Property Pooled Plus I.T System	3	3	3	0	0
Strategic Acquisition Fund	1,000	1,000	992	0	0
Strategic Acquisitions - Capital Enhancements	667	500	500	500	0
Town Centre scheme - New Ferry	2	0	0	0	0
Town Deal Fund - Birkenhead	8,909	11,455	0	0	0
Town Fund Birkenhead	18	0	0	0	0
West Kirby Masterplan	19	0	0	0	0
Wirral Waters Investment Fund	0	7,000	0	0	0
Total Economy, Regeneration and Housing	49,799	70,134	25,423	5,900	5,472

Appendix 2. Committee Budget Details

G Reserves

Earmarked reserves are amounts set aside for specific purposes or projects. Please note that approval from the Policy and Resources Committee is required to contribute to or drawdown from these reserves.

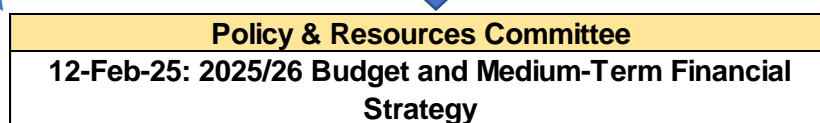
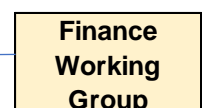
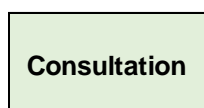
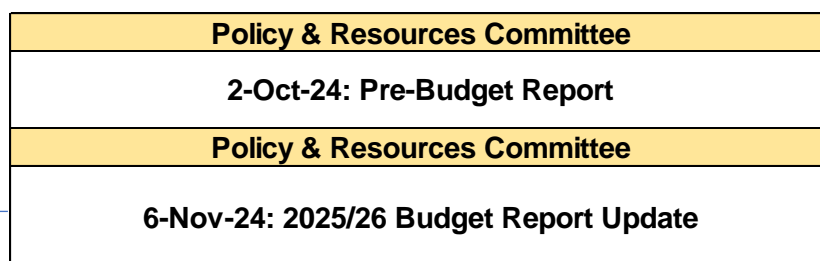
Table 6 2024/25 Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee – Reserves

Reserve	Opening Balance £000
Selective Licensing	1,360
Wirral Ways to Work	395
Regeneration and Inward Investment	735
Urban Development Corporation Bid	43
Building Control Fee Earning	246
HMO Licence Fees	177
Major Infrastructure Project Development	62
Property Repairs rental income	382
DCLG Empty Shops Grant	41
ERDF 4.2 Match Funding	18
Emergency Maintenance and Work in Default	313
Resettlement Programme Grant	5,332
Domestic Abuse Bill Grant	671
Economic Growth	174
Birkenhead Future High Street funding	47
Super Squad Planning	250
Wirral Growth Company Profit	9,153
Total	19,399

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Appendix 3. Flow Chart for 2025/26 Budget Setting

Committee	Budget Workshops	Budget Workshop Feedback reported to Committee
Adult Social Care and Public Health	Jul - Aug	15-Oct-24
Children, Young People and Education	Jul - Aug	16-Oct-24
Economy Regeneration and Development	Jul - Aug	14-Oct-24
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport	Jul - Aug	21-Oct-24
Policy & Resources	Jul - Aug	02-Oct-24
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure	Jul - Aug	17-Oct-24



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ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER ONE (THE PERIOD TO 30 JUNE 2024)
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the financial monitoring information for the Council as at Quarter 1 (30 June) of 2024/25. The report provides Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 saving programme and a summary of reserves and balances, to enable the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

At the end of Quarter 1, there is a forecast balanced position against the £15.843m committee budget, by managing the use of grants and reserves to address the pressures being faced. This position is based on activity to date, projected trends in income and expenditure and changes to Council funding.

This is not a key decision and affects all wards.

The report contributes to the Wirral Plan 2023-2027 in supporting the organisation in meeting all Council priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy Regeneration and Housing committee is recommended to note:

1. the Committee forecast position of a balanced budget of £15.843m at Quarter 1, managed by utilising grants and earmarked reserves;
2. the progress on delivery of the 2024/25 savings programme at Quarter 1;
3. the forecast level of reserves at Quarter 1; and
4. the capital position at Quarter 1.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the revenue budgets and savings achievements enables decisions to be taken in a timely manner, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of Wirral Council.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Policy & Resources Committee has previously determined the budget monitoring process and this report details the agreed course of action.
- 2.2 In striving to manage budgets, available options have been evaluated to maintain a balance between service delivery and a balanced budget.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the end of Quarter 1, there is a forecast adverse position for the overall Council of £12.493m on Directorate spend. This position is based on activity to date, projected trends in income and expenditure and changes to Council funding.

This is a serious financial position for the Council that needs to be significantly mitigated in-year through all available measures to reduce expenditure and generate cost savings. The source of the overspend reflects the outturn position from 2023/24 for which an action plan has been developed and implemented. This is designed to address the main issues generating the adverse position and progress will be reported on this in all future reports and to the relevant committees. However, the majority of this overspend is a consequence of increased demand and costs for social care services and will not be easily resolved.

Whilst the overall position can currently largely be managed in-year corporately by

- a) utilising the contingency budgets,
- b) applying flexible use of capital receipts to fund transformational revenue spend, and
- c) re-provisioning of earmarked reserves,

it is not a sustainable position going forward and will adversely impact budget planning for 2025/26.

