



Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Monday, 15 March 2010
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

Contact Officer: Brian Ellis
Tel: 0151 691 8491
e-mail: brianellis@wirral.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to consider whether they have personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they are.

Members are reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they are subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2010

3. DESTINATION MARKETING - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE (JANUARY TO MARCH 2010) (Pages 5 - 12)

4. PRESENTATION - HOUSING OPTIONS AND CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

To receive a presentation from the Director of Regeneration.

5. PRESENTATION - QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

To receive a presentation from the Director of Regeneration (the full report is available in the Web Library).

**6. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME - MONITORING REPORT
(Pages 13 - 14)**

**7. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND
PUBLIC**

The following item contains exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

8. REGENERATION UPDATE

The Director of Regeneration will provide a verbal update on major development schemes within the borough.

9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 12 January 2010

Present:

Councillors	RL Abbey	B Kenny
	W Duffey (In place of K Wood)	AR McLachlan
	G Ellis (In place of J Hale)	S Niblock
	A Jennings	A Pritchard
	P Johnson	A Taylor

Apologies

Councillors	J Hale
	K Wood

28 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

On a motion by Councillor Johnson seconded by Councillor Ellis it was:-

RESOLVED – That Councillor A Pritchard be appointed Chair of this meeting.

(Councillor Pritchard in the Chair)

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

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

Councillor Niblock declared a prejudicial interest in respect of minute 31 (Housing Market Renewal Programme– Presentation) by virtue of his mother's property being located within the programme area. He also declared a personal interest in respect of minute 32 (Destination Marketing – Update) by virtue of his involvement in the Wirral Farmers' Market.

Councillor A Taylor declared a personal interest in respect of minute 32 (Destination Marketing – Update) by virtue of his involvement in the Wirral Farmers' Market.

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping agreement. No such declarations were made.

30 **MINUTES**

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November, 2009.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be received.

31 **HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL- PRESENTATION**

The Director of Regeneration presented a report supplemented by a presentation to provide Members with an update on the progress of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative in Wirral for the period April 2009 to December 2009.

Of the total allocation to Newheartlands of £152 m for 2008/2011, Wirral's share was £29.53m, which was matched by £10.7m Regeneration Capital Programme funding and some £60m invested by the private sector, Housing Corporation and Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). The funding had allowed Wirral to continue its successful HMRI programme which, by the end of 2009 had enabled more than 1140 homes to be acquired, 825 homes cleared and a number of key strategic sites to be assembled. 963 homes had been renovated through the use of grant funding or via the Group Repair Scheme and the "Living Through Change" programme had helped residents to live through large scale change brought about by the HMRI programme. It had enabled the maintenance of neighbourhood stability, community safety and environmental standards in areas of acquisition and clearance.

The HMRI programme for 2008 - 2011 would complete the clearance programmes in Rock Ferry, Tranmere and Egremont and make a major positive difference to local communities, through the building of new homes on cleared sites. The main focus of the clearance programme for 2008-11 would be in North Birkenhead.

The Director gave a presentation detailing the funding allocations for the HMRI Programme for 2010/11, achievements to date and the progress by Area, the future of HMR and longer term challenges in terms of continuing to make the case for funding the various initiatives.

The Director responded to questions from members relating to:

- the use of Council House Building Challenge Funds as a mechanism to bring forward new development
- development agreements and the development of the Construction Employment Integrator to facilitate the use of local labour and training opportunities on major building projects
- job opportunities associated with Neptune Development scheme, New Brighton
- development of the Private Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- measures to improve the efficiency rating of new build housing

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

32 **DESTINATION MARKETING - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2010)**

The Director of Corporate Services presented a progress report updating Members on the activities of the Destination Marketing Office, during the last quarter of 2009, detailing plans for 2010 and highlighting the support being provided to Wirral's tourism business community, to help them through the economic downturn.

The Director submitted the Wirral Destination Marketing Plan for 2010 (and beyond) and referred to figures provided by The Mersey Partnership (TMP – Merseyside's Tourism Board) regarding the increased revenue of Wirral's tourism industry which highlighted the importance of the plan to directly support Wirral's tourism businesses through the Wirral Tourism Business Network and its six partnerships. The plan was also linked to the annual Destination Management Plan delivered by TMP, and followed the North West Development Agency strategy objectives.

There was general discussion regarding the estimated tourism revenue figures provided by TMP and the potential benefits to the local economy.

