



Cabinet

Date:	Thursday, 25 September 2008
Time:	6.15 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MINUTES
 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
- FINANCE AND BEST VALUE**
3. VALUE FOR MONEY (To Follow)
 4. DEPARTMENT OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT - BUDGET (Pages 1 - 6)
 5. WIRRAL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK: ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2009/10 (Pages 7 - 10)
 6. CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (Pages 11 - 68)
 7. 2008/09 PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT - QUARTER ONE PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 69 - 76)

8. APPROVED DUTIES AND APPOINTMENTS

The Cabinet is requested to consider an application relating to a conference that could not be decided under delegated powers.

Councillor Holbrook has requested to attend the 4th Annual North West e-Government Group Conference 'Lost in Transformation? Moving forward Together', to be held on Wednesday 10th December 2008 in Manchester. The Member Training Steering Group had approved the request.

RECOMMENDED: That Councillor Holbrook's attendance at the conference be designated an approved duty.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

- 9. IMPROVING PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (Pages 77 - 80)**
- 10. IMPROVING SECONDARY SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (Pages 81 - 86)**

REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY

- 11. HOUSING AND PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT - PROVISIONAL ALLOCATIONS 2008/09 (Pages 87 - 92)**

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 12. TACKLING GRAFFITI - AN ANTI-GRAFFITI POLICY & STRATEGY (Pages 93 - 118)**

ENVIRONMENT

- 13. ESTABLISHMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY UNIT (Pages 119 - 122)**
- 14. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

CORPORATE RESOURCES

- 15. QUARRY BANK FLATS, BIRKENHEAD (Pages 123 - 130)**
- 16. SALE OF FORMER SOMERVILLE SCHOOL, GORSEY LANE, WALLASEY (Pages 131 - 142)**
- 17. SALE OF SITES AT WOODHALL AVENUE/ROYSTON AVENUE, WALLASEY AND HOME FARM ROAD, WOODCHURCH (Pages 143 - 154)**

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

- 18. MY PLACE – WIRRAL'S PROPOSALS (Pages 155 - 174)**

REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY

- 19. REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (Pages 175 - 178)**

- 20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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Agenda Item 4

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 25 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

DEPARTMENT OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT - BUDGET

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report deals with the budgetary issues involved in the creation of the new Department of Law, Human Resources and Asset Management. It seeks agreement to the transfer of budgets between Corporate Services, Adult Social Services and Technical Services which will then form the revised base for future financial monitoring.

2. CORPORATE SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET

2.1. Cabinet on 12 December 2007 agreed to the creation of the Department of Law, HR and Asset Management and also to the transfer of the Change Team from the Corporate Services Department to the Finance Department.

2.2. The necessary virements in respect of the Change Team are within the agreed budget for 2008/09. The budget for the remainder of Corporate Services comprises:-

Corporate Services Budget 2008/09	Expenditure £	Income £	Net £
Legal and Member Services	5,575,300	(4,249,700)	1,325,600
HR and Payroll	3,542,500	(3,542,500)	-
Asset Management	1,257,000	(1,799,000)	(542,000)
Administration	2,571,600	(2,480,800)	90,800
Corporate Policy	1,953,300	(8,200)	1,945,100
Strategic Development	3,164,300	(1,270,900)	1,893,400
Tourism and Marketing	1,377,200	(127,000)	1,250,200
Departmental Procurement Savings	(48,000)	-	(48,000)
Total Budget	19,393,200	(13,478,100)	5,915,100

2.3. It was also stated that further work would need to be undertaken to identify those people currently working across the Authority whose work will be best delivered within the new Department. The following details the immediate and more straightforward virements and outlines an ongoing review on the management of complexes which may result in further adjustments.

3. TECHNICAL SERVICES ASSET MANAGEMENT BUDGET

3.1. As part of the further work it was identified that the Technical Services Department has 28 staff directly involved in Asset Management who will transfer to the new department.

3.2. The staff transferring comprise:-

- 9 Planned Property Maintenance Surveyors,
- 5 Day to Day maintenance/repairs surveyors,
- 2 Lift Engineers,
- 7 Energy Conservation Engineers,
- 5 Support staff.

3.3. These 28 staff recover their costs by recharging capital schemes, property maintenance and departmental maintenance budgets. The recharges also recover an element for support services, accommodation and administrative costs. The budget for these elements will be reviewed and adjusted as part of the normal budget setting process as the transfer of staff takes effect.

3.4. The related Technical Services budget being transferred is:-

2008-09 Budget being vired from Design and Consultancy in Technical Services to Asset Management	
Budget item	Budget to be vired £
Salaries	650,100
NI	59,200
Pensions	109,900
Employee totals	819,200
Car Allowances	28,100
Consultants Fees	195,000
Technical Services Recharges	52,500
Support Services Recharges	456,500
Total Expenditure	1,551,300
Fees	(1,527,100)
Recharge to Revenue	(24,200)
Total Income	(1,551,300)
Net Expenditure	-

4. ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES (DASS)

4.1. The staff involved with property management of DASS buildings will transfer to the new department. The DASS Health and Safety Officer is a member of the current HR Unit and will join the Health and Safety Team in Technical Services. The budgets concerned with these staff are shown in the following table:-

DASS Budget 2008-09	Vired to the new department £	Vired to Technical Services £
Salaries	138,600	26,600
NI	12,600	2,400
Pensions	23,400	4,500
Overtime	11,200	

Car Allowances	2,200	1,000
Total Virement	188,000	34,500

5. REVENUE BUDGET RE-ALIGNMENT

5.1. The budget re-allocation between departments is detailed in the following tables. Corporate Services departmental procurement savings will be allocated against particular services as procurement activities give rise to such savings.

5.2. The following table details the revised Corporate Services Budget:-

Budget 2008/09 Revised Corporate Services	Expenditure £	Income £	Net £
Administration (part)	668,500	(621,500)	47,000
Corporate Policy	1,953,300	(8,200)	1,945,100
Strategic Development	3,164,300	(1,270,900)	1,893,400
Tourism and Marketing	1,377,200	(127,000)	1,250,200
Departmental Procurement Savings	(24,000)	-	(24,000)
Total Budget	7,139,300	(2,027,600)	5,111,700

5.3. The following table details the Law, HR and Asset Management Budget:-

Budget 2008/09 Law, HR and Asset Management	Expenditure £	Income £	Net £
Legal and Member Services	5,575,300	(4,249,700)	1,325,600
HR and Payroll	3,542,500	(3,542,500)	-
Asset Management	1,257,000	(1,799,000)	(542,000)
Administration (Part)	1,903,100	(1,859,300)	43,800
Departmental Procurement Savings	(24,000)	-	(24,000)
Ex Technical Services Asset Mgt staff	1,551,300	(1,551,300)	-
Ex DASS Asset Mgt Staff	188,000		188,000
Total Budget	13,993,200	(13,001,800)	991,400

- 5.4. In addition to considering the budgetary provision for these services, the allocation of Corporate Services Efficiency Targets also requires addressing. Cabinet 13 March 2008 set an Efficiency Savings target of £1.68 million for the Corporate Services Department to achieve over the years 2008/11. The department found and built £0.39 million savings into the 2008/09 budgets as reflected in the tables above. The remaining £1.29 million of the saving target therefore is apportioned pro rata between the two departments as follows:-

Efficiency Savings re-allocated to each department	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	Totals £
Corporate Services	203,000	165,000	368,000
Law, HR and Asset Management	507,000	415,000	922,000
Total Efficiency Savings	710,000	580,000	1,290,000

- 5.5. There is no virement of procurement or efficiency savings involved in the transfer of Asset Management Staff from Technical Services or Adult Social Services.
- 5.6. When Cabinet considered the Strategic Asset Management Review on 9 July 2008, it directed that a report be presented on creating a Sustainability Unit as part of the new department. This report is presented elsewhere on this agenda.

6. CAPITAL PROGRAMME RE-ALIGNMENT

- 6.1. The Corporate Services Capital Programme includes five projects concerned with Asset Management that will transfer to the new Department:-

Capital Scheme	Forecast 2008/09 £000	Approved 2009/10 £000	Approved 2010/11 £000
Property Maintenance	1,510	1,510	1,510
Disabled Access	100	100	100
Building Modernisation	250	1,000	2,000
One Stop Shops	242	-	-
Cheshire Lines/Archive.	9	-	-
Total Spend	2,111	2,610	3,610
Funded by General Capital Resources	2,111	2,610	3,610

7. COMPLEX MANAGEMENT REVIEW

- 7.1. The results of an ongoing review of complex management have yet to be received and they may result in additional budgets being transferred.

8. FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. As this report only involves a virement of existing budgets there are no additional financial implications or staffing issues arising from this report.
- 8.2. The revised revenue budgets for the departments concerned as a result of this report are detailed in the following table:-

Department	Council Agreed Budget 2008-09 £	Revised Budget as a result of this report £	Change £
Corporate Services	5,915,100	5,111,700	(803,400)
Law, HR and Asset Mgt	0	991,400	991,400
Adult Social Services	86,656,000	86,433,500	(222,500)
Technical Services	35,608,900	35,643,400	34,500

9. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

10. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

11. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

12. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

13. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

14. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

15. SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

16. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1. This report affects the entire Borough.

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1. No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

18. RECOMMENDATION

That the virement of revenue budget, efficiency targets and capital programme detailed in the report between the Departments of Law, Human Resources and Asset Management, Corporate Services, Technical Services and Adult Social Services, be agreed.

IAN COLEMAN
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

FNCE/204/08

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 25 September 2008

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

WIRRAL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK: ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2009/10

1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report sets out proposals for reviewing the Council's Corporate Plan.

2. Background

2.1. Full Council agreed a new Corporate Plan on 21 April 2008, with the new vision and objectives agreed by Cabinet on 14 November 2007.

2.2. The Corporate Plan details the Council's vision, strategic objectives, medium term aims and one year improvement priorities alongside a framework for delivery. The Corporate Plan provides strategic direction to departments, which are responsible for delivering the Council's objectives through their business plans. The five strategic objectives identify how the Authority will strive to deliver improved outcomes.

2.3. The Corporate Plan runs for three years (2008-11) and is subject to an annual review to ensure its objectives and improvement priorities remain valid, relevant and appropriate, and that the associated delivery plan is refreshed.

3. Annual Review Process – Stage 1

3.1. The first stage of the annual review process is to review the overall vision, priorities and direction in the Corporate Plan.

3.2. Stage 1 of the review process took place at the Cabinet Away Day on 10th September where a substantial discussion took place about the Corporate Plan. The main finding of this session was that the strategic objectives and priorities for improvement identified for 2008-09 remain the most important areas of focus for the Council, and that these should therefore be retained for 2009-10. Indeed, some of the priorities for improvement are becoming increasingly important e.g. the need to reduce the Council's carbon footprint in the light of the huge increases in energy costs that we have experienced. However, Members indicated that minor revisions to the wording relating to recycling and the need for a sustainable and stable budget should be made to reflect the particular progress in these areas (see Appendix 1).

3.3. The Corporate Plan document will be reviewed to take into account organisational and contextual changes, including the creation of the Department of Law, Human Resources and Asset Management, constitutional changes including a move towards five Scrutiny Committees, the sign off of the Local Area Agreement, and the introduction of the new national indicator set and the transition from CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) to CAA (Comprehensive Area Assessment).

4. Annual Review Process – Stage 2

- 4.1 Departments will review their business plans to reflect the indicated likely amendments to the Corporate Plan, in order that the delivery framework of the Corporate Plan can be updated.
- 4.2 The Departmental Plans 2009/10 will need to evidence in detail how we are planning to deliver against the objectives and priorities in the Corporate Plan, taking into account any issues which will impact on delivery such as the recent changes in the economic and housing market, legislative and statutory requirements, as this may make the achievement of existing targets much more challenging.
- 4.3 It is important that Departmental Plans are consistent and properly aligned with the corporate objectives.
- 4.4 The Departmental Plans and the changes for the Corporate Plan delivery framework will be reported to Cabinet on 15th January 2009 and then submitted to Council for formal approval. It should be noted that the Corporate Plan delivery framework does not contain every action in every Departmental Plan, but rather provides the critical measures and projects. This framework is how the success of the Corporate Plan is monitored, through the quarterly performance reports.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The Plan is used to inform the budget making process as well as a number of other enabling strategies.

6. Staffing implications

- 6.1 The Corporate Plan informs the Council's resource plans, including the workforce development strategy. The targets and projects contained in the delivery framework are used to inform key issues exchanges with staff, allowing a clear line of sight between individual action and corporate objectives and priorities.

7. Equal Opportunities implications

- 7.1 As a key document for the Authority, the Corporate Plan is subject to an equality impact assessment. This assessment will be revisited on an annual basis to ensure that no equality problems arise out of changes to the Plan and its priorities.

8. Community Safety, Local Agenda 21, Planning, Anti-poverty, Social inclusion, and Local Member Support implications

- 8.1 There are no direct implications for any of the above issues arising from the report itself, although the Corporate Plan does contain targets and actions that will address a number of these issues.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 Corporate Plan for 2008/9 to 2010/11 – Cabinet report, 13 March 2008 (approved by full Council on 21 April 2008).

10. Recommendations

10. That :

(1) Council be recommended to approve -

- (i) that the main priorities for improvement identified for 2008/9 remain the most important areas of focus for the Council and should therefore be retained as priorities for 2009/10; and
- (ii) the minor revisions relating to recycling and the need for a sustainable and stable budget;

(2) Chief Officers develop departmental plans for 2009/10 which reflect the strategic objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and the revised priorities for improvement indicated in the Appendix to this report; and

(2) the Departmental Plans and the changes to the Corporate Plan delivery framework be reported to Cabinet on 15th January 2009 and then submitted to Council for formal approval.

Appendix 1: outcomes framework for corporate plan 2009/10 to 2011/12

Building a more prosperous and equal Wirral

Strategic Objectives	Aims for 2008 – 2013	Priorities for Improvement 2008/09
To create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral	Increase investment and encourage new developments Improve rate of business start ups and support local businesses to grow. Increase GVA by increasing employment opportunities and matching skills to employers' demands Reduce worklessness Ensure the sustainability of our cultural, leisure and tourism assets.	Reduce worklessness Increase enterprise
To create a clean, pleasant, safe & sustainable environment	Increase levels of recycling Reduce our carbon footprint. Create exemplary levels of street cleanliness Reduce number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents. Deliver HMRI programme & achieve housing decency standards Reduce alcohol related crime Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour. Conserve the borough's natural and built heritage and increase civic pride and public participation.	Sustain increased levels of recycling Reduce the council's carbon footprint Reduce number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents.
To improve health and well being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society	Narrow the mortality gap on Wirral. Promote greater independence and choice Reduce the number of falls for elderly people Encourage healthy lifestyles and participation in fulfilling activities. Improve support for those with mental health problems. Tackle domestic violence Tackle all forms of alcohol and drug induced harm.	Promote greater independence and choice
To raise the aspirations of young people	Raise overall educational attainment, particularly lower achieving young people Reduce numbers not in employment, education or training. Safely reduce the number of looked after children. Reduce childhood obesity. Increase numbers going to university, especially from disadvantaged communities	Raise overall educational attainment, particularly lower achieving young people. Safely reduce the number of looked after children
Create an excellent council	Improve the use of the Council's land and assets. Create a sustainable and stable budget providing value for money Improve the council's budgeting process to fully reflect its priorities. Improve accountability, accessibility and openness and involve those who use our services in their design and delivery. Improve partnership working with the public, private & voluntary sectors.	Improve the use of the Council's land and assets. Maintain a sustainable and stable budget, providing value for money Improve the Council's budgeting process to fully reflect its priorities.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 25 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR WIRRAL – PROPOSED CONSULTATION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the statutory requirement relating to the production of a Sustainable Community Strategy for Wirral by the Local Strategic Partnership and sets out progress to date in developing this key document.
- 1.2 Given the council's leadership role in relation to strategic planning at a borough-wide level through the Local Strategic Partnership, cabinet is also asked to endorse the draft version of the Sustainable Community Strategy attached as Appendix A for the purposes of consultation with partners and the community, and to agree the proposed consultation timetable at Appendix B.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Sustainable communities are places in which people want to live, now and in the future. They embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level. This means they improve quality of life for all whilst safeguarding the environment for future generations. The UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy, *Securing the Future*, was published in March 2005 and included the Government's definition and components of a sustainable community. Sustainable communities embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level. They:
 - Balance and integrate social, economic and environmental components of their community
 - Meet the needs of existing and future generations
 - Respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally also to make their communities sustainable
- 2.2 The Local Government Act 2007 requires every local authority to develop a 'sustainable' community strategy.

3. PROGRESS

- 3.1 The development of Wirral's Local Area Agreement for 2008-11 was a robust prioritisation and negotiation process aimed at ensuring that partners and stakeholders clearly identified the right improvement areas for Wirral. The outcomes of this process have been key to the drafting of a sustainable community strategy which sets out Wirral's story of place and a shared understanding of local needs, both in the medium and long-term.

- 3.2 The council's corporate plan reflects and complements the vision in the draft sustainable community strategy for Wirral. Along with other key partner plans and strategies, the corporate plan will contribute towards the delivery of the over-arching vision set out in the community strategy.
- 3.3 Consultation has already been undertaken with a variety of partnership groups, key stakeholders and the community with regard to the proposed themes for the community strategy, for example through the area forums.
- 3.4 It should be noted that progress on drafting the strategy has been slower than anticipated at the outset of the process for a number of reasons, including the emergence of new guidance and a clear need to align the sustainable community strategy with other key plans and strategies, most notably the Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework is the spatial delivery vehicle for the community strategy and, as such, a significant amount of preparatory work has been undertaken to ensure that these key strategies combined provide the right blueprint for the long-term future of Wirral.

4. PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER CONSULTATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that the draft at Appendix 1 is used as the basis for consultation. This document contains the following elements:
- An executive summary
 - Wirral's **story of place**, highlighting the key challenges faced by the borough
 - A partnership **vision and strategy for Wirral**
 - Wirral's **partnership agreement**, detailing Local Area Agreement priorities for 2008-11 and the shared values of the Local Strategic Partnership as it seeks to deliver improved quality of life outcomes for everyone in the borough

This proposed consultation draft provides a starting point for debate with partners and the community and it is anticipated that the content of the strategy will evolve to reflect contributions from a wide range of stakeholder.

- 4.2 A proposed timetable of key dates relating to the consultation process is attached as Appendix 2. This includes a formal twelve week public consultation period in line with Wirral's Compact agreement. Work will also be undertaken to ensure that consultation in respect of the Core Strategy element of the Local Development Framework (see 3.4 above) is appropriately linked to this timetable.
- 4.2 Work is also ongoing with press and PR with regard to the public consultation aspect to ensure that as wide a range of views as possible is reflected in the strategy. The recent community canvas survey also incorporated questions relating to the community strategy themes, and the results of this survey will be fed in accordingly.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of managing the consultation process will be met from existing budgets.

6. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are no additional staffing requirements required to undertaken the proposed programme of consultation.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The views of Wirral's diverse communities will be sought as part of the consultation process through existing engagement mechanisms and Wirral's Voluntary and Community Sector Network (VCAW).

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** There are none arising from this report.

9. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** The role of the community strategy is to deliver long-term sustainable solutions. Work is already in place, through the establishment of an Environment and Sustainability Advisory Group, to ensure that such concerns are considered in long-term strategic planning and medium-term delivery through the Local Area Agreement.

10. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1** There are none directly arising from this report. The planning implications of the final sustainable community strategy will be addressed through the Local Development Framework.

11. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1** There are none directly arising from this report. Addressing issues of poverty and deprivation is, however, central to the proposed vision for the community strategy.

12. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1** Efforts will be made through the consultation programme to ensure that all areas in Wirral are informed of the draft strategy.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1** None

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) the draft strategy at Appendix 1 be endorsed to be used for the purposes of consultation with key partners and the public;
- (2) the proposed timetable for consultation and approval of the sustainable community strategy at Appendix 2 be approved; and
- (3) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve any changes to the document arising from the initial consultation with partners, prior to the commencement of the public consultation period in mid-October 2008.

**STEVE MADDUX
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

This report was prepared by Jane Morgan who can be contacted on 691 8140



WIRRAL 2025 MORE EQUAL, MORE PROSPEROUS

A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR WIRRAL

PROPOSED CONSULTATION DRAFT

September 2008

Foreword from Councillor Steve Foulkes
Chair of Wirral's local strategic partnership

[To be inserted]

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Wirral's Story of Place

Wirral is a borough with enormous potential and opportunities. It is poised for a momentous period of change that will see a raft of spectacular projects, heralding large-scale investment and boundless opportunities, making it a major contributor to the city region's growth agenda. For example, the UK's biggest regeneration project – Wirral Waters - is set to transform Birkenhead and Wallasey. This visionary £4.5 billion, 30 year redevelopment of Birkenhead and Wallasey docks will have a major economic impact on Wirral and the Northwest region – creating around 27,000 jobs.

Wirral is also a place of sharp contrasts, with the overall picture masking big challenges and serious inequalities against a backdrop of population changes. Wirral has seen a 12% decline in population since the 1970s. The borough has a growing ageing population and a low number of people in their 20's and 30's compared to England and Wales.

Wirral residents experience some of the country's most notable variations in economic and social well being – a substantial percentage of Wirral's population lives within some of the country's most deprived areas, whilst there are also a large number that live in some of the country's most affluent areas. For many of our citizens there is an excellent quality of life, with good leisure facilities, an attractive coastline and countryside, good quality housing, good schools and quality employment opportunities. For some, the picture is very different, with pockets of high unemployment, low skills levels, poorer quality housing, unacceptable levels of anti-social behaviour and high levels of ill health.

In summary, the key challenges for the borough are:

- Wirral's economy is underperforming with the lowest levels of gross value added (GVA) on Merseyside. Earnings of people who work in Wirral are below the national average, whilst earnings of Wirral residents are actually above national figures, due to the fact that approximately 40,000 of our residents travel to work outside the borough to higher paid employment.
- There is a low level of VAT business registrations, plus job density levels that are amongst the lowest in the North West region. Ensuring appropriate supply of employment land and premises is key to supporting the economic improvements outlined in Wirral's Investment Strategy.
- Transport and access to employment opportunities and services both within and outside the borough are key issues to be addressed to ensure Wirral's most deprived residents have the opportunity to access employment.
- Ensuring the supply of housing development sites whilst supporting the delivery of the Housing Market Renewal programme.
- Maximising the unique opportunities presented by both the borough's docklands and the Port of Liverpool.

- Continuing to capitalise upon Wirral's exceptional tourism assets and building upon the legacy of the successful Capital of Culture year.
- With the older age groups expected to be the fastest increasing population group by 2029, looking after the frail older persons population will become a major issue for the borough in the near future, impacting on health, social care and other services.
- Although life expectancy is rising, there is a stark mortality gap between the most affluent and the most deprived areas, with those in the most affluent areas living on average over 10 years longer than those in the most deprived areas.
- There are close to 20,000 people claiming incapacity benefit, a significant number which has a clear impact on the economic performance of the borough
- There are high levels of worklessness in the borough, with a strong correlation to levels of economic inactivity, poor education and skills attainment and other deprivation indicators. Wirral has a higher than average proportion of the working age population on benefits and a quarter of all school children in Wirral qualify for free school meals. The people with the lowest qualifications are least likely to find employment; Wirral has a rate of 35.50% of working age population with no qualifications.
- Tackling increasing homelessness, affordability of housing and the condition of homes occupied by some of the more vulnerable members of the community.
- Against a backdrop of improvements in levels of crime, certain communities of the borough continue to suffer higher levels of crime than others. Wirral's most deprived areas (roughly 10% of the borough) account for 30% of all recorded British Comparator Survey (BCS) crime on Wirral. Those communities also suffer disproportionately from higher levels of violent crime. Anti-social behaviour still makes up a large percentage of the total number of reported incidents that the Police and other agencies deal with in Wirral.
- Despite overall attainment levels being above the national average, there are stark disparities in attainment between areas of the borough, with children in Birkenhead achieving a low level of A*-C grades at GCSE compared to those in West Wirral.
- There are too many looked after children in the borough and they do not achieve as well as others, with only 15% achieving 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE in 2006.
- Whilst significant progress has been made in reducing the number of young people 16-18 not in education, employment or training, the most deprived areas of the borough have been identified as having disproportionately higher levels of young people not in education employment or training, as well as specific cohorts including teenage mothers, care leavers and young offenders.
- The teenage conception rate in Wirral remains lower than the North West regional average but higher than the national and Merseyside rates. Teenage

parenthood in Wirral continues to be an issue in those areas that experience higher levels of deprivation and poorer educational attainment.

