



Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee

Date:	Thursday, 23 January 2025
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

Contact Officer: Daphne Courtenage
Tel: 0151 691 8545
e-mail: daphnecourtenage@wirral.gov.uk
Website: www.wirral.gov.uk

PLEASE NOTE: Public seating is limited therefore members of the public wishing to attend are asked to register their attendance in advance by emailing committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk. Wirral Council is fully committed to equalities and our obligations under The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. If you have any adjustments that would help you attend or participate at this meeting, please let us know as soon as possible and we would be happy to facilitate where possible. Please contact committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk

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 - 10)**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2024.

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, Monday 20th January 2025 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, Monday 20th January 2025 to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.1.

To register your intention to give a statement please do so via this link: [Public Statement Notification](#), and this will be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.1.

Petitions may be presented to the Committee. 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. LEISURE SERVICES TRANSFORMATION UPDATE (Pages 11 - 30)

7. **REPORT ON THE PROPOSED CONFIRMATION OF THE NEW BOROUGH WIDE SMOKE CONTROL AREA (Pages 31 - 48)**

SECTION B - BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

8. **UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF COMMUNAL GRAVES IN WIRRAL (Pages 49 - 56)**
9. **EXPLORING COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARY MODELS (Pages 57 - 72)**
10. **2025-26 BUDGET REPORT UPDATE (Pages 73 - 80)**
11. **PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND CHANGING PLACE PROVISION (Pages 81 - 88)**
12. **COMMUNITY SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 89 - 98)**
13. **TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE REPORT (Pages 99 - 108)**
14. **MEMBER CHAMPION FOR HERITAGE - UPDATE REPORT (Pages 109 - 116)**

SECTION C - WORK PROGRAMME / OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

15. **WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 117 - 126)**
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. **LEISURE SERVICES TRANSFORMATION UPDATE - EXEMPT APPENDIX (Pages 127 - 168)**
18. **2025-26 BUDGET REPORT UPDATE - EXEMPT APPENDICES (Pages 169 - 174)**

Terms of Reference

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

This page is intentionally left blank

TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Thursday, 28 November 2024

Present:

Councillor I Lewis (Chair)

Councillors	A Ainsworth	KJ Williams
	P Jobson	R Molyneux
	G Bennett	M Redfern
	C Cooke	G Davies (for G
	T Murphy (for K	McManus)
	Stuart)	

Apologies

Councillors G McManus K Stuart

41 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed attendees and viewers to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was webcast and retained on the Council's website.

42 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors G McManus and K Stuart. Councillors G Davies and T Murphy deputised.

43 **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.

No interests were declared.

44 **MINUTES**

Members raised an issue with the previous minutes not making reference to the agreed site visit to Thornton Hough public toilets, to meet with the Thornton Hough Community Trust.

Resolved – That subject to the amendments above, the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th October 2024 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

45 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

46 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

One question had been submitted and accepted in advance of the meeting.

Andrew Evans attended the committee meeting to ask a question regarding the Hoylake Municipal Golf Course. He asked whether the council had a plan for the use of the former gold course site, and whether any plan could involve some combined sports and nature (reserve) use, and if a plan were not implemented, whether the land was at risk from housing development.

The Chair addressed Mr Evans' question. He explained that the Council had taken the decision to close the Hoylake Municipal Golf Course and remove the maintenance budget in March 2022, as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process. Members then decided to put this surplus asset into a community asset transfer process and the Tourism Committee had, on the 16th June 2022, agreed to invite the Royal and Ancient to submit a business plan for a transfer of the asset.

The Chair said that the committee had been updated on the progress of the development of a business plan for the transfer of the asset on the 22nd June 2023. He described the uses being developed, such as short term gold formats, and that the plan would enable the course to be used for such activities between Open Golf Championships and then, in the year the Open was held, it would be available for the practice area, car parking and tented village. Following the event, it would revert back to other uses until the next Open.

Members had received a further update report as part of a general report on community asset transfers at the committee meeting on the 19th September 2024. The former golf course was vital for the hosting of the Open Golf Championship at Royal Liverpool, and without it the championship could not take place. The current agreement for future Opens at Hoylake were set to expire in 2026, and discussions were ongoing with the R&A and Royal Liverpool Golf Club on a new future agreement. It was vital for the Council to negotiate on these issues so that it secured a future agreement and a transfer which benefitted the Borough, and hopefully these negotiations would conclude this financial year. The matter would then be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee for decision.

Mr Evans added that he understood the Council's challenging financial situation, and had brought his question to committee for clarity for local

interests. It was a popular facility for young people in the area, and there was a concern that they would have to travel outside the area for activities that could take place on the site.

The Chair suggested that, once the decision was brought before the Policy and Resources Committee, that Mr Evans contact his local ward councillors to make representations.

46.1 **Statements and Petitions**

No statements or petitions had been submitted for this meeting.

47 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

No member questions had been submitted for this meeting.

48 **EXPLORING COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARY MODELS**

The Chair informed Members that Mr Paul Kelly, Regional Co-Director of the Community Managed Libraries Peer Network, was unable to attend this meeting due to personal circumstances.

Members agreed to defer the item to the next meeting of the committee.

49 **RESTORATION OF NEW BRIGHTON MARINE LAKE**

Clare Mahoney and Colin Clayton, representatives of the Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake, introduced their report, which presented Members with details of the group and their work on New Brighton Marine Lake.

A short promotional film was shown to the Members of the committee.

The representatives explained that they were local residents, who had been brought together by their commitment to New Brighton Marine Lake. The group had been formed following an outbreak of blue/green algae a few years prior, as an advocacy group. They were made up of 42 volunteers, with a committee of 10 members, and had been active for 18 months.

In January 2024, the group had met with a local marine ecologist, and had discussed the improvements needed for the lake. Their main task had been to fundraise for a full ecology report to be undertaken, which had been completed the week before this committee meeting.

They had wished to attend the meeting and discuss this issue with Members, so that the committee could get a sense of who the group were, how they worked, particularly as the group wished to work closely with the Council in taking forwards the recommendations of the ecology report.

They described their governance arrangements and that they and their volunteers were incredibly proud of their achievements over the last 12 months. They described some of the events the group held, such as community litter picks, days of action with the Council's Parks and Countryside team, and charity events. The group had applied and had been successful in gaining grant funding, as well as highlighting the work of the group in other community settings. They wished for the lake to be returned to its former glory, and the comprehensive evaluation of the state of the lake would set out in detail how to bring it back to life.

The next stage for the group was to establish a strong, working relationship with the Council. They thanked officers, particularly officers in the Neighbourhoods directorate. They had wanted to come before committee to ask for an agreement to a formal working relationship, as the Council were the asset owner of the lake. In order to continue to apply for grant funding, they needed to have formal support from the asset owner.

Members raised their thanks to the group for their work supporting the lake, as well as recording their thanks for the support from council officers. Members queried whether the presentation, and ecology report, should also be shared with the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee. Members also requested to review the ecology report and discuss what the Council could do to support progress going forwards.

Members asked the representatives whether they had applied for the Heritage Lottery Fund, to which the representatives responded that they had thought of this, however reiterated the point that these funding applications included the criteria of a clear articulation of their relationship with the Council.

Members also discussed the number of marine lakes nationally, and whether the group could support other local groups and share their knowledge.

The Assistant Director for Leisure, Libraries and Customer Engagement responded to a question raised about delays to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the group and the Council. He explained that officers had been meeting with the group fairly frequently over the last 12-18 months, and he recorded his thanks to the group for their work and dedication. Officers had done some interventions and risk assessments on the lake, and these had been shared with the group. Officers had also commissioned for water testing. The lake was a large, unsupervised body of open water, and there were large risks involved. He had reviewed the MOU, and officers were working through this, to ensure the best delivery model and agreement that would work for both the Council and the group. Officers wanted to ensure protections but also the maximum benefit for the lake, and following this, the group would be awarded whatever autonomy was needed.

Following discussion, the Chair proposed an amendment to the recommendation.

It was also agreed that once the ecology report was available, that this be shared with Members of the Committee and a site visit be arranged to discuss the findings of the report.

Resolved – That the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee:

- 1. Thanked the Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake for their presentation and work undertaken on the lake so far;**
- 2. Requested the Director and Assistant Directors of Neighbourhoods meet with the Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake to address the points raised at the meeting; and**
- 3. Refer the report and presentation to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee for consideration.**

50 **UPDATE REGARDING THE WORK OF THE COUNCILS ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE**

The Senior Manager for Environmental Health introduced the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place, which provided the committee with an update on the work of the Environmental Health service. The report included performance details of the service from the 1st November 2023 to the 31st October 2024.

She explained that the Environmental Health Service was responsible for providing a wide range of statutory frontline services to local businesses and residents. The appendix, attached to the report, highlighted a number of requests the service received during this period.

She highlighted that Table 4 within the report showed that there had been 428 new food businesses on an annual basis, with these businesses wanting support and advice from the service. There had been 981 food hygiene inspections, with a large number of businesses being compliant. There had been three prosecutions during this period.

Members raised the following questions/comments:

- Table 3 of the report, Council pest control service – had the team seen any exotic pests in the borough, in light of changes to climate change
- Page 37 of the report, reference to drains
- Page 39, reference to dangerous dogs, were the team involved in any cases with XL Bully breeds
- The process through which service requests came through to the team
- Queries regarding pest control treatments
- Any more information to be given on noise nuisance and complaints
- Environmental food services, inspections done by contracted service, a query whether this could be brought in-house
- Table 3, housing standards, at what point would the team step in

- Why there were so many Freedom of Information requests regarding animal health
- At what point would food outlets be forcibly shut down
- Queries around bonfires
- Whether the team had seen an increase in complaints regarding housing issues

In response to questions, the Senior Manager for Environmental Health told Members that the Environmental Health team had not seen any unusual pests in the borough. The team provided treatments for basic pest control. The team had responsibility for drains in private properties, but any gutters or road gulleys were the responsibility of the Environmental Services team. In regards to dangerous dogs, the team had prepared for changes to legislation, and had close links with Birkenhead Kennels and the RSPCA, to provide advice or take enforcement action. She described the noise nuisance policy to members, and explained that funding had been made available during Covid-19, as officers were diverted elsewhere, to provide contracts to address inspections backlogs, with this contract due to end in December 2024. In regards housing issues, there had been an increase in complaints regarding damp and mould. This work was done in conjunction with the Housing Standards team, who had received funding to address these complaints.

The Chair also requested that information be presented to the Spokespersons of the Committee and to Councillor J McManus, regarding the location of Birkenhead Kennels.

It was also requested that if other suitable spaces for animal groups were found, that this information be circulated to members.

Members recorded their thanks to the Senior Manager and the Environmental Health team.

Resolved – That the report be noted and the contents endorsed.

51 **UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL’S PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND CHANGING PLACES PROVISION.**

It was agreed by assent that this item would be deferred to the next meeting of the committee, on the 23rd January 2025, to allow officers to include requested content items from Members.

52 **COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2024-25 THEME: SAFE, RESILIENT AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES**

The Director of Neighbourhoods introduced the report, which was a quarterly performance report in relation to the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27 for the Theme Safe, resilient and engaged communities.

He explained to Members that the report focussed on seven performance indicators. There were only two performance indicators giving new information to Members since the last quarterly report, in relation to participation in leisure sites and active borrowers from libraries. There were some data sets within the report which included data from 2022/23.

In response to a question on budget constraints, the Director explained that the Committee's next Budget Oversight Panel would review budget proposals developed for the 2025/26 budget, which was a private meeting.

Resolved – That the content of the report be noted and referred to the Policy and Resources Committee.

53 **2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER TWO**

The Head of Finance introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhoods, which set out the financial monitoring information for the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee as at Quarter 2 (30 September) of 2024/25. The report provided 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.

She explained to Members that the current estimate forecasted an adverse outturn position of £1.387m on the Committee's revenue budget. In comparison, the overall Council position was an adverse outturn position of £21.56m.

For this Committee, the adverse position was made up of: £220,000 on Neighbourhood Safety, mainly relating to employee budget pressures; £994,000 on Leisure, Libraries and Theatre, in relation to staffing pressures; and £330,000 on Libraries, in relation to premises repairs and maintenance, and unachievable income targets.

The Committee were being asked to note savings of £1.3m, which were expected to be achieved in full, as set out within Table 2. The full capital programme position and reserves for the Committee were contained within the report at Tables 3 and 4.

Members raised queries over the health and safety works at Wirral Country Park, which had been pushed back to the 2025/26 budget; whether, through the playing fields strategy, any income could be amassed from this; and whether work to understand the staff enhancements costs had been undertaken.

The Head of Finance and the Director of Neighbourhoods agreed to circulate information regarding the health and safety works at Wirral Country Park, as well as a full breakdown of staff enhancement payments.

The Chair raised to the Director that, in the Quarter 1 Monitoring report, there had been no immediate pressures, whereas the Quarter 2 report was identifying budget pressures, and questioned whether this would have been predicted. He asked whether the Director could give assurances that the identified budget pressures would be incorporated into the 2025/26 budget.

The Director of Neighbourhoods responded that in regards to the Quarter 1 monitoring report, he had not wanted to begin the year predicting that they would overspend, however acknowledged that he had not appreciated the issues, particularly around overtime enhancements. Work was underway to ensure that there was provision for this within the revenue budget for Neighbourhoods. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) required the directorate to reduce spending in 2025/26 by £1m and £2m for 2026/27. Officers were looking at the more effective use of resources to reduce on overtime and enhancements.

He explained that officers were currently managing assets for which there was no budget for managing maintenance, which he hoped would be addressed when the move to the Corporate Landlord Model was finalised. He reiterated that colleagues in Finance were forensically examining budgets, to address the unachievable income targets, and officers were trying to fully understand the detail of the directorate's revenue budget.

Resolved – That

- 1. The forecast adverse position of £1.387m presented at Quarter 2 be noted, and the urgent need to examine all available options to address the position.**
- 2. The committee noted that the Director of Finance has contacted the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to make them aware of the Council's financial position**
- 3. The progress on delivery of the 2024/25 savings programme be noted**
- 4. The forecast level of reserves and balances be noted**
- 5. The capital position at the end of Quarter 2 be noted.**

54 MEMBER CHAMPION FOR HERITAGE - UPDATE REPORT

The Member Champion for Heritage, Councillor Williams, introduced his regular update report to Members, and gave an additional verbal update.

He told Members that officers were working to submit two bids for the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in relation to projects in Hamilton Square and Argyll Quarter shopfronts. There had been discussions around the application process for the Heritage Lottery Fund, and whether the process could be

made simpler and less complicated. In regards to the Taylor Street Transport Museum and Heritage Railway Run, they were in the process of organising a governance meeting with elected members and officers with Big Heritage. Work had started on the Birkenhead Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and bidding work on the World Heritage Site was continuing.

In relation to the local listing campaign, a new attempt to push forward with highlighting building and sites of historic importance which were not listed, would launch in a few days time. Councillor Williams thanked the new Principal Heritage Officer for her work, and the work of the Conservation Areas Wirral and the Wirral History and Heritage Association.

The launch of the Wirral Heritage & Culture Champions Training Programme would start in early 2025, with local heritage and culture groups involved with the programme and other training organisations.

Councillor Williams informed Members that Walter Citrine, of the Trade Union Congress, had been nominated for a Blue Plaque.

Finally, he told Members that he was pleased to announce that Wallasey Central Library had been awarded a Grade 2 Heritage listing.

Members asked whether Council officers were placed to support members of the public and local organisations in submitting heritage lottery bids. The Head of Place, Culture and Visitor Economy explained that it was not the role of officers to assist or put in applications for anyone in relation to heritage lottery bids.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

55 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair introduced the report which presented the Work Programme for the Committee. He asked if any members had amendments or additions to present.

The following was raised and was agreed to be added/amended on the Work Programme:

- Community Asset Transfers - Performance Management (testing the success classification of asset transfers, how the Council was measuring community engagement and the success of this, how communities were benefitting from these transfers, performance measures and feedback)
- Detailed list of all asset transfers
- Aquatics Policy

Members agreed for a briefing to be held in the New Year, with Chair and Spokes to discuss the Asset Transfer request with officers in more detail.

Officers explained that work was being done on the aquatics room at Europa Pools with Swim England. A report would be brought, however this would be at the beginning of the new municipal year.

Members queried when the Committee could expect information on the Playing Pitch Strategy, and asked that unscheduled reports be given an estimated timescale of coming before Committee.

The Chair asked Councillor Bennett to provide an update to Members on the matter of communal graves in the Wirral. A report would be made available to the Committee in January 2025. The Chair asked Councillor Bennett to share the report and meeting details with those members of the public he was in communication with.

Resolved – That, subject to the amendment of the items noted at the meeting, the work programme be noted.



COMMITTEE: TOURISM COMMUNITIES CULTURE AND LEISURE

23rd January 2025

REPORT TITLE:	LEISURE SERVICES UPDATE PAPER: DIRECTION OF TRAVEL FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out and seeks support for the general direction of travel of for leisure services including strategic objectives in terms of funding, facility priorities, timelines and projected outcomes to guide decision-making over the next 10 years. The aim of the proposed direction of travel is to:

- Focus on *short term* facility regulatory/compliance requirements.
- Achieve *medium term* enhancement of existing infrastructure and equipment and to undertake larger scale and necessary repair and maintenance works
- Secure *long term* refurbishment funding and to create brand new, state-of-the-art public sector health and wellbeing hub facilities
- Create wraparound sustainable operating model/s, across the short / medium / long term investment timeline, thereby meeting the community's evolving needs and the Council's requirement to act in accordance with its financial position
- Continue with in year transformational work that tackles the agreed cost saving targets placed upon the service by the Medium Term Financial Plan (saving £1m in financial year 25/26 and £2m in financial year 26/27)

The report directly or indirectly supports all themes and priorities within the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27.

This is a key decision as it affects more than one Ward.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Appendix 1 to this report contains exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. It is in the public interest to exclude the press and public under Paragraph 3 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Tourism Communities Culture and Tourism Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the proposed Direction of Travel for Leisure Service Sites as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

- (ii) Authorise the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Interim Director of Regeneration and Place to commission design and development works as necessary, and which result from initial investigative / feasibility work associated with proposed Public Sector Health & Wellbeing Hub in Birkenhead, thereby supporting the principles of the Birkenhead Town Centre Masterplan.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Strategic alignment: there is a need to ensure that facility investments are aligned with the organisation's overall strategic goals and objectives, helping to deliver long-term viability.
- 1.2 It is suggested that the principles that should drive future provision include:
 - Facilities that create better outcomes for residents;
 - Better facilities acting as a single point of contact for all Council customers;
 - Facilities that create high visibility for the Council within communities;
 - Hubs that drive rationalisation in other parts of the Council estate;
 - Solutions that create financial sustainability; and
 - Investment which contributes to the Council's net-zero targets.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Council investing in its leisure facilities is to promote health, well-being, and active lifestyles for its residents. Wirral has a population of approximately 321,000 people, of which approximately 260,000 are aged 16+. Sport England Data measures activity levels of adults (16+). There remains a slow, post Covid recovery taking place, with levels of active adults starting to increase and levels of inactive adults starting to decrease. Despite this, there is still a large swathe of the population, who do not take part in physical activity, which is hugely detrimental to both mental and physical wellbeing. This is especially the case as the 16+ population ages, and those issues manifest financially within the Council's community support and public health services and also the National Health Service, at great cost to both organisations.
- 1.4 Sports England estimates that nationally, 63% of sports halls and swimming pools are more than 10 years old and nearly a quarter of all sports halls and swimming pools have not been refurbished in more than 20 years. Many Councils are in the process of transforming their leisure assets to move towards longer term sustainability and to support their commitment towards carbon neutral.
- 1.5 The challenges being faced nationally are reflective of those in Wirral in terms of availability and the need to prioritise capital and revenue funding. The pandemic also exposed the challenges of ageing leisure stock where poor maintenance and design hindered usage alongside a lack of ventilation and the ability to socially distance. Higher operational and running costs of older less efficient facilities have further increased the subsidy levels of operations.

1.6 Regeneration masterplans currently in development for Birkenhead, Seacombe, Liscard and West Kirby create opportunities to think differently about how leisure and other Council services can be more 'joined-up' spatially and physically.

1.7 There are several universal reasons that the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee are asked to consider when discussing the reasons for the recommendation in this paper:

- Performance improvement: the direction of travel aims to improve operational efficiency and productivity by addressing current facility limitations and optimising space, equipment, and processes.
- Market responsiveness: planned change will help the Council respond to changing market conditions and trends, ensuring that facilities remain competitive and relevant.
- Enhancing operational efficiency: streamlining processes and improving workflows to maximise productivity and reduce waste.
- Improving safety and compliance: ensuring that facilities meet health, safety, and regulatory standards to protect employees and customers and avoid legal issues.
- Upgrading technology: incorporating modern technology to enhance capabilities, such as automation, data analytics, or energy management systems.
- Reducing operational costs: identifying opportunities for cost savings through energy efficiency, maintenance improvements, or optimised resource usage.
- Enhancing customer experience: creating a better environment for clients or customers, which can lead to improved satisfaction and loyalty.
- Supporting strategic initiatives: aligning facility investments with broader organisational goals, such as expansion into new markets or innovation initiatives.
- Maximising asset value: increasing the value of the facility through strategic upgrades and maintenance, ensuring a good return on investment.
- Future proofing: anticipating and preparing for future operational requirements, market changes, and technological advancements.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 One option would be retaining the current operating model. This is not recommended as it would not secure

- Building condition surveys recommended by the Corporate Landlord Programme.
- Proposed directorate and partnership co-location proposals; and
- The longer-term impacts of a lack of investment in existing facility infrastructure.

- 2.2 Another option would be to invest in only short-term, low-cost interventions. This would only tackle short-term operational and building condition compliance issues raised by the Corporate Landlord Programme visits. It would not look to tackle the required transformational change to re-position the Council's Sport and Physical Activity offer or deliver the strategy in the medium to long term.
- 2.3 Another option would be to only invest in short and medium-term, medium-cost interventions. This option would tackle the short-term regulatory and compliance issues raised through the Corporate Landlord Programme asset condition visits. It would also deliver the required medium-term capital investment needed to take care of outstanding repairs and maintenance issues and investment in new equipment and fit out cost requirements of co-locating services. It would not, however, tackle the inherent longer-term issues associated with securing an appropriate target operating model or the need for new state of the art Sport and Physical Activity health and wellbeing facilities, which offer multiple public facing services. Neither would it tackle the borough's need for new health and wellbeing facilities as part of various town centre masterplans, new housing developments and the obvious increase in demand from an increased town centre and borough wide population. This is not a recommended option.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At its meeting of 16th June 2022, this Committee was presented with a report that provided members with (amongst other matters) a proposed Leisure Facilities Infrastructure Strategy ("LFIS") for Leisure Services. This work reflected the importance placed on the provision of quality, community-based facilities, offering sport and physical activities that contribute towards positive health and social outcomes for Wirral residents. This Committee resolved that:
- (i) the LFIS be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee and that a workshop be arranged by the Director of Neighbourhood Services to enable Members of the Committee to consider the proposals further and;
 - (ii) the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to develop proposals within the context of the LFIS and regeneration masterplans currently under preparation/finalisation. Business cases are to be presented at a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3.2 Fathom Consultancy Services (FCS) were subsequently commissioned to review the transformation opportunities available for the delivery of Leisure Services in Wirral, as listed in the Knight Kavanagh and Page report. The focus of the brief was to develop options that can be implemented immediately to provide short-term benefits alongside a medium to long-term strategy around redevelopment and refurbishment. The short-term options were to identify the potential efficiencies, income growth

opportunities, and savings/cost avoidance measures that can be achieved to support the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan. The medium to long-term options were required to take account of regeneration activities and identified future priorities. The activities undertaken as part of the review included:

- Consideration of relevant service information, plans and strategies.
- Establishing an agreed “baseline” for the existing service costs and income.
- Benchmarking of financial performance against a basket of industry KPIs.
- Site visits.
- Stakeholder engagement within the Leisure Service, Neighbourhoods Directorate and other Council services with which there may be potential for co-location, programme co-design and/or integration.
- Self-Assessment Questionnaire undertaken with officers from Leisure Management Service.
- Operating model review – options appraisal with weighted criteria; and
- Informal soft market engagement with all of the major UK public sector operators.