RESOLVED - That the Committee note the contents of this progress report.

33 **QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE - PRESENTATION**

The Director of Regeneration gave a presentation and submitted an overview of progress made against the indicators for 2009/2010 in the second quarter and key projects which were relevant to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

He gave details of what was working well, including:

- 268 jobs created and 272 jobs safeguarded
- 147 businesses supported through business start up programme continue to operate 12 months after commencement
- Wirral Council will receive over £1m to create 187 jobs in the first six months of the Future Jobs Fund initiative, with more jobs expected to be approved over the next few months
- Wirral Council has worked with partners to develop a structured package of support to businesses in a direct response to the recession resulting in a number of grant awards safeguarding in excess of 67 jobs
- Projects designed and implemented include the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme, Future Jobs Fund and Construction & Employment Integrator
- 1,274 vulnerable households under Warm Front exceeding target
- First mortgage rescue scheme on Merseyside delivered in Wirral
- Invest Wirral have successfully supported 40 indigenous company investment projects due to the introduction of the BIG scheme
- A number of Think BIG grants have also been awarded under the redefined criteria resulting in the creation of 96 new jobs through projects already completed. It is hoped that in excess of 350 further jobs will be created through projects currently in development
- The first phase for Wirral Waters has been given planning approval, offering a unique opportunity to transform derelict brown-field land at Birkenhead Docks, potentially creating 27,000 jobs in one of the country's most deprived areas

- With two leading restaurants featured in this year's "Which Good Food Guide", Wirral is proving that it is continually raising the quality of its food and tourism offers

In his presentation the Director referred to the impact of the recession on the local economy and key performance indicators relating to: the overall employment rate; increases in out of work benefits (in line with City Region trends); the housing market; and local market conditions, resulting in delays to some key regeneration partnership projects. He also referred to some of the planned interventions in response to the economic recession.

In respect of the financial position, there were no variations projected at this stage of the year, and spend was expected to be in line with the allocated budget.

The Director responded to questions from members regarding help and advisory services that were available to assist small business in the retail sector during the recession.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

34 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:

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 the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The public interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

35 **REGENERATION UPDATE**

The Director of Corporate Services provided an update on major development schemes within the borough.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted

WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 MARCH 2010

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

DESTINATION MARKETING - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE (JANUARY TO MARCH 2010)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This progress report, updates Council Members on the activities of the Destination Marketing Office (DMO) during the first quarter of 2010, and highlights the support being provided to Wirral's tourism businesses throughout a particularly difficult time. The Implementation Plan, in place to help these same businesses, has the full support of the Wirral Tourism Business Network; links directly to the annual Destination Management Plan delivered by The Mersey Partnership (ie Merseyside's Tourism Board), and follows the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) strategy objectives. This strategic approach has been taken to market Wirral Peninsula's tourism offer more effectively, help local tourism businesses increase trade by attracting more visitors (and related spend) to the Borough, and ultimately encourage long-term economic sustainability. The Committee are requested to note and support the contents of this progress report.

1. Wirral Year of Food (YOF)

- 1.1 A very successful launch took place in January, with catering provided by 2009 and 2008 Chef Shine award winner, Emma Wombwell, at The Wheatsheaf's Cowshed Restaurant in Raby. Over 50 businesses attended the event, which highlighted the new Wirral Good Food Guide, promoting all the very best Wirral has to offer. The showcase event gave the local, regional and indeed national media the opportunity to meet those responsible as well as providing them with the opportunity to taste Wirral's delights for themselves. Double page press features are planned to appear in OK Magazine, Lancashire Life, Cheshire Life, Liverpool Daily Post, Wirral Globe and Wirral News.
- 1.2 A full year's programme of activity is now in place including Chef Shine, which takes place from May to October; Wirral Food and Drink Festival at Claremont Farm in Bebington; Wirral Flower and Vegetable Festival at Birkenhead Park; opening of 2 Gorge Us, the Edwardian tearoom in Port Sunlight Museum; workshops at Claremont Kitchen including vegetarian and international cuisine; Farmhouse Business Breakfasts at Wirral's premier guesthouses; Easter Egg hunt at Church Farm in Thurstaston; a number of Afternoon Tea events throughout the year, and food competitions on www.visitwirral.com. Planning is also currently underway for a regional/national food and travel writers' dinner later in the year. The YOF finale will be the Christmas Gourmet Fair in Port Sunlight on the 4 and 5 December. This European funded, but traditional Christmas event in the 19th century garden village, is being developed by Port Sunlight Village Trust and the experts behind the Wirral Food and Drink Festival.
- 1.3 The Year is the result of visitor research conducted by Ipsos MORI, which highlighted food as well as coast and countryside, as a key attraction for existing and potential visitors to the Wirral Peninsula. This is reinforced by a recent report from The Mersey Partnership (TMP), which

highlights that in 2008 tourism expenditure in Wirral's food and drink sector increased by 13%, again confirming the strength of the Borough's food offer and its potential to attract even more tourists.