- Recycling is a big issue for Wirral. Since the roll out of the grey recycling bins across Wirral, the recycling rates for the borough have improved dramatically. Central government targets have been agreed to have at least 40% of waste recycled by 2013, Wirral is currently only expected to achieve a maximum of 36% by this time. Continued focus is needed to achieve the government target of 40% by 2013.
- Wirral continues to suffer from road traffic accident rates that are too high.
- Whilst significant progress is being made on overall cleansing standards and fly tipping removal across the borough, improvements - especially in more deprived areas of the borough - are often insufficient.

1.2 Wirral 2025 – More Equal, More Prosperous

Our long term, partnership vision is:

A more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities and people to thrive and achieve their full potential

We will therefore plan and work together to deliver:

- **A strong local economy** for Wirral;
- **Safer, stronger communities** in all parts of the borough
- The best possible **health and well-being** for all families and individuals
- Excellent **life chances for children and young people**
- A high quality **living and working environment**
- **Sustainable, appropriate housing** for all

Our partnership vision is underpinned by a set of shared values:

- **Living within environmental limits**
- **A strong, cohesive and fair Wirral**
- **Developing sustainable solutions to tackling our strategic aims**
- **Involving communities**
- **Ensuring that our services are accessible**

These take into account the principles for sustainability set out in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005.

Wirral 2025 is a long term vision demonstrating how the statutory agencies, the private sector and the community and voluntary and community sector work collectively to improve the quality of life within Wirral. It sets the scene for

partnership working in the borough for the years to come and will play a key role in meeting the borough's future challenges, by linking together key local authority and partner strategies such as the borough's Local Development Framework (LDF).

We recognise that focusing on the disparities in the borough needs to be complemented by an approach which identifies and targets a number of priority groups across Wirral, including Incapacity Benefit claimants, lone parents, people from black and minority ethnic communities, low income households with children, people with low or no skills, Wirral's NEET (not in education, employment or training) cohort, the over 50s and women returners.

Given the scale of the challenges, Wirral partners agree that preventing and tackling worklessness and related deprivation (including child poverty) are priorities that must cut across strategic policies at a number of levels.

An ambitious investment strategy is now in place that will drive the economic development of the Borough. This strategy is led by a partnership board consisting of representatives of both the public and private sectors. A multi agency approach to tackling worklessness and growing the economy has been recognised by partners across the Local Area Agreement, with joint priorities being agreed. Activity will focus upon the attainment of the investment strategy's objectives in order to narrow the gap in outcomes for all Wirral people.

1.3 Wirral's Local Area Agreement 2008-11

Partners have already developed strong and effective partnerships with Wirral's voluntary and community sector, which has been at the forefront of much of our activity to tackle worklessness, deprivation and low skills within some of our most deprived neighbourhoods and disadvantaged groups.

We will begin to tackle the key challenges facing Wirral through the delivery of our Local Area Agreement. This is a 3 year action plan which has been negotiated with central government to deliver improvements on Wirral's shared priorities. Wirral's LSP has identified, through a robust prioritisation process, the right improvement targets for 2008-11.

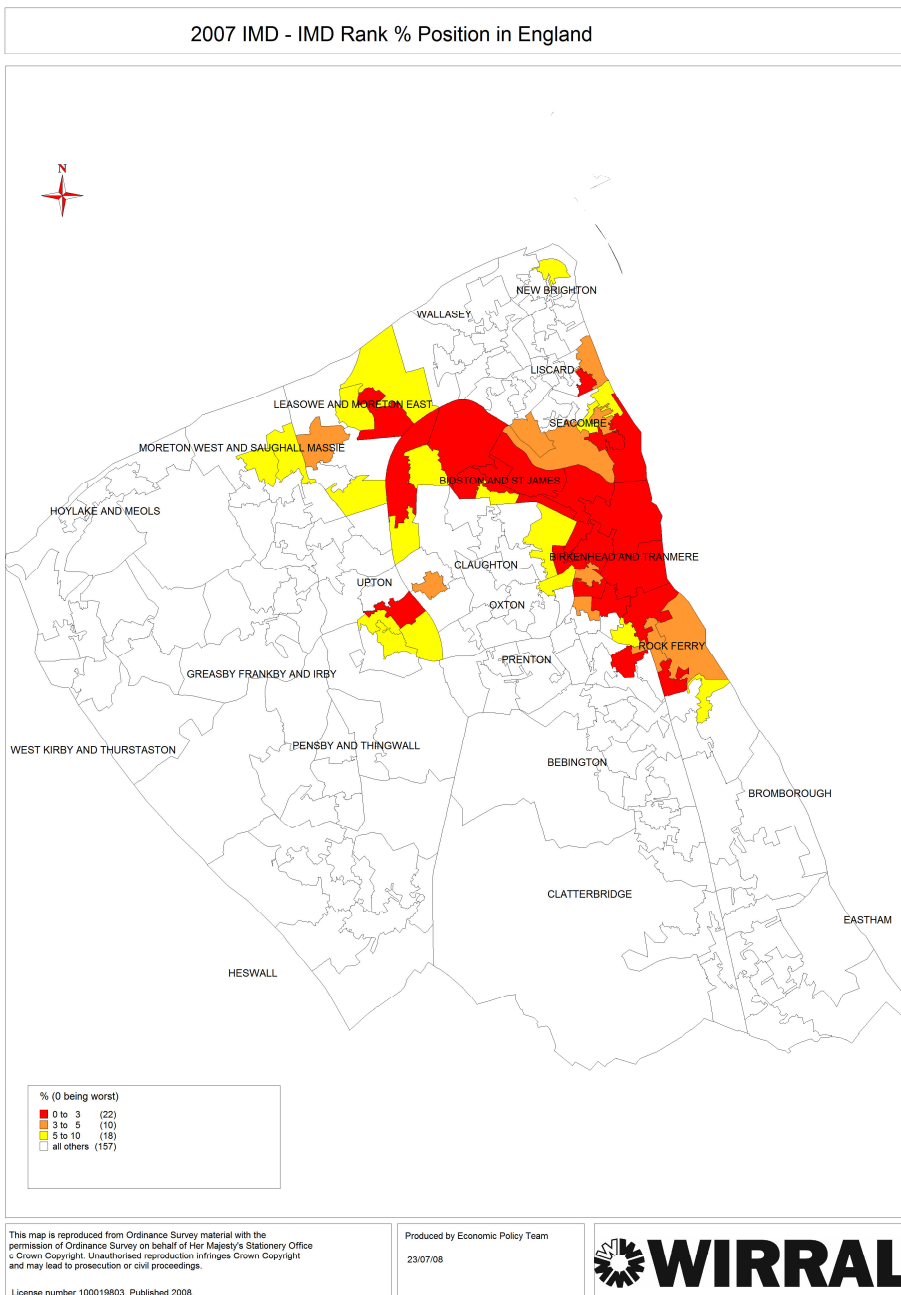
The vision for Wirral is ambitious in scope. However Wirral's Local Area Agreement will balance this ambition with targeted activity. The improvement targets in our Local Area Agreement will address the key challenges identified in the sustainable community strategy.

2. Wirral's Story of Place

2.1 A Borough of Contrast and Challenges

Wirral is a borough of enormous opportunity but it also a place of sharp contrasts, with the overall picture masking stark inequalities for local people. Many of Wirral's citizens enjoy an excellent quality of life, with good quality housing, schools and living environment. In certain parts of the borough, however, there are significant levels of deprivation. Within Wirral, areas range from the 26th most deprived in the country (around St James Church in Birkenhead) to one of the most affluent in South West Heswall less than 6 miles away.

Some of the 3% most deprived areas in the country fall within the urban developments of Birkenhead and parts of Wallasey. These areas generally have a younger population profile than the Wirral average. They experience higher than average levels of anti-social behaviour and educational achievement at Key Stage 4 is below the Wirral average. Life expectancy here is shorter than the Wirral average and a high percentage of Wirral's Job Seeker Allowance claimants live in the area. House prices are lower than the Wirral average although this does lead to a greater availability of affordable housing. There are generally low levels of car ownership here but there is good access to services by public transport. Although environmental quality of the built and surrounding environment can be poor in these areas, every area of Wirral is well served by public parks and open spaces.



In contrast there are areas of the borough (including Bebington and Clatterbridge, Heswall, Pensby and Thingwall and West Wirral) that have an older population

profile where house prices are higher than the Wirral average and there is limited availability of affordable housing. There are low levels of deprivation, low levels of anti-social behaviour and educational achievement at key stage 4 is above average. Life expectancy in these areas is above the Wirral average, and there are high levels of car ownership. Most areas have relatively good access to services by public transport. These areas are well served for parks and open spaces with easy access to countryside and coastal areas.

The remainder of Wirral has a more mixed profile, with generally low levels of deprivation although some areas to the east of the Greasby, Frankby, Irby, Upton and Woodchurch area forum boundary, and in Leasowe, Moreton and Saughall Massie fall into the most deprived 3% in the country.

In terms of deprivation, Wirral compares favourably with most of the other Merseyside Local Authorities, particularly Liverpool and Knowsley. However, in terms of employment deprivation, Wirral comes out as 8th worst, behind Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, and Sunderland.

Wirral's population has declined from over 355,000 during the 1970s to 311,200 in mid-2006. The population is skewed towards older age groups, with a lower proportion of younger adults and a higher proportion of older people than the averages for the rest of England and the North West. The fastest falling population categories are the 24 years and under age groups. The principal flows of population (i.e. people moving out of the borough to other areas) are out of Wirral to Denbighshire, Flintshire and Chester and into Wirral from Liverpool and the rest of greater Merseyside.

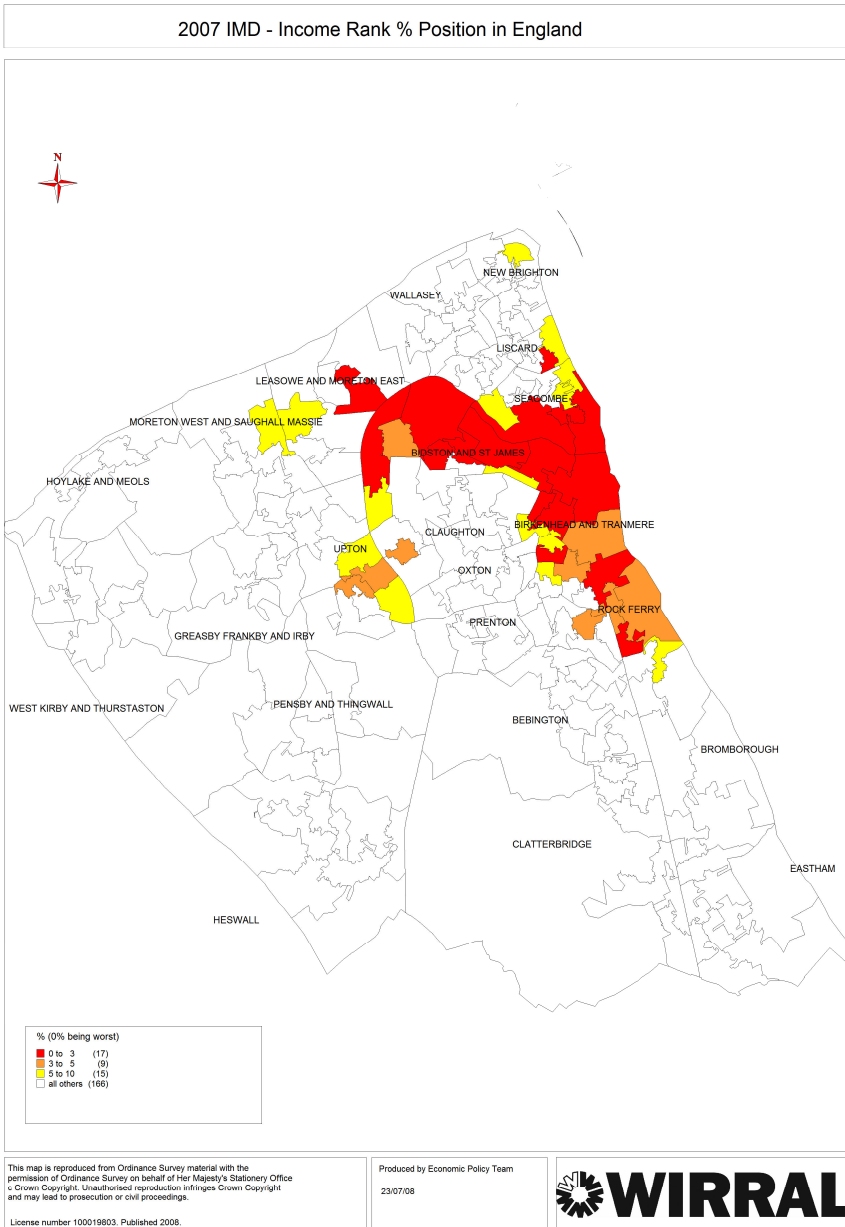
Residents' surveys (2003, 2006, 2007) have consistently identified crime levels, clean streets and activities for teenagers as being important to residents and in need of improvement. In 2006, responses to the general resident's survey indicated that these topics were less in need of improvement than in 2003, suggesting that residents were noticing the positive impact of community safety, youth activities and street cleansing initiatives in the borough. However, results from the Wirral resident's survey 2007 show that several topics have become important to a greater proportion of residents and also been stated as in greater need of improvement by a greater proportion of residents. The most significant change has been in the importance and need of improvement of the provision of affordable decent housing. This is in line with the national context.

2.2 Wirral's Economy

Challenges

It is clear that Wirral is an economy that is under-performing. Although it plays an important role in the City Regional labour market – exporting substantial numbers of highly skilled workers to Liverpool, Chester and elsewhere – Wirral has a relatively small and low value economy. It has one of the lowest GVA per capita in Merseyside and the North West, and represents only 56.7% of the UK average. In addition the economy of Wirral is growing relatively slowly and as a result is falling behind other parts of the City Region, the North West and the rest of the UK.

There is a sharp distinction between the economic activities that are taking place in Wirral and those that Wirral residents are engaged in. Earnings of workers in Wirral are below the national average yet earnings of its residents are actually above the national figures. Wirral is ranked as the eighth most deprived area of the country in the 2007 IMD indices of deprivation in relation to employment and significant concentrations of economic inactivity are focused in the east of the borough. The areas that see these spatial concentrations of economic inactivity also see similar inequalities in areas such as health, educational achievement and crime. This is an indication of the scale of the challenge faced in Wirral and the need for a focused and co-ordinated approach to tackling worklessness and economic inactivity.



In essence, Wirral faces a number of economic challenges that must be addressed if it is to become a thriving place to live, work and visit:

- For every 100 people of working age in the borough, there are only 61 jobs;
- The gap between Wirral, the North West and national rates is significant in terms of all the main indicators of an enterprising economy, such as self-employment rates, business start up rates, business density and GVA per head;
- More than 40,000 residents currently travel outside Wirral to access higher paid employment in Liverpool and Chester;
- There are low levels of enterprise and

entrepreneurial activity in Wirral, particularly amongst women and people from BME groups;

- There are huge variations in levels of economic inactivity across the borough – from over 56% in parts of Birkenhead and Tranmere, to less than 3% in parts of Heswall;

- There are high levels of worklessness, child poverty and related deprivation in certain wards;
- There are close to 20,000 people claiming incapacity benefit - a significant number which has a clear impact on the economic performance of the borough;
- There are stark gaps in employment skills in deprived communities;
- There is a shortfall in the quantity and quality of sites/premises for modern business needs;
- The VAT registration rate of businesses is amongst the lowest in the North West.

Moving in the right direction

A comprehensive investment strategy is now in place to guide Wirral's economic development over the next decade and full employment and enterprise strategies have been developed to create a workforce suitable for the demands of employers. The majority of the new Working Neighbourhoods Fund is being directed towards improving the economic prosperity of Wirral in line with the aims of investment strategy.

The majority of respondents to a Wirral Citizen's Panel Survey in Spring 2007 thought that the local authority had been successful in supporting the economic regeneration of Wirral.

There is a continuing development programme to meet intense demand for prime office and industrial locations. £150m has been invested in Wirral International Business Park and more than 200,000 sq ft of quality business units were developed in 2006.

Partners are working with local people on jobs and skills. The Pathways to Work partnership scheme led by Job Centre Plus is helping people on benefits back into work. An innovative Reach Out service has been developed to give confidential advice and support to people who have experienced problems in accessing employment, education and training. 184 people that were unemployed between 1-15 years are now in employment, and 24 families have been moved out of the child poverty index.

Tourism has already been boosted by Wirral's major events and impressive cultural offer and work is underway to develop a 5 year plan for the borough's cultural and leisure services. The Wirral Coast Partnership is bringing together all key stakeholders with an interest in Wirral's natural coastline asset, with the aim of maximising the visitor potential to the area.

Partners

Partnership arrangements around this agenda have been strengthened further through merging a number of partnerships and groups to establish Wirral's Economic Development and Skills Partnership. This group held its inaugural meeting in May 2007 and the single partnership will deliver the economic development and enterprise outcomes within Wirral's Local Area Agreement.

- Learning and Skills Council
- Job Centre Plus
- Wirral Metropolitan College
- Community and voluntary sector
- Wirral Council (Strategic Development / Transport)
- Children & Young Peoples Service
- Birkenhead 6th Form College
- Connexions
- Wirral Hospital Trust
- North West Development Agency
- Probation Service
- Wirral Primary Care Trust
- Merseyside Employer Coalition
- North West Trades Union Congress
- Government Office
- Business Link
- Wirral PCT

2.3 Crime and Community Safety in Wirral

Challenges

Wirral has the lowest rate of recorded crime in Merseyside. The rates of burglaries, violent crimes, robberies and vehicle crimes continue to fall and are amongst the lowest in the country. However, crime levels in our most deprived communities are disproportionately higher than the overall position for Wirral, with 10% of our Borough contributing almost 30% of crime. Much of this is violent crime, located within our town centres and is associated with our night-time economy.

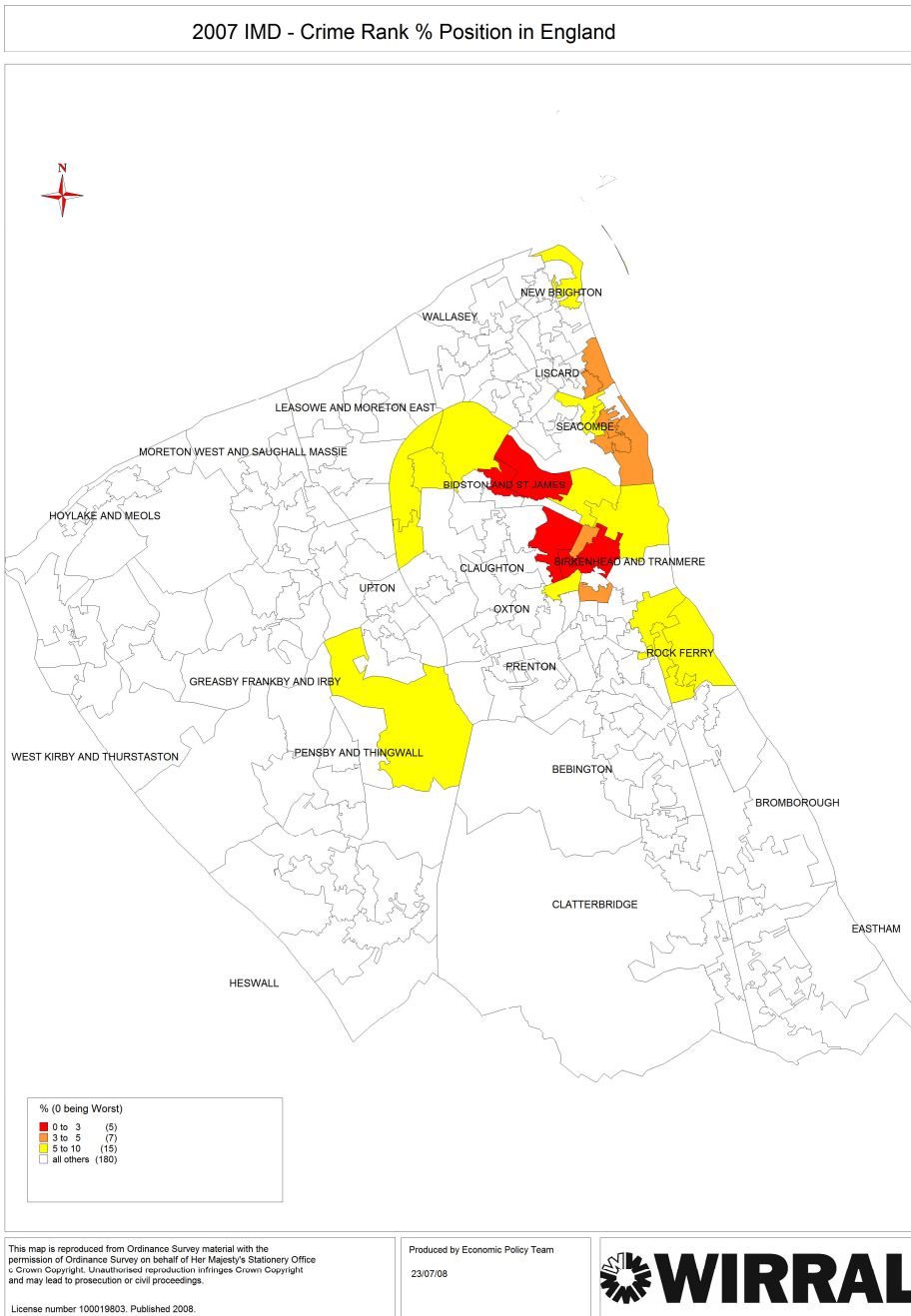
Partners are working together to reduce access to alcohol and improve education, treatment and enforcement to reduce overall crime. There are strong motivations for reducing alcohol fuelled crime in deprived communities in order to protect and enhance the night time economy.

Wirral's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and its Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy detail the preventative action undertaken to tackle the alcohol abuse that is key to reducing alcohol related crime.

There has been a fall in residents' fear of crime. However Anti-Social Behaviour remains a significant issue for local people. Whilst performance is improving, ASB was still the highest reported incident category reported on Wirral in 2006/7 – three times higher than the next highest. During last year, there were 21,994 reported incidents of anti-social behaviour and 7,569 recorded incidents of criminal damage, the next highest category. There were also 2,425 incidents of secondary, deliberate fires.

Serious injury and death of road users and pedestrians in Wirral continues to be a significant challenge. Despite various successful initiatives such as cycle training, traffic calming and road safety neighbourhood regeneration initiatives, the borough

still has particularly high rates of road casualties involving car users, child pedestrians and motorcyclists compared to other Merseyside authorities.



Moving in the right direction

Crime rates continue to fall across Wirral and the borough is largely a very safe place to live, visit and work in. A Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy for Wirral has been in place for a number of years.

Even though issue of crime amongst Wirral's teenagers is still identified by residents as an area for improvement, Wirral has reduced the perception of 'youth disorder as a big problem' by 16.5% since 2005. Working with young people is a recognised strength in Wirral, with a Beacon status awards for Positive Youth Engagement. Just some of the projects are:

- Merseyside's Fire and Rescue Service's work with young people in a number of ways to prevent hoax calls and anti-social behaviour.

This includes early intervention projects and work with children and young people at risk

- On Track - a partnership approach to preventative work with disadvantaged youngsters at risk of becoming involved in crime
- It's My Park - a community involvement and heritage project, delivered in partnership with Liverpool University in Birkenhead Park providing diversionary activities for children, tours for local schools and events for the local community

- CH Youth Challenge - the Sport & Recreation section of the local authority works with communities where need is greatest to reduce anti-social behaviour through the use of sports activities. This is an intelligence – led approach directing the activities where and when most needed.
- For My Girlfriend - a road safety campaign aimed at young men with a hard hitting reconstruction of a car crash, run by the Council in partnership with the emergency services.

Wirral's Youth Offending Service has achieved a consistently high level of performance.

The successful Operation Hawk is the Drug and Alcohol Team's response to street level drug-dealing, delivered by Merseyside Police. It is a co-ordinated campaign which includes police operations, media and marketing activity, information gathering from the public and drug awareness promotion in schools.

In March 2007 Wirral was selected by the government as one of 40 'respect' areas, as part of the current drive against anti-social behaviour. Many initiatives have been developed, including the Youth Respect Team aimed at preventing and reducing anti-social behaviour by young people. For example, a Parenting Coordinator is now in post within the Anti-Social Behaviour Team. This specialist practitioner delivers parenting programmes for families engaged in significant anti-social behaviour. Wirral's Respect Bus visits public places where local residents can get advice from a number of specialists on topics ranging from abandoned cars to youth nuisance

British Transport Police are working in conjunction with Merseytravel on Operation Shield to identify and remove weapons from people using public transport.