Economic Context

- 3.2 While geopolitical events pose potential threats to price stability, the UK's inflation outlook remains positive. The headline Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 2.0% in the year to May 2024, while core inflation has markedly declined in recent months. This sustained downward trend in UK inflation is projected to persist, prompting market analysts to forecast lower interest rates in the latter part of the year.
- 3.3 In June 2024, the Bank of England maintained its Bank Rate at 5.25%. While the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) recognises the need to stimulate the UK economy by lowering rates in upcoming quarters, concerns over persistent inflationary pressures are likely to postpone any cuts until the third quarter of 2024. Experts anticipate a gradual reduction, with rates potentially reaching around 3% by late 2025.
- 3.4 The results of the UK general election will play a pivotal role in determining the economic trajectory in the coming financial year. The election outcome will influence a range of factors, from fiscal policies and public spending to trade relations and regulatory frameworks.

3.5 In terms of the overall economic environment, whilst it is forecast to be more stable than recent years, there remains a great deal of uncertainty and challenge which will need to be monitored carefully as the year progresses. In this context, the Council must remain agile and ready to respond to emerging trends and unforeseen events. Regular re-assessment of economic indicators and global developments will be key to navigating this calmer, yet still challenging, economic landscape.

Quarter 1 Forecast Revenue Outturn Position

3.6 Table 1 presents the forecast outturn as a net position, i.e. expenditure minus income. Favourable variances (underspends) are shown as negative values and adverse variances (overspends) are shown as a positive value.

3.7 At the end of Quarter 1, against the Committees revised net revenue budget of £15.843m, the forecast is a balanced budget managed by utilising grants and earmarked reserves.

TABLE 1: 2024/25 REVENUE BUDGET & FORECAST OUTTURN

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	
			(+ Adv / - Fav)	
	£000	£000	£000	%
Development & Investment	6,926	6,926	0	0%
Housing	6,434	6,434	0	0%
Director of Regeneration & Place	-1,250	-1,250	0	0%
Regeneration Strategy	1,865	1,865	0	0%
Planning	1,218	1,218	0	0%
Local Plan	400	400	0	0%
Special Projects & Regeneration	250	250	0	0%
TOTAL BUDGET	15,843	15,843	0	0%

Notes:

* Forecast Outturn figures assume reserves movements shown in Table 3.

Significant aspects of revenue variances by directorate

Regeneration & Place : Balanced

3.8 Assets currently forecast a £0.200m adverse forecast, due to the impact of pressures on commercial income. There are ongoing discussions with both current and potential tenants across our commercial estate, as the delivery of regeneration schemes may bring temporary disruption for some tenants.

3.9 Planning has a £0.400m adverse forecast due to unachievable planning income. This is being reviewed to identify long term income pressures.

3.10 These pressures will be managed by the department overall through the efficient use of grants and reserves to enable a balanced budget position.

Pressures to be managed

- 3.11 It is financially imperative and legally required that the Council report a balanced position at the end of the financial year. Failure to do so results in the Council's Section 151 officer having to produce a Section 114 report under the Local Government Act 1988.
- 3.12 A number of actions and projects have been taken by the Senior Leadership Team to try and address the overall position of the Council. This ranges from the development of joint commissioning activities within Adults and Childrens, panels reviewing high-cost placements, development of a strategy to increase foster care provision, implementation of the findings from the Home to School Transport review, a number of task and finish groups to address the outstanding issues within Leisure, Libraries and Highways and a review of the Housing Benefit subsidy issues.
- 3.13 This is in addition to the ongoing transformation programme, elements of this will be accelerated in-year including the property rationalisation and the workforce reductions planned within the agreed budget. A robust vacancy management process has been agreed by SLT and will be implemented. Consequently, any external recruitment will be undertaken by exception.

Budget Virements/ Amendments

- 3.14 There have been no budget virements for Quarter 1.

Progress on delivery of the 2024/25 savings programme.

- 3.15 Table 2 presents the progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 approved savings. For savings rated as Amber, an equal amount of temporary in-year mitigation has been identified to cover any shortfalls which may occur. For savings rated as red, the contingency fund set up for non-achieved savings will need to be utilised.
- 3.16 In terms of savings, £0.050m of the £0.050m savings targets are either delivered or on track to be delivered, representing 100% of the total savings target. The table below summarises the progress by Directorate:

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ON DELIVERY OF 2024/25 SAVINGS

Directorate	Approved Saving £m	Green £m	Amber £m	Red £m	Mitigation £m
Regeneration & Place	-0.050	-0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000

- 3.17 A complete list of all approved savings can be found in the Budget report which was presented to Council on 26 February 2024. **Reserves and Balances**

- 3.18 On 1 April 24, earmarked reserves totalled £55.506m and General Fund Balances totalled £13.180m. Of the total earmarked reserves, approximately a quarter will be spent in 2024/25, on the activities for which they were established.

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF EARMARKED RESERVES

Directorate	Opening Balance £000	Use of Reserve £000	Contribution to Reserve £000	Analysis of Forecast Closing Balance £000		
				Ring-fenced	Non Ring-fenced (committed)	Non Ring-fenced
Regeneration and Place	19,399	-9,034	0	9,184	250	931

3.19 £6.985m of Wirral Growth Company reserve is forecast to be utilised in 24/25 to cover costs such as, the final dilapidation costs on exiting the Cheshire Lines Building lease once negotiations have concluded, abortive Market costs, as well as Birkenhead Commercial District costs.