3.3 The FCS report conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- In the medium term, the Leisure Service will face significant financial and service challenges, with a requirement to both justify its cost base whilst transforming its operations.
- The current In-house operational model is not providing residents with an effective or attractive service. The facility stock is dated, dynamic programming is lacking, and performance management is limited.
- The ability for the In-house management option to deliver the transformational change of service required is questionable.
- The creation of a Local Authority Trading Company and/or outsourcing of the service would provide the Council with a significantly more efficient and effective means of delivering the service.
- The concurrent development of an asset transformation programme aligned to the wider Council regeneration programmes would further accelerate the improved outcomes and financial performance required.
- Three sequential programmes should be initiated:
 - implement short term in-year measures;
 - develop detailed business planning on a transformational capital / regeneration programme of the estate; and
 - investigate and report on the benefits of pursuing a new operating model (following appropriate due diligence, design of service specification, business planning and contracting processes).

3.4 The FCS report does find that the service has done an excellent job with the available resources, however due to financial pressures there has been a general erosion of the

original facilities/assets, and that they all need significant financial investment in infrastructure, mechanical and electrical and plumbing.

3.5 The recommendations within the FCS report have been taken into account in setting out a recommended direction of travel for the Council's Leisure Centres (including the currently decommissioned Woodchurch Leisure Centre) as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

3.6 Authority to progress specific undertakings of significant medium to long term transformational change would be based on a case-by-case basis and would have full business case support and would be brought back to this Committee for approval.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Full financial implications have not yet been evaluated and subject to approval of this report, would be presented on a case-by-case basis at the appropriate time.

4.2 Work within the service is currently being undertaken to tackle the agreed Medium Term Financial Plan savings targets of £1m during financial year 25/26 and £2m during financial year 26/27.

4.2 There are short / medium and long-term financial implications:

- Short term financial implications are those determined through the Corporate Landlord Programme Building Condition surveys.
- Medium term financial implications are those determined through a more in-depth repair and maintenance surveys and are specific to the existing fit out of each Leisure Centre.
- Longer term financial implications are based on transformational change including and could include the building of new 3G pitches and the construction of new Health and Wellbeing Hub facilities.

4.3 The funding responsibilities for the short-term capital requirements would likely remain the responsibility of Wirral Council, however opportunities for grants or external capital funding would be actively pursued.

4.4 The funding responsibilities for the medium and long-term capital requirements would be a combination of Wirral Council, Government Department funding and other sources of funding, to be established relative to an individual facility.

4.5 Financial forecasting is anticipating that there will be a significant overspend across the Council in the 2024/5 financial year. This is a severe financial challenge, and all Council departments are challenged to reduce levels of spending to seek to deliver a balanced budget at year end.

- 4.6 A spending freeze was announced on 9th September 2024 and is just one of the measures in place to keep costs to a minimum. It is crucial that all staff adhere to the spending freeze protocols and take all possible measures to limit spending accordingly.
- 4.7 An assessment of how to implement the funding requirements associated with the short, medium and long-term investment required to deliver the LFIS will need to be undertaken. Exceptions to the spend freeze include:
- Commitments and contracts in place before the spending freeze will continue to be honoured, although there needs to be evidence that such properly approved commitments are in place.
 - Existing staff payroll and pension costs.
 - Expenditure on goods and services which have already been received, following standard approval routes.
 - Expenditure needed to deliver the Council's provision of statutory duties at the minimum possible level.
 - Urgent expenditure required to safeguard vulnerable citizens.
 - Expenditure required through pre-existing legal agreements and contracts.
 - Expenditure funded through ring-fenced grants; and
 - Expenditure necessary to achieve value for money and / or mitigate additional in-year net costs.
- 4.8 There may be a range of grant funding initiatives available to reduce the financial burden placed upon the Council. It is important to keep abreast of these and understand timescales and build applications and awards into the delivery programme.
- 4.9 Return on investment (ROI) plans will establish criteria for evaluating the ROI of proposed projects, allowing stakeholders to understand the financial benefits of investments, and agree any tolerances.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Pursuant to Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council has the discretion to provide recreational facilities within its area as it thinks fit.
- 5.2 It is good practice have a Leisure Facilities Infrastructure Strategy and the proposals within this report if approved will inform any such strategy for approval by a future meeting of this Committee.
- 5.3 Appropriate attention will need to be given to the requirements for a consultation with the public and/or representatives of the user groups in relation to the development of specific proposals that arise from the proposed direction of travel.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Implementing the proposed leisure investment projects will require careful allocation of resources, including both capital and staff/consultancy expertise. Significant financial investment will be needed for infrastructure development, such as facility construction, equipment procurement, and technology integration. Additionally, specialised personnel will be required for project management, operations, and customer facing roles. Training staff to meet the demands of the new leisure offerings will also be a key consideration. Operational costs, including maintenance, utilities, and staffing, must be accounted for in long-term financial planning. It will be essential to assess the availability of resources and ensure that existing operations are not disrupted, while also optimising the potential for revenue generation and community engagement, within both the new and existing leisure facilities.
- 6.2 The Corporate Landlord Programme Leisure Centre condition and compliance visits have identified several areas which require small scale investment as a priority, for the facilities to remain compliant. These improvements will be undertaken in partnership with the Council's Asset Management Team.
- 6.3 As part of the business planning process, we will identify the necessary resources (financial, human, and technological) required for investments, thereby facilitating effective budget management.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Reputational – Without delivering the required transformational change to the Leisure Service and the continuous deterioration of the assets from which it operates, the Council risks attracting an increasing adverse perception from its service users and other stakeholders. The likelihood of the Council achieving the health outcomes of the Sports & Physical Activity will diminish without appropriate investment and forward planning for future generations.
- 7.2 Economic – The subsidy provided by the Council to its Leisure Service will continue to increase without transformational change. Most of the subsidy is attracted by utility costs, repairs and maintenance and uneconomic working practices that could all be addressed via investment and change in the estate and workforce.
- 7.3 Health & Safety – The Corporate Landlord Health and Safety visits have raised some issues that will need to be addressed immediately for the Council is to remain compliant. The costs of repeated compliance remediations on an existing and aged stock will increase considerably compared to those of new, refurbished or redeveloped facilities.

- 7.4 Environmental – In their current format the Leisure Centres are not environmentally friendly. They need retrofit works, modernisation and decarbonisation technology, to help the Council on its journey toward NetZero.
- 7.5 Risk Planning – will assess potential risks associated with investments and outlines strategies to mitigate those risks, ensuring informed decision-making. The above risks are part of the corporate and service-based risk registers, and they are monitored on an ongoing basis

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 When progressing material and transformational change with regards to the Leisure Service, its operating model and also the assets from which services are delivered, there will be a full stakeholder and communications management plan built into the programme delivery timeline, to allow for effective and appropriate public consultation.
- 8.2 Engagement with affected Ward Councillors is underway. A workshop has been scheduled with members of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee for January 2025.

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 (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 At this precise moment in time there is no requirement for specific Equality Impact Assessments, however, individual EIAs will be undertaken as specific projects move into approval for delivery, subject to business case approval.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Setting sustainability goals will incorporate mitigation initiatives, aiming to reduce environmental impact and comply with regulations. Any new buildings progressed to replace the aging stock, and changes to fit out of remaining stock (taking account of new co-located operating models) will be designed and built in accordance with Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'excellent' standard. Building Research Establishment (BRE) sets standards for the environmental performance of buildings through the design, specification, construction, and operation phases and can be applied to new developments or refurbishment schemes. It will remain within the Council's gift to decide the level of

BREEAM standard it wishes to achieve within Projects...the higher the ambition the greater the initial cost.

10.2 Utilise the newly designed climate impact tool, developed by the Climate Emergency Team. There is a need to understand, for each short/medium/longer term project, the environmental and climate implications in terms of:

- Energy saving from upgrading equipment
- Building retrofit
- Maintenance
- Ensuring new facilities are net zero by design (against cost benefit)
- Integrating sustainable urban drainage systems and increasing biodiversity within the local area (all development must now have 10% BNG)
- Positioning in terms of accessibility to integrated transport systems

10.3 The Council has faced two serious issues. In the short term, macroeconomic conditions have led to a profound increase in energy costs, with a 45% rise in electricity and 112% increase in gas between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Such extraordinary rises in energy costs threatened to increase the Council's budget deficit, impeding its ability to deliver value for its residents.

10.4 The Council takes its environmental and climate responsibilities seriously and was recently awarded for its decarbonisation efforts at the Association for Public Sector Excellence awards.

10.5 The Council is in the process of submitting Public Sector Decarbonisation funding applications to retrofit hardware to decarbonise the Oval, West Kirby and Leasowe Leisure Centres.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Community wealth building is a new people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

11.2 A greater move towards increased models of co-location and integration, will release opportunities for community development, creating more resilient and connected service offerings for those in need, help to tackle the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents, under one roof. This could significantly improve accessibility to services and reduce travel costs for service users, which has a positive impact on both people's budgets and the environment/carbon emissions.

11.3 Based on value capital works will be tendered for appropriately, giving local firms the opportunity to win work and employ local people, as part of the Council's drive toward social value within its procurement processes.

REPORT AUTHOR: Paul Hurst
LLCE Major Projects Lead
telephone: 07881335728
email: paulhurst@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: EXEMPT Fathom Consultancy Services Leisure Facility Investment Strategy Review

Appendix 2: Recommended Transformation of Leisure Centre Sites

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Knight Kavanagh and Page – Leisure Investment Strategy
Fathom Consultancy Solutions – Leisure Services Review
Birkenhead Town Centre Masterplan
Wallasey Town Hall Quarter Masterplan
Liscard Town Centre Masterplan
West Kirby Town Centre Masterplan
2016 Leisure Centre Building Condition Surveys

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Tourism Communities Culture and Tourism Committee in accordance with Section (d), “for the provision and management of leisure, sports and recreation facilities” of its Terms of Reference.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
TCCL Committee Meeting	16th June 2022

Appendix 1

Recommended Transformation of Leisure Centre Sites in Wirral (including the currently decommissioned Woodchurch Leisure Centre)

See below table for description of asterix * and numbered items (1), (2) and (3).

Facility	Ward	Status	Direction of travel
Europa Leisure Centre (wet)	Birkenhead and Tranmere	Built: 1995 Age: 30 years	Short term (<12 months) (1)
			Medium term (<24 months) (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Town Centre Regeneration masterplan team. • Secure funding for initial feasibility, for a new state of the art Health and Wellbeing Hub on the footprint of the existing Birkenhead Market site
			Long term (<36 months) (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new state of the art multi-purpose health & wellbeing hub on the existing Birkenhead Market site. • To house other public and partner services under one roof to diversify the funding model, reduce risk and maximise the offer to residents, increase usage and footfall,

			and achieve associated cost savings / income. As a minimum, the provision of library and health services should be given prime consideration for inclusion in any new facility.
--	--	--	---

Narrative to detail the priority and transformational change position of Birkenhead Town Centre and the future Leisure offer *(extracted from the BDP Birkenhead Town Centre Masterplan)*

Regarding regeneration and the aspirations for a new state of the art Health and Wellbeing Hub...Birkenhead is currently the focus for the longer-term transformational change.

The town centre benefits from the existing nearby Europa Leisure Centre, however as part of this masterplan options are presented to draw these into the retail core of the town and with them bring new footfall, and with the newly available space, residential development can occur, re-enforcing the need for a new Health and Wellbeing Hub, to cater for the additional demand for leisure and public health facing services, created through increased residential population.

The footfall to Europa Leisure Centre clearly identifies this as a loved asset by the community, but the facility is tired and needs improvement to align to both the required offer for the current and future community. This needs to be balanced against cost to the Council to maintain an aging asset.

The leisure centre has the single highest footfall in the town centre, of any amenity, and re-enforces the need for a revised, relocated and better provision in the future.

The Interim Director of Regeneration and Place has committed external financial grant fund resource to support the undertaking of full feasibility work, in order to fully explore the design and development concept of a new public facing health and wellbeing hub in Birkenhead.

Guinea Gap Leisure Centre (wet)	Seacombe	Built:	Short term (<12 months)
		1908	(1)
		Age:	Medium term (<24 months)
			(2)

		117 years (Considered beyond operational life expectancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Town Centre Regeneration masterplan team.
			<p>Long term (<36 months) (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a strategic business case to deliver a state-of-the-art Health and Wellbeing Hub in a location within the Wallasey area • Work with the Football Foundation to explore the potential to tackle the outputs of the PPS and the local plan, within the Wallasey area
West Kirby Leisure Centre (wet)	West Kirby and Thurstaston	<p>Built: 1977 and partially refurbished in 2004</p> <p>Age: 48 years</p>	<p>Short term (<12 months) (1)</p> <p>Medium term (<24 months) (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore capital funding for aesthetic improvement to the Leisure Centre and its immediate surround, based on the consultation work being led by Regeneration and Place Directorate on the West Kirby Town Centre master planning work

			<p>Long term (<36 months)</p> <p>(3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Assets and Investment Department within Regeneration and Place Directorate and seek to expedite the demolition of the mothballed former medical centre to re-purpose the Medical Centre footprint into a new income generating leisure offer, to be decided.
Leasowe Leisure Centre (wet)	Leasowe and Moreton East	Built:	Short term (<12 months)
		1976	(1)
		Age:	Medium term (<24 months)
49 years	(2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claremount 3G Football Pitch development 	
			<p>Long term (<36 months)</p> <p>(3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Assets and Investment Department within Regeneration and Place Directorate and seek to expedite the co-location of services within the surrounding area, into the existing Leisure Centre building and footprint.

The Oval Leisure Centre (wet)	Bebington	Built: 1972	Short term (<12 months) (1)
		Age: 53 years	Medium term (<24 months) (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential closure of specific areas of the site whilst major infrastructural works are carried out.
			Long term (<36 months) (3)
Bidston Sports and Activity Centre	Bidston and St James	Built: 1990 and partially refurbished in 2023	Short term (<12 months) (1)
			Medium term (<24 months) (2)
		Age: 35 years	Long term (<36 months) (3)
Woodchurch Leisure Centre / Woodchurch Community Football Hub	Upton		Short term (<12 months) (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Council Officers inside the Assets and Investment Department to expedite the demolition of the former Leisure

			<p>Centre, so that a new sports and activity mix can be developed in consultation with the community. Subject to strategic business case and available funding.</p>
			<p>Medium term (<24 months)</p> <p>(2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to potentially develop an additional mix of Sport and Activity facilities, based on data, to compliment the newly built super-size 3G pitch offer.
			<p>Long term (<36 months)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Football Foundation to transition the Woodchurch Leisure Centre Footprint into the Borough's main Footballing Hub. Seek inward investment from national funding bodies for additional artificial grass pitches / tackling the outputs designed into the Playing Pitch Strategy • Look to potentially develop an additional mix of Sport and Activity facilities, based on

			data, to compliment the newly built super-size 3G pitch offer.
--	--	--	--

(1) Applies to each Leisure Centre under short term interventions, with exception of Woodchurch Leisure Centre/Community Football Hub:

- *Undertake small scale priority Corporate Landlord Health and Safety Inspection capital works, to immediately improve the operating model*

(2) Applies to each Leisure Centre under medium term interventions, with exception of Woodchurch Leisure Centre/Community Football Hub:

- *Refine the status quo Target Operating Model to MTFP savings targets placed upon the service*
- *Business case development for medium term infrastructure capital investment for necessary repair/maintenance requirements*
- *Business case development for investment in new equipment required to maintain customer base and standard of consumer offer.*

(3) Applies to each Leisure Centre under medium term interventions, with exception of Woodchurch Leisure Centre/Community Football Hub:

- *Where appropriate research and implement appropriate alternative delivery models **

* A leisure service might seek an alternative delivery model to improve its efficiency, enhance user experience, or address challenges in its current structure. Here are some key reasons:

Cost Efficiency

- **Reduce Operational Costs:** Outsourcing or public-private partnerships can lower expenses by leveraging external expertise or economies of scale.
- **Access to Funding:** Alternative models may enable access to grants, sponsorships, or private investment.

Improved Service Quality

- **Specialised Expertise:** External operators may bring innovative practices, better technology, or specialized skills.
- **Focus on Core Activities:** By partnering with other entities, the service provider can concentrate on core functions like community engagement or strategic planning.

Increased Accessibility

- **Broader Reach:** Collaborating with community organizations or private entities might improve accessibility for underserved populations.
- **Flexible Hours and Offerings:** Alternative models may offer more adaptable programming and schedules.

Responding to Changing Demographics and Needs

- **Diverse Offerings:** A new model might cater to evolving customer preferences, such as wellness trends or digital experiences.
- **Inclusivity:** Partnerships can focus on inclusivity and access for all demographic groups.

Financial Pressures

- **Revenue Generation:** Alternative models, such as leasing facilities to private operators, can generate revenue to sustain or expand services.
- **Budget Constraints:** Public leisure services often face funding cuts, pushing them to explore cost-sharing or outsourcing.

Regulatory and Policy Changes

New policies may require changes in governance or operations, prompting the exploration of models like social enterprises or non-profits.

Risk Mitigation

Sharing risks with partners (e.g., private companies or non-profits) can reduce financial and operational vulnerabilities.

Common Alternative Delivery Models

- **Outsourcing:** Contracting a third party to manage operations.
- **School-Council Partnerships:** Collaboration between Secondary Schools and Local Authority
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborative arrangements for shared responsibility.
- **Community Management:** Involving local groups in running facilities or programs.
- **Social Enterprise Models:** Operating with both a social and financial mission.

Through the consideration of an alternative delivery model, a leisure service would aim to enhance sustainability, adapt to societal shifts, and ensure that they continue to meet the needs of their communities.



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE 23rd JANUARY 2025

REPORT TITLE:	REPORT ON THE PROPOSED CONFIRMATION OF THE NEW BOROUGH WIDE SMOKE CONTROL AREA.
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report proposes revoking the existing Smoke Control Orders and the making of a single Smoke Control Order for the whole of the administrative area under the provisions of the Clean Air Act 1993.

The proposals within this report are consistent with national guidelines and will assist the Council to achieve its objective of improving the air quality within Wirral to help to better the environment and the health and well-being of all residents and visitors to the area.

The report supports the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27, specifically the 'Protecting our Environment' theme.

This is a Key Decision. The proposed consolidation will affect the whole of the borough but in particular, Clatterbridge and Bebington Wards.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Tourism Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to

1. note the objection made during the statutory public consultation process opposing the making of the proposed Smoke Control Order as referred to at paragraphs 3.12 to 3.14 of this report;
2. approve that, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Director of Neighbourhoods be authorised to proceed with the process of:
 - a. revocation of existing Smoke Control Orders, which affect the Council's administrative area; and

- b. the making of a single Smoke Control Order to apply to the whole of the Council's administrative area in the terms of the draft order set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The current smoke control regime can be confusing to officers, other users, and the public, as it is not always clear which properties are exempt, or if they should remain listed as exempt.
- 1.2 Consolidating existing Smoke Control Orders into a single Order covering the whole of the Borough will simplify the enforcement and control of pollution from smoke. Currently, an Enforcement Officer would have to search the records to identify if there is a Smoke Control Order which applies to the area, and if so whether the property in question is included in that order, which takes time.
- 1.3 The recommendations will assist in achieving three of the priority areas outlined in the Wirral Air Quality Strategy 2024-2028 - Priority Area 2- Improve indoor air quality, - Priority Area 4- Reduce domestic, commercial, industrial, and agricultural emissions and Priority Area 5- Raise public awareness and encourage behaviour change. The recommendations will also align with local and regional actions being taken to address the crisis faced, by helping to cut climate-damaging air pollution locally, in line with the Wirral Air Quality Strategy 2024-2028 and global targets.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 One option would be to agree with the objection and proceed no further with the revocation of existing smoke control areas and the implementation of one single smoke control order covering the whole Council administrative area. The existing smoke control areas have achieved their initial goals, and still offer some controls on solid fuel combustion, however, trends have changed, and there is the potential for levels of pollutants outside of the initial aim of the legislation to increase if the situation remains the same. There would be no impact on the additional two wards that are currently not covered by existing smoke control orders.
- 2.2 Another option would be to agree with a suggestion made by the objector and undertake further public consultation prior to considering the revocation of existing smoke control areas and the implementation of one single smoke control order covering the whole Council administrative area. There would be additional resource implication for amending and re-posting the public notice around the borough, and additional cost associated with re-posting public notices in the two newspapers. The process of potential revocation and implementation of the new order would be delayed.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Defra's National Air Quality Strategy and Air Quality Action Plans set out how Government will improve and protect ambient air quality, as part of the creation of a sustainable environment.
- 3.2 The World Health Organisation has updated its health-based air quality guideline concentrations, due to a much stronger body of evidence showing how air pollution affects health at lower concentrations. The Government has set legal limits, known

as air quality objectives, for air pollution, in line with European Directives. In addition, new lower objective levels have recently been introduced for particulate matter. Councils in England have duties regarding local air quality management and must regularly review and assess air quality to determine whether objectives are likely to be achieved.

- 3.3 Although the air quality in Wirral does not exceed legal limits, no safe level of exposure to air pollution has been identified, below which there are no negative health effects. In Wirral, 4.9% of deaths are attributed to Air Pollution. The North-West average is 5.3% and the England average is 5.5%. The aim of the strategy is to reduce emissions and improve air quality across Wirral and it has been developed by collaborating with stakeholders across Wirral such as housing associations, community, voluntary and faith sectors, local businesses, the National Health Service, Schools, Chamber of Commerce and transport sector, to ensure that it represents the priorities of the local community.
- 3.4 Smoke Control Orders were initiated under various Clean Air Acts, initially in 1956, then updated under the Clean Air Act 1993. The initial act was created in response to the large number of deaths attributed to air pollution and smog in the winter of 1952. The Act enabled Local Authorities to enact Smoke Control Orders and to declare all or parts of their areas to be Smoke Control Areas. The Act itself can be seen to be a success, as air quality measurements show that the pollutants associated with smog have been very much reduced. Once declared as a Smoke Control Order, only 'Authorised Fuels' can be used, unless burned on an 'Authorised Appliance' or with an 'exemption' from the Council.
- 3.5 More recently, solid fuel use has changed from being coal, to mostly wood. This has resulted in an increase in emissions of small particulate matter, which has been determined to be a significant contributor to earlier mortality and an increase in associated illnesses, such as the risk of pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer, as well as heart disease and stroke, leading to early death.
- 3.6 The 2019 UK Air Quality Strategy has focused on domestic solid fuel use and as a result several Councils are reviewing and consolidating their existing smoke control orders.
- 3.7 Wood-burning takes place in just 8% of UK homes, and yet is the second highest cause of particle pollution in the UK. It has grown by 35% in the last 10 years as more people install wood-burning stoves. Poor local air quality affects the health of those living and working in Wirral. The highest impacts on human health come from particulate matter but evidence for the effects of arsenic is growing as shown in the Chief Medical Officers Annual Report on Air Quality 2022. Wood burning also contributes to Carbon Monoxide, Carbon Dioxide and Nitrogen Oxide levels in the air.
- 3.8 Deaths in England linked to air pollution are estimated to be between 26,000 and 38,000 each year. Although air pollution can be harmful to everyone, the most susceptible to the effects of air pollution are typically the young, the old, and those with pre-existing health conditions. It particularly affects people living in more densely

populated and polluted areas, which are often areas of higher deprivation, which can widen health inequalities.

- 3.9 Short-term exposure to air pollution can exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Long-term exposure can cause respiratory and cardiovascular disease, cancer, depression, dementia, diabetes, and can affect foetal development.
- 3.10 Wirral has had a minimal reduction in particulate matter pollution in the last 5 years and is expected to produce a 35% reduction by 2040.
- 3.11 At its meeting of 7 March 2024, this Committee resolved as follows:
1. the revocation of the existing Smoke Control Orders which affect the Council's administrative area be approved, subject to such revocations (listed in schedule 1 of the draft order) being subject to formal consultation and confirmation by the Secretary of State; and
 2. the making of a single Smoke Control Order for the whole of the Council's administrative area in accordance with the draft order set out in Appendix 1 to this report be approved, and also that such order be subject to formal consultation and confirmation by the Secretary of State;
 3. that any objections to the orders referred to in recommendations 1 and 2 be referred to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3.12 The consultation, has been completed and one objection has been received regarding the making of a single Smoke Control Order. Defra has also received an objection to the Revocation Order from the same individual. As such, in compliance with Resolution 3 above, details of the objection are being referred to this Committee for its consideration.
- 3.13 The objection has three main points, which have been summarised, with a response, as:

1. No data demonstrating the need for the change

The objection states that there is no air quality data to support this change and no quantitative or qualitative evidence to support new restrictions and that this is a tidying up exercise, following the example set, and being set, by many Councils across the country.