The Wirral Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) is a partnership made up of all the key agencies that work with crime and disorder as well as elected Council Members and members of the public. The group meets to determine the best way to tackle the challenges of crime and disorder in Wirral. In particular the Partnership is accountable for the Wirral Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy. The strategy is reviewed every three years on the basis of an audit of crime and disorder in the borough and consultation with Wirral residents.

The delivery arm of Wirral's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership is a multi disciplinary team which includes seconded officers from Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service and Family Support Unit and is supported by a dedicated Community Safety Solicitor.

Partners

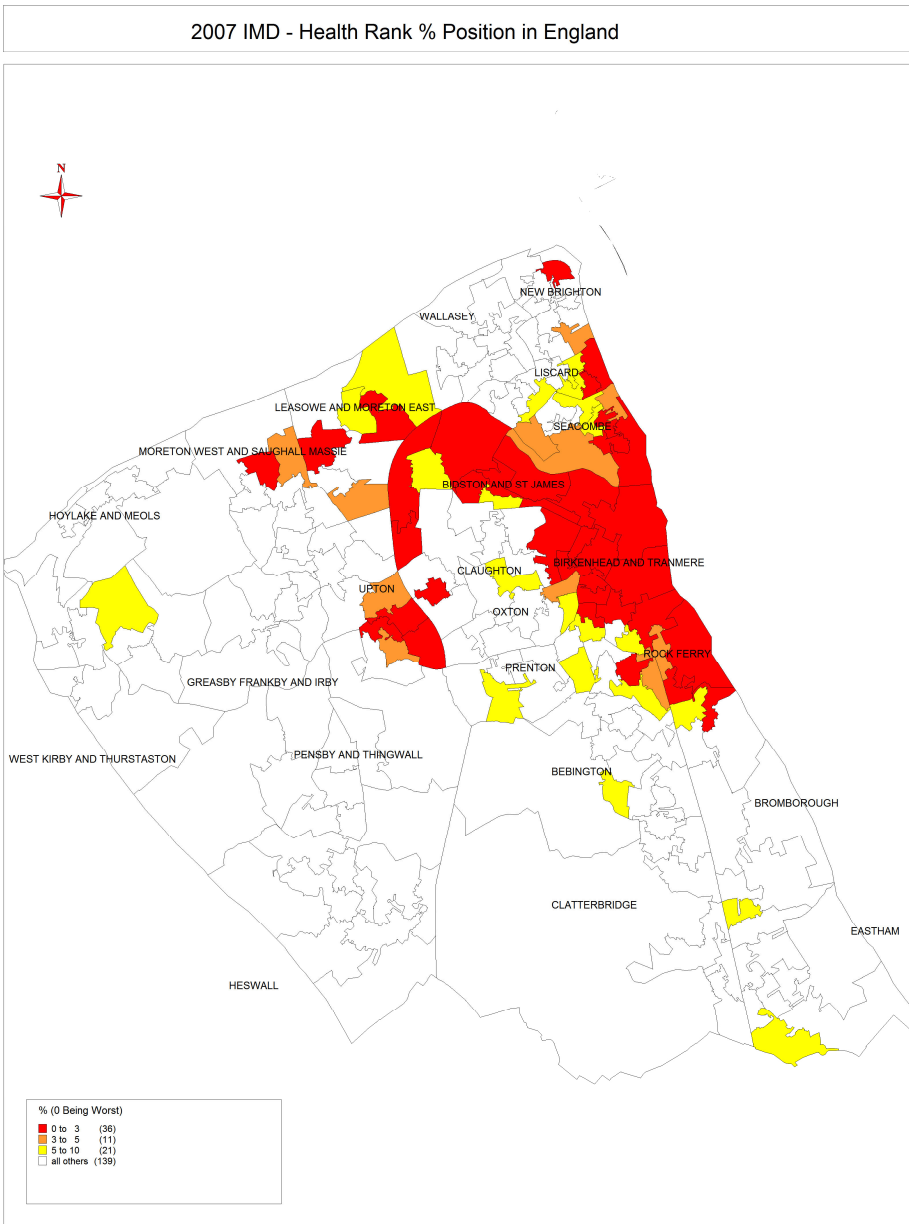
- Merseyside Police
- Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
- Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Youth Offending Service
- Children & Young Peoples Service
- Dept of Adult Social Services

- Wirral Community Safety team
- Wirral Council Regeneration dept
- Anti Social Behaviour Team
- Merseyside Probation Service
- Merseytravel
- Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Service
- Community and voluntary sector
- Wirral PCT
- Crown Prosecution Service

2.4 Health and well being in Wirral

Challenges

Many Wirral residents enjoy excellent health and well-being. However between the most affluent and the most deprived areas there is a stark mortality gap, with those in the most affluent areas living on average over 10 years longer than those in the most deprived areas.



The gap in mortality rates between our most deprived areas and the rest of Wirral continues to widen. Wirral has the widest variation in mortality rates within the borough of all the Merseyside districts and one of the largest health inequalities in the Northwest. Notably, male life expectancy is on average 10.5 years shorter in the most deprived part of the Borough compared with the most affluent.

The reduction of health inequalities is a complex area and requires consistent action across a wide range of agencies at national and local level. Some progress has been made in terms of reducing the overall mortality rates for Wirral through the

success of some specific intervention measures.

For women, the main condition contributing to the gap in life expectancy is digestive disorders (including cirrhosis). For men, the main conditions are cardio vascular disease and digestive disorders (including cirrhosis).

One of the key challenge areas in relation to increasing life expectancy lies in tackling alcohol harm and its related conditions, as well as making progress in relation to other lifestyle behaviours and health promotion for all.

Residents expect to remain independent for as long as possible and to have choice in how they access services and this is a key consideration for partners in designing services in the future.

Falls are a major cause of disability and the leading cause of mortality due to injury in older people over 75. Wirral has an ageing population. 21% of Wirral residents are of retirement age and the population of older people aged over 65 is expected to increase. The population of people aged over 85 is set to increase by 15% by 2010. The ageing population will mean an increase in the number of people with long term conditions and a high risk of falls is likely to present significant challenges in relation to increased demand for hospital care and support to live at home. There are significant inequalities within the Borough regarding falls, with rates of falls per 1,000 population varying from 3.8 to 101.8.

Figures suggest that around 65% of Wirral's 20,000 incapacity benefit claimants are claiming for a mental health condition. It has been estimated that there will be a rise of 12% in the total number of people needing a learning disability service by 2011 with the most significant increase of 20% in the 60-79 age group.

Drug and alcohol misuse impact upon issues as diverse as community cohesion, anti-social behaviour and health.

Moving in the right direction

The Primary Care Trust and the local authority have worked together to develop five lifestyle strategies to encourage people to make healthier choices. These strategies cover obesity, food and drink, physical activity, drink safe and smoke free and all have been integrated into an overarching health and well-being strategic framework under the direction of the joint directors of public health.

A strategic framework for adult social care has been developed, with refreshed joint commissioning strategies for older people and learning disability now in place. Engagement with stakeholders is also improving. For example, an Older People's Parliament has been set up in partnership with Wirral Senior Citizen's Forum, to give older people an opportunity to have their say on decisions that affect them.

The local authority is leading a drive to put power in the hands of the most vulnerable people through the use of individual budgets and direct payments. These two methods allow people to much more easily choose what services we deliver and how they access them. The development of individual budgets and self directed care will provide individuals with greater choice and control over their employment, learning and social opportunities.

Much has already been done to help disabled and older people to live at home more safely and the council is working with Wirral Partnership Homes and the Borough's Primary Care Trust to develop a new, technology-based service that will further this agenda. Following a successful pilot of the Smart House in Woodchurch, a technology based service is being rolled out that will help disabled people and older people live at home safely, supporting falls and accident prevention and assisting with hospital discharges. To date 223 people have had assistive technology equipment installed in their homes.

Culture and leisure services has an important role to play in addressing a range of challenges associated with deprivation in particular health inequality. The strategic review of culture and leisure services will have this principle at the centre of the report that will be delivered this year.

Wirral's leisure centres, in partnership with the Amateur Swimming Association, are adopting the national plan for teaching swimming and pioneering a new scheme which will see older people accessing the Borough's swimming pools for free. The free swimming programme for young people increased use of swimming pools by 65%. This activity will continue.

A new initiative this year will deliver weekend clean ups for targeted play areas. New resources have been allocated to a pilot cleaning scheme capable of responding flexibly outside normal hours, including weekends, to calls to remove glass and debris from those children's play areas where particular problems of cleanliness and safety are identified during periods of high use. This scheme will be monitored and the results used to inform future service delivery. Other initiatives include developing a 'books on prescription' service that encourages more and better informed users to take greater responsibility for their own health. This is a joint project between the Primary Care Trust and Wirral Libraries.

Council funding has also been identified for the "Get into Reading" project, matching that of the PCT and that of the University of Liverpool, who run the scheme in association with Wirral Libraries. The scheme, which aims to improve the mental well being of people and build community spirit through shared reading, and which operates in libraries, community centres and day centres across Wirral, has already proved successful and attracted national attention for the benefits it brings to those who take part.

Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) brings together a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations that are concerned with the effects of drug and alcohol use in Wirral. Wirral DAAT is responsible for ensuring that the targets identified in the National Drug Strategy are achieved locally.

The DAAT's priorities for action in Wirral echo the four key aims of the National Drug Strategy. These are to prevent today's young people from becoming tomorrow's problematic substance users, reduce the availability of illegal drugs, reduce drug related crime and its effect on communities and provide fast and effective treatment. In addition Wirral's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy will continue to be implemented this year.

Partners

- Wirral PCT
- Wirral NHS Hospital Trust
- Drug and Alcohol Team
- Department for Adult Social Services
- Community and voluntary sector
- Merseytravel
- Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
- WIRED
- Children & Young Peoples Dept.
- Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Trust
- Age Concern
- Dept for Work and Pensions
- Wirral Council Technical Services
- Government Office North West

2.5 Life chances for Wirral's children and young people

Challenges

Most of Wirral's children and young people will fulfil the aspirations that we and their parents and carers have for them. They will be healthy, safe and well educated; have easy access to recreation, sport and leisure; be able to make a positive contribution to our society; and be well prepared for their working lives. Attainment levels in primary schools are above the national average in writing and science for seven year olds and statistics for 11 year olds are above or inline with national averages in all subject areas. 60.9 percent of Wirral pupils attain five or more A*-C GCSE grades.

Some children and young people do not fulfil their potential, with a clear link between deprivation and academic attainment. The attainment gap between free school meal pupils and non free school meals pupils in maintained schools for GCSE attainment of 5 plus GCSEs at grade A*-C in Wirral was 37.4 percentage points, higher than in the other Merseyside districts. The key challenge therefore is to bridge the Key Stage 3 attainment gap in science, mathematics and English in schools in deprived communities.

Better outcomes for children and young people are invariably found in the more affluent areas. Children and young people in the more deprived areas of the Borough are less healthy, less safe, have poorer attainments at school and are more likely not to be able to find a job. Although the outcomes for Wirral children and young people taken as a whole exceed the expectations that we may have, given the levels of deprivation, the challenge for us is to eliminate those disparities in outcomes and ensure that all our young people have the best possible start in life.

Broadly, we think that of the 78,000 children in Wirral, 20% (15,600 children) at any one time will have additional needs which require some kind of extra support. Most of these children will be living in the more disadvantaged areas. Within this figure, about 1950 children will have more complex needs and will require a much higher

level of support; for example, if they have to be taken into care or are severely disabled.

Nearly 90% of 16 year olds stay on in school or college or go into employment. However the numbers of young people not engaged in education, employment and training (NEET) is an important challenge. Connexions have reported that the NEET

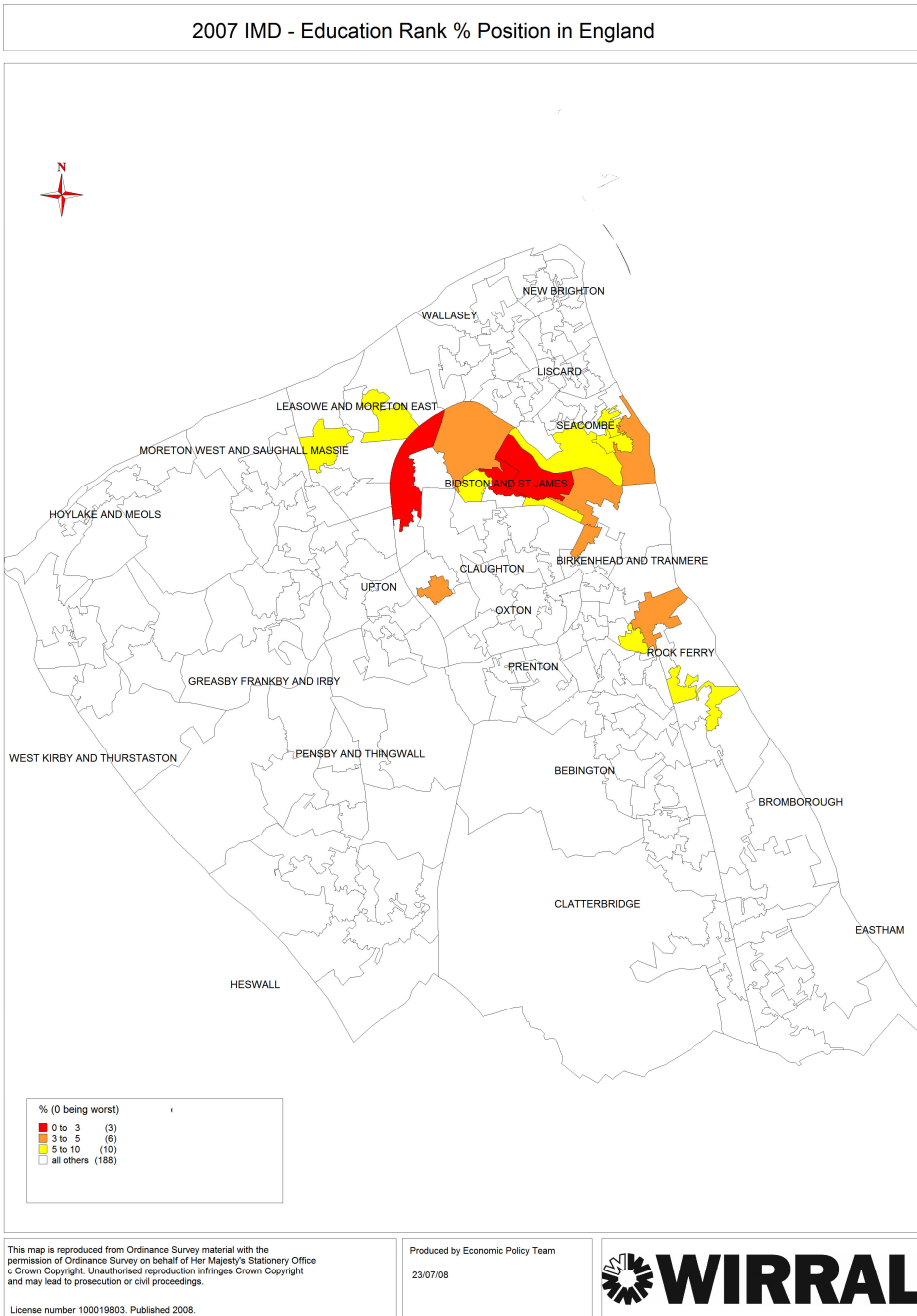
total in Wirral is reducing but significant work remains to be done.

Wirral has a higher number of looked after children than any other comparable authority. Reducing this number is a priority that must be achieved whilst ensuring that the safety of the children remains a paramount concern.

The proportion of children who are obese is higher than the regional average. In 2007, 25% of reception year children and 35% of year six children were classified as either overweight or obese. There are however signs that strategies to promote healthy lifestyles are effective.

Moving in the right direction

Our children and young people’s strategic plan, owned by the Children & Young People’s Partnership continues to be a clear and robust plan identifying the needs and requirements across the



borough.

Children and young people do well in our schools. They are entitled to a place in a nursery or early years setting from the age of 3 and nearly all young children take advantage of this. Wirral has responded well to the challenge of developing childcare to support parents into work or training, with the long term aim of helping to lift children out of poverty. We have seen growth in most sectors although the

numbers of childminders operating in the Borough are subject to some variation. Currently, there are 76 providers registered for full daycare, 60 for sessional care, 332 childminders and 97 out of school clubs

Wirral's children and young people have access to a range of extended services and activities which support and motivate them to achieve their full potential. Wirral's children's centres are at the heart of this agenda. In Primary school this means access to a varied menu of activities combined with childcare, if needed, and in Secondary school these activities are offered alongside a safe place to be. The menu includes sport, arts and drama, recreational play, homework clubs and some academically focussed activities for those who need extra tuition or more challenging opportunities for those most able. Activities can be on the school site or somewhere else in the locality and are available outside of school hours and during school holidays.

Schools are supported to identify children with additional needs, ensuring swift and easy access to a whole range of specialist services. Family learning sessions enable children to learn with their fathers and mothers. Information provided to parents through this service helps ensure a smooth transition into primary school and enables them to support their child moving on to secondary school.

School standards are high – most of our schools on inspection are classified as good or outstanding and children do consistently well at all Key Stages. Nearly 90% of 16 year olds stay on in school or college or go into employment; 45.5% of 18 year olds go to university. The Connexions Service gives good support in providing information, advice and guidance for all young people 13-19 (up to 25 for those with particular needs), and targeted services exist for young people who are vulnerable or not clear about their future.

Most children and young people are healthy. The Borough is well served by health centres, where many of the GPs are located, and children and young people are well supported by a community paediatric team, health visitors, school nurses and others.

Children and young people are generally safe and learn how to care for themselves. They make a positive contribution to life in Wirral. They take part in musical activities, games, sports and outdoor pursuits and are encouraged to take part in positive activities through youth and play provision. Many children and young people belong to clubs and societies where they can develop their interests and skills. Different activities enable children and young people to have fun and also learn about themselves and how they can make a difference to society. They achieve awards under the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and they volunteer in their local communities. Supported by their teachers, youth workers, Connexions Personal Advisors, the organisers of voluntary groups and many others, they grow up to be well-adjusted, active and responsible young people.

Just some of the projects making a difference to children and young people's lives in Wirral include:

- Smokefree - At the end of September, Wirral's two dedicated Smokefree Officers, joined by smoking cessation youth workers, launched an age of sale

change promotion in Birkenhead Town Centre using the health promotion trailer. They are currently also taking the trailer on a tour of local schools and colleges;

- Kerbcraft: Crafty the Fox - an award winning scheme to promote road safety to schoolchildren;
- Digit - a scheme initiated by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service in response to community concerns about anti-social behaviour and complaints from youngsters about lack of things to do. The project has developed in partnership with many agencies enabling the young people to build a market garden and community kitchen which is used for healthy eating, food hygiene and cookery classes, using the produce they have grown themselves. This project contributes to the *Safer Communities* theme by providing diversionary activities for children, the *Health and Well-Being* theme by encouraging a healthier lifestyle and *Living and Working Environment* theme by bringing derelict land back into use;
- Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) – co-ordinated by the Connexions partnership to provide activities for children and young people between the ages of 8-19 yrs, particularly those at risk of social exclusion and community crime;
- Leisure Opportunities for Looked after Children – a joint funding initiative provides a dedicated worker to promote and encourage leisure and cultural opportunities for looked after children. This contributes to the *Health and Well Being* of the children involved;
- Cultural Equalities Inclusion – this project provides holiday activities for children and young people in minority communities, delivered by the voluntary sector.

Partners

- Wirral Council (Children and Young People / Technical Services)
- Wirral PCT
- Connexions Merseyside
- Merseyside Police
- Community and voluntary sector

2.6 Wirral's living and working environment

Challenges

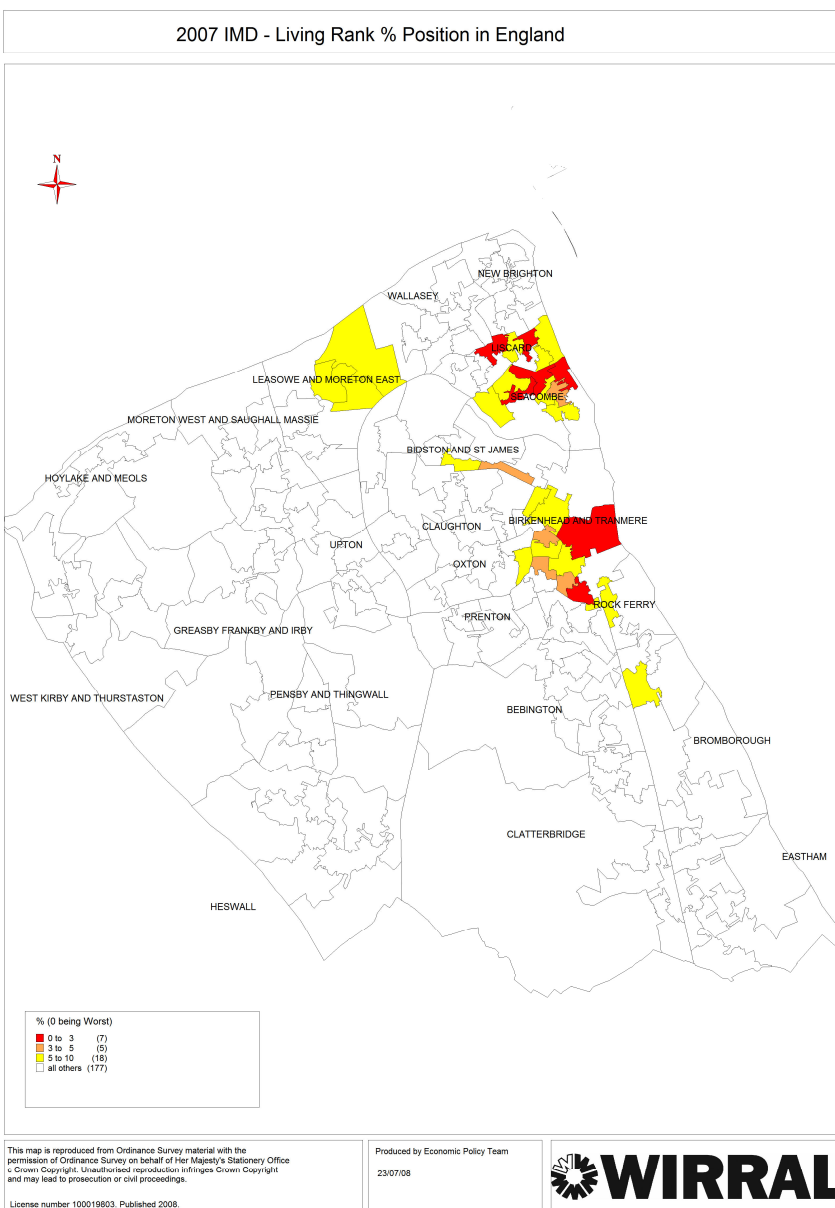
Wirral's living and working environment makes an important contribution to the quality of life of residents and to the Borough's tourism offer.

Wirral was one of the worst authorities in the country in terms of performance on recycling - the percentage of household waste recycled in 2006/07 was only 9% with 5% of waste sent for composting. Wirral fell well short of its 20% combined target. To address this, a new environmental streetscene services contract for all waste and street cleaning has been put in place to deliver improvements in services.

Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill has an environmental and financial benefit. If Wirral residents do not minimise waste produced and recycle more, the council will have to pay significantly more in landfill taxes in coming years. This could divert money away from other priorities.

Since the roll out of the grey recycling bins across Wirral, the recycling rates for the Borough have improved dramatically. The latest figures show that approximately 31% of Wirral’s waste is being recycled, as opposed to 14 % this time last year. 95% of properties are now on the grey bin scheme.

Street cleanliness issues feature highly on Citizens Panel surveys and are frequently raised at Area Forums. It is clear that residents and businesses regard street cleanliness as extremely important to their quality of life. There is a clear link between deprivation and street cleanliness.



Moving in the right direction

Wirral’s performance borough wide has improved in recent years, with significant progress being made on overall cleansing standards and fly tipping removal across the borough.

A wide variety of projects have already made a significant, positive impact on Wirral’s living and working environment. These include:

- **Tranmere Together** - a partnership of the Council and leading Registered Social Landlords, has co-ordinated investment in the area. Under Tranmere Together, a neighbourhood management programme has been implemented to enable the co-ordination and delivery of services

under one roof for the area. New initiatives for the area include the use of Neighbourhood and Environmental Wardens in order to tackle the physical and social challenges found in Tranmere. By providing a pro-active approach to

issues such as fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour, these schemes can pioneer neighbourhood change, tackle low demand and reintroduce safety and pride into communities;

- Bidston and North Birkenhead Environmental Action Group (BEANBAG) - an award –winning community initiative which has co-ordinated action across all public sector organisations and enlisted many private sector partners to improve the quality of the environment in a deprived area of the borough. The group does this through education, litter-picks, and fun days and is so successful that the project has been rolled out to other areas;
- Wirral Wildlife – an umbrella organisation for the many volunteer organisations who protect and maintain Wirral’s natural habitats and species, working closely with Wirral’s Ranger Service, statutory agencies and the police;
- Friends Forum – network of Friends of Parks groups which meets twice a year to share best practice in enhancing and improving local urban parks and open spaces;
- Wirral Local Agenda 21 Environmental Network – voluntary organisation which organises community events and works with schools to promote more sustainable living. A waste topic group promotes waste reduction and recycling through education campaigns;
- UGLI (Urban Green Land Initiative) - aims to work with owners of derelict sites and the local community to proactively find a sustainable solution for the long term maintenance of the site.