3.20 A full list of all earmarked reserves is shown in Appendix 1.

Capital Programme

3.21 Table 4 provides an update on the 2024/25 Capital Programme.

**TABLE 4: ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25**

Scheme	2024/25			2025/26	2026/27
	Budget at 01.04.24 £000	Q1 Forecast £000	Variance	Budget £000	Budget £000
Birkenhead Regeneration Delivery Fund	1,363	1,363	0	-	-
Birkenhead Market Construction	3,913	1,913	-2,000	10,800	-
Birkenhead Regeneration Framework	210	210	0	-	-
Birkenhead Waterfront Programme	8,897	3,897	-5,000	16,970	-
Birkenhead Town Centre Sub-Station	2,250	1,250	-1,000	3,250	-
Business Investment Fund	585	585	0	-	-
Capitalisation of Regen Salaries	741	1,650	909	1,650	-
FHSF New Ferry 21-22	1,902	1,000	-902	2,014	-
Future High Streets - Birkenhead	13,250	3,250	-10,000	11,170	-
Hind Street Programme	5,413	1,169	-4,244	22,772	18,528
Levelling Up Fund 3 - Liscard	635	3,934	3,299	8,240	-
Liscard Town Centre Delivery	13	13	0	-	-
Local Authority Housing Fund 2	4,308	4,308	0	-	-
New Brighton Masterplan for Marine Promenade	7	7	0	-	-
New Ferry Regeneration Strategic Acquisitions	916	916	0	-	-

Office Quarter Building Fit-Out	3,248	2,248	-1,000	1,000	-
Strategic Acquisition Fund	812	812	0	-	-
Strategic Acquisitions - Capital Enhancements	526	526	0	500	500
The Hythe	5,255	5,255	0	-	-
Town Centre scheme - New Ferry	5	5	0	-	-
Town Fund B'head	53	53	0	-	-
Wirral Waters Investment Fund	-	-	0	7,000	-
Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants	5,627	6,079	452	4,700	4,700
Birkenhead Town Centre Masterplanning & Housing Delivery	80	80	0	-	-
Clearance	183	183	0	195	-
Empty Property Grant Scheme	308	308	0	-	-
Property Pooled Plus I.T System	6	6	0	3	3
Town Deal Fund - Birkenhead	8,288	4,300	-3,988	15,455	-
West Kirby Masterplan	21	21	0	-	-
Total Economy, Regeneration and Housing	68,815	45,341	-23,474	105,719	23,731

3.22 There has been a reprofiling of expenditure in this year's Programme so far, in respect of deferrals of budget into future years.

3.23 It is anticipated that further reductions and/or deferrals of budget will be made in future quarters. Such deferrals reduce the borrowing costs incurred during 2024/25 and also delays the resultant Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charges into future years.

3.24 Given the budgetary pressures that the Council faces, a review of the Programme continues to try and identify schemes that may no longer be financially viable, essential, or deliverable.

3.25 New additional awards of grant have been received during Quarter 1 relating to the Capital Programme:

Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants- £5.152m

Capital funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for the provision of home adaptations to help older and disabled people to live as independently and safely as possible in their homes.

Levelling Up Fund Liscard - £10.788m

The Council has secured £10.78m funding for Liscard Town Centre via the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Levelling Up Fund 3. The Council has approved £1.386m via its Capital Programme as match funding to support delivery.

3.26 A capital bid has also been submitted for the below :

Capitalisation of Regeneration Salaries - £2.559m over two years

This capitalisation of staff costs involves critical work to support the delivery of the Regeneration Programme, which includes secured capital funding that requires a

staff structure to ensure that the capital funding is spent as detailed in the Grant Offer letters. There is the likelihood that further external capital funding will be secured which will require resource and capacity to deliver. Capitalisation of salaries will be undertaken where it is allowable under the conditions of the funding received or within the capital regulations.

- 3.27 Of note there are also currently two sites within Birkenhead town centre being investigated regarding their viability as residential development:

Europa Residential (Price Street Car Park) - As part of the approved Future High Street Fund and Investment Plan, Europa Residential is expected to deliver c189 residential units on council owned land to support the acceleration of housing delivery and a diversification of the town centre.

St Werbergh's (House of Fraser site, part of Princes Pavement and land at Grange Road) - Following the demolition of the former House of Fraser building and the recent council decision to relocate the Market Hall to Princess Pavement, an alternative proposal is being brought forward. It is proposed to develop residential space comprising of one bed and two bed apartments over 137,000 sq. ft. Additionally, there will be circa 14,000 sq. ft. designated for retail / leisure / health activities on the ground floor.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This is the Quarter 1 budget monitoring report that provides information on the forecast outturn for the Council for 2024/25. The Council has robust methods for reporting and forecasting budgets in place and alongside formal Quarterly reporting to Policy & Resources Committee, the financial position is routinely reported at Directorate Management Team meetings and corporately at the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of any early warning highlighting pressures and potential overspends, the SLT take collective responsibility to identify solutions to resolve these to ensure a balanced budget can be reported at the end of the year.

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 At this time, there are no additional resource implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there will be resource implications, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget for 2024/25 is dependent on a stable financial position. That said, the delivery of the budget is subject to ongoing variables both positive and adverse which imply a level of challenge in achieving this outcome.

7.2 In any budget year, there is a risk that operation will not be constrained within relevant budget limits. Under specific circumstances the Section 151 Officer may issue a Section 114 notice but that position has not been reached at the present time.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in arriving at the governance process for the 2024/25 budget monitoring process and budget setting process. This report will also be shared and reviewed by the Independent Panel.