Response

The Council has not undertaken local monitoring specifically on emissions associated with the burning of solid fuel, as there is no legal requirement to undertake such monitoring before a smoke control area is introduced.

The pollution associated with domestic burning of solid fuels is recognised nationally. The Air Quality Strategy: framework for local authority delivery states that nationally, domestic burning of solid fuels accounted for 27% of PM2.5 in

2021. This Strategy also states that Local Authorities should keep the boundaries of existing Smoke Control Areas under review, especially if development has taken place outside of the boundaries and that they should consider whether it would be beneficial to declare a new Smoke Control Area. This is why councils across the country are introducing new smoke control areas. In addition, the Strategy identifies that Local Authorities are also expected to enforce restrictions which apply within Smoke Control Areas. The Council has recently introduced a new procedure for the enforcement of smoke emissions from domestic premises within a smoke control area.

2. Badly designed and badly executed consultation process

The objection states that smoke control/air quality has never been an issue. Given this democratic deficit, it was incumbent on Council officials to effectively involve local residents and to explain why changes would bring perceptible benefits; this they have not done.

The objector could not observe public notices within 5 private sector settings that had agreed to display the notices.

The objector believes the Council should have written to all 700 dwellings in Raby to inform them, sent out advanced warning notice in the Electoral update letter, and held 'drop in' sessions.

Response

Schedule 1 of the Clean Air Act 1993 (as amended) outlines the requirements that Local Authorities must comply with regarding the coming into operation of a Smoke Control Area. These requirements are outlined in Section 5.1 to 5.5 of this report. The actions taken by the Council to meet these requirements are outlined in Section 8.1 to 8.4 of this report. The Council has met the legal requirements regarding notification of the revocation of existing smoke control orders and the introduction of a new 'whole borough' smoke control order.

3. No Impact Assessment

The objector is concerned that no proper impact assessment has been completed, and that this should have considered the following:

- a) The number of dwellings that will be affected.

Response

The exact number of dwellings within the Raby Mere, Thornton Hough, Raby, Brimstage and Storeton that are affected by the new Smoke Control Order has not been calculated. The Council has provided and published a map of the existing smoke control area and the new smoke control area.

- b) By how much the new regulations will change the air quality in the affected area and if it will be discernible to residents.

Response

Assessing the change in air quality in the affected areas is not a legal requirement and this information is therefore not available. The health impacts

of both short term and long-term exposure to pollution are well documented. The Chief Medical Officers annual report in 2022 was regarding air pollution, and it states that air pollution has negative effects on health throughout the life course, from pre-birth to old age. In addition, Public Health England stated within their document 'Health matters: air pollution' that there is no clear evidence of a safe level of exposure below which there is no risk of adverse health effects. Reducing levels of pollution emissions associated with wood burning will therefore have health benefits to our residents.

- c) The cost to residents of any necessary changes to their heating arrangements.

Response

The Council is not banning burning. It is following the process to introduce a borough wide Smoke Control Area which will require residents to burn authorised fuels. Residents may burn unauthorised fuels providing they use an 'exempted' DEFRA approved appliance, which is approved for use for burning of the specific fuel. DEFRA has published a list of exempted appliances to assist residents to determine if their appliances can be used to burn unauthorised fuels.

If residents do not want to make changes to their heating arrangements e.g. by installing an 'exempted' appliance, which would enable them to burn solid fuels such as wood, they are able to use non-exempted appliance to burn an authorised fuel. DEFRA has published a list of approved fuels for use in a smoke control area.

Any difference in cost between authorised and unauthorised fuel has not been specifically considered. The costs differences are variable and would depend on factors such as whether the heating appliance was used as a primary or secondary source of heat, the size of the property, number of occupants, the insulation properties of the house, the type of fuel used and the type of appliance being used etc.

- d) The ability of residents to pay for such changes to their heating arrangements.

Response

If residents do not want to change their heating arrangement or do not have the ability to pay to change their heating arrangements e.g. by installing an 'exempted' appliance, which would enable them to burn solid fuels such as wood, they are able to use non-exempted appliance to burn an approved fuel.

- e) The worry that residents may feel about the effect of power cuts.

Response

Residents are still able to plan for power cuts, by having exempt appliances in which to burn authorised and non-authorised solid fuels (in line with manufacturer's instructions) or by burning authorised fuels in non-exempt appliances.

- f) The problems arising for residents who have built up substantial stocks of household coal while it was still available.

Response

Since 1st May 2022, it has been an offence under the Clean Air Act 1993 (as amended) to:

- offer controlled solid fuel (which included bituminous (house) coal) for sale by retail, without taking reasonable steps to notify potential purchasers that it is an offence to acquire that fuel for use in a smoke control area.
- sell any controlled solid fuel by retail for delivery for use in a smoke control area.
- acquire any controlled solid fuel for use in a building to which a smoke control order applies.

Residents existing stocks of house coal can only be used within a smoke control area, using an exempted appliance, approved specifically for use for burning house (bituminous) coal. The manufacturer's instructions must be followed.

- g) The negative effect on residents' mental health from being denied the pleasure of gathering wood, gaining fresh air, and exercise from gathering and chopping the wood.

Response

This has not been considered in an impact assessment.

- h) No longer having the joy of seeing grandchildren's faces lit up as they see and feel a real fire.

Response

This has not been considered in an impact assessment.

- 3.14 An anonymised copy of the full objection is included in Appendix 2.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As per the original Committee Report dated 7th March 2024, there was a financial implication however this report is purely around the consideration of the objection.
- 4.2 Any Council in Smoke Controlled Areas will receive funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from 2023 until 2025 to meet new burdens

associated with their enforcement and management as introduced by the Environment Act 2021. The Council is using this funding to secure training, develop new processes, undertake assessments of the Councils estate and cover officer time.

- 4.3 Where there are Council actions, these will be delivered within business-as-usual operations or via capital funding bids. There may also be an opportunity to apply for future additional funding to deliver local improvements and projects from external partners.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Pursuant to section 18 of the Clean Air Act 1993, and section 73 and Schedule 12 of the Environment Act 2021 the Council has the discretion to declare the whole, or any part of its area to be a smoke control area via a smoke control order.
- 5.2 Schedule 1 of the Clean Air Act 1993 sets out the procedure which the Council must follow to make a smoke control order. Before making an Order, the Council must publish in the London Gazette and once at least in each of two successive weeks in some newspaper circulating in the area to which the order will relate a notice:
- a. stating that the Council proposes to make the order, and its general effect;
 - b. specifying a place in the district of the Council where a copy of the order and of any map or plan referred to in it may be inspected by any person free of charge at all reasonable times during a period of not less than six weeks from the date of the last publication of the notice; and
 - c. stating that within that period any person who will be affected by the order may by notice in writing to the Council object to the making of the order.
- 5.3 In addition, the Council shall post and keep posted throughout the period mentioned in paragraph 5.2(b) above, copies of the notice in such number of conspicuous places within the area to which the order will relate as appear to them necessary for the purpose of bringing the proposal to make the order to the notice of persons who will be affected.
- 5.4 Schedule 1 of the Clean Air Act 1993 sets out the procedure which the Council must follow to make a smoke control order. If an objection is duly made to the Council within the six-week publication period, and is not withdrawn, the Council shall not make the order without first considering the objection. There is no requirement to provide air quality data to support the making of a Smoke Control Order.
- 5.5 Once the objection has been considered, if the delegation is approved, the order will be considered by the Secretary of State with a view to considering whether to confirm the order with or without modification.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The Smoke Control Order can be implemented fully using existing staffing resources.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 As only two additional areas of the borough will be newly covered by the new Smoke Control Order, consolidating the existing areas has minimal risks, as the main outcome would be to clarify the requirements in respect of use of appliances and burning fuels in the existing areas.

7.2 If the existing Smoke Control Orders are not consolidated, there is a risk that the current ambiguous state of some Orders, could result in incorrect advice being given to members of the public. It also takes officer time to go through the Orders each time try to make sure information given out is accurate.

7.3 As the pollutant of concern has changed since the Orders were made, the consultation required to consolidate them, provides an opportunity to review the extent of the problem, and at the same time, raise awareness of the issues around solid fuel combustion. This is a key policy in the Government's UK Air Quality Strategy and could be missed if Orders are not consolidated.

7.4 At present, combustion control is contained within several pieces of legislation and consolidating the Smoke Control Areas can in some situations provide an adequate means of control, with less bureaucracy and cost to the Council and some operators, which could be missed if the Orders are not consolidated.

7.5 There is a potential reputational risk arising from would be objectors misrepresenting or misunderstanding the important environmental aims and objectives of this initiative. This risk will be managed and mitigated through detailed engagement and liaison with colleagues in the Communications and Marketing team to ensure that accurate and up to date information is prepared for release as appropriate that reflects the importance of this scheme to air quality and health and well-being across the borough

7.6 The risks will also be monitored by the Environmental Health team and any risks will be escalated via the Directorate Risk Register.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The in-principle decision to declare a new Smoke Control Order required a period of consultation. This was undertaken between 18th September 2024 and 12th November 2024. This consultation also created the opportunity to raise awareness of Smoke Control Areas and solid fuel combustion.

8.2 To ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act regarding the notification process for revocation of existing smoke control areas and introduction of a single Smoke Control Order for the whole of the Council's administrative area the Officers undertook numerous actions, which are summarised below.

8.3 Summary of the actions taken as part of "consultation":

- Published a Public Notice in London Gazette on 18th September 2024 and 25th September 2024;
- Published a Public Notice in Wirral Globe on 18th September 2024 and 25th September 2024;
- Posted information on the Council website regarding Revocation and Implementation of the new Smoke Control Order. Frequently Asked Questions were also provided;
- Issued communications from Wirral Council in Wirral View 27th August 2024 about the processes;
- Issued communications out on Wirral Facebook page 28th August 2024 about the processes;
- Provided a copy of the public notice, maps of existing and new Smoke Control Areas and the draft order and revocation order provided for free viewing at Birkenhead Town Hall during notification period starting 18th September 2024;
- Contacted, by email, the 5 Councillors whose wards will be affected by new smoke control areas, as they are not currently within one. Informed them of the revocation / new order and provided a copy of the public notice;
- Posted Public Notices in 34 public, council-controlled locations including notice boards in parks, gardens and cemeteries and notice boards in libraries;
- Hand delivered Public Notices to 12 private sector and 1 NHS locations. Each settings agreed to display them at the time of delivery;
- Contacted a local Community Trust on 16th September 2024 and asked if they would contact their membership and disseminate copies of the public notice. They confirm they would;
- After a request from a member of the public, re-contacted a local Community Trust on 21st October 2024, and offered to attend a drop-in session, if they could help facilitate this. No response to this request was received.

8.4 The Council's Media and Marketing sections released communications in Wirral View, the Wirral Globe, and on the Council's Facebook page, to raise public awareness.

8.5 The Council has been running a Defra funded 'Breathe Better' campaign during 2023/2024, which focussed on domestic burning and provided targeted advice to Wirral residents on how to burn better.

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. An Equality Impact Assessment, named EIA Smoke Control Areas, has been undertaken and can be found at: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>. It has been reviewed and is still valid for this report.

9.2 There will be no impact on most residents or groups as this is a consolidation of the legal controls and requirements required to be taken in those areas with existing Smoke Control Orders into one single order.

- 9.3 However, there could be a negative impact for residents suffering fuel poverty, specifically those who are driven to “foraging” for wood in parks and gardens to burn in their properties for heat. Foraged fuels are unsuitable for burning in a domestic property and there is a risk to the residents’ health from poor indoor air quality, carbon monoxide poisoning and fire. Those affected most by poor air quality are people with existing medical conditions, the young and the elderly and so these groups will receive the greatest positive benefit.
- 9.4 Authorised solid fuels are designed to be more efficient when burnt so are cheaper than using coal and therefore there will not be negative financial impact for most residents. Residents will also be signposted to government and charitable organisations for advice regarding fuel poverty as part of the public consultation and related material.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The declaration of a new Smoke Control Area will allow for more efficient enforcement of the Clean Air Act 1993 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) by Council officers. This includes the enforcement of the prohibition of emissions of smoke from properties and the prohibition of sales of non-authorized fuels in the Smoke Control Area’s.
- 10.2 The declaration of a new Smoke Control Order requires a period of consultation, which created the opportunity to raise awareness of Smoke Control Areas and solid fuel combustion. It is hoped that this triggered behaviour changes and residents will choose to use smokeless fuels in their domestic burners.
- 10.3 These actions will reduce the emissions of particulate matter into the atmosphere and improve the overall air quality of Wirral.
- 10.4 Emissions such as Carbon Dioxide, Carbon Monoxide and Nitrogen Oxides arise from wood burning and contribute to global warming. Any reduction in greenhouse gases will support the target of Cool Wirral for the borough to be net zero carbon by 2041.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 In the UK, the single biggest source of particulate matter air pollution (PM2.5) is from domestic burning. This makes it a significant risk to public health. Everyone is at risk from particulate matter air pollution, but people are more vulnerable if they have COPD, asthma or other lung conditions or are elderly or a child. Particulate matter air pollution can cause coughs, dizziness, inflamed airways and shortness of breath. It increases the risk of pneumonia, COPD and lung cancer, as well as heart disease and stroke, leading to early death. It can also impact pregnancy and the development of children’s lungs. The declaration of a new Smoke Control Area, covering the whole of Wirral’s administrative area, will therefore have positive public health impact thus reduce the burden on the NHS, improving health and reducing the health inequity gap on the borough.

Air Quality Manager
Email: victoriachadderton@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

1. Draft Smoke Control Order.
2. Anonymised copy of the objection received.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. The Clean Air Act 1993, Section 18 and Schedule 5
2. The Environment Act 2021, Section 73 and Schedule 12
3. Guidance to local authorities on the application of smoke control areas to moored vessels under the Environment Act 2021.
4. Smoke Control Area Enforcement by Local Authorities in England: Statutory Guidance.
5. Wirral Air Quality Strategy, 2024 – 2028, A four-year vision to improve air quality in Wirral.
6. The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
7. Chief Medical Officers Annual Report 2022. Air Quality.
8. National Air Quality Strategy 2019.
9. The Wirral Working Together Plan 2023-2027.
10. WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines.
11. Research to understand burning in UK homes and gardens - AQ1017.
12. The National Air Quality Strategy: framework for local authority delivery.
13. Emissions of air pollutants in the UK – Particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) - GOV.UK.
14. Public Health England. Health matters: air pollution. 14 November 2018.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee in accordance with Section 6.2(i)(vi) of its Terms of Reference, The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for the Council's role and functions: (i) for trading standards and environmental health, including but not limited to: (vi) air pollution control;

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee	7 th March 2024

Appendix 1 – Draft Smoke Control Order

WIRRAL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SMOKE CONTROL ORDER 2024

CLEAN AIR ACT 1993, SECTION 18

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council (“the Council”) of PO Box 290, Brighton Street, Wallasey, CH27 9FQ in the exercise of its powers under Section 18 of the Clean Air Act 1993 (“the Act”) hereby make the following Order:

1. This Order may be cited as the Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council Smoke Control Order 2024. It will come into operation on **xx xxxxxx** 2024.
2. The Council declares the whole of its district to be a Smoke Control Area (“the Smoke Control Area”). The extent of the Smoke Control Area is shown on the plan annexed at Schedule 1 to this Order.
3. All of the existing Smoke Control Orders listed in Schedule 2 and any others referring to areas within the administrative area of the Council are hereby revoked, insofar as they apply to Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, on the day that this Order comes into operation.
4. In the whole of the Smoke Control Area created by this Order, the operation of Section 19A and Schedule 1A of the Clean Air Act 1993 (Penalty for emission of smoke in smoke control area) shall be applicable to all buildings.
5. Other than exemptions made by the Secretary of State under Section 19C and Section 19D of the Act, there are no buildings or classes of buildings or fireplaces or classes of fireplaces in the Smoke Control Area that are exempt from the operation of Section 19A and Schedule 1A of the Act.

Dated this day **xx** of **xxxxxx** 2024.

The COMMON SEAL of
WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL
was hereunto affixed in the presence of:

Authorised Officer

Appendix 2 - Anonymised copy of the objection received.

Objection

I am writing to object to the proposed Smoke Control Order as propounded in the notice signed by Paul Satoor, Chief Executive of Wirral Borough Council, and dated 9 September 2024.

The key effect of the proposed Smoke Control Order would be to bring under smoke control regulations circa 700 dwellings in rural parts of Wirral: Raby Mere, Thornton Hough, Raby, Brimstage and Storeton.

Grounds for my objection

4. No data demonstrating the need for the change

The Council has not provided any air quality data to support this change. It is therefore clear to me that this is: i) a tidying up exercise, ii) following the example set, and being set, by many Councils across the country and iii) an outcome of the Environment Act 2021 – to be seen to be taking action. There is no quantitative or qualitative evidence to support the new restrictions.

5. Badly designed and badly executed consultation process

Notices were, I am told, placed in the Wirral Globe, the only local newspaper on Wirral. However, this is not delivered to the affected residents.

For the 290 dwellings (40% of the total affected) in Raby Mere, the Council deemed it sufficient to send one notice to Bromborough Golf Club (which is adjacent to Raby Mere). However, this is not on public display; I was told, on enquiring (on Wednesday 2nd October 2024) that it is displayed in the locker room. Not being a member, I have not been able to verify this. The Council told me that notices had been sent to other locations. On my tour of inspection on 2nd October, I found the following:

- nothing on show at the Londis shop at Clatterbridge
- nothing on show at Claremont Farm, Clatterbridge
- bar staff at the Seven Stars in Thornton Hough had received the notice but it was not on display
- bar staff at the Wheatsheaf in Raby knew nothing about a notice
- two members of staff on Reception at the Thornton Hall Hotel knew nothing about the notice

I asked the Council to write to all 700 dwellings but the Council refused.

The Council could easily have put some form of advance warning notice in the Electoral Register update letter sent a few weeks before the official consultation timetable came into force.

Belatedly (at 21 October) and under some pressure from me and a local Councillor, the Council is trying to involve the Thornton Hough Community Trust in holding some form of “drop-in” session. Such a sessions should have been organised from the outset utilising one of the three halls in Thornton Hough for concerned residents to speak to informed Council officials to:

- a. understand the Council’s rationale for the proposed changes

- b. assimilate the implications of the proposed new Smoke Control arrangements in their particular circumstances
- c. understand reasons for the timescale; eg residents may hold substantial stocks of household coal
- d. be given advice as to alternatives to open fires etc and the fuels that can be used in future
- e. understand on what grounds they can object and how such objections will be processed

At the time of writing, I am not aware of any such sessions being arranged.

I have been closely involved with local elections for the past 20 years. Smoke control/air quality has never been an issue. Given this democratic deficit, it was incumbent on Council officials to effectively involve local residents and to explain why changes would bring perceptible benefits; this they have not done.

3. No Impact Assessment

I am concerned that no proper impact assessment has been made for this initiative. Has the Council considered the following issues?

- i) Number of dwellings which will be affected
- j) By how much will the new regulations change the air quality in the affected area? Will such a change be discernible to residents?
- k) The cost to residents of any necessary changes to their heating arrangements
- l) The ability of residents to pay for such changes (capital spending and running costs) especially given the very high costs of electricity and gas compared to a few years ago; now the 10% increase to the Energy Price Cap and the widespread withdrawal of the Winter Fuel Allowance
- m) The worry that residents may feel about the effect of power cuts. After a sequence of power cuts some years ago, I was told by Scottish Power that I live in a rural area and should expect power cuts from time to time. Now we are told to expect more severe weather events as a result of climate change; these will surely lead to more frequent power cuts. At a national level, I think that we are increasingly vulnerable to power outages. At one time last winter, the UK consumed 47GW and produced only 40GW so we were heavily reliant on other countries to keep going. Since then we have lost our last remaining coal-fired power station and nuclear capacity is trending downwards. I would like to make my own arrangements for survival in the traditional way – open fire and candles
- n) The problems arising for residents who have built up substantial stocks of household coal while it was still available
- o) The negative effect on residents mental health being denied the simple pleasure of gathering wood from their gardens and from verges on rural lanes in their neighbourhood, gaining fresh air and exercise; then more exercise from cutting and storing wood; and lighting a fire, tending it and reading a book before its comforting warmth and lively presence
- p) No longer having the joy of seeing grandchildren's faces lit up as they see and feel a real fire – something experienced by humans for thousands of years

Conclusion

Having considered the points which I have made above, I trust that the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee will refuse the proposed Smoke Control Order. Perhaps then Wirral Borough Council will suspend its plans regarding smoke control orders and, if need be, start a new process to seriously engage with local residents.



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23rd January 2025

REPORT TITLE:	UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF COMMUNAL GRAVES IN WIRRAL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides this Committee with an update on the actions that have been taken to date to acknowledge and recognise the deeply sensitive and historic issue which led to the practice of stillborn babies being buried in communal graves, which was once common practice across the country. The report also sets out proposed future actions to support bereaved families.

This report aligns with the Council Plan 'Wirral Working Together' for 2023-2027: working together to create a more efficient, effective, and accessible council.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to note and endorse the content of this report and highlight any areas requiring further clarification or action.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council, having been made aware of the burial of still born babies in communal graves within Wirral Cemeteries, has taken a number of steps to recognise and work with affected families to acknowledge this historic practice.
- 1.2 This report sets out the actions that the Council has taken to acknowledge this historical practice and to support families by: -
- Assisting families to find the graves of their still born baby
 - Holding services of remembrance; and
 - Providing a memorial to commemorate all babies lost.
- 1.3 This report also sets out the proposed future actions to assist bereaved families.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options were considered as having been aware of this there is a compelling need to recognise this historic practice and to take steps to acknowledge it and work with bereaved families.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council first became aware of this issue in November 2022, following a BBC North West news feature which highlighted a parent's efforts to locate her still born daughters grave in Manchester. This led to a growing number of requests to the Council for help from Wirral families wishing to locate their stillborn babies' graves.
- 3.2 Subsequent investigation into this issue highlighted that between 1950s and 1970s, it was widely believed by medical professionals and society that the best course of action for mothers after the loss of a baby was for them to 'move on' by not participating in the funeral. Hospitals would typically arrange for the burial of stillborn babies in communal graves, often without informing parents. This was thought at the time to help the mother recover more quickly from their loss.
- 3.3 Burials in communal graves was once a common practice, not just in Wirral but nationally. This would typically occur when families either did not have an existing family grave or when they were unable to purchase a grave themselves. A communal grave is one for which the 'Exclusive Right of Burial' is retained by the burial authority, allowing unrelated individuals to be buried in the same grave. Each burial in a communal grave was performed with respect with the grave being closed after each interment.
- 3.4 While some communal graves were left unmarked others had a communal headstone erected on the grave which allowed parents to have the name of

their baby inscribed on the memorial if they wished to do so. Parents were also able to place small tributes on the grave in memory of the stillborn babies buried there.

- 3.5 Wirral Council manages eight cemeteries, records indicate that 1,287 still born babies were interred in unmarked communal graves in four of these cemeteries between 1935 and 1981; providing an indication of the extent of the issue of parents not being informed of their still born babies grave location:
- Bebington Cemetery – 1 interment in 1962;
 - Frankby Cemetery – 16 Interments between 1973 and 1981;
 - Landican Cemetery – 1,063 interments between 1935 and 1971; and
 - Plymyard Cemetery – 207 interments between 1940 and 1976
- 3.6 As previously stated, it is recognised that some families were not informed of the burial of their stillborn babies or the location of their babies' grave by the relevant Hospital. While this was thought best at the time by medical professionals, today it is accepted that knowing the location of loved one graves is an important part of the grieving process. Equally the importance of providing parents with choices and support in these difficult moments is better understood.