Partners

- Wirral Council Technical services
- Wirral Council regeneration
- Parks & Countryside Service
- Wirral Partnership Homes
- Riverside Housing
- Wirral Environment Partnership
- Beechwood & Ballantyne Management Committee
- Woodchurch Neighbourhood Management
- Wirral Council Corporate Services

2.7 Housing in Wirral

Challenges

Whilst Wirral’s efforts with regards to decent homes have been largely successful in the social sector in recent years, it is in the borough’s private sector stock where problems are greater, particularly in those homes occupied by vulnerable households.

In the west of the borough, house prices exceed five times the borough average and in the lower valued east, prices are rising faster than incomes. There is, as a consequence, a greater requirement for affordable homes both for social rent and shared ownership housing across the borough together with financial products being made available in the housing market renewal areas to assist lower income households to remain in owner occupied homes. House prices are rising in all areas of the borough, pricing out first time buyers who would normally purchase at the lower end of the market. There is also increasing demand from single non pensioner households and from single parent households.

Against national trends, the number of homeless applicants in Wirral hasn't fallen at the rate it has elsewhere, the level of intentional homeless acceptances is the second highest in the North West and the use of temporary accommodation has increased.

Moving in the right direction

Wirral's proactive approach to developing sustainable, appropriate housing in line with the NW regional housing strategy is evidenced in a number of strategies and programmes of activity. Notable amongst these is the work on housing market renewal which will provide a greater choice of type, tenure and value of property. The application of the restrictive building policy in the west of the borough is intended to assist the Housing Market Renewal Initiative by concentrating redevelopment on the eastern side. Through the short and medium term renewal of housing markets, principally in the key urban areas of inner Wirral, the tone will be set for the long term revival of Wirral's eastern waterfront neighbourhoods as places where people will choose to live in the years ahead, balancing out Wirral's housing market in the process.

The Living Through Change initiative encompasses a range of initiatives to support individuals and neighbourhoods undergoing significant change. This includes the environmental management and security of high stress areas by Environmental Wardens; installation of security equipment, crime reduction advice, personal alarms and CCTV. Following consultation, environmental improvements have been made to the Old Chester Road Corridor in Tranmere; a Homemovers Service and a Handyperson scheme have been implemented;

A recent review of homeless services has highlighted the potential to reduce homelessness through an increased programme of prevention work, including the further development of partnership approaches.

Much has already been done to deliver our aim of eradicating fuel poverty in Wirral including the delivery of the Affordable Warmth project.

Partners

- Wirral Council Regeneration Department
- Merseyside Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
- Wirral Home Improvement Agency
- Wirral Partnership Homes
- Community and voluntary sector

- Tranmere Together
- Venture Housing
- Wirral Methodist Housing
- Riverside Housing
- The Housing Corporation
- Tranmere Alliance
- Partnership for Racial Equality
- Bidston Rise Tenants
- Wirral Council Forward Planning
- Anti Social Behaviour Team
- Housing Associations

3. Wirral 2025

3.1 Our Vision

Our vision is of a more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities and people to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Our goal to improve everyone's quality of life in Wirral is based firmly on local needs and community aspirations. The objectives in our community strategy have been, and will continue to be, informed by consultation with the people of Wirral. Consultation undertaken by the council in relation to the Local Development Framework (LDF) has also informed the partnership's vision and strategy for Wirral alongside visioning work undertaken by the Local Strategic Partnership, including within the context of identifying Wirral's Local Area Agreement priorities for improvement.

In developing our community strategy vision and Local Area Agreement, partners have sought to balance the long-term needs of the borough with the key challenges at hand. The questions for all of us concerned with the sustainable solutions include:

- What distinctive roles should each of the partners in the borough play?
- How can public agencies and the voluntary and community sector work together to maximise improvements in the quality of life for local people?
- How can the challenges found in the more deprived areas of the borough relating to issues such as health and educational attainment be addressed?
- Where in Wirral should new employment business development be focused to deliver maximum regeneration and economic benefits?
- How new housing should be distributed between the Housing Market Renewal Area / Regeneration Priority Areas and higher-demand areas?
- On which transport corridors/routes should investment in sustainable transport be focused?
- How can Wirral's natural and built environment and local distinctiveness be respected and enhanced?

We are planning ahead in partnership to ensure that the borough's infrastructure and services can meet future challenges. We also recognise our success as a partnership is closely linked with that of our neighbours in the region and beyond. We know that in order to achieve our long-term vision, Wirral must have a strong local economy and play a more significant role in the city region economy. We want Wirral to be a thriving, metropolitan area playing a significant part in the sustainable growth of the Liverpool City Region. Wirral is already in a strong position to support the city region's success. Key projects include Wirral Waters, a £4.5 billion investment creating 27,000 new jobs; major new development on the waterfront at Woodside; the £65 million New Brighton scheme and the continued development of Wirral International Business Park that has already seen in excess of £150 million of investment.

We know that a strong local economy cannot deliver prosperity for all in Wirral without addressing other issues. For example, a strong local economy requires a well-educated workforce with the right skills. Sustainable growth and investment in

Wirral is therefore underpinned by our ability to provide excellent life chances for children and young people. Our communities need to be safe and offer a suitable range of appropriate affordable housing and a clean and pleasant living and working environment. Equally, improving health & well being is essential to providing a workforce fit to support the economy. A strong local economy will help us to stabilise Wirral's population and rebalance the mix of age ranges in the borough.

Partners in Wirral also recognise the links between low levels of economic inactivity and other issues such as poor health and low educational attainment. That is why we are working together to develop strong, cohesive communities where people are able to access and enjoy increased prosperity and a better quality of life. We will narrow the gap between the poorest and most affluent of Wirral's people and ensure that all communities can play their full part in a sustainable future. Our ambition is to end deprivation. We will work to narrow the gap in education, employment, health and housing both within and between communities. We will give priority to raising the aspirations, opportunities and quality of life of our most vulnerable, disadvantaged or excluded citizens, wherever they might live.

The Sustainable Community Strategy is a long term vision demonstrating how the statutory agencies, the private sector and the community and voluntary and community sector work collectively to improve the quality of life within Wirral. It sets the scene for partnership working in the borough for the years to come and will play a key role in meeting the borough's future challenges, by linking together key local authority and partner strategies. In spatial terms, the Local Development Framework (LDF) provides the framework within which many of the strategic objectives set out in the community strategy will be addressed, specifically those relating to the use of land and buildings in the borough. The LDF is a series of documents, starting with a Core Strategy. Wirral's community strategy supports and reflects the vision in Wirral's Core Strategy which is that, by 2025, Wirral will be a borough which offers a high quality of life for all its residents:

- Wirral's economy will be strengthened and diversified; there will be a wide range of employment sites and premises attractive to existing businesses and inward investors. The borough will be an attractive location for higher quality, better paying employers, particularly those in the knowledge-based sector
- The borough will be an attractive place to live through the promotion of sustainable, mixed communities and the provision of high quality, well designed, zero-carbon, affordable, mixed tenure housing
- Birkenhead as the borough's sub-regional centre will have been enhanced and revitalised as the retail and service centre of choice for all the borough's residents, supported by a network of vital and viable district and local shopping centres
- The major regeneration project at Wirral Waters will have successfully transformed surplus docklands in Birkenhead and Wallasey into vibrant thriving mixed communities with a substantial range of jobs and homes

- The borough will have developed its potential as a tourism destination focusing on the quality of its natural environment, its built heritage and coastal resorts at New Brighton, West Kirby and Hoylake
- The high levels of deprivation and social and health inequalities found in parts of eastern Wirral will have been significantly reduced
- All new development will be suitably adapted to the potential impacts associated with climate change and flood risk whilst minimising their own carbon emissions and consumption of water and other resources. All new residential development will have been zero carbon from 2016 onwards
- The borough will have maintained and enhanced a high quality built and natural environment, including a fully established network of green infrastructure in the urban area and a safeguarded and enhanced biodiversity and geodiversity resource
- The quantity of waste generated in the borough will be reduced through greater levels of waste reduction, re-use and recycling and all waste generated will be managed and processed as close as possible to the borough
- Transport and land use will be fully co-ordinated, maximising the use of sustainable transport modes, including bus, rail, walking and cycling with the number and length of individual car journeys minimised

3.2 Our Strategy

We will plan and take action together to deliver:

- **A strong local economy** for Wirral;
- **Safer, stronger communities** in all parts of the borough
- The best possible **health and well-being** for all families and individuals
- Excellent **life chances for children and young people**
- A high quality **living and working environment**
- **Sustainable, appropriate housing** for all

We will also plan and take action together towards ensuring that the increased prosperity resulting from a strong local economy is accessible to all, and to **narrowing the gap** between Wirral's most affluent and most deprived communities in relation to issues such as health, educational attainment and crime.

The strategic objectives will also be delivered through key partner plans the Local Transport Plan, the Council's Corporate Plan, Wirral's Investment Strategy and the Primary Care Trust's Strategic Commissioning Plan. The community strategy also supports and complements key sub-regional plans such as the City Region Employment Strategy.

The medium-term delivery plan for addressing the key challenges identified in the strategy is Wirral's Local Area Agreement for 2008-11. Part 4 of the strategy highlights the priorities the Local Strategic Partnership is focusing on for the next three years, along with information about how we will ensure these activities are sustainable in the longer term.

Collaboration in Wirral is a recognised strength and there has been considerable progress in partnership working with a strong cross section of statutory and voluntary and community sector agencies. This partnership working has been significantly strengthened through the development and agreement of our vision for Wirral and priorities for improvement.

Partners in Wirral know that we need to overcome significant labour market challenges: we are committed to addressing concentrations of worklessness, doing more to help Incapacity Benefit claimants and lone parents into work, supporting local people to take up jobs in the travel-to-work area, and improving the skill levels of the lowest qualified. Working collaboratively and innovatively as partners will improve the chances of increasing employment and skills and providing high quality, effective services for local people.

The community and voluntary sector is also playing a key role in the development, management and delivery of our community strategy and Wirral's Local Area Agreement. As well as being represented at all levels of the partnership, the sector's infrastructure is in a phase of development, including implementation of the Compact agreement and the coalescence of the individual councils for voluntary service into a new organisation: Voluntary and Community Action for Wirral (VCAW). VCAW and the Network will provide the first point of engagement with the voluntary and community sector, ensuring the voices of local people and community groups can continue to be included in the partnership.

To deliver our objectives, we need to **think big** for Wirral. To tackle Wirral's big challenges, we are committed to large scale change. Thinking big means:

- Focusing growth and investment on the east of the borough through the delivery of Wirral's Investment Strategy, at the heart of the city region, where social, economic and environmental challenges are most acute, regeneration and improvement are most needed and where the opportunities created will be most accessible to the greatest number of people
- Working together to ensure that the regional and local transport infrastructure supports our plans for continued growth and investment.
- Developing the Birkenhead area as the borough's principal focus for retailing and services, complemented by a network of local centres providing modern facilities for day-to-day needs and community support. However, in terms of the borough's long-term economic future, there is a continuing challenge to make Birkenhead the retail destination of choice for all Wirral residents as opposed to just those in the immediate catchment and the need to respond to competition from nearby Liverpool and Chester, and developments such as Cheshire Oaks.

- Expanding the scale and type of employment within Birkenhead and the A41 Corridor and redeveloping the vacant and under-used land within the dock estates to provide a step change in the mix, type and quality of business accommodation available
- Maximising the strengths of west Wirral, including its reputation for high quality homes and environment as well as being an increasingly recognised destination for countryside and coast recreation and tourism, which will in turn support growth and regeneration in the east of the borough
- Transforming our services, and looking at ways we can as partners collaborate to maximise our strengths
 - Ensuring that the strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector in Wirral plays an increasingly key role in improving quality of life for all
- Looking ahead to the challenges presented by an increasingly ageing population for services and the community
- Working together to tackle issues such as alcohol abuse which, if addressed, will have added value for the community
- Making the main priority for homes the creation of sustainable and cohesive communities at the heart of the urban area, promoting housing market renewal and providing a greater mix in the size, type, tenure, quality and affordability of housing available, supported by a high quality environment and modern services including health and education

A number of large scale regeneration projects are already underway which reflect the thinking big ethos:

Wirral Waters

Birkenhead and Wallasey docks are the scene of huge transformation as Peel Holdings develop the concept of Wirral Waters – a £4.5 billion regeneration project to bring jobs and new homes to the docks, with views of the Liverpool Waterfront.

The project will take many years to complete but Peel has already started with a scheme to refurbish the Hydraulic Tower on the Four Bridges route which will provide a new hotel and restaurant. The Hydraulic Tower has been a local landmark for 150 years and has not been fully used for over 50 years. Its new use shows the potential for change in an area that has been overlooked for too long.

Plans for shops, offices and new-build residential developments are the next stage in the ambitious scheme. The plans are for the North Bank area of Birkenhead docks as the company plans to build a new community around the already renovated warehouses at the docks. This ties in with the 2008 announcement that the Mersey Heartlands are a “growth point”, allowing significant numbers of new homes to be built in parts of Birkenhead and Liverpool.

Newheartlands

The Merseyside Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder – Newheartlands, is a long term regeneration project, to tackle the causes and symptoms of housing market failure, vacancy and decline at the heart of the conurbation.

Since 2003, a £43million programme has been delivered, involving targeted acquisition and clearance and large scale refurbishment. Current activity in Rock Ferry and Tranmere will be completed over the 2008-11 period culminating with the leveraging of £38 million private sector investment in new homes on the Fiveways estate and the £30 million redevelopment of Church Road. A key focus will also be to align the housing market renewal in Birkenhead with the long term intentions of the Wirral Waters scheme and ensure that HMR makes a full contribution to the local economy.

Woodside Waterfront Development

This major regeneration programme will include the redevelopment of the Woodside Waterfront in Birkenhead, opening up exciting opportunities along the riverside site which overlooks the historic Liverpool waterfront. It is envisaged that this will create an area comprising offices, restaurants and bars, pavement cafes and other leisure ventures on the waterfront. The programme will include over £250 million of private sector investment and the creation of over 1,000 new jobs.

Wirral Coastal Zone

One of Wirral's key assets is its countryside and coast. A strategic programme of investment has been developed to capitalise on this which is made up of a number of key projects along the Wirral coastline:

- Building on the success of The Open Championship in 2006 through the creation of a world class golf resort adjacent to the Royal Liverpool Golf Course in Hoylake
- A £60 million regeneration scheme is currently underway in New Brighton to re-invigorate this seaside resort and restore it to its former glory, with the redeveloped Floral Pavilion expected to re-open in late 2008
- A Masterplan for West Kirby and Hoylake, with proposals to improve economic prospects for existing businesses and encouraging private sector investment

Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership is committed to maximising Wirral's potential as a place where people want to live, work and invest. The partnership is further committed to ensuring the approaches developed for addressing Wirral's challenges take into account the needs of all sectors of the broader community, promote fairness, accessibility and inclusion, and result in lasting improvements.

3.3 Our Shared Values

Wirral is ambitious for economic, environmental and social regeneration. The challenge for partners in the borough is to balance the need to safeguard and enhance the quality of its environment, while at the same time meeting the needs of increasing community expectations, modern living and providing a modern and sustainable location in which to do business.

As a partnership, we are committed to:

- **Living within environmental limits**, for example in recognising the importance of climate change;
- **A strong, cohesive and fair Wirral**, for example by continuing to address the health inequalities that characterise the borough;
- **Developing sustainable solutions to tackling our strategic aims**, for example by working with partners and the community to develop the right skills to support continued growth in Wirral;
- **Involving communities**, in developing strategies and making decisions at the local level;
- **Ensuring that our services are accessible**, working together to develop collaborative approaches to delivering services and ensuring that those who need to use them can do so

3.3.1 Living within environmental limits

Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership is committed to maximising Wirral's potential as a place where people want to live, work and invest. Alongside this, we are committed to the promotion of more sustainable development, waste minimisation, recycling, renewable energy, energy and water conservation and eco-homes. The partnership is further committed to ensuring the approaches developed for addressing Wirral's challenges take into account the needs of all sectors of the broader community, promote fairness, accessibility and inclusion, and result in lasting improvements.

The Council has signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and hosts a cross-agency working group to deliver actions across Wirral to reduce the impacts of climate change.

3.3.2 Building a strong, cohesive and fair society

Britain is changing fast: demographics; globalisation and migration are making us more aware of different identities, cultures, religions and beliefs. There are changing relationships between men and women, new family patterns and the needs of the labour market and public services.

Building a cohesive Wirral means recognising diverse needs and tackling inequality. We want the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances to be appreciated and positively valued, and for positive relationships to be developed between people from different backgrounds.

We are committed to developing a better infrastructure for dialogue with groups and individuals who are not engaged in existing forums or mechanisms for consultation, and the partnership is developing a Comprehensive Engagement Strategy to this end, as well as seeking to embed Wirral's Compact.

Wirral has a small, but growing, black and racial minority population. The recent establishment of a Wirral Black and Racial Minority Partnership (WBRMP) provides the borough's wide variety of minority groups with a single forum for discussion, debate and engagement with key organisations and agencies. The WBRMP and agencies such as Wirral's Multicultural Organisation are working with key partners

to develop approaches to community cohesion in the borough which reflect current and future needs.

All public bodies have a legal duty to respond to race, disability and gender issues with regard to the services they provide and the employment of staff. In order to work through the legal duty, organisations have to engage fully with the following key areas of work: policy development and review, consultation, training, responding to emerging legislation, and engagement with the third sector. A common framework for engaging with the agenda is to use the six strands model:

- Age
- Disability
- Faith/Religion
- Gender
- Race
- Sexual orientation

Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership has adopted this framework for the purposes of developing an approach to ensuring that as public bodies we have a consistent and uniform pattern of working across the borough. A Wirral Equalities Forum (WEF) has been established which will ensure that we and our partners are promoting the same core values in relation to the six strands of equality across all of the services we deliver and in our roles as employers. There is a great deal of work now underway by the LSP partners and the community groups, creating a firm foundation for future partnership work. The LSP is now in a position to take advantage of the current level of activity and move the equality and diversity agenda to another level. WEF provides a delivery mechanism to ensure that we continue to work together and play a supporting role for the third sector. For example, WEF will work with Wirral's Black Racial Minority Partnership (WBRMP) on a wide range of issues such as monitoring and reviewing Race Equality Schemes and establishing recruitment and selection best practice in partner organisations.

3.3.3 Developing sustainable solutions to tackling our strategic aims

Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

A key concern for the partnership is balancing our economic strategy with environmental and social considerations. We understand that this is not an easy task.

For example, we understand the risks of over development to localities and want to avoid the loss of local character and distinctiveness which is so important to Wirral residents for example through converting and re-using existing buildings. We also know that increased economic prosperity may result in increased levels of car ownership, which is still low in parts of the borough. While the majority of Wirral's residential areas are within 400 metres of a bus stop or railway station, there is still

a high dependency on the car for journeys to work. Traffic levels already have the greatest impact on communities along the busiest routes, particularly along routes to and from the motorway and Birkenhead. The implications for congestion and long-term air quality are potentially negative, so we need to work together as partners to put in place measures to ensure that the impact is as low as possible, for example through encouraging greener transport options.

We have already identified our Local Area Agreement improvement targets through robustly analysing the borough's needs. This has given all partners a shared understanding of what the big challenges are and enabled Wirral's strategic partnership to agree a genuine set of shared priorities.

A Environment and Sustainability Advisory Group (ESAG) has been set up to further review the themes and priorities in the community strategy and Local Area Agreement to ensure that we are tackling the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of our actions.

The Environment and Sustainability Advisory Group will maintain strong links with other forums addressing the sustainability agenda, including the Climate Change Strategy Group. The group has already developed an integrated approach to undertaking sustainability and equality impact assessments of the improvement targets identified in Wirral's Local Area Agreement.

Key sustainability issues identified through these impact assessments include:

- Balancing economic development with the social and environmental outcomes of this important agenda;
- As the borough increases its levels of recycling, more facilities may be needed to deal with material – what are the potential negative impacts of this, and how can we deal with them in partnership?
- How to fully integrate climate change as a strategic issue for all partners
- How to ensure that air quality in the borough is not compromised by increased traffic resulting from the higher levels of economic prosperity which we are aiming to achieve in Wirral

The improvement target to reduce CO₂ emissions in Wirral's Local Area Agreement will also help to ensure that sustainability is high on our shared agenda.

Another of the ways in which we will measure the sustainability of the work we undertake in relation to our improvement priorities is the extent to which they impact positively or negatively on other elements of our Local Area Agreement.

3.3.4 Involving communities

A clear directive for local areas has been set out in the communities in control white paper to recognise and support representative and participatory democracy. It is about providing ways to pass power to local communities and citizens, giving them real control over local decisions. Community involvement is a crucial factor in ensuring the success of our community strategy and Local Area Agreement.

Wirral traditionally has had a strong ethos of voluntary and community work which has been carried out through a range of agencies. In April 2008, a new coalesced

CVS was launched, Voluntary Community Action Wirral (VCAW). The local authority and VCAW have entered into a 3 year contract to ensure that there is a strong core CVS provision across the borough and a coordinated approach to developing the voluntary and community network function. A new delivery plan for the community empowerment network represents a clear step forward in building capacity in the community.

One of the strategic aims for the LSP is to further explore joint community engagement activities through the development of a community engagement strategy. In order to do this it will be necessary to ensure that Wirral has a robust third sector that is tied closely with the work of the LSP and the delivery of our Local Area Agreement.

The role of Wirral's Compact and its codes are seen as an important element in this process. The Compact and its codes form the basis of the partnership with the voluntary and community sector, setting out the rules for engagement between local public sector bodies. These codes written and agreed at a local level will provide the baseline from which all community engagement activities will be measured.

We will ensure that the views of Wirral's residents are sought and used to shape the delivery of services. To enable this, each of the satisfaction / perception questions within the agreement will be measured annually using the new place survey, which will be carried out in Wirral later in 2008 or early 2009. This will be part of a national survey asking local people for their perceptions about the area and is intended to be relevant to anyone living in the area. It will provide useful information for all of the partners in Wirral to assess their current and future plans.

Well-established mechanisms such as the borough's area forums provide residents with opportunities to influence local services and partnership plans. Recent successes include:

- The Hospital Trust joining the area forums as panel members to enhance partnership working through the forums with effect from October 2007;
- Wirral's Primary Care Trust contributing £55k per annum through the area forums to fund projects and initiatives designed to improve the health and well-being of Wirral residents.
- In July 2007, Wirral held its first area forum conference, attended by 74 area forum members. The event celebrated the success of our forums, and discussed how to better to engage with our communities. The outcomes of this day are being taken forward through an improvement plan.

In addition to the area forums, Wirral also has an established youth forum and youth parliament to enable young people to have their say in shaping services. In 2007, an older people's parliament was established which gives older people an opportunity to have their say on council decisions that affect their lives.

3.3.5 Ensuring that our services are accessible

Wirral, along with the other Merseyside authorities of Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens, Liverpool and Halton, works in partnership on transport and accessibility issues

across the sub-region. The Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority has recently been awarded Beacon status for *Improving Accessibility*, largely for its work on identifying areas of deprivation or particular need and the development of projects to address this need.

Over the next 10 years, Merseytravel will be completing an ambitious programme of improvement and development works to provide a single, integrated public transport network accessible to all, as well as helping to tackle climate change by reducing car dependent lifestyles. Working with partners and stakeholders, Merseytravel is committed to promoting walking, cycling and public transport use to improve quality of life in the Liverpool European city region and beyond.

3.5 Framework for Delivery

The following table places the Sustainable Community Strategy in context with the other key strategies produced by the Council and its partners:

<p>Long Term - 10-15 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Community Strategy • Regional Spatial Strategy • Regional Housing Strategy • Regional Transport Strategy • Regional Economic Strategy • Local Development Framework • Housing Strategy • Municipal Waste Strategy • Investment Strategy • etc.
<p>Medium Term - 3-5 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wirral's Local Area Agreement • Wirral Council's Corporate Plan • Local Transport Plan • Primary Care Trust Strategic Commissioning Strategy • Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy • Children & Young People's Strategic Plan • Licensing Strategy • Medium Term Financial Plan • etc.
<p>Short Term – 1 Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Area Agreement Delivery Plans • Partners' annual priorities for improvement (e.g. the council's Corporate Plan priorities for improvement) and service plans • Area plans, linking area forum level activity with community strategy themes and local area agreement target • etc.