8.2 Since the budget was agreed at Full Council on 26 February, some proposals may have been the subject of further consultation with Members, Customer and Residents. The details of these are included within the individual business cases or are the subject of separate reports to the Committee.

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 At this time, there are no further equality implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be equality implications associated with these, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report has no direct environmental implications; however due regard is given as appropriate in respect of procurement and expenditure decision-making processes that contribute to the outturn position.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 In year activity will have incorporated community wealth implications. Consideration would have taken account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- **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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(Finance Manager - Place)
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – Reserves Summary Position

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This matter is being considered by Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee in accordance with section (j) “providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee’s functions”

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Policy & Resources Committee Report 10 Jul 24: Budget Monitoring and Budget Setting Processes Report.

Bank of England – Monetary Policy Report
CIPFA’s Financial Management Code

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Full Council	26 February 2024
Policy and Resources Committee Environment	13 February 2024
Economy Regeneration & Development Committee	22 January 2024
Policy and Resources Committee	8 November 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	4 October 2023

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Appendix 1. Reserves Summary Position

Reserve	Opening Balance £000	Use of Reserve £000	Contribution to Reserve £000	Ring-fenced	Non Ring-fenced (committed)	Non Ring-fenced (available)
Selective Licensing	1,360	0	0	1,360	0	0
Wirral Ways to Work	395	0	0	395	0	0
Regeneration and Inward Investment	735	-735	0	0	0	0
Urban Development Corporation Bid	43	-43	0	0	0	0
Building Control Fee Earning	246	-100	0	146	0	0
HMO Licence Fees	177	0	0	177	0	0
Major Infrastructure Project Development	62	0	0	0	0	62
Property Repairs rental income	382	0	0	0	0	382
DCLG Empty Shops Grant	41	0	0	41	0	0
ERDF 4.2 Match Funding	18	0	0	18	0	0
Emergency Maintenance and Work in Default	313	0	0	0	0	313

Appendix 1. Reserves Summary Position

Resettlement Programme Grant	5,332	-500	0	4,832	0	0
Domestic Abuse Bill Grant	671	-671	0	0	0	0
Economic Growth	174	0	0	0	0	174
Birkenhead Future High Street funding	47	0	0	47	0	0
Super Squad Planning	250	0	0	0	250	0
Wirral Growth Company Profit	9,153	-6,985	0	2,168	0	0
Total	19,399	-9,034	0	9,184	250	931



ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 16 JULY 2024

REPORT TITLE:	APPOINTMENT OF PANELS, STATUTORY / ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES 2024/25
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND CORPORATE SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to enable Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee to review the continuing need for various panels, statutory/ advisory Committees and working parties, and to appoint Members and named deputies to serve on those (including the statutory committees and panels) that are to be retained in 2024/25.

The Council Plan for 2023-2027 sets out the Councils vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. This proposal directly supports the following key themes within that plan:

- A people focused regeneration.
- Safe, resilient and engaged communities.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and is not a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION

Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Monitoring Officer as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership of the Active Travel Member Working Group and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.
2. Give consideration to the proposal to appoint a cross party group of Members to conduct a policy development review in accordance with the approach outlined at appendix 1 of the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

1.1 The work of the group will enable this Committee to make appropriate decisions and recommendations which will support the delivery of increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to support actions required to address the Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030.

1.1 The key drivers for refreshing policy development work at Committees is the move to a Whole Council Election Scheme in May 2023 and the new four-year Council Plan agreed by Council on 4th December 2023. The Council Plan provides an opportunity to establish a new way of strategically 'working together' across the organisation to deliver the Council Plan vision '*working together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities*' and the associated Council Plan enabling and delivery themes:

Enabling Theme:

- Working together to create a more efficient, effective and accessible Council.

Delivery Themes:

- Working together to improve early help for children and families.
- Working together to promote independence and healthier lives.
- Working together to deliver people-focused regeneration.
- Working together to protect our environment.
- Working together to create safe, resilient and engaged communities.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 This Committee could resolve to vary the numbers of Members or not appoint Members to it.

2.2 It is considered that the Active Travel Member Working Group Working Group will assist the Council in actively working to deliver ambitious inclusive walking and cycling projects as required to secure a positive outcome in delivering increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to support actions required to address the Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030'.

Policy Development

2.3 Potential options which the Committee could investigate, and potential consequences, include:

2.3.1 Not conducting policy development work. However, policy development work is clearly stated in the Council's Constitution and not conducting this type of work can be viewed by the sector as being indicative of wider governance and service failure issues (it is also considered good practice). Given the new Council Plan has now been approved, Members now have a clear strategic framework to conduct effective

policy development work. It is important as it engenders transparency and enables the Council to be accountable to residents. It can help the Council achieve best value; support further improvement and best practice; and enable locally adopted, enforceable recommendations and policies which deliver better outcomes for the wider community.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The following is a body retained or created in 2024/25 to assist the Committee in its work, with the membership for 2024/25. The Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix 1.

Active Travel Member Working Group

3.2 A working group currently comprising 8 members tasked with securing a positive outcome in delivering increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan. This development of the Local Plan is also within the wider context of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030'.

3.3 The working group has an advisory role in the development of active travel schemes. The group will advise on the direction of active travel policy and delivery across Wirral. This is with a view to aiding greater understanding across the Council of issues associated with the implementation of active travel initiatives. The group will take account of the wider context of the potential for sustainable transport projects to contribute to:

- health and well-being;
- tackling the climate emergency and improving air quality;
- improving accessibility;
- reducing congestion by encouraging active travel modes especially for shorter journeys;
- achieving value for money;
- helping economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic;
- tackling transport poverty and inequality of access; and
- inclusive economic growth.