Members will recall the objectives of the YOF are to:

- Raise the positive profile of Wirral as a key destination for quality food.
- Encourage trade for all local food-related businesses.
- Encourage innovation and training in the food industry.

2. Wirral Tourism Business Network (WTBN)

2.1 The Council's DMO continues to support the activities of the WTBN, which is made up of over 250 stakeholders, from the accommodation, attractions, coast, food, golf and heritage sectors. A successful Stakeholder Update event took place in January at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club – now hosts of the Womens Open Championship in 2012, Boys Amateur Championship in 2013 and The Open Championship in 2014. Key presentations included Neptune Developments on the continued regeneration of New Brighton and the opportunities available to tourism businesses; how businesses could better use new media by The Mersey Partnership, and the new Wirral Golf Classic (see 3.1.1).

2.2 The DMO are working with a number of Wirral rural tourism businesses to help secure grant funding from the Mersey Rural Leader local authority programme (ie an active partnership, with NWDA funds of over £2 million available until 2013, to support businesses within Merseyside's rural economy). Grant approval has now been secured for the following businesses;

- Gregory's Farm at Brimstage: to develop an indoor/outdoor play and activity area, interactive learning centre, nature trail, outdoor animal paddock and café.
- Brian Mellor Cookery School at Claremont Kitchen in Bebington: digital recording and presentation equipment to enhance his workshops and customer experience.
- Claremont Farm in Bebington: catering equipment to enhance the farm shop and provide in-house training opportunities.

In addition, both Sheldrakes Restaurant in Heswall and 2 Gorge Us, the new Edwardian tearooms in Port Sunlight, have also submitted initially expressions of interest into the Mersey Rural Leader programme, and are awaiting formal invitation to apply (ie 40% maximum grant available).

3. Excellent Events

3.1 Golf

3.1.1 Wirral Golf Classic

- 3.1.1.1 The Wirral Golf Classic is a new five-day (including rest day) amateur competition. A steering group from the Wirral Golf Partnership (including all of Wirral's golf club secretaries and accommodation providers), in association with the DMO and England's Golf Coast campaign manager, are helping to create, develop and market the event, which is supported with European funds (2010 and 2011 only).

- 3.1.1.2 An event manager has been secured to help market and deliver the Classic, which will take place from the 13 to 17 September at Caldy, Heswall, Wallasey and Royal Liverpool golf clubs, for the very competitive price of £199 plus VAT (ie less than half the price of the usual green fees). Promotional literature and a dedicated website – www.wirralgolfclassic.co.uk - have been produced, to efficiently and effectively market the event, and assist with the booking of players. It is hoped a minimum of 300 golfers will attend in its first year – all playing, eating and staying in Wirral.
- 3.1.1.3 The tournament will take full marketing advantage of the news that The Open Championship will return to the Royal Liverpool Golf Club in 2014, and the Classic itself is based on a similar but well-established model in Northern Ireland, which regularly attracts over 800 golfers annually. A main sponsor is still being sort to sustain the event beyond the initial funding.

3.1.2 British Golf Championships

Following the fantastic news that The Open Championship will return to Hoylake in 2014, as well as the Womens Championship in 2012, and the Boys Amateur Championship in 2013, the DMO are now in the early stages of planning how to help all of Wirral's tourism businesses make the most of these prestigious events.

3.2 Christmas Gourmet Fair in Port Sunlight

- 3.2.1 This new Christmas Fair forms the finale to the Wirral Year of Food by helping to highlight Wirral's quality food offer, in the beautiful village of Port Sunlight. The event is being managed by the Port Sunlight Village Trust, and supported and steered by the Wirral Food and Drink Festival experts, the Wirral Food Partnership and the DMO.
- 3.2.2 The Fair hopes to include over 100 stalls in a festive marquee, adjacent to Lady Lever Art, a lantern parade of local school children, a grotto and a host of activities around the village. The event is beginning to spark the imagination of stakeholders within and beyond the village, and with appropriate marketing is sure to attract more visitors to Wirral.
- 3.2.3 The Fair is also being supported with European funds for two years; however a main sponsor is still being sort to sustain the event beyond the initial funding.