4. Wirral's Local Area Agreement 2008-11

Our vision is of a more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities and people to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Local Area Agreements are a contract between central government and local partners. This contract is the delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy and runs for three years. Wirral is part of the second round of Local Area Agreements and submitted its Local Area Agreement for 2008/9 to 2010/11 to the Communities and Local Government Department at the end of May 2008.

In order to achieve the vision outlined above, Wirral's Local Area Agreement focuses on the main priorities for improvement facing the borough. These are the key challenges that need to be tackled.

The priorities for improvement were developed through a robust process, using a needs analysis to identify broad improvement areas. Each of the block / thematic partnerships developed a long list of potential improvement areas. These were reviewed through the LAA development group. The local area agreement programme board then received a business case for each area. The partnership performance team analysed these cases and rated them with a traffic light system against the four key principles for inclusion. These principles, agreed by the board are:

- Is it a problem for Wirral or a part of Wirral?
- Is it in need of improvement?
- Does it need partnership working to achieve it?
- Does the evidence base exist to prove the above?

These business cases were challenged in a series of 'dragon's den' sessions involving key partners, including representatives from Government Office for the North West (GONW), against these criteria. Once these sessions were complete, block leads were tasked with identifying the best indicators to measure progress against the improvement areas and negotiating the improvement targets. The board received regular updates on progress and presentations on additional target areas suggested by GONW.

4.1 **A strong local economy**

A strong local economy is fundamental to our vision for a more prosperous Wirral. We want Wirral to be a thriving, prosperous, metropolitan area contributing to growth at the heart of the Liverpool City Region. We want to expand the number and type of jobs, to increase opportunities for income growth and wealth creation for local people and reduce the numbers of people commuting outside of the borough for work. To achieve these aspirations, we aim to focus growth and investment on the east of the borough, where social, economic and environmental problems such as long-term worklessness are most acute, and where the opportunities created will be most accessible to the greatest number of people. We also want to retain the spending of Wirral residents within the borough to ensure that increased prosperity has a positive impact on the borough's living and working environment – our high quality cultural offer will be integral to this, including the authority's tourism and coastal strategies. We are also committed to playing a full part in the emerging multi

area agreement around the economy. The improvement targets will help to deliver the local authority's enterprise and full employment plans. These plans focus on a number of areas and groups, such as lone parents, over 50s, people from minority ethnic communities and areas with rates of worklessness over 25%.

Priorities for a strong local economy

- Worklessness
- Skills for employment
- Business start-ups
- Employment land and premises

4.2 Safer, stronger communities

Wirral has made significant progress in creating **safer communities**, with crime and the fear of crime continuing to fall across the borough. Wirral has the lowest rate of recorded crime in Merseyside and levels of burglary, violent crime, robberies and vehicle crime are amongst the lowest in the country. We want to keep improving because we know that crime is still a high priority for local people. We also want to make sure that people and businesses in the more deprived areas of Wirral do not continue to experience disproportionately high levels of crime and disorder. Tackling anti-social behaviour is a high priority for partners, and we will continue to work together to address related issues such as alcohol and improved services for the borough's young people. Another area of focus will be reducing the number of first time entrants into the youth justice system by continuing to reduce overall levels of crime.

Priorities for safer, stronger communities

- Violent crime
- Assault
- Antisocial behaviour
- Drug-related offending
- Adult and child traffic accidents

4.3 Health and well-being

Wirral has a rich history of partnership working to deliver improvements in the borough's **health and well-being**. We want to continue to build on this foundation to tackle the serious issues of continuing health inequalities and an ageing population. In Wirral, those in our most affluent areas live on average over 10 years longer than those in the most deprived areas. We want to focus on activities which address those things which have an impact on life expectancy, including alcohol-related disorders, smoking and cardio vascular disease. We also want to offer improved support for people to make better lifestyle choices. We will work hard to address the challenges of developing services in line with Wirral's ageing population and the expectations of people who rightly want to remain independent for as long as possible and to have choice in how they access services. This will have significant implications for the way social care is delivered in the borough.

Priorities for health and well-being

- Life expectancy
- Independence / people helped to live at home
- Dementia
- Mental health
- Falls
- Alcohol harm admissions
- Smoking cessation
- Carers

4.4 Living and working environment

Wirral's **living and working environment** is hugely important to increasing investment and prosperity, as well as having a real impact on local people's quality of life. Wirral has a culture and heritage to be proud of and it is important to our sense of identity that we retain and promote these aspects of life that impact on our living environment. We have made improvements to our environment but we are committed to doing more. Waste and recycling, street cleanliness, highway maintenance, the quality of our parks and open spaces and safety on our roads are all issues that rightly matter to local people and we recognise that all partners in Wirral can contribute to making improvements in these areas. We want a cleaner, greener Wirral for all, and we will therefore work to tackle the disparities in cleanliness standards affecting some of our more deprived areas. Another key area of focus will be on reducing the CO₂ emissions per capita across the borough, and partnership working around a new Carbon Reduction online system will be a valuable tool in achieving this target.

Priorities for Wirral's living and working environment

- Environmental cleanliness
- Recycling and waste minimisation
- CO₂ emissions

4.5 Life chances for children and young people

Life chances for children and young people in Wirral are overall very good. Most of our children and young people will fulfil the aspirations that they, we and their parents and carers have for them. They will be healthy, safe and well educated, have easy access to recreation, sport and leisure, be able to make a positive contribution to society and be well prepared for their working lives. However, while Wirral on the whole is a positive place for children and young people to grow up, some children and young people do not fulfil their potential. The high levels of poverty and deprivation in some parts of the borough undoubtedly have an impact upon children's lives and their development. Partners in Wirral want to reduce outcome gaps between children from poorer backgrounds and the population as a whole to that ensure that all of our young people have the best possible start in life.

Priorities for improving life chances for children and young people

- Child social care referrals,

- NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- Dept for Children, Schools and Families statutory indicators
- First time entrants to the youth justice system
- Childhood obesity
- Teenage conceptions / sexual health
- Looked after children

4.6 Sustainable, appropriate housing

Delivering **sustainable, appropriate housing** is a challenge for all stakeholders in Wirral. We want the main priority for homes to be the creation of sustainable communities at the heart of the urban area, promoting housing market renewal and providing a greater mix in the size, type, tenure, quality and affordability of housing available, supported by a high quality environment and modern services including health and education. We also want everyone to live in a decent home. Decent housing is essential so that everyone experiences social cohesion, health, well-being and independence. Vulnerable households, which are defined as having family members on means tested or disability related benefit, are statistically more likely to live in a non-decent home compared to other households.

Priorities for sustainable, appropriate housing

- Homelessness
- Decent homes for vulnerable people
- Net new homes built
- Affordable homes

APPENDIX A: WIRRAL'S LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2008 – 2011: Improvement Targets

Strategic Objective	NI	National Indicators (Designated targets)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target			Partners
				2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Safer, stronger communities	15	Serious violent crime rate	0.41 (per 1000 population) (2007/08)	0.37	0.34 ¹	0.31 ¹	Wirral Council Merseyside Police Youth Offending Service
			Volume: 127	114	104 ¹	97 ¹	
Safer, stronger communities	20	Assault with injury crime rate	6.09 (per 1000 population) (2007/08)	5.48	4.99 ¹	4.63 ¹	Wirral Council Merseyside Police Youth Offending Service
			Volume: 1894	1705	1553 ¹	1440 ¹	
Safer, stronger communities	38	Drug-related (Class A) offending rate	National indicator deferred until 2009 – local indicator will be used for 2008/09				
Safer, stronger communities	39	Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates	2220 (2006/07)	3004.06	3449.48	3926.45	Wirral PCT DAAT Wirral Hospital Trust
Safer, stronger communities	47	People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	174 (2005-07)	11.3%	10.4%	11.1%	Highways Agency Wirral Council Merseyside Police Merseyside Fire & Rescue

Strategic Objective	NI	National Indicators (Designated targets)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target			Partners
				2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Life chances for children and young people	48	Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accident	31 (2005-07)	16.3%	15.6%	6.2%	Highways Agency Wirral Council Merseyside Police Merseyside Fire & Rescue
Life chances for children and young people	55	Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year	9.1% (2006/07)	9.23%	9.37%	9.5%	Wirral PCT Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	68	Referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment	71.9% (June 08)	71%	75%	83%	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	111	First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17	National indicator is deferred until 2009/10				
Life chances for children and young people	112	Under 18 conception rate	47.3 (2006)	-28%	-39%	Subject to refresh	Wirral PCT Wirral Council Wirral Hospital Trust
Life chances for children and young people	117	16 to 18 olds who are not in education, employment and training (NEET)	9.5% (2007)	7.40% ² (current reward target)	7.10%	6.90%	Connexions Wirral Council
Health and well-being	120	All-age all cause mortality rate	815 (2006) Male	735	714	694	Wirral PCT Wirral Council

Strategic Objective	NI	National Indicators (Designated targets)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target			Partners
				2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
			529 (2006) Female	513	500	488	Wirral PCT Wirral Council
Health and well-being	123	Stopping smoking	896 (Baseline based on average 2004-07)	896	896	896	Wirral PCT Wirral Council Wirral Hospital Trust
Health and well-being	130	Social Care clients receiving Self Directed Support (Direct Payments and Individual Budgets)	191 (2008)	322.3	651.7	1121	Wirral Council
Health and well-being	135	Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information	15.1% (January 2008)	18%	21.5%	25%	Wirral Council
Strong local economy	151	Overall employment rate ³ (WNF Reward indicator)	69.8% (June 2007)	70.5% (0.7%)	71.02% (0.7%)	72.1% (0.9%)	Wirral Council Job centre plus
Strong local economy	153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods (WNF Reward indicator)	35.8% (May 07)	35.2% (-0.6%)	34.4% (-1.4%)	33.3% (-2.5%) ⁴	Wirral Council Job centre plus Learning and Skills Council
Sustainable, appropriate housing	154	Net additional homes provided	330 (04/05-06/07)	500	500	500	Wirral Council

Strategic Objective	NI	National Indicators (Designated targets)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target			Partners
				2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Sustainable, appropriate housing	155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	99 (04/05-06/07)	149	167	187	Wirral Council, Local RSLs, Developers, Housing Corporation, New Heartlands
Sustainable, appropriate housing	156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	8 (Dec 2004)	18	12	4	Rehousing Services, RSLs Supporting People
Living and working environment	167	Congestion - average journey time per mile during the morning peak	4.14 minutes per mile	4.3%	4.7%	5.1%	Wirral Council, Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority / Executive, Merseytravel
Strong local economy	171	New business registration rate	Baseline data available Nov 08	Targets to be set subject to baseline data			Wirral Council
Living and working environment	186	Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area	6 tonnes CO2 per capita (2005)	3.7%	7.5%	11.4%	Wirral Council Enworks ESTAC
Living and working environment	192	Household waste recycled and composted	14.2% (2006/07)	34%	35.50%	37%	Wirral Council Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority

Strategic Objective	NI	National Indicators (Designated targets)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target			Partners
				2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Living and working environment	195	Improved street and environmental cleanliness – Litter (Primary)	11% (2007/08)	8%	7.5%	7%	Wirral Council Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority
		Improved street and environmental cleanliness – Detritus (Secondary)	11% (2007/08)	10%	9%	8%	
		Improved street and environmental cleanliness – Graffiti	7% (2007/08)	Conditional to show no deterioration from baseline figure			
		Improved street and environmental cleanliness – Fly posting	1% (2007/08)	Conditional to show no deterioration from baseline figure			

¹ Targets will be reviewed during the first year refresh

² Re the previously agreed reward element on NEET, NI 117, the counting methodology adopted at the time of the agreement will be used to measure reward performance only

³ Please note that this data has a 95% confidence interval of +/- 3.1%

⁴ Target is cumulative for the three year LAA

Set Statutory Indicators for attainment and early years

Strategic Objective	NI	New National Indicators	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target			Partners
				2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Life chances for children and young people Page 60	72	Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy	46.1%	54.0%	56.0%	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	73	Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 (Threshold)	72.0%	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	77.0%	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	75	Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (Threshold)	48.4	52.0	55.2	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council

Strategic Objective	NI	New National Indicators	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target			Partners
				2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Life chances for children and young people	83	Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3	75.0	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	80.0	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	87	Secondary school persistent absence rate	7.1	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	6.4	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	92	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest	34.3	31.5	30.2	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	93	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	78.9	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	86.0	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	94	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	72.3	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	79.0	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council

Strategic Objective	NI	New National Indicators	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target			Partners
				2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Life chances for children and young people	95	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3	26.5	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	35.0	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	96	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3	59.9	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	67.0	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	97	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4	60.0	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	65.7	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	98	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4	29.0	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	35.0	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	99	Children in care reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2	41.3%	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	44.0%	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council

Strategic Objective	NI	New National Indicators	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target			Partners
				2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Life chances for children and young people	100	Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2	51.7%	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	44.0%	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council
Life chances for children and young people	101	Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths)	7.9%	Set on an academic year basis for 2009/10	7.4%	Set on an annual basis	Wirral Council

Local Indicators

Strategic Objective	Local indicators	Baseline	Improvement Target:			Partners
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Safer , stronger Communities	Reducing the number of incidents of ASB	18414 (2007/08)	17917	17558	17207	Wirral Council Merseyside Police Youth Offending Service
Safer , stronger Communities	Rate of drug related offending	47.5% (2007/08)	45.0%	National indicator (NI 38) will be implemented from 2009/10		Wirral Council Merseyside Police Wirral PCT Wirral DAAT Wirral Probation Service
Life chances for children and young people	Safely reducing the number of looked after children	606 (Feb 2006)	590	565	540	Wirral Council Wirral PCT Wirral Hospital Trust Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Trust
Life chances for children and young people	Young peoples participation in positive activities	Baseline during 2008/09	Targets to be set subject to baseline data			Wirral Council
Health and well-being	Establish cohort of clients aged 16-35 with two or more episodes of self harm in the last 12 months who subsequently become engaged in meaningful social activities	Audit to be conducted end of July 2008 and baseline set.	Sustain 5% based on an accurate baseline	Sustain 5% based on an accurate baseline	Sustain 5% based on an accurate baseline	Wirral Council Wirral Hospital Trust Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Trust Wirral PCT

Strategic Objective	Local indicators	Baseline	Improvement Target:			Partners
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Health and well-being	People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)	2141.55 (2007/08)	2,185.8	2,230.05	2,274.3	Wirral Council Wirral Hospital Trust Wirral PCT
Health and well-being	To reduce the number of people with dementia admitted to residential and nursing care 5% reduction on 2007/08 admittances	180 (2007/08)	171	162	154	Wirral Council Wirral PCT Wirral Hospital Trust Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Trust
Health and well-being	The number of emergency bed days for fractured neck of femur in over 75s	16,685 bed days per 100,000 (2006/07)	35,335 (current reward target)	10,398	10,231	Wirral PCT Wirral Council Wirral Hospital Trust
Strong local economy	The amount of floor space (ha) developed and brought to the market for employment use (Borough-wide)	Baseline 2008/09	Targets to be set subject to baseline data			Wirral Council
Strong local economy	NVQ level 2 skills participation	3250 (2006/07)	3283	3299	3316	Wirral Council Learning & Skills Council
Sustainable, appropriate housing	No. of vulnerable households assisted with at least one main energy efficiency measure under Warm Front	2665 (2006/07)	2765	2903	3048	Wirral Council, EAGA plc, Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre,
Living and working environment	Improved street and environmental cleanliness – levels of litter and detritus in Wirral's most deprived areas	30% (2007/08)	28%	24%	20%	Wirral Council Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority

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Cabinet, 25th September 2008

A Sustainable Community Strategy for Wirral - Proposed Consultation

Appendix 2 - SCS Consultation Timetable 2008-09

Action	When
Draft strategy reported to cabinet	25 th September 2008
Draft strategy considered by key LSP partners prior to public consultation	From 17 th September (date of cabinet agenda publication) to 10 th October 2008
Public consultation commences, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available on Internet, other formats by request • Available on UKOnline (VCAW) • Advertised through press, Internet, flyers in one stop shops, libraries, community centres and at area forums (next round commences 7th Oct) • Distribution through WVCSN • Distribution by email to interested parties list accumulated through area forums, enquiries, known groups 	13 th October 2008
Update report to LSP (results of consultation to date)	9 th December 2008
Public consultation ends	9 th January 2009
Updated strategy circulated to LSP partners for final comments	12 th January 2009
Update report to LAA Programme Board	22 nd January 2009 (date to be confirmed)
Deadline for final comments	26 th January 2009
Chair of the LSP writes to partners to seek endorsement and ask that final strategy is adopted through appropriate governance arrangements	30 th January 2009
Final strategy approved and endorsed by partner organisations, including the council (see below)	February – March 2009
Final strategy reported to cabinet	23 rd February 2009
Final strategy agreed by full council*	2 nd March 2009
Strategy launched alongside refreshed LAA for 2009-11	March 2009 (date to be confirmed, but potentially could replace LSP meeting currently scheduled for 10 th March)

* Once prepared, the SCS must be agreed at full council in accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations 2000/2853

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 25th SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

2008/09 PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT – QUARTER ONE PROGRESS REPORT

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This is a supplementary performance report to provide Cabinet with the progress made towards delivering the Council's nine 2008/09 priorities for improvement, and to consider the remedial action that is being taken to address areas of underperformance.

2. Background

- 2.1. Cabinet received a detailed quarter one performance report at the 4th September 2008 Cabinet meeting. The report provided an overview of the authority's performance at quarter one and a series of appendices gave a more detailed break down against performance, capital and revenue budgets and risks.

- 2.2. Further to discussion of this report, Cabinet agreed the following:

Cabinet asks that a brief supplementary report be produced for its next meeting which details each priority for improvement and the progress made against that priority in lay terms, so improvements made can be easily understood in terms of their overall benefit to Wirral, and that areas where improvements are not being achieved be spelt out in the same way with the actions being taken to remedy the position.

This report outlines the progress that has been made towards delivering the 2008/09 priorities for improvement and the ongoing work which is being undertaken.

3. 2008/09 priorities for improvement – quarter one progress report

3.1. Reduce worklessness

Progress made:

Wirral's overall reduction in worklessness broadly reflects the national average. There have been significant reductions in Incapacity Benefit claimants which are double the national average; however these have been negated by increases in Jobseeker Allowance which go against the national trend.

Working Wirral has commissioned several strands of activity. The Reach Out project has been continued and is successfully engaging and supporting workless households from Wirral's most deprived communities to access employment opportunities that they may otherwise be unaware of. Since its launch in 2006,

Reach Out has knocked on over 57,000 doors in and engaged 9832 residents providing initial information or signposting.

The programme has achieved impressive outcomes which include supporting 1016 workless residents from Wirral's most deprived communities into employment.

Ongoing work:

In May 2008, Wirral developed an Employment and Enterprise Investment Framework which has been taken forward by the Wirral Economic Development and Skills Partnership (WEDS) and conducted through consultation with a range of partners to ensure activity adds value and compliments other mainstream delivery.

The Investment Framework has provided the context for Working Wirral commissioning priorities which uses a range of resources including, Working Neighbourhood Fund, Deprived Area Fund and the European Social Fund Complementary Strand.

3.2. **Increase enterprise**

Progress made:

Wirral has developed an Investment Framework for Employment and Enterprise.

The Wirralbiz programme has significantly increased the number of business starts in the borough and is expected to achieve Wirral's LAA stretch target for business starts which will attract £0.818m performance reward grant.

Ongoing work:

Working Wirral has only commissioned enterprise related activity until March 2009. This is to ensure that any Wirral activity integrates with Regional enterprise activity, in line with the Business Support Simplification Agenda.

Wirral continues to work towards the objectives of the Enterprise Strategy (2006) and has worked with Merseyside partners to develop a Merseyside Enterprise and Growth Strategy.

3.3. **Increase levels of recycling**

Progress made:

Big increases in recycling have led to a reduced amount of waste going to landfill. This means the Council pays less Landfill Tax helping to balance budgets.

Recycling rates continue to improve with figures for April – June 2008 at 39.57%. Performance for this period is better than expected because of unusually high amounts of garden waste in May.

Ongoing work:

Further increases in recycling rates are expected during the next quarter as a result of a new campaign to roll out the scheme to flats and other multi-occupancy buildings. We have followed up our successful pilot of recycling schools' rubbish by extending the scheme to all schools in Wirral, and we anticipate that this scheme will be successful in increasing the rates still further.

Surveys have been conducted in those areas where less recycling takes place to find out what we can do to improve recycling rates.

3.4. Reduce the council's carbon footprint

Progress made:

It was reported to Cabinet on 4th September 2008; that additional initiatives introduced in 2007/08 led to a 22% CO₂ reduction against our baseline position. This is ahead of target and this means a reduction of 11,800 tonnes in our carbon footprint since 2003/04 including a 937 tonne reduction due to energy efficiency savings from Phase 1 of our Investment Energy Efficiency Programme in 2007/08.

Ongoing work:

Cabinet agreed to the establishment of a Sustainability Unit to drive further energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives, and to work with Businesses and the Community to raise awareness of the urgent need to reduce Wirral's Carbon footprint. This will be done by working with our local partners to take action to reduce Carbon emissions.

The Council is working closely with partners to deliver the new national indicators and over the coming months will explore with them how we can learn together to improve performance.

3.5. Reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured in road accidents

Progress made:

Numbers of people killed or seriously injured continue to fall. The figure for April – June 2008 is 40, this equates to a monthly average of 13.3 which is a significant reduction from the 2006 figure of 14.2.

Ongoing work:

Partners continue to work closely to monitor progress of this priority for improvement.

3.6. Promote greater choice independence and choice

Progress made:

The number of carers receiving a specific carer's service, or advice and information is currently performing better than expected. The number of people supported to live

independently through social services is also exceeding its target for April – June 2008.

Ongoing work:

The number of clients receiving direct payments is falling and performance is not currently on target. An operational manager has been identified as the lead for this target. A task group has been established to monitor performance and take appropriate action.

3.7. Raise overall educational attainment, particularly lower achieving young people

Progress made:

Figures indicate that we are narrowing the gap at foundation stage between the lowest achieving pupils and all other pupils.

Figures also indicate that we are narrowing the achievement gap at key stage two between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers. 2007/08 key stage 2 figures for English and Maths continue to show improvement compared to the previous year. Significant progress has been made with educational achievement of looked after children at key stage two with results showing English has improved from 36% in 2006 to 61% in 2008 and Maths has improved from 28% in 2006 to 64% in 2008.

Provisional results for 2007/08 GCSE A* -C is 66% which shows an improvement on the previous year's figures.

Ongoing work:

There are significant national data quality issues for key stage three figures which need resolving. At present the 2007/08 figures demonstrate a stable result for level 5 Maths and English compared to the previous year and a deterioration for level 5 Science figures.

3.8. Safely reduce the number of looked after children

Progress made:

Numbers of looked after children have reduced from 671 to 607 during 2007/08 and currently remain at 607.

Ongoing work:

There are currently more than 20 children placed for adoption and whilst no orders have been granted during the first quarter the picture will change as the year progresses.

Referrals for initial assessment are slightly below target for April – June 2008. However, they are in line with the tolerance band that was agreed by GONW. This is

an area where improvements are expected to occur during the year as a result of changes in practices that have already been agreed.

3.9. Improve the use of the Council's land and assets

Progress made:

Since 2005, assets totalling £13,263,908 have been disposed of.

Ongoing work:

At the 9th July 2008 Cabinet meeting, Cabinet agreed the Strategic Asset review. This included a number of geographical area reviews which will focus initially on the following areas:

- Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry; Bidston, Cloughton and Oxton and Prenton
- West Wirral
- Leasowe, Moreton and Saughall Massie
- New Brighton, Wallasey, Liscard and Seacombe

A further report on the Strategic Asset review will be provided to Cabinet on 16th October 2008.

3.10. Create a sustainable and stable budget, providing value for money

Progress made:

Regular updates by the Director of Finance to Cabinet to provide assurance that the budget of the Council remains viable

There are now over 1,000 users accessing the electronic "Procure to Pay" system. In 2007/08 the total number of purchase order transactions was 28,000 (representing 41% of all orders placed), a financial value in excess of £25m. The work of the Procure to Pay section implementing and developing the new system has been recognised nationally by the Local Government Chronicle Award 2007.

A refined Council Tax recovery programme is now in place with arrangements monitored automatically. The collection rate has seen an increase to 96.6% at the end of March 2008 with improved figures expected.

Ongoing work:

There is a slight underperformance in respect of the corporate savings targets in relation to procurement efficiencies. This position is expected to improve and performance will meet the year end target once a number of high value contracts are let.