Actions taken to date

- 3.7 The Council, having been made aware of these historic practices, has sought to work with the bereaved families in a number of ways.
- 3.8 The Cemetery Service arranged a Baby Memorial Service, for bereaved families effected, held at Landican Cemetery Chapel on Saturday 11 February 2023. Several staff, offering their recognition and support for these families, volunteered their time to support this service. This memorial service was organised in partnership with a local celebrant and the Bereavement Midwife from Arrowe Park Hospital. The service was also webcast, for those not able to attend in person. The service was well attended with positive comments received from the bereaved families affected.
- 3.9 Shortly after the service, work commenced on providing two memorials to commemorate all babies lost. These were placed in Landican Cemetery and Wallasey Cemetery. This was done to provide a physical memorial and focal point for the bereaved families.
- 3.10 The Baby Memorial Service, held in February 2023, also led to bereaved families seeking answers to how these burials were undertaken in the past. Cemetery staff held a number of meetings with families. Whilst most burials within communal graves took place before the Council was created, in April 1974, and before many current staff were born, the service was able to provide assurances to the families using their knowledge of grave preparation and interment. This included assurances that communal graves would have been filled in after each interment and not left open. Communal graves would only have been opened to prepare for a further interment, on the morning of the burial and covered with a board until the time of the burial. Following the burial

the grave would have been back filled until the next time it was required for burial.

- 3.11 Cemetery staff at Landican Cemetery also assist bereaved families in locating the graves of their loved ones within Wirral Cemeteries. As with a burial in a private grave, burial records were kept for all burials in communal graves, allowing people to trace the resting places of their loved ones over the years. Council staff at the Landican Cemetery Office assist families by undertaking searches in both the Burial Register and Graves Register to provide information and locate the grave that their baby was buried in.
- 3.12 Copies of Wirral Councils Burial Registers are also provided on microfilm and are available from the Archive Service and Birkenhead Central Library, allowing families to search the records themselves. Grave Registers, which provide details of the birth parents and their address, however, are not publicly available for inspection.
- 3.13 On Monday 13 November 2023 a second Baby Memorial Service was held, including the unveiling of a dedicated memorial at Landican Cemetery. This was attended by the then Mayor of Wirral, Councillor Jerry Williams. The memorial service was held within the 'Forget-me-not Baby Garden' at Landican Cemetery, an area of the cemetery set aside in recognition of all babies buried and cremated.

Proposed next steps

- 3.14 In September 2024 Oldham Council launched, an on-line version of its Burial Register. In doing so it also recognised the historic practice of burying still born babies in communal graves. The on-line publication of these records has resulted in a call for the Council to also to make Burial Register and Grave Registers more publicly accessible.
- 3.15 The service is currently seeking quotes from its current cemetery IT suppliers to provide a similar on-line record to Oldham Council, based upon the Burial Register. Once quotes are received the service will seek the additional funds and resources to digitise records and provide these on-line in a similar way to Oldham Council
- 3.16 It is not considered that there is a sound legal basis to publish the Graves Register. This is not currently publicly available. Publication of this information could cause distress to the families of still born babies by disclosing the names and addresses of parents included in the Graves Register. This is information that parents may not wish to be placed in the public domain, and which they may not be aware are recorded in the Graves Register due to way interments were arranged by Hospitals at that time.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The costs associated with digitising records and providing these on-line are expected to exceed the current budget allocation, within the service, for its IT

Support. Once quotes are received additional funding would need to be identified and agreed.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Cemeteries across the UK adhere to strict regulations to ensure that all burials including those of stillborn child are conducted with dignity and respect. The Burial Act 1852 and the Cemeteries Clauses Act 1847 were repealed and replaced with Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO) which sets the general parameters under which the Council's Cemeteries operate today.
- 5.2 LACO empowers the Council to maintain plans showing and allocating distinctive numbers to all graves in which burials are made and maintain records of the burials made in any grave.
- 5.3 In relation to computerised records, Article 11 of LACO was amended by The Local Authorities Cemeteries (Amendment) Order 1986 to allow for the "maintenance of registers on computer and provides that a burial authority shall maintain a register of all burials in a cemetery in a book or books provided for the purpose, or in a computer. The pages in which entries are to be made shall include columns headed:
- Number;
 - Date of Burial;
 - Deceased name in full;
 - Age;
 - Address;
 - Grave or Vault number;
 - Other particulars; and
 - Signature of person directing or making entry
- 5.4. LACO (as amended) provides that where the register of burials is maintained in a computer the burial shall be entered in the computer so as to ensure that any document produced by the computer in relation to that burial contains the same information as would have been recorded if the burial had been entered in a book. It provides that the register of burial shall at all reasonable times be available for consultation by any person free of charge. This will guide any future digitisation of burial records.
- 5.5 The issue of 'public documents' such as Burial Registers and Grave Registers and the relationship to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a complex one. The definition of a public document and access to them is contained within *Sturla v Freccia* (1880). This case related to hearsay and the use of documents used as evidence. The case makes clear the document in question must be "public" in three senses. First, the document must be made by a public officer, i.e. an officer acting under a public duty when creating the document. Secondly, the document must be public in the sense of it being created for an official, as opposed to a private purpose. Thirdly, it must be a public document in the sense of its purpose; it must be made for the purpose of the public making use of it. "Public" does not mean the whole world. It

means all those who would have a legitimate interest in the matter that is recorded in the document.

5.6 Legitimate Interest in relation to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) places a responsibility on the Council to protect an individual's interests. GDPR sets out the three elements that must be proved to qualify as 'legitimate interest' in that a person needs to:

1. Identify a legitimate interest;
2. Show that the processing is necessary to achieve it; and
3. Balance it against the individuals' rights and freedoms.

Whilst a legitimate interest can be a person own interest, or the interests of third parties which can include broader societal benefits, the processing of the information must be necessary. If it can reasonably achieve the same result in another less intrusive way, legitimate interest will not apply.

5.7 The merits of making the contents of Grave Registers publicly accessible via an on-line system has been considered but is not recommended, for the following reasons: -

- Grave Registers contain person details of potentially living persons in the form of grave ownership or parents of other children buried in a communal grave. Therefore, the legitimate interest test, contained within GDPR applies.
- Whilst a legitimate interest to a public document can be a person's own interest, or the interests of third parties which can include broader societal benefits, the processing of the information must be necessary. As the information allowing an interested person to search for the burial location of a deceased person can reasonably be found via the Burial Register, the same result is able to be achieved in another less intrusive way than that of a Grave Register and therefore a legitimate interest to have access to the information contained within a Grave Register will not apply.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 ICT: There are no ICT implications arising directly from this report, However, these will need to be considered as part of considerations for future options including the provision of burial registers online.

6.2 Staffing: There are no staff implications arising directly from this report. However, as with ICT implications, these will need to be considered as a part of any future considerations.

6.3 Assets: There are no asset implications arising directly from this report. However, as with Staffing implications, these will need to be considered as a part of future considerations.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The subject of this report is a deeply sensitive issue which may cause distress to families who are already grieving, regardless of how much time has

passed. A failure to address these issues in both a timely and sensitive way carries a reputational risk for the Council.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The service has actively engaged with families and groups to agree and take forward the actions contained within this report.

8.2 It is recognised that further on-going engagement with families and other key stakeholders will need continue to ensure that future actions are understood and supported.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The 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.

9.2 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct environment and climate implications arising from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no community wealth implications arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR:

Lisa Parkes
Cemeteries and Crematorium Senior Manager
lisaparkes@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Not applicable

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee in accordance with Section G of its Terms of Reference, "in relation to bereavement services and support to the Coroner's service."

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- ICCM Guiding Principles for Burial and Cremation
- ICCM Statement – Communal Graves 17th October 2024
- ICCM policy and Guidance for Baby and Infant Funerals (September 2015)
- Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (as amended).

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 23 JANUARY 2025

REPORT TITLE:	EXPLORING COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARY MODELS
REPORT OF:	PAUL KELLY, REGIONAL CO-DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARIES PEER NETWORK

REPORT SUMMARY

At the meeting of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee on Thursday 24th October 2024, it was agreed to invite Mr Paul Kelly, the Regional Co-Director for the Community Managed Libraries Peer Network (CMLNPN), to a future meeting of the committee.

This report sets out the work of the Community Managed Libraries Peer Network. The presentation on behalf of the Regional Co-Director is attached at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to note and comment on the presentation by the Community Managed Libraries Peer Network.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The presentation supplied by CMLNPN will inform the Committee on the mission of and work undertaken by CMLNPN. Members may wish to comment on or make suggestions to add to the work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options have been considered as Members of the Committee requested that CMLNPN be invited to present their work to the Committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Community Managed Libraries National Peer Network is an independent charity, funded by the National Lottery, covering England and Wales. The CMLNPN helps community managed libraries to run effectively by sharing ideas, learning, experiences and inspiration. There are 542 community managed libraries currently open which makes up around 19% of the total library provision.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There are no risks arising from this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is committed to engagement and consultation with Third Sector organisations.

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 from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environment and climate implications arising from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no community wealth implications arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Daphne Courtenage**
Principal Democratic Services Officer
telephone: 0151 691 8545
email: daphnecourtenage@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Exploring Community Managed Library Models presentation

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of meeting of Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee, Thursday 24th October 2024.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee in accordance with Section E of its Terms of Reference, “for delivery of the authority’s library and museums services, including but not limited to art galleries, historic buildings and their gardens and the functions of the Council regarding public records”.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee	Thursday 24 October 2024

This page is intentionally left blank



**Community Libraries
Network**

EXPLORING COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARY MODELS

MISSION OF CMLNPN

The Community Managed Libraries National Peer Network helps community managed libraries (CMLs) to run effectively and successfully by sharing ideas, learning, experiences and inspiration.

Our Vision

To help community managed libraries thrive in their communities.

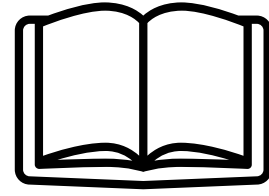
We want community managed libraries to

- be aware of, and able to grasp opportunities such as funding and advice
- provide mutual support and learning
- operate as effectively as possible, to make them sustainable in the long term

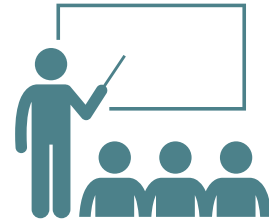
What we do

- help community managed libraries to learn from each other, exchange information and good practice
- collaborate to run learning and networking events
- create and share resources of benefit to community managed libraries
- provide a voice to raise issues that matter to community managed libraries
- draw on learning and good working practices from other peer networks





LIBRARIES STRATEGY



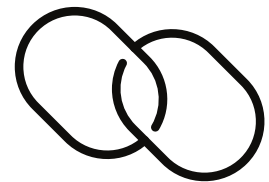
TRAINING & GUIDANCE



LEADING COMMUNITY SPACES



AWARDS PROGRAMME



COMMUNITY HUB DEVELOPMENT



PEER SUPPORT

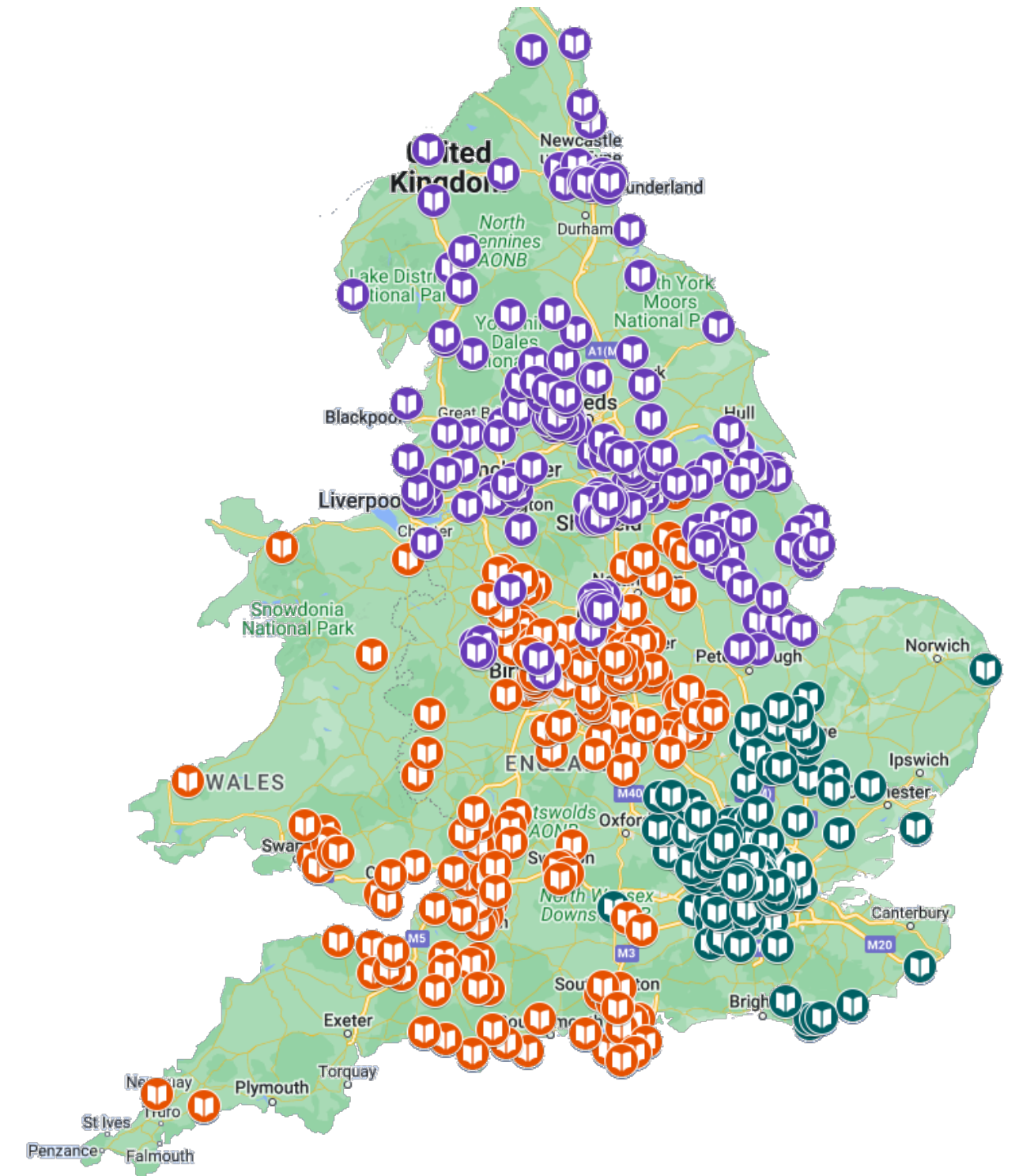
THE SCALE OF THE NETWORK

642
COMMUNITY
LIBRARIES

EXPERIENCE 

KNOWLEDGE 

Power 



NATIONAL CONTEXT

20K

VOLUNTEERS

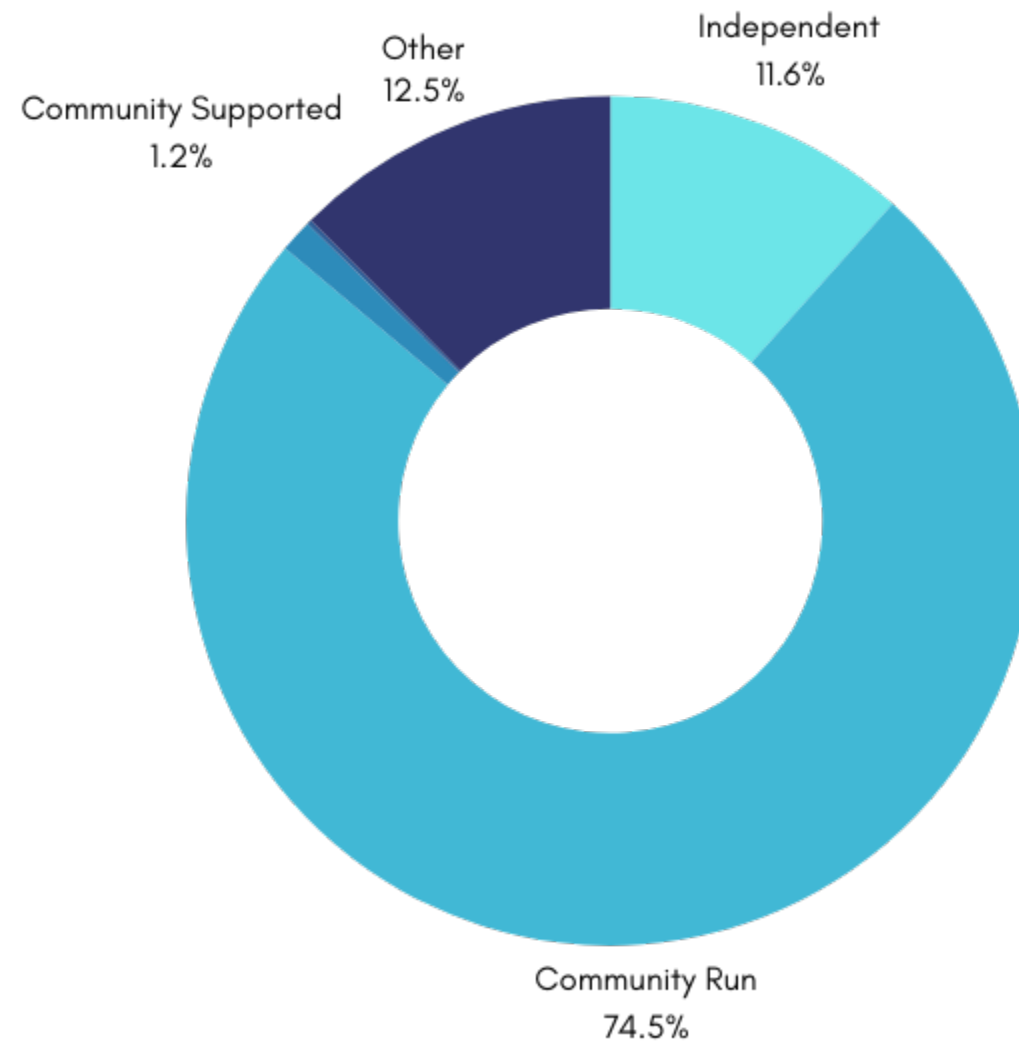
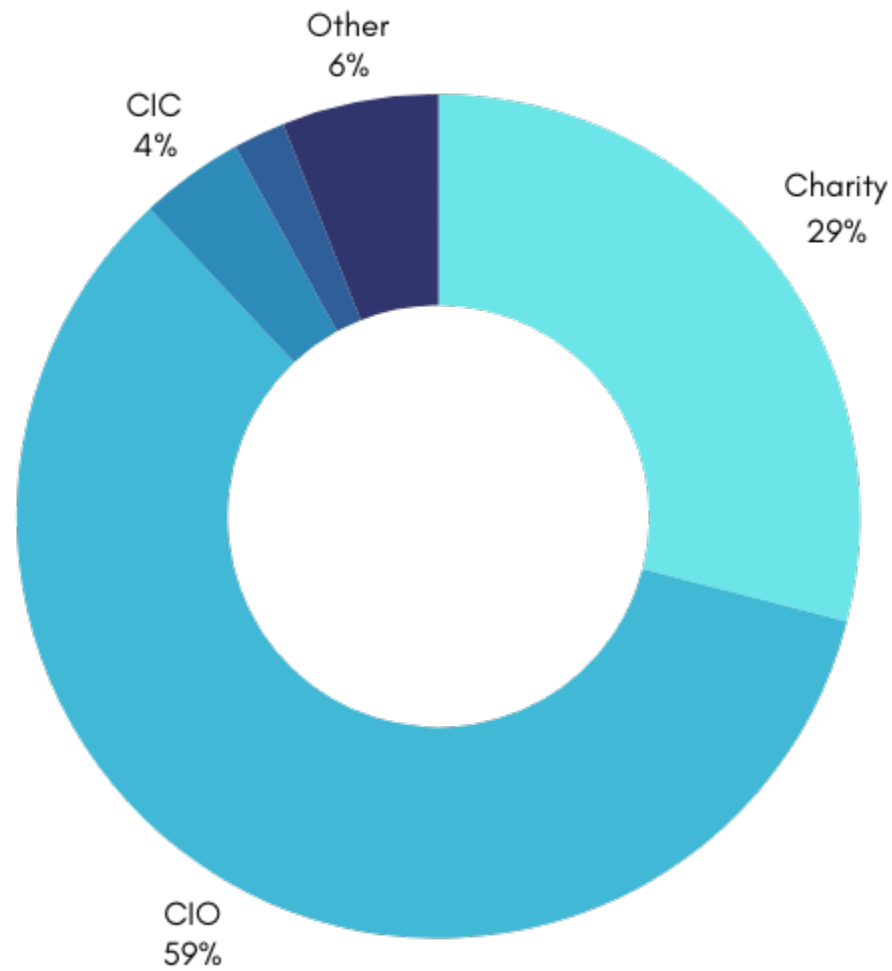
467

PAID STAFF



97% VOLUNTEER POWERED

Page 65



MEMBERSHIP SCHEM



By becoming a member of the Community Libraries Network, you are not only supporting your own organisation, you are supporting community libraries across England & Wales to grow and thrive.

COMMUNITY HUB DEVELOPMENT

Develop activities, services and income streams to ensure sustainability & resilience

- Diversifying into Community Hubs
- Self-generating income from multiple sources whether that be trusts & grants, trading income corporate & individual giving, council contracts etc.
- This should always be done in consultation with local communities.



RECOGNITION

Shout about your successes and achievements!

Libraries are not always the best at celebrating the great work that they do.

Be vocal about your achievements both individually and collectively, as displaying your positive impact is beneficial for all partners involved in delivering community focussed library services.



JESMOND COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Model: Independent Community Library

Ownership : The building is leased by the Friends of Jesmond Library from Newcastle City Council

Location : Jesmond Library, St George's Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 2DL

Contact information : chrisclarkenewbrough@gmail.com / enquiries@jesmondlibrary.org

Website : www.jesmondlibrary.org

Jesmond Library is open for **three days a week** as a normal public library, with just over **10,000 books** , newspapers and a seating area, a popular children's area, coffee machine, People's Network public access computers, a photocopier and two well-used community meeting rooms. Room bookings and events organised in the community rooms and main library space take place both during normal library hours, and usually in the evenings and on the other four days a week as well. No paid staff are employed; we currently have about **85 volunteers** .

The library operates independently from the local authority, from which it receives no ongoing revenue funding, and so is not part of the statutory library network. Nevertheless, the Friends have had significant advice and help from a number of council officers and councillors and choose to pay for the council to maintain various building maintenance services.

When the library re-opened, the council donated most of the book stock and furniture to us. The Friends now spend about **£4,000 a year on purchasing new (and some second hand) books** , as recommended by a book buying group of library users.

The Friends cover normal running costs from a variety of sources, with the largest contributions coming from regular voluntary monthly or annual donations from supporters, room hire, and events organised by volunteers. Extra fundraising, such as grants and special appeals, is used to fund capital improvements to the building. The Friends hold the building on a **20 year lease** from the council. The council is responsible for keeping the roof in good repair, but otherwise the friends are responsible for all building maintenance, repairs and running costs.