3.3 Core and Supported Events

- 3.3.1 Plans are already underway for the Core Events programme in 2010. These include the International Kite Festival in New Brighton in June; six Chef Shine evenings as mentioned at various Wirral restaurants; the Wirral Food and Drink Festival in August; and the WTBN grand finale, the Wirral Tourism Awards for Excellence in November.
- 3.3.2 Following the agreement of the Supported Events Panel in December last year, grant support is in the process of being allocated to this year's programme of Supported community-led events. These include the Hoylake RNLi Open Day, Coastal Walk, Port Sunlight Village, Birkenhead Park Transport and Folk on the Coast Festivals; and Wirral Egg Run, Wallasey Motor and Historic Vehicle Rallies, and the Wilson Trophy (or British Open Dinghy Team Racing Championships).

- 3.3.3 In addition, the Wirral Events Advisory Group, administered by the DMO and including Officers from Corporate Services, HR, Law and Asset Management, Regeneration and Technical Services; continues to advise and support various community groups in 2010, to develop and deliver their own activities and events, in a safe and sustainable way.

4. Make It Easy

The following initiatives aim to better inform Wirral visitors, stakeholders and partners and improve business/customer connectivity:

4.1 www.visitwirral.com

The site will continue to be developed and promoted throughout 2010; particularly through regular competitions and campaign activity, with prizes generously donated by Wirral's tourism sector. There has been a 12% increase in unique visitors to the site, when comparing January 2009 to January this year, and the most popular pages are "Activities" and "Year of Food", and it is this last section that hosts the Wirral Good Food Guide, which visitors can download for themselves or request hard copies.

4.2 Promotional Literature

- 4.2.1 At the time of this report being written, a new Wirral Peninsula branded Visitor Guide is in the process of going to print, and includes new images, text, maps and illustrations, and will be launched to coincide with the "Play, Eat and Stay in Wirral" spring marketing campaign. The Guide promotes Wirral's full tourism offer through themed sections (eg coast, countryside, food, etc), and will be circulated throughout the northwest of England and beyond.
- 4.2.2 The Wirral Good Food Guide, part sponsored by The Grange and Pyramids shopping centres, has now been launched and is being actively distributed to promote the Wirral Year of Food (see 1.)
- 4.2.3 This year's new Attractions and Events leaflets are currently in production, and again will be produced in-house and distributed regionally. The DMO was instrumental in helping the Wirral Attractions Partnership improve their self-funded document, by including discount vouchers and a competition, kindly donated by the our stakeholders.

4.3 Press Familiarisation Visits

The DMO are in the process of finalising a number of press visits for May. These include the Bradford Telegraph, Cumbria News, Gloucestershire Echo, Huddersfield Daily, Hull Daly Mail, North West Evening Mail, Sheffield Star and Worcester News. Members will recall the visitor research conducted, highlighted that the key target audience for Wirral to attract potential visitors, was within a two hour drive.

4.4 Tourism Signage and Interpretation

- 4.5.1 Due to delays beyond the control of the DMO, NWDA funds have only recently been confirmed, to develop a project to update Wirral's coastal signage. The project, led by Cultural Services, aims to help raise the positive profile of the coast, safely inform and disperse new and existing visitors/residents, and encourage visitor spend in the

Borough. The scheme will mirror all the necessary Health and Safety criteria; incorporates tourism information and the Wirral Peninsula branding; and will eventually connect to the North West Coastal Trail initiative, also being developed by the NWDA. Due to the funding being time limited, discussions are taking place with the Finance Department's Print Section, at the time of this report being written, so payment for the signs can be defrayed before the end of the financial year.

4.5.2 DMO Officers are also working with the Technical Services Department to update the brown tourism signage throughout Wirral. Phase 1 work has already been delivered in Port Sunlight, Woodside, Seacombe and New Brighton, and Phase 2 is currently being developed for Birkenhead and Bromborough. Members will appreciate good, quality signage greatly enhances the visitor experience and it is hoped the project can be rolled out throughout the Borough - budgets allowing.

4.5.3 Tourism Talk e-newsletter

The January edition was circulated, highlighting the YOF, and the summer edition already being planned. Tourism Talk has been developed to better engage partners and stakeholders, on current activities and developments, and allows for regular feedback from partners and customers.