3.4 Policy Development Work

Purpose

3.4.1 The purpose of policy development work is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the council's service provision and procedures (or those services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants). However, it is not possible to examine every service or activity in detail, so it is important for the Policy and Service Committees to prioritise and plan its work programme for the

year to be taken forward through the committee, or a dedicated task and finish group.

Scope

3.4.2 The Council's Constitution (Part 4, Section 4) states that the Policy and Services Committees are to adopt policy development working practices when undertaking their functions to review the Council's actions or to review or otherwise scrutinise outside bodies and processes. The Policy and Services Committees may conduct policy development to:

- Review decisions made or actions taken by the Authority in so far as they have a direct impact on the role or functions of the Committee and the Committee can make recommendations to the relevant Committee on policies, budget and service delivery.
- Undertake reviews and make recommendations on services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants where this does not fall within the role or remit of another service committee or where it relates to cross cutting issues, including the review and monitoring of contractual and operational performance of shared service partnerships, joint ventures and outside organisations to which the Council makes a resource contribution, focusing on examination of the benefits of the Council's contribution and the extent to which the body concerned makes a contribution to the achievement of the Council's priorities as outlined in the Council Plan 2023 - 2027.

Process

3.4.3 A suggested process for determining and prioritising policy development topics is outlined at Appendix 1. This includes:

- **Identify potential issues –**
 - Consulting with all Members of Policy and Service Committees, Senior Leaders and Council Officers.
 - Looking at Wirral Council Plan priorities, Directorate Business Plans, the Forward Plan of the Council, as well as the MTFS.
 - Considering events and decisions in the Council's calendar that could require an input from scrutiny, such as setting budgets.
 - Reviewing the Council's risk register - analysis of risk registers on an ongoing basis will mean that scrutiny can understand what the impacts might be if risks are likely to occur, and what steps can be taken to mitigate.
 - Evaluating previous Council performance and identifying any follow-up work required to previous scrutiny work.
 - Carrying out work to engage with local people, for example through surgeries, local media, opinion surveys and online forums.
 - Reviewing customer complaints to identify any reoccurring themes.
- **Prioritise topics -** Identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics, considering the resources they would require and the level of impact they could achieve.

- **Plan policy development and scrutiny work** - Decide which policy topics to review and include them in the work programme.
- **Review and evaluate** - Review progress and evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the value added.

3.4.4 For every item on the policy development work programme, it should be clear:

- What is the issue/activity/project under consideration?
- What would the Policy and Service Committee be asked to do?
- What are the reasons for/expected benefits of policy development in this area?
- Strategic considerations (aligned to the new Council Plan and underpinning strategic framework).
- Is there a specific deadline for the piece of work?

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The establishment of the Active Travel Working Group is in compliance with the Council's Constitution. This group will not take any decisions but inform the deliberations of this Committee.

5.2 The size of the Working Group is currently set at eight members. In addition, Members of other Committees may be invited to attend as and when appropriate at the discretion of the Chair of the Working Group.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report as the Working Group is arranged and serviced using existing staff resources.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 As the Active Travel Working Group is a non-statutory meeting, no risks have been identified from the recommendations.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 It is for political groups to decide how they wish to allocate their places on working groups.

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 There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report

REPORT AUTHOR: **Bryn Griffiths**
Senior Democratic Services Officer
email: bryngriffiths@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Active Travel Member Working Group

Appendix 2 – Policy Development Timeline and Topic Selection Process

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council's Constitution

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee	20 June 2023
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee	13 June 2022
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee	8 June 2021
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee meeting of 4 March 2021 – Proposal to establish an Active Travel Working Group.	4 March 2021

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Appendix 1: Active Travel Member Working Group- Terms of Reference

Background / Context

The Active Travel Working Group (“the Working Group”) been established to consider what the opportunities and barriers may be to deliver ambitious inclusive walking and cycling projects as required to secure a positive outcome in delivering increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan. This is within the wider context of the Council’s declaration of a Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to ‘a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030’.

In the context of the Local Plan and to guide the future development of Wirral the group will consider the potential for sustainable transport projects to contribute to:

- health and wellbeing;
- tackling the climate emergency and improving air quality;
- improving accessibility e.g. to employment, education, healthcare and leisure opportunities;
- reducing congestion by encouraging active travel modes especially for shorter journeys;
- achieving value for money;
- helping economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic;
- tackling transport poverty and inequality of access; and
- economic growth.

Purpose and remit of the Group

The overarching purpose for the Working Group is to act as an Advisory Group, making recommendations on the direction of active travel policy and delivery across Wirral and to aid greater understanding across the Council of issues associated with the implementation of active travel initiatives. The Working Group will consider the role of active travel in the borough, the future vision of Wirral as a sustainable borough and in delivering public health and climate change objectives.

The remit of the Working Group includes:

- Policies, processes and resources;
- Infrastructure, including reviewing best practice and Government guidance;
- Consultation and community engagement; and
- Behaviour change and vision.