Reviews being carried out of high spending areas as identified by the Audit Commission "spend profiles" and Value for Money initiatives (as reported to Cabinet in July 2008) such as Looked After Children and Social Care.

Regular liaison meetings between Cabinet and Chief Officers to assess the current position and on-going implications including strategies and proposals for addressing the projected gap between likely spend and resources.

3.11. **Improve the Council's budgeting process to fully reflect its priorities**

Progress made:

Wirral's Medium Term financial, Capital and Risk Management Strategies have been refreshed and were approved by Wirral Cabinet on 23 July 2008

Any increased spending that is approved reflects the agreed priority areas of the Council.

Ongoing work:

Enhanced financial monitoring reports, including monthly summary statements, are now produced for Cabinet and Committee Chairs to aid decision making

Budget resolution includes references / linkages to the priorities.

Financial support to a number of departments has improved - including seconding staff and supporting decisions on new contracts. The budget process for 2008/09 has been improved to make it more focused for Members and Officers. This has enabled the service to reach an earlier production of the budget, with more focus on the changes in the budget.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1. The financial implications for the council were reported fully in the detailed quarter one performance report reported to cabinet on the 4th September 2008. Any financial implications related to the progress of the 2008/09 priorities for improvement are detailed in section three of this report.

5. Staffing implications

- 5.1. Any staffing implications related to the progress of the 2008/09 priorities for improvement are detailed in section three of this report.

6. Equal Opportunities implications

- 6.1. There are no direct equal opportunity implications associated with the report.

7. Community Safety implications

- 7.1. There are no direct community safety implications associated with the report.

8. Local Agenda 21

- 8.1. There will be a positive impact for the environment as a result of the improvements the Council is making to increase recycling and reduce the Council's carbon footprint

9. Planning implications

9.1. There are no direct planning implications associated with the report.

10. Anti-poverty implications

10.1. There are no direct anti-poverty implications associated with the report.

11. Social inclusion implications

11.1. There are no direct social inclusion implications associated with the report.

12. Local Member Support implications

12.1. There are no direct local member support implications associated with the report.

13. Background Papers

13.1 Wirral Corporate Plan 2008-11

13.2 Corporate Plan Financial and Performance Monitoring Summary – Cabinet Report, 4th September 2008.

14. Recommendations

That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the views of Cabinet are requested on the format of this report.

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

This report was prepared by Lucy Beed, who can be contacted on 0151 691 8006.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET– 25TH SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

IMPROVING PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report summarises the outcome of informal discussions with headteachers, parents and other interested parties concerning the provision the Authority makes for pupils in the three primary special schools for pupils with complex learning difficulties. It proposes that a more formal review of the options is undertaken.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Local Authority has three primary special schools for pupils with complex learning difficulties (CLD). These schools meet the needs of pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils have associated needs such as autistic spectrum disorders or physical and sensory disabilities. Elleray Park School, Stanley School and The Lyndale School all meet the needs of pupils aged 2-11. Following initial work undertaken by the special school headteachers and discussions with stakeholders within each of the three schools the Authority have been asked to undertake a comprehensive review of current provision and to produce a plan for the future development of Wirral's special schools

2.2 Initial exploratory discussions have been held with Headteachers, staff, governors and groups of parents in each of the three primary special schools for pupils with CLD to gather views on current provision and how it could be enhanced. A dialogue has also started with partners in the Health Authority to consider how educational, social care and health provision for this group of young people could be more effectively integrated.

2.3 The work with the primary CLD schools has considered the quality of the current provision, including the standards of teaching and learning, the accommodation, facilities and the opportunities available to the pupils and their families. Despite Wirral having in place high quality special school provision for this group of pupils there is some agreement amongst many of the staff, governors and parents on areas for further improvement. Some of these issues would require reorganisation of provision and changes in accommodation to be made. There is general support amongst stakeholders for exploring in more detail the benefits and implications of any changes.

2.4 This report proposes that a more extensive examination of alternative options for organisation of provision for primary aged children with complex learning difficulties is completed to assess the feasibility and benefits of changing existing provision and the degree of support for making such changes amongst all of the relevant stakeholders. Once completed this work can lead to a draft plan for developing special schools in Wirral in the future in order to offer pupils and families a more comprehensive and integrated provision.

This plan could then be implemented over the next 5-10 years, as and when funding opportunities become available as part of Wirral's broader primary school strategy.

2.5 The special school Headteachers group have worked collaboratively to consider the special school provision for primary aged pupils with complex learning difficulties in Wirral, laying out their vision for how this could be developed and improved in the future. There was a consensus amongst the Headteachers that while the present standard of school provision is outstanding it could still be further improved. They suggest a number of options for changing the accommodation, provision and services offered by the schools, and possibly the size and location of provision. The Headteachers are keen that various options that they believe could benefit their pupils and schools should be explored and considered.

2.6 **Current primary provision for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties**

2.7 Elleray Park School, Stanley School and The Lyndale School provide for a combined current population of 208 pupils (Elleray Park School currently has 83 pupils; Stanley School has 91 pupils; The Lyndale School has 34 pupils). This includes a small number of part time places for very young pupils in nursery classes.

2.8 The numbers in the three primary schools have fluctuated over the years. At present numbers in The Lyndale School have reduced while Elleray Park has seen a recent growth in numbers. Stanley School's numbers have been more stable for many years. Factors such as a change of key staff in the school, new and improved facilities or developments in teaching and learning can all influence parental preference.

2.9 In spring 2008 Council agreed with the proposal to change the number of funded places at Elleray Park School and The Lyndale School. There was an increase in the number of funded places at Elleray Park to 75, and a reduction in the number of funded places for pupils with social and communication difficulties at The Lyndale School from 55 to 45 over a two year period.

2.10 Stanley School and The Lyndale School were both inspected in 2007 .Elleray Park School was inspected in 2008. All three schools were judged to make outstanding provision.

2.11 The accommodation available at the three primary schools has a number of limitations. Stanley School shares a site with Thingwall Primary School and close links are maintained between both schools, much to the benefit of the pupils. Stanley School does not however meet current accessibility requirements and pupils who are wheelchair users cannot be placed at the school. Elleray Park School has many accommodation restrictions, particularly given the recent rapid rise in the number of pupils on roll. The building does not fully allow for effective delivery of much of the therapeutic provision that is required within the pupil's timetables. The Lyndale School opened in 1999 and is within a refurbished building. Its facilities are attractive and modern but its limited number of classrooms restricts the number and range of pupils it can accommodate. Elleray Park School and The Lyndale School are not co-located alongside a mainstream primary school

3.0 **The findings from initial discussions with Governors, staff and parents**

3.1 A series of meetings have been held in each of the three primary CLD schools. These were attended by the Head of Branch for Participation and Inclusion and the seconded special school headteacher. Staff and governors were all invited to a meeting and parents were given the opportunity to attend two meetings in each school. A number of parents attended the initial discussion meetings in each of the schools. All of those parents present were very positive about their child's current school and the education and care that was provided.

Given the high standard of current practice within all three CLD schools there is agreement that any changes that were made to local provision must build on existing standards and bring clear benefits for pupils and their families.

- 3.2 The development of extended schools provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties, including wrap around child care and school holiday activities is a priority for future development. This was a major feature in comments from parents, many of whom indicate that a lack of accessible, appropriate and affordable child care that meets the special needs of their child prevents them from seeking or maintaining employment. Better year round access to health professionals and integrated provision from education, social care and health professionals in one location was another priority for future development amongst all parents.
- 3.3 The practical issue of combining groups of pupils with a range of needs was explored in many of the discussions. Within the existing primary CLD schools in Wirral there are a wide range of pupils including those with severe learning difficulties, autism, physical disabilities and profound and multiple learning difficulties. While each school is designated as a generic CLD special school custom and practice has resulted in individual schools taking more pupils with a particular type of need. If local provision were to change in the future parents, staff and governors want reassurance that the cohorts of pupils across the complex learning difficulties continuum could continue to have their education, health and care needs met appropriately in a safe environment. A small number of parents also voiced concern over a potential loss of choice of schools if there was to be any change in existing provision.
- 3.4 There was support amongst a group of parents at The Lyndale School for the creation of a special school in Wirral for pupils aged 2-19 with profound and multiple learning difficulties. These parents argue that specialist provision for this cohort of pupils who currently attend a number of the primary and secondary CLD schools in Wirral should be established on a single site. This would also remove the need for these pupils to transfer from a primary to secondary school setting when they reach 11 years old.
- 3.5 While recognising the accessibility problems in their school's accommodation the parents, staff and governors at Stanley school strongly support the co-location of their building alongside Thingwall Primary School. This offers opportunities for the inclusion of their pupils into mainstream school activities which can be very beneficial. Many parents, staff and governors at Elleray Park School and The Lyndale School feel that their children miss the opportunity that is available to the Stanley School pupils and so would like to move to premises that were also co-located on a mainstream primary school site.

4.0 Financial and Staffing Implications

- 4.1 The proposed consultation exercises would be undertaken by officers within the Children and Young Peoples Department, in conjunction with the special school headteachers and other relevant partners

5.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 5.1 The pupils at Stanley School benefit from the opportunities available as a result of being co-located alongside a mainstream primary school. These benefits are not currently available to the same extent to pupils at Elleray Park School and The Lyndale School, although some links with mainstream primary schools exist.

5.2 Pupils with CLD who are wheelchair users are not currently placed at Stanley School because of restrictions in space and accessibility within the building. This results in pupils who use wheelchairs being given a restricted choice of which of the three schools they can attend.

6.0. Community Safety Implications

6.1 There are none arising out of this report

7.0. Local Agenda 21 Statement

7.1 There are none arising out of this report

8.0 Planning Implications

8.1 At this stage there are no implications from the recommendations

9.0 Anti Poverty implications

9.1 There are none arising out of this report

10.0 Social inclusion implications

10.1 Any additional co-location of special school provision with mainstream schools would increase the opportunities for pupils with learning difficulties to be included in activities alongside their mainstream peers.

11.0 Local Member Support implications

11.1 Pupils from all three of the primary schools for pupils with complex learning difficulties come from all areas of the Wirral

12.0 Background Papers

None

13.0 Recommendations

That

(1) a formal review of the provision the Authority makes for primary aged pupils who have complex learning difficulties be approved - such a review would be completed in March 2009 when a further report would be submitted to Cabinet; and

(2) this review would include a widespread consultation with all stakeholders and the assurance that any development would be an improvement on the current high quality provision.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET– 25TH SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

IMPROVING SECONDARY SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Executive Summary

This report informs members of discussions that have taken place recently regarding secondary provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties and proposes further consultation in conjunction with a feasibility study on the amalgamation of the two schools.

Background

- 1.1 The Local Authority has two secondary special schools for pupils with complex learning difficulties (CLD). These schools meet the needs of pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many of the pupils have associated needs such as autistic spectrum disorders or physical and sensory disabilities. Foxfield School and Meadowside School both provide for pupils within the 11-19 age range. Following work undertaken by the seconded consultant headteacher and initial discussions with governors, staff and parents, the schools have approached the Authority and requested that formal consultation is undertaken with all of the relevant stakeholders on a proposal to amalgamate the two schools and create a single new school. This would provide appropriate facilities for 11-16 year old pupils in one building and an age appropriate environment for 16-19 year old students in a separate environment.
- 1.2 A range of exploratory meetings have been held with headteachers, staff, governors, parents and pupils in both of the two secondary CLD schools to gather views on current provision and how it could be enhanced. Consideration was given to the future needs of this group of young people and their families over the next decade and beyond, and the anticipated demands that will be placed upon Wirral's special school provision. A particular focus was on how the schools can best prepare the pupils for adult life, the choices that are available at 16 and 19 and how the special school provision offers a clear route for the young people with learning difficulties to progress onto relevant local post school provision.
- 1.3 This initial work within the two secondary special schools for pupils with CLD has considered the quality of the current provision, including the standards of teaching and learning, the accommodation, facilities and the opportunities available to the pupils and their families. There is agreement amongst many of the staff, governors and parents that provision could be improved if some reorganisation of places and changes in accommodation were made.
- 1.4 This report proposes that a formal consultation on a reorganisation of secondary special schools for pupils with complex learning difficulties is undertaken, to assess the feasibility and benefits of changing existing provision, and the degree of support for making such changes amongst all of the relevant stakeholders. This consultation could lead to the production of a plan to reorganise secondary CLD schools in Wirral over the next 5 years in a

way that has widespread support among stakeholders and which will lead to clear improvements in existing provision.

- 1.5 The Wirral special school headteachers group have worked collaboratively to begin the task of considering all of the different types of special school provision in Wirral, and setting out their view for how this could be developed and improved in the future. The headteachers began by considering the present and future provision needed locally for secondary age pupils with complex learning difficulties. There was a strong agreement that while the present standard of provision is very good it could be further improved. They suggest that an option for changing the organisation and location of provision should be explored and considered.
- 1.6 This work of the headteachers has progressed onto examining primary CLD schools, and provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Consideration of the future development of special school provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties is underway
- 2.0 **Secondary Provision for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties - Current Position**
- 2.1 Meadowside and Foxfield currently provide for a combined current population of 201 pupils. (Foxfield has 136 pupils and Meadowside 65). The combined number of 16-19 year old students with complex learning difficulties is currently 72. While the numbers of pupils in each school vary over time the size of the combined population remains fairly constant. The projected number of 16-19 year old students across both schools is expected to remain between 70-80 over the next five years.
- 2.2 Both schools were inspected by Ofsted in 2006/2007 and were each judged to be good with outstanding features
- 2.3 Foxfield has traditionally provided for pupils with more complex needs including pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, and associated difficulties including autism or complex, challenging behaviours. Meadowside's population historically covered a wider ability range of pupils but over recent years it has become increasingly similar to Foxfield's. There is now little difference between the pupil populations in both schools.
- 2.4 While facilities for 11-16 year old pupils in both schools are sufficient, Foxfield and Meadowside both have difficulties providing suitable specialist, discrete accommodation for their post 16 learners. Constraints in the buildings mean that there are limited 6th form facilities and both sites struggle to offer adequate environments for age appropriate vocational and work related learning environments alongside independent living skills teaching areas. Increased numbers of pupils have remained on roll post-16 because of the shortage of alternative provision in the local colleges.
- 2.5 While the 16-19 curriculum offered in each school is relevant and challenging, the size of the 6th form cohorts limits the range of options and opportunities that can be offered within the timetable. This issue will become a growing concern as the work in the Foundation Learning Tier and the new Diplomas begin to reshape the secondary curriculum offered to pupils in all schools including these two special schools.
- 2.6 Effective transition and coordination of provision between the special schools and the local further education colleges, work place training organisations and adults social services is a key issue. Partner organisations suggest this could improve if they had to work with fewer special school sixth forms.

- 2.7 A disproportionately high number of students with learning difficulties progress from Wirral schools to out of area specialist residential FE colleges. These college placements are currently funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). A lack of a clear progression route into suitable, high quality local post school provision is often a key factor behind applications by students and their parents to these specialist providers. Improved local post school provision for young adults with learning difficulties, which closely links to the special school sixth form, would offer an improved local route for students with such needs. This could also result in a substantial saving for the Authority, who take over responsibility for post school provision including FE college costs for this group of students from 2010.
- 2.8 The Learning and Skills Council are currently funding a number of new initiatives that will improve the local opportunities available to young people with learning difficulties and disabilities when they leave school. While substantial progress has been made over the last two years, key issues that require ongoing attention include transition arrangements, partnership planning and joint funding arrangements, and ensuring that clear progression pathways exist between special school sixth form provision and local post school providers. Better partnership planning has now been established between the Children and Young Peoples Department, the LSC, Connexions, Health and Adult Social Services to improve transition and local provision for this group of young people.
- 2.9 It is the view of the special school headteachers that all of Wirral's provision for 11-16 year old pupils with complex learning difficulties should be combined into a single special school. The long term objective is to have newly built accommodation that would be funded from Building Schools for the Future funding that is co-located alongside a secondary mainstream school. In the meantime the present Foxfield School building has sufficient space and facilities needed to accommodate the combined population of pupils.
- 2.10 Headteachers also recommend that a specialist provision for the combined population of 16-19 year old students with learning difficulties should be established on another site that is more focussed on the curriculum, social and independence needs of this group of young people. Initially the present Meadowside site could be used for this purpose with minor modifications but the medium term objective would be to create new co-located specialist sixth form provision alongside a local FE college.
- 2.11 There is some interest and support within the Learning and Skills Council for creating combined specialist 16-19 provision for Wirral's students with learning difficulties. Initial conversations have also taken place with the Principals of both of the local colleges who are generally supportive of this suggestion.
- 2.12 **The findings from initial discussions with governors, staff and parents**
- 2.13 A number of parents attended the initial discussion meetings in both schools. All of those parents present were generally positive about their child's current school and education and care that was provided.
- 2.14 Given the high standard of current practice within both secondary special schools for pupils with complex learning difficulties there was agreement that any changes that were made to local provision must build on existing standards and bring clear benefits for pupils and their families .
- 2.15 The majority of people involved in the initial discussions expressed concern about the transition from school to adult life, the planning and preparation for young people entering the adult world and the support that is available to them. Many students and their parents currently look towards specialist provision outside Wirral as the best post school option, as

they see limited local options and choices of relevant provision in further education, employment training and adult care. Students and parents suggest that they would prefer to access local provision across the 16-25 age range rather than feel out of area provision is necessary.

- 2.16 The development of extended schools provision and services for pupils with complex learning difficulties, including wrap around child care, better year round access to health professionals and improved school holiday activities was another priority amongst all parents for future development.
- 2.17 Many parents, staff and governors in the two secondary special schools believe that the cohorts of pupils could combine without great difficulty. A small number of people voiced concern over the loss of choice between secondary provision if the present two schools were combined.
- 2.18 There was strong support for improving post 16 opportunities which offered more choice for students in the sixth form and lead to a better transition into post school provision.

3.0 Financial and Staffing Implications

- 3.1 The proposed consultation and feasibility exercises will be undertaken by officers within the Children and Young Peoples Department, in conjunction with the special school headteachers and other relevant partners. The financial and staffing implications of any changes would be considered as part of this exercise.

4.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 4.1 The Local Authority is required to work with the LSC to ensure that good quality local provision is available for students with learning difficulties aged 16-19. In 2010 this duty transfers wholly to the Local Authority, who will then have responsibility for this group of learners from the age of 16-25.

5.0 Community Safety Implications

- 5.1 There are none arising out of this report

6.0 Local Agenda 21 Statement

- 6.1 There are none arising out of this report

7.0 Planning Implications

- 7.1 At this stage there are no implications from the recommendations

8.0 Anti Poverty implications

- 8.1 There are none arising out of this report

9.0 Social inclusion implications

- 9.1 It is considered more age appropriate to have a separate sixth form provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties. Any additional co-location of special school provision alongside a mainstream school or further education college would increase the opportunities for pupils

with learning difficulties to be included in learning experiences and social activities alongside their mainstream peers.

10.0 Local Member Support implications

10.1 Pupils from both of the secondary schools for pupils with complex learning difficulties come from all areas of the Wirral

11.0 Background Papers

None

12.0 Recommendations

That

(1) approval be given to undertake a feasibility exercise to identify the practical and financial implications of amalgamating Foxfield School and Meadowside School;

(2) approval be given for an extensive consultation exercise to be undertaken with pupils, parents and all other relevant stakeholders to gauge wider support for the amalgamation of Foxfield School and Meadowside School and the establishment of a single split site 11-19 provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties; and

(3) approval be given to undertake a detailed exploration with the Learning and Skills Council of the feasibility of developing a post 16 facility which is co-located with a local college.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 25 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

HOUSING AND PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT – PROVISIONAL ALLOCATIONS 2008/09

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government has indicated that it intends to award the Council £131,013 under the annual award of performance related Housing and Planning Delivery Grant. This report sets out the detailed breakdown of the award and asks Cabinet to confirm the distribution of monies to planning services.

1 Background

1.1 Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) is the Government's replacement for Planning Delivery Grant (PDG), which was awarded annually to Local Planning Authorities between 2003/04 and 2007/08. Like PDG, HPDG is intended to provide an incentive for improved performance in planning-related services, in line with emerging government priorities.

2 Criteria for Awards

2.1 Previous awards of Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) have been based on local performance related to development control, plan making and e-government, with additional awards to reflect demands arising from the promotion of enterprise and housing market renewal.

2.2 The new award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) has been based on different criteria, to focus on the preparation of Local Development Frameworks and on the delivery of additional housing, to meet the targets set out in the Housing Green Paper – Homes for the Future, More Affordable, More Sustainable.

2.3 A guide to the award of HPDG, including the Government's response to the national consultation in October 2007, can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/grantallocationresponses.pdf>. The Council's response to the national consultation was considered by Cabinet on 12 December 2007 (Minute 401 refers).

2.4 The new HPDG has two main elements set out under a number of different headings (set out in Table 1 below). The planning elements have been assessed based on recorded performance during 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. The housing element has been assessed based on the three year average performance for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2007.

2.5 The Government will review the effectiveness of HPDG after 12 months but expects to bring forward a further element of HPDG, from 2010/11, as an incentive to deliver additional affordable housing.

3 Provisional Awards for 2008/09

3.1 Table 1 below sets out the expected amounts to be awarded to the Council under each element of the grant for 2008/09. The table also provides a summary of the criteria for each element and the basis for the award in terms of performance in Wirral during the relevant periods:

Criteria	Award to Wirral
<p><u>Plan Making</u></p> <p>Authorities preparing Development Plan Documents that will allocate sites totalling more than 2,000 dwellings receive £10,000 for each qualifying document commenced before 31 March 2008.</p> <p>Qualifying documents that were submitted to public examination in accordance with a Local Development Scheme received £208,315 and qualifying documents that were both submitted and adopted received £520,787. Only 53 of 397 authorities qualified to receive these larger payments during 2008/09.</p> <p><i>The Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document, commenced in July 2005, will provide for more than 2,000 additional dwellings. Issues and Options for the Core Strategy will be presented to Cabinet on 16 October 2008.</i></p> <p><i>[Note: The award for plan making has been reduced by 10%, to £9,000, to reflect development control performance (paragraph 3.2 below refers)]</i></p>	<p>£9,000</p>
<p><u>Joint Working</u></p> <p>Authorities who have entered into joint working arrangements to prepare a Development Plan Document receive £38,400.</p> <p><i>The Council has entered into joint working arrangements with the other Merseyside districts and Halton to prepare a Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document (Cabinet 30 June 2005, Minute 80 refers).</i></p>	<p>£38,400</p>
<p><u>Minerals and Waste Core Strategies</u></p> <p>This element of grant is only available to County Councils.</p>	<p>£0</p>

Criteria	Award to Wirral
<p><u>Five Year Supply of Housing Sites</u></p> <p>Authorities who can demonstrate a five or more year supply of deliverable housing sites, in line with National Indicator 159, receive £72,398.</p> <p><i>The Council's net housing land supply at April 2007 was 2143 against the existing (RPG13, March 2003) five year requirement of 800 (@160 per annum).</i></p>	£72,398
<p><u>Housing Land Availability Assessment</u></p> <p>Authorities that have published a new-style Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), in further support of National Indicator 159, receive £36,199.</p> <p><i>The Council's first SHLAA is not expected to be commissioned until September 2008.</i></p>	£0
<p><u>Strategic Housing Market Assessment</u></p> <p>Authorities who have published a Strategic Housing Market Assessment receive £11,215.</p> <p><i>The Council published its Strategic Housing Market Assessment in December 2007 (Cabinet 7 February 2008, Minute 506 refers).</i></p>	£11,215
<p><u>Housing Completions</u></p> <p>Authorities receive £916 for each additional dwelling above 0.75% of their existing dwelling stock at 31 March 2007.</p> <p><i>The three year average of net housing completions in Wirral for April 2004 to March 2007 was 330 (0.002% of stock – in Wirral 0.75% of stock would require 1,085 new dwellings).</i></p>	£0

- 3.2 Authorities performing below National Indicator 157 targets for processing major (60% within 13 weeks), minor (65% within 8 weeks) and other planning applications (80% within 8 weeks) have the grant for plan making reduced by 10, 15 or 20% depending on the scale of variation against the targets. The grant awarded to Wirral for plan making has been reduced by 10% (£1,000).
- 3.3 A third of the total grant awarded must be expended on capital items.
- 3.4 A copy of the provisional awards for other authorities can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/grantprovisionalallocations>

4 Distribution of HPDG Monies

- 4.1 The total award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to Wirral in 2008/09 is £131,013. Actual monies are expected to be received by the Authority in October 2008.
- 4.2 Previous awards of Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) have been divided between Corporate Services, Technical Services and Regeneration Departments, to reflect their differing roles in delivering grant focussed services, in terms of plan making (Corporate Services), development control (Technical Services), e-government (Corporate Services and Technical Services) and housing market renewal (Regeneration) (Cabinet 29 November 2007, Minute 375 refers).
- 4.3 HPDG no longer seeks to provide funding to support development control, following the recent increase in planning fees which was intended to provide a more direct form of self-funding (Government Response, page 22). The incentive to perform has, however, been maintained through an abatement on the plan making element of the grant, where development control performance falls below any of the standards included under National Indicator 157 (processing of planning applications measured against targets for major, minor and other application types).
- 4.4 Similarly, HPDG no longer seeks to support action to address low demand, in areas such as the Newheartlands Pathfinder. Instead, funding has been re-directed towards the preparation of studies and assessments that will assist in the delivery of additional housing. As the Director of Regeneration had previously funded the preparation of the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, prepared by Fordham Research, it is recommended that the award of £11,215 for the publication of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment is directed to the Director of Regeneration.
- 4.5 As the responsibility for the preparation of the Local Development Framework, including the Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document, policies to support the delivery of additional housing and evidence base studies such as a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, resides with the Director of Corporate Services, it is recommended that the remainder of the award for 2008/09 is directed towards to the Director of Corporate Services.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) has been re-directed to focus on the delivery of the Local Development Framework and the delivery of additional housing. The main implications will, therefore, fall on services to which previous grant awards had been directed:
- 5.2 The award of grant is no longer directed towards Development Control. As this grant is budgeted for in Development Control's income, the Director of Technical Services will report separately to Cabinet on the financial implications through the financial monitoring and budget setting processes.
- 5.3 Future performance in the processing of planning applications may have implications for the abatement of future grant awards for plan making.

5.4 The award of grant is no longer directed towards low demand which brings to an end the annual funding of around £100,000 that supported the Council's Empty Property Strategy, from the revenue element of the grant. However, the use of this grant and other resources have successfully pump-primed a pilot scheme involving 4,000 houses and the sales proceeds from these houses are now funding the purchase and refurbishment of further similar properties. The cessation of this grant for low demand was anticipated and there is no direct budgetary implication for the Regeneration Department.

5.5 Ongoing progress on the preparation of the Local Development Framework, including the Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document and support for the delivery of additional housing, will have implications for future awards of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

6 Staffing Implications

6.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly out of this report.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

7.1 There are no equal opportunities implications arising from this report.

8 Community Safety Implications

8.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly out of this report.

9 Local Agenda 21 Implications

9.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 implications arising directly from this report.

10 Planning Implications

10.1 The award of HPDG for 2008/09 will be used to support the preparation of the Local Development Framework, including the Core Strategy DPD, the Joint Merseyside Waste DPD and policy support for additional housing delivery, including the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point and housing market renewal, in support of the Council's wider objectives.

11 Anti-poverty Implications

11.1 There are no anti-poverty implications arising from this report.

12 Human Rights Implications

12.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

13 Social Inclusion Implications

13.1 There are no social inclusion implications arising from this report.

14 Local Member Support Implications

14.1 There are no ward member implications arising from this report.

15 Background Papers

- 15.1 Housing and Planning Delivery Grant – Allocation Mechanism and Summary of Consultation Responses (CLG, July 2008), can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/grantallocationresponses.pdf>
- 15.2 A copy of the Provisional Awards for 2008/09, can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/grantprovisionalallocations>
- 15.3 Cabinet Report – 29 November 2007 – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister – Planning Delivery Grant Award 2007/08, can be viewed at http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/cabpro071114rep1_25642_25660.pdf

RECOMMENDATION

That

- (1) £11,215 of the award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant for 2008/09 be directed towards the Director of Regeneration for the publication of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Wirral; and
- (2) £119,798 of the award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant for 2008/09 be directed towards the Director of Corporate Services for the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

J. Wilkie
Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

This report has been prepared by the Forward Planning Section who can be contacted on 691 8218.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 25 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

TACKLING GRAFFITI – AN ANTI-GRAFFITI POLICY & STRATEGY

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following Cabinet's approval of a policy option to provide additional funding for graffiti removal this report seeks endorsement of a new approach to tackling graffiti within the borough. Whilst this approach will improve the quality of service it is very much focused on tackling anti-social behaviour and improving quality of life in neighbourhoods.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 All Crime and Reduction Partnerships are under a duty to consider enviro-crime issues under Section 1 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Graffiti is a criminal offence under Section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971, attracting a penalty ranging from a Fixed Penalty Notice to community sentences (such as Reparation Orders to imprisonment (for adults) or detention and training (for young people)). Racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage is an offence under Section 30 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which carries a maximum penalty of imprisonment (for adults), detention and training order (for young people) and/or fine.
- 2.2 Graffiti is a form of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and often a pre-cursor to other types of ASB and crime such as deliberate fire setting, vandalism and more serious behaviour. Alongside litter, graffiti has a significant impact on communities' perceptions of anti-social behaviour. There are a number of National Indicators included within the Council's Corporate and/or Departmental Plans. NI 17 is a new indicator measuring perceptions around "vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles". In addition, NI 21 is also a new indicator measuring levels of public satisfaction with the police and local authority in dealing with ASB and crime that matters in their areas.
- 2.3 National Indicator 195 is an existing performance measure that combines four environmental quality indicators: litter; detritus; graffiti and flyposting. Levels of graffiti are measured through an approved NI 195 survey methodology three times each year, totalling nine hundred locations or transects. The combined results provide a score for the percentage of streets that fall below acceptable levels of graffiti. Any graffiti that can be seen from the survey location must be accounted for when scoring each transect. Therefore, graffiti on any land or property can affect the performance of this indicator, not just that falling under the ownership of the Council.
- 2.4 NI 195 has been selected as an LAA priority area where challenging improvements are to be expected in the levels of litter and detritus on Wirral's streets. Government Office will also be monitoring levels of graffiti. Any deterioration in current levels of graffiti will result in Wirral failing to meet its LAA target. The new focus of graffiti resources proposed in Wirral's Anti-Graffiti Strategy will ensure graffiti levels do not increase in the borough, and indeed, seek to reduce levels of graffiti over the next few years. Wirral's

current borough wide performance for graffiti (07/08 NI 195 out turn) is 7% (streets falling below an acceptable standard) (lower is better). An independent survey conducted by EnCams has shown that levels of graffiti are more prolific in the most deprived areas of Wirral. The NI 195 score for most deprived Super Output Areas (07/08) is 12% (streets falling below an acceptable standard).

3.0 CURRENT POLICY & PROCESS FOR REPORTING AND REMOVING GRAFFITI

3.1 Incidents of graffiti are reported primarily through Streetscene (0151 606 2004) but also through 'It's Your Call' (0151 606 2020), both operated through the Council's Call Centre. Any calls to the latter service results in a service request being generated through to Streetscene (subject to the report meeting the current service criteria).

3.2 Racist or other offensive graffiti

Under the current policy, any graffiti that is perceived to be racist and/or offensive will be logged by the Call Centre and a service request generated to the contractor responsible for removing graffiti; Biffa. The target time for the removal of graffiti of this nature is within 24 hours. If the graffiti is on property belonging to a utility company or statutory undertaker, efforts will be made to have the company remove the graffiti themselves, however if they are unable to do so and given the pressing nature, the task is directed to Biffa. In relation to privately owned property, if access is denied to remove the graffiti, the Technical Services Department's Enforcement Team may serve a defacement notice (under Sections 48-52 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 as amended by Section 31 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005) upon the owner giving him/her 28 days to remove the graffiti. If it is not removed, the Council can remove it from the owner's property without consent and recharge the owner for the cost. To date, however, no such notices have been served.

3.3 Other graffiti (non-racist/non-offensive)

If the graffiti is not racist and/or offensive in nature, it will only be removed from property belonging to the Council (such as street furniture, recycling banks, pavements, road signs, footbridges and walls abutting the highway). The target for removal is within 10 working days. Graffiti of this nature on property belonging to utility companies, statutory undertakers, housing associations or private property will not be removed by the Council. The Council can however serve a defacement notice. The Council do not make recommendations to the public on removal firms who may be able to assist in removing graffiti from their homes. Calls reporting non-racist/non-offensive graffiti are not logged by the Call Centre.

3.4 Under the current policy, it is the responsibility of each respective Council Department to arrange removal of graffiti from their own property.

3.5 Due to the fact that not all occurrences of graffiti are recorded through the Call Centre, no accurate data exists within the Council as to whether graffiti has become more prevalent. Anecdotally however, officers working within communities have seen a steady increase in incidents of graffiti and that has been supported by BV199b survey scores in the last two years.

3.6 Response times for graffiti removal have improved in 2007/08 and the vast majority of offensive graffiti complaints are now removed within 24 hours. The service that has been provided to-date, currently operates five days per week, which excludes Saturdays and

Sundays. However levels of graffiti across the Borough are still unacceptable and the need to adopt a new policy and strategy to tackle this issue is evident.

3.7 Within the borough in specified areas, there are a limited number of additional graffiti removal services in operation, such as through the Neighbourhood Environmental Team (NET) employed by Together Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (NMP) and through the Council's Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) LIVE Wirral wardens.

3.8 Research shows that the most effective control over graffiti is its prompt removal or defacement pending removal.

4.0 **A NEW POLICY & RESPONSE**

4.1 It is proposed that as a 12-month pilot scheme commencing from 1 August 2008, a new policy is adopted for the removal of graffiti, with the aim of providing a more comprehensive and inclusive service (see Appendix 1).

4.2 The removal of graffiti will be delivered by Together NMP's NET team. Together will take responsibility for co-ordination of the scheme, which will include stock management, equipment and vehicle maintenance. The overall responsibility for the authority's response to graffiti will remain with the Technical Services Department.

4.3 The pilot scheme will deliver the following service standards:

- removal of racist and/or offensive graffiti within 24 hours;
- removal of 'other' graffiti (i.e. non racist/offensive) within 28 days (this timescale reflects the increase in coverage – see 4.4);
- programmed activity in identified hot-spot locations (and initially a clearance of the backlog);
- preventative activities in accordance with the Anti-Graffiti Strategy (see 5.0).

4.4 It is proposed that the removal of 'other' graffiti is extended to private residential properties (with the owner's consent) and all Council buildings and property. Registered social landlords (RSLs) have been engaged through the RSL Practitioners' Respect Consortium, led by Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, and further discussion is planned to develop a protocol in relation to their properties. Anti-graffiti coatings will be advocated and utilised where appropriate and cost effective.

4.5 This new approach will be operated five days per week and can include Saturday if required; with the Council's out-of-hours service defacing any racist or other offensive graffiti that is reported over the weekend.

4.6 Within Wirral and across other areas nationally, offenders on community-based orders supervised by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) have been involved in reparation and community payback schemes, including graffiti removal in defined areas or at hot-spot locations. Discussions have taken place with NOMS and it has been agreed that offenders will be engaged more formally in the removal of graffiti and through other environmental initiatives.

4.7 It has been acknowledged that due to the current Council policy, there are numerous accumulated graffiti markings across the borough that have remained in situ for long periods of time, increasing the 'baseline' level of graffiti.

- 4.8 Since 1 April 2008, Together NMP has been addressing pockets of graffiti identified through audits conducted by the LIVE Wirral wardens. This work has been undertaken primarily in areas including Egremont, New Brighton, Liscard, Rock Ferry, Seacombe and Poulton. The entire lengths of Laird Street and Borough Road, Birkenhead, have also been focused upon, together with parks large and small. This work has had an immediate impact and resulted in positive feedback from members of the public.
- 4.9 In addition, in order to test the proposed new policy, from June 2008 requests for removal have been directed from Streetscene to Together NMP; these have been separated into requests requiring an urgent response (within 24 hours) and those of normal priority (within 28 days). The former have been removed within 24 hours and the latter have been removed within 10 days, having been grouped into geographical clusters to minimise travelling time. Incidents have ranged from simple 'tags' to a heavily affected underpass taking three days to overpaint.
- 4.10 These efforts have been made to attempt to reduce the baseline/backlog before the new approach is implemented fully (subject to Cabinet endorsement) and the public informed. An example of some of this work, through the use of before and after photographs, is included at Appendix 2.
- 4.11 The new approach has been operating on a trial basis and Members are asked to endorse the new policy. 'It's Your Call', the Borough-wide reporting service for anti-social behaviour, will be advertised as the number for the public to call to report graffiti. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has provided access to all fire stations and standpipes for use by the graffiti removal team.

5.0 A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

- 5.1 It is recognised that a holistic response to the issue of graffiti has needed to be developed. Wirral's current response and best practice from across the country has been analysed in some detail following the appointment of a Criminal Damage Reduction Officer seconded to Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team from Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service. A Steering Group has been developed between the Council's Waste & Recycling Environmental Services Section (Technical Services Department), Anti-Social Behaviour Team (Regeneration Department), Together NMP and LIVE Wirral Wardens (Regeneration Department) and a comprehensive strategy to tackle graffiti developed.
- 5.2 This Strategy (Appendix 3) focuses upon six themes. This includes:
- 5.3 **Strategic management** via the Anti-Graffiti Steering Group (part of the Liveability Group). Including the monitoring of existing, and developing new, ways of improving liveability conditions in neighbourhoods and being an active partner within the Merseyside Cleaner, Safer, Greener Partnership, using the partnership to secure regional agreements with statutory undertakers.
- 5.4 **Graffiti removal.** Adopting the new partnership of delivery through Together NMP, which will ensure a faster and more comprehensive removal response. This will be supported through the use of community payback and reparation with adult and juvenile offenders.
- 5.5 **Proactive graffiti management.** Improving the recording of graffiti through the short-term adoption of a multi-agency web base and longer-term through improvements to the

CRM system. Improved intelligence and evidence gathering through covert and overt surveillance and reward schemes. Preventative work with young people and public communication campaigns. Undertaking graffiti removal blitzes, working with local businesses, controlling the use of graffiti mediums and 'designing out' areas vulnerable to graffiti attacks.

5.6 **Enforcement action.** Taking robust action against graffiti offenders and enforcing the responsibility of land and property owners to remove graffiti.

5.7 **Legalised graffiti sites.** Consideration of the use of authorised sites in appropriate circumstances and following the completion of Impact Assessment Surveys and Risk Assessments.

5.8 **Wider environmental issues.** Ensuring links to wider environmental issues such as flytipping, flyposting and littering and benefiting from economies of scale.

6.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Council's mainstream budget provision for graffiti removal is £40k. Additional funding, through a policy option of £30k, has also been secured to fund the new approach. The service aims to generate income to self-fund above the value of the mainstream budget provision in future years. A progress report will be presented to Cabinet later in the financial year.

7.0 **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The adoption of the new policy and strategy requires no additional staffing within the Council.

8.0 **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The work of the team and the activities undertaken in relation to social cohesion will seek to promote equal opportunities for all.

9.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Tackling anti-social behaviour is a key priority within both the Crime and Disorder (Community Safety) Reduction Strategy and the CDRP's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. This initiative will provide a focused response to the issue of graffiti and public perception.

10.0 **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The prompt removal of graffiti is a deterrent to its use. If effective, this will reduce the use of paint and aerosols used to daub graffiti which include harmful chemicals and solvents.

10.2 The majority of graffiti removal will be undertaken using water directed at high-pressure, with the addition of appropriate substances which react with the graffiti medium used. Wherever possible, substances used will be environmentally friendly, however some accumulated long-term or oil-based graffiti require the use of more reactive substances in dilution with water.

11.0 **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 **ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The skills and experience gained by offenders involved in community payback and reparation as part of the new approach may create employment opportunities and therefore reduce poverty.

13.0 **SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 Tackling graffiti helps promote social inclusion. The involvement of offenders, both adult and juvenile, will also contribute to social inclusion.

14.0 **LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 This report affects all wards.

15.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

15.1 None.

16.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

16.1 That the new policy and comprehensive strategy for tackling graffiti be approved, the actions taken so far be endorsed and officers report back on progress to a future meeting later in the year.

Alan Stennard
Director of Regeneration

This report was prepared by Caroline Laing who can be contacted on 606 5471.

DRAFT
WIRRAL GRAFFITI REMOVAL POLICY
 (Version 3.0 – JULY 2008)

1.0 DEFINITION OF GRAFFITI

1.1 Graffiti is a deliberate mark, scratch, drawing or writing placed without permission on any property, or structure.

1.2 Racist and offensive graffiti is considered to be:

- ✓ Offensive drawings or writings of a sexual or drug related nature;
- ✓ Pro or anti-war writings or symbols;
- ✓ Graffiti targeting an individual in an offensive way (e.g. Dave Smith is a grass, Sally F is a pig etc...)
- ✓ Any graffiti related to race or religion;
- ✓ Threatening graffiti or gang turf graffiti (e.g. X gang - keep out);
- ✓ Homophobic graffiti;
- ✓ Swear words.

2.0 MANAGEMENT OF RACIST OR OTHER OFFENSIVE GRAFFITI REMOVAL

2.1 Response Time

Racist and/or offensive graffiti will be removed or covered up from all land or fixed property in public view* within 24 hours of its report, where it is safe to do so. Exceptions are detailed in section 2.3 below. (*to include residential exteriors not in public view, where the householder has been victimised.)

2.2 Hate Crime Database

All graffiti considered to be a “race hate crime” will be recorded on the Race Hate Crime database. Racist and other offensive graffiti reported by the actual property owner / tenant must also be reported to the Police. Wherever practical (i.e. where the crime is reported by a victim of a graffiti attack) the Crime Reference number must be recorded on CRM at the time of logging the removal request.

2.3 Property belonging to utility companies and statutory undertakers

Reports of offensive graffiti on utility boxes owned by Virgin Media and BT will be sent to the contractor via CRM . The contractor shall paint over the offending graffiti.

The Council will not remove any graffiti from property belonging to utility companies unless we have entered into a partnership agreement with them. The Council will seek to gain a memorandum of understanding with non-partners. The Council will respond to racist and other offensive incidents of non-partners by painting over the offensive part of the graffiti incident. An exception to this is any land and bridges owned by Network Rail or Rail Station Operators (Trackside), the Highways Agency and any other land where legal access is not granted. Where appropriate, graffiti removal notices will be served on the property owner if an MOU is not complied with.

(Example of Statutory Undertakers and Utility Companies include: Network Rail, Mersey Rail, Merseytravel, Highways Agency (motorway bridges/ flyovers), Virgin Media, BT, Cable and Post Office).

2.4 All other property

2.4.1 Access to graffiti

If access to the graffiti is difficult and it cannot be removed using jet wash machinery it will be painted over.

APPENDIX 1

If the offensive graffiti is in a dangerous location, such as a busy carriageway, then Technical Services will apply for a road closure on behalf of the graffiti contractor to deal with the complaint. This cannot be done within 24 hours. If the graffiti is at a dangerous height, then the incident must be sub-contracted to a specialist firm. This may also delay removal.

If the owner of the property is unobtainable, then graffiti will be removed without seeking permission.

2.4.2 Delicate surfaces

If the graffiti removal process is likely to cause damage to a surface, then the contractor will attempt to remove the graffiti without the use of a power wash. If attempts fail, then the contractor will paint over the offending graffiti.

The contractor will not remove graffiti from painted surfaces. They will paint over any offending graffiti with a colour nearest to the painted surface. The contractor will carry one shade of the following colours on board their vehicle: Magnolia, White, Black, Brick Red, Green, and Brown.

2.4.3 Forcible removal of racist or other offensive graffiti

If permission is not granted for removal from private property, or access is denied, the contractor will update CRM and send the in-completed service request to the Council. The Enforcement team will serve graffiti removal notice on the owner of the property. The Owner will then have 28 days to have the graffiti removed. If the graffiti is not removed, the Council is able to remove the graffiti from the owner's property without consent, and charge for the removal.

Technical Services will update residents with progress where paint-outs or removal were not achievable within the 24-hour response time.

2.5 REMOVAL CHARGES

Racist or other offensive graffiti shall be removed free of charge to the property owner unless the removal is as a result of non-compliance of a graffiti removal notice.

3.0 OTHER GRAFFITI REQUESTS – NON OFFENSIVE / RACIST

3.1 Non offensive graffiti on Council owned property (including street furniture)

Grffiti shall be removed within 28 working days of the report. The call is logged on CRM and will be programmed into the first available "reactive scheduled day"

3.2 Non offensive graffiti reported on utility boxes

Reports of non-offensive graffiti on utility boxes shall be referred to the Youth Offending Service via Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team. An agreement exists between the Council and both Virgin Media and BT Openreach with this team to paint over utility boxes.

3.3 Graffiti removal requests from the public reporting graffiti on private property not belonging / rented to them.

3.3.1 Graffiti on residential property, small businesses and charitable organisations

The contractor shall remove graffiti within 28 working days unless the owner of the property denies access. If access is denied then CRM shall be updated by the contractor and forwarded to Technical Services' Enforcement Team who will serve a graffiti removal notice on the property owner. (See 2.4.3)

3.3.2 Graffiti from large businesses (businesses considered to be a regionally or nationally known company and statutory undertakers where no partnership agreement exists) and organisations (e.g. Housing associations, Police, Primary Care Trust, etc)

The request for removal is logged on CRM for the attention of the Technical Services' Waste & Environment Team. The business or organisation is contacted in writing to encourage them to arrange for removal and to quote a price for removal by the Council's contractor. If, after 14 days, the business/

APPENDIX 1

organisation does not comply with a request to have the graffiti removed then the CRM record shall be forwarded to the Enforcement Team who will serve graffiti removal notice (see 2.4.3).

3.4 Graffiti removal requests from property owners who's own property is affected (residential)

3.4.1 Graffiti on non-painted surfaces

The contractor shall remove graffiti within 28 working days of the report. The call is logged on CRM and will be programmed into the first available "reactive scheduled day"

3.4.2 Graffiti on painted surfaces

Residents will be encouraged to remove their own graffiti, in order to match up the cover up paint to the painted surface. The graffiti removal team will only carry limited colours of paint (See 2.4.2) Where this is not possible, the contractor will paint over the surface free of charge on the first occasion. Where repeated attacks on the property occur, the Council will review its approach in these circumstances on a case by case basis. However, the Council will offer to apply a protective coating on the cleaned surface and supply the owner of the property with graffiti wipes so they may manage future attacks themselves. The contractor will carry out this work.

4.0 OPERATIONAL HOURS

The graffiti contractor is operational Monday to Saturday 8.30am to 4.00pm.

Offensive graffiti reported via the emergency out of hours service shall be removed the following day by the contractor with the exception of emergency calls made between 12pm on Saturday and 10am Sunday. These will be referred to the DSO out of hours service between 9am and 10am Sunday for immediate removal (within 2 hours). The DSO shall only paint over the offensive graffiti. The DSO shall inform the Waste & Environment Team of the incident so that the contractor can remove the paint and offensive graffiti if necessary and the incident can be recorded on CRM. All requests made through the out of hours service must have a police Crime Number.

5.0 GRAFFITI REMOVAL CHARGES

Where the graffiti removal service has been requested and the free service does not apply, the Council will charge a minimum two-hour call out fee according to the published schedule of rates. An hourly charge shall apply thereafter for any full or part hours worked.

6.0 CRIMINAL DAMAGE

Wherever practical, photographs shall be taken of graffiti incidents by the removal contractor. These photographs shall be used as evidence to recover removal costs from the offender/perpetrator, should they be found guilty of a graffiti offence at a future date.

Similarly, if the offenders of racist/offensive graffiti attacks are caught and convicted, then the Council may choose to recover all removal costs through the courts.

7.0 PRIORITY FOR REMOVAL

The Council will operate graffiti removal operations in the most efficient way, in order to maximise the amount of graffiti removed from the borough and to reduce the likelihood of the graffiti returning.

In 2008/9 the contractor will therefore be deployed for a minimum of 3 working days per week in whole areas in order to conduct "graffiti" blitzes. These areas will be those most affected by graffiti. The Council will programme requests from elected members and the public according to areas so that reactive work is scheduled in a tighter geographical location. This will minimise time lost travelling between sites. If the demand from the public and elected members exceeds the available time for removal and the 28-day response time cannot be met, then the person who made the request will be informed of the next available scheduled day by the Waste & Environment Team (or the call centre at the time of request if known).

APPENDIX 1

In order to meet the Council's target for removing racist and other offensive graffiti, the work shall be carried out at the beginning or at the end of a working day.

APPENDIX 2

BEACONSFIELD UNDERPASS, NEW FERRY – BEFORE



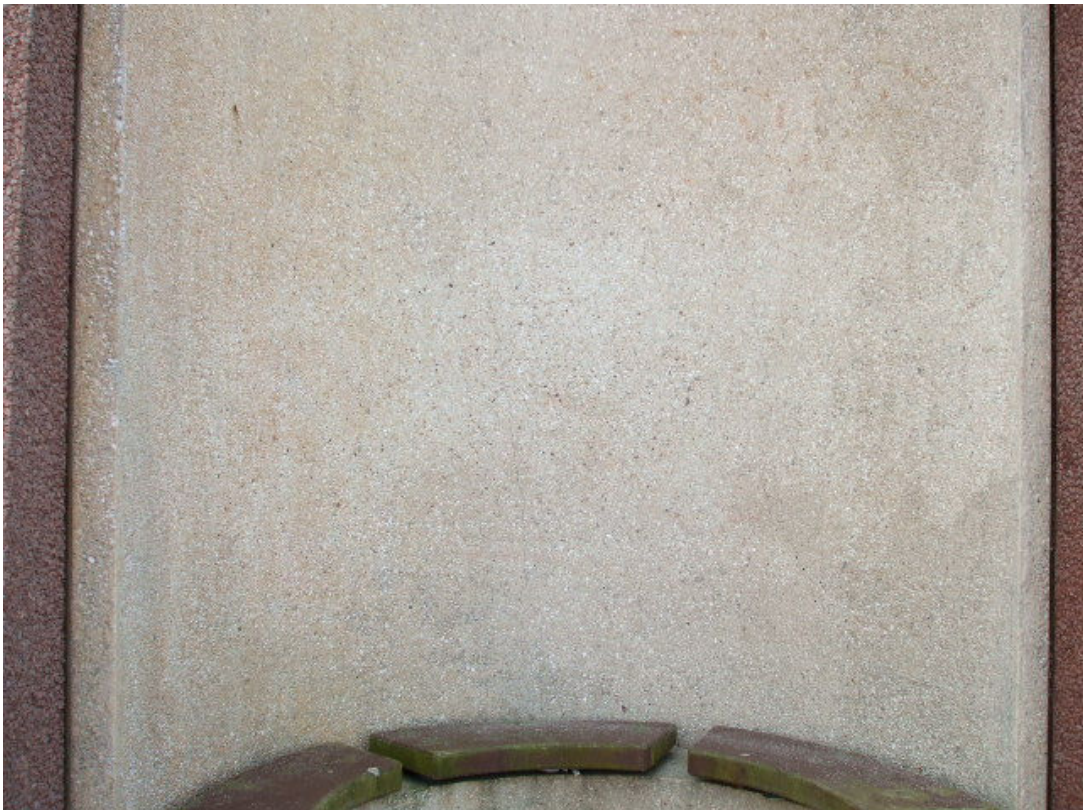
BEACONSFIELD UNDERPASS, NEW FERRY – AFTER



THE PROMENADE, NEW BRIGHTON – BEFORE



THE PROMENADE, NEW BRIGHTON – AFTER



SHOPMOBILITY, LISCARD CRESCENT, LISCARD – BEFORE



SHOPMOBILITY, LISCARD CRESCENT, LISCARD – AFTER



EUROPA COMPLEX, BIRKENHEAD – BEFORE



EUROPA COMPLEX, BIRKENHEAD – AFTER



Draft - Wirral Anti-Graffiti Strategy 2008/9

1.0 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF GRAFFITI

1.1 Liveability Steering Group

Wirral Council's Technical Services Department leads a multi agency Liveability Steering Group, examining ways to improve environmental conditions in neighbourhoods where there have been particular or on going related problems, including graffiti. The Liveability Group recognise the merit of preventive and partnership approaches in high density/high demand neighbourhoods as a means to improve conditions. The developing approach to the treatment of graffiti is part of the action planning process in dealing with neighbourhood based liveability issues. This Steering Group will monitor the effectiveness of the graffiti removal approaches carried out in Wirral, with respect to national indicator NI195 and the Local Area Agreement Priority Area target for improving environmental quality in deprived areas.

1.2 Merseyside Cleaner, Greener, Safer Partnership

Wirral Council is part of the Merseyside Cleaner, Greener, Safer Partnership facilitated by EnCams (formerly the Tidy Britain Group). This partnership will aim to secure regional agreements with statutory undertakers/utility companies in order to unify approaches and resources allocated by these companies for the effective management of graffiti problems.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be developed with services where partnerships cannot be secured to agree their responsibility for the removal of graffiti within defined service standard parameters. This work will extend to Merseytravel and the British Transport Police (BTP).

1.3 Income generation

The graffiti removal service shall be operated by a not-for-profit organisation in conjunction with the Council. Wherever practical, income will be generated through partnership working with other statutory undertakers to help supplement the funding of the graffiti removal service. Any net profits realised through the graffiti operations shall be re-invested into the service to enhance resources for additional removal, or support related educational initiatives, including local community empowerment.

2.0 GRAFFITI REMOVAL

2.1 The most effective deterrent to graffiti is its prompt removal or defacement pending removal. A new approach to removal will ensure a swift and more comprehensive removal response. Wirral Council will not tolerate graffiti incidents on any land or property (This does not

APPENDIX 3

include graffiti style art that has been authorised for community/private projects).

2.2 Graffiti Removal Policy

Graffiti removal resources available to Wirral Council will be utilised to carry out:

Rapid response (within 24 hours) to reports of racist and/or offensive graffiti on all accessible land and property.

Programmed graffiti removal in hot spot areas from all public and private residential land and property.

Response to requests for removal of graffiti from all public and private residential land and property and those SME's engaged with the Wirral Tidy Business Awards Scheme.

Further details are contained within the *Wirral Graffiti Removal Policy*. Service standards will be communicated to residents and business in Wirral through the Council's website and front of office services such as One Stop Shops; the Streetscene and the Anti-Social Behaviour "It's Your Call" service.

2.3 Graffiti removal methods

The physical elements of the graffiti service will be based around three methods:

- **Graffiti removal**
- **Use of paint coverings**
- **Use of 'anti graffiti' coatings**

Standard graffiti removal will involve the use of 'limestone cleaner' and cold and/or hot water jet wash machinery for the vast majority of marks. Simple 'graffiti wipes' and other materials may also be used on certain paints/markings.

In some cases graffiti can be removed more easily and at less cost by covering over the offending marks. This will be carried out by applying paint on a surface. For example black telecom boxes and alleygates are re-sprayed black. Red brick paint, white wash and specialised obliteration paint will also be used on surfaces when appropriate.

Anti-graffiti coatings will be used on surfaces that are repeatedly daubed. The assessment of where and when anti-graffiti coatings should be used will be based on data/information about reappearance of graffiti on particular surfaces/areas.

APPENDIX 3

A rolling programme of applying anti-graffiti coatings to street furniture and Council buildings suffering from repeat graffiti attacks will be developed.

2.4 Management of graffiti removal

2.4.1 Managing graffiti removal requests

Graffiti reports will arise primarily from wardens, Council Officers, Members and the public via the “It’s Your Call” service and Streetscene. Removal requests will be recorded on CRM and Together NMP will have access to CRM via a VPN Key Fob and will be responsible for programming all reactive the work for the graffiti removal teams in order to meet agreed service standards. Together NMP (through their admin desk) will also update CRM and close down completed tasks on a daily basis.

If the instance of graffiti is categorised as a crime by the police, the Council may seek to recover removal costs through the courts. Any communications campaign will promote the use of the “It’s Your Call” service (0151 606 2020 and available at any One Stop Shop).

NB (Interim Arrangement): It is anticipated that Together NMP will not have access to the CRM until November 2008. In the interim, graffiti reports will be screen-dumped and sent daily to Together NMP by the Council’s Waste & Recycling Environmental Services Section (admin team). Together NMP will programme each list and return a daily completed job sheet in order that the CRM job can be closed. Any jobs that may require completing outside the 28-day SLA due to a high volume of requests will also be returned with an expected completion date, in order that the CRM may be updated.

2.4.2 Work priorities

The *Graffiti Removal Policy* details the service standards to which the Council has agreed to operate.

It is anticipated that at least the first six months of the programme will be a ‘catch up phase’ involving the complete removal of existing graffiti in hot-spot areas. These graffiti blitzes will primarily target deprived areas and key gateways, where graffiti is most prevalent.

Non urgent graffiti removal requests will be integrated into the ‘catch up’ work programme to minimise the disruption of programmed work and optimise the time spent on removal as opposed to travelling between sites.

2.4.3 Operational considerations

Day to day graffiti removal operations will be managed by Together NMP. Together NMP has been piloting approaches to a range of environmental treatments jointly with Technical Services and has achieved success both in actual environmental standards and in resident satisfaction. Together NMP takes a social enterprise approach to its business wherever possible via the coordination and maintenance of partnerships. This means that commercial arrangements are flexible and any surplus is used to address other environmental concerns or returned for other community benefits.

Partnership arrangements with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will be developed to include offenders on a risk managed basis in the delivery of the graffiti removal service and also potentially within Together NMP's broader environmental programme.

About Together NMP

Together Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder is one of 35 Government-sponsored national pilot programmes. Established in 2004, the Pathfinder operates as a partnership of statutory and non-statutory agencies and residents.

Turnover over the last twelve months has exceeded £510,000, and is expected to rise to over £700,000 during this financial year. Financial management and reporting is supervised by Together's Partnership Board, in accordance with Government and Local Authority financial rules.

Together's core Neighbourhood Management Team are employed by Riverside Housing and enjoy corporate support available from one of the largest Registered Social Landlords in the country.

Green Apprentices have been appointed as operations partner by Together's Board for delivery of a Lottery funded Green Together Programme, Neighbourhood Environment Team (NET) and Bag a Bargain (BaB) schemes. Green Apprentices staff will carry out graffiti removal operations on behalf of Together NMP. The Green Apprentices have a strong track record in the development and delivery of environmental programmes, employment training and skills projects across the North West in line with European, Learning and Skills Council, Neighbourhood Renewal and Housing Market Renewal contract criteria.

2.5 Health and safety

All work related procedures and use of substances have been fully risk assessed under relevant regulations and staff have received comprehensive training with relevant personal protective equipment supplied. Site risk assessments will be carried out by a suitably trained person from the Together NMP team, prior to work commencing on site. This will include an assessment of risk to health and safety of the graffiti removal crew, accompanying offenders and passers by. Health and safety procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis. Together NMP will be responsible for the maintenance of graffiti removal equipment. The operational teams will have use of all Fire Stations in Wirral for re-filling the water bowser and use conveniences, in addition to the depot provided by Together NMP.

2.6 Reparation

As part of the response, graffiti removal will be undertaken by adult (and potentially juvenile) offenders/perpetrators undertaking reparation. This will be carried out visibly in the community to show the consequences of crime and anti-social behaviour and to act as a deterrent to future unacceptable behaviour.

Work will be undertaken with HM Courts' Service highlighting the successful use of reparation in Wirral and encouraging the issuing of Reparation Orders, in appropriate circumstances, to individuals who have committed criminal damage and other similar type offences.

Community payback in the offenders' own communities will be encouraged.

3.0 PROACTIVE GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT

3.1 Graffiti removal blitzes

Hot spots areas will be, where possible, subjected to programmed removal 'blitzes'. This will involve all relevant agencies pooling graffiti removal resources at one time into an area to help make that area graffiti free. The area will then be monitored closely to respond to repeat attacks in a timely manner and carry out investigations to identify graffiti vandals.

3.2 Improved recording and intelligence & evidence gathering

3.2.1 Partnership working

Covert and overt surveillance will be used to identify graffiti offenders. This includes the use of fixed and mobile CCTV and 'Talking' CCTV will be used at appropriate sites to deter or halt graffiti daubing. Patrols by officers including wardens, Wirral Community Patrol and PCSOs at

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known hot-spot locations will also be undertaken in the course of their duties.

Neighbourhood Management Organisations, the Wirral Federation of Tenants and Resident Associations and Neighbourhood Watch Schemes will be encouraged to participate and the 'RingMaster' system will be used to provide key messages and information to Neighbourhood Watch leaders.

Through work in schools and working with teachers, art and daubing on schoolbooks will be used more consistently to identify 'tags' and alleged offenders.

3.2.2 Graffiti Web Base

In order to improve systems for the recording of instances of graffiti and gathering of evidence related to both locations and offenders, and whilst awaiting service developments within the CRM, a Graffiti Web Base will be implemented.

The online recording database will be available for use by officers from a variety of agencies (such as police officers, PCSOs, wardens, Housing Officers, etc). Officers 'on the street' will use the system to record any instances of graffiti that are sighted, providing specific details relating to the graffiti including location, tags, medium used, etc. The system will have the facility to upload photographs of graffiti instances that may be used as evidence at a later date.

The system will then be used to identify repeat and hot-spot locations and gather evidence on possible offenders. This will lead to more targeted activity in areas and possible identification and prosecution of offenders. Over time a baseline for graffiti incidents can be developed as can more specific targets for its reduction. The impact of initiatives may also be assessed more effectively.

Each and every incident of graffiti uploaded on to the Graffiti Web Base will automatically result in the generation of an email to the Council's Call Centre. The Call Centre advisors will manually input the emailed data into the CRM that will then generate a service request for its removal; this is no more onerous than taking a telephone call directly from an agency reporting the graffiti.

Any graffiti reported directly to the Call Centre by a member of the public will be photographed prior to its removal by Together NMP. The details relating to the instance will be retrospectively uploaded on to the Graffiti Web Base to ensure that all graffiti identified across the borough is recorded.

It is envisaged that over time, when developments within the CRM progress (such as the ability to upload photographs to graffiti records)

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the Graffiti Web Base may become obsolete. However the necessary service developments are likely to be at least 24 months away.

3.2.3 Preventative work with young people

Analysis shows that the average graffiti offender age is 17 years old and the peak time for vandalism is between 4pm-7pm. Peak times often coincide with half terms and the school summer holidays.

3.3.1 Education and awareness

Work will continue at both primary and secondary school level raising awareness about the impact of graffiti (criminal damage) and the consequences for offenders. This work is most effective when local issues and areas affected are discussed with the children and young people.

RESPECT PROGRAMME

Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team operates a Respect Programme in both primary and secondary schools. This is focused upon anti-social behaviour and the consequences and includes specific focuses upon arson and fire; truancy and criminal damage.

The work in secondary schools is led by a seconded officer from Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service. Work in primary schools is led by seconded officers from the Council's Education Social Welfare Service & Merseyside Police and culminates in a mock courtroom trial involving the young people and is supported by officers from HM Courts' Service.

Ad hoc work is also undertaken when there is a sudden increase in graffiti in an area or it is identified as a hot-spot, which involves the Team's Criminal Damage Reduction Officer and partners attending assemblies and conducting an abbreviated presentation on graffiti using visual images from the local area.

Preventative work with children and young people will continue to be undertaken.

Schoolchildren will also be encouraged as part of the Citizenship curriculum to take responsibility for their immediate environment (including minor graffiti removal).

3.3.2 Diversion

Intelligence will be used to influence and direct diversionary activity with young people engaged in criminal damage and/or within hot spot areas.

3.3.4 Community ownership

Projects involving communities (and particularly young people) taking ownership of local areas will be actively encouraged and supported wherever possible. Anti-graffiti or environmental improvement events will be encouraged and publicised. Where practical, this will be planned to coincide with graffiti “blitzes” covering a wider area.

3.4 Communication campaigns

Regular campaigns will be aimed at the public emphasising the cost of graffiti to society and encouraging offenders and offences to be reported.

Campaigns will also be targeted at offenders and potential offenders outlining the consequences.

3.4.1 Reward schemes

This will include reward schemes aimed at young people, offering rewards for information leading to the prosecution of offenders. Initially this may be piloted in area/s where graffiti taggers are prevalent to be able to assess the impact of the initiative. Sponsorship from the private sector will be sought to fund or subsidise reward schemes.

3.4.2 Information campaigns

In areas targeted by persistent taggers, leaflets will be distributed to residents requesting information about the identity of the offender/s. This may include an element of reward. The use of police and Council web sites may be used in borough-wide campaigns.

3.4.3 Raising the profile of the “broken windows” effect

Staff from agencies, including schools, fire service, police, youth workers and Council building managers will be briefed on the impact that graffiti has on communities and how it can act as a precursor to other forms of anti-social and criminal behaviour. The importance of reporting graffiti and feeding in intelligence will be emphasised.

3.5 Work with businesses

The impact of graffiti on communities and the local economy will be emphasised to local businesses through one-to-one contact, forums and campaigns. Businesses will be encouraged to take ownership of their premises and surrounding areas. Initiatives will be developed, for example, sending postcards to businesses with photographs of their graffiti-affected premises.

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The Council's Technical Services Department is launching a 'Tidy Business Award Scheme' during the summer of 2008. Small and medium businesses or enterprises that sign up to this free scheme will commit to a number of actions and standards that aim to reduce any negative impact of their business on environmental quality. In return, the Council will assist the business with graffiti removal and where necessary help them take preventative measures. For example, businesses have the option to receive a graffiti removal kit and training to operate the kit safely and effectively. This service will be provided free of charge.

3.6 Control of graffiti mediums

If improved evidence gathering identifies a prevalence of the use of spray paints, in liaison with Trading Standards, the use of a voluntary scheme restricting the sale of spray paints to under 18's will be considered. In any event, outlets selling spray paints will be targeted with information about the use of spray paints to undertake graffiti.

Council Officers and national organisations, such as the Social Landlords' Crime and Nuisance Group, will co-ordinate activity to assist the Council to lobby central government for the restriction of the sale of other popular graffiti mediums (such as graffiti pens marketed primarily for the intention of graffiti to be carried out) and to make it illegal for adults to provide these mediums to anyone under the age of 18.

3.7 Situational crime prevention

Work will be undertaken with Safer Wirral's Crime Prevention Officers to 'design out crime', specifically around graffiti.

New developments deemed to be at risk from graffiti attacks, will be encouraged to reduce the likelihood of buildings and structures becoming targeted by graffiti vandals, by carrying out a graffiti impact assessment at the design stage, as part of a developer's overall responsibility to community safety. Technical Services will monitor the press list for planning applications and ensure applicants take reasonable action (for example, an application for conversion of residential premises to business premises may be required to apply anti-graffiti coating to their shop shutters, if graffiti is prevalent in the immediate area).

4.0 ENFORCEMENT ACTION

4.1 Offenders

Robust enforcement will be taken against graffiti offenders, including, but not exclusively, Formal Warnings, Formal Cautions, Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), Anti-Social

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Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Prosecution. Successful outcomes will be publicised.

4.2 Responsibility of land / property owner

The use of 'Defacement Removal Notices' (under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005) will be used in appropriate circumstances against the 'person responsible' for the surface, which has been defaced by graffiti. Where necessary, the Council will remove, clear or otherwise the defacement and recover reasonable costs. This power will be used primarily on businesses and other statutory undertakers.

5.0 LEGALISED GRAFFITI SITES

5.1 Graffiti artists

The use of legalised sites that allow graffiti artists to carry out their 'hobby' has been criticised by statutory undertakers such as Network Rail, as such sites act as a 'practice zone' for potential graffiti vandals to hone their talent and speed up their ability to daub their tag or mark illegally. EnCams (formally 'Keep Britain Tidy') also hold a zero tolerance view.

Best practice from local authorities involved in managing legalised sites has shown that such sites should only be initiated if it improves environmental quality and community safety in the area, and that appropriate ongoing monitoring and resources are allocated to the management of the site in the longer term. Sites work best if graffiti artists are responsible, in part, for the management of the site, and that permission to use the site is restricted to authorised persons to minimise site's misuse (controlled by responsible local street artists).

The impact on the wider area, including neighbouring districts and major transport routes to and from the site should also be considered, as tags and artwork is more likely to occur as a result of a successful site, as it will certainly attract graffiti artists or followers from outside the borough. Police Officers and PCSOs would need to be involved in monitoring the site, in order to take appropriate action against site misuse from unauthorised persons.

Wirral Council and relevant partners will only consider authorising use of a legalised site after an Impact Assessment Survey and Risk Assessment have been carried out and all relevant stakeholders, including local residents have been consulted, showing overall support for the scheme.

5.2 Community art projects

It is expected that any community projects with young people, using graffiti-style art, involve the provision of a clear brief to the young people. It is imperative that, if in a public area, this is recognised as public art and therefore has to be appropriate for the wider community. Any street art that is commissioned or organised by a community, must have draft designs approved by the community and relevant Council officers.

6.0 WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The links of this work to other environmental issues such as flytipping, flyposting and littering will be developed in line with the Technical Services Departmental Plan, the Transformational Change Agenda and the work of the Liveability Steering Group involving wider LAA partners.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 25TH SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY UNIT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 It was agreed by Cabinet on the 9th July, Minute 127, that a Sustainability Unit be created as part of the new department of Law, HR and Asset Management, and that a further report on this issue be presented to Cabinet outlining the proposals for this Sustainability Unit

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The 2008 Budget resolution (Cabinet minute 523 and Council minute 122) to establish and provide one-off funding of £115,000 in 2008/09 for this purpose. This is set out below:

- 2.2 “(F) Tackling Climate Change by reducing Wirral’s Carbon Footprint £115,000

That the Council recognises the urgency of tackling Climate Change and takes a lead in promoting Carbon Reduction across Wirral.

That in order to do so, it takes part in the CRed Carbon Reduction Scheme which seeks to achieve a 60% reduction in Carbon Emissions by 2025, which is significantly higher than the government’s own target.

That, as a first stage, the Council purchases the necessary CRed software and co-ordinates and implements the delivery of the Climate Change 2008/09 Action Plan, including using external resources as necessary.

That further work is undertaken on the setting up of a Sustainability Unit within the Council to improve energy efficiency and to work with Businesses and the Community to raise awareness of the urgent need to reduce Wirral’s Carbon footprint, to take action to reduce Carbon emissions and to sign up to the CRed target.

That the Council continue to set an example by reducing its own Energy use, and builds on previous programmes which included the installation of a building energy management system, installation of Burner Management Units, Water reduction schemes, Heat recovery schemes, a rolling programme of Boiler replacements, increased insulation and pilot micro-generation schemes.

That it be noted as an example that the average energy saving where the Building Energy Management systems have been installed is 18%.

That further action is now taken to move to Automatic Meter Reading, which will improve the accuracy of information, improve billing, increase energy

efficiency as usage can be monitored, improve budgeting and provide accurate information on Carbon Reduction to allow the Council to measure its progress against commitments to reduce Carbon emissions.

That a provision of £30,000 from the £115,000 above is set aside to fund the replacement of non-compatible gas or electricity meters as required.”.

3. PROPOSALS

3.1 It is proposed that the Sustainability Unit be established by the appointment of a Climate Change Officer and a Sustainability (CRED) Liaison Officer who together with the existing Energy Manager and Energy Conservation Team would form the new Sustainability Unit.

3.2 The role of the Climate Change Officer would be to lead, coordinate, manage and evaluate all work going on across the Council to deliver the authorities sustainability projects and Climate Change Strategy, in order to meet our National Indicator targets 185, 186, and 194

(185 -CO2 reduction from local authority operations, 186 - Per Capita reductions in CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area, 194 -Air quality (emissions through local authority estate and operations)

3.3 This will be a key post to drive forward the work the Council is currently doing internally but would also support the joint work we have initiated and are developing with local partners. This post will also be responsible for driving forward Climate Change Adaptation work required by the Council in Minute NI188 – specified.

3.4 The role of the Sustainability (CRed) Liaison Officer will be to lead and actively promote the Wirral CRed initiative to the Council and the Council’s key partners, to develop and implement policies regarding climate change and sustainability programmes, to implement the relevant policies within the Council’s Corporate Plan and the Sustainability Commission Strategy, to develop and operate and manage the Wirral Cred website, and provide regular feedback on progress to the Council and key partners.

3.5 Cabinet Minute 127 directed that the Sustainability Unit should be located within the Asset Management Division of the Department of Law, HR and Asset Management.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The costs of the two posts will be in the region of £80,000 per annum. It is anticipated that the establishment of the Sustainability Unit will help the Authority further reduce expenditure on energy. The Unit will also spearhead efforts to reduce CO2 emissions, improve air quality and drive forward the climate change strategy. These are all critical matters that may well have financial consequences for the Authority if not addressed. It is therefore proposed that these costs be met from the Council’s Efficiency Budget.

- 4.2 The one-off £115,000 Policy Option relating to Sustainability mentioned in the report should be vired from Technical Services to the Department of Law, HR and Asset Management.
- 5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**
There are no direct implications as a result of this report.
- 6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**
There are no direct implications as a result of this report
- 7. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**
The creation of the Sustainability Unit will have a significant impact on environmental issues.
- 8. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**
There are no direct implications as a result of this report
- 9. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**
The creation of this until will impact possibly on the delivery of sustainability issues.
- 10. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**
This unit is of interest to all members.
- 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**
None
- 12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That

- (1) £80,000 be allocated from the Efficiency Budget to cover the costs of the new posts;
- (2) the report be referred to Employment Committee to agree the establishment of the new posts;
- (3) the one-of Policy Option of £115,000 relating to Sustainability be vied from Technical Services to the Department of Law, HR and Asset Management.

J. WILKIE
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

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