5. Intelligence Led – Marketing and Evaluation

5.1 Members will be aware that European funds have been secured to deliver a "Play, Eat and Stay in Wirral" marketing campaign each spring for the next three years to help market the peninsula's award winning coast, countryside, attractions, eateries and accommodation. The "call for action" advertising campaign will drive potential visitors to a high-end competition, kindly donated by stakeholders, on the tourism website. Adverts will be placed in the quality northwest/national press and trade journals including the Sunday Telegraph, Observer, BBC Country Life, Walk and Coast magazines, Good Travel Guide and Virgin Rail's Hotline magazine. In addition, a select number of northwest rail and underground poster sites will be utilised, including Manchester Piccadilly and Victoria stations, to take advantage of the high commuter footfall.

5.2A full visitor research study, to mirror the work done by Ipsos MORI, will be undertaken throughout 2011 to evaluate the Wirral Year of Food, Wirral Golf Classic, Christmas Gourmet Fair in Port Sunlight and "Play, Eat and Stay in Wirral" marketing communications. This will inform and help develop all future Destination Marketing activity and implementation.

6. Financial implications

There are no additional financial implications to the Council arising out of this update report.

7. Staffing implications

There are no additional staffing implications arising out of this report.

8. Equal Opportunities / Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 The target group for the Destination Marketing implementation plan is all visitors and businesses, and is fully inclusive. The Destination Marketing Office will endeavour that all Council events are accessible to everyone regardless of age, ability, and social and/or ethnic

background. A number of events/activities will be offered free of charge, however where a charge is necessitated to help sustain the activity, concessions will be made available.

7.2 In terms of those with physical disabilities, and accessing Council events and related activities, provision will be made available wherever possible. The Council is committed to being an equal opportunities service provider, so all Council visitor attractions, and public buildings are accessible, or are reviewing and improving their accessibility requirements. This relates directly to the duties placed upon it, by the Disability Discrimination Act 2004, and is provided in conjunction with the Council's Access Officer.

7.3 The Destination Marketing implementation plan encourages health through both tourism activities such as walking and cycling and the promotion of quality food.

9. Community Safety implications

All events are evaluated by the Wirral Events Advisory Group, which includes Merseyside Police, and Merseyside Fire and Ambulance Services. Public health and safety is of the highest priority and is evaluated by the Group, as well as through individual event plans, and risk assessments.

10. Local Agenda 21 implications

There are no Local Agenda 21 implications arising out of this update report.

11. Planning implications

There are no planning implications arising out of this update report.

12. Anti-poverty implications

There are no anti-poverty implications arising out of this report.

13. Human Rights implications

There are no human rights implications arising out of this report.

14. Social Inclusion implications

The target group for the Implementation Plan is all visitors, and all Council events and activities will aim to be culturally sensitive, all embracing and fully inclusive.

15. Local Member Support implications

The Implementation Plan hopes to benefit all of Wirral by increasing business, visitor numbers and related spend in a sustainable way, so encouraging the regeneration of the local economy.

16. Background Papers

The Destination Marketing Office, within the Tourism and Marketing Division, holds all background papers in relation to this update report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee are requested to note and support the contents of this progress report.

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

This report has been prepared by Emma Degg, Head of Tourism and Marketing, within the Corporate Services Department, and she can be contacted on 691 8688.

This page is intentionally left blank

**MONITORING REPORT FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
ECONOMY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 2009 / 2010**

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
June 2009	Wirral's response to the recession	Officer report		Report noted at 15.09.09 OSC	
Sept 2009	DMO Implementation plan	Officer report	12 Jan 2010	Report noted Further report requested (15.09.09) regarding detailing on costs and outputs "Partners for Tourism Growth"	Committee noted contents of progress report on 12.01.10
June 2009	Taking forward the Investment Strategy	Officer report		Report at later date	
June 2009	Power and Infrastructure	Officer report		Report at later date	
June 2009	Housing Market Renewal	Officer report		Progress noted of Housing Market Renewal Initiative April 08 – Mar 09	Report noted at 12.01.10
June 2009	Choice Based Letting	Officer report	15 Mar 2010	Report to March OSC	
June 2009	Homelessness	Officer report	15 Mar 2010	Report to March OSC	
June 2009	Update on major development schemes STANDING ITEM	Verbal officer reports		Update reports noted 15.09.09 23.11.09 12.01.10	