This Working Group will be given the following specific tasks:

- advising on the development and implementation of an Active Travel Infrastructure Plan as part of building an evidence base and developing business cases for future funding applications as appropriate;

- advising on wider activity to support the implementation of ‘Gear Change’ and the uptake of active travel across Wirral;
- providing input into a review of current and pipeline active travel projects and supporting the implementation of any actions arising;
- providing a collective voice to respond to consultations on policies and proposals that will impact upon pedestrians and cyclists in Wirral, and wider Liverpool City Region as appropriate;
- facilitating the exchange of ideas and best practice in order encourage and promote increased levels of active travel; and
- guiding, responding to, and working with, as appropriate, the Wirral Active Travel Forum.

The Working Group has no decision-making powers on behalf of the Council, but recommendations and findings from this group will be presented to the Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee.

Membership

1. The Working Group will comprise of eight members. In addition, Members of other Committees may be invited to attend as and when appropriate at the discretion of the Chair of the Working Group.
2. The appointment of Members to the Working Group will be made having regard to the political balance of the Council as a whole.
3. A Chair will be selected by the Group from amongst its number.
4. The Working Group meetings must have at least 3 members to be quorate.
5. The Working Group may appoint a Vice Chair.
6. Relevant officers and representatives of external organisations including the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Local or National Active Travel Organisations may also be invited to attend as dictated by the agenda.

Meetings

- Meeting will be virtually at a 4-weekly frequency
- Meetings will last no more than two hours
- Meetings are not open to the public, but minutes will be shared on the website after approval by the Chair as an accurate record.
- The Membership will be consulted throughout the year, as appropriate, regarding individual scheme designs as part of the standard consultation process for infrastructure schemes.

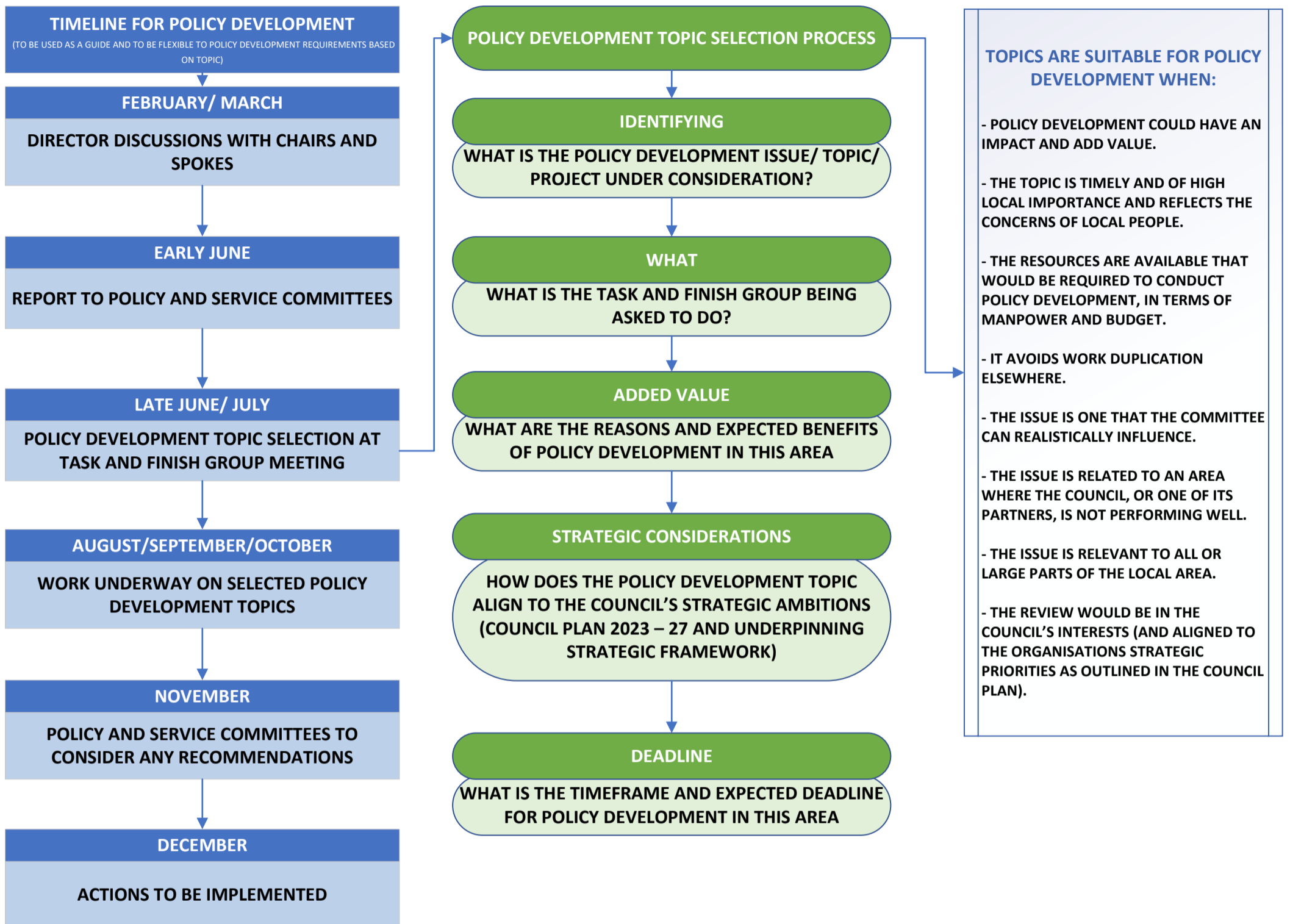
- Meetings will be structured around themes and issues, with evidence and information being provided by officers, partner organisations and technical/policy advisors to support discussion and planning. Context information and background reading will be provided by the Secretariat in advance as appropriate.
- Meetings will include presentations and demonstrations of local, regional and national initiatives, as well as discussions on local active travel delivery.