DENTON WEST END COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Model: Independent Community Library

Ownership : The building was purchased from the council in 2013

Location : Windsor Road, Dane Bank, Denton M34 2HB

Contact information : dweclibrary@gmail.com

Website : www.friendsofdenton-westendlibrary.co.uk

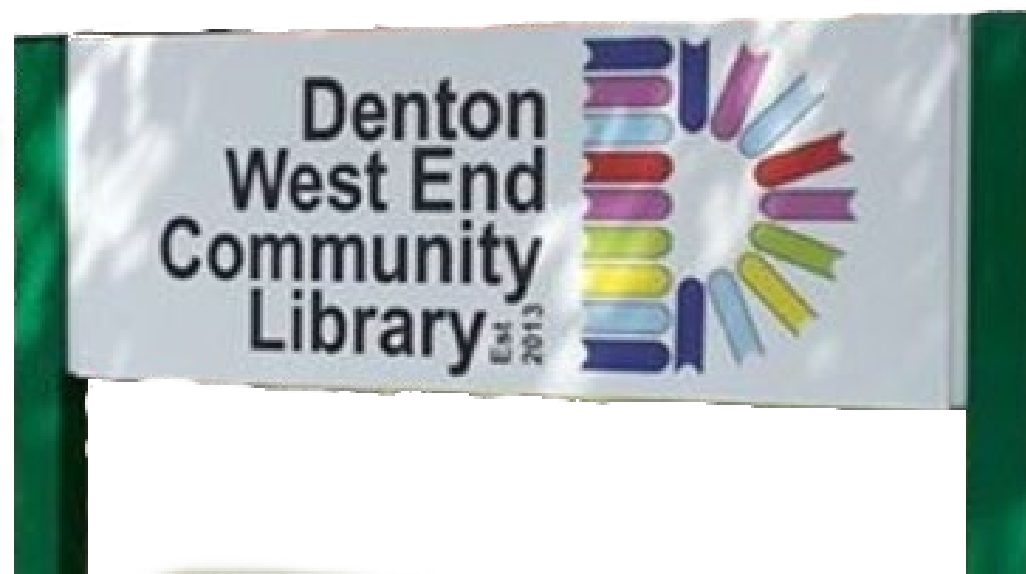
They generate **£19,000 a year** to support running costs, through a combination of grants and donations.

£12,500 a year is raised through trading activities including:

- Book Sales
- Events
- Tuck Shop
- Room Hire
- Clubs and Craft activities
- Raffles

Denton West End Community Library is a vibrant **Community Hub** offering a range of activities and services to their community:

- **Connect with your community:** Join our lively choir, knit and natter group, or discover new hobbies with our regular arts and crafts activities.
- **Keep fit and healthy:** Drop in to a yoga session, relax at a sound bath or join a family fitness session
- **Stay informed and entertained:** Attend community cinema nights, participate in engaging workshops, and enjoy rhyme time for little ones.
- **Get things done:** Access computers, printing, and photocopying services for all your needs.



OTHER CML CASE STUDIES...

You can find other case studies exploring different models of Community Managed Libraries on our website

Hanwell Community Library

www.communitylibrariesnetwork.org/case-study/hanwell-community-library

Werrington Community Managed Library Wellbeing Centre

www.communitylibrariesnetwork.org/case-study/werrington-community-managed-library-wellbeing-centre

Community Hubs

Earlsdon Carnegie Community Library

www.communitylibrariesnetwork.org/case-study/community-hub-development-earlsdon-carnegie-community-library

Upper Norwood Library Hub

www.communitylibrariesnetwork.org/case-study/community-hub-development-upper-norwood-library-hub

CONTACTING US...

Email: info@communitylibrariesnetwork.org

Network Manager: chris.neath@communitylibrariesnetwork.org

RNC (North & N. Midlands): paul.kelly@communitylibrariesnetwork.org

RNC (South West, West Midlands, East Midlands & Wales):
jane.swindall@communitylibrariesnetwork.org

Website: www.communitylibrariesnetwork.org

Blog: <https://communitylibrariesnetwork.wordpress.com>

Twitter/X : @CommunityLibs

You can follow the Community Libraries Network on Eventbrite for future meetings & workshops: <https://bit.ly/3gbZklz>



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23 January 2025

REPORT TITLE:	2025-26 BUDGET REPORT UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the budgets within the remit of the Committee in respect of forthcoming pressures and proposed savings that are being considered within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

It is also for the Committee to consider feedback and outcomes from the Budget Oversight Panels (BOPs) which have been held in recent months. The Panels enabled officer and member liaison on proposed budget options, to facilitate discussion and allow direction to be obtained on further analysis required. The Panels also provided an opportunity for alternative proposals to be considered.

The Policy and Service Committees are responsible for those services being delivered under their operational headings within their annual budget envelope. 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.

The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year and set a Medium-Term Financial Plan which considers the future pressures and savings options that will be taken forward to result in a balanced budget position.

The Council faces a severe budget challenge to identify savings required to set a balanced budget for next financial year, largely due to increased demand and costs for social care services, compounded by the previous significant reductions in Government funding and uncertainty around the future financial settlements.

Unless significant, deliverable cost reductions are identified and approved, the Council will not meet its statutory obligation to set a legal and balanced budget without a significant increase in funding.

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

The appendices to this report are exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the indicative pressures and proposed savings detailed in Appendix 1 and 2.
2. Agree the Budget Oversight Panel feedback and outcomes, as detailed in Appendix 3.

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. This report highlights the external challenges impacting the 2025/26 budget setting process and proposes options to address the challenges faced.
- 1.2 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 setting of a legal budget is a statutory requirement and therefore no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. To do this effectively requires engagement with staff, elected members and residents along with other stakeholders. Previous reports to the Committee have highlighted the external challenges that are impacting on the 2025/26 budget setting process and have highlighted the extent of the financial challenge faced. This report presents the culmination of the work undertaken to present options for budget formulation and to ensure the necessary preparations to facilitate a budget recommendation to Council on 24 February 2025.
- 3.2 The Policy & Resources Committee is responsible for co-ordinating processes for the development of the Budget and Policy Framework, together with decision-making on cross-cutting policies not part of the Policy Framework. The Policy and Service Committees are responsible for those services being delivered under their operational headings within their annual budget envelope. 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.

- 3.3 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has met regularly to discuss the budget setting process, budget proposals, the budget gap that the Council faces and the associated uncertainty on funding. Member engagement in the process has taken place through Budget Workshops along with the presentation of Committee reports.
- 3.4 The Budget Oversight Panels were convened to enable officer and member liaison on various budget matters, and to facilitate discussion and allow direction to be obtained on further analysis required. The Budget Oversight Panels also provided an opportunity for alternative savings proposals to be considered.
- 3.5 The outcomes of these Panels are to be reported to meetings of those committees and to the Policy & Resources Committee as part of the decision-making process that facilitates a budget proposal to Full Council.
- 3.6 Appendix 3 to this report details the feedback and outcomes from this Committee's Budget Oversight Panel.
- 3.7 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 6 November 2024, a potential budget gap of £36m for 2025/26 was presented. Members will be aware that the budget gap is an ever-moving target due to a number of factors; these include:
 - Ongoing Government announcements of funding, including specifically the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2025/26
 - A process of challenge and refinement within the Council to ensure that the proposals are evidence based. Addition of new pressures that continue to materialise as further local and national evidence comes to light.
 - The continuing refinement of budget assumptions including inflation.
 - The development and refinement of budget options.
- 3.8 As a result of these factors, the budget forecast presented to P&R in November 2024 was updated and a more robust position made available. An accurate appraisal was not possible at the time as the details of the financial settlement for Local Authorities was not received until late December. Initial analysis of the proposed settlement have been discussed with Policy & Resources Committee Finance Working Group.
- 3.9 Following budget challenge sessions with Directors and a review of the Q2 budget monitoring information, a position around the current and future pressures has been ascertained. This represents the best available information at this point in time and forms the baseline for the pressures within the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for current and future years.
- 3.10 This information will be updated periodically as a significant element of the pressures is linked to inflation. Assumptions have been made that inflation will rise slightly between now and the 25/26 financial year and that this will be reflected in pay and contract negotiations for 25/26.
- 3.11 Demographic changes have been incorporated within the pressure figures based on the current trend data and the available datasets.

- 3.12 An assessment of the in-year budget variances has necessitated the inclusion of pressures to negate existing income targets and some additional funding for service pressures. These amounts have been minimised in recognition of previously agreed savings which are still to be delivered.
- 3.13 The impact of all these changes will be considered, along with feedback from the consultation process and the budget proposals developed through the Service Committee and Policy & Resources Committee (P&R) Budget Oversight Panel approach to present a robust position on financial matters to be considered in formulating a budget proposal to Full Council.
- 3.14 Policy & Resources Committee budget recommendations will be proposed in February 2025 in respect of the agreement of the annual Budget, setting of the council tax requirement and related matters to the Council, which will be debated by Full Council and voted upon by a simple majority.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report is part of a programme of activity to ensure that a fully balanced, legal budget can be recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee to Full Council at its meeting of 24 February 2025.
- 4.2 The programme to develop a robust budget position, of which this report is a part, will support the Council in demonstrating compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code, specifically in relation to Section 4 of the FM Code which refers to the Annual Budget.
- 4.3 The FM Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes used satisfy the principles of good financial management, based on the following six principles:
- Organisational Leadership – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into organisation culture.
 - Accountability – based on Medium-Term Financial Planning, which derives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
 - Financial management - undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer actions and elected member decision making.
 - Professional standards - Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
 - Assurance - sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool and are mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, Internal Audit and inspection.
 - Sustainability: issues around sustainability of local services are at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.
- 4.4 Delivering financial sustainability is vitally important for the Council and the budget options presented have been drawn up with this in mind, consideration is given to areas of discretionary expenditure that could be curtailed along with demonstrating

savings that can be delivered from statutory components of the Council.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 5.2 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 5.3 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no additional resource requirements directly from this report, however the implications for the proposals included within the 2025/26 budget and MTFP will be assessed at the time of implementation. For budget proposals that may result in reductions to the workforce, the Council will need to consult with trade unions and relevant staff groups as required and in accordance with section 188(1A) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act (TULRCA) 1992). Statutory notices may also be required.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's ability to close the funding gap is highly dependent on the accuracy of assumptions used for Government funding and levies from other bodies, as well as

demand estimates for Council services. As the Local Government Finance Settlement only covers one year, the uncertainty around future funding over the MTFP period remains high.

- 7.2 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget is dependent on a proactive approach due to estimated figures being provided in the calculation for the budget, albeit the best estimates available at the time, plus any amount of internal and external factors that could impact on the budget position in year. Examples of which are new legislation, increased demand, loss of income, increased funding, decreased funding, inability to recruit to posts, etc.
- 7.3 A robust monitoring and management process for the budget is in place. If at any time during the year an adverse position is forecast, remedial action must be agreed and implemented immediately to ensure the budget can be brought back to balanced position.
- 7.4 Failure to achieve a balanced budget would lead to the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice and potential ministerial intervention under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Where required, statutory budget consultation will commence. This will take place in January 2025 and feedback will be taken into consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee when recommending a budget to Full Council at its meeting of 12 February 2025.
- 8.3 The Council has engaged regularly with trade unions about the Council's financial position. All options which have a potential impact on employees are subject to employee consultation, as required.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

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

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

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

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The community wealth implications will be considered within the individual savings proposals currently being developed. The budget proposals under consideration will take account of related matters across headings such as:

- **Progressive Procurement and Social Value**
How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
- **More local & community ownership of the economy**
Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses.
Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses.
Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
- **Decent and Fair Employment**
Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
- **Making wealth work for local places**

REPORT AUTHOR: **Carla Wright**
(Head of Finance - Place)
email: carlawright@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Budget Pressures

Appendix 2: Potential Savings

Appendix 3: Service & Policy Committee Budget Oversight Panel feedback

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER TWO (THE PERIOD TO 30 SEP 2024)

2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER ONE (THE PERIOD TO 30 JUN 2024)

BUDGET MONITORING AND BUDGET SETTING PROCESSES

Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), 'Economic and fiscal outlook' October 24.

Pressure and Growth Proposals

Savings and Income Proposals

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	15 January 2025
Policy and Resources Committee	6 November 2024
Policy and Resources Committee	17 July 2024
Full Council	26 February 2024
Policy and Resources Committee	13 February 2024
Environment, Climate 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



BRIEFING NOTE TOURISM COMMUNITIES CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

DATE: 23 JANUARY 2025

SUBJECT:	PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND CHANGING PLACE PROVISION
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REASON FOR BRIEFING

This Committee requested an update on the changing places programme, confirmation of the Council’s existing provision and information on other public toilet provision, an update on revenue since introduction of charging, and information on Thornton Hough and possibility of reopening with charges.

BRIEFING INFORMATION

The Council holds a number of toilets that are accessed by the general public on a regular basis. This comprises of 78 toilets with public access and six changing places toilets. Seven toilets are managed by the Regeneration Directorate and the balance by the Neighbourhoods Directorate. Information on a site-by-site basis is set out in appendix A.

The majority of provision is managed as part of a wider asset, for example provision for bowling or football pavilions, parks, libraries and leisure centres. The provision associated with bowling and football provision is hired as part of the pitch provision and are accessed on that basis. Opening times are variable across the provision. Often this is dependent on the timings for opening of the asset they are associated with. The Council also has a number of changing place toilets as part of a wider provision across the borough.

A number of toilets have been closed and do not have a budget for their operation. Some toilets are a paid for provision, with a charge of 30 pence per use. This is due to budget decisions taken in previous years.

As part of previous budget savings toilet provision managed by the Council’s Regeneration Directorate has been subject to charging. Charging does not occur for other toilet provision managed by the Council although some are let as part of arrangements for a wider sports provision.

These charged for assets are:

- West Kirby Marine Lake – Dee Lane West Kirby (Part of the Sailing School / Sail loft Building);
- Meols Parade Gardens, Meols Parade;
- Leasowe Common - junction of Pasture Road/Leasowe, Moreton;
- Harrison Drive, New Brighton

Thornton Hough public toilets are managed by the same service and have only one accessible toilet opened at weekends during the football season.

Changing places provision, provided by the Council, is also set out in the Appendix A. More information about changing places provision can be found at the changing places website <https://www.changing-places.org/find>. This web site can be used to identify all changing places toilets in the UK. This sets out 10 changing places locations within the borough. The changing places provision not in control of the Council include Happy Learners Activity Centre, Moreton, The Odeon, Birkenhead, Tranmere Rovers and Beechwood Leisure Centre. In addition to the above, there are a number of Council changing places facilities are identified as available across the Wirral, which are managed by the Neighbourhoods directorate, these are located as follows:

- Europa Pools;
- Leasowe Leisure Centre;
- Williamson Art Gallery;
- Birkenhead Park;
- Wirral Country Park; and
- Marine Point, West Kirby (due to open January 2025).

There are no live applications for changing places grants. It is noted that Marine Point has been delayed due to pressure of work on other assets by the service that manage capital projects.

Four toilets have closed over the past few years. There is no budget currently available to operate these assets.

The following public conveniences have closed over the past few years:

- Meols Parade (at junction of Bennett’s Lane);
- Thornton Hough (Neston Road);
- West Kirby (Concourse Plaza); and
- Woodhead St, New Ferry

Although access to public toilets provide a valuable asset for the community, they can also provide a focus for wide range of anti-social behaviour, although this tends to be location specific and is managed on a case-by-case basis.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

For the 2023/2024 financial year, the Asset Management service has an expenditure budget of £110,000 used to manage and maintain the public conveniences within their area of responsibility, with a £30,000 income target. These include operational toilets and those that have been previously closed.

It was anticipated that 100,000 visits at 30 pence a visit would generate this income needed to support the income target. Since the introduction of charging in June 2023 until November 2024, an income of £3,797.10 was generated, which is significantly below the income target set. The overall cost to operate these assets includes costs of opening, closing, cleaning and day to day maintenance. It is noted that the revised charging mechanism at some of the assets have had problems during the introduction of charging and this has affected the income available to the Council. Historic income pre pandemic was in the region of £8,500 per annum.

There is no specific budget allocated for public convenience provisions managed by the Neighbourhoods directorate. To understand the cost of operation of these assets a more detailed cost analysis would be required for each provision.

The toilets in Birkenhead Market and Pyramids Centre are managed as part of those assets.

Based on the information within this report it is not likely that the introduction of charging at Thornton Hough would cover the whole cost of managing this asset effectively.

It is noted that the Council faces significant financial challenges in relation to balancing its budget for the 2025/26 financial year and beyond and as such, it continues to review its operational costs whilst also focusing on how it best serves Wirral residents, in line with the Council Plan.

WARDS AFFECTED (if applicable)

There are no specific ward implications as this is a briefing paper only.

RISKS AND IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, EQUALITY, ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING, HR, LEGAL ETC)

There are no specific risks and implications associated with this briefing note.

The report identifies the locations of publicly accessible Changing Places facilities available in the Borough, provided at council owned sites. These toilets meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis.

A public consultation was carried out in 2022 when decisions around toilet provision was last taken.

NEXT STEPS

There are several steps that the Council could take regarding to toilets accessed by the public in its control. This may differ depending on the specific circumstances of each location.

- **Retain.** This is a do-nothing option, where the Council would continue to operate this service as it does now. For most of the assets where the provision is complementary to other service provision this would be logical unless the Council chose to alter a wider service provision. The cost of operating the asset would remain and without investment it is clear over time that the quality of the provision would deteriorate.
- **Charge.** This could allow income to be generated to support the provision of toilets, although there would be a capital cost to implement this. Unless there is a high footfall, charging is not likely to cover the whole cost of management and future investment in the asset.
- **Cease to Operate.** The Council has already taken the step to close some public toilets. Generally, the reasons for closure of toilets can be lack of use, poor repair, anti-social behaviour and or cost savings. This could generate savings for the Council; however it may also have impacts for certain groups.
- **Transfer.** Community Asset Transfer does generate an option to explore in certain instances, however, that this is not likely to be suitable in all instances.
- **Develop business partnerships.** Engage with businesses to allow the public to use their toilet provision. This offers the opportunity for increased engagement, however it is likely that supporting businesses with funding to cover increased costs and publicity would be needed. It does present opportunities for increased provision but is dependent on business participation and that the location of those businesses would be where need was.

Given that the Council has previously made decisions to reduce the number of public toilets, reopening closed toilets has not been considered. There would be a cost implication to this approach, both in terms of bringing the assets back into use and also to operate them.

Should the Council wish to deal with the issue of toilet provision in a comprehensive way then there would be a need to commission the relevant surveys and reports, which are currently not funded.

REPORT AUTHOR

Name Andy Kehoe MRICS
Title **Interim Assistant Director Property and Investment**
andrewkehoe@wirral.gov.uk

BACKGROUND AND SUBJECT HISTORY

REGENERATION & PLACE BUDGET SAVING CONSULTATION OUTCOME (PUBLIC TOILETS

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX A: Council toilets: public access

#	Directorate	Service	Category	Site	Location	Typical Opening hours
1	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Parks	Ashton Park	Stand Alone	M-F: 08:00 - 16:00; S-S: 09:00 - 15:00
2	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Parks	Vale Park	Stand Alone	M-S: 09:00 - 17:00
3	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Parks	Central Park	Stand Alone	M-F: 09:00 - 17:00; S-S: Managed by Volunteers
4	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Parks	Hilbre Island	Stand Alone	Permanently open
5	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Parks	Royden Park	Stand Alone	M-F: Staff working hours
6	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Parks	Birkenhead Park	Visitor Centre	M-S: 09:00 - 16:00
7	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Parks	Wirral Country Park	Visitor Centre	M-S: Café opening hours
8	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Parks	Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve	Visitor Centre	Dependant on Ranger work routine (only works 18 hrs a week)
9	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Parks	Eastham Country Park	Visitor Centre	M-S: 09:00 - 17:00
10	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Cemeteries	Landican Cemetery	North Chapel	M-F: 09:00 - 17:00; S-S: 09:00 - 16:00
11	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Cemeteries	Landican Cemetery	Centre Chapel	M-F: 09:00 - 17:00; S-S: 09:00 - 16:00
12	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Cemeteries	Landican Cemetery	South Chapel	M-F: 09:00 - 17:00; S-S: 09:00 - 16:00
13	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Cemeteries	Landican Cemetery	Book of Remembrance	M-F: 09:00 - 17:00; S-S: 09:00 - 16:00
14	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Cemeteries	Frankby Cemetery	Stand Alone	Permanently open
15	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Wirral Country Park	Campsite Utility Block	Toilets not open for public access, only for those hiring the provision
16	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Ashton Park	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
17	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Birkenhead Park	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
18	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Bromborough Rec	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
19	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Central Park	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
20	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Coronation Park	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
21	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Harrison Park	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
22	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Higher Bebington Rec	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
23	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Lingham Park	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
24	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Marine Park	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
25	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Meols Lower Green	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
26	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Meols Parade Gardens	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
27	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Newton Park	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
28	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Poll Hill	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
29	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Quarry Rec	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
30	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Queens Park, Meols	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
31	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Saughall Grange Rec	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
32	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Victoria Gardens, WK	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
33	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Victoria Park	Bowling Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
34	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Lingham Park	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
35	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Upton Park	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
36	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Arrowe Park	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision

37	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Coronation Park	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
38	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Ridgewood Park	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
39	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Thornton Hough	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
40	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Belvidere Playing Fields	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
41	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Central Park	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
42	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Harrison Park	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
43	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Rycroft	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
44	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Wallacre	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
45	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Higher Bebington	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
46	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Levers Playing Fields	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
47	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Mayfields	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
48	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Plymyard	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
49	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Events & Lettings	Birkenhead Park	Football Pavilion	Toilets not open for public access, only for clubs hiring the provision
50	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	West Kirby Marine Lake, West Kirby	Part of the sailing school	09:00 – 16:30 Monday to Sunday in the Winter 10:00 – 18:00 Monday to Sunday in the Summer Charged for service.
51	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	Meols Parade Gardens, Meols Parade	Stand Alone PC	09:00 – 16:30 Monday to Sunday in the Winter 10:00 – 18:00 Monday to Sunday in the Summer Charged for service.
52	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	Leasowe Common, Moreton	Stand Alone PC	09:00 – 16:30 Monday to Sunday in the Winter 10:00 – 18:00 Monday to Sunday in the Summer Charged for service.
53	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	Harrison Drive	Stand Alone PC	09:00 – 16:30 Monday to Sunday in the Winter 10:00 – 18:00 Monday to Sunday in the Summer Charged for service.
54	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	Thornton Hough	Stand Alone PC	one accessible toilet is opened at weekends during the football season
55	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	Concourse Plaza, West Kirby	Stand Alone PC	Closed
56	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	Woodhead Street, New Ferry	Stand Alone PC	Closed
57	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	Meols Parade, Meols	Stand Alone PC	Closed
58	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	Market, Birkenhead	Part of Market	Operating Hours of the Market, for use of customers, but is also used by the public.
59	Regeneration	Asset Management	N/A	Pyramids Shopping Centre, Birkenhead	Part of the Shopping Centre	Operating Hours of the Centre, for use of customers, but is also used by the public.
60	Neighbourhoods	Library Service	N/A	Bebington Library	Part of the Civic Centre	Operating Hours, for Public use
61	Neighbourhoods	Library Service	N/A	Birkenhead Central Library	Part of the library	Operating Hours, for Public use
62	Neighbourhoods	Library Service	N/A	Eastham Library	Part of the library	Operating Hours, for Public use
63	Neighbourhoods	Library Service	N/A	Heswall Library	Part of the library	Operating Hours, for Public use
64	Neighbourhoods	Library Service	N/A	Moreton Library	Part of the library	Operating Hours, for Public use
65	Neighbourhoods	Library Service	N/A	Rock Ferry Library	Part of the library	Operating Hours, for Public use
66	Neighbourhoods	Library Service	N/A	Upton Library	Part of the library	Operating Hours, for Public use
67	Neighbourhoods	Library Service	N/A	Wallasey Central Library	Part of the library	Operating Hours, for Public use
68	Neighbourhoods	Library Service	N/A	West Kirby Library	Part of the library	Operating Hours, for Public use
69	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Leisure centre	Guinea Gap Leisure centre	Part of the centre	Operating Hours, for Public use
70	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Leisure centre	The Oval Leisure centre	Part of the centre	Operating Hours, for Public use

71	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Leisure centre	West Kirby Leisure centre	Part of the centre	Operating Hours, for Public use
72	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Leisure centre	Bidston Sports Centre	Part of the centre	Operating Hours, for Public use
73	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Football Hub	Woodchurch Community Football Hub	Part of the centre	Operating Hours, for Public use
74	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Golf course	Arrowe Park Golf Course	Part of the golf course	Operating Hours, for Public use
75	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Golf course	Warren Golf Course	Part of the golf course	Operating Hours, for Public use
76	Neighbourhoods	LLCE	Theatre	Floral Pavilion	Inside the building	7 days, seasonal times as updates on website
77	Neighbourhoods	LLCE	Museum and Art Gallery	Williamson Art Gallery	Internal of the building	Times on the website
78	Neighbourhoods	LLCE	Museum and Art Gallery	Birkenhead Priory	Internal of the building	Times on the website

CHANGING PLACES

#	Directorate	Service	Category	Site	Location	Typical Opening hours
1	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Changing Places	Birkenhead Park	Visitor Centre	M-S: 09:00 - 16:00
2	Neighbourhoods	Parks & Countryside	Changing Places	Wirral Country Park	Visitor Centre	M-S: Café opening hours
3	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Changing Places	Europa pools	Leisure Centre	Operating hours of the asset
4	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Changing Places	Leasowe Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre	Operating hours of the asset
5	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Changing Places	Williamson Art Gallery	Art Gallery	Operating hours of the asset
6	Neighbourhoods	Active Wirral	Changing Places	Marine Point, West Kirby	Sailing centre	Due to be open in January 2025

This page is intentionally left blank



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23 January 2025

REPORT TITLE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT
REPORT OF:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: NEIGHBOURHOODS, SAFETY & TRANSPORT

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an update on key activity in relation to one of the ten thematic areas of Wirral Community Safety Strategy (2021-2026) - Anti-Social Behaviour.

The work undertaken to improve community safety supports the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27, specifically Theme 2 Early Help for Children & Families, Theme 4 Promoting Independence & Healthier Lives, Theme 5 Protecting our Environment and Theme 6 Creating safe, resilient and engaged communities.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is requested to note the content of the report and highlight any areas requiring further clarification or action.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To ensure that Members of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee have the opportunity to monitor the performance of the Council and partners in relation to community safety.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This report has been developed in line with a request from Members of this Committee. No other options have been considered.

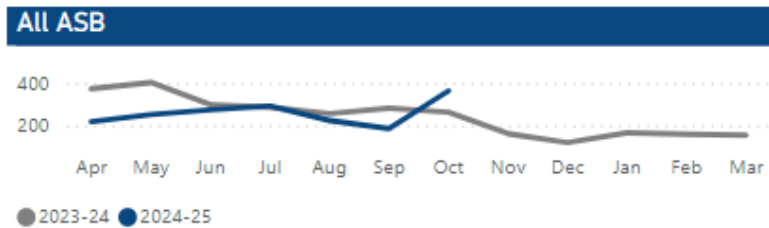
3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 It is a statutory responsibility under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for Councils to lead on the production of a coherent Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (Community Safety Strategy). Wirral's Community Safety Strategy (2021-26) was endorsed by full Council on 6 September 2021, minute 29 refers. This sets out ten thematic areas for focused activity. Activity supports a number of priority areas within the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27
- 3.2 The Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods, Safety and Transport was requested to provide regular updates to Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee on progress made in respect to the delivery of the Community Safety Strategy (27 July 2021, minute 18 refers). Periodic performance reports in relation to Community Safety have been reported to this Committee, utilising data captured in the Safer Wirral Tracker; an award-winning interactive Power BI report created by Wirral Intelligence Service. This report does not seek to replicate that information, but to provide a more in-depth update on key activity in relation to one thematic area: Anti-Social Behaviour.

4.0 TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- 4.1 The number of incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) reported to Merseyside Police over the period of 1st April - 31st October 2024 can be seen in Table 1 below. The trends seen this year have been lower or the same as the levels of ASB for 2023/24, with the exception of October 2024. For October 2024, there were 364 incidents reported to police, compared to 263 for October 2023. The peak day for incidents of ASB was Saturday, with the peak time being between 6pm and 9pm. Over the reporting period there were 1,809 incidents of ASB, with 857 involving youths and 952 involving adults.

Table 1: Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (1 April 2024 – 31 October 2024):



- 4.2 The Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour Team, which is co-located across both Local Policing areas, works closely with Merseyside Police and other partners to identify and target perpetrators of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and offenders and utilise the tools and powers available.
- 4.3 Partnership tactical activity is primarily co-ordinated through a weekly Threat, Harm, Risk meeting, chaired by the Chief Inspector for Local Policing. This meeting reviews Force tactical threats, serious organised crime activity, threat management, neighbourhood crime, offender management and forthcoming prison releases, anti-social behaviour (ASB), upcoming events and agrees deployments and focus priorities for the coming week. A bi-weekly borough-wide Problem-Solving Meeting, led by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, co-ordinates multi-agency activity to tackle emerging locational issues. Hot spot or repeat locations are the focus of dedicated and short-term Problem Solving Groups, chaired by the ASB Team or Police, co-ordinating a range of preventative, diversionary and enforcement activity to reduce incidents and provide community reassurance.
- 4.4 Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) have been implemented by the Council to deal with persistent ASB in specific locations; there are four current PSPOs in [Woodchurch \(2022\)](#), [Bromborough industrial estate \(2022\)](#), [Alabama Way car park \(2024\)](#), and a new PSPO for [West Kirby \(2024\)](#). These Orders prohibit anti-social behaviours impacting the local community, the penalty for breach of which (by over 18s) is by way of Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Referrals and engagement with parents/carers is undertaken with those under 18 years of age. Due to an increasing issue with groups of young people wearing face coverings, including balaclavas, to avoid identification; the West Kirby PSPO includes prohibitions related to face coverings, as set out in the earlier Woodchurch PSPO.
- 4.5 **Activity to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB)**
- 4.6 There is a wide range and breadth of activity across the borough and across sectors to tackle ASB. Key elements of the Council’s contribution have been highlighted below.
- 4.7 **Operation Openspace**
- 4.8 The annual Operation Openspace, led by Merseyside Police, operated over the summer months to help ensure that Wirral’s open spaces, beaches and parks were safe and enjoyable to visitors. Working with the Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour

Team, Detached Youth Work teams and Parks & Countryside teams, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, HM Coastguard Wirral, British Transport Police and other services and partners, activity was focused upon key hot spots, with an uplift in police resources on Friday and Saturday nights over a three-month period. This activity was part-funded by Wirral Community Safety Partnership through the Merseyside Police & Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Grant.

4.9 Activity was focused upon New Brighton, West Kirby and parks in the East of Wirral. Attention was also given to Central Park, Liscard town centre and Birkenhead town centre. Key dates were also targeted including exam and term closures in schools and larger scale events. Police data for 7/6/24-7/9/24 shows a 9% decrease in crime across the borough on top of a decrease the previous year. Whilst on Operation Openspace patrols, officers made significant arrests of suspects relating to serious acquisitive crime. Calls relating to ASB reduced across all areas save those relating to New Ferry, Bromborough and Eastham primarily, which is linked to issues identified further below related to youth violence (4.30).

4.10 **Operation Staysafe**

4.11 Aligned to and co-ordinated with Operation Openspace, Operation Staysafe focuses upon patrolling hot-spot locations to protect unsupervised and vulnerable children and young people and to reassure the public that issues of concern are being dealt with. The Operation identifies young people who are out late at night, or at risk of becoming a victim of crime, being drawn into criminal behaviour and/or being exploited and takes them to a place of safety. They are then returned to their parents/carers and follow up actions may then be put in place to stop problem behaviour from recurring, from safeguarding to enforcement action, as appropriate. Partners to the Council and Merseyside Police supporting these operations have included British Transport Police, HM Coastguard, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Merseyrail, St. John Ambulance, RNLI and Registered Providers of social housing. This activity is being part-funded by Wirral Community Safety Partnership through the Merseyside Police & Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Grant.

4.12 Eight Operation Staysafes have taken place since 1 April 2024, in West Kirby, New Brighton, Birkenhead, Bromborough, Leasowe and Woodchurch. There were a total of 13 stop checks/searches by the police, 121 Non-Payment of Fare Penalty Notices issued, alcohol and drug seizures and 6 young people returned to the place of safety. Following the activity, 19 warning letters were sent by the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team and 3 Formal Warnings issued. On 24 May 2024, a key school date and celebratory gathering at Cubbins Green, West Kirby (which in 2023 resulted in a 15-year-old male being the subject of an assault involving a knife), saw over 50 young people dispersed without any reported incidents of violence. Further Staysafe Operation(s) will next take place in the Spring.

4.13 **Early Help & Prevention Co-ordination Hub**

4.14 The Council's Early Help & Prevention Service (including its Youth Justice Service) continues to lead on a multi-agency approach to prevention through an Early Help & Prevention Co-ordination Hub. The Hub receives referrals for support for young people who are at risk in the community. A variety of partners work together to identify need and the best service to support the child/young person. The activity of

the Hub is overseen through a strategic meeting chaired by the Head of Contextual Safeguarding, with the contribution of senior managers from a number of agencies and service areas who can support and drive the operational delivery.

4.15 **Turnaround Programme**

4.16 Wirral Youth Justice Service (YJS) received Home Office funding for a three-year period (2022-2025) for the Turnaround programme; to target offending behaviour and anti-social behaviour and reduce the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system. The aim was to improve life chances and reduce offending, violence in the community and anti-social behaviour incidents, through early identification and the offer of one-to-one support to these young people and families as well as activity-based programmes. The funding is due to end in March 2025 and at the time of drafting this report, no further notification has been received from the Ministry of Justice that the funding will continue.

4.17 Throughout the programme of Turnaround, data analysis has enabled YJS to target those young people who are most at risk of being involved with the Police. Wirral has utilised the Turnaround funding to target young people identified through Police data who are arrested for an offence but either bailed or released with 'No Further Action'. Three additional officers were appointed to run the programme with young people identified through referral to the Early Intervention & Prevention Hub, through the provision of group activities and via one-to-one interventions. To date and nearing the end of the programme, over 75 young people who were all at risk of entering the criminal justice system or involved in anti-social behaviour have been worked with and to-date none have been arrested. This is outstanding with regards to outcomes for the young people and testament to the staff and young people.

4.18 Moving into 2025/26, the Youth Justice Service will be able to fund the turnaround programme to extend the programme by twelve months, and to future proof the programme. It will look at areas where it can be continued beyond 2025/26.

4.19 **EVOLVE – Clear, Hold, Build**

4.20 The multi-agency partnership tactic was launched in May 2023 – Clear, Hold, Build – designed and part-funded by the Home Office to rescue and regenerate areas most affected by serious and organised crime. The three-phase initiative, known locally as Wirral EVOLVE, uses a combination of targeted high-visibility police operations and covert policing tactics alongside activity from partners and input from residents, to protect communities and prevent organised crime groups from operating. Activity is focused upon Beechwood, Woodchurch and Noctorum.

4.21 Merseyside Police is focused upon the 'Clear' and 'Hold' elements of the strategy. 'Clear' seeing the relentless pursuit of gang members using all available criminal, civil and regulatory powers, and tactics to clear an area, removing and impeding the Organised Crime Group's (OCG's) ability to operate. 'Hold' to prevent other OCG members capitalising on the vacuum created.

4.22 Wirral Council, through the Community Safety service, is leading on the 'Build' element of the strategy. Helping and supporting the community to become more assertive and confident and reduce permissive behaviours, tolerance to illicit goods

and services and criminal/anti-social behaviour. It is important to note that the three stages of EVOLVE are not fixed time periods and the locations are likely to 'flex' between the stages.

- 4.23 An Operational Delivery Group (ODG) oversees the activity and is chaired by the Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods, Safety & Transport. It consists of representatives from across Wirral Council, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Wirral Probation Service, NHS, Registered Providers of social housing and other sectors.
- 4.24 A performance dashboard has been developed in Power BI by Wirral Intelligence Service, building further upon the exemplary Safer Wirral Tracker. The dashboard collates data across the EVOLVE areas relating to crime, anti-social behaviour, population data, economic conditions, substance misuse, hospital admissions and school exclusions. These data sets may continue to be extended as the work of the ODG develops.
- 4.25 Strategic governance includes the reporting of performance outcomes to the Home Office and Merseyside Serious Organised Crime Board chaired by the Executive Director for People at Sefton Council. The EVOLVE project is part of the wider work that takes place under Priority 4 of Wirral Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy. Priority 4 looks to create safe and healthy places for people to live that protect health and promote a good standard of living; this project sits within violence reduction, as it uses a public health approach to community engagement and focuses on strengthening communities and helping them to become more resilient.
- 4.26 The Council's activity in relation to the 'Build' element has been focused through three Problem Solving & Implementation Groups (PSI Groups); one for each area. Whilst these groups consist of community representatives and agencies, it was important that these were chaired by non-statutory service representatives to encourage engagement, whilst still being supported by a dedicated officer from the Community Safety service. Each PSI Group has a bespoke action plan to deliver improvements across a range of thematic areas and a number of early wins have already been achieved in just over a year of their operation. As well as building trust between communities and agencies, environmental improvements have been made in local areas, not least through targeted Community Action Days seeing communities supported to clear litter, waste and fly tipping from 'grot spots', which has been shown to have resulted in a maintenance/improvement in environmental standards.
- 4.27 The work of the PSI Groups were kick started by a Participatory Budgeting process with local communities. Local community based groups in Beechwood, Woodchurch and Noctorum were invited to apply for small grants of up to £2,000 from the EVOLVE Wirral fund (consisting of external funding) and had to present their bids to fellow residents and ask for their vote at one of the local events, where more than 400 people cast their votes for their preferred project. A total of 34 local projects received funding to deliver community safety activities in their communities throughout 2024. £25,000 of the fund was made possible due to the Proceeds of Crime Act, which is designed to re-direct money and assets seized from convicted criminals into community initiatives. Among the successful groups receiving funding

were schools, churches, local junior football clubs, other sports clubs, charities and local Community Interest Companies amongst others.

- 4.28 Wirral's innovative approach to the 'Build' element of EVOLVE was featured at the national Clear, Hold, Build conference hosted by the Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council in May 2024 and the Council has facilitated a number of requested visits from Police Forces and local authorities across the country.
- 4.29 Home Office funding via Merseyside Police also funded a new public realm CCTV camera for each area. The CCTV cameras in Beechwood and Noctorum were the first on the respective estates and in Woodchurch the first with Council control. The latter was a key tool in the investigation of the road traffic collision that occurred on Hoole Road in November 2024 that tragically resulted in the death of a 17-year old and serious injury to an 18-year old.
- 4.30 Increased tensions amongst Organised Crime Groups, particularly with youth-related violence, continues to cause concern and is a priority focus of activity for agencies.
- 4.31 **Operation Banger**
- 4.32 Operation Banger is a multi-agency operation for the period including Mischief Night (30 October), Halloween (31 October) and Bonfire Night (5 November), the planning for which starts in late spring/early summer annually. Due to the increase in the number and size of unauthorised community bonfires, the Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) agreed to the Community Safety service piloting a different approach this year. Due to concerns related to the annual bonfires in the EVOLVE areas in particular and taking the opportunity to build upon the strengthened community relationships, engagement was undertaken with organisers in Woodchurch, Beechwood, Noctorum and Ilchester Park, Birkenhead (which is on the periphery). Advice, guidance and support was given to the organisers to make the events safer, with a small amount of grant funding to ensure key safety aspects were in place, including Public Liability Insurance, risk assessments, first aid, stewarding and fencing.
- 4.33 Overall this approach was successful in terms of public safety. On Bonfire Night in Wirral, there was a 37.5% reduction in deliberate fires, no firework incidents involving the public or firefighting crew dealt with by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service and a 23% reduction in ASB and criminal damage reported to Merseyside Police.
- 4.34 A further report will be taken to SLT outlining a series of recommendations, which will include the proposal for an appropriate Council Committee to debate the full range of views in relation to community bonfires and adopt a clear Council policy.
- 4.35 **Anti-Social Behaviour Case Reviews ('Community Trigger')**
- 4.36 The anti-social behaviour case review (formerly known as the Community Trigger) provides victims of persistent anti-social behaviour the right to request a review of their case where the local threshold is met. If a complainant feels that the response to their complaint has been inadequate, they can request a formal review of the case. This aims to solve problems and investigate other options that may be available.

- 4.37 The Panel hearing ASB Case Reviews consists of representatives from Wirral Council, Merseyside Police & NHS (Cheshire & Merseyside). The Panel may make recommendations to anybody who exercises a public function(s), and that agency must have regard to the recommendations when exercising their public functions. If still dissatisfied, a complaint(s) may escalate their concerns to the Police & Crime Commissioner for Merseyside.
- 4.38 12 ASB Case Reviews were undertaken in the calendar years of 2020-2023 (inclusive). 4 ASB Case Reviews have been heard in 2024, with one further to be listed for hearing.
- 4.39 **Changes in legislation**
- 4.40 Two key proposed changes in legislation are outlined below.
- 4.41 New legislation (the Crime and Policing Bill) is expected to be brought forward in early 2025, which will include new powers to clamp down on anti-social behaviour. New 'Respect Orders' will give the police and local councils powers to ban persistent offenders from town centres or from drinking in public spots such as high streets and local parks, where they have caused misery to local people. These orders will be piloted prior to national rollout to make sure they are as effective as possible. Perpetrators can also be required to address the root cause of their behaviour by being mandated to undertake positive rehabilitation, such as attending drug or alcohol treatment services, or an anger management course to address the underlying causes of their behaviour. Failure to comply with Respect Orders will be a criminal offence. Police will have the ability to immediately arrest anybody who is breaching.
- 4.42 Existing legislation will also be amended to give the police stronger powers to seize vehicles involved in anti-social behaviour, with officers no longer required to issue a warning before seizing the vehicles. This will allow police to deal more swiftly with the scourge of off-road bikes in public parks and dangerous e-scooters on pavements, street racing and cruising. It will also assist the police in tackling car meets, which can see hundreds of cars gather in public spaces that often include loud aggressive engine revving and intimidating music.
- 4.43 **Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week (18-24 November 2024)**
- 4.44 The UK's national ASB Awareness Week, supported by HM Government, the Civil Service, all Police and Fire forces in the country, Historic England, and thousands of housing providers, local authorities and community groups, this year focused upon making communities safer.
- 4.45 Locally, activity was co-ordinated by Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, with Merseyside Police. Activity across the week took place with Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Magenta Living, Riverside Housing, British Transport Police, Involve Northwest's Community Connectors and local ward councillors. Not least, letter drops were made to 440 properties and 250 people were engaged with at street advice surgeries.

4.46 Recognition

4.47 Community Safety has been shortlisted for three national awards. A Community Engagement Award by Keep Britain Tidy (for the environmental activity in the EVOLVE areas, including as part of Operation Banger) the results of which will be announced in January 2025 and both Team of the Year (Emergency Control Centre) and Exemplary Partnership Award (Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, for the Staysafe Operations referred to in 4.10 - 4.12 above) by Resolve, results to be announced in March 2025.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

7.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

8.1 Information on the key risks faced by the Directorate and the organisation and the associated mitigations and planned actions are included in the Directorate and Corporate Risk Registers.

8.2 Funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner, through the Community Safety Grant, is unknown beyond 2026/7. The grant pays for a considerable amount of activity to tackle crime and disorder and has some staffing posts attached to it.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

9.1 Neighbourhood services and partner organisations including Merseyside Police carry out a range of consultation and engagement with residents to work to optimise service delivery and outcomes for residents.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 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.

10.2 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. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

11.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no environmental and climate implications generated by the recommendations in this report.
- 11.2 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

12.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The activity supports the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough which has a range of community wealth implications. This includes increasing safety for people, protecting community assets and local businesses and the ability to tackle any inaccurate perceptions of crime in Wirral. The impact of these can lead to investment in the borough, increase footfall in businesses including retail and the night-time economy and creation of local employment opportunities.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Caroline Laing**
(Strategic Manager Community Safety)
email: carolinelaing@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Crime and Policing Bill
Wirral Community Safety Strategy (2021-26)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee in accordance with section (h) regarding community safety, crime and disorder and all associated matters of its Terms of Reference.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE	25 July 2023
TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE	9 March 2023
TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE	1 December 2022



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE **Thursday, 23 January 2025**

Report Title:	TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE REPORT
Report of:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides performance information in relation to Community Safety encompassing Community Safety delivered by the Council and partner organisations in Wirral. The arrangement in terms of quarterly reporting is for Community Safety to be reported once a year to the committee. Other Neighbourhood Services with oversight by the Committee will also report once a year. Monitoring the performance of Community Safety supports the delivery of the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to note the content of the report and highlight any areas requiring further clarification or action.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee have the opportunity to monitor the performance of the Council and partners in relation to Community Safety.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This report has been developed in line with a request from members of this Committee. No other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 This report contains performance information relating to Community Safety. Regular monitoring of performance will ensure public oversight and enable Elected Members to make informed decisions in a timely manner.
- 3.2 Performance information for Community Safety is also reported through the Safer Wirral Partnership Board.
- 3.3 Wirral Intelligence Service has developed the Safer Wirral Tracker for the Council and Partnership. This is an interactive Power BI report which provides access to a range of Community Safety insight. All committee members have access to this Tracker.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Information on the key risks faced by the Directorate and the organisation and the associated mitigations and planned actions are included in the Directorate and Corporate Risk Registers. There are no further specific risk implications relating to this report, which is a general performance position update.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Neighbourhood services and partner organisations including the Police carry out a range of consultation and engagement with residents to work to optimise service delivery and outcomes for residents.