Secretariat

Meeting agendas and papers to be sent out to representatives at least one week in advance of the Forum and all administration and support will be provided by Democratic Services.

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POLICY DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE AND TOPIC SELECTION PROCESS



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ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 16 JULY 2024

REPORT TITLE:	ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT OF:	CHAIR OF ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Economy Regeneration and Housing 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 Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee is recommended to note and comment on the proposed Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee work programme for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A number of work plan formats were explored, with the current framework 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:

- The Council Plan
- The Council's transformation programme
- The Council's Forward Plan
- Service performance information
- Risk management information
- Public or service user feedback
- Referrals from Council

- 3.2 No proposal has been brought to Committee for this municipal year to establish a Regeneration Member Working Group as in practice this Group did not meet in the last municipal year with members being updated on regeneration matters via other means including reports, workshops and briefings.

Terms of Reference

The Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee is responsible for the Council's adult social care and preventative and community based services. This includes the commissioning and quality standards of adult social care services, incorporating responsibility for all of the services, from protection to residential care, that help people live fulfilling lives and stay as independent as possible as well as overseeing the protection of vulnerable adults. The Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee is also responsible for the promotion of the health and wellbeing of the people in the Borough. The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for:

- (a) formulation and delivery of the Council's strategic development objectives for planning, sustainability and transportation;
- (b) developing and recommending those plans and strategies which together comprise the Local Plan;

- (c) developing and adopting or recommending (if reserved to Council) other spatial planning documents, including but not limited to
 - (i) supplementary planning documents (SPD) and planning policy advice notes;
 - (ii) Master Plans and development briefs;
 - (iii) The Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
 - (iv) [The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) when applicable];
- (d) economic development, including but not limited to infrastructure, enterprise, skills and seeking, securing and managing external funds to achieve that, directly or in partnership with joint ventures and external companies or bodies as well as with the Combined Authority and government bodies;
- (e) the Council's functions and partnerships regarding the promotion of economic growth and the establishment and development of business;
- (f) the promotion and development of the economic factors in the area, such as seeking to ensure sufficient and appropriate employment sites, investment, adult skills, apprenticeship schemes, productivity, development sites and so forth;
- (g) overseeing the progress of major projects (including major building, infrastructure or other projects involving the erection or significant alteration of major permanent structures or landmarks) undertaken by the Council directly or as enabler, funder or joint enterprise partner, including but not limited to the Wirral Growth Company LLP;
- (h) the Authority's role and functions in relation to strategic and private sector housing policies and as the housing authority, including but not limited to
 - (i) the Council's Housing Strategy;
 - (ii) homelessness and the allocation of housing;
 - (iii) private sector housing, including taking action to remedy overcrowding, disrepair, unfitness and statutory nuisances; to promote fire safety in private sector housing and the Council's functions in relation to houses in multiple occupation;
 - (iv) licensing schemes;
 - (v) tenancy relations and the provision of housing advice;
 - (vi) relationship with Registered Providers of housing;
 - (vii) housing loans and grants;
 - (viii) housing related support services;
 - (ix) policies and actions with a view to reducing and eliminating street homelessness to ensure that appropriate action is taken; and
 - (x) analysis, development and overview of housing policies in terms of spatial planning to inform the Local Plan and planning policies;
- (i) reviewing major projects and any project boards having regard to capacity to deliver, corporate priorities and resources, and advise the Policy and Resources Committee as appropriate;
- (j) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions; and

- (k) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.

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.

- 9.2 This report is for information and there are no direct equality implications.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

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

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 This report is for information and there are no direct community wealth implications.

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APPENDICES

Committee Work Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Council Constitution
Forward Plan
The Council's transformation programme

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee	8 June 2021
	26 July 2021
	29 September 2021
	26 October 2021
	22 November 2021
	26 January 2022
	9 March 2022
	13 June 2022
	20 July 2022
	20 September 2022
	7 December 2022
	26 January 2023
	8 March 2023
	20 June 2023
	17 July 2023
	18 September 2023
	16 October 2023
	6 December 2023
	22 January 2024
	27 March 2024

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ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

KEY DECISIONS July 2024

Item	Description	Committee Meeting	Lead Departmental Officer
Approval of Masterplans and Neighbourhood Framework – Cleveland Street Neighbourhood, Northside, Dock Branch Neighbourhood, New Brighton Marine Promenade	The proposals within this report are intended to ensure that the Neighbourhood Framework and Masterplans are duly adopted as the regeneration strategies for the areas that they relate to and are used as material considerations in the determination of planning applications where appropriate.	July 2024	Rebecca Lowry / Tom Booty
Reallocation of Transport Shed Town Deal Grant Funding	This report outlines an alternative proposal of a comprehensive redevelopment and expansion of the existing Wirral	July 2024	Rebecca Lowry / Luke Bithell

	Transport Museum. The aim would be to greatly enhance the existing heritage visitor attraction, meet the outputs of the funding grant and ensure that the building is sustainable and fit for purpose for generations to come.		
Hythe Put/call	This report provides an update on the Hythe Put/Call option that the Council entered into with Peel Land and Property (intermediate) in September 2020.	July 2024	Steve McMorran
Maritime Knowledge Hub	This report sets out the outcome of the work undertaken regarding this site for members consideration. Specifically, the committee is being asked to consider the transaction set out in the report and choose whether or not to agree to the heads of terms.	July 2024	Rebecca Lowry/Andy Keogh
Freeport Investment Fund – Application for Financial Assistance		September 2024	Rebeccah Lowry / Helen Carney
Hind Street Urban Village	Seeking delegated authority for Director of Regeneration & Place to: i. Accept the Cadent C4	September 2024	Marcus Shaw / Tom Booty