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. There is no impact for equality implications arising directly from this report. This report has no direct implications for equalities.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental and climate implications generated by the recommendations in this report. The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Community Safety Tracker and associated activity supports the reduction of crime in the borough which has a range of community wealth implications. This includes increasing safety for people, protecting community assets and local businesses and the ability to tackle any inaccurate perceptions of crime in Wirral. The impact of these can lead to investment in the borough, increase footfall in businesses including retail and the night-time economy and creation of local employment opportunities.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Nancy Clarkson**
Head of Intelligence
email: nancyclarkson@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee. Community Safety Performance Report November 2024

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Data sources: Merseyside Police Management Information Systems Corvus and Delphi.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee in accordance with Section 6.2 (part k) of its Terms of Reference, providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE	25 January 2024
TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE	9 March 2023
TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE	1 December 2022
TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE	26 July 2022

Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee

Community Safety Performance Report

Performance Report
November 2024

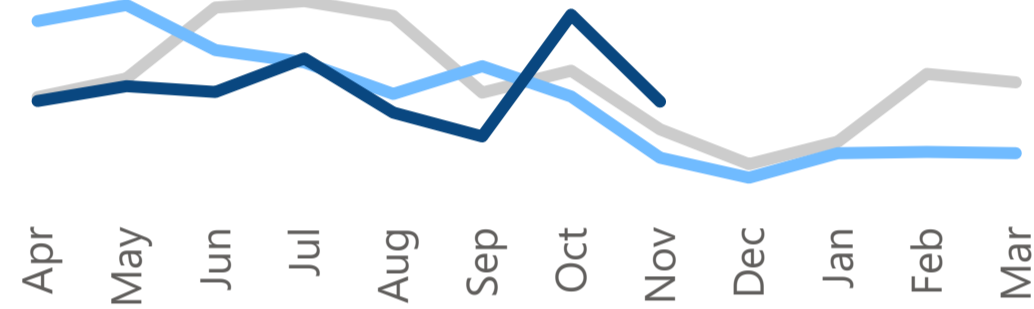
This PDF may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. If you need an accessible copy of this document please contact markcamborne@wirral.gov.uk

ASB

Year To Date

2,203

Previous Year: 2,436 (-10%)



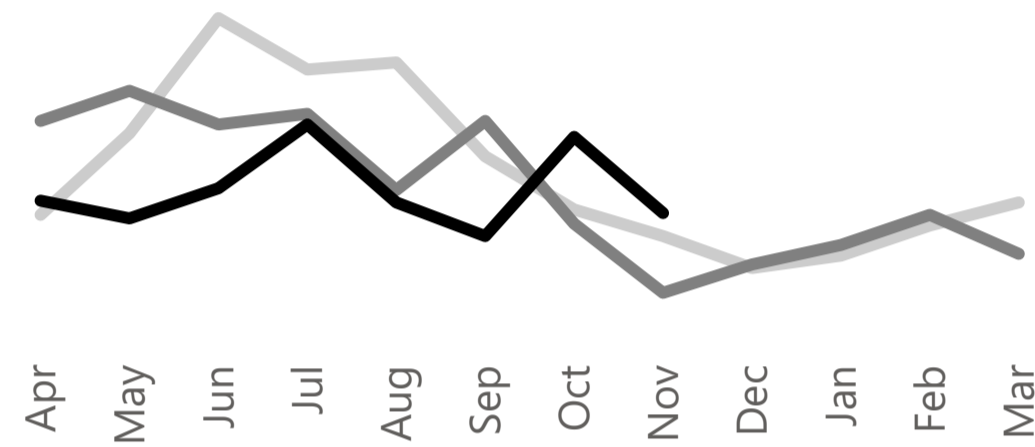
Page 104
2022-23 2023-24 2024-25

Adult ASB

Year To Date

1,072

Previous Year: 1,209 (-11%)



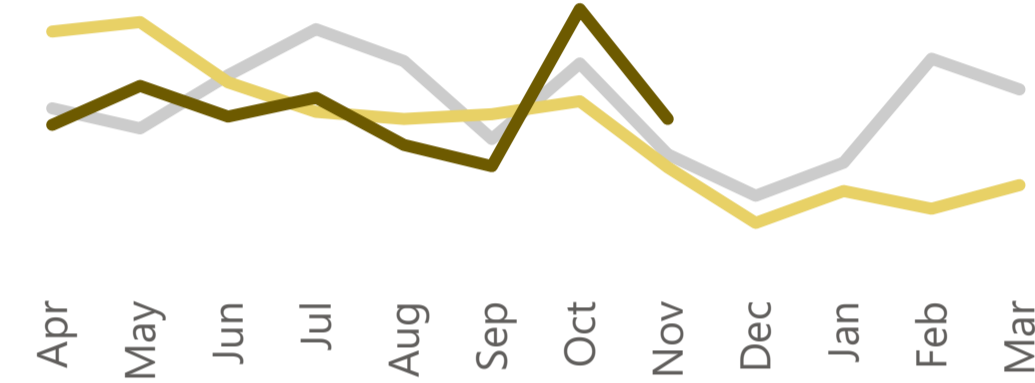
2022-23 2023-24 2024-25

Youth ASB

Year To Date

1,130

Previous Year: 1,227 (-8%)



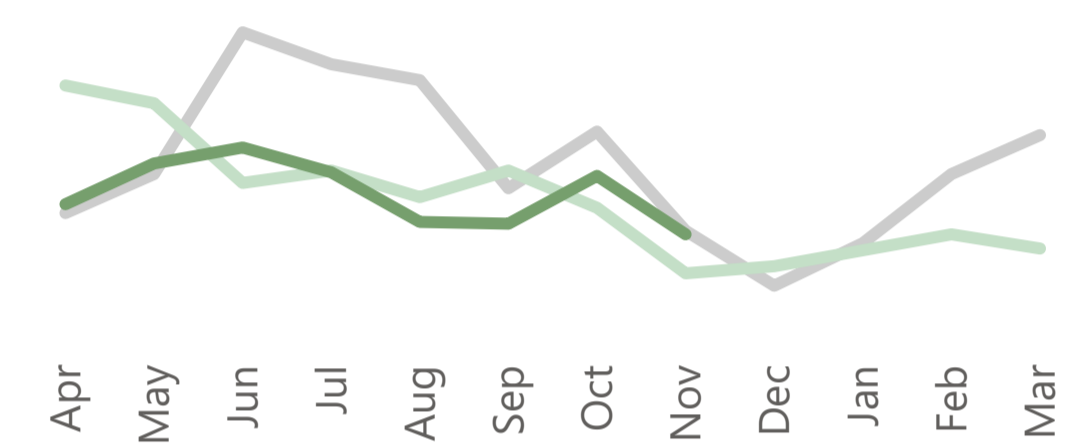
2022-23 2023-24 2024-25

ASB Use of Scrambler Bikes

Year To Date

659

Previous Year: 745 (-12%)



2022-23 2023-24 2024-25

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Birkenhead and Tranmere	190	↓
New Brighton	140	↑
Bidston and St James	136	↓
Bromborough	126	↑
Upton	116	↑

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Birkenhead and Tranmere	93	↓
New Brighton	74	↑
Bidston and St James	61	↓
Bromborough	57	↑
Seacombe	53	↓

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Birkenhead and Tranmere	97	↓
Upton	84	↑
Bidston and St James	75	↓
Bromborough	69	↑
New Brighton	66	↑

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
New Brighton	59	↑
Bidston and St James	50	↓
Wallasey	42	↑
Birkenhead and Tranmere	41	↓
Bromborough	41	↑
Seacombe	41	↑

Wards are based on incident location in call log. Around 23% of call logs have no postcode, so not are not included in ASB by Ward
 ASB classifications are based on words search in the call log
DoT compares same period last year

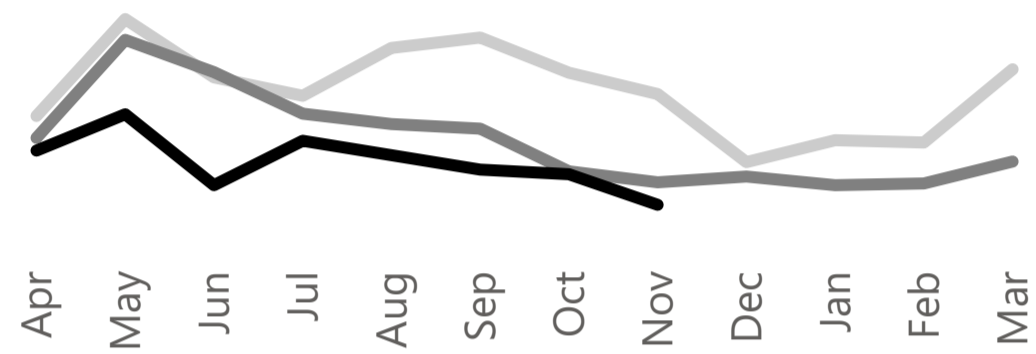
Note: This is Police Reported ASB only. ASB is also reported to the Council, Council ASB cases are not included in this data. However, individuals may have reported ASB to both Council and Police.
 Source: Merseyside Police Management Information Systems: Corvus and Delphi

Violent Crime

Year To Date

4,356

Previous Year: 4,919 (-11%)



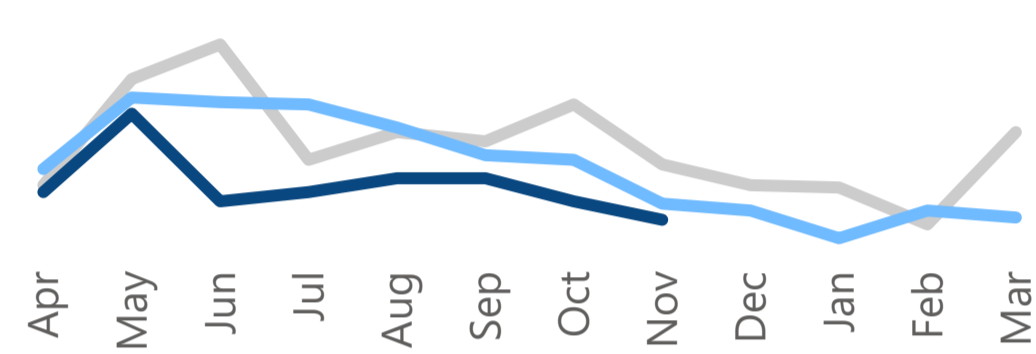
● 2022-23 ● 2023-24 ● 2024-25

Violent with Injury

Year To Date

1,010

Previous Year: 1,165 (-13%)



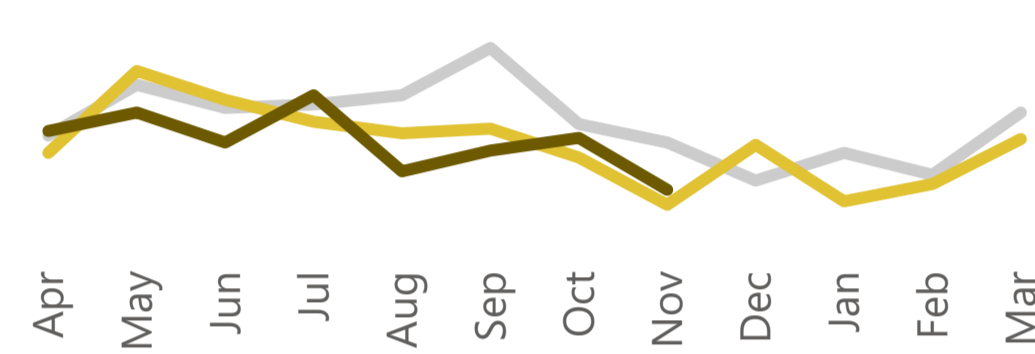
● 2022-23 ● 2023-24 ● 2024-25

Violent without Injury

Year To Date

1,920

Previous Year: 1,973 (-3%)



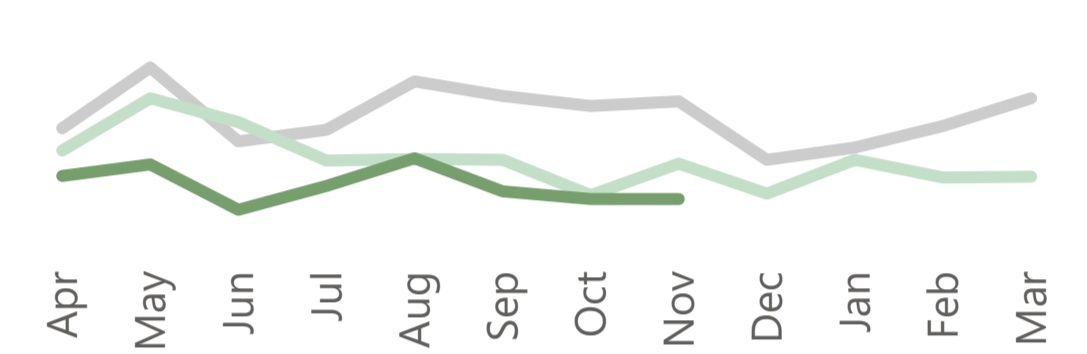
● 2022-23 ● 2023-24 ● 2024-25

Stalking & Harassment

Year To Date

1,421

Previous Year: 1,778 (-20%)



● 2022-23 ● 2023-24 ● 2024-25

Pages 105

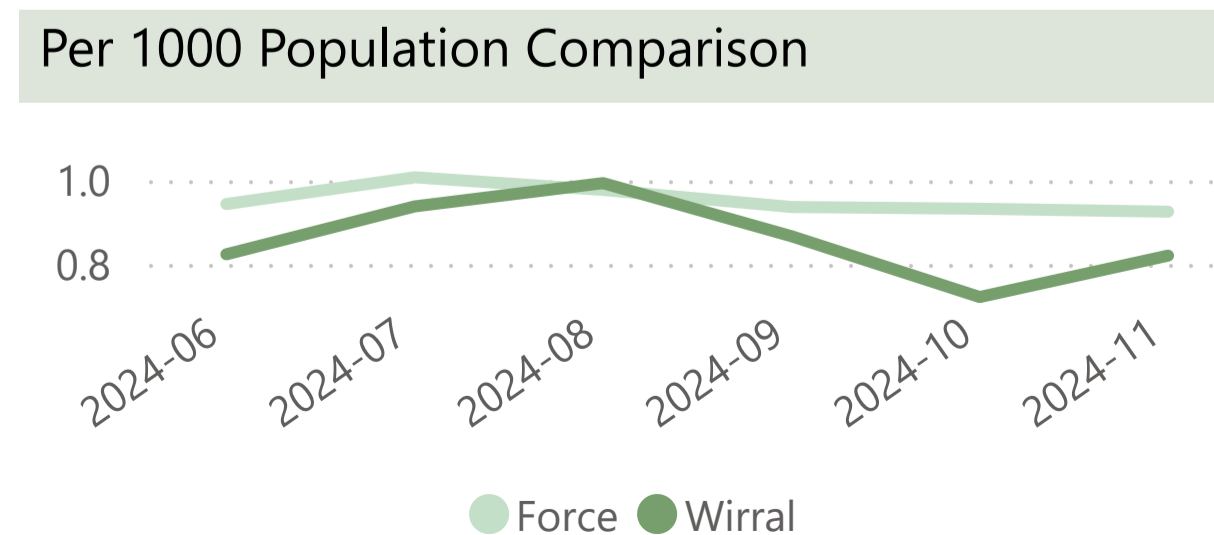
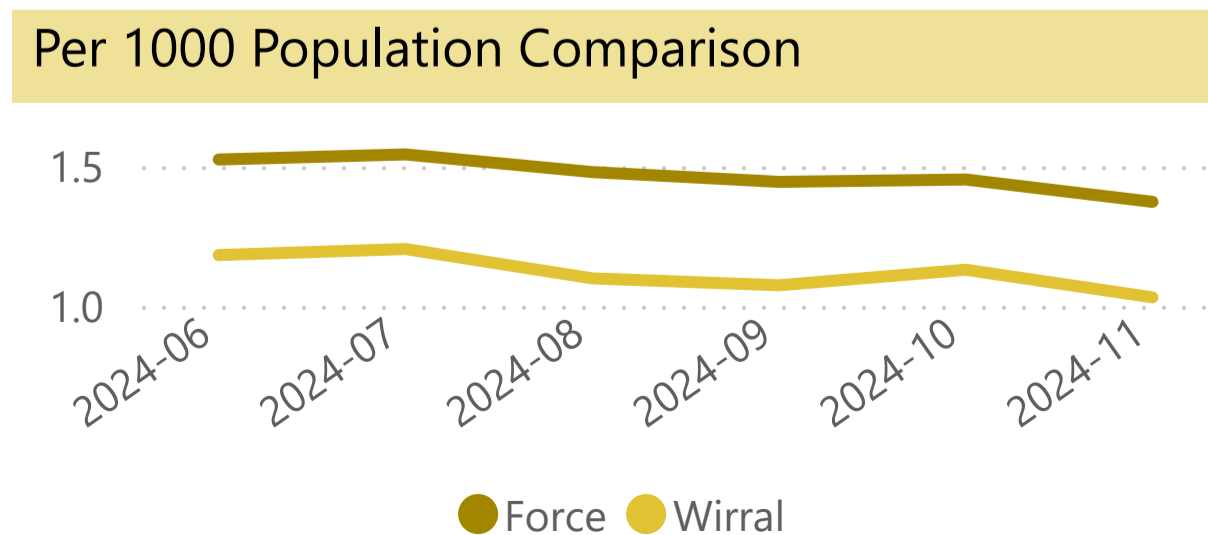
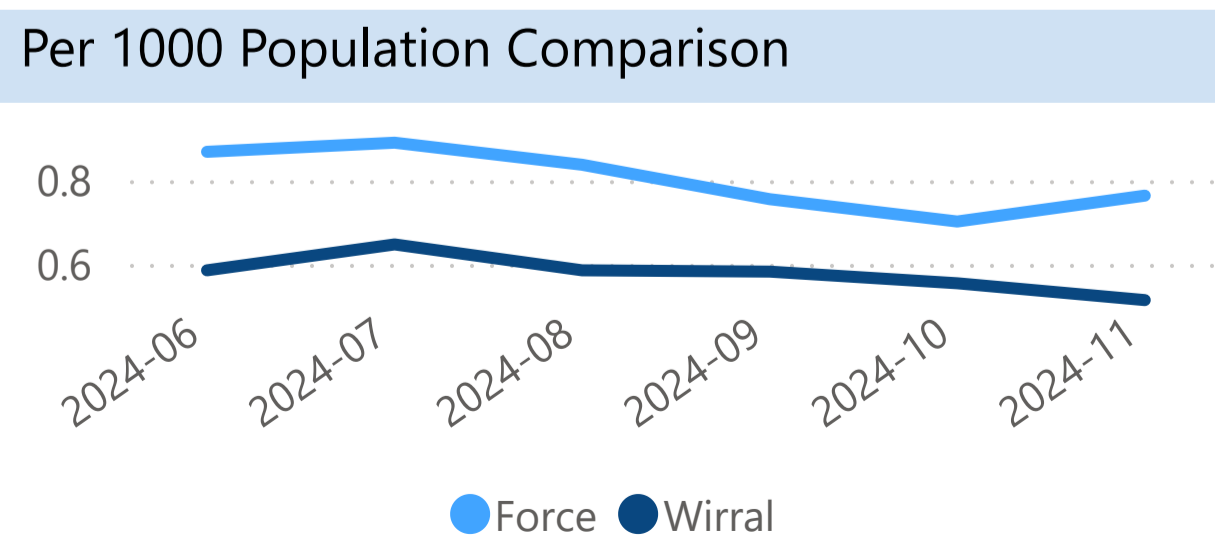
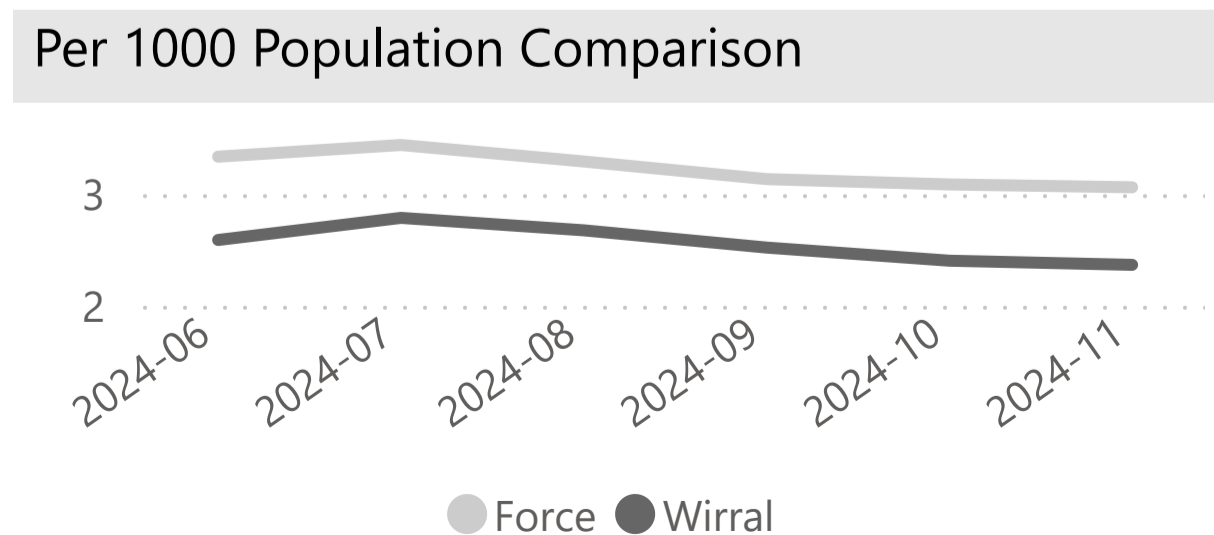
Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Birkenhead and Tranmere	716	↓
Seacombe	336	↓
Bidston and St James	329	↓
Rock Ferry	312	↓
Liscard	256	↓

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Birkenhead and Tranmere	182	↓
Seacombe	83	↑
Bidston and St James	71	↓
Rock Ferry	71	↓
Liscard	67	↑

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Birkenhead and Tranmere	377	↑
Bidston and St James	165	↓
Rock Ferry	145	↓
Seacombe	134	↓
Liscard	107	↓

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Birkenhead and Tranmere	157	↓
Seacombe	118	↓
Upton	107	↓
Rock Ferry	96	↓
Bidston and St James	93	↓

DoT compares same period last year



Acquisitive Crime

Year To Date

12,330

Previous Year: 13,751 (-10%)

Theft from Motor Vehicle

Year To Date

248

Previous Year: 273 (-9%)

Theft of Motor Vehicle

Year To Date

228

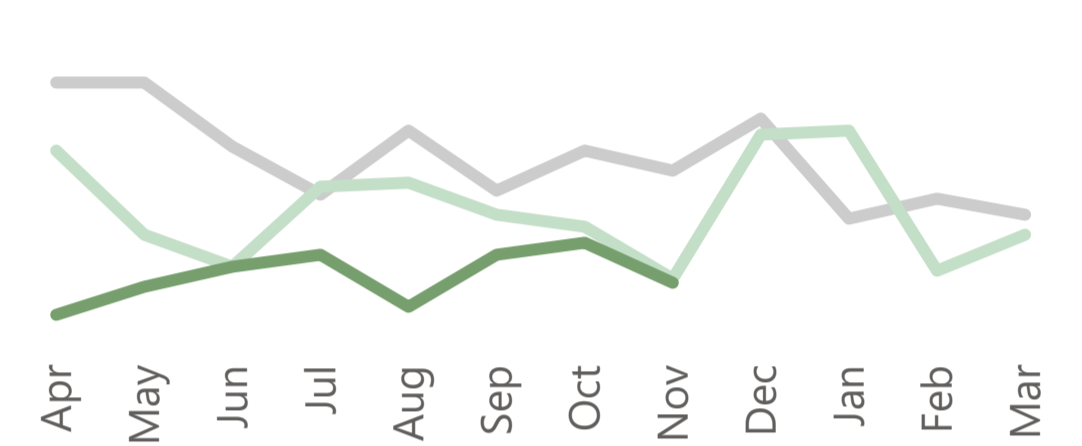
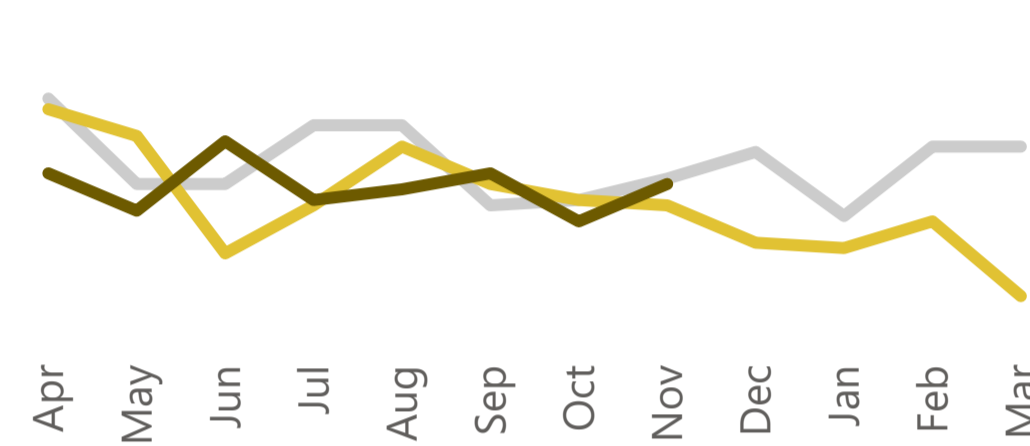
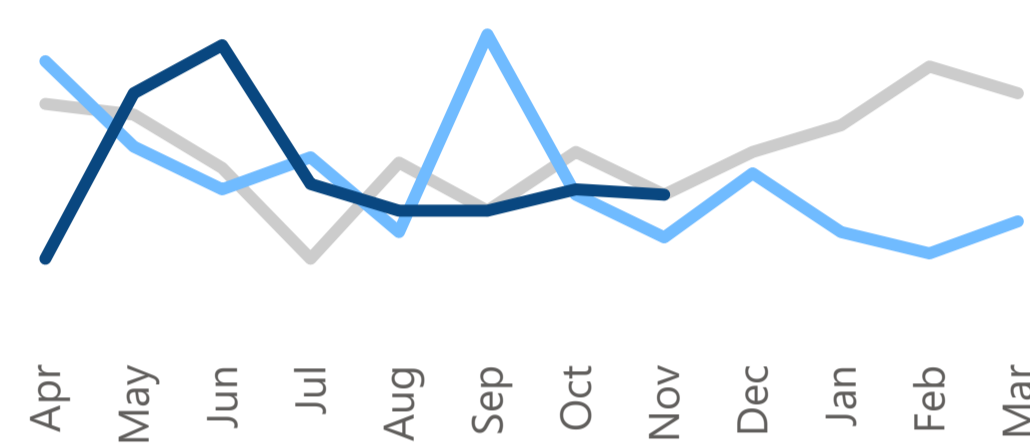
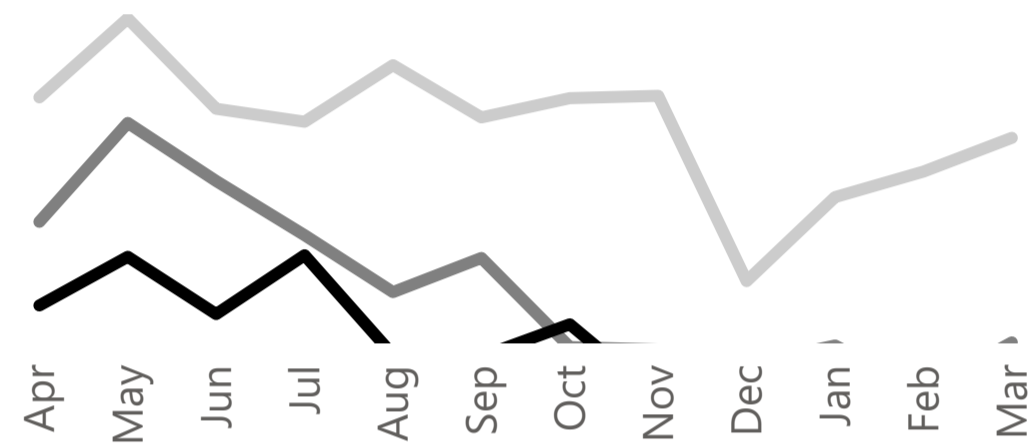
Previous Year: 238 (-4%)