	<p>estimate for the relocation of gas infrastructure and agree the principle of the council forward funding these works</p> <p>ii. Enter into a Development Management Contract with Ion Developments Ltd to oversee the implementation of the Hind Street enabling infrastructure</p> <p>iii. Enter into a works contract with Sisk & Son to deliver the Hind Street enabling infrastructure</p> <p>To be referred to Policy and Resources Committee</p>		
Hamilton Square Conservation Area Regeneration Plan		September 2024	Mandy Lewis
Meols Drive Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan		September 2024	Mandy Lewis
Kings Gap Conservation Area		September 2024	Mandy Lewis

Appraisal and Management Plan			
Commissioning Plan for Homeless accommodation/support services - September		September 2024	Lisa Newman
Procurement of framework for rolling capital programme for adaptations and housing standards		September 2024	Lisa Newman
Future of Wirral Growth Company LLP		September 2024	Director of Regeneration and Place / Marcus Shaw
Woodchurch Leisure Centre Demolition		September 2024	Marcus Shaw / Lauren Reynolds
Disposal of Wallasey Town Hall Annex Sites	To be referred to Policy and Resources Committee in October 2024	September 2024	Marcus Shaw / Steve McMorran
Acquisition of Dock Branch Line from Network Rail	To be referred to P&R in October 2024	September 2024	Marcus Shaw / Tom Booty
Approval of Masterplans and Neighbourhood Framework – Wallasey Town Hall Quarter, New Brighton		September 2024	Rebecca Lowry
Approval of		September 2024	Marcus Shaw / Dave

Masterplans and Neighbourhood Framework – Birkenhead Waterfront (Woodside)			Marsh
Approval of Masterplan – Birkenhead Town Centre		TBC	Marcus Shaw

NON- KEY DECISIONS AND UPDATE REPORTS

Item	Lead Departmental Officer	Timescale	Wirral Plan Priority
Housing update (6 Monthly)	Lisa Newman		
Cheshire & Mersey Learning Disability & Autism Housing Strategy	Jayne Marshall	July 2024	
Mass Transit Update (request from Cllr Tomeny at December ERH)	Julie Barnes	Autumn 2024	Inclusive Economy

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Financial Monitoring Report	Quarterly	Mark Lightburn
Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee Work Programme Update	Every Cycle	Committee Team
Homelessness	TBC	Lisa Newman

WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress
Working Groups/ Sub Committees				
Active Travel Working Group	Workshops	Ongoing	Julie Barnes	Ongoing
Housing Delivery Workshop – Including Council House Building Options.	Briefing Paper / Workshop	TBC	Director of Regeneration and Place / Lisa Newman	Ongoing
Establish a Task and Finish Group to examine the potential benefits and risks of Mersey Tidal Power to Wirral and liaise with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	Task and Finish Group	TBC	Director of Regeneration and Place	

(requested via a motion at Council in December 2023)				
Departmental Risk Register Workshop	Workshop	TBC	Director of Regeneration and Place	

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Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee – Terms of Reference

The Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee has responsibility for developing and delivering a vision for Wirral as a place. It is responsible for developing and determining or recommending all planning policies, including the Local Plan, and infrastructure planning. It is also responsible for promoting regeneration, economic development and associated activities, including the tourism, culture and visitor economy, and for removing barriers to growth. It is also responsible for taking a strategic approach to the Council's various housing functions, including issues concerning social rented and affordable housing, homelessness, allocations and standards of housing.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for:

- (a) formulation and delivery of the Council's strategic development objectives for planning, sustainability and transportation;
- (b) developing and recommending those plans and strategies which together comprise the Local Plan;
- (c) developing and adopting or recommending (if reserved to Council) other spatial planning documents, including but not limited to
 - (i) supplementary planning documents (SPD) and planning policy advice notes;
 - (ii) Master Plans and development briefs;
 - (iii) The Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
 - (iv) [The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) when applicable];
- (d) economic development, including but not limited to infrastructure, enterprise, skills and seeking, securing and managing external funds to achieve that, directly or in partnership with joint ventures and external companies or bodies as well as with the Combined Authority and government bodies;
- (e) the Council's functions and partnerships regarding the promotion of economic growth and the establishment and development of business;
- (f) the promotion and development of the economic factors in the area, such as seeking to ensure sufficient and appropriate employment sites, investment, adult skills, apprenticeship schemes, productivity, development sites and so forth;
- (g) overseeing the progress of major projects (including major building, infrastructure or other projects involving the erection or significant alteration of major permanent structures or landmarks) undertaken by the Council directly or as enabler, funder or joint enterprise partner, including but not limited to the Wirral Growth Company LLP;
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 - (iv) licensing schemes;

- (v) tenancy relations and the provision of housing advice;
 - (vi) relationship with Registered Providers of housing;
 - (vii) housing loans and grants;
 - (viii) housing related support services;
 - (ix) policies and actions with a view to reducing and eliminating street homelessness to ensure that appropriate action is taken; and
 - (x) analysis, development and overview of housing policies in terms of spatial planning to inform the Local Plan and planning policies;
-
- (i) reviewing major projects and any project boards having regard to capacity to deliver, corporate priorities and resources, and advise the Policy and Resources Committee as appropriate;
 - (j) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions; and
 - (k) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.