Residential Burglary

Year To Date

285

Previous Year: 402 (-29%)



● 2022-23 ● 2023-24 ● 2024-25

● 2022-23 ● 2023-24 ● 2024-25

● 2022-23 ● 2023-24 ● 2024-25

● 2022-23 ● 2023-24 ● 2024-25

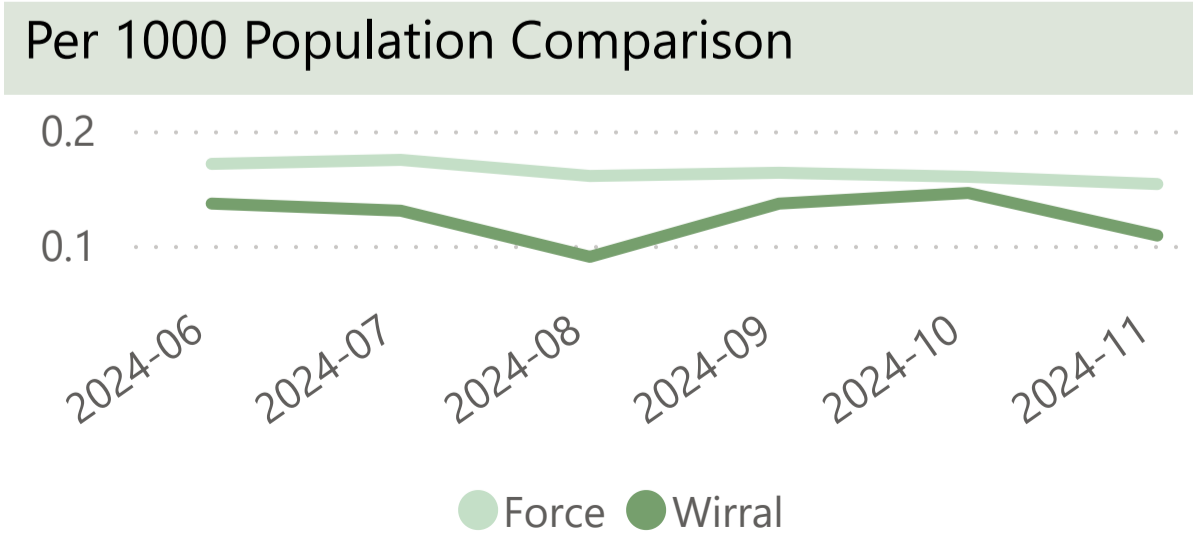
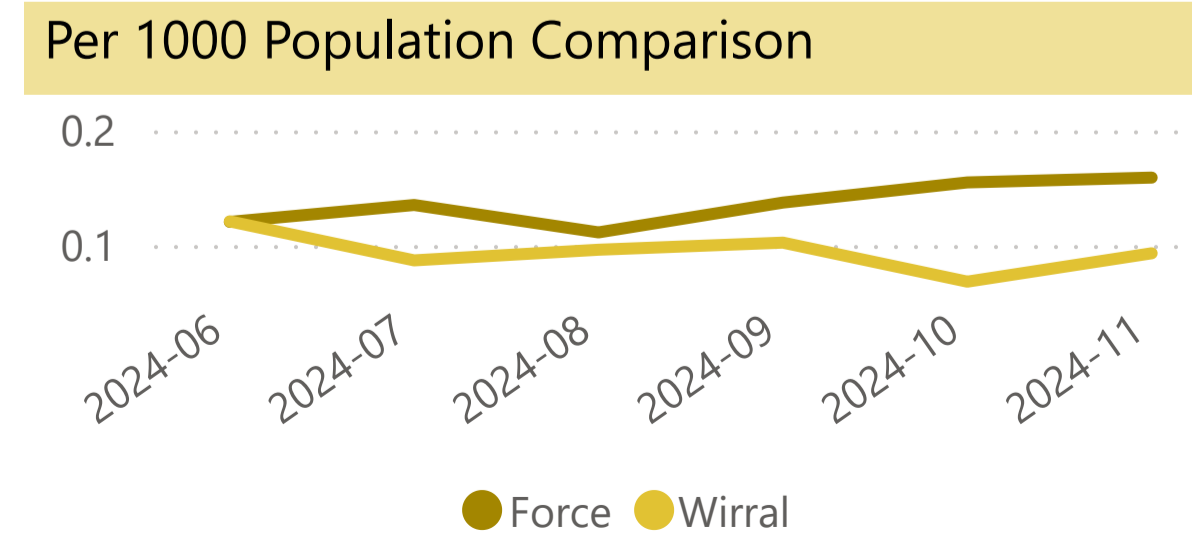
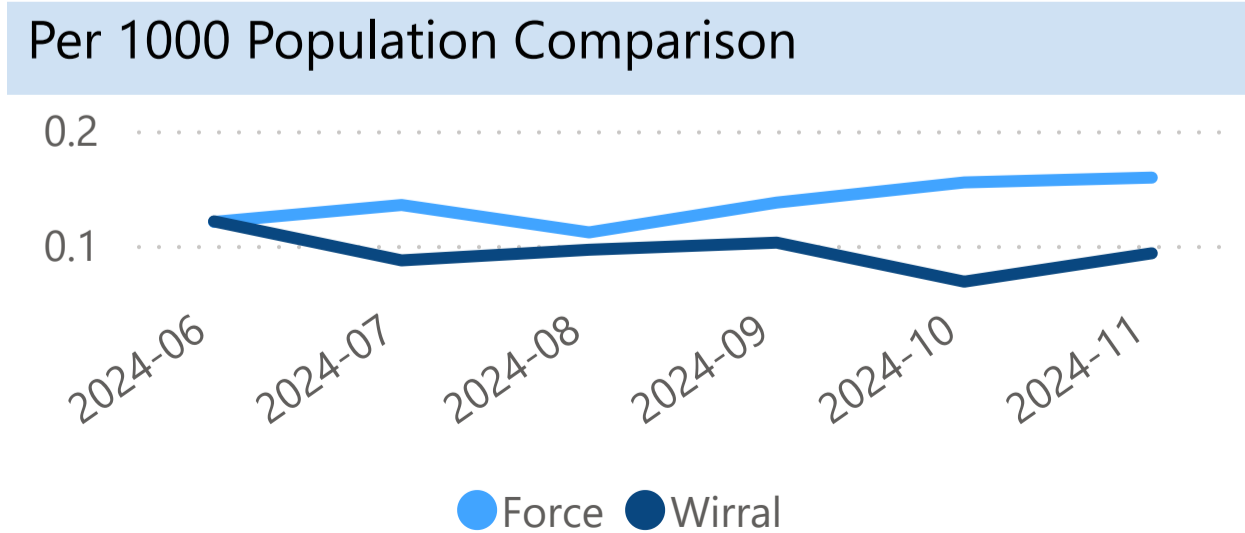
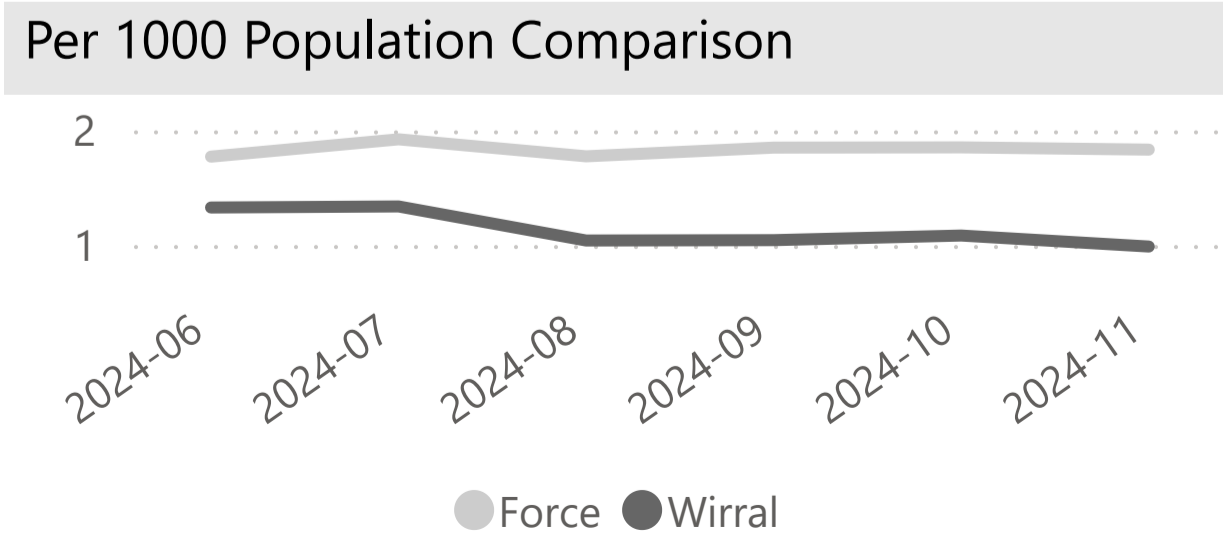
Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Birkenhead and Tranmere	2,063	↓
Bidston and St James	1,155	↓
Seacombe	886	↓
Rock Ferry	881	↓
Liscard	713	↓

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Bidston and St James	27	↑
Birkenhead and Tranmere	25	↓
Bromborough	19	↑
Claughton	19	↓
Oxton	18	↑

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Bidston and St James	32	↓
Birkenhead and Tranmere	25	↓
Seacombe	21	↑
New Brighton	19	↑
Claughton	14	↓

Top Wards YTD	YTD	DoT
Birkenhead and Tranmere	32	↓
Rock Ferry	29	↓
Seacombe	26	↓
Bidston and St James	24	↓
Moreton West and Saughall Massie	15	↑

DoT compares same period last year



● Force ● Wirral

● Force ● Wirral

● Force ● Wirral

● Force ● Wirral

Violence

Note: This page demonstrates Violence against the person.

Acquisitive Crime

Note: This page demonstrates 'volume' acquisitive crime. All acquisitive crime types are: Robbery of Business Property, Robbery of Personal Property, Burglary - Business and Community, Burglary - Residential, Theft of Motor Vehicle, Theft from Motor Vehicle, Interfering with a Motor Vehicle, Theft from the Person, Bicycle Theft, Shoplifting and Other theft

Anti-Social Behaviour

Note: This is Police Reported ASB only. ASB is also reported to the Council, Council ASB cases are not included in this data. However, individuals may have reported ASB to both Council and Police

Date Source: Merseyside Police Management Information Systems: Corvus and Delphi

This page is intentionally left blank



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 23rd JANUARY 2025

REPORT TITLE:	MEMBER CHAMPION FOR HERITAGE – UPDATE REPORT
REPORT OF:	MEMBER CHAMPION FOR HERITAGE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out recent events and updates from the Member Champion for Heritage to the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee. The updates from the Member Champion for Heritage are attached at appendix 1.

This report affects all wards.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report and attached appendix.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Following the meeting of the Tourism, Communities Culture and Leisure Committee on 24 July 2024, it was agreed that a regular, written report would be brought to the committee from the Member Champion for Heritage.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options were considered. It had been agreed by members that a regular written report be brought to committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee is to appoint a Member Champion in relation to matters concerning the Borough's heritage. Following the appointment of Councillor Williams at the meeting of the 24 July 2024, the Committee requested that the Member Champion for Heritage bring a regular, written report to every meeting to update the committee on events relating to heritage.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Not applicable to this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Not applicable to this report.

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.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environment and climate implications arising directly from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no community wealth implications arising directly from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Councillor Jerry Williams**
Member Champion for Heritage
email: jerrywilliams@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Report of the Member Champion for Heritage

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee in accordance with Section (f) of its Terms of Reference, “concerning tourism, the arts, culture and heritage, including provision of theatre, entertainments, conferences and events”.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee	24 July 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

Heritage Champion Report to Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure

Wirral Heritage & Culture Champions/Ambassadors Training Programme:

The initial meeting took place before Christmas with Wirral CVS to assist with parts of a training programme, for some aspects of the scheme. Chris Hahn and Elizabeth Davey of the Wirral History and Heritage Association in attendance. Due to the late start of this programme, for reasons mentioned before, funding is only available till the end of March, but hoping for a renewal to this, for next year. We are endeavouring to make as much progress, as we can in the 3 month period of time.

A special “thank you” to Agustina in Heritage Planning for the great progress on the “Local Listing Campaign”.

We are hoping for quick progress in relation to Council input in relation to future Big Heritage Projects at the Transport Museum.

Tourism

As part of the LCR Destination Marketing Project –

- The Let it Be Christmas in Wirral Campaign is live, including on visitwirral.com. This has included promotion of the Peter Pan panto at the Floral Pavilion
- The autumn/winter version of the Wirral Essential Guide has been distributed and is live on visitwirral.com
- There is currently a Wirral destination brand review taking place, for which Wordscape were commissioned, and this is with a view to having refreshed assets available in spring
- Along with other Group Travel marketing activity, a Wirral Travel Trade event took place in November for Group Travel Operators across several locations in Wirral
- Conference & meetings photography and videography has been captured and will be used on visitwirral.com and digital channels

Culture Updates

TBC.

Conservation Updates

Continued investment in the Hamilton Square Conservation Area:

Hamilton Square has been on the national heritage at risk register since 2009. The council is continuing on its upward trajectory of assisting with addressing the area's long-standing issues related to its heritage.

- **Argyle Quarter Property Improvement Scheme:**

The Council launched the property improvement grant scheme in September 2024, focused on two key strands: shopfront improvements and bringing empty properties back into use.

Ten applications were successful; £45,000 was allocated. The conservation team is working closely with the applicants for all the works to be high-quality conservation standards. All works are to be completed in February 2025.

Alongside the grant scheme, the stakeholder group is working with the Chamber of Commerce on a potential package of support to attract new creative businesses into the area—this work is considered complementary to the grant scheme but would not be funded directly via the UKSPF Phase 1 allocation.

- **Towards Net Zero – Hamilton Square**

Wirral Council, in partnership with Historic England and the University of Liverpool, is leading an innovative project to balance heritage preservation with climate action.

Together, they aim to:

- Retrofit historic buildings to improve energy efficiency without compromising their heritage value.
- Develop solutions that contribute to local and national net-zero carbon targets.
- Empower the community with knowledge and tools to embrace sustainable conservation practices.

This project combines innovation with tradition to ensure Hamilton Square's future is as inspiring as its past. Lectures and events will be organised for the local community. The first phase of the project will end in May 2025.

Other good news:

- **Local Listing Campaign**

The Wirral has a rich history with many historic assets of local interest and value that contribute positively to the character and identity of the area. These historic assets can be buildings, built structures, or landmarks. Once on the local list, the significance of assets is therefore recognised and can be afforded consideration in planning applications.

The local listing campaign was launched in December 2024. Any member of the public can submit nominations from the website [Welcome - The Local Heritage List for Wirral](#).

The conservation team is also looking for volunteers to help with the campaign. If interested, you can contact heritage@wirral.gov.uk.

Nominations will be open until the 30th of April 2025.

- **Birkenhead Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

Work is progressing on the Birkenhead Park Conservation Area and Management Plan. The conservation team is working closely with the consultants on the production of the report.

This page is intentionally left blank



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Thursday 23 January 2025

REPORT TITLE:	TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT OF:	CHAIR OF TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

REPORT SUMMARY

Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee, in conjunction 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 Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee is recommended to note and comment on the proposed Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee work programme.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A number of workplan 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

3.1 Terms of reference

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee has responsibility for customer contact, community development and community services, including all of those functions related to community safety and also those regarding the promotion of community engagement. The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for the Council's role and functions:-

- a. for customer and community contact services, including various offices and meeting points, customer contact centres and advice and transaction services
- b. community engagement, incorporating the Council's approach to equalities, inclusion communities, neighbourhoods and the voluntary and charitable sector, community wealth building and social value;
- c. in considering options and develop proposals for neighbourhood arrangements, including capacity building, use of assets and devolving powers and services to neighbourhoods;
- d. for the provision and management of leisure, sports and recreation facilities;

- e. for delivery of the authority's library and museums services, including but not limited to art galleries, historic buildings and their gardens and the functions of the Council regarding public records, and the Council's
- f. concerning tourism, the arts, culture and heritage, including provision of theatre, entertainments, conferences and events;
- g. in relation to bereavement services and support to the Coroner's service;
- h. regarding community safety, crime and disorder and all associated matters;
- i. for trading standards and environmental health, including but not limited to:
 - consumer protection;
 - product safety;
 - fair trading;
 - metrology;
 - food standards and animal health;
 - air pollution control;
 - health and safety at work (except in so far as it relates to the Council as an employer);
 - public conveniences
 - food safety; and
 - control of nuisances;
- j. in respect of emergency planning and community resilience (community, regulatory and asset services);
- k. providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions; and
- l. 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.
- m. in respect of the Police and Justice Act 2006, the functions to:

- review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions; and
- make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions

Overview and Scrutiny

The Committee's role includes an overview scrutiny approach to its responsibilities which shall be conducted in accordance with the overview and scrutiny means of working set out at Part 4(4)(B) of this Constitution. As part of its work programming the Committee shall consider:

- a. Overview and Policy Development -The Committee may undertake enquiries and investigate the available options for future direction in policy development and may appoint advisors and assessors to assist them in this process. They may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations.

- b. Overview and Scrutiny – The Committee holds responsibility:
 - for scrutinising and reviewing decisions made or actions taken by the Authority in so far as they have an impact on the role or functions of the Committee, its policies, budget and service delivery;
 - for the overview and scrutiny of external organisations whose services or activities 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; and
 - for those overview and scrutiny functions in respect of crime and disorder as set out in paragraph 6.4(m) above which are to include the establishment and
 - functioning of joint arrangements as set out at paragraph 15 of this Section

- c. Stakeholder Engagement - The Committee may invite stakeholders to address the committee on issues of local concern and/or answer questions in so far as it impacts directly or indirectly on the role of functions of the committee.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

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

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

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

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

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

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

REPORT AUTHOR: **Daphne Courtenage**
Principal Democratic Services Officer
telephone: 0151 691 8545
email: daphnecourtenage@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee Work Programme

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Council Constitution

Forward Plan

The Council's transformation programme

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Standing item.	



TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

Contact Officer: Daphne Courtenage

DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BETWEEN NOVEMBER 2024 TO MARCH 2025

Item	Key Decision	Date	Lead Officer
23 rd January 2025			
Performance reports (Community Safety)	No	January 2025	Assistant Director – Neighbourhood Safety and Transport
Community Safety Annual Report	No	January 2025	Assistant Director – Neighbourhood Safety and Transport
Leisure Services Transformation Update	Yes	January 2025	Assistant Director – Leisure, Libraries and Community Engagement
Public Conveniences and Changing Places Update	No	January 2025	Interim Director of Regeneration and Place
Exploring community managed libraries models	No	January 2025	Mr Paul Kelly
Report on the Proposed Confirmation of the New Borough Wide Smoke Control Area'	Yes	January 2025	Air Quality Manager / Senior Manager Environmental Health
Update on Review of Communal Graves in the Wirral	No	January 2025	Head of Parks and Countryside
Budget Report	No	January 2025	Head of Finance (Place)
6 th March 2025			
Floral Pavilion Future Operational Model	Yes	March 2025	Assistant Director – Leisure, Libraries and

			Community Engagement
Wirral Culture and Heritage Strategy	No	March 2025	Chief Regeneration Officer / Head of Place, Culture and Visitor Economy
Destination Marketing and Visit Wirral	No	March 2025	Chief Regeneration Officer / Head of Place, Culture and Visitor Economy
Financial Monitoring Quarter 3	No	March 2025	Head of Finance - Place
Customer Experience Strategy update	No	March 2025	Senior Manager Neighbourhood Engagement
Annual Air Quality (ASR) update and Air Quality Strategy	No	March 2025	Air Quality Manager / Senior Manager Environmental Health
Third Sector Commissioning and Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector (CVF) Summary Update	No	March 2025	Director of Public Health
Council Plan Performance Report Q3	No	March 2025	Director of Neighbourhoods

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS – WAITING TO BE SCHEDULED

Item	Brief description	Approximate timescale	Lead Officer
Community Asset Transfers – Performance Management	A briefing will be scheduled in the New Year for Chair, Spokes and Officers to discuss request.	March 2025	

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Financial Monitoring	Quarterly	Head of Finance - Place

Performance reports (Community Safety)	Annually	Assistant Director – Neighbourhood Safety and Transport
Customer Experience Strategy update	Annually	Senior Manager Neighbourhood Engagement
Performance reports (Leisure/Libraries/Museums)	Annually	Assistant Director – Leisure, Libraries and Community Engagement
Annual Air Quality (ASR) update and Air Quality Strategy	Annually – move to November	Air Quality Manager / Senior Manager Environmental Health
Third Sector Report	Annual	Director of Public Health
Heritage Champion – Update Report	Every meeting	Member Champion for Heritage

WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress
Spotlight sessions / workshops				
Budget Monitoring	Workshop	2024	Head of Finance – Place, Director of Finance	Combined with the Budget Oversight Panel, December 2024
Budget Oversight Panel	Workshop	Bi-monthly	Head of Finance – Place	Next date to be agreed.
Leisure Estate - Facilities Investment Strategy	Workshop	January 2025	Assistant Director – Leisure, Libraries and Community Engagement	Workshop held with members
Briefing notes				
Playing Pitch update strategy	Briefing note	TBC	Forward Planning Manager /	

			Assistant Director – Chief Planner	
Corporate scrutiny / Other				
Risk (at request of Audit Committee)	Workshop	December 2024	Risk Continuity and Compliance Manager	Held in December 2024.

Schedule of meetings:

- 19 September 2024
- 17 October 2024
- 28 November 2024
- 23 January 2025
- 6 March 2025

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee – Terms of Reference

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee has responsibility for customer contact, community development and community services, including all of those functions related to community safety and also those regarding the promotion of community engagement.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for the Council's role and functions:-

- (a) for customer and community contact services, including various offices and meeting points, customer contact centres and advice and transaction services
- (b) community engagement, incorporating the Council's approach to equalities, inclusion communities, neighbourhoods and the voluntary and charitable sector, community wealth building and social value;
- (c) in considering options and develop proposals for neighbourhood arrangements, including capacity building, use of assets and devolving powers and services to neighbourhoods;
- (d) for the provision and management of leisure, sports and recreation facilities;
- (e) for delivery of the authority's library and museums services, including but not limited to art galleries, historic buildings and their gardens and the functions of the Council regarding public records, and the Council's
- (f) concerning tourism, the arts, culture and heritage, including provision of theatre, entertainments, conferences and events;
- (g) in relation to bereavement services and support to the Coroner's service;
- (h) regarding community safety, crime and disorder and all associated matters;
- (i) for trading standards and environmental health, including but not limited to:
 - (i) consumer protection;
 - (ii) product safety;
 - (iii) fair trading;
 - (iv) metrology;
 - (v) food standards and animal health;
 - (vi) air pollution control;
 - (vii) health and safety at work (except in so far as it relates to the Council as an employer);
 - (viii) public conveniences;
 - (ix) food safety; and
 - (x) control of nuisances;
- (j) in respect of emergency planning and community resilience (community, regulatory and asset services);
- (k) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions; and
- (l) 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.
- m) in respect of the Police and Justice Act 2006, the functions to:

- (i) review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions; and
- (ii) make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions