Public Document Pack

WIRRAL

Cabinet

Date:	**Thursday, 12 April 2012**
Time:	**6.15 pm**
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

Contact Officer: Mark Delap
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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Cabinet are invited to consider whether they have a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any of the items on this agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting have been printed and published. Any matters called in will be reported at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the minutes be approved and adopted.

REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY

3. NEW BRIGHTON - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME (Pages 1 - 14)

4. HOYLAKE STATION GATEWAY - PHASE 2A SCHEME (Pages 15 - 28)

5. WIRRAL TOWN TEAMS FUNDING (Pages 29 - 32)

6. REGIONAL GROWTH FUND ROUND 3 (Pages 33 - 40)

7. COMMITTEE REFERRAL - GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW (Pages 41 - 80)

This matter was considered by the Economy and Regeneration O&S Committee at its meeting on 8 March, 2012, at which it was agreed that, 'the Green Growth Scrutiny report be presented to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting.'

The minute and report are attached.

8. GREEN GROWTH IN WIRRAL (Pages 81 - 98)

9. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (Pages 99 - 106)

10. COMMITTEE REFERRAL - BUSINESS SUPPORT (Pages 107 - 114)

This matter was considered by the Economy and Regeneration O&S Committee at its meeting on 8 March, 2012, at which it was agreed that, 'the matter be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

The minute and report are attached.

11. TACKLING WORKLESSNESS AND SUPPORTING APPRENTICES IN WIRRAL (Pages 115 - 122)

12. MICRO SUPPORT SERVICES - UPDATE (Pages 123 - 128)

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

13. CHILD POVERTY - BUDGET OPTION (Pages 129 - 134)

14. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS 2013-2014 (Pages 135 - 172)

15. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ADOPTERS (Pages 173 - 182)

16. GOVERNOR SUPPORT (Pages 183 - 186)

17. VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH SECTOR WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAMME FOR NEET (Pages 187 - 196)

FINANCE AND BEST VALUE AND SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSION

18. ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT (Pages 197 - 208)

19. WIRRAL/LGA IMPROVEMENT BOARD - REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 209 - 210)

20. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE (Pages 211 - 220)

To give consideration to the report of the Chief Executive, deferred at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 March 2012 (minute 335 refers).

21. CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER - BUDGET 2012 (Pages 221 - 224)

22. BANKING CONTRACT

To follow

23. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CARERS SELF DIRECTED ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION SYSTEM (Pages 225 - 228)

PUBLIC HEALTH

24. PUBLIC HEALTH DEVELOPMENTS 2012/2013 (Pages 229 - 236)

25. BRIEFING REPORT - KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY (Pages 237 - 244)

26. PUBLIC HEALTH TRANSITION (Pages 245 - 272)

To give consideration to the report of the Chief Executive, deferred at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 March 2012 (minute 334 refers).

COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

27. WELFARE AND DEBT ADVICE SERVICES (Pages 273 - 280)

28. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN CONTACTS (Pages 281 - 286)

CULTURE, TOURISM AND LEISURE

29. LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY (Pages 287 - 292)

30. WIRRAL POSITIVE FUTURES PROJECT (Pages 293 - 298)

31. FINDINGS OF THE WIRRAL VISITOR RESEARCH STUDY - CONDUCTED IN 2011 TO SUPPORT WIRRAL'S TOURISM BUSINESSES (Pages 299 - 308)

32. PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES MODERNISATION PROJECT - PROGRESS UPDATE INCLUDING PROPOSED WORKFORCE WORKING PRACTICES PILOT INITIATIVE

To follow

33. PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES MODERNISATION PROJECT - PLANT AND EQUIPMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (Pages 309 - 314)

34. THE READER ORGANISATION (Pages 315 - 318)

35. LIBRARIES CHAMPION (Pages 319 - 322)

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

36. UPDATE ON AREA APPRAISAL AND STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS - BELMONT, BIRKENHEAD (Pages 323 - 332)

37. COMMITTEE REFERRAL - AFFORDABILITY AND MORTGAGES INCLUDING FIRST TIME BUYERS (Pages 333 - 344)

This matter was considered by the Economy and Regeneration O&S Committee at its meeting on 8 March, 2012, at which it was agreed that Cabinet be asked, 'to consider the establishment of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to assist first time buyers in Wirral.'

The minute and report are attached.

STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES

38. 20MPH SPEED LIMITS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS (Pages 345 - 368)

39. LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND (LSTF) - 2011/12 PROGRESS REPORT AND 2012/13 PROGRAMME (Pages 369 - 380)

40. ENVIRONMENTAL STREETSCENE SERVICES CONTRACT FINANCIAL REVIEW (Pages 381 - 386)

41. THE FLOOD AND WATER ACT 2010 - NEW POLICY IMPLEMENTATION (Pages 387 - 398)

CORPORATE RESOURCES

42. AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 399 - 412)

43. CHURCH ROAD (TRANMERE) HMRI ACQUISITION OF 25A SEYMOUR STREET AND 41 CHURCH ROAD (Pages 413 - 416)

44. ROCK FERRY LIBRARY AND ONE STOP SHOP - SCHEME AND ESTIMATE REPORT (Pages 417 - 426)

45. CROSS LANE, WALLASEY - WEST WALLASEY VAN HIRE (Pages 427 - 430)

46. COMMITTEE REFERRAL - MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINSTRATION (MBA) PROGRAMME (Pages 431 - 454)

This matter was considered by the Council Excellence O&S Committee at its meeting on 26 March, 2012, at which it was agreed that the concerns of the Committee be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

The minute and report are attached.

ENVIRONMENT

47. TACKLING DOG FOULING IN WIRRAL (Pages 455 - 460)

48. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 1)

To consider any other business that the Chair accepts as being urgent

49. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following items contain exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY

50. EXEMPT APPENDIX (Pages 461 - 464)

- Exempt Appendix to agenda item 11
  Tackling Worklessness and Supporting Apprentices in Wirral

  This appendix is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 as it contains commercially sensitive information

FINANCE AND BEST VALUE AND SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSION

51. EXEMPT APPENDIX

- Exempt Appendix to agenda item 22
  Banking Contract

  This appendix (to follow) is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 as it contains commercially sensitive information

CORPORATE RESOURCES

52. EXEMPT APPENDIX (Pages 465 - 466)

- Exempt Appendix to agenda item 43
  Church Road (Tranmere) HMRI – Acquisition of 25A Seymour Street and 41 Church Road

  This appendix is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 as it contains commercially sensitive information.

53. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 2)

To consider any other business that the Chair accepts as being urgent

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**NEW BRIGHTON - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**NEW BRIGHTON**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING & PLANNING**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY**
KEY DECISION ?	**YES**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Following the decision by Council on 1st March 2012 to invest a further £1.2M in environmental improvements in New Brighton [minute 131 refers], this report seeks endorsement for the proposed Outline Design and Scheme Timetable described in the report.

1.2 In addition it seeks authority for the Director of Technical Services to proceed with the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to carry out the work.

2.0 PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

2.1 The proposals will build on the successful regeneration of New Brighton following the completion of the Floral Pavilion and Neptune's £60M mixed use development, through the provision of complementary, high quality environmental and public realm improvements along the landward stretch of the promenade from Marine Point to Victoria Parade. This will include the following improvements:

- New footways, road surfaces and car parking provision;
- Hard & soft landscaping works;
- New lighting, street furniture;
- Improved signage, pedestrian flow and crossing points;
- Junction improvements at Rowson Street, Victoria Parade and Fort Perch Rock car park.

2.2 Outside of the new development the public realm and highways infrastructure along the promenade from Marine Point to Victoria Rd is in poor condition and needs improving. The state of the streetscene in the area is such that there is strong evidence that this having a negative impact on the perception of the town amongst would be investors. If not addressed quickly this could have a detrimental impact on the number of visitors to New Brighton and jeopardise the future of existing businesses in the town.

2.3 Improvements to the public realm in the manner described will act as a catalyst for the remainder of the development and help stimulate reciprocal private sector investment in leisure and accommodation facilities along this stretch of the promenade. These new amenities will in turn benefit both the indigenous population and help not only sustain visitor numbers but attract additional visitors to the area.

Outline Design

2.4. The proposed reconstruction of Marine Promenade between Rowson Street and Victoria Parade will involve:

- The removal and disposal of the existing block paving that forms the road surface from the Rowson Street roundabout to Victoria Parade. The block paving will be replaced with new asphalt surfacing.

- Along both the seaward and landward footways, sections of the existing paving flags that are damaged and in poor condition will be removed and replaced with a flexible surfacing, paved strips will be installed across the footways to "break up" the overall extensive asphalt effect and to indicate crossing points for pedestrians.

2.5 The damaged areas are predominantly between the Floral Pavilion and Rowson Street on the landward side and between Fort Perch Rock car park and Marine Point on the seaward side. Paved sections beyond these points and extending to Victoria Parade are in relatively good condition and will require only selective repairs.

2.6 A number of existing brick planters will be removed to allow for improved visibility at pedestrian crossing locations and for potential improvements to highway junctions along with the provision of additional car parking spaces. In the course of the detailed design account will be taken on the planters and a decision will be taken on whether they are removed or enhanced. In the remainder of those planters where the existing vegetation is in poor condition and unsightly, it is proposed to remove this vegetation and either replant the planters with new plants and shrubs or to install in them suitable maritime artefacts from the Council's store on a prepared foundation.

2.7 Subject to future redevelopment proposals for Union Terrace, the Travellers Rest and the vacant site between the Queens Royal Hotel and Union Terrace it is intended to undertake minimal reconstruction works to the existing service road which runs along the frontage of the above properties and the Queens Royal Hotel between Waterloo Road and Rowson Street. The broken flags will be removed from the footway fronting the properties and replaced with flexible surfacing but the existing block paving will remain in the road. However it is proposed to "convert" the small area of service road in front of the night clubs in Union Terrace and the Travellers Rest pub into an area of pavement to provide a pedestrian area for the many people leaving the clubs late at night by removing the paving blocks and resurfacing the road to the

same level as the surrounding footways. The remaining section of the service road in front of the Queens Royal Hotel will be for taxi use only.

2.8 The junction of Marine Promenade and the entrance to Fort Perch Rock car park will also be realigned to improve access and egress for both pedestrians and motorists visiting New Brighton and the Floral Pavilion.

2.9 The Rowson Street roundabout junction is to be resurfaced together with a section of Rowson Street towards Virginia Road and Kings Parade along the Marine Point frontage to the new puffin crossing outside Morrisons. Depending on the location of underground utilities apparatus at this junction it may also be possible to construct a left turn lane from Marine Promenade into Rowson Street to improve vehicle movements and to reduce congestion.

2.10 The works will also include the cleaning of the existing block paving and kerbing around the perimeter of the roundabout and rationalisation of the traffic signs and road markings.

2.11 At the easterly end of the promenade it is also proposed to reopen the junction of Victoria Parade and Marine Promenade by introducing a one way traffic system around the existing "Town Square" plinth. Traffic will turn right from Marine Promenade into Victoria Parade and then proceed onto Victoria Road. For traffic accessing Marine Promenade from Victoria Parade, vehicles will turn left from the one way system in Virginia Road and join Marine Promenade adjacent to Victoria Gardens.

2.12 The existing street lighting columns are to remain but the triple headed lanterns are to be replaced with new single lanterns. The columns will be repainted black as part of the scheme.

2.13 All the existing traffic sign poles will be replaced with new and a number of the street benches will be replaced but the remainder that are in good condition will be repainted.

2.14 A plan showing the proposed Outline Design is appended to this report.

2.15 It is proposed to undertake additional works beyond the limits of the approved scheme in terms of further surfacing works to Kings Parade from the puffin crossing outside Morrisons to the junction with Atherton Street and also surfacing repairs to a section of Tower Promenade between Tollemache Street and Egerton Street. This work will be funded from the Council's Capital and Revenue Highway Maintenance Budgets and will amount to approximately £100,000. This will be added to the existing scheme budget making the contract sum £1.3 million.

Scheme Timetable

2.16 The proposed timetable for the scheme is as follows:

- Cabinet endorsement of Outline Design: April 2012

- Stakeholder engagement and public consultation/ exhibition: April to June 2012
- Finalise design and go out to tender: June 2012
- Tender period: July 2012
- Evaluate tenders: August 2012
- Contract Award: Cabinet early September 2012
- Construction: October 2012 to January 2013

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 Returned tenders might result in projected costs being greater than the available budget, in which case Members will be informed and options for either increasing the available budget or revising the extent of the proposals to meet the budget will be reported.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 No other options have been considered.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Council Officers will consult closely with all relevant stakeholders during the design and implementation process including local Members, community groups, local businesses, and the general public. This will include a public display of any final designs, prior to implementation.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are none specifically arising from this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 The cost of the proposed scheme is £1.2million to be funded from the Council's Capital Programme for 2012/13.

8.2 A multi disciplinary team drawn from Officers from the Regeneration, Housing and Planning Department and the Department of Technical Services will be responsible for managing the project. The design and implementation of the scheme and the procurement of the contract will be carried out by existing staff as part of their normal duties and the fees for this work funded from the approved costs.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There will be a number of Traffic Regulation Orders required as part of the proposals which will be prepared, advertised and implemented in the normal manner, to meet the timescales for the scheme.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and an impact review is attached – http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct carbon reduction implications arising from this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no immediate planning implications arising from this report. There are positive community safety implications as a result of the proposals through improved pavement surfaces.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Cabinet is requested to:

(1) Endorse the Outline Design and timetable for the proposed scheme described in this report;

(2) Authorise the Director of Technical Services to proceed with the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to carry out the work.

14.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 To allow for the design of the scheme and the necessary consultation exercise to be completed during the spring and summer months prior to commencement on site in September 2012.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Neil Mitchell**
Project Manager
telephone: (0151 691 8423)
e-mail: neilmitchell@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Plan showing proposed Outline Design.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Background papers and information used in the preparation of this report are held by the Regeneration Team within the Department of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and the Department of Technical Services.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	21st February 2012

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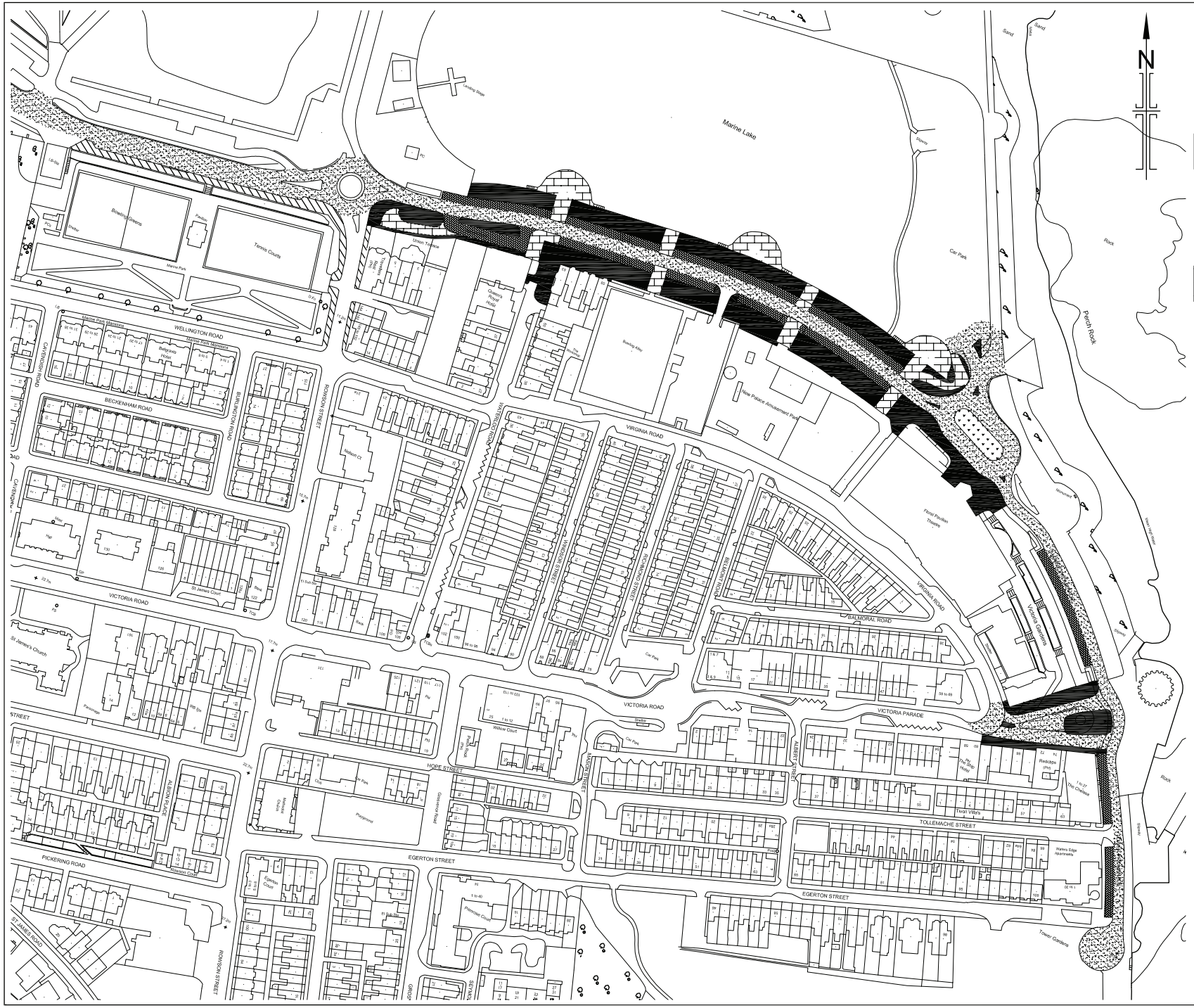

KEY

N

FOOTWAY RESURFACING TO REPLACE EXISTING PCC FLAGS

GRANITE FLAGS

EXISTING PCC FLAGS TO BE TAKEN UP & RELAID

HOT ROLLED ASPHALT SURFACING TO REPLACE EXISTING CONCRETE BLOCKS IN CARRIAGEWAY

EXISTING CONCRETE BLOCKS IN PARKING BAYS TO REMAIN

ROUNDABOUT TO BE LANDSCAPED TO SUIT NEPTUNE DEVELOPMENT

No	Amendment	Date

WIRRAL
Technical Services Department
David Green Director
Cheshire Lines Building Canning Street Birkenhead
Wirral Merseyside CH41 1ND 0151 606 2000

MARINE PROMENADE, NEW BRIGHTON
PROPOSED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS
NEW BRIGHTON WARD
(Prelim proposals for further design)

Drawn MW	Date MAR 12	Scale NTS	
Traced A/CAD	Drg No		
Checked	APPENDIX 1		
Approved			

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Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

Section 1: Your details

Council officer: Rob Clifford

Email address: robertclifford@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Service: Mark Smith

Chief Officer: Dave Green

Department: Technical Services

Date: 16th March 2012

Section 2: What Council function / proposal is being assessed?

NEW BRIGHTON - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

Section 2b: Is this EIA being submitted to Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes / No

If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

……Cabinet - 12 April 2012……

And please add hyperlink to your published EIA on the Council's website

……n/a……

Section 3: **Will the Council function / proposal affect equality in ……?**
(please tick relevant boxes)

☐ **Services**

☐ **The workforce**

X **Communities**

☐ **Other** (please state)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

☐ **None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: **Within the Equality Duty 2010, there are 3 legal requirements.**

Will the Council function / proposal support the way the Council

……(please tick relevant boxes)

☐ Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

X Advances equality of opportunity

☐ Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

☐ **None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5: **Will the function / proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?**

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Disability	Positive – interventions to maintain or improve access for those with restricted movement or who are blind or partially sighted are undertaken through compliance with national standards and guidance for highway design. Examples include the rationalising the provision of pedestrian crossings and dropped crossings.	n/a	Ian Hatton	n/a	n/a
	Negative – often disruption is caused to movement along or across a highway during the works, which	Planning and implementing of roadworks is carried out in accordance with national standards	Ian Hatton	Ongoing	Existing Resources

	will may have particular impact on those with restricted movement or who are blind or partially sighted.	(Chapter 8). Care is taken to ensure that temporary access arrangements are introduced and maintained, and that advance publicity is clear about the impacts of the works.			

Section 5a: **Where and how will the above actions be monitored?**

n/a

Section 5b: **If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

n/a

Section 6: **What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

None.

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council function / policy?

Yes

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why: n/a

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place?

Through presenting the proposals for public inspection in the Locality, prior to finalising the design.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your 'incomplete' EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**HOYLAKE STATION GATEWAY – PHASE 2A SCHEME**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**HOYLAKE & MEOLS**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING & PLANNING**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY**
KEY DECISION ?	**YES**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Following the decision by Council on 1st March 2012 to invest a further £1.2M in improvements in Hoylake [minute 131 refers], this report seeks endorsement for the proposed Outline Design and Key Principles described in this report.

1.2 In addition the report seeks authority to proceed with the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to carry out the work and to negotiate with Network Rail and Merseytravel to formalise an agreement for the Council to adopt and maintain the completed highway improvement works.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Following the successful hosting of the Open Golf Championships at Royal Liverpool in 2006, the Championships will return to Hoylake in July 2014. This represents a major opportunity for the borough and is expected to act as a catalyst for the continued regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby.

2.2 Members will recall that between 2005 and 2007 a programme of high quality environmental and public realm improvements were introduced to Hoylake from Station Rd to Melrose Avenue. The scheme incorporated improvements to the delineation of the road, new paving, street lamps, street furniture, signage, landscaping works and distinctive public art features. Delivered in two separate phases; prior to, and immediately after, the Championships, the £2.7M of improvements had been made possible due to the Council securing external investment from Merseywaterfront Regional Park and The Merseyside Objective 1 Programme.

2.3 The Masterplan for the regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby was produced by consultants Building Design Partnership (BDP) and approved by the Council's Cabinet in November 2004. It outlined the key principles for development and identified a number of key opportunities for investment including the key proposal identified below.

3.0 PROPOSED 'HOYLAKE STATION GATEWAY - PHASE 2A' SCHEME – OUTLINE DESIGN AND KEY PRINCIPLES

3.1 In light of the announcement of the return of the Open Golf Championships in 2014, the Hoylake Station Gateway proposal has taken on added significance and provides the impetus for Wirral to capitalise on the increased profile of the area that will result from this major sporting event.

3.2 Essentially the proposal seeks to build upon the earlier improvements (Market Street Phases 1A and 1B) that were undertaken either side of the Open between 2005 and 2007. They introduced high quality environmental improvements to the streetscene in Hoylake's main retail area.

3.3 The Hoylake Station Gateway (Phase 2A) project will continue these improvements by upgrading the public area in front of the Grade II listed station building, to create an attractive "town square" and semi pedestrianised environment and complement the mixed use environment along the adjacent highways of Market Street, Albert Road and Station Road. It is expected that the economic prospects for existing businesses will be enhanced and new private sector investment will be encouraged.

3.4 Using similar materials and products to those used in the Phase 1A and 1B schemes, these proposals will bring significant improvements in hard and soft landscaping with the introduction of high quality paving, bespoke street furniture, lighting and planting.

3.5 Members are reminded that in March 2007, Cabinet gave its approval for Officers to prepare a brief to facilitate outline design work and cost estimates in order to attract potential external investment – [minute 283 refers]. This work having subsequently been undertaken 'in house' by the Design Consultancy Division based within the Department of Technical Services at the time. The proposal has been surveyed and costed using actual costs from the earlier Phase 1A and 1B works and other comparable public realm schemes as a benchmark and costs are currently estimated at approximately £1,100,000.

3.6 Mindful that the target area for development is in mixed ownership, Officers shared the proposals with representatives from Merseytravel, Network Rail and Merseyrail Electric at the time and 'in principle' support was agreed, subject to the Council being able to secure the necessary level of resources.

3.7 Overall the project will require 1,125 m² of land currently in the ownership of the rail authorities to be transferred to the Council, by a tripartite Dedication Agreement under the Highways Act, which will thereafter be maintained by the Council at its expense. This would require a legal agreement prepared by the Council's Legal Services officers, which would be presented to the relevant rail authority or the Office of the Rail Regulator for approval.

3.8 The agreement could contain conditions allowing the rail authorities to retain access rights on the plan for their own property maintenance purposes. The

land concerned will also remain available to be utilised as required by the rail authorities during any high-profile public events (e.g. The Open Golf) by local agreement with the council and other parties or event management groups.

3.9 The scheme will be designed to be sympathetic with the appearance and listed status of the station frontage and Council officers will work closely with the rail authorities to agree all relevant details impacting on this, including lighting. A catering business housed in a former railway carriage and operating under a tenancy lease arrangement on the Merseyrail car park to the north of the station will also need to be considered as part of the proposal. Council officers and rail partners will enter into discussions with the owners of the business to examine alternative locations for this facility. This could include the relocation into a vacant unit within the station building or integrating the carriage within the wider development.

3.10 The proposal has already received 'in principle' support from the rail authorities, subject to a number of statutory rail processes being concluded:

- the issue of a Minor Modification Certificate (MMC) - in relation to surrendering the car parking spaces
- Station Change – to cover the changed arrangements to the car parking and works to the car park itself

3.11 The MMC process has now been concluded, however the Station Change is still outstanding. Network Rail having been reluctant to progress this matter, until they had the surety of funding for the scheme being fully in place. There is some risk in that the Station Change could be vetoed by any of the key rail stakeholders that will be consulted, but this is generally mitigated by informal agreement prior to formal submission by the rail partners.

3.12 In order to move forward with the proposals, Officers will shortly reconvene a meeting with their rail counterparts to reaffirm their support and to agree a delivery plan and timetable for implementation of the proposals. With the Ricoh Women's Open Championships taking place at Royal Liverpool in September 2012, Officers are hopeful that the regulatory and legal processes have been addressed by then, in order that works could commence early in 2013.

3.13 A plan showing the proposed Outline Design is appended to this report and has been placed in the Members' Room.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 The proposals are subject to Station Change to reflect the loss of parking spaces within the area. These processes are mandatory and the scheme is subject to failure if the proposals are not agreeable to the consultees.

4.2 Wirral Council will maintain the high quality surfacing materials to highway standards, but Network Rail will continue to own the land. Failure to produce a tripartite agreement / land dedication between Wirral, Network Rail & Merseyrail will lead to the scheme's cancellation.

4.3 Wirral Council has offered to gift the Carr Lane Park & Ride car park to Merseyrail as part of the tripartite agreement. However, this is unlikely to be accepted, as it would impose maintenance liabilities on Merseyrail.

4.4 Wirral Council are to submit the proposals via Merseyrail into Network Rail's technical approval process to obtain Landlord's Consent. Failure to gain Landlord's Consent will delay or cause the scheme to be abandoned.

4.5 The area in front of the station also provides 4 car parking spaces for residents of nos. 1 - 4 Station Road through an informal arrangement with Merseyrail and these parking arrangements will need to be considered as part of the scheme.

4.6 The timing of procurement, award or contract and commencement on site will be timed to avoid disruption to the Ricoh Women's Open Golf Championship in September 2012 and the Open Golf Championship in July 2014. Delays to the date of commencement on site could have a serious effect on visitors to the 2014 event, if works are still ongoing at that time.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The only other option available would be to proceed with a lesser scheme. This has been discounted as it would reduce the impact of the proposals to such an extent that it would not provide an environment appropriate to the expectations for such a major sporting event and in creating a permanent high quality and bespoke street-scene. Furthermore it would in all likelihood have a detrimental effect on the ability to attract future inward investment to the town.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Some initial informal consultation with Ward Members, local businesses and residents took place in April 2009 through a meeting of the Hoylake Regeneration Contact Group, where the outline designs were tabled.

6.2 Council Officers will undertake initial consultation with stakeholders in the area which will inform the detailed design of the scheme. Once the design has been agreed further consultation through a public display within Hoylake will take place. This consultation will be in addition to the statutory consultation process that will take place in relation to the planning application for the scheme.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are none specifically arising from this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 A multi disciplinary team drawn from Officers from the Regeneration, Housing and Planning Department and the Department of Technical Services will be responsible for managing the project. The design and implementation of the

scheme and the procurement of the contract will be carried out by existing staff as part of their normal duties and the fees for this work funded from the approved costs.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There will be a number of Traffic Regulation Orders required as part of the proposals which will be prepared, advertised and implemented in the normal manner, to meet the timescales for the scheme. In addition, Legal Services will be expected to provide advice, guidance and representation as required, in terms of drawing up any agreements with the rail authorities to facilitate the process.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and an impact review is attached – http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct carbon reduction implications arising from this report. Whilst the proposed scheme won't eliminate the use of vehicles completely, the design will be expected to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport. Hence there will be a marginal decrease in carbon emissions as a result.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Planning Consent for a change of use will be required.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Cabinet is requested to:

(1) Endorse the Outline Design and Key Principles for the proposed scheme described in this report;

(2) Authorise the Director of Technical Services to proceed with the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to carry out the work;

(3) Authorise the Director of Technical Services in conjunction with the Director of Law, HR & Asset Management to negotiate with Network Rail and Merseytravel to formalise an agreement for the Council to adopt and maintain the completed highway improvement works.

14.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 The outcome of this work will be the creation of an extremely attractive transport hub and focal point in Hoylake town centre, facilitating significant business and commercial opportunities and maximising the previous investment on the adjacent Market Street, through the Phase 1A and 1B schemes. Upon completion this will effectively conclude the essential regeneration of central Hoylake.

14.2 The upgrading of the public realm, creation of a "town square" and improvements at the station frontage will have a significant impact on the streetscene and enhance the existing transport infrastructure. In addition the project will bring about other major economic benefits and healthy lifestyle improvements.

14.3 The project will improve the existing built environment whilst preserving and enhancing the Hoylake Conservation Area.

14.4 The delivery of further high quality public realm improvements will attract significant investment and job opportunities making the town more attractive for visitors and residents alike.

14.5 As the public realm is in the ownership of the authority, upon completion of the environmental improvements, Wirral Council's Department of Technical Services will take responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the additional areas of streetscene previously maintained by Mersey Rail and Network Rail, subject to agreement on land transfers with these parties.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Neil Mitchell**
Project Manager
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e-mail: neilmitchell@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

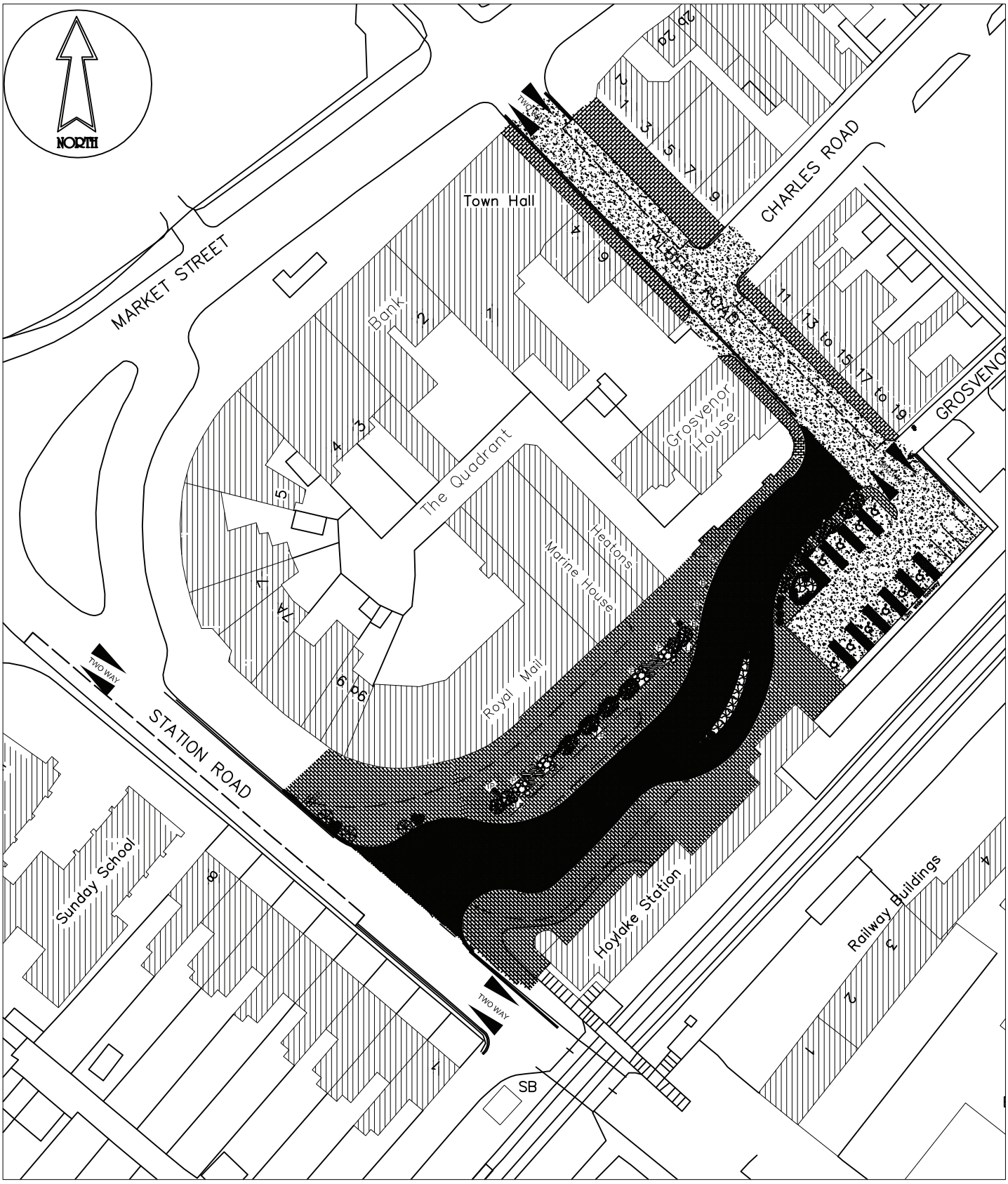
Plan showing proposed Outline Design.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Background papers and information used in the preparation of this report are held by the Regeneration Team within the Department of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and the Department of Technical Services.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	21st February 2012



WIRRAL

Technical Services Department

David Green
Director

HOYLAKE STATION GATEWAY - PHASE 2A PROPOSALS
STATION ROAD/ALBERT ROAD, HOYLAKE

HOYLAKE & MEOLS WARD

Scale	Not To Scale	Date	March 2012	Plan Ref No.	Appendix 1

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Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

Section 1: Your details

Council officer: Rob Clifford

Email address: robertclifford@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Service: Mark Smith

Chief Officer: Dave Green

Department: Technical Services

Date: 16th March 2012

Section 2: What Council function / proposal is being assessed?

HOYLAKE STATION GATEWAY – PHASE 2A PROPOSALS

Section 2b: Is this EIA being submitted to Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes / No

If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

……Cabinet - 12 April 2012……

And please add hyperlink to your published EIA on the Council's website

……n/a……

Section 3: **Will the Council function / proposal affect equality in ……?**
(please tick relevant boxes)

☐ **Services**

☐ **The workforce**

X **Communities**

☐ **Other** (please state)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

☐ **None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: **Within the Equality Duty 2010, there are 3 legal requirements.**

Will the Council function / proposal support the way the Council

……(please tick relevant boxes)

☐ Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

X Advances equality of opportunity

☐ Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

☐ **None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5: **Will the function / proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?**

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Disability	Positive – interventions to maintain or improve access for those with restricted movement or who are blind or partially sighted are undertaken through compliance with national standards and guidance for highway design and any planning conditions in place. Examples include the provision and layout of street furniture.	n/a	Ian Hatton	n/a	n/a
	Negative – often disruption is caused to movement along or across a highway during the works, which will may have	Planning and implementing of roadworks is carried out in accordance with national standards (Chapter 8).	Ian Hatton	Ongoing	Existing Resources

	particular impact on those with restricted movement or who are blind or partially sighted.	Care is taken to ensure that temporary access arrangements are introduced and maintained, and that advance publicity is clear about the impacts of the works.			

Section 5a: **Where and how will the above actions be monitored?**

n/a

Section 5b: **If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

n/a

Section 6: **What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

None.

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council function / policy?

Yes

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why: n/a

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place?

Through consultation as part of the Planning process.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your 'incomplete' EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**WIRRAL TOWN TEAMS FUNDING**
WARDS AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY**
KEY DECISION	**YES**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Following the recent Council budget (4th February 2012, minute 317 refers), this report sets out the approach for taking forward the £500,000 which has been made available for local shopping areas to bid for, to help to improve the vitality of their centre.

1.2 The report outlines the approach to consulting and advertising the application process to help gain interest in creating a Town Team and bidding into the funding. The report also outlines the process for applications and the requirements that Town Teams will need to meet in order to be eligible for funding, as well as outlining the criteria which the applications will be considered against.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 As part of the Government's initiative to tackle the challenges of high streets, Mary Portas was commissioned to undertake a review of high streets in 2011. In December 2011 Mary Portas published 'The Portas Review - an independent review into the future of our high streets'. This set out 28 recommendations for overhauling our high streets, one of which was to create "Town Teams", described as a "visionary, strategic and strong operational management team for high streets".

2.2 On 4th February 2012 Government announced the 'Portas Pilots – Prospectus: an invitation to become a Town Team' which is inviting bids from groups across the country to become a Town Team. These must be submitted to Government by 30th March 2012. The Government will support twelve pilots across the Country with up to £100,000 available for each, dependant on the amount sought and Government's assessment of the bid.

2.3 As Members will be aware, the Council has been working with interested groups who are looking to create Town Teams and submit bids to CLG. Cabinet (15 March 2012, minute 20 refers) agreed the approach that the Council has taken to co-ordinating these and ensuring that they provide value for money for the tax payer in the use of the grant.

2.4 As part of the Council's budget on 21 February 2012, £500,000 has been allocated to support local Town Teams to improve the vitality of their shopping areas. The bids that will be supported will need to demonstrate how local trader groups will come together and contribute their time and/or resources to the bids successful outcome. This process will work alongside and complement any successful bids into the Government's Mary Portas pilots.

Consultation approach

2.5 To take forward the Wirral Town Team bidding process, we will engage with as many existing trader groups (including those which have bid into the Governments 'Portas Pilots') as we are aware of. We will also advertise the application process in April on the Council's website, through press releases, Invest Wirral and social media networks. We will also be distributing a letter to traders in Wirral's 24 Town, District and Local Centres to inform them of the funding and application process.

2.6 This will also complement the Council's on-going work through the Town, District and Local Centre Study and Delivery Framework and Action Plans (Cabinet 21st July 2011, minute 75 refers). Through this on-going work officers have been engaging with Trader Groups in the first phase of Action Plans to start to create a Vision for their centre and an approach going forward.

2.7 Following agreement by Cabinet the application process will open and run for six weeks for Traders groups and Town Teams to bid into. The applications which meet the criteria for funding will be brought back for Members to consider at a Cabinet meeting in June/July with the funding being allocated thereafter.

Criteria and Aims of funding

2.8 The 'Portas Pilots' are aiming to help to galvanise commitment from local traders, landlords and other local groups to tackling issues in their Town Centres through a strong local leadership approach.

2.9 To take this forward at a local level it is proposed to follow the example pilot set out by the Department of Communities and Local Government and set up a bidding process for local ' Town Teams' to bid into from across the borough.

2.10 The application process would allow bids for up to £100,000 per Town Team through one application per Town Centre. The process would require a robust application which sets out the key criteria for the funding application to meet, including:

- Ensuring that the applications are innovative in their approach and reflect some of the key elements of the Portas Review,
- Demonstrating value for money for the use of grant,
- Showing how the funding will enhance and support the vitality of the Town Centre,
- Meets the eligibility criteria for the funding and demonstrates its sustainability and will have demonstrable outputs,
- Ensuring it has a wide range of support and commitment to the Town Team approach with integral Trader support to take the aspirations forward,
- Complying with all relevant legislation including The Equality Duty 2010 and the Council's priorities, Corporate Plan and Local Competition Rules.

2.11 Applications would be reviewed by an Officer panel against these criteria in May/June and proposals brought back for Cabinet approval in June/July.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The main risk is ensuring that the money once allocated is expended for the purposes for which it was given. To address this risk each approved project will be required to sign a grant funding agreement and each applicant will have to conform to the terms and conditions of the funding and account in line with the Council's accounting policies and procedures.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The funding has been allocated through the Council's Budget Options for this specific purpose and therefore there are no other options to be considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 The application process will be open for 6 weeks and as outlined in 2.5 it will be advertised through the Council's Website, Invest Wirral, a press release and Social Media to ensure the widest possible consultation and engagement. A letter will also be distributed to the traders in 24 Town, District and Local Centres across the borough.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 The application process will engage the voluntary, community and faith groups.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The report sets out the approach for taking forward the £500,000 which is set out in the Council's budget for 2012/13 as agreed by Cabinet on 4th February 2012.

7.2 The project will be delivered from existing resources within the Department of Regeneration, Housing and Planning.

7.3 There are no IT or asset implications.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A funding agreement will have to be entered into by the Council with each successful Town Team, setting out that the project funding will be managed in accordance with the Council's procurement and accounting practices.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposals been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010-0

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Town Team plans must be in conformity with national policy in terms of sustainable development.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The proposals for Town Team bids may involve the need for planning applications for change of use to any buildings which are proposed to be used, dependant on the use classification.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Members agree the process and criteria for individual bids of up to £100,000 to be invited from Traders Groups in Wirral for the creation of a number of Town teams.

12.2 Members agree that a further report is submitted to Cabinet for the approval of bids once the application process has been completed

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To allow maximum impact in the use of the grant.

13.2 To allow officers to commence the application process.

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Investment Strategy
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email: hayleycrook@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Portas Pilots: Prospectus - an invitation to become a Town Team

http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/regeneration/portaspilotsprospectus

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Portas Pilot Bid funding	**15 March 2012**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**REGIONAL GROWTH FUND ROUND 3**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY**
KEY DECISION	**YES**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Government has recently announced the opening of a further round of the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) and this report sets out the objectives of the Fund and details the criteria against which bids will be assessed. The report sets out how RGF could support the delivery of key priorities within the Council's Investment Strategy and Members are asked to agree the next steps outlined within the report for bringing forward projects, in partnership with the private sector, that meet the RGF criteria.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Government launched the Regional Growth Fund in October 2010 in order to encourage private sector enterprise by providing support for projects with significant potential for sustainable economic growth and which could also create new private sector employment. In addition the Fund aims to help areas with high levels of unemployment and an over dependence on the public sector to make the transition to private led growth.

2.2 Initially funding of £1.4 billion was made available for allocation and the Government held two bidding rounds in January 2011 and July 2011. The rounds were highly competitive with only 164 bids being progressed out of a total of 956 applications, some 17%:
Round 1 Bids submitted: 464. Bids successful: 45 10% progressed to due diligence
Round 2 Bids submitted: 492. Bids successful: 119 24% progressed to due diligence

2.3 All successful RGF bids will be required to work through a due diligence process and will be subject to further negotiations. At the 2011 Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced an additional £1 billion for an RGF Round 3. The closing date for applications under this round is the 13th June 2012 with funds needing to be drawn down by the end of March 2015.

REGIONAL GROWTH FUND ROUND 3

2.4 The Regional Growth Fund is a Challenge Fund and an Independent Advisory Panel of business leaders, chaired by Lord Heseltine will consider the bids submitted and

make recommendations to a Ministerial Panel led by the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg and this panel will make the final decisions as to which bids should receive funding. Bids can be for projects or for programmes, where proposals demonstrate an over-arching investment strategy for a specific geographical area. However, a clear outcome of the bids must be that they are focused on the delivery of sustainable private sector jobs.

2.5 The RGF will provide a mixture of direct support for private sector investments and private public partnerships, but all projects will need to lever private sector investment for long term growth and private sector employment. The criteria for bids are as follows:

- create additional sustainable private sector growth;
- rebalance the economy in those areas currently dependent on the public sector;
- would not otherwise go ahead without support from the Regional Growth Fund;
- offer value for money;
- state aid compliance; and
- bids must be for at least £1 million

2.6 Analysis of successful bids under Rounds 1 and 2, and a review of the amended guidelines for Round 3, indicate that to be successful projects will need to be able to illustrate that they are able to create significant sustainable private sector jobs and attract a high level of leverage of private sector investment into the programme. Even then, Round 3 will be extremely competitive as this is widely expected to be the last round of RGF, at least until 2013/14.

WIRRAL OPPORTUNITIES

2.7 Wirral's Investment Strategy (2011-16) sets out how the Council and our partners will drive economic growth and increase investment in Wirral in this period and provides a clear delivery focused framework. Whilst it outlines the significant challenges facing the Borough, including high levels of worklessness, low levels of business density, combined with the difficult global conditions, it clearly sets out a number of investment opportunities which could stimulate economic growth and jobs within Wirral.

2.8 Reflecting these Investment Strategy priorities and also responding to the opportunities presented by the Wirral Waters developments, work has been taking place with private sector partners to identify what interventions could be progressed that would unlock development, kick-start the economy and lead to sustainable local jobs being created. The announcement by Government of Round 3 RGF has led to the identification of four areas of opportunity where interventions could be progressed which would meet the RGF criteria and which could lead to economic growth and the creation of jobs within the Borough. These four areas are set out below.

2.9 **Wirral Waters Buffer Zone** The designation by the Government of the Wirral Waters development as an Enterprise Zone in 2011 provides a range of incentives such as business rate relief and enhanced capital tax allowances and has increased the ability of the site to attract investment. This has already been evidenced by the Peel International Trade Centre that will be developed on the West Float. However, using the Enterprise Zone status as a catalyst, there are further opportunities that could be realised for regenerating and revitalising the peripheral areas of the Zone by supporting investment programmes. Led by the Council, work is taking place to

identify how strategic land assembly projects could increase linkages to Birkenhead Town centre, as recommended in the Birkenhead and Wirral Waters Integrated Regeneration Study 2010, complement the work taking place as part of the 'Setting the Scene for Growth' project (as reported to Cabinet 1st September 2011, minute 97 refers) and support activity within the Enterprise Zone. This work will also include strategic land assembly projects that will support the regeneration of the Wirral Waters Partnership areas where there is a clear opportunity for driving employment growth.

2.10 Work is also taking place, to assess the extent to which such activity could result in the development of a long term investment vehicle, in line with government aspirations and building on the City Region's Chrysalis Urban Investment Fund, where a return on the assets could enable further regeneration projects to be delivered. This approach to the development of a Wirral Waters buffer zone has been reflected in the Liverpool City Region's City Deal Asks of Government that are currently being progressed.

2.11 **Offshore Renewable Energy** The Investment Strategy recognises the growth potential of the offshore energy sector and that the port related infrastructure at the eastern end of the Borough, along with the engineering capabilities of Cammell Laird and the established supply chain, offers the potential for the Borough to secure a significant share of this market. This has been further evidenced by the energy contractor RWE agreeing a three year contract in 2011 with Cammell Laird to support the construction of the Gwynt y Mor wind farm off the coast of North Wales. Members have also previously agreed (Cabinet 21st July 2011 min 78 refers) that the sector provides strong opportunities for investment support to the local supply chain for growth and diversification, as well as for targeted inward investment activity.

2.12 Analysis of local and national supply chain capabilities within the offshore sector has led to the identification of opportunities that could support the development and growth of this sector. This includes the provision of infrastructure that would enable businesses engaged in research and development to be located close to the manufacturing capability at Cammell Laird thereby enabling them to develop and commercialise new technologies. Wirral also has additional quayside locations that could be further utilised to provide sites for the development of advanced manufacturing, fabrication and assembly as well as operations and maintenance activities. The development of such sites would enable local companies to take full advantage of the many supply chain opportunities around offshore wind, but also provide ideal locations for the global energy players already active in the Borough. Initial work to identify opportunities has taken place with Cammell Laird, Peel and other local companies, and the identification of delivery partners would be part of further stages of activity.

2.13 Attracting investment would also support the renewable energy sector and the development of the 'Green Economy' within Wirral. A separate report on this Cabinet agenda responds to the findings of the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral and sets out a range of policy options designed to enable businesses in Wirral's green economy to set up, grow and maintain competitiveness. Offshore wind is identified in the report as one of the key growth sectors for this industry and investment in infrastructure would therefore complement proposals to strengthen Wirral's effective business support offer in this sector.

2.14 **Next Generation Access (NGA) Broadband** One of the priority projects identified in the Investment Strategy, the council has been pursuing the delivery of the NGA project which aims to deliver high speed broadband access to key employment sites and business parks. Fast and reliable internet connectivity and infrastructure investment is recognised as a vital component in influencing business decisions as to where to locate and relocated. Wirral has made a commitment to develop a world class NGA network to support local businesses and to enable future development activity and increased investment into the Borough.

2.15 Work has been taken forward within Wirral to progress this activity and attracting resources from the Regional Growth Fund would complement the council's investment and enable the provision of superfast broadband to businesses across the Borough. Securing resources through RGF could enable there to be a focus on the key growth sectors which would include, where possible, linkages to supporting the growth of renewable technologies and the development of the related supply chain.

2.16 **Financial Support for Key Growth Businesses** Invest Wirral delivers a range of business support services that help businesses set up, grow and maintain competitiveness. Cabinet (23 June 2011 Minute 47 refers) agreed how these services could be enhanced and extended so that businesses operating in Wirral can expect to benefit from services that support growth and sustainability. Access to finance is one of these services and capital grants are available to support businesses with viable and sustainable plans for growth. This could include a company choosing to locate to Wirral for the first time or an established business with a project to sustain or uplift their productivity and increase employment opportunities.

2.17 The operation and impact of the financial support programme has been regularly monitored and these assessments have identified that there is a requirement for businesses within Wirral to access funding to support expansion, diversification or relocation that falls outside the scope of the Invest Wirral grant packages. These businesses would be looking for support that would be likely to meet the eligibility criteria of the Regional Growth Fund in all but one aspect, namely that they would be looking for resources of less than £1 million. Initial discussions have taken place with the Chairman of Wirral Investment Network (WIN) with a view to taking a proposal to the WIN Board, subject to Wirral Cabinet approval, for an RGF programme application to be made, in partnership with Wirral Council. The intention would be to establish a fund which would enable businesses with sustainable plans for growth to access levels of funding in excess of that currently available through Invest Wirral, but less than the RGF minimum threshold.

2.18 It is proposed that Wirral Council would become the accountable body for RGF, should the application be successful, but the bid itself would be private sector driven under the recognised WIN partnership brand.

DEVELOPMENT OF RGF APPLICATIONS FOR WIRRAL

2.19 The four projects outlined above reflect agreed Investment Strategy priorities and have been identified as interventions which meet the eligibility criteria for RGF resources. However, as set out in paras 2.5 and 2.6 above, even if the criteria are met, this round of RGF will be extremely competitive.

2.20 It is recognised that substantial work is required to develop these projects sufficiently to meet the RGF timescales and it is proposed that officers are instructed to work with private sector partners to bring forward detailed applications for submission to Government. These applications would also be submitted to the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership for comment. Given the timescales involved it is recommended that authority for the agreement of these submissions is delegated to the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member responsible for Regeneration and Planning Strategy. Further reports will also be brought back to Cabinet as even if a project is successful in being allocated RGF a process of due diligence is then required to be undertaken before any funding is awarded.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Should any of the proposals be successful in securing RGF resources, the Council would be likely to be the accountable body for the applications. This would involve managing and accounting for the money and ensuring compliance with financial and audit requirements. The Council already undertakes these functions in relation to other regeneration projects for which it is the accountable body and there is an expertise and proven track record amongst Council officers who would manage the programme.

3.2 A risk analysis addressing the development of the four proposed RGF submissions has been undertaken and individual risk registers will be developed for each of the projects as they progress. Should any of the projects be awarded RGF resources then this will be subject to a process of due diligence which will involve further analysis and testing of the identified risks and of the actions proposed to mitigate them.

3.3 There are some indirect risks associated with non-delivery of the Investment Strategy and its related projects. These relate to poor future economic performance through a failure to realise the Borough's significant economic opportunities and potential. This could mean that Wirral remains an area in which high levels of worklessness and associated inequality exist.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The proposed projects are all identified as priority areas within the Wirral Investment Strategy 2011-16. Priority projects have been reviewed in partnership with private sector partners in order to ascertain whether interventions could be identified that meet the RGF criteria and could be delivered by the end of March 2015. This has resulted in the identification of the four projects outlined in this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Wirral's Investment Strategy provides the framework for the development of the RGF applications and this has been reviewed following an extensive consultation with partners. The development of the proposals has also been informed by the consultation undertaken as part of the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral. Consultation has taken place with a number of private sector partners and further consultation will be carried out as the bids are developed through Invest Wirral's Business Forum and the sectoral cluster groups.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 If any of the projects should be successful in securing RGF resources then this would provide opportunities for voluntary, community and faith organisations that operate as small and medium sized enterprises or micro businesses.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 This report sets out the direction of travel for the development of bids to the Regional Growth Fund and this can be achieved through existing resources. Further reports will be brought forward should the detailed proposals identify any additional financial or staffing requirements.

7.2 The proposed projects may involve use of Council assets. Where this is the case further reports will be brought back to Members to ensure that any proposals are compatible with council objectives and achieve value for money for Wirral residents.

7.3 State Aid is a complicated legal framework (referenced in para 8.1 below) and in order to ensure compliance it may be necessary to seek specialist advice. This would result in a financial implication but this could be met from existing budgets.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 All projects put forward for funding will need to ensure compliance with State Aid and De minimis rules. State Aid rules exist in order to prevent any form of aid to a commercial undertaking distorting, or threatening to distort, competition within the European Community. However, a number of block exemptions are in place which enable support to be given in areas such as developing disadvantaged regions and promoting small and medium sized enterprises as this is considered to be in the common interest of the EU and is therefore allowed where required. Expert advice will be taken to ensure that the applications put forward are compliant with State Aid.

8.2 The further development of the projects will need to ensure that where relevant there is compliance with the obligations arising under the Bribery Act 2010 which came into force on the 1st July 2011.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposals been reviewed with regard to equality?
(a) Yes and the impact review can be accessed at
http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010-0

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The proposed bid for developing the offshore energy sector will support the use and development of renewable energy and enable green innovation and investment. It is anticipated that this activity would support carbon reduction amongst Wirral businesses.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no immediate planning and community safety implications arising from this report, however planning consent will be required for some of the individual projects.

This will be identified as the detailed bids are developed and will be addressed as appropriate through the planning process.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Cabinet agrees that the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and the Investment Strategy Team should progress the development of the four applications to the Regional Growth Fund as set out in this report.

12.2 Cabinet agrees that authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member responsible for Regeneration and Planning Strategy to negotiate, finalise and submit the applications for Regional Growth Fund.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The Investment Strategy sets out an ambitious vision for Wirral to secure its economic future by attracting investment and creating sustainable jobs for the people of the Borough. The opportunities presented by the 3rd round of the Regional Growth Fund could support the delivery of this vision and the proposals outlined in this report are ones that could meet the criteria of the RGF and are therefore put forward for further development.

13.2 The RGF deadline for submission is noon on the 13th June. Delegated authority to agree the detailed submissions has been requested in order to meet this timescale.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Sally Shah**
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Investment Strategy Team
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email: sallyshah@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

The Investment Strategy 2011-16 Wirral Council website http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/business/investment-strategy

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Liverpool City Region Offshore Energy 2010
Technology Innovation Centre Application to the Technology Strategy Board 2011

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Green Growth in Wirral	**8th March 2012**
Cabinet – Investment Support Services Framework	**23rd June 2011**
Cabinet – Targeted Inward Investment Activity	**21st July 2011**
Cabinet – Investment Strategy	**21st July 2011**
Cabinet - Enterprise Zone	**9th December 2010**

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COMMITTEE REFERRAL

ECONOMY AND REGNERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2012

52. GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Chair introduced the final report of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review. The panel, consisting of Councillors Mark Johnston, Peter Kearney, Steve Niblock and Stuart Whittingham had focused on seven main issues for the review and had been supported by the Scrutiny Support Officer, Alan Veitch. Details were given of the variety of methods which the Panel had employed to gather evidence and thanks were expressed to all those who had assisted the review by so readily giving their time, experience and suggestions.

The report contained 19 recommendations and assuming that the Committee agreed with these it was recommended that the report be presented to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting.

The Chair expressed his thanks to all those involved, especially to Ben Lavell, Business Engagement Officer, at Invest Wirral and to Alan Veitch, Scrutiny Support Officer. He would be more than happy if Members were also involved with the Working Group, which it was proposed be set up to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

The Director thanked the review panel for all their work and commented that the staff involved in the review had found the process very beneficial.

Resolved –

(1) That this Committee supports the contents and recommendations of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review.

(2) That the Green Growth Scrutiny Report be presented to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting.

(3) That further reports be presented to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update members regarding the progress being made towards the implementation of the recommendations.

(4) That this Committee welcomes this example of cross-party working which sees scrutiny at its best.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

08 MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	***GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	**GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS**
KEY DECISION?	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides background information regarding the Final report of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 Members are requested to support the contents and recommendations of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review;

2.2 The Green Growth Scrutiny Report should be presented to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting;

2.3 Further reports will be presented to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update members regarding the progress being made towards the implementation of the recommendations.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

3.1 Council Notice of Motion

At the meeting of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, held on 6th June 2011, members agreed to undertake an in-depth scrutiny review to produce an informed response to the Notice of Motion that was approved by Council on 18th April 2011. The Notice of Motion, which was agreed unanimously, was:

That Council:

(1) Recognises the importance of environmental sustainability to future business growth and the development of the Borough's economy, not just the Green economy.

(2) Recognises that aligning resource efficiency, sustainable procurement, waste reduction strategies, commercial waste infrastructure, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources are common

across all sectors of the economy and key to long term success and sustainability.

(3) Notes the ENWORKS report 'Making an impact in the Liverpool City Region' and the excellent resource efficiency support that this organisation has offered to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), making businesses stronger through better use of resources.

(4) Instructs officers to review the Council's economic regeneration policies to ensure that businesses in Wirral can access appropriate information and support tools to enable them to benefit from increased profitability, productivity and sustainability through improved energy and resource efficiency.

(5) Recognises the green value of Wirral's Home Insulation Programme, set up under the previous Labour / Liberal Democrat administration and continued by the present administration, which will benefit Wirral householders, increase employment opportunities and reduce the Carbon Footprint of the Borough.

(6) Believes that there is real potential for the development of emerging Green technologies on Wirral and asks the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate and draw up a report for Cabinet on the best ways to create and support a "cluster" of companies to lead the way in driving a Green economy on Wirral and across the country.

3.2 Panel Membership

The Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that a panel of members should be formed to undertake the scrutiny review. Subsequently, the following members volunteered to be members of the Panel:

- Councillor Mark Johnston (Chair)
- Councillor Peter Kearney
- Councillor Steve Niblock
- Councillor Stuart Whittingham

The panel has been supported by a Scrutiny Support Officer, Alan Veitch.

3.3 Scope of the Review

Panel members agreed that the review should focus on paragraph (6) of the Notice of Motion. The review, therefore, concentrated on "the best ways to create and support a 'cluster' of companies to lead the way in driving a green economy on Wirral and across the country".

The main issues were identified in the Scope document for the Review as:

- National Policy –
  What is the national Government policy / strategy and how will this impact on Wirral?
- Current business support provided by the Council -
  What is already being done regarding support to local businesses in the green economy? How can we support these companies to expand?

- Marketing -
  How are we marketing Wirral to attract inward investment and to create more green investment jobs?
- Creating a green market –
  What is the Council doing to create a green market and support the green economy?
- Education / training –
  What are the educational and training needs of the sector?
- Planning and land availability –
  Does the existing planning regime encourage green growth? What has Wirral Borough Council got in terms of rentable space and land and how suitable is it?
- Council properties –
  What does the Council do with its own properties regarding green technology and is there an opportunity to create a market for green suppliers?

3.4 Evidence Gathering and the Report

The Panel members have used a number of methods to gather evidence for the review:

- Meetings with key officers
- Visits to local businesses already operating in the green sector
- A questionnaire for businesses already active in Wirral's green sector
- Written evidence, from a national, regional and local perspective

The Panel members express their thanks to all those who have assisted the review by so readily giving their time, experience and suggestions.

3.5 The Final Report

The Final Report, 'Green Growth in Wirral', which includes nineteen recommendations, is attached for consideration by the Committee.

Report of the Green Growth Scrutiny Panel Members:
Cllr Mark Johnston (Chair)
Cllr Stuart Whittingham
Cllr Steve Niblock
Cllr Peter Kearney

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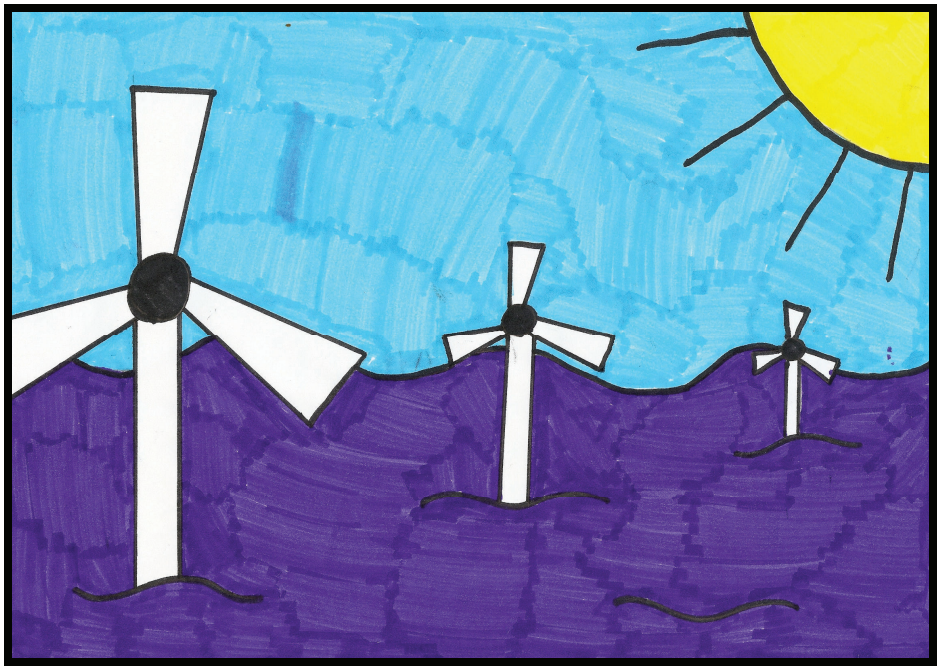
WIRRAL

SCRUTINY REVIEW
of
GREEN GROWTH IN WIRRAL



A report produced by
THE ECONOMY & REGENERATION
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

February 2012

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL

GREEN GROWTH IN WIRRAL
SCRUTINY REVIEW

FINAL REPORT

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The low carbon economy has been identified by Wirral and the wider city region as one of the economic sectors on which to focus in order to create jobs. Wirral's Investment Strategy is a key document in setting the future priorities for the economy in the borough as part of the Council's enabling role. The Strategy proposes an increased emphasis on developing a number of key growth sectors that will build on existing local specialisms and will offer the most growth potential. Two of the proposed growth sectors are Offshore Energy and the Low Carbon sector.

There can be no escape from the fact that the current economic climate is extremely difficult for many businesses. This was borne out during the discussions with the business community held during the course of this Scrutiny Review. Nevertheless, although the green sector is of a fledgling and diverse nature, the potential impact of future economic growth makes it an industry worthy of investment and special attention. Wirral has some key opportunities to develop its green sector and the Investment Strategy provides the tools to enable this, being supported where appropriate by national policy. The prospects for green growth in Wirral are clearly linked to those of the Merseyside region and, therefore, synergies with Wirral's regional neighbours should continue to be exploited. The Mersey Partnership report 'Low Carbon Economy Action Plan – Delivering Economic Growth 2011-2015' examines, in detail, the opportunities for the low carbon economy. That report concludes that there is the potential for the creation of 12,000 jobs in the low carbon economy over those five years.

Geography and existing infrastructure, particularly in the form of Cammell Laird, provide Wirral with a great opportunity to support the expansion of offshore wind activity in the North Sea. The Panel Members were informed by an officer that "The off-shore agenda is potentially huge, with significant opportunities for the supply chain". Other specific opportunities relate to the Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone, and the availability of JESSICA funding (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) to Merseyside which provides the region with a unique advantage. In the longer term, the wider Wirral Waters development being undertaken by Peel Holdings gives the prospect of growth in the low carbon sector. The relationships with the Council's key partners will clearly be instrumental in ensuring that the Investment Strategy is delivered successfully.

The overall strategic aim is to build on the current assets that exist in Wirral and the Council will play an enabling role, where possible, to support this investment and growth. The Panel Members have concluded that there is a great deal of positive activity already taking place both within the Council and amongst partner organisations leading to potential inward investment opportunities and a high level of constructive support available to existing businesses. The feedback from the businesses contacted during the course of this Scrutiny Review has been positive.

Officers from a number of service areas have a part to play in the business support agenda. In order to support the development of the relevant growth sectors, the Panel Members believe that a Working Group should be formed to support that process. The purpose of the Working Group is to ensure that the recommendations and existing initiatives are given the time, attention and resources required to bring about sustainable development. In order to help raise the profile of the issue, consideration should be given to how best members can lead and assist that work.

A key service provided by Wirral Council in terms of business support is that provided by Invest Wirral, which provides business support to existing companies based in Wirral and also provides some Inward Investment advice to prospective employers. The response from the business community regarding the support provided by Wirral Council was positive, with particular recognition being made towards the team at Invest Wirral. Advice and support available from Invest Wirral to those businesses in the green sector was clearly appreciated and highly regarded. Some respondents to the questionnaire, undertaken as part of this Scrutiny Review, also referred specifically to the financial support that has been available to them from Wirral Council in the past. A number of service areas within the Council interact with the business community on a regular basis. As a general point encountered during this Scrutiny Review, it is clearly important that those teams within the Council work closely together.

With regard to marketing, a specified officer from within the Corporate Marketing team provides the press, public relations and marketing support for regeneration projects, tourism, inward investment and business support, including Invest Wirral. Much of the marketing material is available on the internet. Wirral-based businesses are directed to the BusinessWirral.com website which provides online business support for existing businesses. The BusinessWirral.com website has been developed by Invest Wirral specifically for existing Wirral companies. The InvestWirral.com website, which has been recently re-launched, is the site for new businesses looking for investment opportunities in Wirral. The new website includes sector-specific pages, including low carbon and offshore wind.

However, it is recognised that further work needs to take place to raise the profile of the green sector in Wirral. It was important for the future of those businesses who were contacted that there is an increased awareness of green issues. Although a national issue, in order to help overcome some of the perceptions and to highlight the positive image of the green sector, the Panel Members suggest that a large marketing event should be held within the borough at which local companies could showcase their products and services.

There was also a perception among some of the business community that more could be done to market Wirral as a place to do business, specifically within the green sector. It is, therefore, important that the Council continues to take a lead in highlighting the positive image of Wirral. The Marketing team obviously has a major part to play in delivering that service.

As part of the ongoing energy efficiency measures to enable the borough to move closer to its target of reducing carbon emissions by 60% by 2025, Wirral Council is investing heavily in renewable energy in 2011-12, both on making the Council's own buildings more energy efficient and also by helping community and voluntary groups take their own steps to reduce emissions through the Energy Efficiency Grant. Nearly £3 million will be invested in solar energy over the next two years in 30 Council properties. This will mean a significant investment and one which it is hoped will be of benefit to the local economy by providing employment opportunities to local people within Wirral's growing low carbon sector. It is also anticipated that the Council's Home Insulation Programme will continue to encourage local businesses in this sector.

The Council's Corporate Procurement team has developed a Sustainable Procurement Policy which is aimed at addressing the objective to "promote procurement practices and policies which contribute to the Council's priorities on equality, sustainability and regeneration". The purpose of this policy is to help minimise the impact on the environment by providing staff with information and practical help to assist them to buy or specify products that cause the least environmental damage. It sets out Council policy on environmental purchasing and gives tips and advice on how to find products that will be effective, of value for money and do least harm to the environment.

Wherever possible, and legal to do so, local suppliers will also be encouraged to participate in the tender process. The Council will, on occasion, require delivery of goods or services within specified time limits whenever this is relevant to the subject of the tender. However, caution must be applied in order to avoid any prejudice being shown to a supplier's opportunity to deliver a contract on the grounds of localism unless it is essential to the delivery of the contract. The Council can and does encourage participation in the process by advising local suppliers how to work with the Council. It is clear that substantial effort has been made to support the local business community. Nevertheless, there was some feedback from business people that the procurement procedures can appear too complicated, especially for small companies, and "there are too many hoops to go through". As the green sector is a fledgling sector with younger businesses being more prominent, it is suggested that particular emphasis is given to that sector in terms of procurement training.

The Panel Members detected skills and training as a significant issue for those individuals aiming to enter the green sector. Members concluded that, within the process for identifying skill requirements and funding allocation within the Further Education system, there appears to be little recognition of local requirements. The process for changes to qualifications and approved courses also appears to be slow. In respect of the green sector, there was an impression that opportunities were greater for upskilling rather than for new entrants to training.

The Wirral Apprenticeship Scheme is widely recognised as a success. The Panel Members suggest that, in order to support the training programme and improve skill levels within the green sector, a number of apprenticeships are made available annually to green businesses. Further consideration should also be given to the feasibility of offering greater subsidies to employers in the green sector including incentives to support access to higher level apprenticeships.

Feedback from businesses gave a strong indication that there was a lack of clarity regarding the availability of relevant training providers and courses in the region. The Panel Members, therefore, suggest that further work takes place to identify and promote the availability of appropriate training to the green sector. The creation of a fund to support upskilling of those working within the green sector should be explored. The fund will also enable those people moving into the sector, including the unemployed, to access existing training opportunities in Wirral.

During the course of this Scrutiny Review, the advantages and disadvantages of using Council-owned land for the development of a green business park have been debated. There was some scepticism expressed that trying to impose sites via a bespoke business park is an approach that will not work. The point was also made that speculative development is extremely difficult to attract in the current economic conditions and such an approach has a high risk factor. On the other hand, a Green Business Park could give Wirral a competitive edge. Members concluded that a report to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be produced debating the rationale for creating a green growth cluster of businesses either in a geographical location (a Green Business Park) or by association in various locations across Wirral.

In conclusion, it is recognised that the delivery of all of the recommendations made in this report will involve a significant amount of officer time and effort as well as some financial resource. However, if the borough is to seize the opportunities afforded by the offshore wind and low carbon sectors, then an initial investment will be necessary in order to harvest the long-term gains.

In considering the evidence found during the Review, the Panel Members have formulated the recommendations identified on pages 6 to 8.

Recommendation 1 - Officer Working Group
An officer working group should be created to oversee the implementation of the recommendations from this scrutiny review and the development of a long-term strategy for green growth in Wirral. Work will include monitoring and evaluating the implications of national policy changes, such as the Green Investment Bank and the Green Deal. The working group should include officers from a variety of departments (including Invest Wirral, Strategic Planning, Housing, Procurement, Marketing and Sustainability), as well as a small number of Members. The group will provide regular updates to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee).
(Reference Section 6.1, page 14)

Recommendation 2 – Enterprise Zone
A report on the potential of the Enterprise Zone to provide opportunities for the growth of Wirral's green economy should be produced for the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee).
(Reference Section 6.1, page 15)

Recommendation 3 – Relationship with Peel Holdings
The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning Strategy are requested to hold further discussions with Peel Holdings. The discussions will focus on feasible options for the advancement of Wirral's green economy as part of the Wirral Waters project.
(Reference Section 6.1, page 15)

Recommendation 4 – Relationship with City Region Partners
The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning should hold discussions with officers working on inward investment enquiries at a City Region level to explore opportunities for attracting businesses specialising in green products and services to Wirral.
(Reference Section 6.1, page 15)

Recommendation 5 – Cross-Departmental Working
All businesses, as well as those in the green sector, access a range of services provided by the Council, including those provided by Invest Wirral, Inward Investment, Marketing and Planning Departments. As a consequence:

a) The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is requested to ensure that close working relationships are developed between officers in Invest Wirral, Inward Investment, Marketing and Planning Departments.
b) The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is encouraged to ensure that dedicated planning support to businesses should be provided by having all business planning applications assigned to a specified team of planning officers.
c) If a business planning application is submitted to the Planning Department, Invest Wirral should be immediately informed and if a new business is speaking to Invest Wirral regarding planning matters, a referral should be made to the Planning Department so that support is offered.
d) The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is requested to consider the benefits of Development Control being part of an integrated planning team.
e) Furthermore, making use of the office rationalisation programme, co-location of relevant teams should be investigated. Therefore, the Head of Asset Management and the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning are jointly requested to investigate the feasible options.

(Reference Section 6.2, page 17)

Recommendation 6 – Business Forum Network
Wirral Council should evaluate the current business forum network to ensure that the interests of all companies in the green sector are included in the network. Consideration should be given to the creation of a new green sector network.
(Reference Section 6.2, page 17)

Recommendation 7 – Engagement with Green Businesses at Overview and Scrutiny Meetings
This Scrutiny Review has given the Panel Members an opportunity to discuss relevant issues directly with members of the business community. Therefore, during the forthcoming municipal year (2012/13), the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) is encouraged to invite a minimum of two leading Wirral companies in the green sector to meet the Committee to further explore the problems and opportunities currently faced by those companies.
(Reference Section 6.2, page 17)

Recommendation 8 – Public Awareness Event
Wirral Council is keen to support the local green economy. Therefore, the Council is encouraged to hold a large 'market-place' style event aimed at raising public awareness in the products and services provided by the local green economy. Relevant businesses would be invited to display their products and services at the event, to which potential large-scale customers and members of the public would also be invited. The event should also highlight employment and training opportunities available in the green sector.
(Reference Section 6.3, page 18)

Recommendation 9 – Marketing 'hits' for the Green Sector
The aim is for Wirral to be recognised as a market leader in the green economy and build a reputation as a positive environment for green growth industries. Therefore, the Marketing Department should be set a target to promote a minimum of 30 green issues per year through the Council's website and local media channels. Special attention should be paid to promoting good news stories from local businesses in the green sector. This will require close working relationships between Invest Wirral, Inward Investment and Marketing.
(Reference Section 6.3, page 19)

Recommendation 10 – Developing the relationship with social landlords
Housing is a huge potential market for the green economy. The proposed Officer Working Group, given its cross-cutting remit, will be well placed to encourage a positive relationship between landlords, both social and private, and local green business. Therefore, social and private landlords should also be invited to play a role in the marketing event, proposed in Recommendation 8.
(Reference Section 6.4, page 20)

Recommendation 11 – Procurement training for the Green Sector
The Scrutiny Panel recognises the excellent work done by Invest Wirral and Corporate Procurement to encourage access to the procurement process by all companies. However, recognition needs to be given that the green sector is a fledgling sector. It is, therefore, requested that a sector-specific procurement training programme and support is provided, organised through the Green Sector Forum as proposed in Recommendation 6.
(Reference Section 6.4, page 20)

Recommendation 12 – Promotion of the Council's Environmental Policies to potential suppliers
Potential suppliers are currently provided with a copy of the Council's equality policies. In order to raise the profile of green issues, potential suppliers should be provided, by the Procurement Department, with a copy of the Council's environmental policies relevant to the procurement process.
(Reference Section 6.4, page 21)

Recommendation 13 – Lobbying for changes to the Funding Regime for Training
The training opportunities appropriate to the green sector which are now provided by the private sector in Wirral are welcomed. However, the Scrutiny Panel Members are concerned at the limited flexibility within the current funding regime to enable new courses to be developed within the further education curriculum. Consequently, training provision in colleges does not reflect changing requirements, such as the growth of the green sector. As a result, the Director of Children and Young People and the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning are jointly asked to raise this issue with the relevant funding agencies, such as the Skills Funding Agency and the National Skills Academy.
(Reference Section 6.5, page 22)

Recommendation 14 – Creation of a fund to encourage access to existing training opportunities
Access to adequate training is recognised by the Scrutiny Panel Members as an important issue for individuals. The creation of a fund to support upskilling of those working within the green sector should be explored. The fund will also enable those people moving into the sector, including the unemployed, to access existing training opportunities in Wirral.
(Reference Section 6.5, page 22)

Recommendation 15 – Wirral Apprenticeship Scheme
The members of the Scrutiny Panel recognise the success of the Wirral Apprenticeship scheme. In order to help increase the training opportunities in the emerging green sector the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is encouraged to allocate between five and ten apprenticeships to green businesses in the forthcoming financial year. Consideration should be given to offering greater subsidies to employers in the green sector, including incentives to support access to higher level apprenticeships.
(Reference Section 6.5, page 22)

Recommendation 16 – Database of Green Skills Training Providers
Wirral Council is encouraged to develop a database of all green skills training providers available in the North West region. The information should be made available through Invest Wirral and other Council websites, colleges and schools.
(Reference Section 6.5, page 23)

Recommendation 17 – Green Accreditation Scheme for Traders
The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is requested to assess the possibility of developing a green accreditation scheme similar to The Wirral Trader to bring increased consumer confidence.
(Reference Section 6.5, page 23)

Recommendation 18 – Opportunities for Section 106 Agreements (or Community Infrastructure Levies)
Wirral Council is encouraged to explore, as have other Councils, the opportunities for the creative use of Section 106 Agreements (or Community Infrastructure Levies) in the planning process, particularly where linked to training or green initiatives. Therefore, a report on best practice and potential use should be provided to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee).
(Reference Section 6.6, page 24)

Recommendation 19 – A Green Business Park for Wirral?
A report to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) should be produced debating the rationale for creating a green growth cluster of businesses either in a geographical location (a Green Business Park) or by association in various locations across Wirral.
(Reference Section 6.6, page 25)

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report presents the findings of a Scrutiny Review into Green Economic Growth in Wirral. The Review was undertaken by a Working Group which was set up by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is hoped that the recommendations which form part of the report will further develop the good practice that exists within the Council and with our partners. It was apparent during the review that a great deal of work is happening to enable businesses to expand in the emerging green sector of the economy, as is the case with Wirral's economy in general. However, the challenging economic conditions in recent years have certainly made it more difficult for new businesses to emerge and for existing businesses to grow.

The Panel would like to thank all those people who willingly agreed to contribute and to provide information to this review. In particular, the Panel thanks those members of the business community who hosted meetings with Members of the Panel and discussed their past experiences and hopes for the future. The Panel Members also appreciate the input of all those companies who responded to the online questionnaire which was conducted as part of the review. Particular thanks are paid to Ben Lavell (Business Engagement Officer, Invest Wirral) who contributed greatly to the review by helping to establish the meetings with the business community and also coordinated the issuing of the questionnaire to the businesses. In addition, the Panel Members are extremely grateful to all those members of staff with whom they have met and exchanged ideas.

Thank you to those Panel Members who have contributed to the review, which I hope will play a part in the development of service provision in this area. In the future, it is important that the impact of all of the recommendations is reviewed and that progress is monitored.

On a personal level, this has been my first experience of involvement in a detailed Scrutiny Review. I have found the process very helpful. It helps you understand issues, meet officers to explore their roles and engage with businesses and partner organisations. I now place great value in the role of scrutiny and would hope any democratic structure Wirral Borough Council uses in the future ensures that scrutiny has a prominent role and is well resourced.

Thank you to all for your participation and contributions to this Review.

Councillor Mark Johnston
(Chair of the Members' Panel and of the Economy and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 2011-12)

3. PANEL MEMBERSHIP

The Green Growth Scrutiny Panel was appointed by the Economy and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 5th September 2011. The purpose of the Panel is to carry out a Scrutiny Review of the potential for growth in the green sector of Wirral's economy. The Panel will make any relevant recommendations for changes which, in the first instance will be discussed by the Economy and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The following members volunteered to be members of the Panel:

Councillor Mark Johnston (Chair)

Councillor Peter Kearney

Councillor Steve Niblock

Councillor Stuart Whittingham

The Scrutiny Support Officer for this Scrutiny Review was Alan Veitch.

4. BACKGROUND AND ORIGINAL BRIEF

At the meeting of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 6th June 2011, members agreed to undertake an in-depth scrutiny review to produce an informed response to the Notice of Motion that was approved by Council on 18th April 2011. The Notice of Motion, which was agreed unanimously, was:

That Council:

(1) Recognises the importance of environmental sustainability to future business growth and the development of the Borough's economy, not just the Green economy.

(2) Recognises that aligning resource efficiency, sustainable procurement, waste reduction strategies, commercial waste infrastructure, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources are common across all sectors of the economy and key to long term success and sustainability.

(3) Notes the ENWORKS report 'Making an impact in the Liverpool City Region' and the excellent resource efficiency support that this organisation has offered to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), making businesses stronger through better use of resources.

(4) Instructs officers to review the Council's economic regeneration policies to ensure that businesses in Wirral can access appropriate information and support tools to enable them to benefit from increased profitability, productivity and sustainability through improved energy and resource efficiency.

(5) Recognises the green value of Wirral's Home Insulation Programme, set up under the previous Labour/Liberal Democrat administration and continued by the present administration, which will benefit Wirral householders, increase employment opportunities and reduce the Carbon Footprint of the Borough.

(6) Believes that there is real potential for the development of emerging Green technologies on Wirral and asks the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate and draw up a report for Cabinet on the best ways to create and support a "cluster" of companies to lead the way in driving a Green economy on Wirral and across the country.

In developing the scope for the review, the Panel Members suggested that the review should focus on paragraph (6) of the Notice of Motion. The review will, therefore, concentrate on "the best ways to create and support a 'cluster' of companies to lead the way in driving a green economy on Wirral and across the country". It is expected that the scope of this scrutiny review will complement the work requested from officers in paragraph (4) of the Notice of Motion, namely, "to review the Council's economic regeneration policies to ensure that businesses in Wirral can access appropriate information and support tools to enable them to benefit from increased profitability, productivity and sustainability through improved energy and resource efficiency".

The Scope Document for the scrutiny review, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, was agreed by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2011. It was agreed that the review would concentrate on the following issues:

- What is the national Government policy / strategy and how will this impact on Wirral?
- What is already being done regarding support to local businesses in the green economy and how can we support these companies to expand?
- How are we marketing Wirral to attract inward investment and to create more green investment jobs?
- What is the Council doing to create a green market and support the green economy?
- What are the educational and training needs of the sector?
- Does the existing planning regime encourage green growth? What has Wirral Borough Council got in terms of rentable space and land and how suitable is it?
- What does the Council do with its own properties regarding green technology and is there an opportunity to create a market for green suppliers?

The Panel commenced work in attempting to find answers to these questions.

5. METHODOLOGY FOR THE REVIEW

The Panel has employed a number of methods to gather evidence:

5.1 Visits to local businesses already operating in the green sector

A series of visits have taken place at which the Panel Members could discuss relevant issues with business people who are already running businesses in the green sector. All of the visits were very constructive and highlighted issues relevant to the Review. Those visited during the course of the review were:

- Colin Jones, Managing Director, Inteb
- Mark McManus, Managing Director, Stiebel Eltron UK
- Lee Stewart and Mike Lowes, Joint Managing Directors, Renewable Solutions UK Ltd
- Sue Tunnington and Al Tunnington, Joint Managing Directors, Combined Harvesters

5.2 Questionnaire responses from the business community

Panel Members wanted to enable other members of the business community in the green sector to have an input into the Review. Therefore, a short questionnaire was made available to relevant companies, making use of Invest Wirral's Business Forum contacts. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix 2 to this Report. In total, responses were received from 12 companies.

5.3 Meetings with Officers

A series of individual meetings have taken place at which the Panel Members could discuss relevant issues with key officers from Wirral Borough Council. In addition, Kevin Adderley, Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning, provided advise to the Panel Members during the initial planning stage and the closing phase of the review. Those interviewed during the course of the review were:

Invest Wirral

- Paula Basnett, Senior Investment Manager, Invest Wirral
- Graham Maddrell, Investment Manager, Invest Wirral
- Ben Lavell, Business Engagement Officer, Invest Wirral

Wirral Borough Council

- Andrew Fraser, Strategic Planning
- Eddie Fleming, Strategic Planning
- Alan Evans, Strategic Planning
- Gill Rutter, Destination Marketing
- Ian Brand, Asset Management
- Ray Williams, Corporate Procurement
- Joanne Nettleton, Corporate Procurement

Wirral Metropolitan College

- Catherine Court, Head of Employer Services
- Colin Campbell, Head of Construction

5.4 Written Evidence

Written evidence was received from a variety of sources. Details are shown in Appendix 3 to this report.

6. EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Implications of National Policy for Wirral

The low carbon and environmental goods and services sector (LCEGS or 'Green Economy') is defined as "a community of businesses that provide technologies, goods and services that will enable the UK's transition to the low carbon economy"[1].

The low carbon economy has been identified by Wirral and the wider city region economy as one of the transformational areas on which to focus in order to create jobs and narrow the productivity gap with the rest of the UK. K-Matrix data from 2009/2010, which is used by The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and is sourced from a number of different data banks, shows that in the period 2009/2010 there were 227 registered companies in the following sub sectors in Wirral:

Table 1: Number of low carbon and environmental goods and services (LCEGS) companies by sector in Wirral

Sector	Number of Registered Companies
Low carbon sub sector	105
Renewable energy sub sector	71
Environmental sub sector	51
TOTAL	**227**

Source: K-Matrix data 2009/2010, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

This compares to 400 companies in the Liverpool City Region as a whole, where it is estimated that 8,700 people are employed.[2]

A central plank of the Government policy for green growth is the Green Investment Bank which is designed to accelerate private sector investment in the UK's transition to a green economy. The first priority sectors for the Bank, subject to approval by the European Commission, are:

- Offshore wind power generation
- Commercial and industrial waste processing and recycling
- Energy from waste generation
- Non-domestic energy efficiency
- Support for the Green Deal

The location of the Green Investment Bank is due to be announced by the Secretary of State for Business within the next few weeks with Liverpool being one of the 32 bidding towns and cities. It will build the necessary expertise in financial markets and green investments, with the aim of both achieving significant green impact and making financial returns. However, in reality, it will only impact in Wirral if businesses are in a position to put forward viable schemes and projects which are in need of finance.

The green sector will also be impacted by the Government's Green Deal, which will enable many households and businesses to improve the energy efficiency of their properties. The Green Deal is a new government initiative designed to help meet the upfront cost of making homes more energy efficient. Due to be launched in late 2012, the Green Deal will enable the installation of energy efficiency measures. Although customers will repay the cost over time, this is not a conventional

[1] 'Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and services: an industry analysis commissioned by BERR (Department of Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform)
[2] Low carbon Action Plan (2011-2015), The Mersey Partnership

personal loan as the charge is attached to the meter and paid back through the fuel bill. It remains to be seen how this initiative will impact on the green economy. During the course of the review, some local businesses also recognised the launch of the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme in November 2011 as potentially a very significant step in changing the way that heat is generated and used. However, at the same time, there is considerable concern in the industry that the recently announced reduction in feed-in tariffs for solar panels will have a detrimental effect on the growth of that particular sub-sector.

The green vehicle sector is also expected to receive a boost after the government announced reforms to company tax designed to make it more attractive for firms to purchase low and zero-carbon vehicles, and revealed it will extend enhanced capital allowance tax breaks to cover the purchase of zero-carbon goods vehicles.

Within the national framework, opportunities will emerge for Wirral. Wirral's Investment Strategy is a key document in setting the future priorities for the economy in the borough as part of the Council's enabling role. The Strategy has been developed following consultation with the Council's strategic partners, including Wirral Economic Development and Skills (WEDS) Partnership, the Investment Board and Wirral's Business Forum. In the context of green growth, it is positive that the prospects for the green sector are highlighted within the plan. Wirral's Investment Strategy 2011-2016, approved by Cabinet on 21st July 2011, aims to grow the economy of Wirral by identifying and attracting new investment and by also supporting the existing business base to grow and develop. In particular, two of the Key Policy Statements within the Strategy are:

"We will support the development of key sectors by facilitating investment into specific key projects, such as the infrastructure for Offshore Wind"

"We will attract and support the development of successful businesses, particularly those in key growth sectors".

The new Investment Strategy proposes an increased emphasis on developing a number of key growth sectors that will build on existing local specialisms and will offer the most growth potential. The growth sectors include:

Research and Development.....Low Carbon
Offshore Energy.....Biomedical
Advanced technology and manufacturing

The Strategy stresses that the focus on these key growth sectors and high profile projects will be underpinned by a range of effective support services and enabling measures to attract new investment; to support businesses and to ensure that people have access to the right employment and skills services to benefit from these new opportunities.

The overall strategic aim is to build on the current assets that exist in Wirral and the Council will play an enabling role, where possible, to support this investment and growth. Officers from a number of service areas have a part to play in that process. In order to support the development of the relevant growth sectors (namely, Offshore Energy and the Low carbon sector), the Panel Members believe that a Working Group should be formed to support that process. The purpose of the Working Group is to ensure that the recommendations and existing initiatives are given the time, attention and resources required to bring about sustainable development. In order to help raise the profile of the issue consideration should be given to how best members can lead and assist that work.

Recommendation 1 - Officer Working Group
An officer working group should be created to oversee the implementation of the recommendations from this scrutiny review and the development of a long-term strategy for green growth in Wirral. Work will include monitoring and evaluating the implications of national policy changes, such as the Green Investment Bank and the Green Deal. The working group should include officers from a variety of departments (including Invest Wirral, Strategic Planning, Housing, Procurement, Marketing and Sustainability), as well as a small number of Members. The group will provide regular updates to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee).

There are significant opportunities for Wirral to develop its green technology sector. A wide range of businesses, from the internationally recognised brand of Stiebel Eltron in Bromborough to the small emerging businesses operating in recycling activities, are already in existence. The infrastructure supporting offshore wind activity is reportedly amongst the best in Europe and in Cammell Laird, there is a business capable of taking a significant market share of this emerging UK market. An officer told the panel:

"The off-shore agenda is potentially huge, with significant opportunities for the supply chain"

Potentially other opportunities could arise such as harnessing tidal power using emerging technology and collaborating with the world class facilities at the local universities to promote Research and Development, leading to innovation.

The Investment Strategy envisages that opportunities will develop naturally and Wirral should be able to use the Enterprise Zone and, in the longer term, the Wirral Waters development to enhance the opportunities for the green sector. The announcement of the Enterprise Zone will enable financial incentives, in the form of business rate reductions and potential capital allowances, to be available to potential investors. It is clearly important that the Enterprise Zone is used to maximise the opportunities for inward investment. As a growing sector, green business should be able to benefit. It is therefore, recommended that further work is done to identify ways in which the Enterprise Zone might specifically benefit the green sector. In addition, JESSICA funding (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) is available to Merseyside and provides the region with a unique advantage. This scheme allows money to be made available on a repayable basis through loans.

Recommendation 2 – Enterprise Zone
A report on the potential of the Enterprise Zone to provide opportunities for the growth of Wirral's green economy should be produced for the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee).

Recommendation 3 – Relationship with Peel Holdings
The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning Strategy are requested to hold further discussions with Peel Holdings. The discussions will focus on feasible options for the advancement of Wirral's green economy as part of the Wirral Waters project.

Wirral has some key opportunities to develop its green sector and the Investment Strategy provides the tools to enable this, being supported where appropriate by national policy. The prospects for green growth in Wirral are clearly linked to those of the Merseyside region and, therefore, synergies with Wirral's regional neighbours should continue to be exploited. The Mersey Partnership report 'Low Carbon Economy Action Plan – Delivering Economic Growth 2011-2015' examines, in detail, the opportunities for the low carbon economy. The report concludes that there is the potential for the creation of 12,000 jobs in the low carbon economy over those five years. Although the economic conditions continue to be difficult, opportunities do exist in sub sectors as varied as offshore wind, microgeneration, biomass and energy from waste, smartgrid technology, retro-fitting of energy efficiency and low emission vehicles.

Recommendation 4 – Relationship with City Region Partners
The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning should hold discussions with officers working on inward investment enquiries at a City Region level to explore opportunities for attracting businesses specialising in green products and services to Wirral.

6.2 Local Business Support in the Green Economy – what already exists and how can it be improved?

A key service provided by Wirral Council in terms of business support is that provided by Invest Wirral, which provides business support to existing companies based in Wirral and also provides Inward Investment advice to prospective employers. The team consists of nine staff, most of whom have a lead sector. One member of staff is the officer providing lead support to the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector (LCEGS or 'Green Economy'). The aim is to engage with companies on a proactive basis.

The response from the business community regarding the support provided by Wirral Council was positive, with particular recognition being made towards the team at Invest Wirral. It is worth noting, however, that although feedback was positive, many comments referred to general business support rather than support which was specifically available to companies operating in the green sector. Advice and support available from Invest Wirral to those businesses in the green sector was clearly appreciated and highly regarded. Some respondents to the questionnaire referred specifically to the financial support that has been available to them from Wirral Council in the past. The positive response was reinforced by the reply in the questionnaire to the following question:
"Overall, how do you feel about the level of support currently provided to your business by Wirral Council"?

Table 2: Perceived satisfaction of business leaders regarding the level of support currently provided by Wirral Council

	Percentage of respondents
Very Satisfied	33.3
Satisfied	58.3
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	8.3
Dissatisfied	0
Very Dissatisfied	0

Source: Questionnaire of Wirral businesses in the green sector, Green Growth Scrutiny Review, November 2011

One respondent to the questionnaire commented:
"It is quite unusual for a council to offer this level of direct support and it is very welcome in terms of finding out what is going on in the local business community and other business news and have found the networking and forum events to be very useful in making contact with other businesses as prospective partners/clients".

Another added that:
"I currently work with a number of public sector organisations in other areas and have found Wirral to be one of the most proactive business supporters".

Meanwhile another said:
"I work very closely with the team at Invest Wirral. They helped me establish the business here on Wirral and have given me support to allow me to develop and grow the business both locally and nationally."

Nevertheless, through the contacts with business people it became clear that some businesses struggle to obtain information:
"I believe that the help is out there, but as a busy business owner it is sometimes difficult to access the correct help and implement suggestions that are made."

The drive for inward investment is clearly a high priority for the borough. Panel Members were impressed by the effort and progress that is being made. The Panel Members recognise the need for staff in different service areas to work together in a joined-up way. During the course of the review, a number of examples came to light where areas for some improvement were identified. Although not uniquely relevant to the green sector, it is recommended that a closer working relationship between a number of service areas would lead to a more coherent service provision from the perception of the business community.

Recommendation 5 – Cross-Departmental Working
All businesses, as well as those in the green sector, access a range of services provided by the Council, including those provided by Invest Wirral, Inward Investment, Marketing and Planning Departments. As a consequence:

a) The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is requested to ensure that close working relationships are developed between officers in Invest Wirral, Inward Investment, Marketing and Planning Departments.
b) The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is encouraged to ensure that dedicated planning support to businesses should be provided by having all business planning applications assigned to a specified team of planning officers.
c) If a business planning application is submitted to the Planning Department, Invest Wirral should be immediately informed and if a new business is speaking to Invest Wirral regarding planning matters, a referral should be made to the Planning Department so that support is offered.
d) The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is requested to consider the benefits of Development Control being part of an integrated planning team.
e) Furthermore, making use of the office rationalisation programme, co-location of relevant teams should be investigated. Therefore, the Head of Asset Management and the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning are jointly requested to investigate the feasible options.

One specific service provided by the Invest Wirral team is the support provided to the Business Forums. During the course of the review, a suggestion was made from the business community that not all businesses operating within the green sector are captured within the current forum network.

Recommendation 6 – Business Forum Network
Wirral Council should evaluate the current business forum network to ensure that the interests of all companies in the green sector are included in the network. Consideration should be given to the creation of a new green sector network.

The Panel Members met with a small number of business leaders during the review. The views expressed during those meetings gave a good insight into the issues faced by those businesses currently operating in a relatively immature business sector. Enabling other members of the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to debate current issues with representatives of the business community could only enhance the understanding of Members and therefore strengthen the role of the Committee in supporting the development of Wirral's green economy in the future.

Recommendation 7 – Engagement with Green Businesses at Overview and Scrutiny Meetings
This Scrutiny Review has given the Panel Members an opportunity to discuss relevant issues directly with members of the business community. Therefore, during the forthcoming municipal year (2012/13), the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) is encouraged to invite a minimum of two leading Wirral companies in the green sector to meet the Committee to further explore the problems and opportunities currently faced by those companies.

6.3 Marketing and Awareness

A specified officer from within the Corporate Marketing team provides the press, public relations and marketing support for regeneration projects, tourism, inward investment and business support, including Invest Wirral.

Wirral-based businesses are directed to the BusinessWirral.com website which provides online business support for existing businesses. The BusinessWirral.com website has been developed by Invest Wirral specifically for existing Wirral companies. The website is password protected to ensure access by known users only. The site provides information on issues such as:

- The ILM programme (Wirral Intermediate Labour Market, supported by the European Social Fund)
- The Wirral Apprenticeship Scheme
- Peel Development
- Sector Information
- Business events and networking opportunities
- Local business news
- Trading opportunities and tender alerts

The InvestWirral.com website, which has been recently re-launched, is the site for new businesses looking for investment opportunities in Wirral. The new website includes sector-specific pages, including low carbon and offshore wind. The website will also make use of email flyers, for example, there will be an offshore wind newsletter for those who have registered. Recent positive innovations include the availability of a Mandarin version of the website in order to attract further interest from the Far East.

With specific reference to the development of the green economy, the Panel Members were informed by business people that the barriers to green companies expanding in Wirral included:

"Overcoming negative perceptions that green business is all about 'eco warriors' or 'chip fat express'".

And:

"The same barriers exist in other areas of the UK. As well as standard business practices, the knowledge of the Green Economy is very sparse and need investing in".

In order to help overcome some of the perceptions and to highlight the positive image of the green sector, the Panel Members suggest that a large marketing event should be held within the borough at which local companies could showcase their products and services. It was clearly important for the future of those businesses who were contacted that there is an increased awareness on green issues such as sustainability and the security of energy supplies for local businesses.

Recommendation 8 – Public Awareness Event

Wirral Council is keen to support the local green economy. Therefore, the Council is encouraged to hold a large 'market-place' style event aimed at raising public awareness in the products and services provided by the local green economy. Relevant businesses would be invited to display their products and services at the event, to which potential large-scale customers and members of the public would also be invited. The event should also highlight employment and training opportunities available in the green sector.

There was a perception among some of the business community that more could be done to market Wirral as a place to do business and specifically within the green sector. One businessperson informed the Panel Members that:

"I find that Wirral suffers from a lack of identity in being known for any particular sector".

Meanwhile another added that:

"Wirral should aim to market itself as the capital of the low carbon economy, using companies already here to attract others. The Peel development (Wirral Waters) provides vast opportunities for green technology".

However, there was equally positive feedback in the comment that:

"The Wirral Investment Forum has helped to raise the profile of Wirral as a good place to do business".

It is, therefore, clearly important the Council continues to take a lead in highlighting the positive image of Wirral as a place to do business and specifically for those companies in the green sector. Continuing to highlight the activities of the green sector in a positive light is one way in which the Marketing Department can help to advance the borough if it is to become "the capital of the low carbon economy".

Recommendation 9 – Marketing 'hits' for the Green Sector
The aim is for Wirral to be recognised as a market leader in the green economy and build a reputation as a positive environment for green growth industries. Therefore, the Marketing Department should be set a target to promote a minimum of 30 green issues per year through the Council's website and local media channels. Special attention should be paid to promoting good news stories from local businesses in the green sector. This will require close working relationships between Invest Wirral, Inward Investment and Marketing.

As with some other service areas, detailed in Section 6.2 above, benefits could be gained from the development of a closer working relationship between marketing and other teams, specifically with Invest Wirral to highlight joint strategic marketing issues. As an example, some benefit may be gained from the availability to Invest Wirral of a generic brochure that could include inserts geared towards specific sectors providing information such as case studies and training organisations. It is also understood that further work will be done by the Marketing Department to develop marketing materials in relation to the newly appointed Inward Investment Manager.

6.4 Creating a Green Market

As part of the ongoing energy efficiency measures to enable the borough to move closer to its target of reducing carbon emissions by 60% by 2025, Wirral Council is investing heavily in renewable energy in 2011-12, both on making the Council's own buildings more energy efficient and also by helping community and voluntary groups take their own steps to reduce emissions through the Energy Efficiency Grant.

Nearly £3 million will be invested in solar energy over the next two years in 30 Council properties. This will mean a significant investment and one which will bring a return over many years as savings in both energy costs and CO_2 emissions are realised. It is hoped that there will also be an additional benefit to the local economy in that switching buildings over to solar power will provide employment opportunities to local people within Wirral's growing low carbon industry. The Cheshire Lines building last year became the first Council building to install solar panels to allow it to generate its own electricity and microgeneration is something that the Council is supporting.

Other organisations are also being encouraged to follow suit. To achieve this, grants are being used to help community groups, through the Energy Efficiency Grant, to introduce a range of different energy efficiency technologies, including building insulation, heating and lighting upgrades and IT energy efficiency improvements. Applications for the Grant, which can be made up to £4000, aim to support the long-term sustainability of community groups running community buildings. In so doing, it is hoped that such schemes will help to stimulate the market for green businesses in the local area,

albeit in a limited form. Likewise, and on a larger scale, it is anticipated that the Council's Home Insulation Programme will also continue to encourage local businesses in the low carbon sector.

In general, housing providers, both social and private landlords, have the potential to generate a great deal of work for green businesses. It is, therefore, suggested that effort is made to further persuade the borough's landlords of the benefits of making buildings more energy efficient and of pursuing the green agenda.

Recommendation 10 – Developing the relationship with landlords
Housing is a huge potential market for the green economy. The proposed Officer Working Group, given its cross-cutting remit, will be well placed to encourage a positive relationship between landlords, both social and private, and local green business. Therefore, social and private landlords should also be invited to play a role in the marketing event, proposed in Recommendation 8.

The Council's Corporate Procurement team has developed a Sustainable Procurement Policy, which is aimed at addressing the objective to "promote procurement practices and policies which contribute to the Council's priorities on equality, sustainability and regeneration". The purpose of this policy is to help minimise the impact on the environment by providing staff with information and practical help to assist them to buy or specify products that cause the least environmental damage. It sets out Council policy on environmental purchasing and gives tips and advice on how to find products that will be effective, of value for money and do least harm to the environment. The purchase price may only be a fraction of final cost to the Council, or wider society, with a variety of impacts associated with the way goods and services are made, delivered, moved, used and disposed of. These include running costs, repair and disposal charges, along with indirect and hidden costs like traffic congestion and pollution.

Wherever possible, and legal to do so, local suppliers will also be encouraged to participate in the tender process. The Council will, on occasion, require delivery of goods or services within specified time limits whenever this is relevant to the subject of the tender. However, caution must be applied in order to avoid any prejudice being shown to a supplier's opportunity to deliver a contract on the grounds of localism unless it is essential to the delivery of the contract.

The Council can encourage participation in the process by advising local suppliers regarding how to work with the Council. In partnership with Invest Wirral, Corporate Procurement have held supplier workshops on 'How to do Business with Wirral Council', with over 300 companies having received training to date, most of whom are local. A guide, 'How to do Business with Wirral Council' is also published on the Council's website. Within the current legislation, it is also allowable to request an explanation from the supplier regarding how they will work with the local community. That approach is more difficult with large contracts. However, in those circumstances, the supplier will often want to work with local companies through sub-contracting. As an example, Portsmouth Council has developed a portal specifically to support companies with second and third level sub-contracting.

It is clear, therefore, that substantial effort has been made to support the local business community. Nevertheless, there was some feedback from business people that the procurement procedures can appear too complicated, especially for small companies, and "there are too many hoops to go through". As the green sector is a fledgling sector with younger businesses being more prominent, it is suggested that particular emphasis is given to that sector in terms of procurement training.

Recommendation 11 – Procurement training for the Green Sector
The Scrutiny Panel recognises the excellent work done by Invest Wirral and Corporate Procurement to encourage access to the procurement process by all companies. However, recognition needs to be given that the green sector is a fledgling sector. It is, therefore, requested that a sector-specific procurement training programme and support is provided, organised through the Green Sector Forum as proposed in Recommendation 6.

With regard to the environmental credentials of suppliers, all contractors, suppliers and service providers that bid for major or strategic contracts are required to provide their Environmental Management System and to detail what impact their business has on the environment. All are required to provide any information about failure to comply with any legislation or where they have been subject to fines for transgressing those regulations and failure to do so would mean withdrawal of any contract offer. However, the Panel Members suggest that greater awareness among suppliers of the Council's environmental policies might help to influence those suppliers.

Recommendation 12 – Promotion of the Council's Environmental Policies to potential suppliers
Potential suppliers are currently provided with a copy of the Council's equality policies. In order to raise the profile of green issues, potential suppliers should be provided, by the Procurement Department, with a copy of the Council's environmental policies relevant to the procurement process.

6.5 Education and Training

The following question was asked in the questionnaire:
"How would you rate availability of skilled labour for businesses in Wirral's green sector"?

Replies varied but included:

"There is a known shortage of green skills across the North West".

"This is a new economy and people have to learn or develop the skills. This is common for all areas of the UK".

"There is a strong base of skilled employees from established industries such as chemical, engineering and shipbuilding where contraction has taken place".

The funding of courses delivered through Further Education Colleges is driven by national agencies. The Sector Skills Councils are employer-led organisations that are responsible for providing the leadership to address skills needs within and across sectors. However, there is no specific Sector Skills Council to represent the green sector. As the green sector covers a wide spectrum, the requirements will sit across a number of the Sector Skill Councils, for example, Construction, SEMTA (Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies) and Summitskills (Building Services / Engineering). Data is collated at a national level by the Sector Skills Councils, who identify training requirements at a national level. Included in the remit of the National Skills Academy is to identify the requirements of new business sectors. As part of that process, Liverpool Community College has been named as the region's lead hub for the green sector.

Among the most the relevant courses to the green sector offered by Wirral Metropolitan College are those courses that fall within the electrical and plumbing sectors. Within those courses, elements applicable to the green technologies are included, although Panel Members were told that, to date, there was little demand for 'green' training. The Panel Members were also informed that in order to be eligible for a free course, the student must be under nineteen years of age and the course must be on a list of recognised qualifications. There are currently no 'green' courses on that list.

Wirral Metropolitan College operates the Plumbing and Gas Skills Academy at Lumina Park, Bromborough. The courses at Lumina Park include biomass and the new technologies. In addition, the roof at the Twelve Quays Centre has been fitted with solar panels. Therefore, the training facilities are available. However, there has been little take-up. This may well be due to the fact that the relevant courses are non-funded and have to be paid for by the individual. One officer commented:

"Decisions (regarding the availability of courses) are often driven by what funding streams are available. This means that the selected course is not necessarily the best for the individual."

Companies in the private sector do provide welcome opportunities for training in Wirral. In particular, the Green Energy Training Centre in Bromborough, operated by Stiebel Eltron in collaboration with Scientiam, offer training facilities. Those courses attract customers from a wide area, often travelling from outside the borough although they appear to be targeted at upskilling existing tradespeople rather than new entrants. Indeed, from a national perspective, there appears to be an increasing focus to ensure that employers are more responsible for identifying training needs and providing the training opportunities for employees.

Members concluded that, within the process for identifying skill requirements and funding allocation within the Further Education system, there appears to be little recognition of local requirements. The process for changes to qualifications and approved courses also appears to be slow. In respect of the green sector, there was an impression that opportunities were far greater for upskilling rather than for new entrants to training.

Recommendation 13 – Lobbying for changes to the Funding Regime for Training
The training opportunities appropriate to the green sector which are now provided by the private sector in Wirral are welcomed. However, the Scrutiny Panel Members are concerned at the limited flexibility within the current funding regime to enable new courses to be developed within the further education curriculum. Consequently, training provision in colleges does not reflect changing requirements, such as the growth of the green sector. As a result, the Director of Children and Young People and the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning are jointly asked to raise this issue with the relevant funding agencies, such as the Skills Funding Agency and the National Skills Academy.

Recommendation 14 – Creation of a fund to encourage access to existing training opportunities
Access to adequate training is recognised by the Scrutiny Panel Members as an important issue for individuals. The creation of a fund to support upskilling of those working within the green sector should be explored. The fund will also enable those people moving into the sector, including the unemployed, to access existing training opportunities in Wirral.

There are over 200 frameworks for apprenticeships. The frameworks, which are groups of nationally recognised qualifications, are due to have some green element added to them, if they do not already do so. The National Apprenticeship Service is working in partnership with the relevant Sector Skills Councils to ensure frameworks are developed to meet the needs of employers. Apprenticeship frameworks exist, for example, in Electrotechnical, Electrical and Electronic Servicing, Heating and Ventilation and so on. Within each of those frameworks, there are relevant elements that provide training in the new technologies, for example, sustainable materials, alternative energy sources, modern construction techniques, and methods to reduce the sector's carbon footprint. Therefore, it is the existing apprenticeship frameworks with additional green focus units that will provide individuals with the green industries skills. The Wirral Apprenticeship Scheme is widely recognised as a success. The Panel Members suggest that, in order to support the training programme and improve skill levels within the green sector, a number of apprenticeships are made available annually to green businesses.

Recommendation 15 – Wirral Apprenticeship Scheme
The members of the Scrutiny Panel recognise the success of the Wirral Apprenticeship scheme. In order to help increase the training opportunities in the emerging green sector the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is encouraged to allocate between five and ten apprenticeships to green businesses in the forthcoming financial year. Consideration should be given to offering greater subsidies to employers in the green sector, including incentives to support access to higher level apprenticeships.

Discussions with businesses and also feedback from the questionnaire gave a strong indication that there was a lack of clarity regarding the availability of relevant training providers and courses in the region. The Panel Members, therefore, suggest that further work takes place to identify and promote the availability of appropriate training to the green sector.

Recommendation 16 – Database of Green Skills Training Providers
Wirral Council is encouraged to develop a database of all green skills training providers available in the North West region. The information should be made available through Invest Wirral and other Council websites, colleges and schools.

One businessman informed the Panel Members that:
"The industry has to have an awareness of getting information to the public that is from a credible, trustworthy source".

In order to support that process, the Panel Members suggest that, in order to further build customer confidence in the green sector, those traders who have the appropriate skill levels are eligible to join a green accreditation scheme.

Recommendation 17 – Green Accreditation Scheme for Traders
The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is requested to assess the possibility of developing a green accreditation scheme similar to The Wirral Trader to bring increased consumer confidence.

6.6 Planning, Land Availability and Council Properties

There is a need for land availability and industrial units to enable existing companies to grow and to encourage inward investment. Ensuring that the supply of accommodation supports the Council's inward investment strategy is a critical factor in the development of the sector. An employment land study was carried out two years ago. The study suggested that much of the available employment land was low grade. One officer described the Wirral International Business Park as "the jewel in the crown". There are 70 hectares of land left for development, estimated to be used in five to 10 years time. Therefore, there are limited options for the future.

Within the Council's ownership, the industrial portfolio comprises 123 units located in nine industrial estates in the Tranmere / Birkenhead / Wallasey areas. In addition, there are five individual units located throughout Wirral. The sizes of the units range from starter units of 22.75 m² (245 sq ft) at the Wirral Business Centre, through to the largest units of 667.75 m² (7,185 sq ft) at Kelvinside in Wallasey. The predominant characteristic of the Council's industrial portfolio is that it comprises small units, on average less than 185.87 m² (2,000 sq ft) in area. The units are let on leases or licences and, at any one time, there will be a small number of units available. Therefore, there are limited options within the Council's industrial / commercial estate.

The relationship between the Planning Department and other service areas has been discussed earlier in Section 6.2. Within the planning system, it is understood that little can be done to incentivise the green sector. As the Council can make planning policy, the main options relate to the level of restrictions that are applied. Therefore, it is possible that policies could be relaxed to promote further business expansion. However, policies would have to be relaxed for all sectors (not just the green sector) for reasons of legality, equity and probity. All industrial development within a similar class would need to be dealt with in the same way.

Some Councils elsewhere have been successful in using Section 106 agreements during the planning process to secure benefits for the local community. However, it is fair to say that the greatest benefits are secured where the demand for land is greatest, for example London and the South East of England. As an example, Milton Keynes Council and key partners have worked together to support job opportunities for local people. The planning service at Milton Keynes has been instrumental in supporting local employment via planning policies and securing benefits through Section 106 agreements. Councils in Camden, Islington, Ealing and Greenwich have all secured substantial benefits in the areas of job creation, training and apprenticeships through the use of section 106 agreements.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that opportunities could occur, particularly in a more buoyant economic environment which could be linked to green initiatives. It is, therefore, suggested that work is done to explore prospects further. It is understood that the Council has the option to make use of Community Infrastructure Levies (instead of Section 106 Agreements) in the future. Recognition is also given to the fact that whenever the possibility of a Section 106 agreement is available, there are conflicting interests and priorities. As an example, should a green initiative have a higher priority than a transport scheme or a community leisure scheme?

Recommendation 18 – Opportunities for Section 106 Agreements (or Community Infrastructure Levies)
Wirral Council is encouraged to explore, as have other Councils, the opportunities for the creative use of Section 106 Agreements (or Community Infrastructure Levies) in the planning process, particularly where linked to training or green initiatives. Therefore, a report on best practice and potential use should be provided to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee).

In respect of Council-owned property, Wirral Council has put in place a series of energy efficiency measures, some involving Council-owned property as discussed in Section 6.4 above. This includes the initiative to install solar panels on Council-owned buildings. In addition, Cabinet, in November 2010, approved the Green Specification, in the form of a Best Practice Guide for designers. The Best Practice Guide would require sustainable materials and products with recognised environmental benefits, and, where practicable, renewable energy technologies, to be incorporated into all Council building projects. Not only will this contribute to the Council's Carbon Reduction Programme and Carbon Budget, it will also, hopefully, support the local green sector.

During the course of this Scrutiny Review, the advantages and disadvantages of using Council-owned land for the development of a green business park have been debated. There has been some feedback supporting the principle of developing a green business park with one respondent to the questionnaire remarking:
"(A green business park would) give Wirral a competitive edge. Wirral needs to be seen as leaders in this new economy while it is still developing to therefore take as much market share as possible as the market grows".

Another remarked that:
"Synergies between green businesses would be better served by closer locations".

However, there was also considerable scepticism expressed that trying to impose sites via a bespoke business park is an approach that will not work. The point was also made that speculative development is extremely difficult to attract in the current economic conditions and such an approach has a high risk factor.

The concept of a cluster of green businesses could equally be developed by association, that is, for example, a major green company is established which then creates supply chain opportunities for emerging local companies. However, the companies in the supply chain do not all need to be geographically together. The biggest impetus would come from the investment by a company from the green sector. This would create a 'pull' effect and business would follow business. A further example might see a company operating in a particular sub sector which may offer synergies for other similar companies to develop as ancillary business opportunities develop.

Recommendation 19 – A Green Business Park for Wirral?
A report to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) should be produced debating the rationale for creating a green growth cluster of businesses either in a geographical location (a Green Business Park) or by association in various locations across Wirral.

This report was produced by the Green Growth Scrutiny Panel.

Appendix 1: Scope Document for the Green Growth Scrutiny Review

Date: 4th August 2011

Scrutiny Panel Chair: Cllr Mark Johnston	Contact details: mobile: 07986 540930
Additional Panel Members: Cllr Peter Kearney Cllr Steve Niblock Cllr Stuart Whittingham	Contact details: 0151 343 1719 mobile: 07583 395300 mobile: 07939 578041 0151 653 5539 mobile:
Scrutiny Officer: Alan Veitch	Contact details: 0151 691 8564
Departmental Link Officer: Kevin Adderley	Contact details: 0151 691 8187
Other Key Officer contacts:	
1**. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?** 1.1 Market Wirral as a world class location for businesses and visitors. 1.2 Make Wirral Council one of the most business friendly and supportive Councils in the country.	
2. **What are the main issues?** 2.1 National Policy - What is national Government policy / strategy and how will this impact on Wirral? 2.2 Current business support - What is already being done regarding support to local businesses in the green economy and how can we support these companies to expand? 2.3 Marketing - How are we marketing Wirral to attract inward investment and to create more green investment jobs, for example, through involvement with trade fairs? What will be the opportunities for the green economy arising from the proposed Enterprise Zone? 2.4 Creating a green market – What is the Council doing to create a green market and support the green economy? 2.5 Education / training – What are the educational / training needs of the sector? 2.6 Planning and land availability – Does the existing planning regime encourage green growth? What has Wirral Borough Council got in terms of rentable space / land and how suitable is it? 2.7 Council properties – What does the Council do with its own properties regarding green technology and is there an opportunity to create a market for green suppliers?	

3. **The Committee's overall aim/objective in doing this work is:**
3.1 Council agreed a motion on 18th April 2011 which included:
"This Council believes that there is real potential for the development of emerging Green technologies on Wirral and asks the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate and draw up a report for Cabinet on the best ways to create and support a 'cluster' of companies to lead the way in driving a Green economy on Wirral and across the country".

4. **The possible outputs/outcomes are:**
4.1 To understand the current position regarding the green economy in Wirral.
4.2 To gauge the current strength of the low carbon sector in Wirral.
4.3 To develop proposals to help stimulate further green growth in the borough.

5. **What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic?**
Further scrutiny will help to raise the profile of green growth within the Council and, hopefully, remove barriers to future development.

6. **Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?**
6.1 Appropriate Cabinet members and Directors, Wirral Borough Council.
6.2 Indirectly, potential investors.

7. **Duration of enquiry?**
Report due at the end of 2011.

8. **What category does the review fall into?**

Policy Review	x	☐	Policy Development	x	☐
External Partnership		☐	Performance Management		☐
Holding Executive to Account		☐			

9. **Extra resources needed? Would the investigation benefit from the co-operation of an expert witness?**
The review will be conducted by councillors with the support of existing officers. However, the Panel Members are looking for advice from people with expertise on this topic.

10. **What information do we need?**	
10.1 **Secondary information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc).** Relevant Government Departmental documents Recent Committee / Cabinet reports Relevant national documents Reports from other Councils into similar topics Examples of good practice from other Councils, for example, Bristol.	10.2 **Primary/new evidence/information** An evaluation of the businesses currently operating in the green economy sector in Wirral. (How many businesses, number of employees, type of business, etc..) Interviews with key officers Interviews with representatives of the business community Possible survey of representatives of the business community
10.3 **Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet portfolio holder, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc).** Several meetings will be held including: Ben Lavell (Invest Wirral, WBC) Mark McManus (Managing Director, Stiebel Eltron) plus other representatives of the business community Kevin Adderley, Interim Director of Corporate services, WBC) – to discuss Inward Investment strategy Gill Rutter (Destination Marketing, WBC) Andrew Fraser (Strategic Development, WBC) - to discuss the planning regime and land issues Ian Brand (Asset Management, WBC) Alan Evans (Strategic Development, WBC) Visit to the Green Energy Training Centre (Stiebel Eltron) Wirral Metropolitan College	10.4 **What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?** Which part of the Council's current service provision is particularly successful? Where can improvements to service provision be made? What are the current barriers to green growth in Wirral? Can these barriers be removed? What should be the priorities for the future?

11. **What processes can we use to feed into the review? (site visits/observations, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, written questionnaire, etc).**

11.1 Meetings with officers and representatives of the business community
11.2 Visits to include the Green Energy Training Centre, Invest Wirral
11.3 Survey of businesses in the green economy sector
11.4 Desk-top analysis

12**. In what ways can we involve the public and at what stages? (consider whole range of consultative mechanisms, local committees and local ward mechanisms).**
12.1 None at this stage, other than through the business community

Appendix 2 : Questionnaire issued to businesses in the Green Sector

GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW

BUSINESS QUESTIONNAIRE – FEEDBACK SUMMARY

SECTION A – BUSINESS SUPPORT PROVIDED BY WIRRAL COUNCIL

Q1. What support does your business currently receive from Wirral Council?

Service	Number of respondents receiving the service.
Funding Support	
Personal advice from an Invest Wirral adviser	
Newsletters (via email or website)	
Attendance at Business Forums	
Events and networking opportunities	
Links to suppliers	
Wirral apprenticeship scheme	
Wirral ILM	
International links support	
Invest Wirral Business Forum membership (www.businesswirral.com)	
None of the above	

Q2. How useful is this service on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 5 is the most useful)?

	Number of respondents giving each rating				
Service	1	2	3	4	5
Funding Support					
Personal advice from an Invest Wirral adviser					
Newsletters (via email or website)					
Attendance at Business Forums					
Events and networking opportunities					
Links to suppliers					
Wirral apprenticeship scheme					
Wirral ILM					
International links support					
Invest Wirral Business Forum membership (www.businesswirral.com)					
Others (please specify)					

Q3. Overall, how do you feel about the level of support currently provided to your business by Wirral Council?

	Number of respondents
Very Satisfied	
Satisfied	
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	
Dissatisfied	
Very Dissatisfied	

Any other comments:

Q4. What more can Wirral Council do to support your business?

SECTION B – BUSINESS SET-UP

Q5. How easy/ difficult did you find it to set up business in Wirral?

	Number of respondents
Very Easy	
Easy	
Neither easy nor difficult	
Difficult	
Very Difficult	

Any other comments:

Q6. Are there any barriers to other green businesses being set up in Wirral?

Q7. Do you think a green business park would be beneficial to Wirral?

	Number of respondents
Yes	
No	
Don't know	

Any other comments:

SECTION C – TRAINING AND SKILLS

Q8. How would you rate availability of skilled labour for businesses in Wirral's green sector?

	Number of respondents
Very Good	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very Poor	

Any other comments:

Q9. What training opportunities, of which you are aware, are available to meet any skill gaps?

Q10. What further training requirements does your business have?

SECTION D – MARKETING

Q11. How effectively do you feel Wirral markets itself as a place to do business?

	Number of respondents
Very Effectively	
Fairly Effectively	
Fairly Ineffectively	
Very Ineffectively	

Any other comments:

Q12. What is Wirral's 'Unique Selling Point' and how could the marketing of Wirral as a place to do business be improved?

SECTION E – TRANSPORT

Q13. Do you think that Wirral's transport infrastructure is business-friendly?

	Number of respondents
Yes	
No	

Any other comments:

SECTION F – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Q14. Please add any other comments that you wish to make.

Appendix 3 References

Reference Documents included the following:

'Low Carbon Economy Action Plan – Delivering Economic Growth 2011 – 2015', The Mersey Partnership, *2011*

Report of the Interim Director of Corporate Services, 'Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas (JESSICA)', presented to Cabinet, *4th November 2010*

Report of the Director of Technical Services, 'Green Specification and Renewable Energy Generation by Council', presented to Cabinet, 25th *November 2010*

Report of the Director of Finance, 'Community Benefits in Tenders', presented to Cabinet, 4th *November 2010*

Report of the Interim Director of Corporate Services, 'Wirral Investment Strategy 2011-2016', presented to Cabinet, *21st July 2011*

Report of the Interim Director of Corporate Services, 'Targeted Inward Investment Activity', presented to Cabinet, *21st July 2011*

'Creating Green Jobs – Developing Local Low-carbon Economies', Local Government Association

'Sector Skills Councils', UKCES (UK Commission for Employment and Skills), *November 2011*

'College opens one of the largest "green" training centres in the UK', Liverpool Community College website, *November 2011*

'Wolf Review proposes major reform of vocational education', Department of Education website, *November 2011*

'Section 106 for training and skills', Planning Advisory service website, *November 2011*

Various, Bristol City Council website, *November 2011*

'Wirral plans renewable energy innovation Centre', BBC website, *September 2011*

'Cammell Laird wins £5m Wind Farm Contract' Liverpool Echo, *5th October 2011*

Mersey Solar Panel Firms Shocked at Feed-in Tariff Cut', Liverpool Daily Post, *2nd November 2011*

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***GREEN GROWTH IN WIRRAL***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	***KEVIN ADDERLEY*** ***DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**(RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER)** **REGENERATION & PLANNING STRATEGY**
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report follows the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral, produced by The Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which acknowledge the importance, vibrancy and potential of the 'Green Economy' to create enterprise, jobs and help Wirral to become environmentally sustainable. This report sets out proposals to develop the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review in order to respond to the needs of Wirral businesses and therefore to stimulate economic growth and create new jobs for the residents of Wirral

1.2 This report seeks Members' approval for a range of policy options designed to enable businesses in Wirral's 'green economy' to set up, grow and maintain competitiveness.

1.3 This report complements Wirral's Investment Strategy, which sets future priorities for the economy in the borough. The Strategy proposes an increased emphasis on developing a number of key growth sectors that will build on existing local specialisms and will offer the most growth potential. Two of the proposed growth sectors are Offshore Energy and the Low Carbon sectors.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The low carbon and environmental goods and services sector (LCEGS or 'Green Economy') is defined as "a community of businesses that provide technologies, goods and services that will enable the UK's transition to the low carbon economy"[1].

2.2 The low carbon economy has been identified by Wirral and the wider city region economy as one of the transformational areas on which to focus in order to create jobs and narrow the productivity gap with the rest of the UK. K-Matrix data from 2009/2010, which is used by The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)

[1] 'Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and services: an industry analysis commissioned by BERR (Department of Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform)

and is sourced from a number of different data banks, shows that in the period 2009/2010 there were 227 registered companies in the following sub sectors in Wirral:

2.3 **Table 1: Number of low carbon and environmental goods and services (LCEGS) companies by sector in Wirral**

Sector	Number of Registered Companies
Low carbon sub sector	105
Renewable energy sub sector	71
Environmental sub sector	51
TOTAL	**227**

Source: K-Matrix data 2009/2010, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

2.4 This compares to 400 companies in the Liverpool City Region as a whole, where it is estimated that 8,700 people are employed.[2]

2.5 A central plank of the Government policy for green growth is the Green Investment Bank which is designed to accelerate private sector investment in the UK's transition to a green economy. The first priority sectors for the Bank, subject to approval by the European Commission, are:

- Offshore wind power generation
- Commercial and industrial waste processing and recycling
- Energy from waste generation
- Non-domestic energy efficiency
- Support for the Green Deal

2.6 The Green Investment Bank will build the necessary expertise in financial markets and green investments, with the aim of both achieving significant green impact and making financial returns. However, in reality, it will only impact in Wirral if businesses are in a position to put forward viable schemes and projects which are in need of finance.

2.7 The green sector will also be impacted by the Government's Green Deal, which will enable many households and businesses to improve the energy efficiency of their properties. The Green Deal is a new government initiative designed to help meet the upfront cost of making homes more energy efficient. Due to be launched in late 2012, the Green Deal will enable the installation of energy efficiency measures. Although customers will repay the cost over time, this is not a conventional personal loan as the charge is attached to the meter and paid back through the fuel bill.

2.8 It remains to be seen how this initiative will impact on the green economy. During the course of the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral, businesses recognised the launch of the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme in November 2011 as potentially a very significant step in changing the way that heat is generated and used. However, at the same time, there is considerable concern in the industry that the recently announced reduction in feed-in tariffs for solar panels will have a detrimental effect on the growth of that particular sub-sector.

[2] Low carbon Action Plan (2011-2015), The Mersey Partnership

2.9 The green vehicle sector is also expected to receive a boost after the government announced reforms to company tax designed to make it more attractive for firms to purchase low and zero carbon vehicles, and revealed it will extend enhanced capital allowance tax breaks to cover the purchase of zero-carbon goods vehicles.

2.10 Within the national framework, opportunities will emerge for Wirral. Wirral's Investment Strategy is a key document in setting the future priorities for the economy in the borough as part of the Council's enabling role. The Strategy has been developed following consultation with the Council's strategic partners, including Wirral Economic Development and Skills (WEDS) Partnership, the Investment Board and Invest Wirral Business Forum. In the context of green growth, it is positive that the prospects for the green sector are highlighted within the plan. Wirral's Investment Strategy 2011-2016, approved by Cabinet on 21st July 2011, aims to grow the economy of Wirral by identifying and attracting new investment and by also supporting the existing business base to grow and develop. In particular, two of the Key Policy Statements within the Strategy are:

"We will support the development of key sectors by facilitating investment into specific key projects, such as the infrastructure for Offshore Wind"

"We will attract and support the development of successful businesses, particularly those in key growth sectors".

2.11 The new Investment Strategy proposes an increased emphasis on developing a number of key growth sectors that will build on existing local specialisms and will offer the most growth potential. The growth sectors include:

- Research and Development
- Low Carbon
- Offshore Energy
- Biomedical
- Advanced technology and manufacturing

2.12 The Strategy stresses that the focus on these key growth sectors and high profile projects will be underpinned by a range of effective support services and enabling measures to attract new investment; to support businesses and to ensure that people have access to the right employment and skills services to benefit from these new opportunities.

Developing the Green Economy

2.13 The Scrutiny Review of Green Growth, compiled by The Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee following significant engagement with businesses, relevant partner organisations and officers examines barriers to growth that are experienced by businesses in Wirral's Green Economy.

2.14 The Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the existing services provided to companies in Wirral's Green Economy across all departments. The committee set out 19 recommendations, aimed to further enhance and develop Wirral Council's enabling support to the 'green economy'.

Formation of a Green Economy Officer Working Group

2.15 The overall strategic aim of supporting the Green Economy is to build on the current assets that exist in Wirral. The Council will play an enabling role, where possible, to support this investment and growth. Officers from a number of service areas have a part to play in that process. In order to support the development of the relevant growth sectors (namely, Offshore Energy and the Low carbon sector) a Green Economy Working Group should be formed to support that process.

2.16 The purpose of the Working Group is to ensure that the recommendations and existing initiatives are given the time, attention and resources required to bring about sustainable development.

2.17 The Officer Working Group will oversee the implementation of this Report's recommendations and the development of a long-term strategy for green growth in Wirral. Work will include monitoring and evaluating the implications of national policy changes, such as the Green Investment Bank and the Green Deal.

2.18 The working group will include officers from relevant departments, including Invest Wirral, Strategic Planning, Housing, Procurement, Marketing and Sustainability, as well as a small number of Members. The group will provide regular updates to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee). The first quarterly meeting of the Working Group will be arranged for May 2012.

Enterprise Zone

2.19 The Investment Strategy envisages that opportunities will develop naturally and Wirral should be able to use the Enterprise Zone and, in the longer term, the Wirral Waters development, to enhance the opportunities for the green sector. The announcement of the Enterprise Zone will enable financial incentives, in the form of business rate reductions and potential capital allowances, to be available to potential investors. It is clearly important that the Enterprise Zone is used to maximise the opportunities for inward investment. As a growing sector, green business should be able to benefit. It is therefore, recommended that further work is done to identify ways in which the Enterprise Zone might specifically benefit the green sector. In addition, JESSICA funding (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) is available to Merseyside and provides the region with a unique advantage. This scheme allows money to be made available on a repayable basis through loans.

2.20 An update on the potential of the Enterprise Zone to provide opportunities for the growth of Wirral's green economy should be produced for the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee). The Officer Working Group will coordinate this activity and ensure completion by September 2012.

Relationship with Peel Holdings

2.21 The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning Strategy will hold further discussions with Peel Holdings, to focus on feasible options for the advancement of Wirral's green economy as part of the Wirral Waters project.

Relationship with City Region Partners

2.22 Wirral has some key opportunities to develop its green sector and the Investment Strategy provides the tools to enable this, being supported where appropriate by national policy. The prospects for green growth in Wirral are clearly linked to those of Merseyside and, therefore, synergies with Wirral's regional neighbours should continue to be exploited.

2.23 The Mersey Partnership report 'Low Carbon Economy Action Plan – Delivering Economic Growth 2011-2015' examines, in detail, the opportunities for the low carbon economy. The report concludes that there is the potential for the creation of 12,000 jobs in the low carbon economy over those five years. Although the economic conditions continue to be difficult, opportunities do exist in sub sectors as varied as offshore wind, micro-generation, biomass and energy from waste, smart grid technology, retro-fitting of energy efficiency and low emission vehicles.

2.24 Therefore, The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning will hold discussions with officers working on inward investment at a City Region level to explore opportunities for attracting businesses that specialise in green products and services to Wirral. This activity should feed in to the activities of the Officer Working Group and an update will be provided to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee by October 2012.

Improving existing support to businesses in the Green Economy

Cross-Departmental Working:

2.25 All businesses, including those in the green sector, access a range of services provided by the Council, including those provided by Invest Wirral, Inward Investment, Marketing and Planning Departments.

2.26 In order to ensure that Wirral is best placed to handle and take advantage of inward investment opportunities that arise from the enterprise zone and international trade centre developments, it is required that close working relationships are further developed between officers in business facing departments including Invest Wirral, Inward Investment, Marketing and Planning Departments. This activity will be overseen by The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and implemented by the Officer Working Group.

2.27 The Officer Working Group will ensure that a cross-departmental approach is taken to all business planning applications, with Invest Wirral and other relevant teams being informed of planned developments in order to support growth opportunities.

2.28 One of the Council's key corporate commitments is to make Wirral one of the most business friendly and supportive councils in the country; to build a place where local

employers succeed and businesses choose to invest. In order to achieve the Council's Corporate Plan objectives, Wirral is dedicated to providing a seamless contact point approach in order to support businesses with their planning needs.

2.29 The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning will therefore ensure that the council provides an efficient and effective service, ensuring that planning applications from investors are undertaken by a dedicated team, providing professional advice that draws on the services and expertise of all relevant business facing departments. As part of this cross-departmental approach to working, the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning will consider the benefits of Development Control being part of an integrated planning team and review opportunities for the co-location of relevant teams. A report will be provided to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee by January 2013.

Invest Wirral Business Forum

2.30 Invest Wirral, through the Invest Wirral Business Forum and sectoral cluster groups, engage with businesses on a daily basis, listening and responding to their needs as appropriate.

2.31 The Invest Wirral Business Forum – www.businesswirral.com – provides Wirral-based businesses with public sector tender alerts, online networking and member-to-member inter-trading opportunities, a company profile page, regular email updates on business support developments, access to local business news, events and business support resources.

2.32 Membership is growing month by month with a targeted figure by the end of March 2012 of 2,500 members achieved. The Invest Wirral Business Forum should be developed to allow for the creation of a standalone green (environmental) cluster group, which will provide members from all sectors with a number of online services including a directory of green product and service providers, provide a sense of identity for the sector and provide clear information and improved signposting to support services for businesses that engage in 'green' business activities.

2.33 To be completed by Invest Wirral within a 3 month timescale, with delegated powers afforded to the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning to oversee website development.

2.34 This online support will be supplemented by an Invest Wirral officer that will be dedicated exclusively to supporting and developing the Green Economy in Wirral. This activity will involve face-to-face business engagement, development of workshops and events, encouraging inter-trading and collaborations and acting as a conduit to other council services and departments. The officer will sit on the Officer Working Group and will have responsibility for coordinating its activities.

Funding Implications: £3,541

Engagement with Green Businesses at Overview and Scrutiny Meetings

2.35 The Panel Members met with a number of business leaders during the Scrutiny review. The views expressed during those meetings provided a good insight into the issues faced by those businesses currently operating in a relatively immature business sector. Enabling other members of the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to debate current issues with representatives of the business community could only enhance the understanding of Members and therefore strengthen the role of the Committee in supporting the development of Wirral's green economy in the future.

2.36 Therefore, during the forthcoming municipal year (2012/13), the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) is encouraged to invite a minimum of two leading Wirral companies in the green sector to meet the Committee to further explore the problems and opportunities currently faced by those companies. Suitable companies will be identified by Invest Wirral during the course of its day-to-day engagement with companies in the Green Economy.

Marketing and Awareness

Public Awareness Event

2.37 Lack of awareness and negative perceptions were reported to the scrutiny committee as barriers to the growth of Wirral's green economy. Wirral Council is keen to support the local green economy. Therefore, the Council will hold a large 'marketplace' style event in September 2012 aimed at raising awareness of the products and services provided by the local green economy. The event is an opportunity for Wirral Council to publicly display its commitment to supporting this sector.

2.38 The event will feature a marketplace of local green sector product and service providers with free exhibition space provided to Wirral based companies that provide 'green' goods and services. The event would be open to potential customers, including public sector procurement officials, businesses and members of the public. Invest Wirral will identify potential exhibitors through its existing networks and through targeted marketing in partnership with Corporate Marketing colleagues.

2.39 The event will have a number of distinct themes drawn from the findings and recommendations of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review:

- Skills and employment: working in partnership with JobCentre Plus, schools, colleges, universities and private training providers.
- Business-to-business exhibition: for local product and service providers
- Business-to-consumer showcase: for local product and service providers
- Supporting green growth: Showcase of business support service providers, including Invest Wirral and its partner organisations

2.40 This valuable insight event will feature a programme of insight seminars, 1-2-1 - meet the buyer sessions, networking opportunities with developers, suppliers, innovators and procurers of renewable energy solutions, offshore wind, biomass & waste technologies, nuclear energy, automotive and green transport solutions, eco-building technology, and green construction products.

2.41 This event will be delivered by Invest Wirral, following consultation with the Officer Working Group and businesses that are currently active in the sector. This activity will be overseen by the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning.

Funding implication: £20,000

Marketing 'hits' for the Green Sector

2.42 In order for Wirral to be recognised as a market leader in the green economy and build a reputation as a positive environment for green growth industries, the Marketing Department will be set a target to promote a minimum of 30 green issues per year through the Council's website and local media channels.

2.43 Special attention will be paid to promoting good news stories from local businesses in the green sector. This will require close working relationships between Invest Wirral, Inward Investment and Marketing. Marketing activities will be monitored through the Green Economy Officer Working Group and reported to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Creating a Green Market

2.44 As part of the ongoing energy efficiency measures to enable the borough to move closer to its target of reducing carbon emissions by 60% by 2025, Wirral Council is investing heavily in renewable energy in 2011-12, both on making the Council's own buildings more energy efficient and also by helping community and voluntary groups take their own steps to reduce emissions through the Energy Efficiency Grant.

2.45 Other organisations are also being encouraged to follow suit. To achieve this, grants are being used to help community groups, through the Energy Efficiency Grant, to introduce a range of different energy efficiency technologies, including building insulation, heating and lighting upgrades and IT energy efficiency improvements.

2.46 Likewise, and on a larger scale, it is anticipated that the Council's Home Insulation Programme will also continue to encourage local businesses in the low carbon sector.

Developing relationship with landlords

2.47 In general, housing providers, both social and private landlords, have the potential to generate a great opportunities for green businesses. It is, therefore, suggested that effort is made to further persuade the borough's landlords of the benefits of making buildings more energy efficient and of pursuing the green agenda.

2.48 Housing is a huge potential market for the green economy. The proposed Officer Working Group, given its cross-cutting remit, will be tasked to encourage a positive relationship between landlords, both social and private, and local green business.

2.49 Members of the Officer Working Group will engage with Social and Private Landlords to ensure that they are aware of the opportunities that exist to utilise green products and services. Invest Wirral will support these companies to access the 'opportunity' section of the Invest Wirral Business Forum, which is a simple, electronic method of

obtaining quotes from local companies. Further, Social and Private landlords will be targeted as potential participants of the Public Awareness Event.

Procurement Training

2.50 In partnership with Invest Wirral, Corporate Procurement have held supplier workshops on 'How to do Business with Wirral Council', with over 300 companies having received training to date. A guide, 'How to do Business with Wirral Council' is also published on the Council's website.

2.51 There is evidence that procurement procedures can appear too complicated, especially for small companies. The Green Growth Scrutiny Review acknowledged that this is of particular relevance to companies in the Green Economy, which is regarded as a 'fledgling sector with younger businesses being more prominent'. Therefore, Corporate Procurement and Invest Wirral will continue its programme of procurement training events, with targeted marketing to companies in 'green' business activities. Further, and where relevant, Invest Wirral will utilise the support services of SME Business Support Managers to deliver enhanced public sector procurement support services.

Promotion of the Council's Environmental Policies to potential suppliers

2.52 With regard to the environmental credentials of suppliers, all contractors, suppliers and service providers that bid for major or strategic contracts are required to detail their Environmental Management System and to specify what impact their business has on the environment. All are required to provide any information about failure to comply with any legislation or where they have been subject to fines for transgressing those regulations and failure to do so would mean withdrawal of any contract offer.

2.53 The Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral suggests that greater awareness of the Council's environmental policies among suppliers might help to positively influence the environmental considerations and activities of those suppliers.

2.54 The Scrutiny Report highlights the need to raise the profile of green issues and to outline the Council's commitment to supporting the Green Economy and meeting its carbon reductions commitments. To address this, Corporate Procurement will ensure that all potential suppliers are made aware of environmental and sustainable procurement policies. Corporate Procurement will update the Officer Working Group on timescales for implementing this.

Education and Training

Lobbying for changes to the Funding Regime for Training

2.55 The Liverpool City Region Employment & Skills Board is currently engaged in ongoing negotiations with Government (Cabinet Office and the Department of Business Innovation and Skills) over devolution of employment and skills policy making and funding from Central Government. The Employment and Skills Board has provided a series of 'Asks' that have been developed in partnership with all 6 Local Authorities, principle Government agencies/funders and the City Region's Colleges and training providers.

2.56 As part of the newly designed national skills system an 'innovation code' will be introduced. This 'code' will enable colleges and providers to draw down funding for programmes that meet a particular employer skills need whilst they are simultaneously developed for the Qualifications & Credit Framework (the framework of approved programmes of learning that qualify for government funding).

2.57 One of the Liverpool City Region 'asks' of government therefore is to free up providers from the ridged funding constraints, such as those highlighted in the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth, by piloting of these new 'innovation codes' for identified growth areas where barriers in the skills system can be evidenced. This will enable providers to react much quicker to businesses while awaiting the formal qualification approval processes.

2.58 Alongside these localised negotiations with Government, the Department of Business Innovation and Skills will launch a national consultation this year to seek views on how businesses can be more engaged in qualification design, development and assessment. The Officer Working Group will therefore ensure that key messages on the required changes to the funding regime for training to support local green sector growth are fed into the Liverpool City Region negotiations and the national consultation.

Creation of a fund to encourage access to existing training opportunities

2.59 In order to unlock real barriers to workforce skills in the green sector, it is proposed that £200,000 is set aside as a Wirral Green Skills Growth Fund.

2.60 The scrutiny review of green growth in Wirral identified the cost of green industry specific courses as a prohibitive factor in the take-up of green skills training. As an example, the advertised cost of short 4-5 day courses offered by the new National Skills Academy for Environmental Technology Centre ranges from £475 to £575 per person. The scrutiny review identified a need to stimulate the green skills training market to support up-skilling of the workforce to meet the growth potential of this sector and also the opening up of opportunities to the unemployed. Taking average costs as per examples highlighted in Section 2.60 this fund would support 250+ positions to access relevant training, also recognising that within this parameter specialist training may also be identified. As two distinct target groups, it is proposed that this new fund is administered via separate mechanisms until 31st March 2013, as follows:

- **Business Grant**: to support up-skilling of the existing workforce to meet the potential for business growth in the green sector.

2.61 Invest Wirral has established clear processes and procedures for the delivery of business grants through their investment support services framework which follow the Councils standards for due diligence procedure and include robust health checks and viable project plans prior to allocation. It is therefore proposed that a Green Skills Business Grant for workforce training is offered through Invest Wirral as part of its investment grants package. This could include a company choosing to locate in Wirral for the first time, or an established business in Wirral with workforce skills requirements that will unlock potential for growth in green sector activities.

2.62 Delegated powers should be provided to the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning for authorisation of grant applications.

Fund Allocation: £175,000

- **Individual Grant**: To support unemployed individuals to access employment opportunities in the green sector.

2.63 Wirral Council currently contracts with the Reach Out Partnership to deliver an employment programme to support workless residents into jobs. This service includes a discretionary fund to support unemployed participants on the programme to overcome barriers to employment including funding participant costs for short focussed pre-recruitment training linked to specific employer vacancies. As part of a complementary budget policy option for the economy, Members have requested the Director of Regeneration & Housing bring forward a report detailing how this contract will be re-tendered to ensure no gap in delivery. It is therefore proposed that the worklessness programme incorporates promotion of the green skills economy as a growth employment market supported by a prioritised proportion of the discretionary fund reserved for Green Skills short course training costs. The discretionary fund supports participants to overcome barriers to employment including, participant costs for short focussed pre-recruitment training linked to specific employer vacancies and clothes for interview/work etc. Based on costings from the previous Worklessness Support Programme, a budget of £25,000 would support a minimum of 70 unemployed people to access green business employment opportunities.

Fund Allocation: £25,000

Both grants will only support training costs that cannot be met through any other source of funding.

Wirral Apprentice Scheme

2.64 The Wirral Apprentice programme was launched in 2009 as part of a suite of interventions which formed Wirral's Economic Recovery Plan. The initial rounds offered 18 month subsidies in return for 2 year contracts of employment, supporting 167 apprenticeship opportunities across Wirral. Further funds were secured from the Liverpool City Region European Social Fund Pathfinder Enabling Programme in 2010 to supplement further Council investment. The current programme runs from April 2011 to August 2012, offering 12 month subsidies in return for 2 year contracts of employment, supporting a further 146 apprenticeship opportunities across Wirral.

2.65 Given the successful implementation of the Apprenticeship Programme thus far, and the considerable continuing interest shown from businesses it is proposed that the Council continues to invest in a wage subsidy model for the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme. Full details of the proposed new programme are detailed in the Tackling Worklessness and Supporting Apprentices in Wirral report which appears elsewhere on this meeting agenda.

2.66 In order to increase employment and skills opportunities in the green sector, it is proposed that £235,000 is set aside to ensure that a minimum of 24 apprenticeship

opportunities are ring-fenced for green growth businesses within the next round of the Wirral Apprentice Programme.

Total Budget Allocation: £235,000

Database of Green Skills Training Providers

2.67 The scrutiny review of green growth in Wirral highlighted a lack of clarity regarding the availability of relevant training providers and courses in the region; this was particular expressed in feedback and discussions with local businesses. In order to address this, the development of a database of all green skills training providers available through Invest Wirral, Council websites, colleges and schools is recommended in the scrutiny report. Business and learner access to searchable training databases is currently publicly available via the Business Link and Next Step websites, however initial research has highlighted some limitations to its application.

2.68 It is therefore proposed that the Green Growth Officer Working Group undertake further detailed research, into existing services and exploring the feasibility of a Council operated database which builds in clear, locally relevant signposting course information but makes best use of existing services. Development and implementation will be directed by the Officer Working Group and progress returned to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Green Accreditation Scheme for Wirral

2.69 The Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral recommended that in order to further build customer confidence in the green sector, traders who have the appropriate skill levels should be eligible to join a green accreditation scheme, similar to The Wirral Trader, operated by Wirral Trading Standards.

2.70 Delivery of a Green Accreditation Scheme would require staff to establish, administer and monitor the programme with proactive day-to-day engagement with 'green businesses' to promote the initiative. Benchmarking with The Wirral Trader, the closest current equivalent, shows that three officers would be required to deliver this programme with significant ongoing revenue costs.

2.71 Further, the imminent introduction of the 'Green Deal Quality Mark', a national, government initiated accreditation scheme for product and service providers that wish to participate in the Green Deal may negate the need for a local accreditation scheme. The Green Deal Quality Mark will ensure the right measures for each property are installed to the highest standards and consumer protection is given prime importance. The 'Green Deal Quality Mark' will help consumers identify reputable businesses even if the work is not being paid for by Green Deal finance. Invest Wirral will ensure that product and service providers in the Green Economy are aware of, and able to access, the Green Deal Quality Mark and other relevant accreditation schemes.

2.72 It is therefore proposed that the Green Growth Officer Working Group undertake further detailed research, exploring the feasibility of a Council backed green accreditation scheme. Development and implementation will be directed by the

Officer Working Group and progress returned to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Planning, Land Availability and Council Properties

Opportunities for Section 106 Agreements (or Community Infrastructure Levies)

2.73 Wirral Council is committed to the use of Section 106 Obligations in the planning process, and in future will ensure a focus on training or green initiatives where appropriate. Current initiatives being developed include a business focused development management approach and the introduction of a Developers Guide. Further work is also being done on the potential for introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy, and further information and options will be brought back to Cabinet. Additionally, a report on best practice and potential uses will be brought to a future Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Creating a green growth cluster in Wirral

2.74 The Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral presents the opportunity for development of a green growth cluster and debates the advantages and disadvantages of using Council owned land for the development of a green business park.

2.75 Alternatives suggested by the review include supporting the development of clusters through green supply chains. The Green Growth Officer Working Group will be tasked to compile a report to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) that explores the rationale for creating a green growth cluster of businesses either in a geographical location (a Green Business Park) or by association in various locations across Wirral. This will form part of the long-term strategy for green growth in Wirral.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The corporate risk register will be revised in line with the draft Corporate Plan to ensure that any risks to delivering the Council's Green Growth goals are understood and mitigating actions put in place as appropriate.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Not investing in The Green Economy, which has been identified by Wirral, the city region and national Government as a key economic area on which to focus in order to create jobs and stimulate investment. This could mean a missed opportunity to implement a key component of Wirral's Investment Strategy, which proposes an increased emphasis on developing a number of key growth sectors, including Offshore Energy and the Low Carbon sectors.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 This report follows The Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral, a report produced by The Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Panel employed a number of methods to gather evidence:

- Visits to local businesses already operating in the green sector
- A questionnaire, completed by 12 Wirral-based businesses
- Meetings with officers from Invest Wirral, Strategic Planning, Destination Marketing, Asset Management and Corporate Procurement
- Meetings with Wirral Metropolitan College

5.2 Invest Wirral, through the Wirral Business Forum and the sectoral cluster groups, engage with businesses on a regular basis, listening and responding to their needs as appropriate. Ongoing business and partner organisation engagement will be carried out by the Invest Wirral's dedicated Green Economy Support Officer.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 Voluntary, Community and Faith Groups that engage in trading activities, and whose goods and services fall within the remit of the 'green economy', will be able to access the support services outlined in this report.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 On 1st March 2012 Council approved a budget of £500,000 for 2012/13 to support the expansion of Wirral's Green Economy which it is proposed to allocate as follows:-

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Summary of recommendations	**£**
Development of Invest Wirral Business Forum	3,541
Public Awareness Event	20,000
Wirral Green Skills Growth Fund – Business	175,000
Wirral Green Skills Growth Fund – Individual	25,000
Wirral Apprentice Scheme – Green allocation	235,000
Salary cost	41,459
TOTAL	500,000

7.2 Implementing the recommendations set out in the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral will have significant resource implications for Invest Wirral. It is proposed that temporary cover will be recruited through Wirral Council's Matrix contract for 1 year only. The cost of this temporary cover will be £34,549 at top of band and on costs.

Funding implication: £41,459 including on cost

7.3 Extended spend of policy option budgets are requested until August 2013 for the delivery of Green Apprenticeships and the individual element of the Wirral Green Skills Growth Fund. This will be to accommodate the length of apprenticeships and also to ensure there is a suitable contract length for external providers in the worklessness delivery programme. Full details of request are provided in 'Tackling Worklessness And Supporting Apprentices In Wirral' elsewhere on agenda.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None as a direct result of this report

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached –

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010-0

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Implementing the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral will support the local uptake of green skills and qualifications, enable green innovation, investment and collaboration by local businesses. It is anticipated that the support interventions outlined in this report will enable significant carbon reduction among the borough's businesses.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None as a direct result of this report

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That Cabinet agrees that officers should develop and implement a coordinated and robust business support service for businesses in Wirral's green economy in order to enable job creation, enterprise development and investment in the borough, as set out in this report:

- The formation of a Green Economy Officer Working Group to support the development of Wirral's Green Economy and the implementation of this reports recommendations.

- That updates are provided to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) on the potential of Enterprise Zone to provide development opportunities in green sectors.

- That the Invest Wirral Business Forum is developed to allow for the creation of a standalone green (environmental) cluster group, which will provide members from all sectors with a number of online services including a directory of green product and service providers, provide a sense of identity for the sector and provide clear information and improved signposting to support services for businesses that engage in 'green' business activities.

- That during the forthcoming municipal year (2012/13), the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) is encouraged to invite a minimum of two leading Wirral companies in the green sector to meet the Committee to further explore the problems and opportunities currently faced by those companies.

- That an awareness raising event takes place in September 2012 aimed at raising awareness of the products and services provided by the local green economy. The event is an opportunity for Wirral Council to publicly display its commitment to supporting this sector.

- That Corporate Procurement ensures that all potential suppliers are made aware of environmental and sustainable procurement policies.

- The Creation of Wirral Green Skills Growth Fund to unlock barriers to workforce skills in the green sector until 31st March 2013.

- Ensure that a minimum of 24 apprenticeship opportunities are ring-fenced for green growth businesses within the next round of the Wirral Apprentice Programme.

- That the Green Growth Officer Working Group undertake further detailed research, into existing training services and explores the feasibility of a Council operated database of green skills.

- That the Green Growth Officer Working Group undertakes further detailed research, exploring the feasibility of a Council backed green accreditation scheme.

- That the Green Growth Officer Working Group be tasked to compile a report to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) that explores the rationale for creating a green growth cluster of businesses either in a geographical location (a Green Business Park) or by association in various locations across Wirral.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The Green Economy has been identified by Wirral, the wider city region and national Government as a key economic area on which to focus in order to create jobs and stimulate investment. Wirral's Investment Strategy proposes an increased emphasis on developing a number of key growth sectors that will build on existing local specialisms and will offer the most growth potential. Two of the proposed growth sectors are Offshore Energy and the Low Carbon sector.

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APPENDICES

Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral – Council website

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Wirral Investment Strategy 2011-2016 – Council website

'Low Carbon Economy Action Plan – Delivering Economic Growth 2011-2015' The Mersey Partnership

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	**8th March 2012**
Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee	**6th June 2011**

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**KEVIN ADDERLEY, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	
KEY DECISION?	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report outlines the main headlines of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Communities and Local Government Department on March 27th Policy Framework. The NPPF comes into effect immediately and replaces the previous suite of existing national Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Minerals Planning Statements.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the report be noted

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 To brief Cabinet on the finalised National Planning Policy Framework

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Following consultation in Summer 2011 (Cabinet 22nd September 2011 Minute 124 refers), the Coalition Government has now issued the finalised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which came into effect on the day of publication (27th March 2012). A copy of the new NPPF can be viewed at http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf

4.2 The NPPF replaces all the previous Planning Policy Guidance Notes/Planning Policy Statements and Minerals Planning Guidance Notes and some circulars/advice letters to Chief Planning Officers listed in Annex 3 to the NPPF.

4.3 Separate Technical Guidance has also been issued on flooding and minerals, which can be viewed at http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115548.pdf.

4.4 The NPPF sets out the new simplified national policy under the following headings:

Achieving sustainable development
1. Building a strong, competitive economy
2. Ensuring the vitality of town centres
3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy
4. Promoting sustainable transport

5. Supporting high quality communications infrastructure
6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
7. Requiring good design
8. Promoting healthy communities
9. Protecting Green Belt land
10. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

A list of the main changes from the draft NPPF, as identified by the Government in their Impact Assessment, are set out in Appendix 1.

4.5 The **presumption in favour of sustainable development** remains as a "golden thread" running through both plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph 14). Sustainable development is now set in the context of the guiding principles in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy and recognition that sustainable development includes economic, social and environmental dimensions (paragraph 7). There is however, still no concise definition of sustainable development in the document, although pursuing sustainable development is taken to seeking environmental and quality of life improvements, including making it easier to create jobs, achieve net gains for biodiversity, secure better design, improving living conditions and choice of homes (paragraph 9). For plan-making, this is taken to mean that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted

This will also apply to Neighbourhood Plans (paragraph 16).

4.6 These exceptions also apply in the case of **decision-taking** when the Development Plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. Development proposals which accord with the Development Plan should be approved without delay. However, relevant policies - such as those protecting the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and other areas - cannot be overridden by the presumption in favour (paragraph 14). The reference in the consultation draft to the default answer to development proposals always being "Yes" has been removed.

4.7 Within the Core Planning Principles and Natural Environment sections, clarification is given on 'encouraging' the reuse of **previously developed land** (provided that it is not of high environmental value), although there is no reference to the previously expressed priority to develop brownfield land before green field sites. An objective of 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it' is included (paragraph 17) but this is not repeated within the section on policy and is therefore not one of the operational tests to determine if development is sustainable.

4.8 The NPPF retains the objective that the planning system should do all it can to support sustainable **economic growth** (paragraph 19) and plan proactively to meet

the development needs of business and support and economy fit for the 21st Century (paragraph 20). However, it also indicates that planning policies should avoid the long-term protection of sites allocated for employment uses where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose (paragraph 22).

4.9 The "**town centres first**" approach is retained in the NPPF, along with the requirement to apply the sequential test for site selection in both plan-making and decision-taking and to assess the impact of out of centre proposals not in line with an up-to-date Local Plan. Offices and indoor bowling centres have been added to the list of main town centre uses subject to these controls, in Annex 1 to the NPPF. The main significant change is that impact assessments can only be required if the proposal is greater than 2,500 sqm floorspace unless there is a proportionately locally set threshold in the Local Plan (paragraph 26). The previous policy in PPS4 also allowed for assessments for out-of-centre applications below 2,500 sqm, even when there was no local threshold, where the scheme was likely to have a significant impact on other centres. In advance of the inclusion of a threshold within the Core Strategy there will therefore be little or scope to require impact assessments for retail and leisure applications outside existing centres. In Annex 2 of the NPPF a town centre is defined simply by its inclusion on a Local Plan Proposals Map, including primary and secondary shopping areas. The draft NPPF and previous guidance defined town, district and local centres by the nature of the activity they accommodated and then encouraged their definition on the Proposals Map. One potential interpretation of this change is that centre boundaries will have to be identified on a Proposals Map in order for the "town centre first" approach to apply and that any simpler notation such as a symbol on a Core Strategy Proposals Map may not be a sufficient basis for future decisions.

4.10 In line with previous advice, local planning authorities are encouraged to support a pattern of development that facilitates the use of **sustainable transport** modes "where reasonable to do so" (paragraph 30) but there is still no reference to integration with Local Transport Plans. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are "severe" (paragraph 32).

4.11 In relation to **housing**, the requirement to maintain a 5-year housing land supply is less onerous compared with the draft. There is now a requirement to maintain 5 years supply plus an additional 5% brought forward from later in the plan period to allow for choice and competition. The additional 20% requirement would only apply where there is a persistent record of under-delivery (paragraph 47). A "persistent record" has not however been defined and it not stated how or by whom this will be decided. The final NPPF now clarifies that Local planning authorities may make an allowance for windfall sites (excluding residential gardens) in their five year supply, if they have compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and continue to provide a reliable source of supply (paragraph 48). The previous test in PPS3 that schemes that met a shortfall in the 5 year supply should be 'considered favourably' has not been carried forward into the NPPF. Aside from their exclusion from windfall considerations, paragraph 53 advises that local planning authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of **residential gardens**, for example where development would cause harm to the local area.

4.12 As in the draft, it will be for local planning authorities to set local policies on residential densities, affordable housing and brownfield targets. A housing implementation strategy will need to be prepared alongside the Local Plan, with housing trajectories for both market and affordable housing, to be prepared and updated annually. There is a continuing requirement for **viability assessment** to underpin planning policies with an emphasis on ensuring that delivery is maintained even in difficult economic circumstances. Under the **Duty to Cooperate** there may be a need to meet shortfalls in housing requirements from neighbouring authorities. Local authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively co-operated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination, but there is no policy on how this should be implemented, for example, if agreement is not possible.

4.13 Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the **quality of the development that will be expected** for the area, based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics (paragraph 58), although design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription and detail (paragraph 59).

4.14 The NPPF recognises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities (paragraph 69). Planning policies and decisions should guard against the loss of **valued facilities and services** and ensure that established shops facilities and services are able to develop and modernize in a way that is sustainable and retained for the benefit of the community (paragraph 70).

4.15 In relation to the **Green Belt**, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt (paragraph 81). Green belt boundaries should be established in the Local Plan and should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of the Local Plan (paragraph 83). When considering planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that “substantial weight” is given to any harm to the Green Belt (paragraph 88).

4.16 Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to **climate change**, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations (paragraph 94).

4.17 The NPPF indicates that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the **natural and rural environment** (paragraph 109). Policy on development affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest, absent in the consultation draft, has now been included in the final version (paragraph 118). References to Local Nature Partnerships have been added throughout the document. In relation to **built heritage**, the provisions of PPS 5 appear to have been largely retained in the finalised NPPF.

4.18 Considerable interest has focused on the **transitional provisions**, which are set out in Annex 1 to the NPPF. In brief, they indicate that the policies in the NPPF will apply from the date of publication (paragraph 208); that existing Local Plan policies should not be considered “out-of-date simply because” they were adopted before the NPPF was published (paragraph 211); and that for twelve months from publication, decision makers “may” give weight to policies adopted since 2004, even if there is limited conflict with the NPPF (paragraph 214). In other cases and following the

twelve month period, the weight to be given to any existing plan is dependent on their consistency with the NPPF (paragraph 215). Emerging plans can be given weight according to their consistency with the NPPF, the stage of preparation and the existence of any unresolved objections (paragraph 216).

4.19 The sections on plan-making and decision-taking are largely unchanged from the consultation draft.

4.20 Ultimately the impact of the NPPF will be established through appeal decisions, case law and Development Plan examinations. Use of words like 'encourage', for example, in the context of reusing brownfield land, provide scope for a range of interpretations, along with other potential ambiguities, such as the possible differences in meaning between "significant weight" "substantial weight" and "great weight" (all used within the guidance) and the definition of town centre discussed earlier.

4.21 In terms of the **immediate impact on Wirral**, future planning decisions will need to be based on Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 (which has not been revoked by the NPPF), the Regional Spatial Strategy issued in September 2008 (until it is revoked by the Secretary of State) and the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (until the Council formally resolves to remove it), alongside the additional requirements of the NPPF, as set out above.

4.22 The Core Strategy for Wirral, which will form part of the Council's Local Plan and which will now need to reflect the requirements of the NPPF, will be reported to Cabinet for approval for publication and submission to public examination in July 2012.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 None identified – this report is for information

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None identified

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government undertook consultation on the draft National Planning Policy Framework in 2011 to which the Council responded.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no implications arising directly out of this report, although the finalised National Planning Policy Framework may have implications for voluntary, community and faith groups which are looking to pursue development proposals.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 There are no implications for the Council's finances, IT, staffing and assets arising directly out this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The National Planning Policy Framework has legal status as a formal statement of national planning policy, to which the Council must have regard when framing future planning policies and in taking decisions under the Town and Country Planning Acts. This will also apply to decisions taken by Planning Inspectors at appeal.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The draft National Planning Policy Framework was been subject to a national level Statutory Equality Duties Impact Test.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The promotion of carbon reduction is one of the key themes in National Planning Policy Framework.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 National Planning Policy Framework replaces the current suite of Planning Policy Statements, Minerals Policy Statements, older Planning Policy Guidance Notes and a number of Circulars and "Letters to Chief Planning Officers". The main planning implications are set out throughout the main body of this report.

The National Planning Policy Framework refers to the need for crime prevention under the heading of "design" (NPPF, page 33, paragraph 116) and "sustainable communities" (NPPF, page 35, paragraph 125); and planning for public safety under "Planning for Places" (NPPF, pages 42 to 45 and on pages 48 and 49).

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REFERENCE MATERIAL

The National Planning Policy Framework and accompanying documents can be viewed at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf

Appendices

Appendix 1: Changes listed in National Planning Policy Framework Impact assessment

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	22nd September 2011

Changes listed in National Planning Policy Framework Impact assessment

- Introduction of presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- Removal of small scale rural office development from 'town centre first' policy.

- For major town centre schemes where full impact will not be realised within 5 years, impacts should also be assessed for a period of up to 10 years.

- Removal of the maximum non-residential car parking standards for major developments

- Removal of national brownfield target for housing development.

- Require local planning authorities to allocate and update annually a 5 year supply of housing sites with at least 5% buffer (moved forward from later in plan period) and 20% buffer (moved forward from later in plan period) where a record of persistent under delivery.

- Removal of national minimum site size threshold for requiring affordable housing to be delivered.

- Increased flexibility for delivery of rural housing to reflect local needs.

- Increased protection for community facilities.

- Minor technical changes to the detail of Green Belt policy.

- Provide more flexibility regarding manner in which local planning authorities meet local requirements for decentralised energy supply.

- Encouragement for local planning authorities to map areas for commercial scale renewable and low carbon energy development opportunity, and then to apply these criteria to other applications.

- Requirement on local planning authorities to take strategic approach in Local Plans to creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

- Recognition of designation within Local Plans of locally designated sites of importance for wildlife, geodiversity or landscape character.

- Clarification of which wildlife sites should have same protection as European sites.

- Removal of requirement to set criteria and select sites for peat extraction.

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COMMITTEE REFERRAL

ECONOMY AND REGNERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2012

51. BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning submitted a report which set out proposals to expand Invest Wirral's services to compliment the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) and to expand current business support to pre-start businesses. The matter would be referred to Cabinet for consideration / approval.

The NEA scheme and Enterprise Clubs provided essential help to unemployed people in becoming self employed however, it did not include certain individuals and mentoring support was not provided past the early stages of trading. The current eligibility criterion excluded people who had not been claiming JSA for a minimum of 6 months. This could include individuals in the following circumstances:

- Out of work less than 6 months
- Part-time workers
- Individuals in temporary jobs
- Unemployed people not claiming JSA
- Individuals in full time employment with a potential business idea

Individuals with a robust business idea that fell into any of the above categories could not currently access business start support. Invest Wirral provided a range of business support services which currently included the Micro Business Support programme. This programme supported companies with less than 3 staff and/or a turnover less than £100,000. It was suggested that this programme could be expanded to include help for pre start businesses that were not eligible for NEA support. In such cases, Invest Wirral Micro Business Support Managers would work with individuals to develop a sustainable business plan and guide them through the stages of business start up.

Members, in expressing support for the proposal, commented that the best time to get people back into work was when they had been just been made redundant.

Resolved –

(1) That this Committee supports the expansion of the current Invest Wirral services, to include access to business support for pre start businesses that are not eligible for NEA.

(2) That the matter be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8TH MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	**BUSINESS SUPPORT**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**PLANNING AND REGENERATION STRATEGY**
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out proposals to expand Invest Wirral's services to compliment the New Enterprise Allowance and to expand current business support to pre-start businesses. The matter will be referred to Cabinet for consideration/approval.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Members should be aware that in October 2010 the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced that the Government will give extra help to unemployed people who want to start their own business, through the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA).

2.2 NEA is available to Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants aged 18 and over who have been claiming for 26-weeks or more.

2.3 Participants will have access to a volunteer business mentor who provides guidance and support as they develop their business plan and through the early months of trading. Once a claimant can demonstrate they have a viable business proposition with the potential for growth in the future, they may be able to access financial support. This consists of:

- a weekly allowance worth £1,274 over 26 weeks, paid at £65 a week for the first 13 weeks and £33 a week for a further 13 weeks, and
- the facility to access a loan of up to £1,000 to help with start-up costs, subject to status.

2.4 The total package of support could be worth up to £2,274 to each participant who starts their own business.

2.5 Non financial support includes:

- practical help and support to prepare for self-employment
- help and support in setting up the business

- support and guidance for the first six months of trading

2.6 In order to receive NEA support individuals must have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for at least six months and be assessed as having a good business idea.

2.7 Blue Orchid Management Consultants Ltd (Blue Orchid) has been selected to deliver two thirds of this programme across Merseyside and St Helens Chamber is delivering one third of the Merseyside contract. Both organisations went through a tender process to win the national tender from central Government. If a new business needs start-up capital, they may also be able to access a loan up to £1,000 to help with their start-up costs. The Contract for the delivery of the loans service in Merseyside has been awarded to East Lancashire Moneyline.

2.8 In January 2011, the Minister for Employment announced the launch of Enterprise Clubs to complement the NEA scheme. This is a UK wide initiative targeted at unemployed people interested in self-employment. It supports the development of a network of locally-led community-based clubs.

2.9 The main aim of Enterprise Clubs is to help people make the most of local knowledge and resources to help unemployed people in their communities set themselves up as self-employed or start their own business.

2.10 They exist to empower local communities and encourage people to work together to offer additional support to unemployed people who are interested in becoming self-employed. They also help local communities to become more prosperous by encouraging private sector growth.

2.11 Enterprise Clubs provide unemployed people interested in self-employment with a place to meet and exchange skills, make contacts, share experiences, receive support and encourage each other to work through their business ideas.

2.12 The NEA scheme and Enterprise Clubs provide essential help to unemployed people in becoming self employed however, it does not include certain individuals and mentoring support is not provided past the early stages of trading.

2.13 The current eligibility criterion excludes people who have not been claiming JSA for a minimum of 6 months. This could include individuals in the following circumstances:

- Out of work less than 6 months
- Part-time workers
- Individuals in temporary jobs
- Unemployed people not claiming JSA
- Individuals in full time employment with a potential business idea

2.14 Individuals with a robust business idea that fall into any of the above categories cannot currently access business start support.

2.15 Invest Wirral provides a range of business support services which currently includes the Micro Business Support programme. This programme supports companies with

less than 3 staff and/or a turnover less than £100,000. It is suggested that this programme can be expanded to include help for pre start businesses that are not eligible for NEA support.

2.16 In such cases, Invest Wirral Micro Business Support Managers will work with individuals to develop a sustainable business plan and guide them through the stages of business start up. Master classes and workshops will also be provided covering areas such as business and financial planning, marketing and sales, legal processes and taxation, etc. Micro Business Support Mangers are a self employed individuals who have been selected by Invest Wirral to provide dedicated business support services.

2.17 The structure to provide business start services is already in place and is complementary to the support being provided by Invest Wirral for micro businesses. The support will not include grant funding and will focus on advice and mentoring. Funding to provide the service is available using the current budget allocation to support micro businesses. Additional money may become available subject to a bid that is being developed for additional resource via ERDF, that will be reported to Cabinet for approval. The funding is expected to be in place from April 2012 until March 2014.

2.18 Individuals that are eligible and have participated in the NEA scheme will be able to access Invest Wirral services once the 26 weeks of NEA support is finished. Invest Wirral will work in partnership with Blue Orchid so that businesses with growth and development potential are referred to Invest Wirral to continue with support and guidance through each stage of business growth.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The risk is that people, who are not eligible for NEA will not have the confidence or the knowledge to turn their business idea into reality and potentially the business could fail, never start or not reach its full potential.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Alternatively the scope of the Micro Business Support Managers could remain the same and not include pre start businesses. However, a clear gap will remain for support for individuals not eligible for NEA.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Invest Wirral has consulted with Blue Orchid to establish the gap in support services and to agree future partnership working once NEA recipients have utilised the maximum 26 weeks of support.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are no implications for voluntary, community and faith groups.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The new services do not require additional resources to enable support to be provided to new start businesses.

7.2 Additional funding may become available subject to EFDF bid that will report to cabinet.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal implications

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

This report does not contain implications for equality; however, future activities will be covered with an equality assessment within the business strand of the Investment Strategy.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None as a direct result of this report

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no implications for planning and community safety

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That Scrutiny Committee approve the expansion of the current Invest Wirral services, to include access to business support for pre start businesses that are not eligible for NEA.

12.2 That the matter be referred to Cabinet for consideration

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Supporting Wirral's businesses is one of the key priorities of the Council's Investment Strategy which aims to deliver a strong, vibrant economy with high levels of investment and employment opportunities for the residents of Wirral. Providing an effective and co-ordinated advice and support service to Wirral's businesses is critical to ensuring that they are supported to develop and grow sustainably.

13.2 It is fundamental to Wirral's economy that individuals who have the drive and desire to set up their own businesses have the necessary advice and support they need to begin trading and become a success. Without an expansion of Invest Wirral services some individuals are excluded from accessing this support.

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APPENDICES

Not applicable

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Investment support services framework	23rd June 2011

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**TACKLING WORKLESSNESS AND SUPPORTING APPRENTICES IN WIRRAL**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**KEVIN ADDERLEY DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**(RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER) REGENERATION & PLANNING STRATEGY**
KEY DECISION?	**YES**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 As part of a complementary suite of budget policy options for the economy, Members have requested that the Director of Regeneration, Housing & Planning bring forward a report detailing how programmes will be developed and delivered to tackle worklessness and support apprentices.

1.2 This report sets out the proposed models for these programmes and seeks Members approval to commence delivery. This includes a combination of both externally contracted elements that require competitive tendering and elements to be delivered in house by the Council.

1.3 Appendix A of this report contains commercially sensitive information regarding a competitive tendering process, the disclosure of which is not considered to be appropriate. Accordingly, Appendix A is deemed to be exempt from disclosure under paragraph 3, Part 1 of schedule 12A of the local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 National Policy Context

2.1.1 Department for Work and Pensions

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has responsibility to develop Welfare to Work policy. Delivery of their services is provided via Jobcentre Plus and external providers selected from a preferred supplier framework:

- **Jobcentre Plus** (part of DWP) has responsibility for supporting people in finding work in the early stages of their benefit claim.

- **DWP Work Programme,** delivered locally by A4E and Ingeus Deloitte, is a mandatory programme that supports people who are long-term unemployed, or are at most risk of becoming so.

- **ESF Families with Multiple Problems Programme,** delivered locally by Reed in Partnership, is a voluntary programme to tackle worklessness by progressing families with complex and multiple problems, closer to employment.

2.1.2 Apprenticeships

National apprenticeship policy has been reshaped so that Level 3 becomes the level to which learners and employers aspire. Apprenticeships are now defined as: Intermediate Level Apprenticeships (Level 2); Advanced Level Apprenticeships (Level 3); and Higher Apprenticeships (Level 4).

2.1.3 As part of its Plan for Growth, the government announced measures in November 2011 to ensure more young people benefit from an apprenticeship and to make it easier for employers to take on apprentices. These include:

- 40,000 incentive payments of £1,500 for small companies taking on their first apprentice aged 16-24 which will be available from April 2012;
- streamlined processes for employers and a requirement that new opportunities must be advertised on the national Apprenticeship Vacancy Service website;
- renewed focus on younger adults, new employees, higher level qualifications, and specific sectors which deliver greatest impact;
- apprenticeship providers to offer training in English and Mathematics up to the standard of a good GCSE (intermediate) for all apprenticeships;

2.2 Background to Current Wirral Council Programmes

In November 2010 Cabinet approved proposals to secure European Social Fund (ESF) resource for activity to address worklessness and support apprenticeships. Wirral was subsequently awarded:

- £1,220,310 ESF to tackle worklessness, which combined with Wirral Council match funds provided a total allocation of £2,440,620
- £655,960 ESF to support apprentices, which combined with Wirral Council match funds provided a total allocation of £1,714,539

2.3 Tackling Worklessness (April 2011 to May 2012)

2.3.1 Worklessness Support Programme: The Reachout Partnership

Following a competitive tendering procedure the Council contracted with The Reachout Partnership to deliver the following outputs between 1st April 2011 and 31st May 2012:

- 1755 participants engaged on the programme
- 702 Job Outcomes of which 456 will be sustained at 26 weeks

2.3.2 Other Enabling Actions to Support Worklessness

This has delivered pre-recruitment training linked to employer vacancies; a Jobs Fair & Information Day for the Marine Point Development and an Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) Programme, which has part-funded 100 fixed term employment contracts with training with a local employer.

2.4 Supporting Apprentices (April 2011 to November 2012)

The Wirral Apprentice programme, launched in 2009, offered 18 month subsidies in return for 2 year contracts of employment and supported 167 apprenticeship opportunities across Wirral. The current programme runs from April 2011 to November 2012, offering 12 month subsidies in return for 2 year contracts of employment, supporting a further 146 apprenticeship opportunities across Wirral.

3. PROPOSED NEW PROGRAMMES

3.1 In order to continue Worklessness and Apprenticeship Programme activity the following programmes are proposed in Table 1.

Table 1: New Programme Activity

Programme	Activity	Numbers
Worklessness Support Programme	Exempt Appendix A	To Be Contracted
Wirral ILM	Subsidised Jobs	30
Pre-Recruitment Support	Recruitment Responses Redundancy Responses	100
Wirral Apprentice	Subsidised Apprentices	114

3.2 Worklessness Support Programme

In developing a programme to tackle worklessness consideration has been given to the proposed interaction with DWP services and identifying additional provision to meet local need. Members are requested to re-tender for delivery of the Worklessness Support Contract as outlined in Appendix A of this report.

3.3 The Wirral ILM

The Wirral ILM programme part funds a fixed term employment contract and training with a local employer. Delivery is still in its infancy, with only a small number of participants/employers reaching the end of the 6 months subsidised period. Members are requested to delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning, to continue the programme based upon evaluation of key success criteria from the first round of delivery. This will also include consideration of how new approaches to delivery can be maximised through the development of innovative and pioneering partnerships with DWP services.

3.4 Pre-recruitment Support

Flexibility to deliver prompt and responsive pre-recruitment support linked to local labour market need. Examples include pre-recruitment training linked to employer vacancies, jobs and information events and additionally a response to redundancy element. Prior to utilising this resource the Council will at all times explore the potential of other funding streams.

3.5 Supporting Apprentices

In order to refocus the programme to support local growth, maximise resources, and take account of national and local policy concerned with driving up advanced level apprenticeship participation, it is proposed that a differential level of wage subsidy support is adopted for the new programme. This can be achieved by varying the length of the subsidy period according to level of Apprenticeship framework as follows:

- Intermediate Level Apprenticeship (Level 2): 9 month wage subsidy; up to 35 hours per week; at least 18+ age related national minimum wage rate;
- Advanced Level (Level 3) & Higher Level Apprenticeship (Level 4): 12 month wage subsidy; up to 35 hours per week; at least 18+ age related national minimum wage rate.

3.5.1 It is proposed that delivery mechanisms, priority participants and target businesses will remain within the parameters of the original programme, with the exception of an

added ring-fenced allocation for green sector apprentices to support the Green Growth in Wirral report which appears elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda.

3.5.2 Officers will investigate ways in which the national age-related apprenticeship grant can be combined with the Council subsidy in a way that adds value to the programme. This will serve a dual purpose: raising the profile and take up of the national incentive in Wirral; and adding value to the proposed Council subsidy level.

4. CONTRACTING AND DELIVERY TIMESCALES

4.1 Advice from Legal and Corporate Procurement regarding the tendering of the worklessness support programme is outlined in Appendix A of this report.

4.2 In-house delivery of the Wirral ILM, Pre-recruitment Support and the Wirral Apprentice will commence with immediate effect, subject to Cabinet approval.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 The Council will manage the programmes through existing staff in Regeneration, Housing and Planning who have the expertise and proven track record in managing such programmes.

5.2 Tackling Worklessness

5.2.1 The Council will commence a procurement exercise to tender delivery of the worklessness support contract which will include a payment model to mitigate risk of underachievement as outlined in Appendix A.

5.2.2 Existing performance management systems will be continued:

- **Wirral Council/Contracted Supplier:** Systems developed for regular performance management/financial monitoring, reporting, audit and review
- **Wirral Council Internal Scrutiny:** Wirral Council internal processes to scrutinise performance/financial delivery. This includes an officer led group to examine performance; review by internal audit and reporting to Economic & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.3 Supporting Apprenticeships

Members will note the differentials in the wage subsidy as detailed in 3.5. Planning assumptions are laid out in Appendix A. Variations in accordance with business and participant take up will determine the final number of apprenticeship opportunities available within the allocated budget.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 Wirral's current Worklessness Support Programme commenced prior to the launch of the Work Programme and ESF Families provision. As such engagement of participants was extensively front loaded to ensure no overlap in provision (a requirement of ESF funding). However, the absence of ESF resource now allows the Council a greater degree of flexibility to determine the focus of activity.

6.2 In developing the new programme, Officers have taken an approach that considers the proposed interaction with DWP services. This was balanced against the reputational risk for the local authority to limit access to services for its residents, against the adoption of a fully universal service that would not seek to maximise

Council resource. Members are therefore asked to support the delivery model set out in Appendix A of this report, which proposes a range of support priorities to meet this balance.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The new programme is helping to deliver Wirral's Investment Strategy priorities. These priorities were reviewed through extensive consultation with Wirral residents and our external partners as part of the refresh of the Investment Strategy in 2011. The Council has reviewed our economic priorities with local residents through the Wirral's Future (2010) and Neighbourhood Planning (2011) consultations; and also through consultation with our strategic partners, including Wirral Economic Development & Skills (WEDS) Partnership; the Investment Board; and Wirral's Business Forum.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 Members will be aware that the partnership that delivers the Council's current worklessness support programme is a consortium made up of organisations from Wirral's voluntary, community and faith sector.

8.2 Whilst the tendering process for the new programme will continue to request a single contract, the tender will allow for consortia applications. This principle enables smaller organisations, including voluntary, community and faith groups to use their combined expertise to bid to deliver the contract. The tender specification will additionally ask potential contractors to set out how they will link with Wirral's voluntary, community and faith sector.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 Financial

The total proposed allocation to tackle worklessness and support apprentices is £2,260,000 made up of the following:

<u>Policy Option Single Year Resources</u>:	
Total allocation from Worklessness & Apprentices:	£1,500,000
Proportional allocation from Green Growth in Wirral	£260,000
<u>Annual Resources</u>:	
Base Budget for apprentices:	£500,000
TOTAL ALLOCATION:	**£2,260,000**

9.2 IT

As a requirement of the Council's previous ESF contract to tackle worklessness and support apprentices, the Council and its contracted suppliers were required to use a specific client handling/management information system. These licenses were purchased and funded centrally across the Liverpool City Region by Knowsley Council as accountable body for the ESF resource. The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning is going to formally write to Knowsley Council regarding the availability of ESF resource to continue with this support. If this is not available and to maintain the performance management arrangements, the licenses would have to met from within the policy option budget.

9.3 Staffing

All programme management costs relating to the worklessness and apprenticeship programme will be met from existing staff resource from Regeneration, Housing and Planning.

9.3.1 The Wirral ILM programme will continue to be delivered in-house by existing staff resource from Regeneration Housing and Planning.

9.3.2 The Wirral Apprentice Programme will continue to be project managed in-house by existing staff resource within Children and Young People. Members are asked to support the costs of the Band F Monitoring and Finance Officer (£26,899 including on costs) based in Children and Young People within the total £2,260,000 budget.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Transfer of Undertaking Regulations

The Transfer of Undertaking Regulations 2006 (TUPE) may apply in connection with any retendering of the worklessness programme. TUPE operates to transfer the contracts of employment of affected staff on the date of the transfer. Whether TUPE applies will depend on a number of factors which include whether the economic entity currently undertaking the contract retains its identity on transfer and the percentage of staff time assigned to the existing contract.

10.1.1 Regulation 13 of the 2006 Regulations requires the transferor organisation to supply certain information in connection with a transfer of an undertaking, or part of an undertaking or service provision change. Appropriate clauses need to be included in the tender documents and conditions of contract to ensure that the implications of TUPE are made clear to potential bidders. It is only when bids are received that the decision can be made whether TUPE will apply to the proposed contract.

10.2 State Aid

State Aid rules exist to prevent any form of aid to a commercial undertaking to distort, or threaten to distort, competition within the European Community. Activity such as The Wirral ILM and The Wirral Apprentice will ensure that businesses are asked to comply with the de minimis regulations, which allows a qualifying enterprise to receive up to 200,000 euros in aid over three fiscal years. Confirmation will be obtained by employers that any such support will not take their organisation over the State Aid de minimis limit.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?
(a) Yes and impact review is attached
http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/regeneration-housing-planning

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 This activity will support and link to the Green Growth in Wirral report by enabling workless Wirral residents to move into the green growth sector, through appropriate training and apprenticeship opportunities in Wirral.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no direct planning or community safety implications arising from this report.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Members are requested to:

14.1.1 Approve the delivery model for the worklessness support programme and authorise the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning to commence a competitive exercise to re-tender this contract as set out in Appendix A of this report.

14.1.2 Approve the delivery model of The Wirral ILM and Pre-recruitment Support element and authorise the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning to commence delivery as set out in para 3.3 and 3.4 of this report.

14.1.3 Approve the delivery model of The Wirral Apprentice programme and authorise the commencement of delivery as set out in para 3.5 of this report.

14.1.4 Approve the allocation of £1,500,000 from the Worklessness and Apprenticeship Policy Option; £260,000 from the Green Growth in Wirral Policy Option and £500,000 from the base budget for apprentices, as set out in Appendix A of this report, to meet the objectives of tackling worklessness and supporting apprentices.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 Reducing worklessness and increasing the number of apprentices is a fundamental element in the delivery of Wirral's Investment Strategy. As part of a complementary suite of budget policy options for the economy, Members have requested the Director of Regeneration & Housing bring forward a report detailing how:

- The Worklessness Support programme will be developed and re-tendered to ensure no gap in delivery;
- The Council will continue to invest in the Wirral Apprentice programme;
- To enable people, including the unemployed, to move into the green growth sector, through appropriate training and apprenticeship opportunities in Wirral.

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SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Extension of Wirral Apprentice Programme report to Wirral Council Cabinet	**14th October 2010**
Liverpool City Region European Funding Proposal report to Wirral Council Cabinet	**4th November 2010**
Tackling worklessness and supporting apprenticeships in Wirral through the European Social Fund report to Wirral Council Cabinet	**9th December 2010**
Tackling worklessness and supporting apprenticeships in Wirral through the European Social Fund report to Wirral Council Cabinet	**3rd February 2011**
Tackling worklessness through the European Social Fund: Wirral Intermediate Labour Market programme report to Wirral Council Cabinet	**14th April 2011**
Wirral Investment Strategy 2011-2015: report to Wirral Cabinet	**21st July 2011**
European Social Fund report to Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	**7th November 2011**
DWP Work Programme report to Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	**7th November 2011**
Tackling worklessness and supporting apprentices in Wirral through the European Social Fund report to Wirral Council Cabinet	**8th December 2011**
Wirral Support for the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy report to Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee	**21st March 2012**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	**MICRO SUPPORT SERVICES - UPDATE**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**PLANNING AND REGENERATION STRATEGY**
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Invest Wirral delivers a range of business support services that help businesses set up, grow and maintain competitiveness. A cabinet report in June 2011 set out proposals to expand these services further in order to respond to the needs of Wirral businesses and therefore to stimulate economic growth and create new jobs for the residents of Wirral. This report provides an update on how these services have developed and outlines some recommendations to ensure the new business support services provide the best possible value for money.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet agrees the changes to the Investment Support Services Framework based on the information set out the report.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 Supporting Wirral's businesses is one of the key priorities of the Council's Investment Strategy which aims to deliver a strong, vibrant economy with high levels of investment and employment opportunities for the residents of Wirral. Providing an effective and co-ordinated advice and support service to Wirral's businesses is critical to ensuring that they are supported to develop and grow sustainably.

3.1 The Investment Support Services Framework began implementation in September 2011. Since its inception the programme has developed trends in demand that were not anticipated in the initial planning stages. Through experience in delivering the new programmes Invest Wirral has indentified changes that will improve service delivery and provide better value for money.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Wirral's Investment Strategy recognises the importance of supporting businesses in order to deliver a strong and dynamic economy and provide employment opportunities for Wirral's residents. This includes encouraging the

start-up of new businesses as well as providing firms with the support necessary to enable them to grow and to remain competitive.

4.2 Cabinet on the 21st February 2011 (Min 327) confirmed funding to support investment growth and to continue business support services previously funded by Working Neighbourhoods Fund. Funding of £1.625m has been made available for the delivery of investment support services in 2011/12. It was agreed that in addition to the existing services available through Invest Wirral that further investment should take place to:

• Link business growth with the delivery of jobs for local people;

• Provide support targeted at micro businesses (3 or less staff and/or a turnover below £100,000) to encourage development and job creation;

• Develop a 'Business Angels' network to provide investment in fast growing enterprises.

4.3 This report specially looks at the service that supports the growth of SME's and Micro businesses.

4.4 **Support for Business Growth**

Business acumen within the private sector is the driving force of economic growth and job creation. Many businesses are preoccupied with the day to day running of their business and need intensive support to enable them to think strategically and take their business to the next level. Invest Wirral have procured a pool of skilled private sector individuals (SME Business Support Managers) who offer specialist support on key elements which promote business growth. The outcome of the support is to improve main business areas such as strategy and vision, people and processes, customers and sales and raising finance. These self-employed project managers are managed by Invest Wirral and employed on a task specific basis.

4.5 SME Business Support Managers are allocated business support projects with a specific timeframe and are paid £35 per hour.

4.6 This service has been very popular and has supported 100 businesses to date.

4.7 **Micro Business Support**

Invest Wirral have selected a team of Micro Business Support Managers to work specifically with micro-businesses (3 or less staff and/or a turnover less than £100,000) to support businesses in identifying barriers to growth and to support them to develop.

4.8 Micro Business Support Managers are currently paid £18 per hour and cover all business support areas affecting small local companies. The programme so far has supported 130 businesses.

4.9 The demand from Micro Businesses is high and the Micro Managers are providing intensive support that in many cases replaces the need to bring in a specialist SME business support manager which would have been more expensive.

4.10 We would like to propose a change to the original strategy which will spend the funding more efficiently while maintaining quality and helping more businesses.

4.11 At the moment Micro Managers support businesses with <3staff and/or turnover less than £100,000. We would like to increase this to <8 staff and/or turnover <£200,000. This will reduce the need for Specialist SME Business Support Managers in these size companies, thus reducing costs. The demand for Micro Managers would increase due to the larger range of businesses. Therefore Invest Wirral would seek additional Micro Business Support Managers to join the programme.

4.12 As we are trying to attract additional Micro Managers and asking the current managers to take on more, which would be a change the current terms and conditions, we would like to reduce the gap in payment between Micro and SME Managers; our suggestion is to increase the current micro rate of £18 per hour to £25 per hour and Keep SME Business Support Manager on £35 per hour.

4.13 Cabinet approved an additional six workshops to be added to Invest Wirral's workshop programme which specific focus on micro businesses. The workshops have been delivered in partnership with the private sector and provide in-depth knowledge transfer on businesses growth related themes. The workshops provide good value for money by sharing knowledge with a small group of businesses rather than a one to one session. Invest Wirral would like to increase the number of workshops to twelve per year so more businesses benefit from of this.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 A full risk analysis had been carried out by Wirral Officers and the business support framework has been designed to offer Wirral businesses the highest quality level of support. The councils risk manager has been asked to comment on the requirement of the businesses advisors to have specialist professional indemnity insurance for advice and guidance and this has been considered and will be covered by existing insurance policies.

5.2 If the proposed changes to the programme are not adopted the potential risk is that the services become oversubscribed during the next financial year and the best value for money is not achieved.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 Officers have carefully developed the investment support services framework taking into account past experience of dealing with business in Wirral and best practice from elsewhere. The services have been managed successfully and can continue to do so without change, however, this could lead to less

businesses supported and full budget commitment before the financial year end.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Invest Wirral, through the Wirral Business Forum and the sectoral cluster groups, engage with businesses on a regular basis, listening and responding to their needs as appropriate. The services have been running for six months under the management of Invest Wirral, demand experienced during this initial phase has provided a firm justification for the suggested improvements to the services detailed in this report.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no implications for voluntary, community and faith groups.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 Cabinet on the 21st February 2011 (Min 327) confirmed funding to support investment growth and to continue business support services previously funded by Working Neighbourhoods Fund. Within this budget, Cabinet approved an annual allocation of £300,000 of permanent financial support for delivery of SME Business Support and Micro Business Support as a key component of the Business Support Framework.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The development of the Investment Support Services Framework complies with the obligations arising under the Bribery Act 2010 which came into force on the 1st July 2011.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

11.2 This report does not contain implications for equality; however, future activities will be covered with an equality assessment within the business strand of the Investment Strategy.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None as a direct result of this report

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no implications for planning and community safety

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APPENDICES

Not applicable

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council Budget 2011-12 Report to Wirral Council Cabinet Business Support Services Report to Wirral Council Cabinet Investment support services framework	21st Feb 2011 14th April 2011 23rd June 2011

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT	**'ROOTS AND WINGS' CHILD POVERTY BUDGET OPTION**
WARD/S AFFECTED	**ALL**
REPORT OF	**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	**COUNCILLOR SHEILA CLARKE**
KEY DECISION:	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to work with partners to develop a Wirral Child Poverty Strategy as set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010.

1.2 The discussions of Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Working Group have informed the development of a draft 'Roots and Wings' strategy and action plan which was approved by Cabinet on 13th October 2011 as the basis for further consultation and engagement. Central to the discussions of the independent Working Group has been the need for all partners to work with each other to add value to existing provision and the need to utilise the positive assets of local communities in raising the aspirations of children and families. This report provides an update on the development of the action plan, and highlights some of the work that is already being taking forward within the scope of the draft 'Roots and Wings' strategy.

1.3 The Council's budget resolution of the 1st March set out a commitment to tackling intergenerational poverty in Wirral and agreed an investment of £400,000 to take forward the 'Roots and Wings' strategy. Council also agreed that the independent Working Group is best placed to determine and prioritise where this investment should be made to best effect in local communities. This report therefore provides initial views from the Working Group as to the allocation of the funding.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 On the 13th October 2011, Cabinet considered a report relating to the draft Wirral Child Poverty Strategy and action plan and:

- Authorised the Chief Executive to undertake further consultation on the draft strategy and prepare a final version for approval and adoption by the Council and partners;
- Authorised the Chief Executive (and any other officer nominated by him) to undertake any other steps and action incidental and conducive to finalising the strategy and progressing the action plan, including working with relevant partners and stakeholders as considered necessary and appropriate;
- Agreed that the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group should continue to meet to oversee the further development of the strategy.

2.2 Further consultation has been undertaken via the Local Strategic Partnership's Executive Board and the Children's Trust and will continue to be undertaken with a number of other key forums through attendance at partnership meetings. Mapping of partnership activity against the workstreams identified in the draft strategy continues to be undertaken by a core officer group working with departments and partner organisations. It is evident from this further consultation and ongoing mapping activity that the draft strategy has already provided a focus for partnership working and increased engagement, as well as informing key plans and strategies, including the Council's Corporate Plan and budget for 2012-13 and the draft Child and Young People's Plan. In addition to the £400,000 funding, which is the subject of this report, a further £100,000 has been allocated in the Council's 2012/2013 budget to support research and subsequent development of school readiness measures. The research element is being undertaken by the University of Cambridge and it is intended that the outcomes from the research will be of benefit nationally as well as supporting Wirral young people. It is proposed that the detailed allocation of this £100,000 be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.

2.3 The draft strategy has also initiated a number of projects led by the voluntary, community and faith sector, including the development of a child poverty training module which will be rolled out initially across the children's workforce.

2.4 The work to develop Wirral's strategy and action plan is linked to a wider approach being undertaken by the Liverpool City Region (LCR). Wirral is working with colleagues across the Liverpool City Region to deliver the actions identified in the recently launched Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy, with a focus on sharing learning and best practice across the sub-region. One of the key areas in which Wirral will be working with the City Region is on developing consistent performance management approaches to measure the impact of new approaches to tackling poverty.

2.5 The allocation of the budget option referred to in 1.3 above represents a further milestone in finalising the strategy and putting in an action plan for delivery in 2012-13. As indicated in 1.3, the Council's budget resolution of the 1st March set out a commitment to tackling intergenerational poverty in Wirral and agreed an investment of £400,000 to take forward the 'Roots and Wings' strategy. Council also agreed that the independent Working Group is best placed to determine and prioritise where this investment should be made to best effect in local communities.

2.5 The Working Group met on the 21st March 2012 with the principal objective of discussing the approach to determining the allocation of the £400,000 investment. The Working Group discussed a number of key principles in relation to allocating the funding:

- That the focus for the investment should be an innovative programme of activity which is focused on engaging communities and transforming services to reduce the impact of poverty now and for future generations;

- That the investment could be targeted at a specific geographical area, subject to further consideration by the Working Group;

- That the targeting of the investment is based on the latest available evidence;

- That a key factor in targeting the investment should be ensuring that we avoid duplication and/or add value to existing project activity and resources available;

- That a commissioning process is undertaken with regards to the funding based on a detailed proposal to be developed in conjunction with the Working Group which identifies the expected outcomes for the programme of activity;

- That any conflict of interest relating to the commissioning process is identified at the earliest possible opportunity.

2.6 The Working Group requested that the evidence base for developing the 'Roots and Wings' strategy is revisited and refreshed to enable it to make recommendations in accordance with the above principles. It is therefore proposed that:

- More detailed profiles of the areas with the highest levels of child poverty are developed using existing and new statistics and information, including relevant Neighbourhood Plan consultation findings and the report of the 'what works' project previously commissioned to evaluate the impact of local initiatives and programmes on families in poverty which will be finalised in April 2012;

- These profiles are considered by the Working Group alongside options for commissioning and delivering the programme of activity and that the Working Group makes recommendations to Cabinet with regard to the how the investment should be targeted and a preferred approach to delivering the programme;

- Previous work undertaken with regard to identifying best practice and the key drivers for tackling poverty is integrated as appropriate in the preferred approach;

- Commissioning is undertaken with due regard to procurement procedures further to Cabinet's consideration of the Working Group's recommendations;

- A clear protocol is put in place with regard to any conflict of interest related to the membership of the Working Group and the commissioning process to ensure transparency.

2.7 As mentioned above, discussions of the Working Group to date have placed an emphasis on the importance of innovation in tackling the complex issue of poverty and deprivation and on the need to build on existing community assets to provide sustainable transformation. It is therefore anticipated that the investment will include outcomes linked to the use of existing community facilities, making information and support available to communities at a local level and proactively involving the community in activities aimed at raising aspirations and addressing areas of need for example through developing social enterprise models.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The development of a risk register will be included as part of performance management and governance arrangements. Failure to develop and implement a child poverty strategy and action plan will expose the Council to risk of challenge for failing to discharge a statutory duty.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 A range of options will be considered as set out elsewhere in this report to ensure that the investment is addressing need and that it will add value to existing activity.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 A targeted approach to consultation and engagement with local partners, families and communities about child poverty issues can be evidenced in respect of the development of the draft 'Roots and Wings' strategy and the 'what works' evaluation project which will be finalised in April.

5.2 Ongoing consultation has taken place with key partnership forums and relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 The role of the voluntary, community and faith sector in tackling the complex problems faced by children and families living in poverty and in identifying those at risk is recognised through appropriate representation on the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group. In addition, the group is chaired by a representative from the voluntary, community and faith sector. The sector continues to be a key partner in developing and delivering Wirral's strategy and action plan.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The development activities described in this report are being progressed using existing staff resources from a number of departments.

7.2 Detailed resource implications will be set out in relation to the delivery of £400,000 budget option in a future report aligned to the preferred approach recommended by the Working Group.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The local authority has statutory duties in relation to the Child Poverty Act 2010, which will be progressed through the delivery of the activities set out in this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Child Poverty Strategy will have a clear focus on supporting those who are disadvantaged, including the delivery of specific services and through ensuring that

all of Wirral's diverse communities are equally able to access services. The final strategy and action plan will have a full equalities impact assessment attached. The profiles referred to in 2.6 will furthermore include available information about protected groups in specific areas where this is available.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report has no specific carbon reduction implications.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report has no specific planning and community safety implications.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Agrees the principles and approach set out in 2.5 and 2.6 of this report as the basis for the Working Group to determine and prioritise where the £400,000 investment identified in the Council's budget for 2012-13 should be made to best effect in local communities;

- Requests that the Working Group develops collaborative working strategies using their skills and attributes.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The Council's budget for 2012-13 agreed an investment of £400,000 to take forward the 'Roots and Wings' strategy. This report proposes an approach for identifying how this investment should be prioritised.

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SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
CABINET: CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN	**14th April 2011**
CABINET: CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT	**13th October 2011**
COUNCIL: COUNCIL BUDGET 2012/13	**1st March 2012**

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND COORDINATED SCHEME FOR 2013-2014**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR SHEILA CLARKE**
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report invites the Cabinet to determine the Authority's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools and the coordinated schemes for 2013-2014. This is a statutory requirement.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Authority is required to determine admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools. The New School Admissions (England) Regulations (2003) also require the Authority to have in place a coordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools in 2013-14. The proposed schemes are attached (Appendices 1 and 2), along with proposed admission numbers for community and controlled schools (Appendix 3). The Admissions Forum has considered the schemes.

2.2 A revised Draft School Admissions code was published on 2nd November 2011, subject to parliamentary scrutiny and Royal Assent of the Education Bill 2010-11, after which it will become the new School Admissions Code, impacting on admissions to schools from September 2013 onwards.

Consultation on changes to grammar test procedures

2.3 On the 8th December 2011 Cabinet approved a public consultation on the proposed admission arrangements and coordinated schemes for primary and secondary schools for 2013-2014, and that this consultation should include the proposal to amend the timing of the grammar school selection process as recommended by the Wirral Eleven Plus Working Group, in line with the draft School Admissions Code.

2.4 On 1st February 2012, the final version of the School Admissions Code (2012) was published by the Department for Education. In relation to the grammar test procedures, the final Code now says (paragraph 1.3.1) that the authority must "take all reasonable steps to inform parents of the outcome of the selection tests before the closing date for secondary applications on 31st October so as to allow parents time to make an informed choice of school – while making clear that this does not equate to a guarantee of a selective place".

2.5 In total, 83 responses to the consultation were received. All were in relation to the proposed changes to the grammar test procedures. The individual responses are available for members to read on request. The outcome of this consultation was as follows:

	Agree % (number)	Disagree % (number)
Total responses	83	
Results before preferences?	92% (76)	8% (7)
Test in early September?	52% (43)	58% (40)
		OF WHICH
Test in Summer Y5		7% (6)
Test in late September or October Y6		11% (9)
No alternative suggested		30% (25)
Delay implementation to 2014 entry	18% (15)	

2.6 The majority of respondents (92%) agreed that results should be provided to parents before the end of the preference period (31st October).

2.7 Division between those who were in favour of testing in early September as proposed by the Wirral Eleven Plus Working Group, and those who disagreed with this proposal, were almost exactly equally split. Of those who did not agree with early September for practice and real tests, the majority (30%) did not suggest any specific alternative arrangement in their response. Just 7% of respondents specifically stated a preference for testing in summer term of Year 5, which was one of the options considered by the Working Group. A further 11% suggested tests could be carried out later in the Autumn term, however this option is not feasible due to the time required for processing tests, holding the Independent Assessment Board and returning results to parents prior to 31st October.

2.8 Objections to testing in September of Year 6 fell into the following general categories

- Children would be younger when taking the test
- Too soon after the summer holidays
- Stress during summer break
- Disadvantage when compared with previous years

2.9 Regarding children's age at the time of the test, although the informal name "11 plus" is sometimes used for the selection tests, even under the current arrangements, three-quarters of those tested are not yet 11 years old. The Authority's tests are age-standardised, and this will continue under the new timing arrangements.

2.10 The potential impact of proximity to the summer holidays would be the same for all children. As all children taking the selection tests would do so at the same time, and test results are standardised within that years test group, there is no disadvantage compared with previous years. Some respondents felt that parents would be obliged to coach or tutor their children during the summer holiday. The Authority's tests are produced by GL Assessment, who advise 4 to 6 hours of preparation for the tests using the familiarisation pack provided by the Authority. Two practice tests are also provided to give children an opportunity to get used to the timings and test

environment. The tests have been designed to predict a pupil's potential performance at secondary school and so further preparation for the verbal reasoning test is not necessary. The familiarisation pack and practice tests will be retained under the new timings. Some parents choose to do additional preparation or tutoring with their children for the selection tests, but this is a choice, not a requirement and cannot be taken into account when revising the timing of the tests. One respondent said that children would have more time with the familiarisation pack under the proposed arrangements.

2.11 It should be noted that 18% of respondents felt that the introduction of the earlier test dates should be delayed for one academic year. This was principally due to concerns about a reduction in time to prepare for the tests for current Year 5 pupils. However, as in 2.10 above, there is no requirement for any additional preparation beyond the familiarisation pack and practice tests which are maintained under the proposed arrangements. The published Admission Code 2012 came into force from 1st February 2012, and requires the Authority to provide parents with their child's test results for the 2013 entry cohort, with no scope to delay the Code's introduction

2.12 Some respondents suggested complying with the Code by extending the preference deadline to November or December, however 31st October is a fixed national preference deadline date which cannot be amended locally.

2.13 St Anselms College and Upton Hall School (FCJ) have advised the Authority that they intend to bring their test date forward to 17th September for entry from 2013 onwards in order to comply with the Code.

2.14 18 of the 24 authorities outside London with grammar selective testing would not have been compliant with the 2012 Admissions Code requirement that parents must have test results prior to the preference deadline. A sweep of available data on proposed co-ordinated schemes for 2013-2014 indicates that 19 authorities will carry out testing during September, the remaining 5 will have completed their testing by 8th October. The earliest test dates were scheduled for 8th September.

2.15 Wirral's test procedures for the non-Catholic grammar schools currently include two practice tests, followed by two real tests. Many other admission authorities appear to carry out a single real test without practice tests. The 11 Plus Working Group discussed reducing the number of practice tests from two to one in order to allow the testing process to begin slightly later in September, but their consensus view was that retaining two practice tests gave the best opportunity for pupils to acclimatise to the venue and the style of the test, particularly those children who had not received extensive tuition.

2.16 As parents will be provided with the outcome of the grammar selection tests prior to the preference deadline, the 2013-2014 scheme indicates that the number of preferences on the common application form will be reduced from 5 to 3 accordingly.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 An option considered by the 11 Plus Working Group was for testing to take place in Summer term of Year 5. This was suggested by 7% of respondents to the consultation. Respondents in favour of this option said that it would avoid a drop in performance over the summer holiday, that late tests could then be held in September, it would follow on more immediately from the familiarisation pack

preparation, and that children were more used to being tested in the Summer term. The view of the working group was that this would not be a viable option.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation has taken place with all schools and other relevant admission authorities.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 None.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 On average 40% of the total Year 6 cohort are tested by the Authority for entry to non-Catholic grammar schools each year. With testing taking place in September, this could lead to approximately 1500 applications compressed into the final two weeks of the preference period which would increase pressure on staff in the Mainstream Admissions team.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The arrangements comply with all statutory guidance.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review will be published on the web site, hyperlink below.

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That Cabinet agree the proposed admission arrangements and coordinated schemes for 2013-2014.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 There is a statutory requirement to determine admission arrangements.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Scheme for the coordination of admission arrangements for maintained primary schools 2013-2014
Appendix 2 – Scheme for the coordination of admission arrangements for maintained secondary schools 2013-2014
Appendix 3 – Proposed admission numbers for Community and Controlled schools 2013-2014

REFERENCE MATERIAL

School Admissions Code 2012
School Appeals Code 2012

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	**8th December 2011**
Cabinet	**14th April 2011**
Cabinet	**18th March 2010**
Cabinet	**9th April 2009**

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APPENDIX 1

WIRRAL

Children and Young People's

Department

David Armstrong MA

Acting Director

SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE WIRRAL AREA

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2013-2014

This scheme fulfils the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under the School Admission (Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Wirral Council. It builds on the well established co-ordination of primary school admissions that have been a longstanding feature of local practice.

The scheme applied to arrangements whereby children are to be admitted to primary schools in the academic year 2012/13 and for subsequent years, subject to any review.

The co-ordinated scheme applies to all schools, excluding special schools, maintained by Wirral Council and to preferences expressed by Wirral resident parents and carers for schools maintained by other English local authorities, academies and free schools. Admissions to other schools with independent status are not be covered by this scheme.

1.0 Applications for school places for admission into Foundation 2 – the normal admission round

1.1 Wirral Authority will act as the co-ordinating authority for all applications. Offers will be made by Wirral Council, in its role as the home authority, on behalf of the admissions authority for the school allocated as follows:

Admissions Authority	Category of School
Wirral Council	All Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools
Governing body of school	All Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust and Academy schools
Maintaining Local Authority	Non-Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools

1.2 The admission arrangements for schools maintained by Wirral Council are published on the Council's website and in its information booklets, in line with the requirements set out in the School Admissions Code (2012). The Authority's information booklets will be available electronically on the Council's website from 1 September. Hard copies will be available in primary schools, or will be obtainable by request from the Local Authority at the start of the autumn term. Admissions arrangements are also available from each school on request.

1.3 All parents who live in the area administered by Wirral Council must apply for places in maintained primary schools either in Wirral or in the area of another local authority by completing the Wirral Parental Preference Form. Paper forms will be generated and distributed centrally by the Mainstream Admissions team of the Children & Young People's Department in September. On-line applications are made through the Council's website.

The form provides an opportunity for the parent to:

- apply for up to 3 schools
- rank the schools applied for in order of preference

1.4 Applications for all schools, including Foundation, Trust, Academy and Voluntary Aided schools must also be made on the common Primary School Application Form.

1.5 Applications for places sent direct by parents and carers to individual schools cannot be accepted and must be sent to the Local Authority for inclusion within these arrangements.

1.6 Parents must return forms to the Children and Young People's Department by 15th January to ensure the allocation of a school place on 16th April or next working day (the National Offer date from 2014-15 onwards). Applications received after the

published deadline of 15th January will be dealt with once the offer of places has been sent to parents on 16th April.

1.7 Parents can apply for school places only from the 1st September preceding admission to Foundation 2, that is, at the beginning of the academic year in which their child's 4th birthday falls. Children are normally admitted to school at the beginning of the academic year in which their 5th birthday falls.

1.8 **Deferred entry and part-time places**. Parents can request deferred entry or part-time attendance up until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term following their 5th birthday).

Child's age 5 birthdate between	**First term of compulsory education**
1st January and 31st March	Summer term (April)
1st April and 31st August	Autumn term (September)
1st September and 31st December	Spring term (January)

1.9 **Applications from separated parents.** We will accept only one application form per child. It is essential that agreement is reached by the parents of a child as to the preferences for school places. If agreement cannot be reached, or if neither parent has been granted a Specific Issues Order in this respect, then we will accept the application from the parent with whom the child is "ordinarily resident".

1.10 **Changes of address.** Parents and carers must inform the Authority immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form. The Authority will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed; e.g. A letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date; A signed rental agreement showing the start of the tenancy and its duration. In addition the Local Authority may request further information – for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application, including evidence of disposal of previous property. Information and supporting evidence must be received by 28th February. Proof of residency received after 15th January will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date.

2.0 Dealing with Applications

2.1 The Authority will, by applying the Council's admissions criteria, rank the order of priority of each application for community schools and voluntary controlled schools.

2.2 The Authority will provide Academy and Voluntary Aided Schools with details of those preference forms which include an application for their school by 31st January.

2.3 Preference ranking will not be shared with school admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2012 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.

2.4 The Governing Bodies of Academy and Voluntary Aided schools will rank each application by applying the school's admission criteria and notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their ranking by 24th February.

2.5 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the Authority will allocate the highest priority preference.

2.6 The Mainstream Admissions team will notify the Governing Bodies of Academy and Voluntary Aided primary schools of those pupils who will be allocated places at their school by 9th April.

2.7 In March we will inform neighbouring LA's of any pupils who are not resident in Wirral and to whom the Authority can offer places at Wirral schools.

3.0 Determination of applications for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools

3.1 **Allocation of places**. Applications for all Community schools and also for Bidston Village CE Primary School, Holy Trinity CE Primary School (Hoylake), Millfields CE Primary School and St Bridget's CE Primary School (West Kirby) will be determined on the following basis:

3.1.1 All children who have applied before 15th January will be eligible for a place so long as there is space within the school's admission number. If there are more applications than there are places available, then eligibility will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities:

- Children in care, and children who were in care but have been adopted or are subject to a residency order or special guardianship order ("previously in care")
- Then children who live in the school's catchment zone in the following priority order:

- Children who already have older brothers or sisters (including half or step siblings living in the same household) at the school when they are due to start school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school. We will also treat a brother or sister at a corresponding junior school as a sibling.
- Children who have recently experienced a traumatic family or domestic event or for whom there are clear medical grounds to support placement in a particular school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence.
- Children who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Authority's electronic Ordnance Survey address point based routing system.

3.1.2 If places remain available, eligibility for children do not live in the school's catchment area will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities.

- Children who already have older brothers or sisters (including half or step-brothers and sisters living in the same household) at the school when they are due to start school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school. We will also treat a brother or sister at a corresponding junior school as a sibling.
- Children who have recently experienced a traumatic family or domestic event or for whom there are clear medical grounds to support placement in a particular school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence.
- Pupils who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Authority's electronic Ordnance Survey address point based routing system.

3.1.3 If places remain available at the school after all "on time" applicants have been allocated, places will then be allocated to late applications received after 15th January in date order of receipt up to the school's admission number. See paragraph 5.0 below.

3.2 Christ Church CE Primary School in Birkenhead shares part of its catchment zone with two other schools - Woodchurch Road Primary School and Woodlands Primary School. We give priority as detailed above in 3.1.1- 3.1.3.

3.3 **Aided schools and Academies**. Applications for Academy schools and the Catholic and Church of England voluntary aided schools will be determined by the governing bodies of these schools in accordance with their published admission criteria.

3.4 **Mandatory Allocation**. Where it is not possible to allocate a place at any of the schools applied for, children resident in Wirral will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate Wirral school where there are places available. "Appropriate " means community school if the parents' preferences indicate preferences for non-denominational education; or a Catholic school or C of E school if the parents indicated a preference for education in a school of that denomination. The nearest school will be measured on shortest walking distance using the Authority's electronic Ordnance Survey address point based routing system.

3.5 **Special Needs**. All schools will be required to admit a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school.

4.0 Offer of Places

4.1 Parents resident in Wirral will be informed by the Director of Children's Services of the school allocated in writing by second class post on 16th April or next working day. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal.

4.2 Where online applications have been received, the parent or carer making the online application can log on to their online account on the published date to view the school place offered and can also request to receive their offer by e-mail.

4.3 If places become available before the start of the autumn term, the Authority will allocate them to children whose parents have either lodged an appeal but not been successful or who have expressed a continuing interest in a place at the school concerned. Parents can do this by returning the reply slip attached to the allocation

letter or by e-mail to the address indicated in the letter. If there are more children interested in a particular school than places available, the Authority will use the same criteria to determine priorities as is used for the initial allocation.

4.4 Children whose parents applied before 15th January will have priority over children whose parents applied after that date, provided they tell us that they continue to want a place at that school.

4.5 All offers of places for schools covered by the scheme will be issued by the Authority.

5.0 Late applications

5.1 Applications received after the published deadline of 15th January will be dealt with after the offer of places have been sent to parents on 16th April or next working day. We will send details of late applications for academy and voluntary aided schools to the governors of the schools concerned by 23rd April or, for applications received after that date, within five days of receipt.

5.2 We will deal with preferences for community and voluntary controlled schools in the date order we receive them. We will allocate places up to the school's admission number. If we receive several applications on the same day for the same school, we will use the scheme of priorities given in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above.

5.3 Parents will be notified in writing by the Children and Young People's Department. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal for any Wirral school and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, where possible, lodge an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the outcome of their application.

5.4 Applications for Catholic or Church of England Aided Primary Schools and the Academy received after the published deadline of 15th January will be determined by reference to the schools' published admission arrangements and the governors will inform the Children and Young People's Department of the outcome of the applications. Parents will be notified in writing by the Children and Young People's Department. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, where possible, lodge an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the outcome of their application.

5.5 Parents and carers must accept or decline the offer of a late place within 10 working days of the offer date.

6.0 Waiting Lists

6.1 If at the end of the Summer Term a school is believed to be full, the Authority will close the procedures and make no more reallocations. However, it may be that places will become available at the beginning of or during the Autumn Term. The Authority will keep a waiting list of children whose parents are interested in obtaining a place at the school if a place becomes available. The Authority will write to the parents of those children included in paragraph 4.3 who have expressed a continuing interest. This waiting list will be held open during the Autumn Term. Priority on the waiting list for community and controlled schools will be given to children in accordance with the criteria given in paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2. Each added child requires the waiting list to be ranked again in line with the published admission criteria.

6.2 The Authority will contact parents directly if a vacancy does occur. Schools must not notify parents that a place has become available but must inform the Authority in order that an offer can be made by the home Authority. The Authority will cease to hold the Foundation 2 waiting list at the end of the Autumn Term.

7.0 In Year applications outside the normal round of admissions

7.1 'In year' applications are those made during the school year into any year group, other than at the normal point of entry (i.e. the normal admission round). This will include applications from parents and carers of children moving into the authority from another authority's area, moving within the authority, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.

7.2 Applications for all schools including Academy and Voluntary Aided schools must be made on a common Primary School Transfer Form. Parents/carers seeking places 'in year' will be advised to complete their 'home' local authority's common application form stating up to three school preferences ranked in priority order.

7.3 Schools should not deal with transfer application forms. Any forms received by schools should be forwarded to the Mainstream Admissions team in the Children and Young People's Department.

7.4 Upon receipt of a transfer request Mainstream Admissions staff will establish whether or not the parent has discussed the request with the headteacher of the pupil's

current school. If this is not the case, parents will be advised to contact the headteacher to discuss their request.

7.5 If the parents have discussed the request with the headteacher the transfer request form will be acknowledged and parents informed that the Mainstream Admissions team will request completion of appropriate documentation to forward to their preferred school. Requests for transfer in Y6 other than moves from outside Wirral will be discouraged on educational grounds, but parents have the ultimate right to proceed with the request.

7.6 We arrange for children in Years 1 and 2 to start at a community or voluntary controlled primary school in a similar way as Foundation 2 (Reception) age children. The appropriate year group is determined by the chronological age of the child.

Key Stage 1 - We will offer children places at their catchment school as long as this will not bring the class size to more than 30 and if we cannot offer an alternative school place within two miles of the parents home address.

We will agree a place in an out-of-zone school as long as:

i) there is room within the admission number; and

ii) there are not already 30 children in the class.

Where a school, which is below its admission number, has organised its Key Stage 1 into classes of 30 and the only way to admit another child would require the Authority to take Qualifying Measures (that is, it would require the Authority to provide additional resources in terms of staff and accommodation at the school), these are grounds on which the Authority may refuse an application.

Key Stage 2 – Children are automatically entitled to a place at their catchment school even though the school may be on or above its admission number.

We will agree a place in an out-of-zone school as long as there is room within the admission number.

7.7 **Infant Class Size limit exceptions**

There are a limited number of exceptions to the Infant Class Size limit of 30. These children remain an excepted pupil for the time they are in an infant class, or until the class numbers fall back to the infant class size limit. They are:

- Children with statements of special educational need (SEN) admitted outside the normal admission round
- Looked after children and previously looked after children
- Children admitted because of a procedural error made by any admission authority in the original application process
- Children admitted following an appeal upheld by an independent appeals panel
- Children who move into a catchment area outside the normal admission round for whom there is no other school place within a shortest walking distance of 2 miles
- Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admission round
- Twins and children from multiple births when one of the siblings is the 30th child admitted
- Children with SEN who are normally taught in an SEN unit attached to the school or who are registered with a special school, but attend some infant classes within a mainstream school

7.7 **Children of UK service personnel**. Places for these children will be allocated in advance if accompanied by an official letter with a relocation date and Unit postal address or quartering area address.

7.8 **Overseas applications**. Parents who have already moved to the UK from overseas who are British or European Economic Area nationals, or who have an endorsed passport showing right of abode, can apply for places for their child at any school covered by this scheme. The Authority may ask to see passports for verification.

Parents or children in these categories who do not yet live in the UK can apply before the date they move to the UK. However, the address to be used in the allocation will be the address that the child is living at on the closing date, unless a subsequent house move has been accepted up to the last date for changes in the coordinated scheme. A UK address will only be used once the child is residing at that address, and evidence will be required of this, as in paragraph 1.10 of this document.

7.9 **Waiting Lists.** The Authority will not keep waiting lists for places in Year 1 and above. Parents may wish to contact schools directly to establish whether there is space in their child's year group prior to completing an in year transfer request form. The Authority will confirm the availability of a place with the school before issuing a formal offer of a place. Schools must not offer places to parents.

7.10 The Authority will provide Voluntary Aided Schools and the Academy with copies of those application forms which include a preference for their school.

7.11 The Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided schools and the Academy will consider each application by applying the school's admission criteria and notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their decision within 5 days of receipt of the application.

7.12 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the parent's highest priority eligible preference will take precedence.

7.13 All parents will be informed by the Children and Young People's Department of the school place allocated by letter. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

7.14 If the relevant body is refusing admission the Local Authority will write to the parent advising them that the application has been refused and informing the parent of the legal right to appeal against the decision. Where a house move from outside the area or within Wirral is the reason for requesting an in year transfer and none of the preferred schools are able to offer a place, the Authority will, where possible, indicate on the refusal letter the nearest appropriate school with vacancies at the time of application, where "nearest" uses the shortest walking distance from the Authority's electronic Ordnance Survey address point based routing system. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

8.0 Pupils transferring from Infant to Junior Schools

8.1 All children who are on roll at one of the Infant Schools listed below at the time of transfer from Year 2 to Year 3 are eligible to transfer to the linked junior even if they

do not live in the school's catchment area. Children who live in the catchment area of the Junior School are also eligible.

Black Horse Hill Infant School to Black Horse Hill Junior School

Brackenwood Infant School to Brackenwood Junior School

Greasby Infant School to Greasby Junior School

Overchurch Infant School to Overchurch Junior School

Town Lane Infant School to Higher Bebington Junior school

8.2 Admissions to St John's Junior School are detailed by the governing body in accordance with the school's admission arrangements.

9.0 The Fair Access Protocol

9.1 In view of the "Guidance on Hard to Place Children" (DfES 2004 and the subsequent Guidance on Fair Access Protocols 2007), there are a small group of pupils for whom the normal arrangements will be varied; admissions authorities will be expected to admit the following categories of pupils above the admission number. This must not, however, cause an infant class to exceed 30, except in the case of children in care. These are as follows:

- Children in care and previously in care will be placed in the school of their carer's preference irrespective of the availability of places in the year group. However, the Authority will give careful consideration to the reasons given in support of a preference and monitor the flow of such requests. These children can be admitted as excepted pupils in infant classes which would otherwise be subject to qualifying measures.
- Children who have recently experienced a traumatic family or domestic event or for whom there are clear medical grounds to support placement in a particular school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence.
- Children of refugees and asylum seekers, homeless children and children with unsupportive family backgrounds where a place has not been sought.
- Children without a school place and with a history of serious attendance problems.
- Traveller children.

- Children who are carers
- Children who have been out of education for two months or more
- Children from the criminal justice system or pupil referral units who are being reintegrated into mainstream education

Such cases will be discussed in detail with the headteacher concerned before placement is confirmed. Again such placements will be made above the published admission number if necessary.

9.2 **Permanent Exclusions**. For pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and on the roll of a Wirral school it is open to the headteacher to refer the child to Gilbrook Outreach Service.

9.3 Pupils who have been permanently excluded will normally be placed on the roll of Gilbrook School or WASP (Wirral Alternative School Provision). Schools should contact the Exclusions Officer as soon as the exclusion has taken place. The Exclusions Officer will consider whether the pupil can be transferred immediately to an alternative primary school. Such transfers will be agreed with the parent and relevant headteacher. All primary schools will take a minimum number of 1, or the number of permanent exclusions in the previous academic year, as the agreed quota of permanently excluded pupils for placement.

9.4 The transfer to a school will be decided at the Wirral Excluded Pupils Monitoring Panel (WEMP) on which headteachers are represented. All such placements will be initially on a trial basis for a minimum of six weeks. Confirmation of placement or the school roll will be subject to satisfactory report.

Admissions Authorities in Wirral
Wirral Council
Community Primary Schools (60)
Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools (5)
The Governing Bodies of:
Academy Schools
Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls (Junior)
Church of England Aided Primary Schools
Christ Church (Moreton) CE Primary School
Dawpool CE Primary School
St Andrew's CE Primary School
St Peter's CE Primary School
St Saviour's CE Primary School
The Priory CE Primary School
Woodchurch CE Primary School
Catholic Aided Primary Schools
Christ The King Catholic Primary School
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
Ladymount Catholic Primary School
Our Lady and St Edwards Catholic Primary School
Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
St Alban's Catholic Primary School
St Anne's Catholic Primary School

St John's Catholic Infant School
St John's Catholic Junior School
St Joseph's (Birkenhead) Catholic Primary School
St Joseph's (Upton) Catholic Primary School
St Joseph's (Wallasey) Catholic Primary School
St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School
St Paul's Catholic Primary School
St Peter & St Paul Catholic Primary School
St Peter's Catholic Primary School
St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School
Joint Denominational Aided Primary Schools
Holy Spirit Catholic and CE Primary School

A full list and map is provided in the Authority's information booklets for parents, available on-line at www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions.

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APPENDIX 2

Children and Young People's Department

David Armstrong
Acting Director

SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAINTAINED SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2013-2014

This scheme fulfils the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under the School Admission (Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Wirral Council. It builds on the well-established coordination of secondary school admissions that have been a longstanding feature of local practice.

The scheme applied for admissions to secondary schools in the academic year 2013/14 and for subsequent years, subject to any review.

The co-ordinated scheme applies to all schools, excluding special schools, maintained by Wirral Council and to preferences expressed by Wirral resident parents and carers for schools maintained by other English local authorities, academies and free schools. Admissions to other schools with independent status are not be covered by this scheme.

1.0 Applications for school places for admission into Year 7 - the normal admission round

1.1 Wirral Authority will act as the co-ordinating authority for all applications. Offers will be made by Wirral Council, in its role as the home authority, on behalf of the admissions authority for the school allocated as follows:

Admissions Authority	**Category of School**
Wirral Council	All Wirral community schools
Governing body of school	All Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust and Academy schools
Maintaining Local Authority	Non-Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools

1.2 The admission arrangements for schools maintained by Wirral Council are published on the Council's website and in its information booklets, in line with the requirements set out in the School Admissions Code (2012). The Authority's information booklets

will be available electronically on the Council's website from 1 September. Hard copies will be available in primary schools, or will be obtainable by request from the Local Authority at the start of the autumn term. Admissions arrangements are also available from each school on request.

1.3 All parents who live in the area administered by Wirral Council must apply for places in maintained secondary schools either in Wirral or in the area of another local education authority by completing the Wirral Parental Preference Form. Paper forms will be generated and distributed by the Mainstream Admissions team of the Children & Young People's Department to the parents of Year 6 pupils in September. On-line applications are made through the Council's website.

The form provides an opportunity for the parent to:

- apply for up to 3 schools
- rank the schools applied for in order of preference

1.4 Applications for places sent direct by parents and carers to individual schools cannot be accepted and must be sent to the Local Authority for inclusion within these arrangements.

1.5 Preference forms should be returned to the Children and Young People's Department by 31st October to ensure the allocation of a school place on 1st March. Applications received after the published deadline of 31st October will be dealt with once the offer of places has been sent to parents on 1st March.

1.6 **Applications from separated parents**. We will accept only one application per child. It is essential that agreement is reached by the parents of a child as to the preferences for school places. If agreement cannot be reached, or if neither parent has been granted a Specific Issues Order in this respect, then we will accept the application from the parent with whom the child is "ordinarily resident".

1.7. **Changes of address.** Parents and carers must inform the Authority immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form. The Authority will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed; e.g. A letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date; A signed rental agreement showing the start of the tenancy and its duration. In addition the Local Authority may request further information – for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application, including evidence of disposal of previous property. Information and supporting evidence must be received by 1st January. Proof of

residency received after 31st October will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date.

2.0 Dealing with Applications

2.1 The Authority will, by applying the Council's admissions criteria, rank the order of priority of each application for community schools.

2.2 The Authority will provide Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided Schools with details of applicants for their school by 22nd November. Details of preferences for a school place in the area of another Local Authority will be sent to that Authority along with any details and supporting evidence provided by the parent by 22nd November.

2.3 Preference ranking will not be shared with school admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2012 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.

2.4 The Governing Bodies of Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools will rank each application by applying the school's admission criteria and are required to notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their ranking by 16th December.

2.5 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the Authority will allocate the highest priority preference.

2.6 The Mainstream Admissions team will notify the Governing Bodies of Wirral Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools of those pupils who will provisionally be allocated places at their school by 1st February.

2.7 When the Authority receives from other Authorities details of their provisional allocation for Wirral children seeking places in schools maintained by them, the Authority will then offer the highest preference if they are eligible for more than one school.

2.8 On 23rd February Wirral Authority will inform schools and neighbouring Authorities of the final allocations. Letters will be posted to parents by second class post on 1 March.

3.0 Determination of applications for Community schools

3.1 Each secondary school has a published admission number. Places will be allocated up to but not beyond this number.

3.2 All children who have applied before 31st October will be eligible for a place so long as there is space within the school's admission number. If there are more

applications than there are places available, then eligibility for community schools will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities:

(a) Children in care, and children who were in care but have been adopted or are subject to a residency order or special guardianship order ("previously in care")

(b) Pupils who have a medical reason for attending a particular school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence.

(c) Pupils who have a brother or sister of statutory school age (including half or step-brothers and sisters living in the same household) at the school when the pupil starts school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school.

(d) Pupils who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Authority's electronic Ordnance Survey address point based routing system.

3. 3 If places remain available at the school after all "on time" applicants have been allocated, places will then be allocated to late applications received after 31st October in date order of receipt up to the school's admission number.

3.4 **Multiple births.** For community schools, where the final place in a year group is offered to one of twins (or triplets etc.) it will be our policy to admit the other twin too even if that means going above the admission number.

3.5 Applications for Academy, Foundation, Trust and Aided schools will be determined by the governing bodies of these schools in accordance with their published admission criteria.

3.6 **Mandatory Allocation**. Where it is not possible to allocate a place at any of the schools applied for, children resident in Wirral will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate Wirral school where there are places available. "Appropriate " means community school if the parents' preferences indicate preferences for non-denominational education; or a Catholic school if the parents indicated a preference for education in a school of that denomination. The nearest school will be measured on shortest walking distance using the Authority's electronic Ordnance Survey address point based routing system.

3.7 **Special Needs**. All schools will be required to admit a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school.

4.0 Admission to Grammar Schools

4.1 Admissions authorities for the grammar schools in Wirral will allocate places only to children who have achieved the required standard. If they are over subscribed with children who have achieved the standard, they will not be able to offer places to all; they will use other non-academic criteria to decide which children should be offered places.

4.2 **Request for Assessment**. Parents who wish their child to be assessed for grammar school education should inform the Children and Young People's Department by 31st May in Year 5 using the Request for Assessment form.

4.4 The Authority conducts the assessment arrangements for Calday Grange Grammar School, West Kirby Grammar School, Wirral Grammar School for Boys and Wirral Grammar School for Girls. All the grammar schools are Academy schools, they have criteria to determine which children will be given places if more children achieve the standard than there are places available.

4.5 Parents who wish their children to be assessed for a place at Upton Hall School or St. Anselm's College must follow the procedures for requesting an assessment set out by those schools; those children will be assessed by the schools themselves.

4.6 **The selection tests**. The assessment is based on the results of two verbal reasoning tests that pupils take in September of Year 6. The test does not take into account what pupils have learnt at primary school. They have been designed to predict a pupil's potential performance at secondary school and so preparation for the verbal reasoning tests is not necessary. However, we will provide a familiarisation pack by 30th June to help children prepare for the tests. Two practice tests will also take place in September of Year 6 prior to the real tests.

So that children are not disadvantaged because of their date of birth, in each case the score is changed by using conversion tables to take account of each child's exact age in years and months. The two test scores are then added together. Children who reach the required score will be deemed to have reached the grammar school standard.

4.7 **Referral to Independent Assessment Board (IAB)**. In October the Authority will tell primary school head teachers the scores of their pupils and the required score for the grammar school standard. The Authority will invite head teachers to make referrals to the IAB on behalf of any children whose test results do not, in their view, reflect the children's potential. Since there is a strong relationship between verbal reasoning scores and potential, these cases will be quite rare.

In some cases parents may feel that certain factors may have affected the child's academic performance (for example, if his or her education has been severely disrupted because of ill health, change of schools, or any other reason). If this does apply, it is important that parents should inform their child's headteacher, in writing, no later than 30th September. If the child's case is referred to the IAB, the IAB will consider the written information. The Authority will also refer to the Board the cases of any pupils who have been given extra time in the tests because of a disability.

4.8 The Board will meet in October before results are sent out to parents, and is made up of four headteachers (two from primary schools, two from grammar schools) and is administered by an officer from the Children and Young People's Department. None of the Board will have any personal interest in any of the pupils they are asked to assess.

4.9 For each child whose case is referred, the Board will see:

- the child's verbal reasoning test scores and papers
- the representations made by the primary school head teacher with supporting evidence if necessary, and
- confidential information from parents and reports from other professional agencies such as educational psychologists, social workers. doctors and so on.

The Board then uses its professional judgement to decide whether the evidence clearly shows that the results of the verbal reasoning tests did not truly reflect the child's ability. The Board will decide in each case whether or not the child has reached the grammar school standard.

4.10 At the end of the process, the Authority will have a list of the children who have reached the grammar school standard. This does not necessarily mean that they will go to a grammar school; that will depend on the number of preferences that we have for the grammar schools. If a grammar school is oversubscribed, the governors use other criteria to decide who should be given places.

4.11 The Authority will send the outcome of the assessment tests and the IAB (where applicable) to parents by second class post by 21st October. Parents who have

provided an e-mail address on their request for assessment form will receive their child's test results by e-mail.

5.0 Determination of applications for Foundation, Trust, Academy and Aided schools

5.1 The governing bodies of Foundation, Trust, Academy and Aided schools publish their own admission arrangements which include the criteria which they will use to determine priorities if their school is oversubscribed.

5.2 **Special Educational Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with a Statement of special educational needs naming the school.

6.0 Offer of Places

6.1 Parents resident in Wirral will be informed in writing by second class post by the Director of Children's Services on 1st March of the school allocated to their child.

6.2 Where online applications have been received, the parent or carer making the online application can log on to their online account on the published date to view the school place offered and can also request to receive their offer by e-mail.

6.3 This will include the allocation of a place in a school of another Authority if the parent's application for a place there has been successful. The letter and e-mail will also inform parents of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

7.0 Late Applications

7.1 Preferences which are received on or after 1st November will be dealt with after places have been allocated on 1st March. At that point some schools may be full and no more places will be allocated at those schools. In the case of schools which have places available, places will be allocated up to the school's admission number in accordance with the arrangements described in paragraphs 3 and 5.

7.2 Late applications for grammar schools will require separate arrangements for testing.

7.3 Parents will be notified in writing by the Children and Young People's Department. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application. Parents and carers must accept or decline the offer of a late place within 10 working days of the offer date.

7.4 If places become available before the start of the autumn term, the Authority will re-allocate them up to the school's admission number. If there are more children interested in a particular school than places available, in the case of Community schools the Authority will use the same criteria to determine priorities as is used for the initial allocation. In most cases the re-allocation will be made depending on where the children live. If this is the case, the Authority will keep a list in order of those who will have priority because they live nearer the school in question.

7.5 If at the end of the Summer Term a school is believed to be full, the Authority will close the procedures and make no more reallocations. However, it may be that places will become available at the beginning of or during the Autumn Term. The Authority will keep a waiting list of children whose parents are interested in obtaining a place at the school if a place becomes available, following the same criteria as when places were first offered. The waiting list will be kept open until the last day of the autumn term.

8.0 In Year applications outside the normal round of admissions

8.1 'In year' applications are those made during the school year into any year group, other than at the normal point of entry (i.e. the normal admission round). This will include applications from parents and carers of children moving into the authority from another authority's area, moving within the authority, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.

8.2 Applications for all schools including Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools must be made on a common Secondary School Transfer Form. Parents/carers seeking places 'in year' will be advised to complete their 'home' local authority's common application form stating up to three school preferences ranked in priority order.

8.3 Schools should not deal with transfer application forms. Any forms received by schools should be forwarded to the Mainstream Admissions team in the Children and Young People's Department. The Authority coordinates all parental requests for in-year transfers and placements.

8.4 Upon receipt of a transfer request Mainstream Admissions staff will establish whether or not the parent has discussed the request with the headteacher of the pupil's current school. If this is not the case, parents will be advised to contact the headteacher to discuss their request.

8.5 If the parents have discussed the request with the headteacher the transfer request form will be acknowledged and parents informed that the Mainstream Admissions

Team will request completion of appropriate documentation to forward to their preferred school. Requests for transfer in Y10 and Y11 will be discouraged on educational grounds, but parents have the ultimate right to proceed with the request.

8.6 The Authority will request from the Headteacher of the child's current or previous school, information relating to the child's curriculum record, attendance and behaviour. This information will have no bearing on whether a place is offered. The headteacher of the school must sign the form and return it to Mainstream Admissions within 10 school days.

8.7 This information together with a copy of the parent's preference form and any relevant documentation from other agencies such as the Education Social Welfare Service, social worker, educational psychologists and so on, will then be forwarded to the Headteacher of the requested school(s).

8.8 The headteacher of the requested school should reply to the Authority within 5 school days, with comments expressing any reservations regarding admission of the pupil. The Authority will enter into discussion with the headteacher regarding any reservations. These discussions should be undertaken within 5 school days. Where it would be helpful, the Exclusions Officer or Managed Move Officer may facilitate meetings between the parents and the schools involved in order to resolve any difficulties.

8.9 For Community Schools the Authority will consider all available information and decide whether to agree or refuse the request within 10 school days of receipt of the application.

8.10 The Governing Bodies of Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools will notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their decision whether a place will be offered within 10 school days of receipt of the application.

8.11 If a parent expresses a preference for one or more of the grammar schools then their child will be assessed by the school or schools concerned and a decision made by the governing body as to whether to offer a place. The governing body will inform the Authority of the outcome of the application.

8.12 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the parent's highest eligible preference will take precedence. Headteachers will be informed of the decision.

8.13 All parents will be informed by the Children and Young People's Department of the school place allocated by letter and advised to contact the headteacher of the school to arrange admission. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to

appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

8.14 In accordance with the School Admissions Code 2012 admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child solely because:

(a) they have applied later than other applicants;

(b) they are not of the faith of the school in the case of a faith school;

(c) they have followed a different curriculum at their previous school;

(d) information has not been received from their previous school;

(e) they have missed entrance tests for selective places.

8.15 Where places are available in the relevant year group it is unlawful to refuse a parent's preference on the grounds of a pupil's previously poor attendance or behaviour. The Admissions Code of Practice 2012 restricts refusal of parental preference to those situations where schools are either in special measures or have recently come out of special measures.

8.16 If the request is refused headteachers are informed of the decision and parents are informed in writing and given details of their legal right to appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application. If a parent lodges an appeal, copies of the relevant documentation will be sent to the preferred school.

8.17 The time taken for a transfer request to be processed should be as short as possible. The Authority guarantees that parents will be informed of the outcome of their request within 15 school days.

8.18 **Children of UK service personnel**. Places for these children will be allocated in advance if accompanied by an official letter with a relocation date and Unit postal address or quartering area address.

8.19 **Overseas applications**. Parents who have already moved to the UK from overseas who are British or European Economic Area nationals, or who have an endorsed passport showing right of abode, can apply for places for their child at any school covered by this scheme. The Authority may ask to see passports for verification.

Parents or children in these categories who do not yet live in the UK can apply before the date they move to the UK. However, the address to be used in the allocation of a place will be the address that the child is living at on the closing date, unless a subsequent house move has been accepted up to the last date for changes in the

coordinated scheme. A UK address will only be used once the child is residing at that address, and evidence will be required of this, as in paragraph 1.7 of this document.

9.0 The Fair Access Protocol

9.1 All requests for in-year places will be considered with reference to the Authority's current admission arrangements and procedures for in year placements. The majority of requests will be agreed or refused with reference to two important factors: parental preference, and the availability of places within the relevant year group.

9.2 In view of the "Guidance on Hard to Place Children" (DfES 2004 and the subsequent Guidance on Fair Access Protocols 2007), there are a small group of pupils for whom the normal arrangements will be varied; admissions authorities will be expected to admit the following categories of pupils above the admission number. These are as follows:

- Children in care will be placed in the school of their carer's preference irrespective of the availability of places in the year group. However, the Authority will give careful consideration to the reasons given in support of a preference and monitor the flow of such requests.
- Children who have recently experienced a traumatic family or domestic event or for whom there are clear medical grounds to support placement in a particular school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence.
- Children of refugees and asylum seekers, homeless children, children with unsupportive family backgrounds where a place has not been sought.
- Children without a school place and with a history of serious attendance problems.
- Traveller children.
- Children who are carers
- Children who have been out of education for two months or more
- Children from the criminal justice system or pupil referral units who are being reintegrated into mainstream education

Such cases will be discussed in detail with the headteacher concerned before placement is confirmed. Again such placements will be made above the published admission number if necessary.

9.3 **Permanent Exclusions**. For pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and on the roll of a Wirral school it is open to the headteacher to refer the case to Exclusions Officer to consider the possibility of a managed move. The Managed Move protocol is covered by a separate document, available on request.

9.4 Pupils who have been permanently excluded will normally be placed on the roll of WASP (Wirral Alternative School Provision). In a minority of cases where the exclusion was as the result of a 'one off incident' such pupils will be transferred immediately to an alternative school. Such transfers will be agreed with the parent and relevant headteacher. All secondary schools will take a minimum number of 1, or the number of permanent exclusions in the previous academic year, as the agreed quota of permanently excluded pupils for placement.

9.5 The majority of such pupils will have spent some time in the relevant alternative base or Pupil Referral Unit. The transfer to a school will be decided at the Wirral Excluded Pupils Monitoring Panel (WEMP) on which headteachers are represented. All such placements will be initially on a trial basis for a minimum of six weeks. Confirmation of placement or the school roll will be subject to satisfactory report.

Admission Authorities in Wirral
Wirral Council
Community Secondary Schools (4) Mosslands School Pensby High School for Boys Pensby High School for Girls Wallasey School
The Governing Bodies of:
Academy Schools
Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls (Senior)
Calday Grange Grammar School for Boys *
Hilbre High School *
Oldershaw School
Prenton High School for Girls
St Anselm's College
University Academy of Birkenhead
Upton Hall School FCJ
Weatherhead High School for Girls
West Kirby Grammar School for Girls
Wirral Grammar School for Boys
Wirral Grammar School for Girls
Woodchurch High School *
Catholic Aided Schools
St John Plessington Catholic College
St Mary's Catholic College
Foundation Schools
Ridgeway High School
South Wirral High School
Trust Schools
Bebington High School Sports College

* Status subject to confirmation.

A full list of schools and a map showing locations is provided in the Authority's information booklets for parents, available on-line at www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions

The scheme will be amended if there are further changes to the status of schools.

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APPENDIX 3 PROPOSED ADMISSION NUMBERS FOR 2013-14

WIRRAL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	ADMISSION NUMBER 2013 – 2014
Barnston Primary	45
Bedford Drive Primary	55
Bidston Avenue Primary	60
Black Horse Hill Infant	60
Black Horse Hill Junior	60
Bidston Village CE Primary School	50
Brackenwood Infant	60
Brackenwood Junior	60
Brookdale Primary	30
Brookhurst Primary	30
Castleway Primary	30
Cathcart Street Primary	30
Christchurch CE Primary (B)	34
Church Drive Primary	40
Devonshire Park Primary	60
Eastway Primary	36
Egremont Primary	60
Fender Primary	37
Gayton Primary	30
Greasby Infant	60
Greasby Junior	60
Great Meols Primary	60
Greenleas Primary	46
Grove Street Primary	55
Heswall Primary	30
Heygarth Primary	45
Higher Bebington Junior	85
Hillside Primary	30
Hoylake Holy Trinity CE Primary	42
Irby Primary	30
Kingsway Primary	25
Leasowe Primary	30
Lingham Primary	54
Liscard Primary	90
Manor Primary	30
Mendell Primary	30
Mersey Park Primary	60
Millfields Primary	30
Mount Primary	48
New Brighton Primary	78
Overchurch Infant	90
Overchurch Junior	94
Park Primary School	55
Pensby Primary	30

SCHOOL	ADMISSION NUMBER 2013 – 2014
Portland Primary	30
Poulton Lancelyn Primary	60
Prenton Primary	60
Raeburn Primary	55
Riverside Primary	43
Rock Ferry Primary	47
Sandbrook Primary	30
Somerville Primary	75
St. Bridget's CE Primary	60
St. George's Primary	110
Stanton Road Primary	45
Thingwall Primary	30
Thornton Hough Primary	23
Town Lane Infant	72*
Townfield Primary	60
Well Lane Primary	30
West Kirby Primary	40
Woodchurch Road Primary	71
Woodlands Primary	44
Woodslee Primary	46

*Subject to discussion with the Governing body of Town Lane Infant School.

WIRRAL COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	ADMISSION NUMBER 2013 – 2014
Mosslands School	258
Pensby High School for Boys	150
Pensby High School for Girls	150
Wallasey School	250

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ADOPTERS**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR SHEILA CLARKE**
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Adopters are generally people who have applied to the local authority because they wish to begin or extend their family through adopting a child that is not known to them. It is recognised nationally that some children and young people may have specific additional needs that will require financial support to enable them to be adopted. Therefore Wirral Council will ensure that the needs of the adopted child are supported appropriately and finances will not be a barrier to finding adopters that meet a child's needs. This revised policy details the eligibility for adoption financial support

1.2 The report proposes a revised policy for financial support for adoption. The proposal is to continue with the model means test provided by the government, using DFE criteria. The approach differs to the one used for special guardianship and assisted residence orders to reflect the specific circumstances of adoption compared to other permanence arrangements.

1.3 The amendments to the financial support policy for adoption clarify the eligibility criteria for financial support and the decision making process. The revised policy includes how financial support is determined when children are placed for adoption, and brings the financial support available to previous foster carers that adopt in line with regulations.

1.4 The revised policy complies with the requirements of the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Amendments were made to the policy for special guardianship and assisted residence orders in April 2011 as a result of potential legal challenges to the previously agreed policy on 12th June 2008 for financial support for adoption, special guardianship and assisted residence orders. However amendments were not made to the financial support to adoption at this time due the different circumstances of adopters compared to those of special guardians or people applying for residence orders and the fact the legal challenges did not relate to adoption cases.

2.2 The reason for providing financial support in adoption is to ensure that adopters have the resources to support children with particular needs as defined in the Adoption Support Regulations, and provide for a secure and stable future for children. Financial support for special guardians and people applying for residence orders was initially aimed at family and friends who had been approved as foster carers and who were receiving a fostering allowance. The support aimed to encourage foster carers to secure the children legally as part of their family through applying to discharge the care order and request the court made a special guardianship or residence order.

Implementation of the DFE criteria

2.3 Wirral has implemented the DFE criteria since 2006 according to the guidance which has meant most assessed adoptive families receive the full allowance whatever their income. As a result of a review it is proposed to continue with the DFE criteria approach according to the government guidance, but there will be greater scrutiny of family's eligibility according to Regulation 8 of the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 and the means test only applied to adoptive parents where the Agency Decision Maker has made a decision the children they are to adopt require periodic payments according to one of the specified circumstances (see section 2.2. in the proposed Adoption Financial Support Policy in Appendix 1).

2.4 It is proposed that where the Agency Decision Maker has decided that a child may require additional support through the provision of periodic payments adopters who are in receipt of income support, income related job seekers allowance, pension credit or income related Employment Support Allowance will receive the maximum eligible periodic payment less child benefit. This will ensure that adopters on low incomes, where the criteria are met, are not discouraged from applying to be adopters.

2.5 The proposed new policy has changed the financial support available to foster carers that adopt to bring it into line with regulation 9 of the Adoption Support Services Regulations regarding remuneration of previous foster carers. The previous policy stated that previous foster carers would receive the full fostering allowance for 2 years without being means tested. According to the new proposed policy previous foster carers will be means tested for the periodic payment linked to the fostering allowance apart from any previously paid skills element. The skills fee element will continue for 2 years without being means tested and then cease unless there are exceptional reasons for it to continue.

2.6 The maximum periodic payment will be the local authority fostering allowance plus birthday, Christmas and holiday allowances consolidated into the weekly amount less child benefit.

Additional non means tested financial support

2.7 The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 also makes provision for additional financial support to be provided that is not means tested. This would be for legal fees, introductions, initial costs of accommodating a child, travel costs for contact, financial packages relating to special care and any specific arrangements required for the placement of children as a result of their age, ethnic origin or with their siblings. The policy for adoption in Appendix 1 details the proposed rates for introductions and start up grants in accordance with that agreed regionally through Adoption 22.

Decision making for financial support

2.8 The Agency Decision Maker (currently the Acting Deputy Director of Children's Services) will make all decisions regarding eligibility for financial support and the type of financial support.

2.9 Adopters and prospective adopters will have 28 days to make representations if they disagree with the proposed financial support (see Appendix for further information).

Current adopters

2.10 All carers receiving financial support are required by regulation to be reviewed annually. As there are no significant changes to the method of calculation of financial support, there is not expected to be any impact on adopters already receiving financial support as a result of this change in policy.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Continuing the use of the DFE criteria for adopters and potential adopters creates a risk that financial support will continue to be provided to all adopters rather than targeting those families most in need of support. The implementation of a decision making process about what type of financial support is needed for individual children who are being considered for adoption will be monitored by the Agency Decision Maker and the Agency Advisor for adoption to ensure compliance.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Adjustments to the DFE criteria calculation have been considered. However legal advice is that the government guidance should be followed if the DfE model means test is used. Any alterations to the model means test could lead the local authority open to legal challenge.

4.2 The process of full financial assessment used for special guardianship and assisted residence orders could be introduced for adoption. However the full financial assessment is more appropriate for implementation with Special Guardianship and Assisted Residence Orders a detailed analysis enables the specific needs of the child and family to be addressed where they have taken on the care of the child in usually unexpected circumstances. In adoption the decision to care for a child is well prepared and planned; and the eligibility of the child to receive financial support can be considered separately from the carers.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Other adoption support services within the North West region have been contacted to compare their process for assessing for financial support. Other local authorities implement similar eligibility criteria as proposed in this policy and they continue to use the DFE criteria for adoption financial support.

5.2 The change in the adoption financial support policy had been discussed at the multi-agency Adoption Task Force meeting and with staff in the adoption service. All the proposals in this report have been considered within children's social care senior management meetings.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 A clearer, consistent policy for financial support will assist those organisations providing advice and information to potential adopters.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The budget for financial support for adoption for 2011-12 is £599,600 and for 2012 -13 is £626,000. The current forecast for expenditure for 2011-2012 is £1,000,000. The average cost per adopted child is £6,500 per year.

7.2 The current number (as of 12/3/12) of adopters receiving ongoing periodic payments to support their adopted children and children placed with them prior to adoption is 160. The amount of financial support is subject to annual review and will cease if the child is 18 unless they continue in full-time education or training when they may continue. Payments will also cease if the child leaves home or the child is eligible to receive benefits in their own right, or ceases full time education or training and takes up employment.

7.3 The introduction of this revised policy and stricter application of the eligibility criteria and decision making for adopters receiving financial support is expected to result in some saving. A reduction in the number of adopters receiving periodic payments would be cumulative each year. It is difficult to predict the actual saving as it is dependent on the needs of each individual child being adopted and the financial circumstances of each family that adopts.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This policy ensures that local authority is compliant with the requirements of the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005. This is a legal requirement.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review can be found via the following link:

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no carbon reduction implications in relation to this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Providing financial support to carers adopting children permanently will assist families in ensuring positive outcomes for their children and an ongoing stable home life.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Cabinet requests that the Acting Director of Children's Services consults further with representative adopters in respect of the proposed Policy for Financial Support for Adopters and that a further report is brought to Cabinet on the outcome of these consultations.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The policy on financial support for adoption has been reviewed in accordance with the recommendations made to Cabinet in March 2011 in relation to the financial support to Special Guardianship and Assisted Residence Orders. The changes to all policies have been made to ensure that Wirral is acting in a similar way to other local authorities in the North West, financial support provided is not being duplicated with support available from elsewhere, and the means test provides *a* level of financial support that reflects the needs of the children being adopted.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Financial Support for Adopters

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Adoption and Children Act 2002
Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005.
Department for Education Standardised Means Test Model for Adoption and Special Guardianship Financial Support

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	**17th March 2011**
Cabinet	**18th March 2010**
Cabinet	**12th June 2008**

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APPENDIX 1

Wirral Adoption Financial Support Policy
(according to The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005)

1.1 Adopters are generally people who have applied to the local authority because they wish to begin or extend their family through adopting a child that is not known to them. The local authority recognises that some children and young people may have specific additional needs that will require financial support. Therefore Wirral Council will ensure that the needs of the adopted child are supported appropriately.

1.2 Once children are placed for adoption families will become eligible to claim new state benefits such as child benefit, and child tax credit. Therefore wherever possible, families are expected to be financially independent from council support for the day to day costs of a child.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Financial support may be payable to an adoptive parent for the purpose of supporting the placement of the adoptive child or the continuation of adoption arrangements after an adoption order is made.

2.2 Financial support can only be provided in the following circumstances (according to The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 Regulation 8):
(a)where it is necessary to ensure that the adoptive parent can look after the child;
(b)where the child needs special care which requires greater expenditure of resources by reason of illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the continuing consequences of past abuse or neglect;
(c)where it is necessary for the local authority to make any special arrangements to facilitate the placement or the adoption by reason of—
(i)the age or ethnic origin of the child; or
(ii)the desirability of the child being placed with the same adoptive parent as his brother or sister (whether of full or half-blood) or with a child with whom he previously shared a home;
(d)where such support is to meet recurring costs in respect of travel for the purpose of visits between the child and a related person;
(e)where the local authority consider it appropriate to make a contribution to meet the following kinds of expenditure:

(i)expenditure on legal costs, including fees payable to a court in relation to an adoption;

(ii)expenditure for the purpose of introducing an adoptive child to his adoptive parent;

(iii)expenditure necessary for the purpose of accommodating and maintaining the child, including the provision of furniture and domestic equipment, alterations to and adaptations of the home, provision of means of transport and provision of clothing, toys and other items necessary for the purpose of looking after the child.

2.3 Financial support can be a single payment, payment in instalments or periodic payments for recurring expenditure. The decision about the type of financial support required to meet the needs of individual children (according to the criteria in 2.2) will be made by the Agency Decision Maker.

2.4 Financial support may be agreed at the time that a child's placement plan is presented to the adoption panel or at any time up until the child's 18th birthday as long as the criteria listed in 2.2. are met.

3. Introductions and setting up grants

3.1 The local authority will consider providing the following financial support to families to enable the introduction of a prospective adopted child to the prospective adopters:

- Travel costs i.e. rail or coach fare or car mileage. The maximum travel costs will be public transport rates. Car mileage will be paid at 20p per mile.

- Overnight accommodation. Where possible this should be arranged through the council procurement process. The rates allowed will be no greater than the subsistence rates for Wirral council employees

3.2 The local authority –can provide a 'setting up' grant for adopters matched with a child from Wirral according to the regional agreement (Adoption 22). This is currently £250 per child and may increase subject to the regional agreement changing.

3.3 Where the child has specific additional needs the local authority will consider paying for additional equipment above the 'setting up' grant.

3.4 The prospective adopters' financial circumstances will not be taken into account when the local authority makes a decision about providing financial support for 'introductions' and setting up grants.

4. Periodic payments.

4.1 Where the agency decision maker has decided that a child may require additional support through the provision of periodic payments the adoptive parents will be subject to a means test (based on the 'DFE means test') to assess if they have sufficient disposable income to provide for the child.

4.2 The means test will calculate the disposable income of the prospective adopters or adopters which takes into account income from earnings, all eligible benefits including child tax credit, and expenditure that includes housing costs and daily living expenses according to the 'DFE means test' guidance.

4.3 The maximum eligible periodic payment will be the local authority fostering allowance plus birthday, Christmas and holiday allowances consolidated into the weekly amount less child benefit.

4.4 Where the Agency Decision maker has decided that a child may require additional support through the provision of periodic payments and the adopters are in receipt of income support, income related Jobseekers Allowance, pension credit or income related Employment Support Allowance the maximum eligible periodic payment less child benefit will be provided without the requirement to undertake the means test.

4.5 Where the adopter was receiving fostering allowance for the child, as an approved foster carer, immediately prior to the Order, the child will continue to be considered to require additional support through the provision of periodic payments and the adoptive parents will be assessed according to the means test to determine the amount of the periodic payments. In addition, the adopters will continue to receive the skills fees (paid for that child prior to the order) for a period of 2 years. Payment of the skills fee beyond 2 years will only continue in exceptional circumstances.

5. Other payments

5.1 In addition to the periodic payments that are means tested the following financial support can be provided to support children as decided by the Agency Decision Maker according to the criteria in 2.2 which may not be means tested:

- Any legal costs associated with the application for an Adoption Order,
- Costs for travel to facilitate contact between the child and a related person. The travel and subsistence rates will be the same as that detailed in 3.1 for introductions
- any special arrangements to facilitate the placement or the adoption by reason of the age or ethnic origin of the child; or
- any special arrangements to enable a child being placed with his siblings or with a child with whom he previously shared a home
- A financial package for any special care relating to illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the consequences of past abuse or neglect for any child that was previously looked after

6. Decision making

6.1 The Agency Decision Maker for Adoption will make a decision about what type of financial support individual children are eligible to receive.

6.2 The decision about the level of financial support, following the approval of the Agency Decision Maker, will be made by the Strategic Service Manager, Children's Resources following a recommendation by the LAC Service Manager.

6.3 The adopters or potential adopters will be informed of the proposed financial support and will have 28 days to make representations if they disagree with the proposal.

6.4 No periodic payments will start until the prospective adopters or adopters have agreed to inform the local authority of the following circumstances when financial support will cease:

- The child dies

- The child ceases to have a home with the adopters
- The child ceases full time education or training and commences employment
- The child qualifies for Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment Support Allowance in his or her own right
- The child attains the age of 18 unless she or he continues in full-time education or training, when the payments may continue until the end of the course or training that she or he is then undertaking

In addition the prospective adopters/adopters must inform the local authority of any change in their financial circumstances and change of address.

7. Reviews

7.1 All adopters receiving an adoption allowance or periodic payment will be subject to an annual review.

7.2 The local authority will write to the adopters to inform them of the decision of the review of the financial support and their reasons for any variation of the plan. Where the review leads to a reduction in allowance or termination of the allowance they receive, the case will be presented to permanence panel and any outcome will be shared in person with the adopters.

7.3 If as a result of the review the local authority is proposing to reduce or terminate the financial support, the local authority will write to the adopters to give them the opportunity to make representations within a 28 day period.

8. Appeals

8.1 The Director of Children's Services will consider any representations and make a decision whether to vary or terminate the payment, seek recovery overpayments or revise the financial support plan.

Adoption maximum periodic payments weekly 2011/12 rates

Age	Adoption Allowance rates based on fostering allowance	Less child benefit (assuming eldest child in family)	Maximum periodic payment 11/12
0 - 1yrs	£120.62	£20.30	£100.32
2 - 4yrs	£122.77	£20.30	£102.47
5 - 10yrs	£135.69	£20.30	£115.39
11 - 15yrs	£156.15	£20.30	£135.85
16+ yrs	£180.92	£20.30	£160.62

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**GOVERNORS SUPPORT SHARED SERVICE**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR SHEILA CLARKE**
KEY DECISION?	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Support services for governors in schools has been provided by and funded by the Council for a substantial number of years. The cost in 2011/12 for this is approximately £106,000. This report provides information about the outcomes from the Learn Together Partnership (LTP) Directors of Children's Services decision in 2009 to move towards more shared services. The Learn Together Partnership has formally existed since 2004 and is a collaborative of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton, Warrington and Wirral, Children and Young People's Services. The shared service proposal is based around four local authorities sharing governor support services, Wirral, Warrington, Halton and Cheshire East, with Cheshire East taking the lead on school governor development and support during 2012. This will further support and enhance the corporate priorities of developing joint working to provide an outstanding service which will provide greater value for money via group opportunities for procurement, with no redundancies. The statutory duty placed on the Local Authority to secure training and support to governors will still be fulfilled.

1.2 The report does not contain exempt information.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 There are currently over 2000 governors supporting Wirral schools. This makes it one of the biggest volunteer forces on the Wirral. All governors in maintained schools are members of the Wirral Governors' Forum which coordinates representation for Wirral Governors on a range of bodies locally, regionally and nationally; for example, Wirral School's Forum and the Wirral Children's Trust Board. The Chair and Vice-Chair of Wirral Governors' Forum also liaise with senior colleagues in Wirral Council on the strategic development of support for Governors and also with the Governor Support Service.

2.2 To support these volunteers, Wirral Council runs its Governor Support Service and has done for many years. The Governor Support Service is mainly served by 1.8 Council employees with a Principal Manager managing the service. It is overseen by a Strategic Service Manager. There are many other staff and colleagues that have

provided support directly and indirectly for the Governors of Wirral through training and information or directly to school governing bodies. These include, the Director of Children's Services; Heads of Branch; Strategic Service Managers and Principal Managers; other consultants; and School Improvement Partners.

2.3 The primary role of the Governor Support Service has been to provide a multi-faceted level of support to Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, governors and clerks relating to all aspects of school governance.

2.4 Last year, in line with the "Wirral Future" consultation the Task Force Recommendations which were approved by Cabinet, a review took place of Governor Support Service and the way it was funded and where statutory duties resided.

2.5 Therefore, for 2011/12 most of the Governor Support Service delivery and funding was transferred across to the new Wirral school improvement service level agreement with schools, Education Quality (EQ). However as part of the Council contribution to EQ partnership, funding for the staff in Governor Support Service involved remained with the Council for 2011/12.

2.6 During 2011/12 the Council participated in the discussions around the possibilities of shared services within the LTP and in particular the possibilities from a shared governor support service with Cheshire East as the nominated lead authority.

2.7 Wirral is participating in the other three shared services which are, Primary Assessment; Newly Qualified Teacher authorisation; and Elective Home Education. Wirral CYPD is taking the lead on Primary Assessment.

2.8 Relevant staff were kept informed of the discussions and some of the implications.

2.9 As much of the governor support service is delivered through EQ, the potential and proposals for a governor support service shared service were taken to the EQ Management Board. This governing board for EQ is made up of Headteacher and governor representatives and Council Officers. In principal the Board approved the development of the shared service.

2.10 The proposed shared service outlined was:

- Local face-to-face training for governors
- A comprehensive range of e-learning modules tailored to our governors' needs
- National Governors' Association membership, including hard copy newsletters and regular and informative email updates
- Locally produced hard copy newsletters twice per year;
- A comprehensive web-based resource, including rapid response to all governor queries via Ten Governor Support, 24/7, 365 days per year
- A locally based help-line for non-generic queries, accessible to all governors
- A managed programme of support and training for clerks.
- Safer recruitment training

In particular Ten Governor Support, National Governors' Association membership and e-learning modules through Modern Governor would be a significant enhancement for

the service provision for 2012/13 over what is currently offered for not much more additional cost for the schools who bought into EQ.

2.11 To support the shared service delivery, a draft memorandum of understanding has been shared with Wirral legal services.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 It is important that the outstanding training, support, advice and other services that are provided to Wirral governors is maintained and enhanced.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The option not to join the shared service is being considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation as part of the EQ consultation has taken place with all Chairs of governors at locality events and with the EQ Management Board.

5.2 Staff have been consulted during the process and relevant trade unions have been kept informed of ongoing developments.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 The outcomes of the shared service would enhance service delivery to Wirral's largest group of volunteers, school governors.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 For 2011/12 Wirral Governor Support Service is funded by a combination of:
- Council Core Budget of £60,000
- EQ (schools) contributing £46,000.

7.2 For 2012/13, if the shared service proceeds, the costs would be:
- Council Core Budget of £36,000
- EQ (schools) contributing £81,857.

7.3 This change results in a saving of £24,000 to the Council non-schools budget. From the 1.8 admin support currently providing governor support, it has been reviewed that if the shared service goes ahead, then only 0.5 admin support will be required to be retained by Wirral Council. It is anticipated that the remaining 1.3 posts can be redeployed into posts following a review of CYPD central administration. This means that redundancies would not be required.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The draft memorandum of understanding for the shared service states that the Governors' Support Project Board will provide overall strategic oversight and direction to the governors shared service. This would imply that the Teckal Test is met for a

shared service and as such would not be subject to Wirral Council procurement procedures.

8.2 The transfer of the data base of governor records to Cheshire East is being clarified to ensure that the Data Protection regulations are met.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality? Yes and impact review can be found via the link below:

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Governors can travel to nearest locality training venue or access good quality training and advice from home.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 The information in the report is considered and that approval is given to enter formally into the shared Governor Support Service with Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Sharing the Governor Support Service with three other Local Authorities across the area will:

- Reduce Governor costs by £24,000 per year.
- Provide Wirral schools an enhanced Governor Support Service to those schools who buy into EQ.

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APPENDICES
None

REFERENCE MATERIAL
None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Report on Governor Support Services to CYP Overview and Scrutiny	**26 January 2011**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY & FAITH SECTOR WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAMME FOR NEET**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**CLLR SHEILA CLARKE**
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 As part of a complementary suite of budget policy options for Your Family – Services for Children and Young People, Members have requested that the Director of Children and Young People bring forward a report detailing how a work placement programme with the Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCFS) sector will be developed and delivered to tackle NEET.

1.2 This report sets out the proposed delivery model for the programme and seeks Members approval to commence delivery.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 On 25 November, 2011, the Government announced almost £1 billion of funding to deliver a new Youth Contract over the next three years from 2012-13 to support the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work

2.2 The Youth Contract contains three main elements. The first is additional support for unemployed 18-24 year olds, including Work Experience places, wage incentives and additional support from Jobcentre Plus advisers. The delivery of this element is being led by the Department for Work and Pensions

2.3 The second is subsidies for small businesses taking on an apprentice aged 16-24. This element is being led by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the National Apprenticeship Service

2.4 The third is a new programme of additional support aimed at 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training. The programme will give providers freedom to address young people's individual needs. It will be strongly based on payment by results, incentivising organisations to help young people to reengage sustainably in education, training or employment with training.

2.5 In total, £150 million of funding was announced to support this element in 2012-15. £24m of this funding will be provided to Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to put in place support for young people in their areas. An overall funding envelope of £126m will support delivery in England.

2.6 This programme will make a key contribution to achieving the Government's commitment to reach full participation of 16-17 year olds in education or training by 2015, as well as helping to reduce the risks of long-term unemployment.

2.7 In December 2011, the Departments for Education, Business, Innovation and Skills and Work and Pensions published *Building Engagement, Building Futures*, a joint strategy to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work.

2.8 The Wirral 16 and 17 year old voluntary work placement will fit within the overall context set out in that strategy, helping to achieve the Government's commitment to achieving full participation of 16 and 17 year olds in education or training.

2.9 Research shows that around two-fifths of young people who are NEET at 16-17 are 'sustained', facing significant barriers to re-engagement, with a greater likelihood of long-term disengagement. These are the young people that we most want to support through the VCFS work placement programme.

3.0 PROPOSED NEW PROGRAMME

3.1 In developing a voluntary work placement programme to tackle 16 and 17 year old NEET consideration has been given to determining the proposed interaction with DWP services as well as identifying gaps in national provision to meet local need. As a result, Members are requested to support delivery of the following activity to tackle NEET which adds value to DWP services and maximises investment in the borough. The model that has been developed complements and adds value to the NEET Participation model in place for care leavers. Placement opportunities will be offered Wirral wide in Partnership with the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector.

3.2 The main aim of the programme is to support 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education employment or training (NEET) and at risk of long term disengagement to move into education, training or employment and to sustain this outcome.

To increase these young people's experience and qualifications so that they have the opportunity to continue in education and successfully find work, reducing the proportion that become unemployed in adult life.

To test methods of local delivery and payment by results, increasing the effectiveness of these models and developing best practice.

3.3 The target group for this programme will be 16 and 17 year olds who are:

- Currently not participating in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Currently not receiving job seekers allowance

3.4 As of the end of February 2012 there were 1086 (9.15%) young people NEET in Wirral, of which 40 were claiming jobs seekers allowance. This brings 1046 young people into scope for this programme.

3.5 The target is to engage 10% of the NEET cohort on the programme.

3.6 It is proposed that the voluntary work placement programme adopts the same application and referral process as that already in place for the successful Wirral Apprenticeship programme (see Appendix 1).

3.7 Voluntary, Community and Faith organisations will be invited to bid to offer a voluntary placement opportunity that may last between 4 and 10 weeks. Each placement proposal will include additional costs associated with accommodating work placement opportunities. This may include for example a maintenance allowance, travel costs, PPE, child care costs. Organisations will be asked to demonstrate how they will successfully help some of the most disengaged 16-17 year olds into education, training and work with training within a potential funding envelope of £1600 per placement.

3.8 This programme will be based on a system of payment by results, with three payment points

- An **engagement payment** when a young person has joined the programme and the organisation has agreed an action plan with them. Proposed payment £100.
- A **retention payment** when the organisation successfully retains the young person in the placement opportunity. Proposed payment £200
- A **progression payment** when the young person is successfully engaged in one of the sustainability outcomes for 3 months after the date of the retention payment

3.9 Young people will be referred to the programme by Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership who has been commissioned to deliver Wirral's new targeted information, advice and guidance service from 01 April 2012.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 The Council will project manage the programme through existing staff in Children and Young People's Department who have the expertise and proven track record in managing work related learning and work experience programmes.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Consideration was given to commence a procurement exercise to tender with an external contractor to deliver the programme within a single contract. This option was discounted as we wanted to encourage the widest range of opportunities from a broad cross section of large and small organisations. In addition we wanted to mitigate against Health and Safety and safeguarding risks associated with extended work experience for this cohort of young people.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The new programme is helping to deliver Wirral's corporate priorities. These priorities were reviewed through extensive consultation with Wirral residents and our external partners as part of the refresh of the Corporate Plan in 2011.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 Members will be aware that the budget policy option specifically stated a programme that encouraged placements with organisations from the voluntary, community and faith sector.

7.2 Officers will seek to second, from the voluntary, community and faith sector, a project co-ordinator to be based in Children and Young People's Department.

7.3 The application process for the programme will enable smaller organisations, including voluntary, community and faith groups to bid to deliver voluntary placements.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 **Financial**

The total proposed allocation to support NEET Work Placement is £220,000 (Full budget breakdown is listed in Appendix 2).

IT
No direct implications arising from this report.

Staffing
The NEET Work Placement Programme will be project managed in-house by existing staff resource within Children and Young People. Members are asked to support the costs of

- A Placement Co-ordinator to be seconded from the VCFS to work alongside the 14-19 Team. 1 x fte at band G. Total cost including on costs £27,332
- A administrator at 0.5 fte at band B. Total cost including on costs £8,111

Assets
No direct implications arising from this report.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review will be published on the web site, hyperlink below.

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct Carbon usage implications arising from this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct planning or community safety implications arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Members are requested to approve the delivery model for the NEET 16 and 17 year old work placement programme.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Reducing NEET is a fundamental priority in Wirral's Corporate Plan and Children and Young People's Plan. As part of a complementary suite of budget policy options for Your Family – Services for Children and Young People, Members have requested that the Director of Children and Young People forward a report detailing how a programme of work placements for 16 and 17 year old NEET will support NEET reduction.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Council budget 2012/2013	21 February 2012

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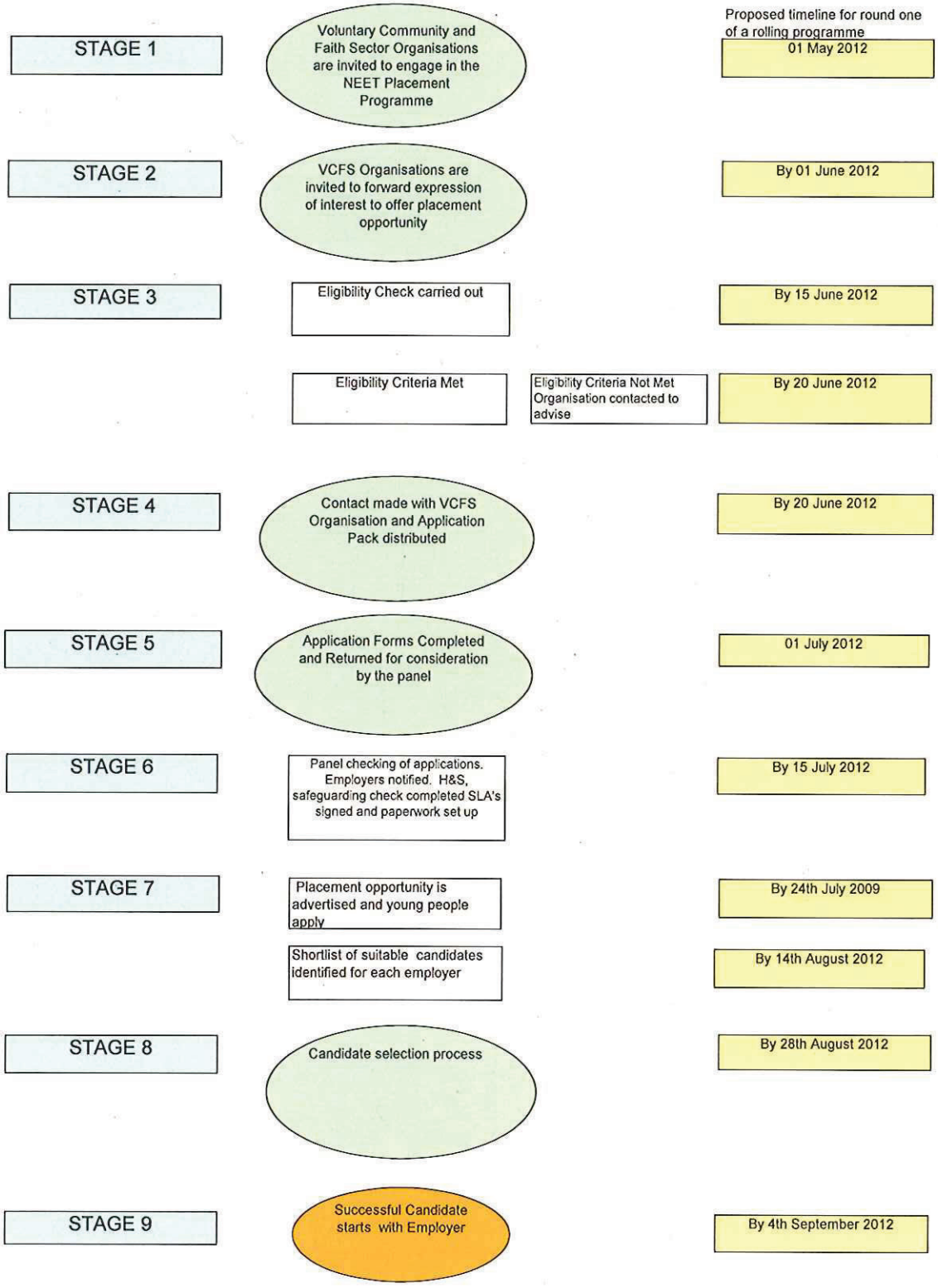
APPENDIX 1

The Wirral VCFS Placement Timeline



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APPENDIX 2

Budget: VCFS Work Placement Programme

Participant Costs (based on max 105 participants for 10 weeks)	£
Maintenance allowance 10 weeks x 105 participants @£30	31500
Travel 10 weeks x 105 participants @£20	21000
PPE 105 @ £100	10500
other (eg accreditation) 105 @ £20	21000
Provider Costs Provider charges 105 x £400	42000
Payment by results Participation 105 x £100 Retention (80%) 84 x £200 Progression (65%) 68 x £300	10500 16800 20400
Staff Costs (inc on costs)	40000
Contingency	6300
Total	**220000**

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	***CHIEF EXECUTIVE***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***CLLR JEFF GREEN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL***
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Wirral Council recognises the enormous contribution which our Armed Forces have made and continue to make to the safety and security of the Nation. The purpose of this report is to further demonstrate that recognition by seeking Cabinet approval for the 'signing up' to a Wirral Armed Forces Community Covenant.

1.2 This report also seeks Cabinet approval for the nominations of Armed Forces Champions at both Elected Member and Officer levels.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 An Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level. The aim of the Community Covenant is to encourage local communities to support the Armed Services community in their area and nurture understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces.

2.2 Wirral Council has a proud history of honouring the Armed Forces with some recent examples being the funding a Wirral Veterans Contact Centre. This is a unique service staffed three days a week by volunteering veterans and offer other returning service personnel, veterans or their families to come in and discuss any relevant matters with people who have undergone similar experiences and signpost the to the relevant agency or service provider. To date the Contact Centre has assisted over 150 veterans. In addition to the Contact Centre and in recognition of their recent tours to Afghanistan the Council has also agreed to bestow the Freedom of the Borough to 2 local Squadrons (234 (Wirral) Transport Squadron, Royal Logistics Corps and 107 (Lancashire and Chester) Field Squadron, Royal Engineers (Volunteers). This Honour will be celebrated with a march through the Borough on Saturday 21st April. A further example of the recognition the Council holds all our veterans and service personnel is the significant budget allocation for the recent extensive restoration of the war memorials across the Borough. It is vitally important that even in these austere times

we continue to remember and honour those that have given their lives for our freedom.

2.3 In October 2011 a letter was received from Brigadier Nick Fitzgerald, Commander of 42 (NW) BDE offering support to Local Authorities in the North West wishing to develop a Covenant. It was recommended in the letter from the Brigadier that an Armed Forces Champion be appointed. Mark Camborne the Health, Safety & Resilience Manager was appointed as officer Champion on an interim basis as he works regularly with the Armed Forces through his Resilience work and he has been leading on the development of the Wirral Veterans Contact Centre.

2.4 Upon receipt of the letter Mark met with Major Mark Austin from 156 (NW) Tpt Regt RLC (V) and discussed what should be included in a Community Covenant and the document at Appendix 1 was provided as a good example. Whilst this draft Covenant is clearly in its initial stages, it is very much based upon others that are in development across the North West. The Covenant is very much a statement of intent. The model is based upon a brief description of mutual support with a commitment to develop detailed initiatives and outcomes at a later date as mutually agreed by all partners.

2.5 Many people have become involved in supporting the Service community through Service Charities, or participating in Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Day and other military events. They have shown their support through fundraising and open days, attending homecoming parades and repatriation ceremonies and offering commercial discounts. Even simple demonstrations of support, such as displaying the Armed Forces Day window sticker in cars and businesses have had a positive effect and boosted the morale of our Armed Forces community.

2.6 The Community Covenant seeks to build on this local level of support, and its main aims are to:

- Encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces community in their areas;
- Nurture understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces community;
- Recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces community;
- Encourage activities which help integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life; and
- To encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.

2.7 As part of the commitment to the Covenant the Armed Forces would also like to see the establishment of an Armed Forces Steering Group (or Forum) to coordinate and implement the support between the Armed Forces and the community within Wirral. Following discussions with the military and also with other Councils who have already established similar groups, it is generally accepted that the Local Authority are best placed to coordinate these forums. On average these forums meet three or four times

a year and progress reports are delivered via the Chief Executive and the Brigade Commander on an annual basis.

2.8 The Armed Forces would like to see the Covenant signed by April 2012, however there is some degree of flexibility in the timescales providing it is demonstrated that the Council and its partners are working towards the Covenant being developed and signed.

2.9 Clearly there is more work to be done around the development of the Covenant. If support is given for establishing an Armed Forces Community Forum here on Wirral, then some initial questions that to be addressed are (not exhaustive):

- The principles, objectives and actions arising from the Covenant – are they the right ones and how can themes be delivered in practice?
- Which organisations / individuals should be the signatories of the Covenant?
- How should the (numerous) Veterans Organisations be represented?
- To what extent the Council and its Partners would want to promote particular services or coordinate activities targeted at ex service personnel to deliver the principles and objectives above?
- Determine the terms of reference and the membership of the Wirral Armed Forces Community Forum

2.10 At present this report is only seeking Cabinet endorsement for the signing of the Draft Covenant. An official, public signing will take place as close as possible to Armed Forces Day on the 30th June 2012. This will allow the initial Forum to have met and give suitable time for Partners to consider whether they wish to also sign up on that date.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Community covenants have already attracted significant interest and this is likely to increase with the recent announcement of the Armed Forces redundancies which is likely to result in an increased number of ex-service personnel resettling back in the North west.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 There are no other options as a result of this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 There is no need for consultation as a result of this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 Voluntary, community and faith groups, and also relevant charities will be invited to participate in the drafting of the Covenant.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 It is anticipated that any costs associated with delivering the Covenant will be contained within our existing resources. If this position should change this would be reflected in a future report to Cabinet.

7.2 In order to support the Armed Forces Covenant the MOD have established a Community Covenant Grant Fund. If Council were minded to support the Covenant this would enable applications to the fund to be made.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no carbon reduction implications as a result of this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no planning and community safety implications as a result of this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That Cabinet note the report and:

- Endorse the intention to sign up to the Draft Armed Forces Community Covenant on Armed Forces Day the 30th June 2012 and provide any comments on the draft appended to this report;
- Consider nominating an Elected Member Armed Forces Champion;
- Endorse the recommendation that the Health, Safety & Resilience Manager continue as the Armed Forces Champion; and
- Request that the Armed Forces Champion establish a Wirral Armed Forces & Veterans Forum;
- Agree to progress being reported via an annual report as detailed in paragraph 2.7.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To support the integration within the location and the community of all members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

13.2 To demonstrate continuing support within Wirral for our Armed Forces and Veterans.

REPORT AUTHOR: ***Mark Camborne***
Health, Safety & Resilience Manager
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Wirral Armed Forces Community Covenant (Draft)

REFERENCE MATERIAL

'***Honouring the Armed Service Community'*** LgiU. Available from following link:

https://member.lgiu.org.uk/whatwedo/Publications/Pages/armedservicecommunity.aspx

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	**Date**
None	

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Appendix 1

Community Covenant

AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

BETWEEN

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHARITABLE AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS, THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY OF WIRRAL

AND

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN WIRRAL

FIRST DRAFT

We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to honour the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

Signatories

Signed:

Name: **Brig N O Fitzgerald MBE**

Position Held: **Comd 42 (NW) Bde**

On behalf of the **Armed Forces Community**

Date:

Signed:

Name: **Councillor Jeff Green**

Position Held: **Leader**

On behalf of **Wirral Council**

Date:

Signed:

Name: **M Camborne**

Position Held: **Armed Forces Champion**

On behalf of **Wirral Council**

Date:

Signed:

Name: **Jim Wilkie**

Position Held: **Chief Executive**

On behalf of **Wirral Council**

Date:

Signed:

Name:
Position Held:
On behalf of the

Date:

Signed:

Name:
Position Held:
On behalf of

Date:

Others – Wirral NHS, Veterans organisations such as ABF, Royal British Legion, Business Sector, Police, Fire?

FIRST DRAFT

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS

1.1 This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in Wirral

And

Wirral Borough Council

And

The Charitable and Voluntary Sector

And

Other members of the civilian community

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

2.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

2.2 The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Wirral and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er) s in Wirral.

2.3 For Wirral Borough Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives such as the Welfare Pathway.

2.4 For the Armed Forces community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

Aims of the Community Covenant

3.1 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and

FIRST DRAFT

from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.

3.2 The Armed Forces Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community

3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

3.4 Recognise the status of serving soldiers and veterans through public events and other public support.

SECTION 4: Measures

4.1 The establishment of an overarching Wirral Armed Forces Community Forum to co-ordinate and direct implementation of mutual support between the Armed Forces and the community within Wirral. The Forum will report annually to the Chief Executive Wirral Borough Council and Commander 42 (North West) Brigade.

4.2 Through specific Working Groups develop action plans to support the delivery of agreed priorities to in-service and ex-service personnel and their families where appropriate:

- **Education, children and young people**.
- **Skills and employment**
- **Safer communities, environment, housing and Infrastructure**.
- **Health and wellbeing**

4.3 The development of a communication strategy in order to ensure that key services are effectively signposted to members of the Armed Forces Community.

4.4 Encourage the recognition of the Armed Forces through such activities as Freedom, Homecoming and Remembrance Parades and support to the annual Armed Forces Day.

4.5 Work with the Wirral community to access the £30M Community Covenant Fund, in order to deliver financial support to projects at the local level which strengthen the ties or mutual understanding of the Armed Forces community and the wider community in which they live.

FIRST DRAFT

CONTACT PERSONNEL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

MOD DCDS (Pers&Trg) Covenant Team

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In-Service representative(s)

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Wirral Borough Council

Contact Name:	Mr Mark Camborne
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FIRST DRAFT

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom
Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

FIRST DRAFT

LGA Wirral Improvement Board
Terms of Reference

The Programme Board is a partnership between Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council and the Local Government Association and will provide oversight, support and challenge to Wirral's improvement and transformation journey.

The Board aims to support the Council to:

- Demonstrate its ambitions for its local communities
- Drive forward its plans for improvement in corporate governance and services in a timely way
- Prioritise what is most important
- Create the capacity and plans to embed lasting improvements and culture change
- Deliver improved services within realistic spending constraints

The Improvement Board's role is to:

- Provide support and guidance
- Identify and signpost appropriate good practice
- Provide challenge and act as a critical friend
- Ensure the contributions from different external agencies/bodies to Wirral's improvement journey are coordinated
- Ensure there is a single, integrated and holistic improvement plan that can be clearly understood and communicated internally and externally
- Endorse decisions which impact on political and managerial leadership arrangements, corporate governance and improvement in advance of them going through Wirral's own decision-making structures, eg Cabinet or Council.

Board meetings

Duration – We expect the Improvement Board to be in place for at least eighteen months ie summer 2013 in order to guide and support Wirral's improvement journey.

Frequency – monthly for the first six months then review

Venue – at a Wirral Council venue.

Agenda – at each meeting the Board will agree the content of the agenda for the next meeting. Standard agenda items should include:

- Actions from the previous meeting
- Report on progress against the improvement plan

- Risk review
- Additional items for the agenda for the next meeting
- Confirmation of date, time and venue for the next meeting

Chair – LGA Principal Advisor (to April 2012) then Joyce Redfearn

Review – These Terms of Reference will be kept under review by the Improvement Board as things develop. A protocol for delegation of urgent matters to the Chair of the Improvement Board in consultation with the Council Chief Executive will be developed.

Attendees
Wirral Council – Council Leader and Leaders of the two other main political parties, Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Law and the Programme Manager for the Improvement Programme
Local Government Association – Principal Advisor North West, Associate Support Officer, Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Member Peers.
Independent Chief Executive- CE of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.
District Auditor.
Advisors – AKA Associates and the Chief Executive of North West Employers.
Other officers or Members, or indeed representatives form other external bodies may be invited to attend as appropriate.

Action Notes – A note outlining the actions agreed following will be produced by the LGA after each meeting and this will be available for wide circulation.
Every third meeting of the Board will be held in public to report on progress and take questions.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	Chief Executive's Office
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	Chief Executive
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	The Leader of The Council
KEY DECISION:	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report makes recommendations in relation to strengthening the Chief Executive's Office to ensure appropriate priority is given to key areas of activity. This involves the transfer of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR and OD). In addition it takes forward the arrangements for establishing a Council Policy Unit, further to the review of policy undertaken as part of the governance work programme agreed by Cabinet on 16 November 2011 to ensure sufficient capacity is in place to manage this crucial area of activity.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

There is a significant improvement and delivery agenda that requires the leadership of The Chief Executive. It is important, therefore, that The Chief Executive has sufficient support to meet these challenges. It is also important that the key functions that can drive change, policy, communications and engagement, HR and Organisational Development, work closely together to support The Chief Executive to deliver the challenge.

3.0 HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The HR and OD function is a key driver for change and is of strategic importance in developing and delivering the capacity and cultural change required across the organisation. The People Strategy 2010-2013: 2011-2012 Implementation Plan was agreed by the Employment and Appointments Committee and outlined the key priorities of The People Strategy. These priorities require the leadership from The Chief Executive.

3.2 The aim of The People Strategy is to ensure that Wirral Council has an effective and productive workforce to meet its current and future objectives. The principles of The People Strategy are that people who are well led, healthy, motivated and developed, are more likely to deliver effectively. The Council's strategic people issues have been addressed through focusing our attention and prioritising action within 5 key themes with the priorities for deliver 2011/12 detailed below:

1. Developing and delivering leadership and skills across the organisation

- Improve the take-up of learning and development and continue to develop learning to meet the needs of the organisation

2. Developing our organisation, to respond to and deliver change

- Improved communications
- Continued development of a framework to consult and engage employees
- Remodelling the organisation to respond to organisational change
- Future workforce change plan to be put in place
- People are deployed effectively, and employee pay costs reflect the working arrangements within budget
- Delivery of the Transforming Business Support project
- Review Employee Pay Costs

3. Developing capability and capacity to deliver performance improvement

- Implement and embed a performance management framework for leadership.

4. Delivering performance through an effective People Management Framework and efficient processes

- To review and seek approval for the People Management Framework policies
- Delivery of one Casework system for HR cases
- Delivery and management of enhanced Attendance Management policy and procedure
- Implementation of Phase 2 and 3 of Job Evaluation
- Effected HR processes / services

5. Delivering our role as a good employer

- Achievement of Excellent Status for the Equality Framework for Local Government
- Further develop the Fit for Wirral Framework
- Development of Apprenticeship and Graduate Programmes

3.3 The People Strategy Implementation plan will need to be reviewed for 2012/13 to ensure that it both drives and supports the Council's Improvement Plan. Organisational Development is key to developing organisational capacity, leadership, individual performance management, team working and personal development.

4.0 POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

4.1 A detailed review of policy was undertaken to establish the proposed functions of a Policy Unit with involvement from key stakeholders. As part of this work, a review of policy arrangements in a range of other local authorities was undertaken to explore models for delivery and identify good practice. These findings identified a strong correlation between the development of robust evidence-based policies and strategies with effective engagement and consultation with stakeholders and local people. The review further identified that many of the models explored aligned responsibilities for policy development and equality and diversity within one team.

4.2 As the result of the review, this report makes recommendations with regard to establishing the Policy Unit by April 2012. It is therefore proposed that the Head of Communications and Community Engagement is assigned to a newly designated

post of Head of Policy, Communications and Community Engagement with overall responsibility for the Council's Policy Unit reporting directly to The Chief Executive in addition to existing responsibilities for all communications and community engagement activities (including marketing, tourism, the voluntary, community and faith sector) and equality and diversity.

4.3 On the basis of these findings and with engagement from key stakeholders, the proposed functions of the Policy Unit which were reported to the Council's Corporate Governance Committee on the 8 February 2012 will include:

4.4 ***To lead on a coherent and joined up approach to policy, planning and strategy development for the Council***

The products and features of this function would include:

- Regular policy briefings
- Well coordinated policy framework
- Development of the Council's Corporate Plan and other strategic plans as appropriate including the Child Poverty Strategy
- Policy network for the Council with all departments represented

The intended outcomes of this function will be:

- Elected Members are well informed on current and future policy issues
- Effective collaboration between departments on cross cutting policy issues
- Robust implementation and review of policy decisions
- Effective sharing of learning and best practice

4.5 ***To ensure that there is a robust knowledge and evidence based approach to decision making in order to tackle the key challenges for Wirral***

The products and features of this function will include:

- Robust approach to 'horizon scanning' and dissemination of information
- Regular policy briefings
- A single knowledge 'hub' / evidence base e.g. statistics, demographic info
- Annual 'state of the borough' report
- Joined up approaches for research and information

The intended outcomes of this function will be:

- Consistent use of evidence to develop Council plans and strategies
- Shared view within the Council and amongst partners about the key challenges / opportunities for Wirral

4.6 ***To engage with local and sub-regional partners to shape and respond to policy developments and implement decisions***

The products and features of this function will include:

- Utilising the Local Strategic Partnership to discuss policy drivers

- Innovative partnership working
- A clear briefing process in place to inform the Council's contribution at City Region, regional and national level

The intended outcomes of this function will be:

- The Council and LSP proactively anticipates and plans for policy changes
- Shared view within the Council and amongst partners about the key challenges / opportunities for Wirral
- Identification of potential resources
- Influencing policy at sub-regional, regional and national level through ensuring that Wirral's interests and priorities are effectively represented.

5.0 INITIAL STAFFING AND RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. Cabinet on 11 July 2010 agreed to a centralised model for The Human Resources and Organisational Development function with a phased plan for delivery. It was recognised that to meet the challenges facing the Council the HR/OD team would need to work differently, with consistent leadership and direction under a "one team" approach. The principles of centralising the HR/OD function ensure that there is one team which brings all the functions of HR/OD together. This allows for alignment of work, ensuring all team members understand the priorities and are working towards those priorities, ensuring the most effective utilisation of resources. This will be completed with a further report to Cabinet outlining the financial changes and future structure.

5.2 The role of Head of HR and OD is currently at a Head of Service level. The role will now take on additional duties which include directly supporting and reporting to The Chief Executive in leading and driving The Improvement Plan for the Council which will have a capacity building and people focus. This role will also provide direct support to The Chief Executive.
To ensure parity with other direct reports it is proposed that this role be re- graded at a Deputy Chief Officer level, DCO3. However as the senior management grades are currently being evaluated, this change will be subject to the outcome of job evaluation.

5.3 At The Employment and Appointments Committee on 29 September 2011, the Committee approved my recommendation to create a Policy Unit working directly to me and approved the creation of a new post of Head of Policy. Since this report in September, I have implemented an interim arrangement whereby officers with responsibilities for policy development have been reporting directly to me. This has resulted in significant capacity issues. Policy development is an extremely important function for the authority, as identified in the AKA report, and it is therefore essential that this area of work is given sufficient capacity and strategic direction to robustly influence and improve Council services. The recommendations made within this report are therefore based on ensuring that a strategic direction is effectively provided to the new post of Head of Policy and the policy unit, and I am therefore recommending that the Council's policy function reports into a Head of Service rather than directly to me to provide additional support and capacity to this important work.

5.4 The review of policy arrangements in a range of other local authorities identified a strong correlation between the development of robust evidence-based policies and strategies with effective engagement and consultation with stakeholders and local people. I am therefore recommending that the Head of Communications and Community Engagement is assigned to a newly designated post of Head of Policy, Communications and Community Engagement with overall responsibility for the Council's Policy Unit. This post already reports directly to the Chief Executive as a DCO3 with existing responsibilities for all communications and community engagement activities (including marketing, tourism, the voluntary, and community and faith sector) and equality and diversity. This post will also provide direct support for The Chief Executive.

5.5 The core staff in the Policy Unit will work closely with a wider network of officers in departments and link as appropriate to other core functions in order to effectively coordinate the Council's approach to knowledge management. This will include links with the functions delivered by the Director of Public Health such as the preparation of Wirral's joint strategic needs assessment and wider research and information requirements.

5.6 A proposed structure chart is shown at Appendix A

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

6.1 The bringing together of key functions to support The Chief Executive seeks to mitigate the risk of the Council not delivering on the Improvement plan.

6.2 A project team has been established for the review of policy with robust project planning and risk management in place. The risks in relation to this project are regularly reviewed to ensure that these are addressed through mitigating action.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The establishment of a Council Policy Unit is one of the 10 Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) approved by the Corporate Governance Committee on the 16 November 2011. This provided a clear steer for the review and therefore no further options were considered.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation with the key senior staff affected has taken place.

8.2 Consultation with stakeholders in respect of the establishment of a Policy Unit has been undertaken as set out in section 5.0 of this report. This report has also been considered by the Council's Corporate Governance Committee on the 8 February 2012.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

9.1 The proposed functions of the Policy Unit relating to engaging with partners will take into account the need to ensure effective engagement with voluntary, community and faith groups.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

10.1 The net annual cost of the change of the grade for the post of Head of HR and OD is £2821 plus on costs.

10.2 All other proposals are met within existing resources.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 No legal implications have been identified in respect of the proposals set out in this report.

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached –

Law, Human Resources and Asset Management Equality Impact Assessments (post 2010) | WIRRAL Borough Council

13.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 No carbon reduction implications have been identified in respect of the proposals set out in this report.

14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 No planning or community safety implications have been identified in respect of the proposals set out in this report.

15.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 It is recommended that proposals in this report are agreed as the basis of the further work required in establishing the Policy Unit by April 2012.

15.2 The Head of Communications and Community Engagement is assigned to a newly designated post of Head of Policy, Communications and Community Engagement with overall responsibility for the Council's Policy Unit reporting directly to The Chief Executive in addition to existing responsibilities for all communications and community engagement activities (including marketing, tourism, the voluntary, community and faith sector) and equality and diversity;

15.3 Authority is designated to the newly designated post of Head of Policy, Communications and Community Engagement to establish the Policy Unit on the basis of the proposed function and staffing considered in this report and works with departments and key service areas to ensure the effective delivery of the core functions of the Unit.

15.4 That the Head of HR and OD reports directly to The Chief Executive and the function is moved into the new Chief Executive's Department. The role will be

graded at Deputy Chief Officer level DCO3, subject to the outcomes of Job Evaluation.

15.5 Recommend to The Employment and Appointments Committee the changes to the Staffing arrangements outlined above.

16.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

16.1 The recommendations are in response to the critical milestones set out by Anna Klonowski in her report *'Improving Corporate Governance In Wirral'*. The establishment of a Council Policy Unit is one of the 10 Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) approved by the Corporate Governance Committee on the 16th November 2011.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Jim Wilkie**
Chief Executive
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APPENDICES
Appendix A Structure chart – The Chief Executive's Office

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Corporate Governance Committee	8 February 2012

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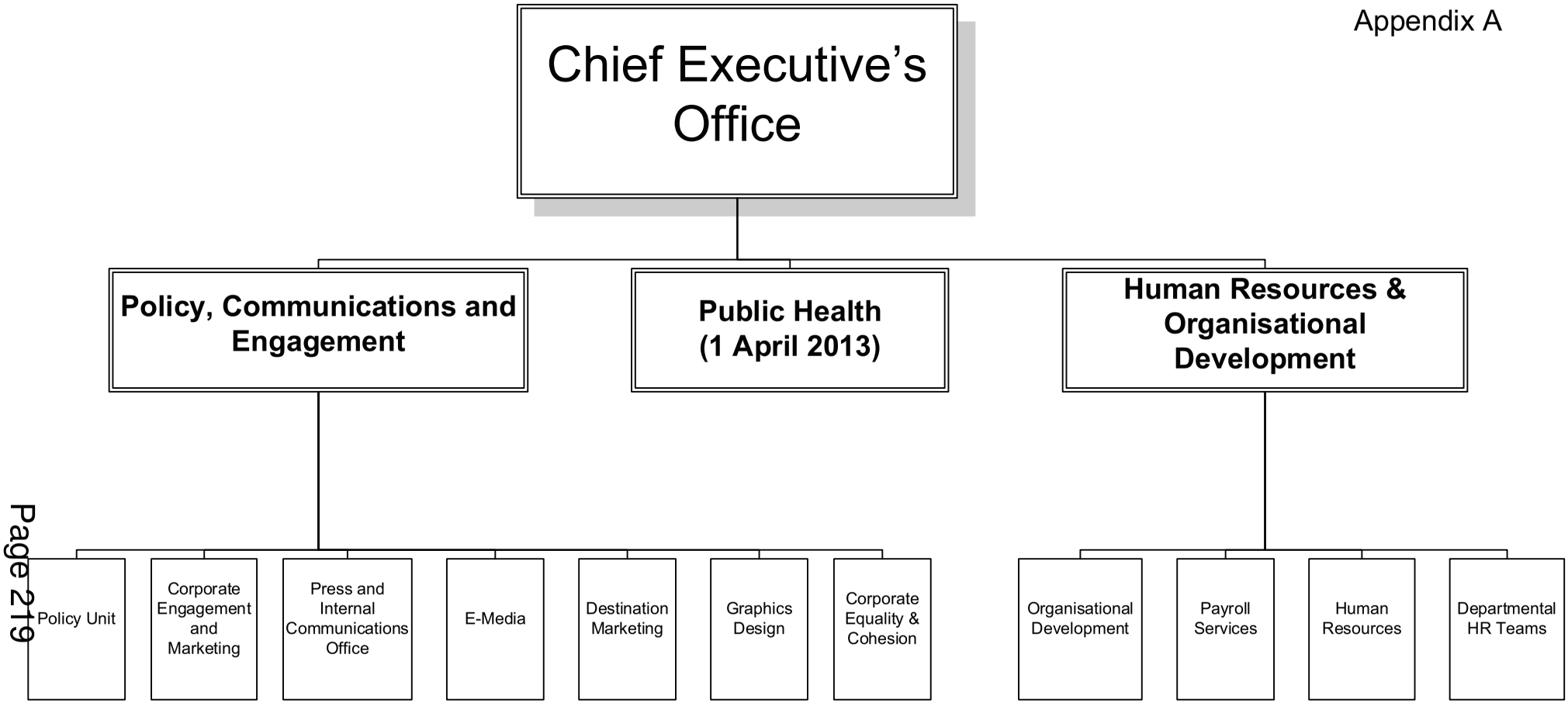
Appendix A


Chief Executive's Office
Policy, Communications and Engagement
Public Health (1 April 2013)
Human Resources & Organisational Development
Policy Unit
Corporate Engagement and Marketing
Press and Internal Communications Office
E-Media
Destination Marketing
Graphics Design
Corporate Equality & Cohesion
Organisational Development
Payroll Services
Human Resources
Departmental HR Teams

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER'S BUDGET 2012**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR JEFF GREEN**
KEY DECISION:	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented his Budget 2012 on 21 March 2012. This report provides a summary of the main issues together with the key implications for local authorities.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Chancellor's budget set out actions covering three specific themes

- A Stable Economy: the government laid out measures which aim to protect the economy and achieve strong, sustainable and balanced growth.

- A Fairer More Efficient and Simpler Tax System: this to be achieved by introducing measures to reward work, reducing headline tax rates, closing tax loopholes and by introducing measures to create a simpler and sustainable tax system.

- Reforms to Support Growth: this includes measures which complement the Plan for Growth, Autumn Statement 2011 and the National Infrastructure Plan 2011.

2.2 THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

(a) The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has revised the UK growth forecast for 2012 from 0.7% to 0.8%. Growth is forecast to be 2% in 2013, 2.7% in 2014 and 3% in both 2015 and 2016.

(b) Inflation is forecast to fall to 2.8% during 2012 and reduce to 1.9% during 2013.

(c) The OBR forecast unemployment to peak at 8.7% during 2012 before falling to 6.3% by 2016/17.

(d) Borrowing is expected to be £125 billion in 2012 which is £1 billion less than forecast in the Autumn Statement. Borrowing is expected to reduce to £120 billion during 2012/13 and reduce further each year to £21 billion in 2016/17.

(e) The Chancellor confirmed the plans set out in the Autumn Statement 2011 for public spending growth in 2015-16 and 2016-17 to continue at the same rate as per the Spending Review 2010.

PROPOSALS AFFECTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.3 A number of measures and proposals were announced by the Chancellor which may impact upon Local Government. These are detailed in the following paragraphs.

(a) Borrowing Costs. The Government will introduce a 20 basis point (0.2%) discount on loans made by the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) for local authorities who aid transparency by providing the Government with additional information regarding long term borrowing and associated capital spending plans. The Government will also work with local authorities to examine the potential for an independent body to facilitate the provision of PWLB lending at a further reduced rate. Further details regarding these proposals will be announced at a future date.

(b) Public Sector Pay. The Government has provided evidence to the Pay Review Bodies on the case for reforming public sector pay to better reflect local labour markets. The review bodies are expected to report back from July 2012.

(c) Local Support for Council Tax Set Up Costs. £30 million has been set aside to help local authorities with set-up costs for the new local support for Council Tax which replaces Council Tax Benefit from 1 April 2013. Further details are awaited.

(d) Council Tax Rebate for Service Families. The Chancellor announced that relief on Council Tax for service families will be raised to 100%. The current 50% relief scheme is paid for by the Ministry of Defence and does not affect the Council Tax receipts of Councils. Details are awaited as to whether the 100% scheme will function in the same manner.

(e) Tax Increment Financing. The Chancellor announced that £150 million would be made available from 2013-14 for larger scale projects in core cities. This will enable eligible local authorities to borrow against future growth in business rates.

(f) Planning. The Government will publish the National Planning Policy Framework. This is intended to aid local authorities with pro-growth policies in local plans.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 No other options are applicable to this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 No specific consultation has been undertaken with respect to this report

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 There are no specific resource implications arising directly from this report. Once further details of the proposals laid out within the Chancellor's budget 2012 are released, these will impact upon future local government resources.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That Cabinet notes the implications from the Chancellor's budget.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 To make Members aware of changes emanating from the Budget that will impact on future policy decisions taken by the Council.

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Chief Accountant
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APPENDICES

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet - Autumn Statement 2011	**8 December 2011**
Cabinet - Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget 2011	**14 April 2011**
Cabinet - Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget 2012	**15 April 2010**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CARERS SELF DIRECTED ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION SYSTEM**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**GRAHAM HODKINSON, DIRECTOR OF DEPARTMENT OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR JEFF GREEN**
KEY DECISION?	**YES**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to agree a proposal for an engagement and consultation exercise to consider changes to the current carer's budget provided through the Department of adult social care Resource Allocation System (RAS). These changes will be undertaken as part of a co production arrangement with carers and their representatives and aim to ensure that there is a clearer focus on carers when they need support. It will also ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligation towards carers of vulnerable adults which are outlined in the 1995 Carers Act and subsequent equalities legislation.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 In October 2010 Cabinet agreed the introduction of a new assessment and resource distribution system for adults with social care needs. When eligible for support under the Council's Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) eligibility criteria, service users can now access personal budgets in accordance with national guidance on the development of personalisation. In October 2011 a review of these arrangements was started. This review included an evaluation of the carers assessment and the carers budget which are a discrete part of the wider self assessment and Resource Allocation System.

2.2 For the purpose of this report, a carer is someone who provides some form of care for an individual (usually family members, friends or neighbours), be that physical care, emotional support, advice or advocacy support. A carer is a person who provides (or intends to provide) a substantial amount of care on a regular basis to the person being assessed and is not paid for providing that care (nor is she or he providing the care as a volunteer placed into the caring role by a voluntary organisation).

2.3 The law relating to carers states that for those carers providing a substantial amount of care they have a right to a 'carers assessment', and their ability to manage in their caring role must be taken into account. This requirement is covered in the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995.

2.4 The model agreed and adopted by Wirral Council is that service users who are cared for and their carers are assessed through a Self Directed Assessment (SDA) which allocated points according to that answers given in the assessment. These points are translated into an indicative budget through the Resource Allocation System. There then follows a support planning process where the support to help the individual and their carer is agreed upon, making use of elements of this indicative budget to meet their critical and substantial needs under Fair Access to Care Services. This support could take the form of services commissioned by the Council, or direct payments whereby the individual purchases services agreed with the Council with monies paid to them, or a combination of both. The agreed support is called a personal budget.

2.5 The way that the budget is arrived at is the same for carers and the people they care for. However as these new arrangements have been rolled out the emphasis on encouraging choice and control for service users and their carers has led to the carers needs and the needs of the individual becoming merged in support plans. Having considered the legal guidance in this area, it is clear that carers have needs of their own and should be supported in managing the impact of undertaking the caring role, separately from the service users own needs. Any intimate care provided to the individual should come from the service user's personal budget. The most common example of where carers budgets have been used is for respite care where the person's intimate care needs are met. This should be identified in the person's support plan, and not the carers plan.

Proposal to consult on proposed changes to the carers budget

2.6 For these reasons the main proposal in this report is that the Council, working with representative groups supporting carers, undertakes an engagement and consultation exercise with a view to implementing changes to the current carers Self Directed Assessment and carers budget. The intention would be to engage and consult on a revised set of arrangements which would more clearly identify resources made available for 'carer specific' services.

The consultation and engagement process would draw on the resources of the Council's corporate communications and engagement team alongside carers representative groups of the Voluntary Community and Faith sector. A range of methods would be used to ensure an inclusive and comprehensive engagement process. These would include the following:

- Consulting with those carers currently receiving a carers budget
- Engaging with the carers representative groups
- Holding engagement events where appropriate

2.7 The focus of the consultation and engagement exercise will consider changes to the current carer's budget with resources linked to their critical and substantial needs The impact of a caring would remain the focus of the assessment process and the aim would be to ensure there was greater clarity for goods and services for carers as part of their separate carers assessment. Support that is provided to the service user such

as respite care will transfer into their personal budget. These arrangements will comply with the law and national guidance.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 It will be important to consult widely with carers on these changes to ensure that they do not view the proposed new system as less effective in terms of meeting their needs. The current point system can generate a carers budget of up to £4,500 per year. However, the critical point to note is that some of the services currently being purchased through this budget meets the service users needs rather than the carers needs. As advised, a legal guidance confirms that intimate care needs for an individual should be met from their personal budget.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The option of not changing the current system has been considered but rejected because, while there is no evidence that carers needs have not been met, the Council needs to ensure that it distinguishes between meeting the needs of service users and their carers through separate assessment support plans.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 A revised carers Self Directed Assessment has already been drafted with a small group of carers who support a wide range of people with differing needs. Their input and expertise has been invaluable alongside consultation with practitioners from the Department of Adult Social Services and staff from the Finance Department.

5.2 The proposed changes will be consulted on with carers representative groups, Wirral Carers Association and the Carers Development Committee. The Wirral COMPACT is an agreement between the statutory sector and third sector partners in Wirral. Its purpose is to define and strengthen relationships between the statutory sector and the third sector for the benefit of Wirral people. The COMPACT is a commitment to work more closely and to respect each others rights and responsibilities. All consultation and engagement activity will follow the principles of Wirral's COMPACT agreement to ensure that engagement is conducted comprehensively and inclusively. The consultation programme will also be informed by equalities considerations.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 The Voluntary Community and Faith Sector will play an active role in the consultation exercise and work will be based on the principles of co-production.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 It is important that support for carers is separated from the support offered to the person they care for, and that any services which provide intimate care to the person should be funded through the personal budget. Because service users are financially assessed and make a contribution to their care, there will be an impact in terms of Fair Access to Care Services. Under the current system, carers are not subject to financial assessment or charging and there are no plans as part of this proposal to change this.

7.2 Subject to the outcome of the consultation the new carers assessment will be loaded onto the Department of Adult Social Services Electronic Social Care Records (ESCR) templates.

7.3 Subject to any changes being made, a training programme will be developed to support people to understand and implement these changes. Carers currently in receipt of a carers budget would be subject to an individual service review before any changes were made to their existing support.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The proposed changes to the carers assessment process have been made in response to the legal guidance set out in the 1995 Carers Act informed by the changes brought about by the new Equality Act 2010.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That Cabinet note the report.

12.2 That Cabinet agree to progress the consultation and engagement process for changes to the carers personal budget using the methodology referred to in this report.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To ensure carers needs are met as distinct from the person they care as set out in relevant legal guidance.

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APPENDICES
None.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Carers and Their Rights : The Law Relating to Carers Four Edition 2011, Luke Clements.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet - Resource Allocation System	**October 2010**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***PUBLIC HEALTH DEVELOPMENTS – 2012/13***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	***DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH***
KEY DECISION	YES/NO *(delete as applicable)*

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the key development areas which will be delivered through the Public Health Annual Plan for 2012-13. Currently accountability for the delivery of these activities lies within the National Health Service at the NHS Cheshire, Warrington and Wirral Cluster Board. However, during 2012-13 public health reform means that increasingly the Council will need to be involved in the determination of future priorities for action, and will want to understand progress against the existing plan in order to be in a good position to take early decisions affecting delivery from April 2013 onwards. The Health and Social Care Act which enshrines these public health reforms is expected to receive Royal Assent before the Easter recess.

1.2 The activities described in this report are those identified for the final year of the delivery of NHS Wirral's Strategic Commissioning Plan, and for a number of other existing public health programmes.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The NHS Wirral Strategic Plan for 2010-13 identified the health needs of the local population, and how the views of the public and partners were being captured, and set out a number of programmes to address these. There were ten programmes in all, of which are linked to public health outcomes. Leadership for five of these strategic programmes has been provided through the public health directorate, these include: Health Inequalities, Alcohol, Obesity, Smoking and Sexual Health. All of these issues are to be the future responsibility of local authorities. In addition there are a number of other public health programmes that have been in place for some years and which are regularly reviewed to ensure they are still delivering value to our local population, and for improvement purposes. These include: accidental injury prevention, mental wellbeing, drug misuse, physical activity, workforce health and the healthy child programme.

2.2 This report can in no way do justice to the wide range of activities that are taking place on these strategic programmes, and it may be useful if future reports on specific areas of interest were to be brought to future Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny meetings. Additionally, the full Annual Plan report will be made available to

Elected Members. However, it will hopefully highlight areas of development activity which will be taking place in the Borough during the financial year April 2012-13.

2.3 Proposed new developments for 2012-13

The Alcohol Treatment programme (which incorporates education, prevention and treatment services for adults and children) will be managed by the Drug and Alcohol Action team (DAAT) and will continue to deliver the services described in detail in the strategic commissioning plan. Considerable progress was made in achieving the goals of this plan during 2011-12, with the new developments proposed in last years plan all delivered, or at least on the way to being delivered. To follow on from that work and further enhance the performance of the Programme in 2012-13, it is proposed that a new series of developments are delivered, including the following:

- Work with Cheshire and Wirral partnership to put in place a "Shared Care scheme" for alcohol that builds on the learning and structures already established and operating effectively for drugs.
- Develop further the additional alternative responses to alcohol related crime and integrate these with the existing drug Intervention Process to achieve the maximised effectiveness and added value that this has the potential to offer. This includes further amendments to the Conditional Cautioning Scheme and the introduction of more prompt responses to alcohol related crime.
- Linking the above with the enhanced prison through-care process with the capacity of this increased to enable it to engage with prisoners leaving custody who have had problems with alcohol and to connect them effectively with the appropriate community based services on their release.
- Deliver the Social Marketing Campaign for young people using a "Peer Mentoring" model and incorporating the lessons learnt from the pilot study conducted in 2011.
- Continue to strengthen the crisis intervention response, with particular reference to establishing a link nurse between Wirral University Teaching Hospital, General Practitioners and Birchwood, – ensuring that access to the service by General Practice is prompt and effective
- Redesign the 'WHAT?' (alcohol awareness) website
- Complete the analysis of the data and information from the Alcohol needs Assessment and implement the actions and development indicated by this process.
- Produce a new alcohol strategy

The Government are preparing a new National Alcohol Strategy, and the team will also respond to this on its publication and look to incorporate it's priorities into the local delivery plan and programme.

The health inequalities programme (which incorporates the Community Programme, the Health Trainer Service and the Targeted Nurse Practitioner service for the homeless) will continue to deliver the commissioned services and intends to undertake a number of key developments in 2012-13, including:

- To deliver a Health Advocate service to provide additional support and capacity to the Health Trainer programme. It is anticipated that delivery will commence in April/May 2012
- To offer third sector providers pilot funding to develop capacity for community-led health improvement activities, including Expert Patient and Mind-fullness programme

- To develop a service to increase the sustainability and reach of the Community Programme to those people who are most at risk of ill health and benchmark the programme against other areas

The obesity programme (incorporating the breastfeeding peer support service, the UNICEF baby-friendly initiative, adult and child weight management services and delivery of the Healthy Schools Programme) will continue to deliver the services commissioned via the strategic commissioning plan. During 2012-13 additional developments will include:

- Weight management interventions for obese pregnant women
- Workforce development to promote early intervention to increase healthy weight

The Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme has 2 investment strands –specific services for young people and universal services for the whole population:

The young people's programme (incorporating support for the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, Health Services in Schools, Brook Wirral, workforce development, targeted outreach and delivery of the "Young People Friendly: You're Welcome" initiative) will continue to deliver its core programme, with the following enhancements through Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) 2012-13 including:

- Secondary school PSHE staff trained to raise awareness about teenage relationship abuse and domestic violence and provided with lesson resource.
- Resources and training to be developed through a multi-agency partnership for children and young people's workforce on addressing sexualisation, child sexual exploitation and pornography with young people.
- Disseminate findings from the 'Faith and Values in Relationships and Sex Education' consultation in the form of a Values Framework for Wirral.

The Chlamydia testing and treatment programme spans the age range 15-24 and is a model of good practice of a targeted and value for money intervention. However while positivity rates are high the testing volumes have been insufficient to meet targets so additional resource was commissioned to increase the volume of young men tested and to take testing out into the community using the 'Screen for a Screen engagement tool'. The learning from this pilot will be incorporated into the integrated specification for 2012-13.

In addition in 2012-13 implementation of findings of the needs assessments will continue, including:

- Increased accessibility to SRH services
- Develop and pilot 'self-care' SRH model based in Children's Centres
- Improve efficiency and VFM of SRH services
- Commission workforce clinical training where necessary
- Increase access and availability of Emergency Hormonal Contraception
- Maximise core service uptake of Chlamydia screening to meet 2012-13 outcome measure (2,400 per 100,000 population)
- Increase access to, and retention of, Long Acting Reversible Contraception methods
- Increase promotion of and access to HIV testing to ensure reduced undiagnosed rate and to reduce late diagnosis
- Commission a one–stop Wirral sexual health web-site and additional promotion work

NHS Cheshire, Warrington and Wirral Cluster and sub-regional (Cheshire and Merseyside SH Network) partnership work under development 2012-13 :

- A joint and shared specification for integrated reproductive and sexual health services
- Validation and road-testing of sexual health tariff and pathways
- Identification of a model joint protocol and pathway for free Emergency Hormonal Contraception in community pharmacies
- Abortion service study and development of self–referral pathway
- Best practice guidelines for condom distribution

The sexual health programme (incorporating support for the teenage pregnancy strategy, **H**ealth **S**ervices in **S**chools, workforce development, targeted outreach and delivery of the "Young People Friendly: You're Welcome" initiative) will continue to deliver its core programme, with the following enhancements for 2012-13 including:

- Secondary school staff trained to raise awareness about teenage relationship abuse and domestic violence and provided with lesson resource.
- Resources and training to be developed for children and young people's workforce on addressing sexualisation, child sexual exploitation and pornography with young people.
- Disseminate findings from the 'Faith and Values in Relationships and Sex Education' consultation in the form of a Values Framework for Wirral.
- Brief intervention training in targeted Secondary schools to promote positive mental health
- Further targeted outreach to increase Chlamydia test uptake
- Following evaluation of the HIV testing pilot in termination of pregnancy services we will implement the recommendations arising from the evaluation and introduce workforce development regarding HIV awareness and testing for all key providers.

The Healthier Homes programme (aimed at ensuring Looked after Children have the best possible opportunities to follow healthy lifestyles) will continue to develop through 2012-2013 by:

- Supporting the Local Authority to introduce the Healthier Homes Fostering Standard to Wirral's foster carers via pilot projects including therapeutic foster carers.
- Deliver the "Health Challenge Champions" pilot in conjunction with local partners to a defined group of young people "at the edge of care".
- Working with housing associations such as Forum to adapt the above "Health Challenge Champions" into a format which can challenge and improve the lifestyles of young people moving towards independence via supported living.

The smoking programme (incorporating "Quit Stop Initiative" and the NHS Stop Smoking Service) will continue to deliver the key smoking cessation components of the tobacco control plan for Wirral and intends to deliver a number of improvements in 2012-13, including these:

- Aim to deliver more quit attempts through local community providers to deliver smoking cessation along with weight management and exercise sessions

- Aim to deliver more quit attempts and embed smoking cessation services amongst carers, the mental health community and patients at risk of premature mortality by training staff, reviewing policies, increasing brief interventions and referrals
- Aim to reduce availability of tobacco products to children and young people through tackling illegal and illicit tobacco

The Drug and Alcohol Action team will also continue to manage the delivery of the Wirral Drug programme incorporating the key elements of the National Drug Strategy – "Reducing Demand, Restricting Supply, Building Recovery and Supporting people to live a drug free life". This strategy was published by the Government in November 2010. During 2011-12 the DAAT intends to deliver a number of further improvements to the existing service including, based on analysis from the rigorous annual Needs Assessment, and consideration of other changes in the wider operating environment:

- Wirral DAAT will continue to monitor the progress of the national Payment by Results (PbR) pilot in the six national pilot areas, and co-operate with other identified DAAT areas who are also developing local variations of this approach, and work with provider partners to develop an application of the PbR model that fits with the local Treatment and Recovery Programme and supports further improvement in performance. Contracts negotiations will take place in 2012/13 to include PbR elements.

The DAAT will drive the further development of the Drug Treatment and Recovery Programme to maximize the effectiveness of this programme so that the following is achieved:

- Further increase the focus and effectiveness of the programme so that it supports a minimum of 12% of the In-treatment population to achieve and sustain recovery.
- Organise the system of support services available to people in recovery so that they are able to stay abstinent and out of contact with treatment services for at least 6 months after completing treatment (in line with new National Treatment Agency (NTA) outcome targets)
- Reduce the percentage of the in-treatment cohort who have been in treatment for 6 years or more (in line with NTA identified priorities).
- Strengthen the links between the Treatment and Recovery Programme with the Department of Work & Pensions Work Programme to increase the number of people accessing education, training and employment.
- Continue to create more opportunities to include service users in Recovery in the planning and delivery of services so that the system is able to harness the recognized positive benefits this has been shown to have in terms of motivating others to commit to their own Recovery. In particular, work with partners to consolidate and continue to develop the "Quays" Peer Support Project.
- Develop the potential for substance misuse Recovery Services to also work with people recovering from mild to moderate mental health problems, and by so doing break down some of the stigmatising effects of limited user group definitions, and increasing the therapeutic benefit of more mixed and varied user groups, as well as having potential for increasing the cost effectiveness.

Other improvements and developments will include:

- Having achieved the target of 60% for Hepatitis C screening the work will continue to provide co-ordinated support for the uptake of Hepatitis B and C testing and treatment so as to achieve a raised target of 70% target for Hepatitis C screening.
- Increase the availability of dried blood spot testing by increasing the numbers of staff who are able to carry out the testing and make this available across a wider set of service outlets.
- Through specialist treatment services, promote a winter health protection programme aimed at service users at greater risk of illness or death from winter conditions, and equip key staff to deliver winter health checks and protection advice.
- Work with colleagues at Supporting People, and with local provider partners, to organise available resources to provide the most comprehensive support to those service users living in abstinence based recovery housing.
- Reduced offending and improved offender health through effective treatment delivered as part of the prison through care and Integrated Offender Management (I.O.M.) programmes.
- Work with colleagues in the Community Safety Partnership to respond to the establishment of the new Police Commissioner role and maintain the high quality and effectiveness of substance misuse and crime services on the Wirral.
- Complete the review the Safeguarding protocols, policies and practice across the drug and alcohol programmes and take the required action to fill any gaps or where process or practice needs to be updated.
- Expand the work undertaken with 18 to 24 year old substance users and continue to develop projects with a specific focus on and skills in responding to their needs.

DAAT commissioning linked to generic Public Health programmes: The DAAT will give increasing attention to strengthening the links and integration between the commissioning strategies and programmes for substance misuse with other key Public health programmes, in particular those tackling Smoking Cessation, Obesity, Sexual Health and Teenage Pregnancy. Drug service providers in particular have a well developed, strong and effective practice in terms of engaging with their target communities, the majority of whom represent the hard to reach elements of the wider community, and those with higher levels of health inequalities. By looking at the areas of overlap between specialist drug and alcohol treatment services and the Public Health Action initiatives the DAAT will be looking for developments that not only tackle health inequalities in the drug alcohol misusing population but also support enhancements in the delivery of the Public Health programmes to the communities in which DAAT services and service users are based. Examples of this will include:

- Increased delivery of the smoking cessation programme through the substance misuse treatment services.
- Increased involvement with, and utilisation of, the Health Action Area programme by those engaged with the substance misuse programmes, including training recovery champions to be health champions both within their peer groups, and within their wider communities.
- Possible utilisation of the sites and methods of engagement practised very effectively by community substance misuse services to deliver Pubic health programmes addressing Obesity, Sexual Health, Teenage pregnancy

The Public Health Department are also intending to deliver a number of other strategic and tactical health improvement services in 2012-13. These include:

- A review of the School Nursing specification with the intention of commissioning the revised service specification from 2013
- Further promotion of the Healthier Homes programme to include identifying young people to act as health champions
- To act on the findings of the young offender health needs assessment due to conclude during 2012 to ensure the health needs of this vulnerable group are met
- To review and revise the local GU Medicine and Sexual Health Service
- To further develop – with our partners in the Local Authority – our physical activity programme
- To further develop the workforce health programme
- To pilot a health champion model within BME communities
- To repeat the third sector public health innovation fund opportunities – building on the lessons learned from 2011-12
- To develop a mental health awareness training programme in response to initial sessions delivered
- To develop a programme for carers which will be incorporated into the eventual "wellness service" model
- To explore potential community activities to support older people experiencing social isolation and dementia

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 *(Describe consultation undertaken, or proposed and any implications for partner organisations.)*

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 *(Are there opportunities to involve voluntary, community and faith organisations? Is this report Compact compliant?)*

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – (*insert appropriate hyperlink)*.

(To find your departmental hyperlink click on

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010-0

Please delete this instruction before you finalise your report.)

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

(c) No because of another reason which is

** Delete the two answers above which don't apply.*

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 *(Carbon usage implications? Any other relevant environmental issues?)*

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 *(Is planning permission required?)*

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 *(NOTE: Any decision/s made will not normally be implemented until after the expiry of five clear working days following the publication of the Minutes relating to this meeting; or until after conclusion of the Call-in process, if applicable.)*

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1

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(Designation)
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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Public Health Annual Report 2012-13, which can be found at:

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***BRIEFING REPORT – KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	***DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH***
KEY DECISION?	YES/NO *(delete as applicable)*

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Within the Budget agreed at Council on 20th February, it was stated that:

"The transfer of public health responsibilities to the Council and the establishment of our health and wellbeing board provides the opportunity to strengthen cross-sector working between the Council, the NHS and the voluntary sector to reduce inequalities, increase efficiency and improve health outcomes.

Keeping people in good health means that we need to go beyond provision of separate services and single-issues, and look at providing an integrated response and model of support in our communities. The approach recommended is to assess what services we have currently supporting different parts of the borough, to assess how those services can work more closely together and to develop a model where we can ensure that people can get the support they need as easily and simply as possible. They are likely to include services for supporting people on healthy lifestyles, self-care and independent living, families and early years, work, learning and skills, health protection and personal safety, community development and leisure and welfare.

This would enable those commissioning and providing services to offer a holistic and systematic offer of support to all those who could benefit from it. We will also identify areas of Wirral where we can implement this in the first instance so that we can evaluate the benefits before rolling out more widely. This work has been identified as a work stream for the Health & Wellbeing Board, and will initially be supported by place-based leadership funding from the National Leadership Council. "

1.2 There has been a call for a shift in public health emphasis from preventing illness to keeping people well and building on individual and community assets in recent years. 'Living Well' is a North West public health call to action to reduce inequalities through prioritising wellbeing. Wirral has been used as a case study in national reviews of this approach as a result of the work it has done in our Health Action Areas and our Community Health Programme. This report provides a briefing on evidence for this approach, and highlights the steps that will be taken in building on this early start to achieve our aspirations for improving public health outcomes for people living and working on Wirral.

1.3 Wirral's shadow Health and Wellbeing Board has identified this approach as its public health workstream, and with support from the National Leadership Council, set up a workshop to invite colleagues from all sectors to explore the potential for developing a model which can be tested on Wirral. This workshop took place on 20th March, and a report detailing the discussions, and the suggested actions will be taken back to a future Health and Wellbeing Board. In the meantime, the key issues debated during the workshop are highlighted in this report.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Living Well

The idea of Living Well is based on an approach that:

- Creates the conditions that support wellbeing and enable people to live well
- Actively involves and empowers citizens and communities
- Focuses on the assets of people to bring about change
- Balances health, economy and environment
- Supports cultural change, requiring leadership, energy and a radical shift in focus

The shift created by this addresses the social determinants of health, and the 'causes of the causes'; encourages organisations to think 'why' they are doing things rather than simply responding; considers services in an integrated way to be built around individuals, rather than the services themselves; and sees people as empowered, active citizens rather than passive recipients.

2.2 Wellbeing

It is worth reflecting on what the term 'wellbeing' means. The Government Office for Science's *Foresight Review on Mental Capital and Wellbeing* (2008) defined well-being as "a dynamic state, in which the individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community".

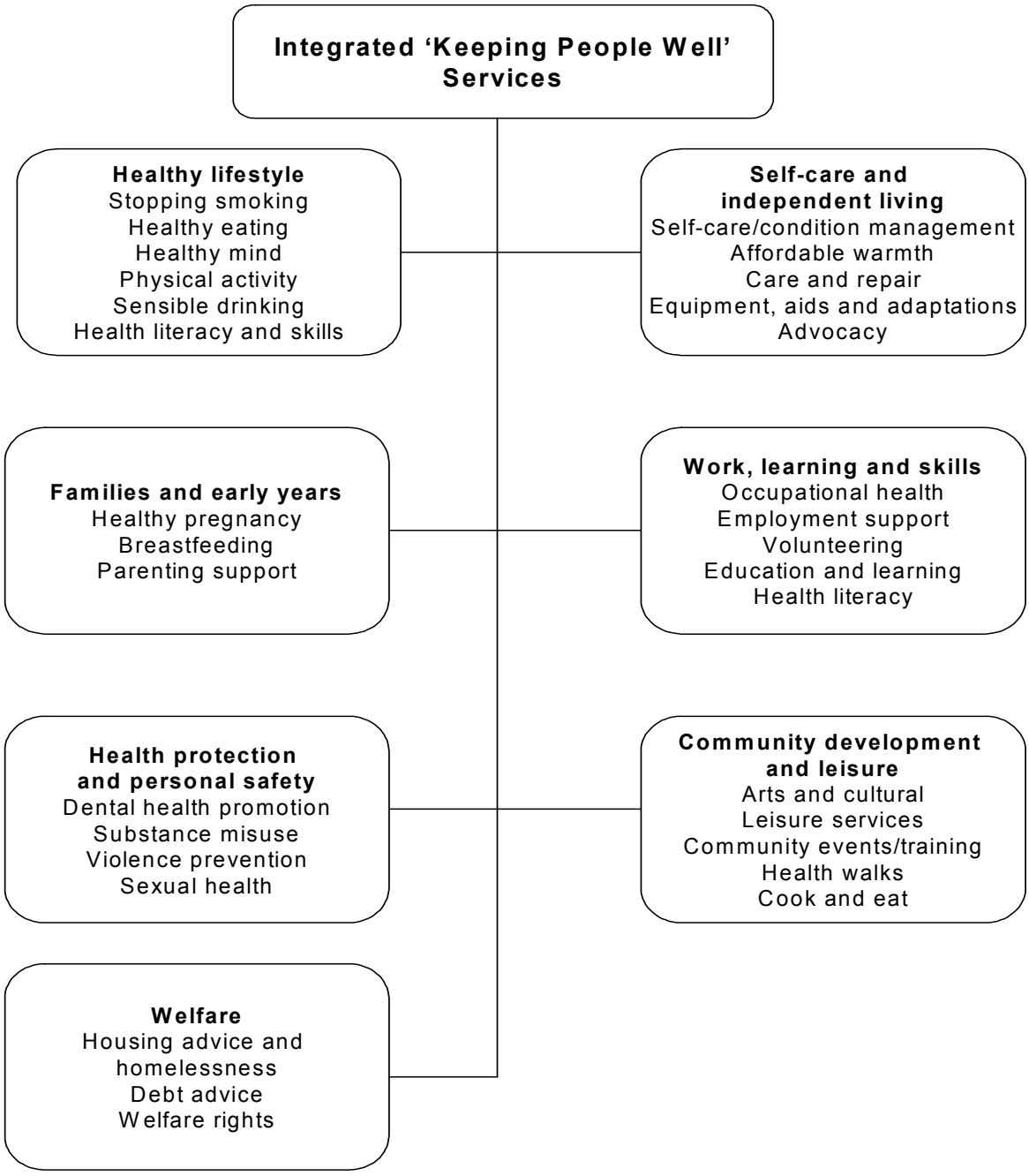
2.3 Keeping People Healthy

Keeping people healthy is the theme for the public health workstream of the Health and Wellbeing Board. This will allow Wirral to build on its best practice in respect of working with local communities and building assets, and will support the development of clear commissioning models which will enable much more effective integrated services to be delivered to individuals across our communities.

In the first year of this workstream, a number of activities will be undertaken including:

- Establishing a multi-agency/stakeholder steering group
- Ensuring widespread engagement in considering and shaping the future model(s)
- Mapping community assets
- Development of options for use of existing services/locations to support a 'one-stop' approach.

A framework for our local approach can be shown in the following diagram which illustrates the services and support which contribute to keeping people healthy. This framework was the basis for inviting those involved in the services described to a workshop held on 20th March 2012 to explore the potential to enhance what is already provided to people on Wirral through existing services.



Participants identified a number of current schemes in the Wirral that provide foundations for the integrated wellness approach:

- The Wirral Well online information hub for wellbeing, health and social care services, hosted by Wirral CVS, provides a first step in describing the range of services and

resources available. This is supported by volunteers who offer peer support and help in signposting services.

- The Health Action Teams at a neighbourhood level offer a model of joined up care and support.
- There are community health champions across Wirral health care organisations: there is scope to rebrand and orientate these assets toward wellbeing and wellness.
- Community pharmacies are often used by people as a source of advice. Pharmacists could refer more effectively if they had better access to information on available services and resources.
- Drug and alcohol services do offer a relatively integrated approach to health protection, safety, self care and welfare. A more positive focus on healthy lifestyles and positive mental health would be a logical development
- The Community Trust has been working to establish a more integrated approach to its public health services with a particular focus on healthy lifestyle, health protection, family and early years and some aspects of community development.
- Family support groups aim to take a holistic approach to supporting people's needs
- The Healthy Homes initiative includes a single assessment that is a first step to referral to a range of public services.
- The Housing Options team works across agencies to identify and support people at risk of homelessness.
- The youth service for people aged 16-19 works has a model that is based on early intervention.
- The community development and leisure services are already trying to broaden their connections to other agencies and encourage greater breadth of participation and use of these resources.

2.4 A number of ideas for establishing the proposed approach on Wirral emerged at the workshop and will be taken forward as more detailed work.

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2.4.1 **Signposting and information sharing**

Perceptions of risk and a competitive environment were identified as the two significant barriers to effective information sharing between professions and organisations. Three specific proposals were put forward.

- The development and extension of the Wirral Well website. This existing resource could be extended to embrace all elements of the wellness approach. It would require buy in from all relevant organisations and they would need to commit to keeping their information up to date. CVS Wirral has funding to develop the resource over the next year. An endorsement by the Health and Wellbeing Board would signal the value of the Wirral Well tool and encourage stakeholders to play their part in making it a success. While the first phase of development could concentrate on the collation of information about services and support which is available the real benefit of this tool lies in developing it as an interactive resource in which citizens and communities can contribute their own assets.

- For adults and patients with complex needs a working group should be set up to look at how data sharing between health, social care and welfare services could be improved. Information sharing agreements have been developed for some services and these could be reviewed and amended to apply to other care groups.

- An organisational forum could be established to review and improve the approach to signposting across the Wirral.

2.4.2 **Developing the Team around the Person**

Lessons from Children's services have demonstrated the benefits of creating virtual teams around individual cases. For adults the key barriers to better coordinated care appear to be lack of clarity about responsibilities and uncertainty by different agencies about whether they have a mandate to lead coordination activities. The agencies that would need to be involved in developing a 'team around the person' would be GPs, social services, mental health, family support, police and probation services as well as relevant specialist services. Four actions that could help take this forward for adult services were identified:

- A directory of services and points of contact
- Agreement to pilot the concept with a specific care group. As there has already been some work done to rethink care for people with critical needs this might be a useful place to start.
- Provision of training for staff on the virtual team approach and on understanding each others' roles and contributions
- The development of an appropriate needs assessment tool that could cover all relevant sectoral contributions.
- In time area team coordinators might be needed to support the arrangements.

2.4.3 **Establishing a better balance between advocacy, self determination and support from services**

There are several current resources across Wirral that either provide advocacy or support self determination. There is an opportunity to bring these different providers together to:

- Consider how they might use their skills and capability to spread the approach to other parts of the system

- Identify how advocacy/self determination could be built into some specific care/recovery pathways where it has the potential to add real value. Three areas which were suggested for consideration were end of life care, long term conditions and carers needs.

2.4.4 **Connecting health, welfare and work**

The preferred approach here was to develop and put in place a plan for scaling up what is already in place

2.4.5 **Enabling individuals and communities to identify and share assets**

As noted earlier one of the key barriers here is lack of awareness about the assets based approach so communication to this effect is an early priority. Thereafter participants suggested that:

- A structured approach could be used to help voluntary, community and statutory organisations to share information about assets that they have and would be prepared to share. Community leaders could be encouraged to lead local initiatives if there were a structured programme that they could draw on;
- There are several models of peer support which operate across the Wirral such as the expert patient programme and HomeStart. These could be reviewed to identify what makes them effective so this learning can be built into further programmes.
- The council could facilitate asset sharing within communities by providing training and funding CRB checks. Voluntary and community organisations could also consider the opportunities for joint work e.g. in the recruitment, selection and training of volunteers.

2.4.6 **Connecting voluntary and community organisations**

Some of the actions described above would also address this theme. Further approaches which participants recommended were:

- Promoting the use of notice boards as a complement to online tools such as Wirral Well. These are a very simple and practical tool that may have been under-exploited. Library services provide a valuable role in managing these resources, but notice boards in other public spaces and GP surgeries could also be utilised. The priority is to promote awareness of these resources to voluntary and community organisations to encourage them to make use of this space for promoting their work.

- A large scale promotional event across the Wirral could be held to promote the work of voluntary and community organisations and the value of volunteering. This is something that the Council would be well placed to lead.

- Commissioners of voluntary and community organisations need to consider how they can use the commissioning process to facilitate better relationships and partnerships between organisations.

All of these proposals need further work, and should not be considered as specific proposals for Cabinet at this point.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Failure to realise the benefits of existing community assets will create increasing pressures on Council and other local resources.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Not applicable

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 *The initial workshop is the start of an engagement process. Consultation on any proposals, and to help shape proposals will be undertaken as part of the work programme of this workstream of the Health & Wellbeing Board.*

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 Voluntary, community and faith groups are important stakeholders in this work and will be involved extensively.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 For 2012-13 there are no immediate resource implications for the Council. This will be kept under review as the approach develops.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Not applicable

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(c) No because of another reason which is: this is a briefing paper, not proposals being brought for decision to Cabinet.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 *Not applicable*

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 *None*

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 It is recommended that Cabinet note the contents of the report, and consider whether the direction of travel for this project is, in principle, in line with the aspirations of the Council in its role as a public health organisation.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The Council has identified keeping people healthy as a key priority in its budget for 2012-13. This report identifies progress with implementing this intent and in respect of the Council's leadership of the Health & Wellbeing Board.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Living well across communities: prioritising well-being to reduce inequalities: www.nwph.net/hawa
Healthy Lives, Healthy People: www.official-documents.gov.uk
Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England: www.marmotreview.org.uk
Wellness services: new approaches to supporting people to live healthy and well. www.nhsconfed.org

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET 12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***PUBLIC HEALTH TRANSITION***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	***CHIEF EXECUTIVE***
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide The Cabinet with information regarding the implications of the transfer of part of the current public health system into the local authority in relation to roles and future structures.

While not currently a statutory duty, under the Health and Social Care Act, currently making its way through Parliament, local authorities will be statutorily responsible will be given new statutory duties across the three 'domains' of public health. These are:

- Health improvement – including reducing lifestyle related ill-health and inequalities in health, and addressing the underlying determinants of health
- Health protection – including ensuring that comprehensive plans are in place across the local authority, NHS and other agencies to respond to infectious disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies
- Health service improvement – by providing NHS Commissioners, including Clinical Commissioning Groups, with expert advice and support to improve and evaluate the quality and efficiency of health services.

In addition, each authority must, acting jointly with the Secretary of State for Health, appoint an individual to have responsibility for its new public health functions, known as the Director of Public Health.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

National guidance

2.1 A number of guidance documents have now been issued in relation to the reform of the public health system. In particular,

- The public health outcomes framework.
- An operating model describing how PHE will work.
- Further details about implementing public health in local government and the role of the DPH.
- Public health funding – establishing the baseline for expenditure.
- An HR Concordat with local government on the transition process.

2.2 The HR Concordat was published on 17th November 2011 by the Local Government Association and the Department of Health. The Concordat provides guiding principles and Human Resource (HR) standards for the transfer of PCT public health commissioning activity and functions ("senders") to local authorities ("receivers"), and a fair and consistent approach to managing the related detailed HR processes in a

local context. The concordat also outlines the indicative timescales for change and the obligations on NHS and local government employers and trade unions on managing the change.

2.3 On 20th December the Department of Health published 'The new public health system', which has a summary document supported by two short 'fact-sheet' style documents on how Public Health will operate in Local Government (including the role of the Director of Public Health [Appendix 1], and the Operating Model for Public Health England. The details of the responsibilities that will transfer to the local authority are given in Appendix 2.

2.4 Public Health Outcomes Framework was published in January 2012and sets the context for the new system from local to national level. This identifies two overarching outcomes and four domains of indicators where improvement is sought. A summary of these is provided in the table below.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Public Health Outcomes Framework</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Vision: To improve and protect the nation's health and wellbeing, and improve the health of the poorest, fastest

Outcome 1: Increased healthy life expectancy
Taking account of health quality as well as the length of life
(Note: this measure uses a self-reported health assessment, applied to life Expectancy)

Outcome 2: Reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities
Through greater improvements in more disadvantaged communities

(Note: these two measures would work as a package covering both morbidity and mortality, addressing within-area differences and between area differences)</td></tr>
<tr><td>DOMAIN 1:
Improving the wider determinants of health

Objective:
Improvements against wider factors that affect health and wellbeing, and health inequalities

(Indicators across the life course)</td><td>DOMAIN 2:
Health improvement

Objective:
People are helped to live healthy lifestyles, make healthy choices and reduce health inequalities

(Indicators across the life course)</td><td>DOMAIN 3:
Improving the wider determinants of health

Objective:
The population's health is protected from major incidents and other threats while reducing health inequalities

(Indicators across the life course)</td><td>DOMAIN 4:
Healthcare public health and preventing premature mortality
Objective:
Reduced numbers of people living with preventable ill health and people dying prematurely, while reducing the gap between communities

(Indicators across the life course)</td></tr>
</table>

2.5 The baseline funding estimates for the new public health commissioning architecture were published on 7 February 2012. This provides the funding estimate for 2012-13. A further piece of work is being done by the Advisory Committee on Resource

Allocation and how resources should be distributed in the long-term, but we have been advised that this is unlikely to be available until December 2012. The document states that 'we would not expect the LA public health ring-fenced grants to fall in real terms from the values in Annex A, other than in exceptional circumstances such as a gross error or following a technical adjustment with major consequences for budgets, such as significant adjustment for NHS income, a change in planned responsibilities, or a large shift in the incentive payment for drugs treatment. In particular we may need to do further work to confirm the adjustment we have made to take account of abortion, sterilisation and vasectomy services initially being the responsibility of CCGs [Clinical Commissioning Groups] rather than LAs.' The baseline spend projected for 2012-13 for Wirral includes an uplift from the 2010 figures which it is based on, and for Wirral is estimated to be £22,264,000. Our current contracts and services provided for those areas which will transfer to local authority responsibility are within this figure.

Public Health Structure for Wirral

2.6 On 3 February 2012 a report providing an update on public health transition was taken to and it was recommended that

- the Chief Executive be instructed by to work with the Director of Public Health to bring back a proposal to on the future structure and operation of public health within the Council.

- subject to the satisfactory outcome of consultation, the Chief Executive ensures that a Memorandum of Understanding or other appropriate arrangements are put In place to allow the public health function to operate in shadow form during 2012/13.

- Cabinet endorses the membership and purpose for the Public Health Transition Steering Group

These recommendations were approved by Cabinet.

2.7 This report considers the steps that need to be undertaken to ensure that an appropriate structure is put in place to meet the local authority's future responsibilities, and to support the continued delivery of public health responsibilities during transition.

2.8 The LGA, in collaboration with the Department of Health has issued guidance on human resources issues associated with transition. This guidance notes that:

- All matters relating to the statutory transfer of public health functions and any staff transfers are of course subject to the passage of the Health and Social Care Bill 2011 and royal assent

- Staff identified as working in the public health functions that will transfer to local government on a statutory basis under the Health and Social Care Bill 2011 will do so on a TUPE or TUPE-like basis under COSOP

- Local authorities and PCTs are strongly encouraged to work together jointly with relevant trade unions to prepare for the transfer

- Arrangements should be agreed locally to help transferring staff to engage more closely with their eventual new employers in the transition year 2012-13

- However, no staff should transfer employment in advance of the due date of 1st April 2013 which is the date the statutory responsibilities transfer

- Councils are strongly encouraged to implement best employment practice, taking account of the need for future recruitment and retention of specialist public health staff

2.9 The bullet points above are being taken into account by the human resources workstream of the public health transition steering group.

2.10 A key element of transition planning will be to agree the functions and structure of the public health resource within the local authority. It will be important to ensure that this is done in a way that allows current public health responsibilities to be delivered until they are taken into their future system-wide locations. For example, the local DPH is still responsible for screening programmes until the NHS Commissioning Board and Public Health England are formed and start to commission them. Following that, the local responsibility will be to undertake monitoring and assurance that local people are benefiting adequately from those services.

2.11 It could be viewed that there are two main steps in agreeing a structure for the long-term.

(a) Agreeing a structure that allows delivery of current responsibilities until formal transition occurs in 2013 (or until the new arrangements for PHE and NHSCB are in place)

(b) Agreeing what functions will remain as a local responsibility, and how they will be delivered from April 2013 onwards.

Issues which might arise:

2.12 The NHS is currently running a voluntary redundancy process. Public Health staff may apply for this, and any agreement will need to be made on the assumption that we do not need the post, or that we will restructure to manage the work.

2.13 PHE and the NHS Commissioning Board have not yet published their detailed local structures. It is not clear whether specific roles would transfer into those structures from a local level; although if this were to be the case the numbers of roles in those organisations are likely to be small, and may be subject to competitive interview.

2.14 It is likely that more substantive arrangements will be required to be in place around October 2012. This is as a result of Clinical Commissioning Groups being authorised, NHSCB and PHE structures being defined, and the need for PCT Cluster oversight being reduced. In other words, the majority of the reformed system will be expected to be working in the six months before the formal transfer of responsibilities proposed in the Health & Social Care Bill.

Managing existing responsibilities

2.15 The structures attached to this report in Appendix 3 are the structures that are in place now to meet the needs of the next 12 months, however, this may change given 2.12 and 2.13 above. It would be expected that we would need to seek some shared service arrangements to manage the work with a reduced capacity of staff.

2.16 The Shadow arrangement proposed in the Cabinet paper of 2nd February is intended to enable public health staff to attend internal council meetings, understand council systems and to undertake a process of induction. However, this is on the understanding that the liability for those staff and budgets remains with the NHS until the end of March 2013. It may be that this liability may be dealt with through a secondment arrangement that could be put in place in October if the issue described in point 3 above arises. This could only happen if the local authority was happy to operate in this way.

Defining a future structure

2.17 There are significant opportunities arising from this reform which it would be valuable to work on during the period from now to October. The role of the Director of Public Health is defined by the guidance provided at Appendix 1, and the functions/responsibilities of local authorities at Appendix 2.

2.18 The guidance issued on the new public health system states 'While the organisation and structures of individual local authorities is a matter for local leadership, we are clear that these legal responsibilities should translate into the Director of Public Health acting as the lead officer in a local authority for health and championing health across the whole of the authority's business. This means that we would expect there to be direct accountability between the Director of Public Health and the local authority Chief Executive for the exercise of the local authority's public health responsibilities and that they will have direct access to elected members.'

2.18 The work now required will be to (taking into consideration 2.12-2.14 above):

- Review the public health outcomes and functions aligned to the local authority
- Map existing resources within the public health function and across the authority that link to these functions
- Take into account how shared service models might be agreed or developed between local authorities on specific areas where resources are scarce or where there is value in a single approach.
- Drafting of a structure that meets these needs and which can then be consulted on
- Undertake any required consultation (particularly with staff and staff-side representatives).

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The risks are as described in the Cabinet report of 3rd February:

Risk	Potential Impact
Inadequate level of funding within local public health ring-fence to support local	Cuts in services currently provided

public health functions	
Failure to clarify public health responsibilities and organisational roles of the Local Authority, Public Health England and the NHS at a local level	Duplication/lack of coordination, potential to improve health outcomes is lost.
Public health responsibilities not embedded in all relevant parts of the new local system	Prevention not incorporated into care pathways Unable to maximise improvement and health inequality reduction opportunities.
New operating models do not provide for adequate public health support for local health emergency preparedness, resilience and response	Unable to respond effectively to major/public health incidents
Organisational barriers to access to information	Public health unable to access NHS data for health improvement, health protection and healthcare quality; thereby compromising the public health response
IM&T arrangements insufficient to support public health monitoring and service delivery	Inability to measure impact, uptake and outcomes.
Local authority does not embed public health action across all its functions	Duplication/lack of coordination, potential to improve health outcomes is lost.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 This report sets out the steps to enable options to be considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation on transition of staff

There will be a need to ensure meaningful consultation with staff affected by the transfer of functions.

5.2 Commissioned public health activity

Depending on the local public health budget, and on policy decisions made within the Council, there could be a need to consult. This could arise from a reduction in investment available, or a change in focus responding to understanding of needs through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 *(Are there opportunities to involve voluntary, community and faith organisations? Is this report Compact compliant?)*

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The public health function currently commissions a significant amount of voluntary and community sector activity. In 2010/11 this amounted to £3.7 million of investment.

There is an opportunity to ensure that this commissioning is integrated into any approach to commissioning from the VCF sector by the local authority.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The local authority will be given statutory duties under the Health and Social Care Act (subject to Parliament). It has been indicated that, subject to the successful passage of the Bill the role of the Director of Public Health will be a statutory one, and that guidance would be issued describing this statutory role in the same way as guidance is produced for Directors of Adult Social Services and Directors of Children's Services.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

An impact review will need to be done in more detail since there is clearly potential for a workforce impact. An initial assessment is attached.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 *n/a*

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 *n/a*

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That the cabinet note the report.

12.2 That The Director of public Health reports directly to the Chief Executive on a shadow basis for 2012/13

12.3 That the additional skills and resources within the public health directorate, including the public health intelligence team are seen as a welcome addition to the Council workforce.

12.4 That the steps described in 2.18 are supported to allow for transition planning to take place on the basis of the reporting structure directly to the Chief Executive.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 There are clear opportunities to create a robust structure for delivering public health functions, and to support the local authority in delivering its role as a public health organisation. These will be enhanced as further information becomes available on public health system reform, and assessment of internal opportunities is undertaken.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Role of the Director of Public Health
Appendix 2: Local Authority Commissioning Responsibilities
Appendix 3: Current public health structure

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	**Date**
Cabinet Report	3 February 2012
Cabinet Report	3 October 2011
Health & Wellbeing OSC	13 September 2011
Cabinet Report	17 March 2011
Health & Wellbeing OSC	18 January 2011

[Appendices 1 and 2 are taken directly from the document 'Public Health in Local Government: Factsheets' issued by the Department of Health in December 2011]

Appendix 1

The role of the Director of Public Health

In taking forward their leadership role for public health local authorities will rely heavily on the Director of Public Health and the specialist public health resources he or she has at their command. Indeed the Health and Social Care Bill makes clear that the Director of Public Health is responsible for exercising the local authority's new public health functions.

We have highlighted the duty on each unitary and upper tier authority to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area.

The Health and Social Care Bill makes clear that each authority must, acting jointly with the Secretary of State for Health, appoint an individual to have responsibility for its new public health functions, known as the Director of Public Health. That individual could be shared with another local authority, where that makes sense (for example, where the senior management team is shared across more than one authority and the authorities are geographically contiguous). Below we cover key aspects of the function and scope of the role of Director of Public Health.

Appointments

We are working with local government and public health stakeholders to produce guidance, which will cover:

• appointments to existing Director of Public Health vacancies in a way that ensures they are fit for purpose for the future

• managing the transition of Director of Public Health posts to local government during 2012/13

• a process for local authorities and Public Health England (in the Secretary of State's behalf), acting jointly, to appoint new Directors of Public Health from 1 April 2013.

The guidance will build on the existing joint appointments process for Directors of Public Health and be consistent with Faculty of Public Health standards, including the use of appointments advisory committees and faculty assessors, and best practice in local government recruitment.

This will ensure Directors of Public Health in local government have the necessary technical, professional and strategic leadership skills to promote, improve and protect health and provide high-level, credible, peer-to-peer advice to the NHS about public health in relation to health services.

Reporting arrangements

We promised in Healthy Lives, Healthy People: update and way forward to discuss with stakeholders how best to ensure that that the Director of Public Health has an appropriate

status within the local authority, in line with the position of the Directors of Children's Services and Adult Social Services.

We have consulted local government and public health interests, and intend to bring forward amendments to the Health and Social Care Bill to reflect our desired policy position. Subject to Parliament, we will add Directors of Public Health to the list of statutory chief officers in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

After Royal Assent, we intend to issue statutory guidance on the responsibilities of the Directors of Public Health, in the same way that guidance is currently issued for Directors of Children's Services and Directors of Adult Services.

While the organisation and structures of individual local authorities is a matter for local leadership, we are clear that these legal responsibilities should translate into the Director of Public Health acting as the lead officer in a local authority for health and championing health across the whole of the authority's business.

This means that we would expect there to be direct accountability between the Director of Public Health and the local authority Chief Executive for the exercise of the local authority's public health responsibilities and that they will have direct access to elected members.

Responsibilities

The Director of Public Health as a public health specialist will be responsible for all the new public health functions of local authorities, including any conferred on local authorities by regulation. The Health and Social Care Bill will in addition make it a statutory requirement for the Director of Public Health to produce an annual report on the health of the local population, and for the local authority to publish it. Directors of Public Health will also be statutory members of health and wellbeing boards, and will wish to use the boards as the key formal mechanism for promoting integrated, effective delivery of services.

What these legal responsibilities should translate into is the Director of Public Health acting as the lead officer in a local authority for health and championing health across the whole of the authority's business. Thus the Director of Public Health will be the person elected members and other senior officers will consult on a range of issues, from emergency preparedness to concerns around access to local health services. Often the Director of Public Health will not be personally responsible for the problem, but he/she will know how to resolve it through engaging with the right people in the new system. He/she will be able to promote opportunities for action across the "life course", working together with local authority colleagues such as the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Adult Social Services, and with NHS colleagues.

The Director of Public Health will work with local criminal justice partners and the new Police and Crime Commissioners to promote safer communities. And he/she will engage with wider civil society to enlist them in fostering health and wellbeing. In short, the Director of Public Health will be a critical player in ensuring there are integrated health and wellbeing services across the locality.

With regard to the ring-fenced grant, formal accountability rests with the Chief Executive of the local authority, but we would expect day-to-day responsibility for the grant to be delegated to the Director of Public Health.

Core skills

To deliver its new public health functions the local authority will need a specialist trained Director of Public Health and public health support with the full range of appropriate skills to deliver the functions we have described. That means we will need to ensure that job descriptions reflect the highest possible standards as set out by the Faculty of Public Health.

It is important to reaffirm that the Government believes the multidisciplinary nature of public health is a key strength of the profession. We believe that the transfer of new public health responsibilities to local authorities in no way changes this, and indeed reaffirms the importance of attracting to public health high-quality individuals from a wide range of disciplines including, but not limited to, medicine.

We will publish a Public Health Workforce Strategy, accompanied by a formal public consultation. The strategy will seek to ensure the development and supply of a professional public health workforce, set out proposals for how learning and development will be taken forward in the reformed health system, and outline options for how public health knowledge can best be embedded across the wider workforce.

The new arrangements will provide opportunities and challenges for employers, including the wider local authority workforce.

Professional appraisal and support, and capacity building

Continuing professional development is a professional obligation for all public health professionals, both medical and non-medical. It ensures that public health professionals develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to practise effectively and work towards improving the health of communities. Local authorities will wish to support this professional development.

Way forward

The Director of Public Health's new role offers a great opportunity to build healthier communities. But to make the most of this Directors of Public Health will need to:

• be fully engaged in the redesign of services that address the coming challenges

• influence and support colleagues who have a key role in creating better health, such as planning officers and housing officers

• facilitate innovation and new approaches to promoting and protecting health, while bringing a rigorous approach to evaluating what works, using the resources of Public Health England

• contribute to the work of NHS commissioners, thus ensuring a whole public sector approach.

Appendix 2

Commissioning responsibilities

Local authorities will be responsible for:

- tobacco control and smoking cessation services
- alcohol and drug misuse services
- public health services for children and young people aged 5-19 (including Healthy Child Programme 5-19) (and in the longer term all public health services for children and young people)
- the National Child Measurement Programme
- interventions to tackle obesity such as community lifestyle and weight management services
- locally-led nutrition initiatives
- increasing levels of physical activity in the local population
- NHS Health Check assessments
- public mental health services
- dental public health services
- accidental injury prevention
- population level interventions to reduce and prevent birth defects
- behavioural and lifestyle campaigns to prevent cancer and long-term conditions
- local initiatives on workplace health
- supporting, reviewing and challenging delivery of key public health funded and NHS delivered services such as immunisation and screening programmes
- comprehensive sexual health services (including testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, contraception outside of the GP contract and sexual health promotion and disease prevention)
- local initiatives to reduce excess deaths as a result of seasonal mortality
- the local authority role in dealing with health protection incidents, outbreaks and emergencies
- public health aspects of promotion of community safety, violence prevention and response

- public health aspects of local initiatives to tackle social exclusion
- local initiatives that reduce public health impacts of environmental risks.

We have undertaken a further check of where commissioning responsibilities for a range of services might sit in the future. As part of this work we have taken the opportunity to look again at where commissioning of abortion services might most appropriately be placed.

Given the highly clinical, and in most cases surgical, nature of abortion provision we have reconsidered our earlier decision to place these services with local authorities. We have provisionally concluded that abortion should remain within the NHS and be commissioned by clinical commissioning groups.

However, we are keen to seek a range of views on this revised commissioning route. A consultation on this revised recommendation will begin in due course.

In Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Update and way forward, we said we were still considering where to place responsibility for sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) and for campaigns to promote early diagnosis of, for example, cancer. We have decided that, subject to resolving some further points of detail, responsibility for sexual assault services, including SARCs, at least in the short to medium term, should rest with the NHS Commissioning Board. This is in our view the best way to ensure the delivery of uniformly high-quality services across the country. On early diagnosis we are committed to giving both Public Health England and the NHS Commissioning Board clear responsibility for delivery, based on a shared set of outcomes.

Only some of the above services are to be mandated. The commissioning of other services will be discretionary, guided by the Public Health Outcomes Framework, the local joint strategic needs assessment and the joint health and wellbeing strategy.

There was considerable comment during our consultation on commissioning responsibilities about the split of responsibilities for the public health of children and young people, including the Healthy Child Programme, with pregnancy to five services being commissioned by the NHS Commissioning Board. We accept the many benefits to be had from the integration of public health into the wider commissioning of children's and young people's public health, particularly in terms of the prevention and safeguarding agendas.

As we explained in Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Update and way forward, we believe that the NHS Commissioning Board will be best placed to lead the commissioning of public health funded services for children under five in the first instance, including health visiting, the Healthy Child Programme and Family Nurse Partnership, given the commitment to a 50% increase in the health visiting workforce and a transformation in the health visiting service by 2015, and to ensure associated improvements in support for families.

Our medium-term aim is to unify responsibility for these services within local government by 2015 when the increased health visiting workforce and new health visiting service model and the Healthy Child Programme offer to families should be in place. In line with this direction of travel, we are also transferring responsibility for commissioning effective Child Health Information Systems to the NHS Commissioning Board, also to be funded by the public health budget.

This decision will be reviewed in 2015 to determine longer-term plans. We will engage further on the detail of these proposals, particularly in respect of transition arrangements and the best way to begin to involve local authorities in local commissioning of these services in partnership with the NHS.

In the meantime, Public Health England will retain a close interest in the specification of Child Health Information Systems, to ensure public health requirements, such as accurate and effective collection on the delivery of childhood immunisations, are met.

The list of commissioning responsibilities above is of course not exclusive. Local authorities may choose to commission a wide variety of services under their health improvement duty, and indeed we would hope to see much innovation as local authorities embrace their new duties. This freedom is deliberately wide, to encourage the kind of locally-driven solutions that lie at the core of localism, underpinned by a robust analysis of the needs and assets of the local population. Public Health England will promote this local innovation through encouraging peer sharing of best practice and learning experiences, and through supporting rigorous evaluation of new approaches to improving and protecting public health.

Sexual health services

Local authorities will become responsible for commissioning comprehensive open-access accessible and confidential contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) testing and treatment services, for the benefit of all persons of all ages present in the area. Transfer of these services offers great opportunities to integrate sexual health services and to link services to wider services, including alcohol and drugs, for particular target groups, such as young people, vulnerable people and other groups at risk of sexual ill-health.

We are going beyond merely transferring responsibility for sexual health services to local authorities and actually mandating hem for two reasons. First, STI testing and treatment services are a central part of protecting health. The Government therefore believes that high-quality services must be available in all areas, although the services provided will be tailored to meet local needs.

Second, the Secretary of State for Health currently has a duty, reiterated in the Health and Social Care Bill, to provide advice on contraception, medical examination of people seeking advice on contraception, the treatment of these people, and the supply of any contraceptive substances and appliances. This duty is currently delegated to primary care trusts, who are required to provide open-access services which are not limited to their own residents. Mandating these services of local authorities in the future will allow the Secretary of State for Health to meet this duty fully, over and above what is provided for via current GP provision.

Health protection plans

At present Directors of Public Health in primary care trusts play a key leadership role in planning for, and responding to, health protection incidents, supported by local Health Protection Agency health protection units. Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Health and Social Care Bill will provide that the Secretary of State for Health is responsible for taking steps for the purpose of protecting the health of the population. However, we want

the Director of Public Health to continue to provide a coordination role to protect the health of the local population when transferred to local authorities. Our vision is that the local authority, and the Director of Public Health acting on its behalf, should have a pivotal place in protecting the health of its population. We therefore propose to use a regulation-making power in the Bill to require local authorities to take steps to ensure that plans are in place to protect the local population.

Under this duty, local authorities (and Directors of Public Health on their behalf) would be required to ensure that plans are in place to protect the health of the local population from threats ranging from relatively minor outbreaks to full-scale emergencies, and to prevent as far as possible those threats arising in the first place. The scope of this duty will include local plans for immunisation and screening, as well as the plans acute providers and others have in place for the prevention and control of infection, including those which are healthcare associated.

Where the Director of Public Health identifies issues it will be his or her role to highlight them, and escalate issues as necessary, providing advice, challenge and advocacy to protect the local population, working with Public Health England which will provide specialist health protection services including, for instance, coordination of outbreak control, and access to national expert infrastructure as and when necessary. His or her role in delivering these functions will be supported by the transparency in the system that will allow the Director of Public Health and others rapid access to routine monitoring data.

Below we set out in brief how we envisage this health protection role working.

With regard to emergencies, we plan the following. At the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) level, a lead Director of Public Health from a local authority within the LRF area will be agreed to coordinate the public health input to planning, testing and responding to emergencies across the local authorities in the LRF area.

Public Health England will continue to provide the health protection services, expertise and advice currently provided at an LRF level by the Health Protection Agency.

The NHS Commissioning Board will appoint a lead director for NHS emergency preparedness and response at the LRF level, and provide necessary support to enable planning and response to emergencies that require NHS resources.

Local Health Resilience Partnerships (LHRPs) will bring together the health sector organisations involved in emergency preparedness and response at the LRF level. LHRPs will consist of emergency planning leads from health organisations in the LRF area and will ensure effective planning, testing and response for emergencies.

LHRPs are a formalisation of existing health subgroups found in the majority of LRF areas. They will enable all health partners to input to the LRF and in turn provide the LRF with a clear, robust view of the health economy and the best way to support LRFs to plan for and respond to health threats. Further work will be done over the coming months to pilot and plan the resourcing and operation of LHRPs.

The lead director appointed by the NHS Commissioning Board and the lead Director of Public Health will act as co-chairs at the LHRP during emergency planning. Resources will be required to support the LHRP to provide continuous readiness.

More work will take place in the coming months to develop operational guidance for the system-wide emergency preparedness, resilience and response model.

The NHS lead director will represent the LHRP on the LRF, as now, since most emergencies require readiness and input of NHS resources. The lead Director of Public Health should also attend, and Public Health England will attend where the emergency requires its presence.

In terms of plans for screening and immunising the local population we envisage a process as follows. The NHS Commissioning Board will be accountable for delivery of the national screening and immunisation programmes in accordance with an agreement between the Secretary of State for Health and the Board which will set out the terms in which the Board will exercise a Secretary of State function. Public Health England will provide public health advice on the specification of national programmes, and also a quality assurance function with regard to screening.

Directors of Public Health will advise, for example, on whether screening or immunisation programmes in their area are meeting the needs of the population, and whether there is equitable access. They will provide challenge and advice to the NHS Commissioning Board on its performance, for example through the joint strategic needs assessment and discussions at the health and wellbeing board on issues such as raising uptake of immunisations and screening, and how outcomes might be improved by addressing local factors. They will also have a role in championing screening and immunisation, using their relationships with local clinicians and clinical commissioning groups, and in contributing to the management of serious incidents.

Directors of Public Health will play a role in ensuring that immunisation care pathways for programmes such as neonatal hepatitis B are robust. The Board will remain accountable for responding appropriately to that challenge from local public health teams, and for driving improvement.

This local authority role in health protection planning is not a managerial, but a local leadership function. It rests on the personal capability and skills of the local authority Director of Public Health and his or her team to identify any issues and advise appropriately. But it will be underpinned by legal duties of cooperation, contractual arrangements, clear escalation routes and transparency.

Thus clinical commissioning groups will have a duty of cooperation with local authorities; NHS-funded providers can be required through contracts to share plans and appropriate information; Directors of Public Health can use their annual report and membership of the health and wellbeing board to raise concerns more formally; and the Secretary of State for Health can use the Mandate and his agreement with the Board to ensure that the NHS Commissioning Board takes appropriate account of the advice of Directors of Public Health.

Finally, there will be a professional relationship between Directors of Public Health and Public Health England, and the Chief Medical Officer as professional lead for public health, which will give directors and their teams a route for contributing to national thinking about what is needed.

The system ensures that accountability is focused where it needs to be. The Director of Public Health will be responsible as the public health lead in each local authority for advising on plans that are in place and identifying any problems, using his or her public health expertise. NHS and other partner colleagues will be accountable for taking appropriate account of that advice.

This is in line with the design of the new system overall: Public Health England and Directors of Public Health are accountable for the provision of high-quality public health advice; the NHS Commissioning Board, clinical commissioning groups and others are accountable for making the appropriate use of that advice.

The Secretary of State for Health will retain a central interest in health protection even where he has delegated functions to the local level. To this end we will publish further details as we develop policy on the new system. In particular we will develop a statement on how we will promote high performance and support performance improvement.

We also intend to produce operational guidance to support incident management at a local level, which will cover the working relationship between the NHS, Public Health England and the local authority. The guidance will recognise the need for flexibility to enable each area to make plans most appropriate to protect the health of its population.

Population healthcare advice to the NHS

We will also mandate local authorities to provide population healthcare advice to the NHS. Good population health outcomes, including reducing health inequalities, rely not just on health protection and health improvement, but on the quality of healthcare services provided by the NHS. That is why we are preserving a key role for local authority public health teams in providing public health expertise for the NHS commissioners of these services.

The need to secure provision of public health expertise for healthcare commissioners (and to support health and wellbeing boards in producing the joint strategic needs assessment and joint health and wellbeing strategy) was a key theme of the consultation on the public health white paper Healthy Lives, Healthy People.

We have consulted a group of public health and other experts who have developed a draft model for what such a public health advice service might look like, building on existing work across the country. Appendix 1 sets out the group's recommendations, aligned against the stages of the commissioning cycle.

Clinical commissioning groups will require a range of information and intelligence support via both the population healthcare advice service based in local authorities and other commissioning support services such as from Public Health England where appropriate. It is important to note that although there are some similarities in the nature of these services (ie public health population healthcare advice and the work of commissioning support organisations (CSOs) in the future), they will have a different focus.

We envisage that public health teams will provide largely a strategic population focus, synthesizing data from a wide variety of sources and applying their public health skills to draw the implications of that data for the local population. CSOs will focus more on commissioning processes and clinical systems, including detailed analysis of referrals and

activity, procurement and business processes. Both are essential for driving improvements in services.

There would be nothing to stop local authorities from agreeing locally to offer a wider range of services. Local authorities will also be free to meet this obligation in a variety of ways, for example in relatively small authorities it may make sense to locate a team in a single authority, acting on behalf of several. In addition, Public Health England will have a role through its information and intelligence service to support local authorities on this mandatory duty. This could include, for example, providing baseline data and analysis that local public health teams would need to share with the local NHS to inform discussions about relative needs and priorities.

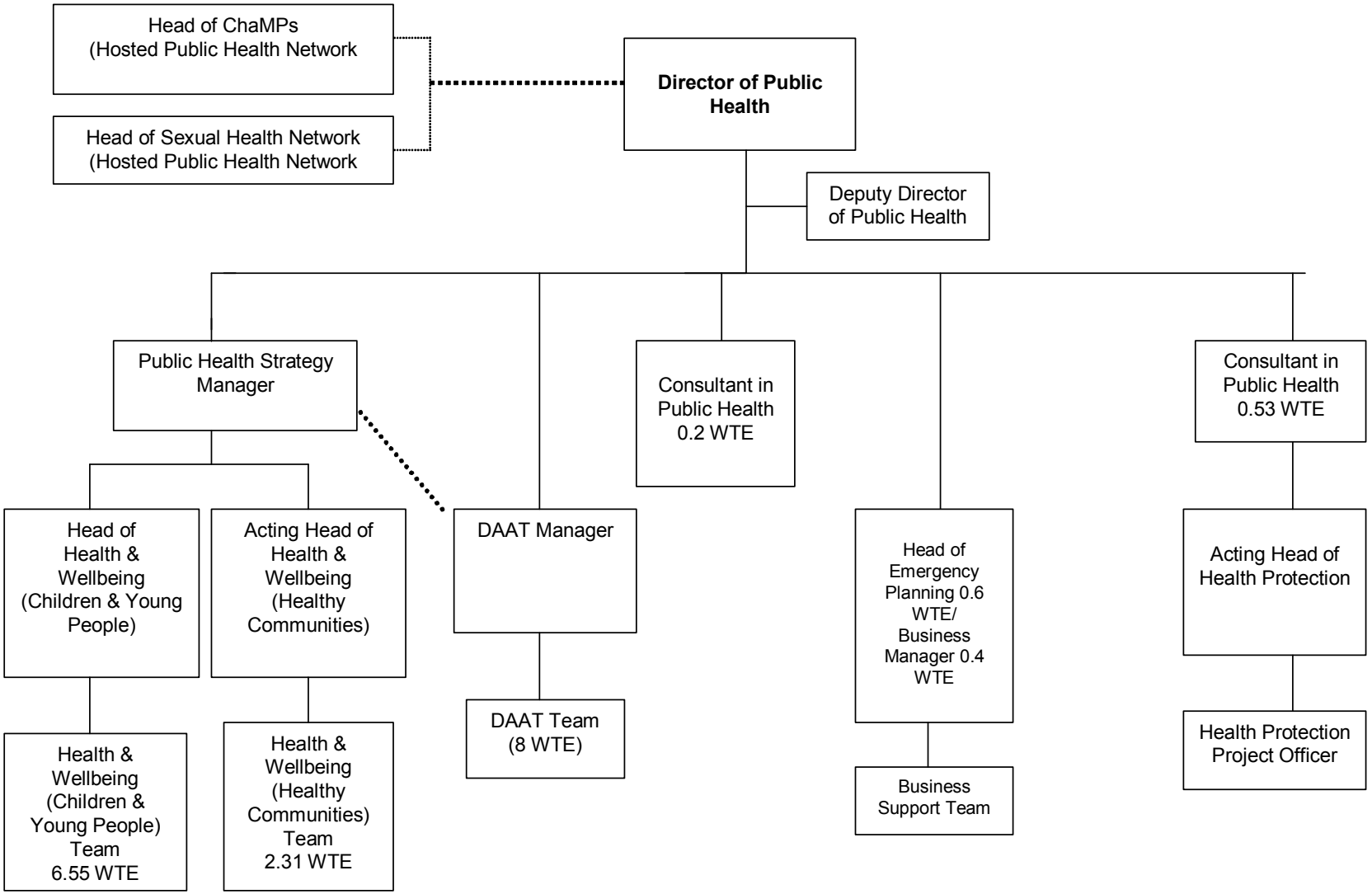
Given close working and responsiveness between public health teams and clinical commissioners we would expect clinical commissioners to make full use of the expertise of local public health teams (as well as public health expertise in clinical senates). Indeed we are confident that as fully integrated commissioning teams are put in place throughout the country, the nature and extent of such assistance will be an accepted and automatic core element of local commissioning practice. This will be another means of taking forward the underpinning localism ambitions of this policy approach.

Where there are concerns about the quality of the advice received we would expect this to be raised at the local level initially with the local authority. There may be an issue of professional development, in which case we would envisage clinical commissioning groups involving Public Health England in discussions.

We are considering further what role local public health advice may play in supporting the NHS Commissioning Board in its core responsibilities, for example with respect to the quality of local primary care commissioning.

The group of public health experts and GPs who have advised us on the development of the population healthcare advice service are also working with us to consider how best to ensure that the provision of population healthcare advice meets the needs of clinical commissioning groups. This will help ensure that clinical commissioning groups can be confident that they will receive the kind of high-quality, responsive service they need.

Public Health Directorate – Health Improvement, Health Protection and Healthcare-related Public Health

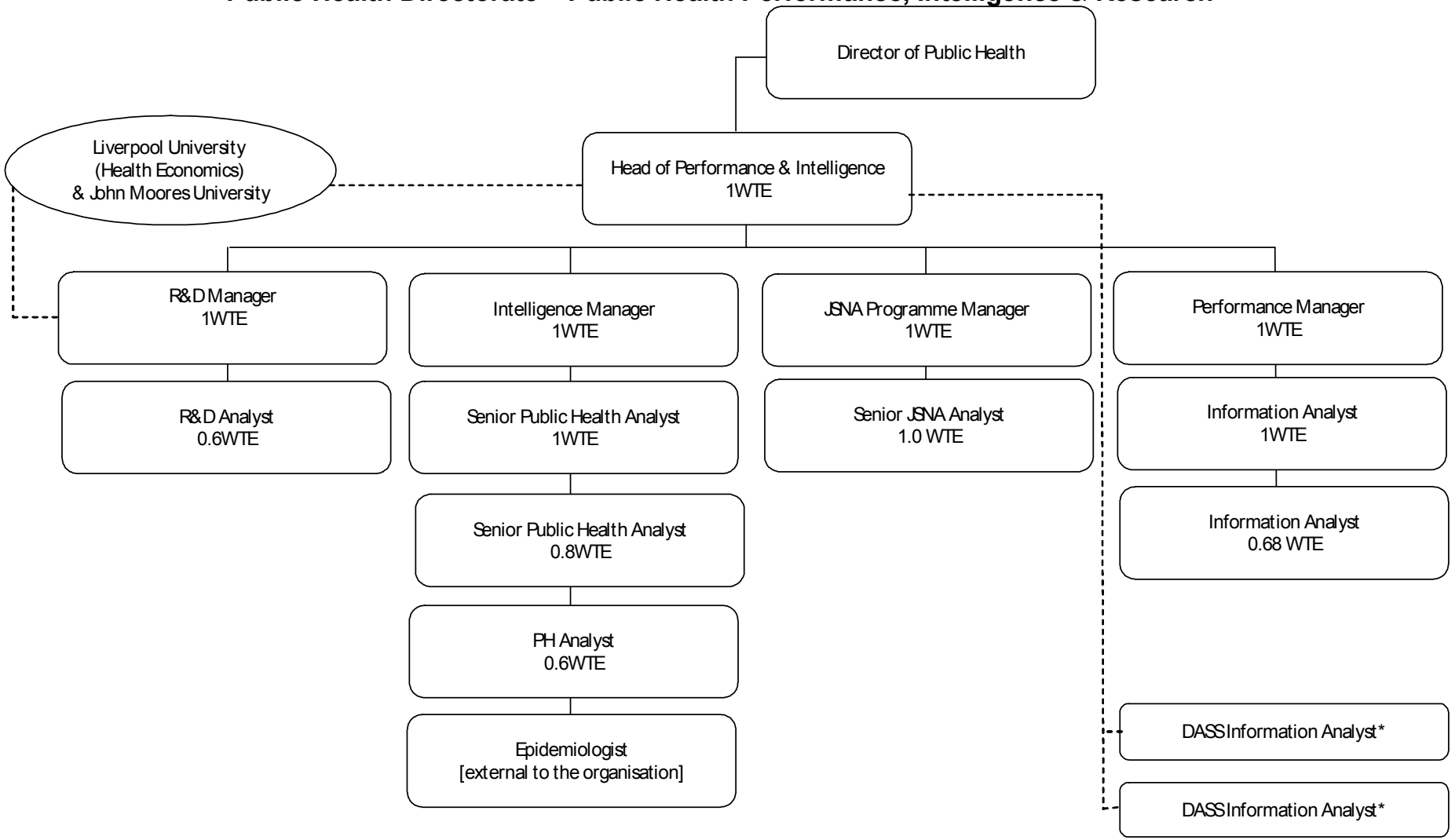


Public Health Directorate – Health Improvement, Health Protection and Healthcare-related Public Health Work Activities and functions

Commissioning and Managing
Teenage pregnancy, sexual health and contraception; weight management; breastfeeding; curriculum development for SRE; the health of looked after children; the healthy child programme; safeguarding; physical activity programmes; contract management; health inequality programmes, health trainer services; smoking cessation programmes; mental health and wellbeing; health improvement for vulnerable and minority communities; drug treatment and recovery services; alcohol education, prevention and treatment services; hepatitis testing and treatment programme; drug and alcohol services in criminal justice; offender health; community asset development

Commissioning and Managing
Health protection and major incident planning
Immunisation (multiple programmes childhood through to older age)
Screening programmes (12 programmes currently running – cancer, non-cancer, maternal and child health)
Support for secondary care health services (e.g. heart disease, cancers, mental health, respiratory disease etc)
Business Planning
Performance Management

Public Health Directorate – Public Health Performance, Intelligence & Research



*Current management arrangements
to be reviewed with Director of ASS

Public Health Directorate – Public Health Performance, Intelligence & Research
- Work activities and functions
(Built around the commissioning cycle)

PLAN	DO	REVIEW	REVISE
-Joint Strategic Needs Assessment -**Health needs/impact assessment** -**Risk profiling & prediction** -**Demographic forecasting and disease trends** -**Geographic analysis and mapping, socio-demographic analysis** -**Identification of risk groups (e.g. communities)** -**Research, evaluation, surveys, audits, peer reviews** -**Trend and statistical analysis** -**Geographic (e.g. ward), practice, regional and national benchmarking of disease prevalence, activity, productivity and cost**	-Analysis and presentation of productivity indicators -Clinical pathway mapping/ modelling & cost comparators -Providing evidence and information on comparative health outcomes -Statistical analysis of variation and correlations -KPI benchmarking -Development, implementation & management of a performance management framework (at all levels of organisation from strategy to individual performance) -Analytical support for contract monitoring/analysis -Provider activity, validation & data quality review	-Contract development (e.g. KPI specification) -Performance management and support for service improvement -Contract validation and challenge -Pathway and scenario modelling (e.g. dementia) -Providing comparative cost and activity monitoring -Metrics reporting -Performance reporting -Providing comparative outcome monitoring (inc. patient and public health data) -Production of Board level reports, presentations and profiles.	-Demographic forecasting and disease trends -Forecasting and future projections of expected activity -Cost benefit analysis of current activity versus alternatives (Health Economics) -Programme budgeting (comparative spend on disease conditions [Health Economics])

WIRRAL

EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACHIEVING

Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

Section 1: Your details

Council officer:

Email address:

Head of Service:

Chief Officer: **Fiona Johnstone**

Department: Public Health

Date: 24 February 2012

Section 2: What Council function / proposal is being assessed?

The transfer of public health functions and responsibilities to the local authority.

Section 2b: **Is this EIA being submitted to Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?**

No

Section 3: **Will the Council function / proposal affect equality in ……?** (please tick relevant boxes)

☐ **Services**

☐ **The workforce** ✓

☐ **Communities**

☐ **Other** (please state)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

☐ **None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: **Within the Equality Duty 2010, there are 3 legal requirements.**
Will the Council function / proposal support the way the Council
……(please tick relevant boxes)

☐ Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation ✓

☐ Advances equality of opportunity ✓

☐ Fosters good relations between groups of people ✓

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

☐ **None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5: **Will the function / proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?**

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Disability	May be a negative impact if staff move location and need reasonable adjustments to be made Accessibility	Assessment of needs would be undertaken	Business Manager	n/a – will only apply if staff move location	Funding for any reasonable adjustments required
Gender	Carers may need flexible working arrangements	Assessment of needs undertaken Use of flexible working policy	Business Manager	Transition period and beyond	Will need to be considered depending on the flexibility required.

Section 5a: **Where and how will the above actions be monitored?**

Through the Public Health Transition Steering Group

Section 5b: **If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

Section 6: **What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

n/a

Section 7: **Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council function / policy?**

Yes

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: **How will consultation take place?**

Consultation will take place through the Human Resources Workstream of the Public Health Transition Steering Group. There are staff representatives on the steering group, and staff-side representatives have been invited to be on the workstream group.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your 'incomplete' EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**WELFARE AND DEBT ADVICE SERVICES**
WARD/S AFFECTED	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR IAN LEWIS**
KEY DECISION:	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the work undertaken at the One Stop Shops (OSS) and Libraries with regard to financial advice to residents. It also details the provision of information and advice on fuel tariffs and the opening of bank accounts to further improve financial inclusion.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Cabinet on 21 February 2012 agreed as part of the budget for 2012/13 that the One Stop Shops Service, already providing financial advice, should look to expand the range of advice to fuel tariffs and the opening of bank accounts to improve financial inclusion.

2.2. One Stop Shops have been established for 14 years and in that time have expanded the range of work and advice offering a variety of information and advice on Council and non Council services. Staff are trained to ask relevant questions when a customer presents with one query as there may often be another issue, for example health and debt are often problems.

2.3 **Current work at One Stop Shops**

2.3.1 The major area of work is Council Tax and Housing Benefits which link to advice in a number of ways:

- In terms of Housing and Council Tax Benefit staff are able to maximise income through identifying other potential benefits not being claimed and translate the complexities of the benefit schemes to ensure that customers are aware of what information they need to provide to the Council.
- Staff are able to explain the role of basic bank accounts to customers who currently don't have an account and need one in order to have their Housing Benefit paid into it.

- With regard to Council Tax, staff can negotiate repayment periods within the same financial year with customers who fall behind with their instalments and can make arrangements with customers for arrears of Council Tax where customers have received a summons for non payment.

- Staff utilise the Council Fair Debt Policy which offers an arrangement based on income and expenditure details to make one single payment to clear arrears in addition to keeping current year debt payments up to date and thereby avoid any further charges. As one debt is paid the arrangement moves to the next debt and by doing this the aim is to break the cycle of debt.

- Education Welfare Benefits - Advisors promote the take up of free school meals to eligible parents which positively impacts on the weekly income the household has available.

2.3.2 There are a number of stand alone and linked areas that support the advice work such as:

- Loan Sharks - Advisors receive training to help identify unexplained patterns of payments when reviewing Housing Benefit documents which might indicate that a customer is paying a loan shark. In such circumstances they will sensitively enquire to establish if this is an issue and will offer to assist the customer in contacting the Illegal Money Lending Team or provide details to the customer should they prefer that option.

- Credit Unions - Discussions have taken place with Wirral Credit Union to enable them to work in partnership with the Council from Library and OSS sites. Wirral Credit Union would be able to promote their services and use the Library and OSS sites as collection points. This will enable customers who do not have access to a bank account to set up saving accounts and take out affordable loans based on the amount of their saving and their ability to repay loans.

- Affordable Loans - Advisors promote the Moneyline service to customers who are not able to get loans from their own bank but may be eligible through Moneyline. Surgeries are currently held at Seacombe One Stop Shop, which are proving to be successful and productive with a higher than average number of customers opening bank accounts.

- Fuel Poverty - Advisors are kept up to date on initiatives that will help customers to reduce their fuel bills or assist them in keeping their homes warmer. This includes initiatives such as the Warm Front scheme, Cosy Homes Heating Grants along with reference to the Energy Saving Trust website for additional advice.

- Tell Us Once -This national service allows advisors to inform a range of Council and Government departments that someone has died. It also provides an opportunity to give advice on a wide range of topics that will help the surviving spouse/family members. This service is to be extended to include the registration of Births. This will provide an opportunity to ensure that the parent is aware of all the services that are available to them at an early stage.

- Consumer advice - The impact of poor/faulty goods to someone on a limited budget can be significant. Advisors can provide initial advice on customer rights and the remedies available. This support is also available on a wide range of topics e.g. doorstep sales.

- Signposting - One Stop Shops have established links with a number of agencies which can help to improve the finances of individuals, e.g. regular surgeries are held by Age UK and the Pension Service across the sites. NHS Wirral surgeries also show how debt and well being are linked.

2.4 **Advice and support on Fuel and Bank Accounts**

2.4.1 With regard to Advice on Fuel Tariffs the One Stop Shops are progressing with the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning Home Energy Officer a range of initiatives including:

- British Gas has funding for a fuel debt advice service which covers Wirral and work is progressing on how this service could be delivered from Libraries and One Stop Shops.

- As part of the Affordable Warmth Implementation Plan 2012-14, there are plans to improve the fuel tariff advice initially by linking with a Consumer Focus accredited energy comparison service. There is a potential income stream for the Council as for every successful switch the service would pay a rebate.

2.4.2 With regard to advice and promotion of Bank Accounts advisors will have refresher training on how to promote bank accounts and this will ensure they are able to explain the difference between different types of accounts available e.g. current or basic bank accounts.

2.4.3 Advisors will also be able to explain which key features should be considered when opening a current account having understood the customers needs e.g. whether they want to access their account through a local bank branch or prefer to bank using the telephone or online.

2.4.4 For those customers who are not able to open a current account the advisors will be able to explain the key features of the different basic bank accounts offered and the services provided by them e.g. if they provide a free “buffer zone” or the amount charged for any unpaid direct debits or standing orders. For many people opening a basic bank account can be the first step to opening a current account.

2.4.5 Advisors will also be able to act as an advocate for the customer in completing the relevant documentation and where necessary may liaise directly with the banks. Where appropriate they will provide free financial guidance leaflets for customers to refer to when making a decision on which bank account is most suitable for the individual. As with fuel tariff advice it will be vital that our advice in this area is impartial.

2.5 **Future Developments on Advice**

2.5.1 While advice on fuel tariffs and bank accounts are clearly important there are other aspects of advice that are being progressed via the merged Libraries and One Stop Shops and these are detailed below:

(a) Advisors can offer a benefit check e.g. using the Personal Advisor on Directgov. This can be offered when an advisor is dealing with an enquiry relating to a Council Tax reminder/summons for non payment.

(b) Advisors can establish if there are grants available to assist with any issues discussed e.g. “Turn 2 Us” website. This could be offered to identify additional income to which the customer may be entitled.

(c) Meetings are being arranged to progress more local Credit Unions working within the One Stop Shops and Library network.

(d) The Library IT suites are venues to hold money management training courses. This maximises use of IT in Libraries and advances the principle of being the local source of support and advice.

(e) The recent approval of the contracts for Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Support and General Advice Services will allow the Libraries/OSS to offer and extend work with the successful tenderers. I will look to dovetail and refer customers between services to be clear on identifying who delivers what to reduce duplication and customer confusion. These organisations can be offered the availability to work from within the One Stop Shop and Library sites.

(f) In the delivery of debt advice more advisors will be trained to deliver first tier debt advice and some staff will be trained to become accredited debt advisors. There is the possibility of this service being delivered at One Stop Shops and Libraries on an appointment basis.

(g) We will develop a Wirral Financial Help Pack in liaison with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector as well as the General Advice Service which would identify sources of help.

(h) There is an opportunity to promote and expand the services the One Stop Shop Advisors can offer to Department of Adult Social Services customers. Clients and Financial Agents should be able to hand in their financial assessment forms, disability related expenditure forms and income/expenditure forms at a site near to them which will be more convenient. They should also be able to obtain free debt advice or be signposted to external free advice debt agencies if they are experiencing problems paying a Council invoice. Repayment arrangements and the Fair Debt Policy will be offered where relevant. Crucially advisors may identify financial abuse, therefore there will be agreed mechanisms in place for Advisors to report this type of Safeguarding issue to the relevant professional. Where relevant, advisors will be able to signpost Clients and Financial Agents to the Department for Work and Pensions in order to maximise benefits that are not being claimed.

(i) There are also identifiable links between the work of the One Stop Shops and the Benefits service with the work of the Department of Adult Social Services (DASS) Welfare Rights Unit. In order to deliver a more effective and coherent service under the management and overview of one Department it is proposed to transfer this function from DASS to the Finance Department.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 If the developments do not take place there is a risk of uncoordinated, duplicated or inefficient advice being given on a range of issues. Conversely, without proper planning and training incorrect or impractical advice could be given. Mitigation of these latter risks is being undertaken via staff training with internal and external support.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 To not undertake such work which would be inefficient for both the Council and service users.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation has already taken place with a number of organisations as well as with internal departments. As detailed plans are formulated this will extend to other relevant groups and organisations.

5.2 The discussion and consultation with both internal and external bodies will help to maximise use of both staff and properties and advance further the Libraries and One Stop Shops service being recognised as a place of local support in respect of a wide variety of issues and organisations able to be dealt with on site.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 This work will look to support Voluntary, Community and Faith organisations as well as the General Advice Sector to present efficient ways of offering linked services to the benefit of the community.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING & ASSETS

7.1 **Financial** – These proposals are being progressed within the current funding of the Library and One Stop Shop service and any improvements in efficiency will further support this.

7.2 **IT** – There are none arising directly from this report.

7.3. **Staffing** – These proposals will have a consequential impact on staff training. The staffing establishment and budget for the Welfare Rights Unit, currently located in DASS would be transferred to the Finance Department

7.4. **Assets** – There are none arising directly from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There will be a need to ensure that advice given is impartial and completed in a way that minimises any liability to the Authority.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This development should continue to assist equality of access to local services for the benefit of all users. The commitment to equality and diversity is integral to delivering excellent customer contact services responsive to all users including those who may not be current users. The recognition that users have different physical and service needs informs access and service plans.

9.2. The link to the Equality Impact Assessment for Library and One Stop Shops is below; http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/finance

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 That Members note the progress on the delivery of welfare and debt advice services.

12.2. That the Welfare Rights Unit currently managed by the Department of Adult Social Services be transferred to the Finance Department.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 That Members are aware of the work undertaken by the service, the proposal to transfer the Welfare Rights Unit to the Finance Department, and the work that is in development.

FNCE/81/12

REPORT AUTHOR: **Malcolm Flanagan**
Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Telephone: (0151 666 3260)
email: malcolmflanagan@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDIX

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	21 February 2012

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS & LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN CONTACTS***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	***DIRECTOR OF FINANCE***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***COUNCILLOR IAN LEWIS***
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the number and nature of requests for information received under the Freedom of Information Act and contacts made by the Local Government Ombudsman service, and to recommend a regular reporting procedure.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 **Freedom of Information (FOI).**

2.1.1 The Freedom of Information Act was introduced in November 2000 and implemented in stages up to January 2005. It gives right of access to information held by public authorities, including Councils, on written request. The Authority has two duties; to inform the member of the public whether or not the information is held and, if it is, to communicate it to the person making the request within 20 working days of the request being received. The 20 day limit can be extended if the public authority needs to seek clarification regarding the information required from the person requesting it.

2.1.2 Certain categories of information, which are detailed in the Act, are exempt from disclosure and can be legitimately withheld. Requests can also be refused on the grounds of cost if it can be shown that the time taken to respond, including that taken to collate the information, would incur a cost in excess of £450. The service is regulated by the Information Commissioners Office, who has the power to issue an Enforcement Notice to compel public authorities to respond to requests within the 20 day limit.

2.1.3 Since its introduction the number of FOI requests received by the Council has risen but 2011 saw a sharp increase. The following tables detail the requests received from 1 January 2011 to 31 January 2012, by month, department and category.

By Month			***By Department***	
2011				
January	82		Chief Executive	10
February	91		Children and Young People (Education)	93
March	97		Children and Young People (Social Care)	71
April	97		Corporate Services	82
May	112		Department Adult Social Services	154
June	94		Finance	439
July	92		Law, HR and Asset Management	251
August	89		Technical Services	174
September	80			
October	87			
November	143			
December	75			
2012				
January	135			
Total	***1274***			***1274***

** Note ~ Figures for Finance include those requests handled directly by the Information Officer*

By Category	
Contracts	54
Media	71
whatdotheyknow.com	333
Education	87
Financial / Budget / Grant / Spend	125
Adult Social Care Provision	63
CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE PROVISION	36
Parliamentary Research	22
Highways / Traffic	52
Buildings	18
Waste / Recycling	35
Parking	30
Pensions	21
ICT	26
Salaries / Job Descriptions / EVR	77
Council Tax	13
Business Rates	45
Planning / Land Charges	31
Tranmere Rovers	15
Legal Issues	51
Licensing	13
Housing Benefits	10
Total	***1228***

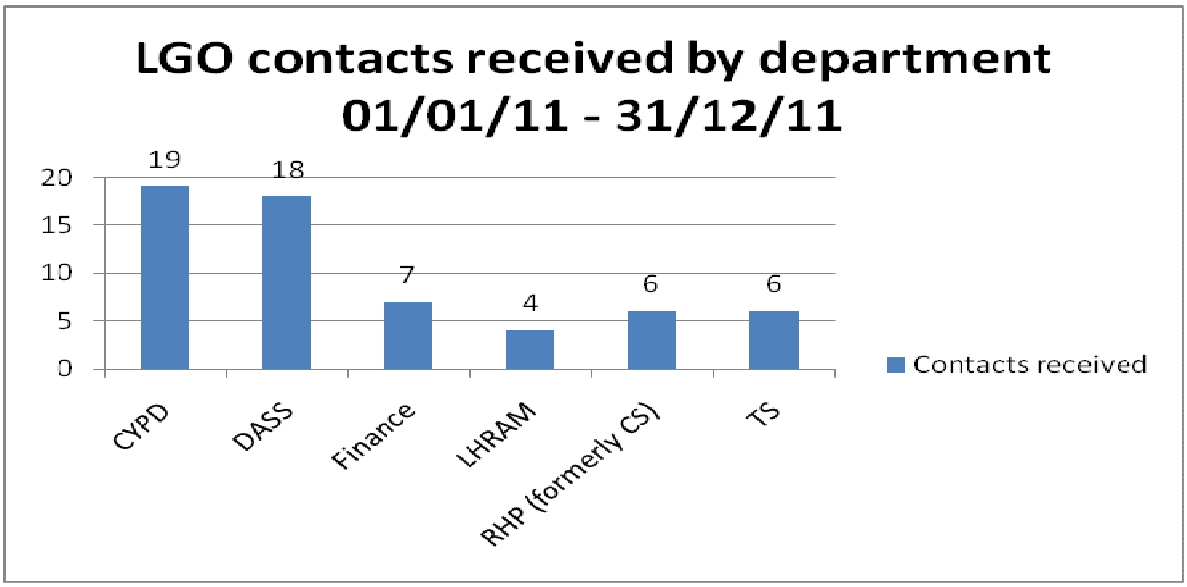
**Note ~ Categories containing less than ten requests are not listed.*

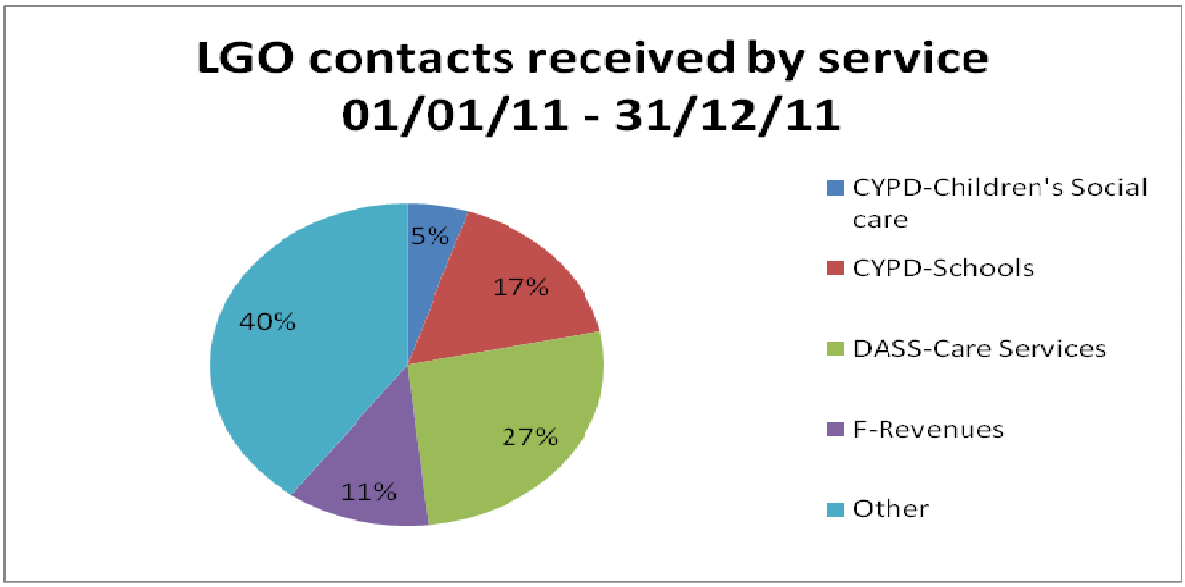
2.2 Local Government Ombudsman

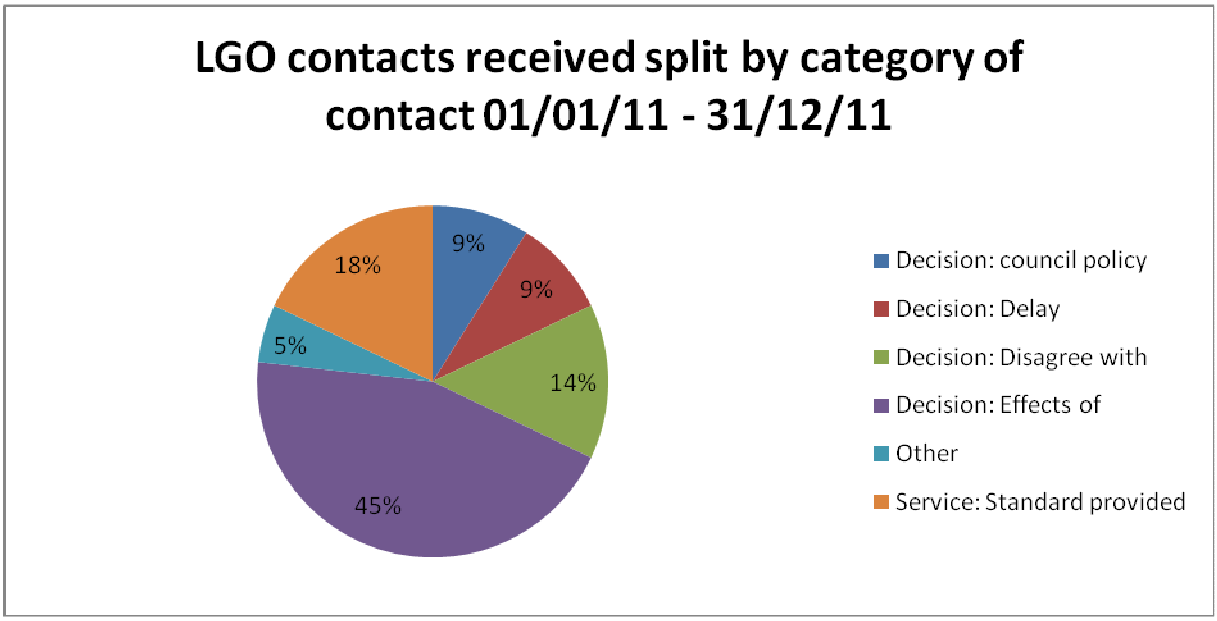
2.2.1 The Local Government Ombudsman Service (LGO) was introduced as part of the Local Government Act 1974 and has two key statutory functions, to investigate complaints against Councils, and some other authorities, and to provide advice and guidance on good administrative practice.

2.2.2 Complaints can only be referred to the Ombudsman if the Council's complaints procedures fail to resolve the issue. The following tables and charts show the contacts received by department,

Department	***Q4 2010/11***	***Q1 2011/12***	***Q2 2011/12***	***Q3 2011/12***
Corporate Services / Regeneration, Housing, Planning				
Building Control	1			
Planning Policy	1			
Planning Services	1	1	1	
Regeneration				1
Children & Young People				
Schools	1	5	6	1
Child Protection		1		
Pupil Services		1		
Support Services		1		
Social Care			2	1
Anti Social Behaviour				2
Adult Social Services				
Care Services	4	7	4	2
Community & Well Being				1
Finance				
Revenues	1	3		2
Law, HR & Asset Management				
Environmental Health		1		
Licensing		1		
Asset Management				1
Legal & Members Services			1	
Technical Services				
Enforcement Highways Maintenance	1			
Refuse Collection		1		
Traffic Issues			1	
Street Cleansing				1
Trees				1
Total Contacts	***10***	***22***	***15***	***13***


LGO contacts received by department 01/01/11 - 31/12/11
20
15
10
5
0
19
18
7
4
6
6
CYPD
DASS
Finance
LHRAM
RHP (formerly CS)
TS
Contacts received


LGO contacts received by service 01/01/11 - 31/12/11
5%
17%
27%
11%
40%
CYPD-Children's Social care
CYPD-Schools
DASS-Care Services
F-Revenues
Other


LGO contacts received split by category of contact 01/01/11 - 31/12/11
9%
9%
14%
45%
5%
18%
Decision: council policy
Decision: Delay
Decision: Disagree with
Decision: Effects of
Other
Service: Standard provided

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 That the Council fails to meet the timescales to respond to requests, which is mitigated by established procedures.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are no implications for voluntary, community or faith groups.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 There are no significant resource implications.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality? No because there is no relevance to equality within the report.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no carbon reduction implications.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The report does not contain any planning or community safety implications.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 That the report be noted

12.2 That a similar report be submitted to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 To ensure Members are informed of the number and nature of FOI requests received and contact made by the Local Government Ombudsman.

FNCE/87/12

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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Standards Committee	29 September 2011
Standards Committee	26 January 2011
Standards Committee	02 December 2010
Standards Committee	29 September 2010
Standards Committee	29 March 2010
Standards Committee	29 September 2009

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	***CHIEF EXECUTIVE***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***CLLR LESLIE RENNIE, CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, TOURISM AND LEISURE***
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the progress made in planning activities for the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay (OTR) visiting Wirral on the 1st June 2012.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Council is marking and supporting the visit of the Torch relay by:

- Assisting all agencies in the safe passage of the Torch through Wirral
- Organising a series of Olympic related events focussed on Birkenhead Park
- Encouraging as much participation in the Olympic related events with a focus of engaging with children and young people

2.2 The Olympic Torch Relay (OTR) is one of the strongest links between the modern Olympic Movement and the ancient Olympic Games, and is considered by many to be the second most important communications tool after the Games themselves.

2.2 Wirral in conjunction with the other Merseyside LA's made a bid in March 2010 to the London Organising Committee of the Olympic & Paralympic Games (LOCOG) to receive the Olympic Torch Relay (OTR) in its Borough. Notification of our success was received in June 2011 but due to the requirements of LOCOG, the process generally has been subject to a strict Non-Disclosure Agreement until public announcement. This agreement remains in place for a number of matters relating to commercial rights (of the 3 principal sponsors) and security.

2.3 The scope of the OTR event is considerable and includes:

- Olympic Flame arrives in UK on 18 May 2012
- OTR starts 19 May 2012
- Travels across the UK for 70 days (the final 7 days in London)
- Involves approximately 8000 torchbearers
- Overall aim of the route of the OTR is for it to travel within 1 hour of 95% of the population
- There will be an evening celebration every night of travel
- The evening event on 1st June will take place in Liverpool

2.4 Some key Olympic related dates are:

- OTR duration: 18 May – 27 July 2012
- OTR visits Wirral – Friday 1st June 2012
- Olympic Games: 27 July – 12 August 2012
- Paralympic Games: 29 August – 09 September 2012

3.0 PREPARATION FOR THE EVENT

3.1 Wirral Community Task Force (WCTF)

3.1.1 As required under a LOCOG agreement, Wirral established its WCTF in September 2011. The Health, Safety & Resilience Manager was designated the Council's Lead Officer for the OTR event and chair of the WCTF. Due to the restrictions of the Non-Disclosure Agreement regular updates were provided via a series of briefing notes to the Leader of the Council.

3.1.2 The WCTF is a multi-agency working group and is made up of representatives from the following partner agencies and Council service areas – Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Traffic Management, Public Relations and Community Engagement, Event Safety, Leisure, Parks & Countryside and schools. It is a working group of representatives who have agreed to provide support services for the OTR event. A sub-group has also been established to concentrate on the programme of sports and activities taking place within the Park.

3.2 The Route

3.2.1 Street-level detail of the route of the event was prescribed by LOCOG and was communicated under the terms of the Non-Disclosure Agreement and there was no opportunity to impart wholesale changes to it. The route follows the heritage trail across Birkenhead and is a proven route in that this route was used for the Marathon in 2011.

3.2.2 The OTR event is due to arrive on Wirral from the Wallasey Tunnel between 5.30 pm and 6.00 pm on Friday 1st June 2012 having started the day in Bolton. It will travel via Duke St, Park Rd Nth and into Birkenhead Park via Ashville Rd. It will proceed along Park Drive and exit Birkenhead Park via the Grand Entrance on Park Rd East. It will travel onto Claughton Rd and into Hemingford St and on into Conway St and then left into Argyle St. It will turn right into Hamilton Sq and then left onto Hamilton St and pass in front of Birkenhead Town Hall. It will continue around the Gyratory and on into Woodside ferry terminus where it will board a Ferry and depart across to the Pier Head and the evening celebration at Liverpool.

3.3 Focus of the Celebration

3.3.1 As a result of the OTR event only being on the Wirral for approximately 1 hour, it was vital that a geographical focus of the visit be provided. This would allow as many people to converge to celebrate this event and also offer the opportunity to provide a location whereby the many community groups could display there activities.

3.3.2 In celebration of the OTR a comprehensive itinerary of Olympic related events is being organised to take place in Birkenhead Park. The celebration has a focus on engaging with children and young people and Birkenhead Park will be positioned as 'the' place to go and watch the OTR procession. Events in the park will begin at 1.30PM with sports and activities for schools (closed for the public). The schools' event will shut down at 4.00PM when open access sport and activities take place for the public from 4.00PM until 6.00PM with people encouraged to 'have a go' prior to the OTR reaching the park.

3.3.3 An important factor of the OTR will be the legacy of the event and in offering a schedule of so many sports and activities for the public to participate and engage in, it is hoped that a number of the participants will continue their engagement long after the OTR has left.

3.4 Media Management

3.4.1 The media management for the OTR is largely led by LOCOG with support from the Government Olympic Communications (GOC) who are the Government's Olympic body. The Councils Press Office will support the GOC and the OTR communications 'machine' both in the lead-up to and during the visit of the Olympic Torch.

3.4.2 LOCOG are to officially announce the details of the actual routes and details of the Torch Bearers on Monday 19th March 2012. To coincide with this information being released there is a planned photocall at Birkenhead Park, where the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member and the Mayor of Wirral will be in attendance.

3.4.3 It is intended for event information to begin to being released to the public on the wirral.gov. website from March 19th. This information will include:

- Olympic Torch FAQ
- Details of events in the Park
- Details of Local Torchbearers
- Business Continuity Advice
- Advice for residents living along the route
- Traffic and Transport information including parking information
- Details of the event at Woodside
- Appeal for 'good news' stories.

3.4.4 This information will continue to be updated right up to the event itself.

3.5 Event Safety

3.5.1 A comprehensive event safety plan is being drawn up for the OTR visiting Wirral. This event safety plan is being prepared in conjunction with all partner agencies and based on the advice contained within the LOCOG Planning Guide.

3.5.2 Initially it is intended to invite employees from across the Council to volunteer to marshall the event. It is estimated that we will require up to 50 Marshalls and if there are insufficient volunteers from within the Council's workforce we will widen the invitation to volunteers and community groups.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 Safety will always be our top priority, so the event safety plan will provide risk control measures based on the input and agreement from partner agencies and LOCOG guidance.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 There are no other options as a result of this report.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 There is no need for consultation as a result of this report.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 Many voluntary community and faith groups have been informed of the opportunity to participate in the event.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 All resources will be provided from within existing resources and budgets.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no carbon reduction implications as a result of this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no planning and community safety implications as a result of this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That the report be noted.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To inform Members of the plans being made to celebrate the Olympic Torch Relay visiting Wirral.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***WIRRAL POSITIVE FUTURES PROJECT***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	***DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***CLLR. LESLEY RENNIE, CULTURE TOURISM & LEISURE***
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update of the work of the Wirral's Sports Development Unit and in particular the Positive Futures Project and to seek Cabinet endorsement for the proposed activity for 2012/13 as agreed in the Council budget for 2012/13.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Wirral Positive Futures Project is managed by the Sports Development Unit. The project started in 2005 and has grown in reputation since that time. The project seeks to make positive changes in the lives of vulnerable young people, especially those caught up in drugs, alcohol and substance misuse. The project is funded by the Home Office with additional support from Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT). From 2013/14 Wirral Positive Futures like all projects across the country, will seek financial support through the Police Commissioning process. Now is an important time to maintain and build upon those relationships to cement future delivery. Central to the success of this project has been its key worker Colin Hunt MBE.

2.2 The project has grown significantly since 2005, both in terms of young people engaged and with the demand for project delivery. Previously additional funding has been specifically for activity, not for staff to develop the schemes. Most recently Positive Futures has been working in partnership to deliver the Enhanced Outreach Project, a mobile sports provision consisting of a small mini bus, containing sports equipment and a lighting rig. This is a good project but success has been restricted by reliance on older vehicles and equipment. These limiting issues could be resolved with the allocated funding of £50,000.

2.3 Positive Futures receives annual funding of £40,000 from the Home Office to cover the salary of the Activity Mentor - Colin Hunt, plus a small amount

of activity delivery. Positive Futures is also currently commissioned to deliver the Enhanced Outreach Project in partnership with the Youth Service to June 2012, and a small amount of holiday provision. Funding from Wirral DAAT is yet to be confirmed. This is subject to a Wirral Council commissioning process

2.4 An additional £50,000 was allocated for the Positive Futures project in the 2012/13 revenue budget approved by Council on 1st March 2012 (Minute 131 refers). This most welcome additional funding will undoubtedly enhance the "offer" to the most needy people and improve their life chances as endorsed by the following two case studies.

3.0 CASE STUDIES

3.1 The following two case studies are to illustrate the work done by the Positive Futures project:

3.2 Case study 1

Person D first approached a youth sports co-ordinator in Summer 2009 at Wirral Sports and Tennis Centre, Bidston, which is the venue for a Positive Futures session held every Friday night. He had been watching the football session from the side lines for a number of weeks and finally 'plucked' up the courage to ask how he could become involved in helping run the session. Person D was temporarily not in employment, education or training (NEET) and following the appropriate clearance, he started coaching as a volunteer in August 2009. The lads who attend the football are sometimes hard to engage and particularly when in a group are quite intimidating and although Person D was nervous he challenged their behaviour and set about laying out acceptable behaviour ground rules. He soon gained a rapport with the group through attending every Friday night and has gone on to continually display a great deal of enthusiasm even when faced with challenging situations.

Person D has continued to attend the session in a supporting role e.g. recording attendances of young people, organising groups into teams, recording scores and refereeing. Person D was instrumental in the planning and delivery of the Northwest Positive Futures football tournament. All of his volunteer sessions have been recorded, which currently shows 67 hours using the V inspired award log-book. (V inspired is a national youth volunteering program).

Person D says "I have been very impressed working for Positive Futures and have personally gained an awful lot, I feel I have got a lot more confident in myself and I am enjoying being part of the Positive Futures team and helping the kids achieve things is a great feeling. I have enjoyed getting to know the Sports Co-ordinators and learning from them has been life-changing for me. I believe that Positive Futures gives the kids something to look forward to and helps them stays out trouble. I have also gained my Football Association (FA) level 1 and my National Pool Lifeguard

qualification and I am very interested in doing more qualifications, I really want to do my FA level 2."

3.3 Case study 2

Extract from a letter received by the Sports Development Unit

I am a 41 year old mother of 4 ages F 26, C 18, J 15 and a 4 year old. We have lived on the Wirral my whole life and for the past 15+ years I have resided in Seacombe. Over the years I have noticed the decline in the area and as my children have hit teenage years I was constantly aware of the growing drug problem in our area. I think a lot of the trouble in our streets stems from boredom, and youngsters possibly looking for ways in which they can entertain themselves sadly turn to drugs, smoking, drinking and increasingly so, violence.

All my children are very sports minded and all absolutely love football. So when the soccer dome opened on Friday nights for free it was such a great relief to me, as it is the weekend when our children are most at risk of making bad decisions. Being a student I have very limited funds to pay for them to go to different sports activities.

I have more concerns over J than C and F. He was starting to get into the wrong crowd etc, but then both C and J started to liaise with Positive Futures who I honestly cannot thank enough. After going on several trips and participating in several sporting activities J has grown as a person and has found respect for both himself and others. He wants to join the army when he leaves school. The opportunities that J has been given has helped him to get fit enough to be accepted into army training centre. Only last week his schoolteacher phones me to say what a change there has been in him. "He is coming into school and on time, completing work, and is a lovely individual to teach". I can tell you this is a far cry from two years ago. Credit has to go to J but the catalyst in his turn around has undoubtedly been Positive Futures, and the Wirral ASBO Team. Through positive futures J has been able to do things he has only ever dreamt of and he has surpassed himself in some of the more challenging activities he has done.

As for C, Positive Futures had been fantastic especially Colin Hunt and Alf (Community ASBO Officer) who has given C some fantastic opportunities. C has done a lot of voluntary work for both the council and Positive Futures and has recently been awarded the RESPECT AWARD. C too has also been able to participate in numerous sporting activates, ranging from football, golf, hill walking, abseiling, canoeing, skiing plus many more. She has also been on a few courses making her more employable; C played in an All Stars tournament earlier this year through Positive Futures and had a great time there and she has been short listed to represent them in a tournament and she is off to London and Switzerland next month, none of which would have been possible without Positive Futures and the ASBO team. The staff are always on hand to support the young people in whatever way they can, providing both emotional and practical support.

I realise funding is hard to find in this current climate, but mine is just one family from the area and you can see what an impact it has had on us.

Positive Futures offer young people the opportunity to do things that their parents could never afford them to do, making them feel good about themselves and also about living a healthy lifestyle. They are taught all about respect and if you give it you will be rewarded for it. Most of the service users treat it well but there is always one or two who are harder to reach out to but I do believe that we can help to promote change for the better if we were given the opportunity to do so.

Since writing this letter C has gone on to be picked to be one of the 8 All Stars for 'Your Game' BBC. I am sure you are well aware of what the prospect or the potential that can come about from this amazing chance and privilege. Not only for Positive Futures, one of your own prodigies' so to speak but for C this could open up so many doors for her. C has some fantastic ideas about the projects she would like to set up, even charities with the help of YOUR GAME and POSITIVE FUTURES I am sure this will be achieved. I am actually quite excited for the future and where all this is going to lead for C and all the other youngsters and young adults she wants to reach out to.

As you can see I am a great fan of Positive Futures and I truly am eternally grateful for the opportunities they have given my children.

4.0 PROPOSED FUTURE EXPENDITURE (2012/13)

4.1 The following activity is proposed for the additional allocation of £50,000 approved by Council for 2012/13 which will enable the project to extend its work:

- Purchase of a transit van complete with telescopic lighting capabilities and generator to floodlight an area of land in the evening allowing organised sports to take place. The mobile sports unit would operate in Parks and multiuse games areas in the evenings at weekends to engage young people. **Cost £20,000**

- Employment of a Positive Futures Assistant Activity Mentor to work alongside Colin Hunt, full time to develop and enhance targeted sports activities and increase volunteering and coaching opportunities for vulnerable young people. The post would be for one year predominantly in the evenings and at weekends in areas of most need. **Cost £22,000**

- Training budget for up to 40 targeted young people enabling them to qualify as sports instructors and be ready for employment on Sports Development and other Sports & Recreation schemes. **Cost £8,000**.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 There are risks to the future long term funding of this project.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 The additional funding could be used to further increase staffing rather than equipment or could be used to provide additional facilities. The proposed combination of equipment and staffing is considered to be the most cost effective for the project at the present time.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 No specific consultation has been undertaken on the proposals.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 The project has a high level of commitment and voluntary engagement.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 The proposed additional expenditure for 2012/13 of £50,000 has been approved in the Council budget for 2012/13.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 *(Carbon usage implications? Any other relevant environmental issues?)*

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no planning implications. The project has a proven record in improving community safety.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Cabinet is requested to:

(1) Note the work of Wirral's Sports Development Unit and in particular the Positive Futures Project;

(2) Endorse the proposed activity for 2012/13 outlined in Section 4.0.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 To agree the expenditure additional funding allocated to the Positive Futures Project for 2012/13.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**FINDINGS OF THE WIRRAL VISITOR RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED IN 2011 TO SUPPORT WIRRAL'S TOURISM BUSINESSES**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNILLOR LESLEY RENNIE, CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, TOURISM AND LEISURE**
KEY DECISION:	**YES**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report summarises the key findings of both current and potential visitors' perceptions of Wirral, and highlights feedback from the Wirral Tourism Business Network, regarding the Council's Destination Marketing team's ongoing support and current performance. It also recommends future activity based on these findings, to help achieve visitor growth, generate spend and encourage long-term economic sustainability.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 In 2006, due to the lack of market intelligence available specifically for Wirral, a Visitor Research Study was conducted to evaluate current attendance at a selection of Wirral's key attractions/locations, and the perception of potential visitors to the Borough. The findings led to the development of the Wirral Tourism Business Network; the creation of the "Wirral Peninsula" brand, and the annual Play, Eat and Stay in Wirral marketing campaign.

2.2 In 2011, the Wirral Visitor Research Study was repeated, to monitor and evaluate performance over the past five years since the previous study, of both the industry and work of the Council's tourism marketing team. European funds were secured, via the Partners for Tourism Growth project in association with The Mersey Partnership, and Ipsos MORI were contracted. This followed initial expressions of interest from three national research companies; in line with the Council's procurement procedure, formal presentations and interviews, and a full evaluation process to achieve Best Value and Best Practice. A range of private, public and community sector stakeholders and partners, from the Wirral Tourism Business Network, were also consulted throughout the process.

2.3 The Research Study included stakeholder interviews, existing and potential visitor research, focus group feedback and web research.

3.0 RATIONALE

3.1 Stakeholder Interviews

3.1.1 To ensure that the research captured all the relevant information, to develop and inform marketing decisions and policy going forward, in-depth interviews were conducted with key Wirral tourism stakeholders from the Business Network.

3.2 Existing Visitor Survey

3.2.1 This quantitative research was carried out in three phases during 2011 (ie spring, summer and autumn), and at 12 high footfall visitor locations, and a total of 672 adults were interviewed. Detailed questionnaires and qualified interviewers were used over the three phases. The locations were the Floral Pavilion Theatre and Conference Centre and promenade in New Brighton, The U-boat Story, Woodside ferry terminal and Home cafe, Port Sunlight Museum, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Wirral Country Park and Visitor Centre at Thurstaston, Spaceport, Seacombe ferry terminal, Birkenhead Market, Hoylake town centre, West Kirby Marine Lake and promenade, and Brimstage Craft Centre.

3.2.2 The Survey analysed the frequency and length of visits, group composition, reasons for visiting, distance travelled, preferences, satisfaction, gender, age, spend, marketing evaluation (eg how they found the attraction/location, etc), and socio-economic grouping.

3.3 Potential Visitor Telephone Survey

3.3.1 Using Random Digit Dialling, a total of 501 adults took part in a Potential Visitor Telephone Survey. This quantitative survey was conducted using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing. The interviews were conducted with adults living within a two-hour drive time of Wirral at six key locations (ie Liverpool, Chester, Wrexham, Manchester, Birmingham and Lancaster), and quotas were set for these areas as well as for age, gender and work status.

3.4 Focus Group Feedback (including Web Research)

3.4.1 A crucial element of the research was to assess the tourism marketing and communications mix that Wirral offers to visitors. This additional and more detailed qualitative work was carried out in locations within a 90 minute drive time of Wirral (ie Chester, Manchester and Birmingham). Each Group contained a maximum of 10 people, and they were questioned against set criteria, to evaluate how people search for short and day breaks; how they assess Wirral's current tourism literature, as well as competitor offerings. Competitor websites

were also reviewed as part of the Study. The work helped to evaluate and secure a profile of views including motivation, frequency and length of visits, perception of the Borough, and the quality of existing marketing material.

3.4.2 The research in 2006 found that over half of all respondents research short breaks on the internet. This led to the enhanced, dedicated website specifically for tourism visitors to Wirral, www.visitwirral.com. To measure its effectiveness, particularly in light of the continuing developments in social networking, qualitative depth interviews of web usage was undertaken, to fully understand how people navigate the internet when looking for visitor information.

4.0 KEY FINDINGS

4.1 Stakeholder Interview Results

4.1.1 All of the Network stakeholders who were interviewed; echoed the three themes of Coast and Countryside, Cuisine and Culture, as the key "attractions" for Wirral. This reassuring recommendation, reinforces the work of the Council's Destination Marketing team, and is reflected by the results of the Wirral Year of Food in 2010, and bodes well for this year's Wirral Year of Coast and Countryside.

4.1.2 All stakeholders valued their relationship with the Council, highlighting that their impact is greater when working together, rather than independently. They acknowledged that Wirral's position as a tourist destination had been enhanced over the past five years, because of the work of the Council's tourism marketing team, and praised the amount of tourism media and press coverage that had been generated nationally and regionally for the Borough.

4.1.3 Golf was an area highlighted as important for Wirral's potential tourism development, with a broad range of visitors already coming to the Borough, including those for the newly developed Wirral Golf Classic. Both the Ricoh Women's British Open this September, and The Open Championship in 2014, will have a major impact for Wirral's tourism businesses.

4.1.4 Stakeholders also suggested a number of areas to be improved or continued. These included better signage to Wirral from outside of the Borough; continued marketing regionally and nationally, and developing a closer relationship with Marketing Cheshire as well as The Mersey Partnership.

4.2 Existing Visitor Findings

4.2.1 Overwhelmingly, visitors see the Wirral as a beautiful place to relax, having something for all the family, and a substantial 90% of current visitors would recommend the Borough as a place to visit.

4.2.2 There has been a significant increase in the proportion of visitors who are satisfied with their visit to Wirral (ie 95% in 2011), and two-thirds are now very satisfied (ie 66% compared to 55% in 2006).

4.2.3 Over 80% of existing visitors believe that Wirral is a better tourism location, than other places they have visited in the last 12 months, which is a significant increase from 50%, when the research was conducted in 2006.

4.2.4 There have been more first time visitors in 2011 than in 2006 (ie 40% compared to 30%), and the proportion of "first-timers" from outside the North West is significantly higher (ie 59% from outside the North West 24% actually from the region), which is a important reflection of Wirral's increasing tourism offer, reputation and marketing activity delivered over the past 5 years.

4.2.5 Existing visitors are of a similar age (ie 57% are 55 plus), gender profile (ie 58% women and 42% men) and social grade to those in 2006 (ie the more affluent group of ABC1s increased slightly from 62% to 65% in 2011, however this compares with 51% of the national population profile of ABC1s)

4.2.6 Those taking short breaks in Wirral have increased from 20% to 26% and 41% of these "overnighters" stay in hotels. This again reflects the increasing tourism offer, including the range of hotels and guesthouses in the Borough, and Wirral's reputation as a place to play, eat and stay.

4.2.7 Visitors come to Wirral for a great day out (50%), to use Wirral's restaurants, tearooms and cafes (26%), and to see specific attractions (24%).

4.2.8 87% of existing visitors agree that Wirral has an excellent coast and countryside offer, and 68% highlighted the Borough's natural assets as the reason they viewed Wirral as a better than average location. The Wirral Year of Coast and Countryside, and the launch of the Wirral Circular Trail have been developed to take advantage of this interest, in order to attract even more visitors.

4.2.9 More than half of existing visitors are interested in the Wirral Food and Drink Festival in Bebington and the Christmas Food Fayre in Port Sunlight. Events such as these, developed by the Destination Marketing team over the past five years with European funds, are a key tool to attract visitors and spend. The economic impact of events in 2011 was over £5 million and includes the Mersey Pirate Muster in New Brighton, the Birkenhead Park Festival of Transport and the Wirral Golf Classic.

4.2.10 In addition, Port Sunlight Museum, Spaceport at Seacombe and The U-boat Story at Woodside attracted the most first time visitors.

4.3 Potential Visitor Findings

4.3.1 Coast/Countryside and Quality Food continue to be the most important considerations for planning short breaks (ie both at 84%), which not only mirrors the research done in 2006, but also reinforces the key themes chosen by the Destination Marketing team to promote Wirral's tourism offer (ie Year of Food in 2010 and Year of Coast and Countryside in 2012). The third highest consideration was Culture at 78%, which will now inform any future themed activity (ie Year of Culture in 2014).

4.3.2 Websites are a key influencer for short breaks (ie increasing to 64% in 2011 from 52% in 2006), however word of mouth continues to be the highest at 83%.

4.3.3 Websites also made a substantial increase for those interested day trips (ie 31% in 2011 from 19% in 2006), however word of mouth again continues to be the highest influence at 57%.

4.3.4 There was significant interest in Wirral's events by potential visitors, and in particular the Port Sunlight Christmas Food Fayre (40%) and Wirral Food & Drink Festival (38%), were mentioned by interviewees. However, there is still some work to be done, to further increase awareness of the full annual events programme to potential visitors.

4.4 Focus Group Results (including Web)

4.4.1 The groups examined the 2010/11 Wirral Visitor Guide, the 2011/12 Food and Drink Guide, and the suggested tourism visuals for the Play, Eat and Stay in Wirral campaign in 2012.

4.4.2 Both the Visitor, and Food and Drink, guides were praised as giving a good impression of Wirral, and would encourage people to visit the Borough.

4.4.3 They were impressed with the design; the A5 format and quality finish of both publications.

4.4.4 They were also very impressed with the quality of the imagery; however they thought both the front cover images did not reflect the quality of images inside the literature. This feedback has now been utilised to immediately inform the new Wirral Visitor Guide and will also inform the development of the next Food and Drink Guide in 2013.

4.4.5 The Play, Eat and Stay in Wirral campaign, was praised for the striking image of New Brighton lighthouse, and it was also felt that Wirral would be a good area for walking. This again reinforces the current Coast and Countryside themed year of activity, including the launch of the new 35-mile Wirral Circular Trail for walkers and cyclists, developed by Technical Services and Cultural Services.

4.4.6 Wirral's dedicated tourism website (www.visitwirral.com) was positively received, particularly in relation to its feel and tone, and it was highlighted that the brand colours fitted the respondents' impression of Wirral. They remarked on the professional look, informative content and were impressed with the images used.

4.4.7 Suggested amendments were put forward to enhance and improve the site, including the sequence of "tabs" at the top; making the itinerary planner clearer; adding more images in parts of the site to further inspire potential visitors, and limiting the amount of scrolling the viewer needs to do. The suggestions are now being considered and implemented by the Destination Marketing team.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are drawn from the results of the Wirral Visitor Research Study conducted in 2011; compared against the results of the market intelligence gathered in 2006, with a view to developing and implementing the future Wirral Tourism Marketing Strategy to support Wirral's tourism businesses:

- Wirral's tourism business stakeholders value their relationship with the Council and in particular the work of the Destination Marketing team. This includes the support to the Wirral Tourism Business Network and six sector partners, and the national/regional marketing campaign activity. However, a closer working relationship with both the Cheshire and Merseyside tourism boards was suggested for the future. Better signage to the Borough was also recommended where possible.

- There has been a significant increase in the proportion of visitors who are satisfied with their visit to Wirral over the past five years (ie 95% in 2011), and those that believe it is a more attractive place, than other locations they have visited.

- More visitors are coming to Wirral for the very first time than ever before, and more of those "first-timers" are coming from outside the North West of England, reflecting the positive impact of Wirral's marketing activity to visitors over the past five years. This also highlights the Borough's increasing tourism offer (eg accommodation, attractions, food and drink outlets, etc).

- People clearly have different motivations for visiting places, however visitors are particularly interested in Wirral's coast and countryside, quality food and cultural offers, and this has already informed Wirral's tourism themed years.

- Wirral's tourism dedicated website (www.visitwirral.com), is an essential tool for Wirral's tourism businesses to attract both day and short break visitors, and a number of improvements will be implemented to improve efficiency (eg sequence of "tabs" to search sectors, more images, etc).

- The range and quality of the Borough's high profile events, which currently has an economic impact of over £5 million, are vital to attracting new and existing visitors.

- Wirral's marketing literature and campaign/press coverage were highly praised for their quality, imagery and effectiveness.

Finally, Wirral's tourism marketing in general was seen as essential to market the Borough to attract both new and repeat visitors; however a "one size fits all" approach should be avoided. It was felt using a range of resources (eg Visitor Guide, Food and Drink Guide, Wirral Circular Trail, Events leaflet, Attractions leaflet, etc) as well as excellent events, www.visitwirral.com and press activity will have the most efficient and effective result in the future.

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

6.1 There are no risks to be considered.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 There are no other options to be considered.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 The findings from the Wirral Visitor Survey have already been presented to the sector-led Wirral Tourism Business Network, and their positive response will inform the development of the Council's future tourism plan and activities.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

9.1 The benefits, resulting from the recommendations of this report, will have a positive impact for Wirral's business community, tourism economy and Borough as a whole.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

10.1 There are no additional IT, staffing or asset implications.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no additional legal implications.

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

An Equality Impact Assessment will not be required; however the Wirral Visitor Research Study was conducted equitably, the events highlighted will be promoted as totally inclusive, and there are no adverse human rights implications.

13.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 A new Wirral Group Travel Partnership, strategy and implementation plan is currently being developed, to encourage more group/coach visitors, to Wirral as a tourism destination. Environmentally sustainable use of public transport and recycling are also promoted at all events where possible, with partners including Merseytravel, so carbon production is reduced to a minimum.

14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no planning or additional community safety implications.

15.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 Cabinet is requested to note the findings and conclusions of the Wirral Visitor Research Study, and support the development of the future Wirral Tourism Marketing Strategy, and annual Implementation Plan. The strategy's objectives will reflect the Study's conclusions to help increase the numbers of visitors to the Borough, encourage visitor spend and support the needs of Wirral's growing tourism businesses.

16.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

16.1 Tourism is currently worth over £265 million to Wirral's economy, employs over 4,000 full time equivalent jobs and has increased by a substantial 15% over the past five years (as verified by Merseyside's current tourism board, The Mersey Partnership). This highlights the value of the work of the Council's Destination Marketing team, and potential of attracting new and repeat visitors to the Borough, particularly in light of Wirral's increasing tourism offer over the coming years. These include the recently opened Marine Point leisure development in New Brighton by HRH The Queen; events such as the Ricoh Women's British Open this September for the first time in Hoylake; the welcome return of The Open Championship in 2014, and themed activity such as the Wirral Year of Coast and Countryside this year. The new tourism marketing strategy and annual delivery plan will not only maximise all of these opportunities efficiently and effectively, to help sustain and grow Wirral's tourism and leisure economy, but help plan and attract other high economic impact tourism projects to the Borough.

16.2 Putting the visitor economy into a national context, tourism is one of the six largest industries in the United Kingdom; with an annual direct spend of £90 billion per year, and employing 4.4% of the nation's total jobs. However, Britons currently take fewer "staycations" than other European countries and the industry continues to be very dependent on public sector funds for marketing activity.

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APPENDICES

Not applicable.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

The previous Cabinet report mentioned is detailed in the subject history below.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Findings of the Existing and Potential Visitor Research Study in 2006	**January 2007**

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 12TH APRIL 2012

COUNCIL – 16TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**PARKS & COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES MODERNISATION PROJECT – PLANT AND EQUIPMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**CLLR LESLEY RENNIE, CULTURE TOURISM AND LEISURE**
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the proposed plant and equipment capital investment programme to modernise the Parks & Countryside Service.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Parks & Countryside Service Modernisation Project is a complex multi-disciplinary project with the purpose of establishing a modern, cost effective and efficient service comparable to that offered by the private sector by Spring 2013.

2.2 An Outline Delivery Plan was endorsed by Cabinet at their meeting on 24 November 2011 (Minute 205 refers) and has been set out under four key workstreams all reporting to a Project Board:

- Policy, Processes and Performance
- Human Resources
- Assets
- Communication and Engagement

A progress report on the modernisation of the service and achievement of the Delivery Plan will also be considered at this Cabinet meeting.

2.3 At Cabinet on 12th January 2012 approval was given to use £500,000 of the existing Capital Programme allocation for Cultural Services assets to purchase plant and equipment necessary to deliver the Highways Grounds Maintenance aspect of the Parks & Countryside Service from 1st February 2012 (Minute 261 refers).

2.4 This report now seeks approval for a comprehensive programme of investment in plant and equipment to enable the modernisation and continuous improvement of the Parks & Countryside Service.

3.0 PROPOSED PLANT AND EQUIPMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

3.1 Justification

New equipment is urgently needed to ensure that we can run the Parks and Countryside Service safely and productively to the highest standards and at the minimum cost both in the short and the long term.

The Parks and Countryside Service has about 650 machines in order to deliver the service and maintain the parks and countryside across the Wirral. This equipment varies in size from hand held machines such as brush cutters and hedge cutters to large four wheel drive tractors of 100 horsepower. This equipment has been maintained throughout its life to a high standard by the Parks and Gardens Workshop.

Unfortunately the fleet is now at considerable age which causes great problems in both maintenance costs and operator safety. Many of the pedestrian machines such as the Ransomes Certes greens mower are in excess of 25-30 years old. The manufacturers are no longer producing some of the spare parts required to maintain these machines which means that adequate repairs cannot be made and the service cannot be delivered in an efficient and effective manner.

The machines the Council currently own and use on a daily basis are based on old designs and therefore are relatively inefficient with regards to emissions, noise and vibration. These old designs also waste fuel and are not environmentally friendly compared to modern equipment.

Operator safety is a major concern as the risks of hand arm vibration and whole of body vibration along with noise levels have been highlighted by several reports by the health and safety executive. Operators now have a legal obligation to reduce risks wherever possible. Wirral council is actively undertaking to reduce these risks to health by the monitoring of staff and testing the equipment used. Due to the age of Council equipment this is becoming increasingly difficult and the staff are only being able to use many machines for a very limited amount of time due to the vibration levels of the old machines.

With investment in new machinery we will be able to reduce risk levels to a minimum and ensure staff are exposed to the minimum risk along with the benefit of greater productivity. This increased productivity will enable the reduction in the number of machines we need to purchase. We have at present 49 Hayter Condor mid sized Pedestrian mowers. We propose to replace these machines with 30 new type "ride on" machines which will cover the same amount of work. This will not only save a considerable amount of money in the purchase of the equipment, as they are approximately the same replacement cost as the old machines, but will greatly reduce operator exposure to vibration and noise emissions. The new types of equipment are also friendlier to the environment by being more fuel efficient which has the benefit of reducing running costs.

3.2 Proposed Investment

Up to £2.4 Million is required in financial year 2012/13 to replace plant and equipment which is not fit for purpose, unreliable and excessively costly to maintain and keep serviceable. This includes new equipment required to reduce risk to operatives and potential claims against authority arising from HAVS. The total amount of plant and

equipment that this will provide is 405 units though actual prices will obviously not be known until the proposed procurement has taken place.

3.3 Further Investment

It is anticipated that there will be further capital investment needed for Parks and Countryside vehicles, depots and the next phase of the end of life plant and equipment. The latter is anticipated to be in 2013/14 and an estimate at the present time is £600K a further 213 units of plant and equipment making a total of 618 across the service.

Further reports will be brought to Cabinet detailing these requirements at a later date and it is anticipated that by this time service efficiencies will be able to directly fund this from its own budget.

3.4 Proposed Procurement Route

The procurement process for the provision of this equipment and vehicles will be fully compliant with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules, UK Procurement Legislation and EC Procurement Directives.

The tender procedure to be followed will be a two part Restricted Procedure which will be advertised on both the Council's ePortal, the Chest, and the Official Journal of the European Union.

Once approval is granted it is anticipated that the majority of equipment will be available from summer 2012.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 Failure to invest in new plant, equipment and vehicles to modernise the service will preclude the achievement of service objectives and could result in increased health and safety risks to the workforce.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 A rigorous exercise has been undertaken to identify the necessary plant, equipment and vehicles required to meet the needs of the service, and a programme of investment has been developed based on a formal assessment of the condition of existing plant, equipment and vehicle assets.

5.2 There may be the opportunity to reduce the capital cost of some of the larger items of plant and equipment through the purchase of low mileage ex-demonstrator models and this will be investigated further as the procurement process progresses.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 A Consultation and Engagement Plan has been agreed for the Parks and Countryside Modernisation Project ensuring staff and users are fully involved in the project.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 A key part of the Modernisation Project is to increase opportunities for voluntary and community groups in assisting with the maintenance and management of the Parks and Countryside area.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 The proposed Investment Programme is summarised as follows:

Service	Requirement	Funding	Comments
FUNDING REQUIRED			
Parks – Modernisation of Existing Service.	Plant and equipment: 405 units	Capital Purchase - £2.4 M	Required to replace equipment which is not fit for purpose, unreliable and excessively costly to maintain and keep serviceable. This includes new equipment required to reduce risk to operatives and potential claims against authority arising from HAVS (Hand, Arm Vibration Syndrome)

8.2 The overall cost to the Council of the borrowing for this Investment Programme will be met from the efficiency investment fund. A review of the Parks and Countryside Service commencing in 2012-2013 is anticipated to identify efficiencies which will contribute towards the cost of this investment.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising from this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Parks Modernisation Project as referred to in the progress report also being considered at this Cabinet meeting.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The new plant and equipment purchased will assist in reducing carbon emissions. Additional tree planting on highways and in parks contributes to offsetting carbon emissions.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Cabinet is requested to:

(1) Approve the proposed Plant & Equipment Capital Investment Programme outlined in this report;

(2) Approve the corresponding amendment of the Council's Capital Programme; and

(3) Refer to Council for ratification.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 A comprehensive programme of capital investment in plant and equipment is essential to effectively modernise the Parks & Countryside Service and enable the achievement of service objectives.

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APPENDICES

None.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Detailed Schedules of plant and equipment requirements.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – PACSPE Contract Award	**22 September 2011**
Sustainable Communities O&S Committee – PACSPE Contract Award Call in	**20 October 2011**
Cabinet – PACSPE Contract Award (following Call in)	**3 November 2011**
Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Services Modernisation Project – Integration of Highway Services and Outline Delivery Plan	**24 November 2011**
Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Services Modernisation Project – Update	**12 January 2012**
Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Services Modernisation Project – Purchase of Second-hand Vehicles and Equipment	**15 March 2012**

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**THE READER ORGANISATION**
WARD/S AFFECTED	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR LESLEY RENNIE**
KEY DECISION:	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the work undertaken by the Authority and The Reader Organisation as part of the Get into Reading initiative. The 2012/13 Budget identified a sum of £100,000 for this initiative. This report details the work delivered with similar funding in 2011/12.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 In the 2012/13 Budget Council approved an award of £100,000 to ensure the Get into Reading project continued, and is to prioritise those who have mental health needs. This built on the 2011/12 Budget award of £100,000 which was to support ongoing work as well as give a focus to the parenting role of children in care and promoting and improving reading to this group of Wirral children.

2.2 Wirral Library Service has been working closely with The Reader Organisation (RO) via the Get into Reading project since 2007. Currently, RO run 91 Get into Reading groups reaching more than 560 individuals every week ranging from mixed sessions to one to ones. The Wirral funding supports 51 of these groups reaching 360 people each week. Many group members are from hard to reach groups focusing on health or complex social needs.

2.3 The Wirral continued support also enables RO to attract external funding which adds value to the Council investment. External funding comes from Wirral NHS, Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Forum Housing, Extended Schools, JP Getty Foundation and Trust House Charitable Foundation.

2.4 Reading groups are facilitated by RO staff, library staff, and a structured volunteer programme which allows group members to progress to support others and helps enrich the social outcomes of the project.

2.5 During 2011/12 funded delivery within Libraries has increased, specifically with project workers acting as “readers in residence” one day a week at four Libraries (Beechwood, Birkenhead Central, Eastham and Seacombe).

2.6 Outreach work continues for specialist groups and these focus on teenagers excluded from school, young mothers with housing issues and mental health day centre users. Project workers can link these to local Libraries with the intent to encourage Library use and increase social interaction.

2.7 RO undertake 11 weekly sessions within the Looked after Children project. These are undertaken by RO staff and are on a one to one basis. These are in addition to the school based work.

2.8. In 2012-13, whilst the underlying work will continue that has became so important to the many users of these services, the focus will now be to see what can be done to prioritise work with those with mental health needs. Meetings have already taken place between officers and the RO to set out how this may be taken forward.

2.9. This will link to the joint work with RO and the Director of Public Health in developing a new library model based on soft social care, education and community development being available on site that has also been proposed as part of the 2012/13 budget. This model is expected to be piloted at one Library site with the aim of replicating it across the entire Library network if successful.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Without this financial support this initiative would not be able to engage as successfully with the range of people it does. Whilst Library staff alone would continue to offer a level of service it would not be as comprehensive as currently offered.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The option would be to reduce or remove funding and attempt to balance the benefits of the programme on offer, which is consistently being expanded, compensated by the commensurate budget saving with only Library staff being utilised, however the breadth of service would be curtailed significantly.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 In reaching out to and developing new reading groups in regard to the social inclusion agenda, need is first established through community profiling, statistical research, partner involvement, user and non-user surveys and discussion with frontline library staff. This then determines the type of group that will be established in each chosen location and allows the Library service to specifically target those with literacy issues, learning difficulties, basic skills needs or mental / physical health problems and helps ensure their local Library reading group has something to offer them.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report, however the Library service continues to work with all sectors as part of the recently agreed Strategy.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING & ASSETS

7.1 **Financial** – The development of an increasingly efficient and responsive Library service and the linked development with One Stop Shops is being done within the financial constraints that the Council faces and offers potential savings in terms of buildings and staff by aligning these complementary services. The budget for RO in 2012/13 is the award of £100,000 which, as with last year, is to be paid quarterly to RO in line with the regular review with RO.

7.2 **IT** – There are none arising from this report.

7.3. **Staffing** – To deliver Get into Reading both trained Wirral Library staff and volunteers work with The Reader Organisation staff to encourage take up.

7.4. **Assets** – This service helps maximise the use of Libraries.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising directly from the approval of this strategy.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Libraries seek to offer access to quality local services for the benefit of all users. A commitment to equality and diversity is integral to delivering excellent services responsive to all users including those who may not be current users. The recognition that different users have different physical and service needs informs access and service plans and this work is complementary.

9.2. An Equality Impact Assessment for the service has been completed as part of the Customer Access and Library Strategy development, the link is below; http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/finance

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That Members note the report.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 So that Members are aware of the work being undertaken with RO.

FNCE/80/12

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last three years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	21 February 2012
Cabinet	21 February 2011

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**LIBRARIES CHAMPION**
WARD/S AFFECTED	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR LESLEY RENNIE**
KEY DECISION:	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report seeks the approval of Members to appoint a Libraries Champion in response to the proposal made in the 2012/13 Budget.

2.0 BACKGROUND ISSUES

2.1 Cabinet on 21 February 2012 (minute 317) proposed the appointment of a Libraries Champion specifically to work with the Reader Organisation to oversee work on a new library model based on delivering soft social care, education and community development. This work would be carried out in partnership with the Director of Public Health and piloted at one library with the aim of replicating it across the entire library network.

2.2. Libraries are currently undergoing a number of key changes. The ongoing merger with One Stop Shops has already seen two sites open and operates successfully, and more will follow. This is key in maintaining the standard of the Library service.

2.3. The Library service has received significant investment over the last eighteen months with the installation of plasma information screens at all sites, wi-fi introduced across the network, an e-Books service and a publicity campaign “More Than Books” to support the work and increase the usage of facilities.

2.4. One of the recommended outcomes of the Charteris Enquiry was for Wirral Libraries to have a Library Strategy. An initial strategy has been developed and was approved by Cabinet on 8 December 2011. Further consultation was then undertaken as to how this is developed and reviewed and a report was submitted to Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 March 2012. This detailed the consultation outcomes which are to be taken forward for approval, and which would then be subject to ongoing review.

Libraries Champion

2.5. The Library service falls under the remit of the Cabinet portfolio holder of Culture, Councillor Rennie and a Libraries Champion would work with and support the portfolio holder.

2.6 The Authority previously appointed a Libraries Champion, Councillor Don McCubbin, on 13 December 2010.

2.7 The Libraries Champion would engage with officers as well as with external organisations to support the use and development of the service. The Champion would also engage with the public and users (both individual and groups) to ensure their views are taken on board during the development and change to the service. This could be particularly relevant when reviewing such matters as the Library Strategy and when undertaking consultation with users.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Championing of the Library service would otherwise fall to individual Members and the portfolio holder.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The option is to either have or not have a Libraries Champion.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 No consultation has been necessary on this specific decision for Members.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 That a specific person acting as Champion could give these groups a single accessible point of contact on this service area.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING & ASSETS

7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The appointment of a Champion would be a single accessible point of reference on a number of issues which would include equality issues.

9.2. The link to the Equality Impact Assessment for Libraries is below;

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/finance

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That Members decide if a Libraries Champion should be appointed and if so to make a suitable appointment.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

14.1 To allow Members to decide if a Libraries Champion appointment should be made and if so to consider the appropriate appointment.

FNCE/79/12

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APPENDIX

None attached

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None attached

SUBJECT HISTORY (last three years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	21 February 2012
Council	13 December 2010

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

PROPERTY DEMOLITIONS IN BELMONT, BIRKENHEAD

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***UPDATE ON AREA APPRAISAL AND STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS – BELMONT, BIRKENHEAD***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***BIRKENHEAD AND TRANMERE***
REPORT OF:	***DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION HOUSING AND PLANNING***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY***
KEY DECISION	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek authorisation to proceed with the demolition of 10 buildings in Belmont, Birkenhead acquired by the Council and update Members on the overall progress of the Belmont area appraisal.

1.2 This action supports ongoing work to seek the longer term comprehensive regeneration of the Belmont area, in line with the Council's Corporate Priorities.

1.3 Demolition will reduce both the Council's liability of ongoing security and maintenance and exposure to risk through anti-social behaviour, vandalism and theft.

1.4 Demolition is not a statutory duty.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Belmont is a street of nineteen pre-1919 terraced properties located off a major road into Birkenhead Town Centre and at the gateway to Oxton (see Appendix A). The residential properties are in a very poor external and internal condition and are all vacant. The street is flanked by two privately owned and previously cleared sites, a public car park, a small terrace of three vacant commercial premises and a public house.

2.2 On 15 October 2009, the Council's Cabinet approved commencement of a preliminary area appraisal of the Belmont site to determine ownership and regeneration prospects. This included delegation of authority for the

Director of Law, HR & Asset Management to agree terms and complete the strategic acquisition of land and properties within the area, subject to owner and resident consultation.

2.3 The area provides an opportunity for the Council to assemble a site, which could facilitate a comprehensive housing redevelopment to the benefit of the local neighbourhood. The *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*, as amended by the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* enables action to be taken to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area.

3.0 PROGRESS UPDATE

3.1 At the outset of the appraisal all Belmont property owners have been consulted regarding their views and aspirations for their property and the area. All agreed that the area was in decline and in need of intervention. There was a unilateral expression of disappointment and a lack of trust in the private sector due to a succession of previous development plans on the neighbouring land, which have failed to be delivered. However, one owner felt that this was partly the Council's responsibility due to the imposition of stringent planning requirement procedures. All property owners expressed an interest in receiving a valuation offer from the Council.

3.2 Agreements were subsequently reached to acquire 15 of the 19 houses and to date, 14 are in Council ownership and 1 is in the process of being conveyed to the Council. Numbers 4, 7 19 and the Mews remain in private ownership and discussions are ongoing about the possible acquisition of these houses. (see Appendix A)

3.3 Senior Council officers have met with the owners of the cleared sites on the corner of Oxton Road/Balls Road East and side on to Oxton Road who were co-operatively working on scheme proposals to develop their own sites in isolation to the rest of the area which is currently residential. Discussions with these owners highlighted that such partial site development was problematic for scheme implementation and unsatisfactory in terms of area regeneration. Further to these discussions, the owners have indicated that they would be interested in working with the Council to facilitate comprehensive site development. The long terms aspirations from the Council are for a comprehensive redevelopment of the whole site to be undertaken. This will complement the work which has been undertaken in the Balls Road/Oxton Road gateway which includes improvements to the local Church and shops and also road improvements. Discussions therefore remain ongoing regarding the potential proposals which could be achieved through the redevelopment of the whole site.

3.4 The Council already owns land to the east of numbers 19 and 22 Belmont, which is partially landscaped and used as a car park. This facility appears to be well used and parking provisions for local

businesses on Oxton Rd will be considered as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the site.

3.5 A fire at 22 Belmont resulted in emergency demolition work to protect public safety. The site has now been fenced off to prevent access to the exposed gable wall of number 20. This is currently stable but may deteriorate over the winter months. Fencing has had to be reinstated several times and rubbish in the general vicinity is cleared on a regular basis. With site management costs accruing, consent to block vehicular access to the rear of the evens terrace was sought from affected owners, in order to deter persistent fly tipping.

3.6 As the Council has acquired houses the security and site maintenance liability has increased. To date, significant resources, both in officer time and financial costs, have been utilised to ensure the housing units are kept safe and secure. Ongoing vandalism and anti-social behaviour puts pressure on the limited resources available. Over time property conditions have and will continue to deteriorate.

3.7 To summarise, a particular difficulty for previous developers has been the fractional nature of property ownership but the Council has made significant headway in resolving this issue. The Council has bought or agreed to buy 15 of the 19 properties, and negotiations to acquire the remaining 4 are ongoing. Despite the success in acquiring the majority of the housing units, the properties are deteriorating due to ongoing vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Only limited resources are available to respond to these ongoing problems.

4.0 PROPOSED ACTION

4.1 In accordance with Cabinet's previous minute resolution (Item 169) the feasibility of demolishing the existing buildings has been assessed. As the Council now owns the majority of properties in this street, ongoing security and site management costs are accruing. This could be reduced by undertaking further limited demolition work to remove liabilities for vacant, derelict property and improve community safety. With 22 Belmont already demolished, it would be possible to continue demolition up to number 6, as all of these properties are in the Council's ownership. Number 6 is also Council owned but its retention would be required to protect the structural integrity of number 4, which is presently privately owned. On the opposite terrace there is an opportunity to demolish numbers 11, 13 and 15 leaving numbers 9 and 17 to support the remaining privately owned houses, numbers 7 and 19, respectively (see Appendix B)

4.2 At this stage, it is suggested that negotiations continue with the remaining individual property and land owners regarding both possible acquisition and a comprehensive regeneration solution for the area as a whole. Should it not be possible to reach satisfactory agreements with

the remaining owners, then a further report to Members will be submitted with details about potential issue resolution.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 There is a risk that a member of the public could be injured should they gain unauthorised access to any of the vacant properties. The Council's exposure to this risk has increased in line with property acquisitions over time and this is evidenced by ongoing vandalism, illegal entry, arson and anti social behaviour both in and around the housing units owned by the Council, despite appropriate remedial measures being taken in an attempt to reduce these risks. Demolishing the majority of the houses owned by the Council, as detailed previously, will reduce this risk to a more manageable level.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 The alternative to demolition is to continue the existing efforts to maintain property security. To date, this has proved to be resource intensive in terms of staffing and finance. With no firm regeneration proposal for the area at this stage, it is difficult to project how long the existing arrangements would need to be continued.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Council has been in contact with all property owners in Belmont regarding both negotiations and the future of the area. Should limited demolition be agreed all remaining property owners will be notified of such a decision.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no implications for voluntary, community and faith groups.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 Acquisitions and site security/maintenance costs are being funded from the existing Housing Capital Programme for 2011/12. It is estimated that the acquisition of the remaining housing units on Belmont will cost in the region of £200,000 with the suggested demolitions in this report costing in the region of £30,000. An allowance has been made for the remaining acquisitions, ongoing security costs and demolition from capital resources previously secured for clearance work.

9.2 There are no IT or staffing implications.

9.3 The Council will retain the ownership of the land following demolition work.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Demolishing the housing units detailed in this report will reduce the Council's exposure to risk and potential liability claims.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Demolition often results in a degree of material salvage and recycling by the demolition contractor. In the longer term the brown field land will be subject to a more comprehensive regeneration solution for the area as a whole which will incorporate carbon reduction measures.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The site is located within a Primarily Residential Area in the Council's Unitary Development Plan. It is also with a regeneration priority area where new housing development is acceptable in principle under the terms of the Council's Interim Planning Policy 'New Housing Development'.

13.2 Future redevelopment for new housing or self contained flats would be subject to UDP Policy HS4 and Supplementary Document SPD2 'Designing for Self Contained Flats Development & Conversions'. Development incorporating retail use would need to be considered against UDP Policy SH4 and the tests in National Planning Policy PPS6 or any forthcoming replacement. The setting of Oxton Congregational Church, a Grade II listed building, will also need to be taken into account in the design of future proposals.

13.3 It is anticipated that the demolition of the properties detailed in this report will greatly reduce the incidents of anti social behaviour and vandalism in the area

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Members approve the demolition of numbers 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 20 Belmont, Birkenhead

14.2 Members authorise officers to consider additional demolition to the remaining 9 units should any further agreements to acquire houses be reached.

14.3 Members note the progress with the area appraisal, pending a further report detailing a more comprehensive regeneration proposal for the Belmont area as a whole.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 Ongoing incidents of vandalism, theft and anti social behaviour in and around properties owned by the Council in Belmont Birkenhead are likely to continue into the future, having implications for the limited resources available to respond to these incidents. This exposes the Council to the risk of a member of the public being injured.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Area Appraisal, Belmont, Birkenhead

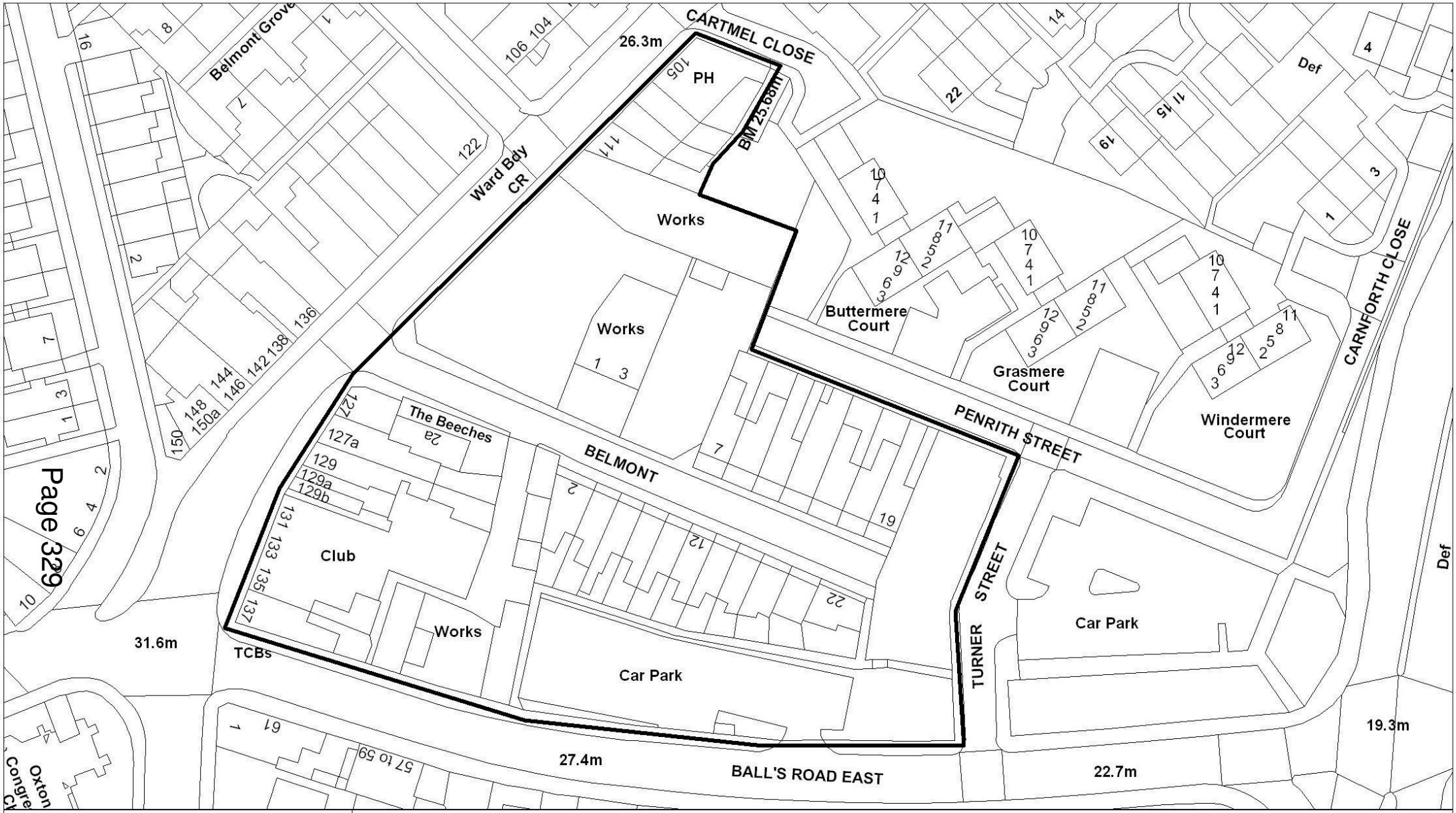
Appendix B – Plan showing property ownership and proposed demolition

REFERENCE MATERIAL

(Include background information referred to or relied upon when drafting this report, together with details of where the information can be found. There is no need to refer to publicly available material: e.g. Acts of Parliament or Government guidance.)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet Report: Area Appraisal and Strategic Acquisitions – Belmont, Birkenhead	**15th October 2009**



WIRRAL

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Title

APPENDIX A: BELMONT, BIRKENHEAD
AREA APPRAISAL BOUNDARY

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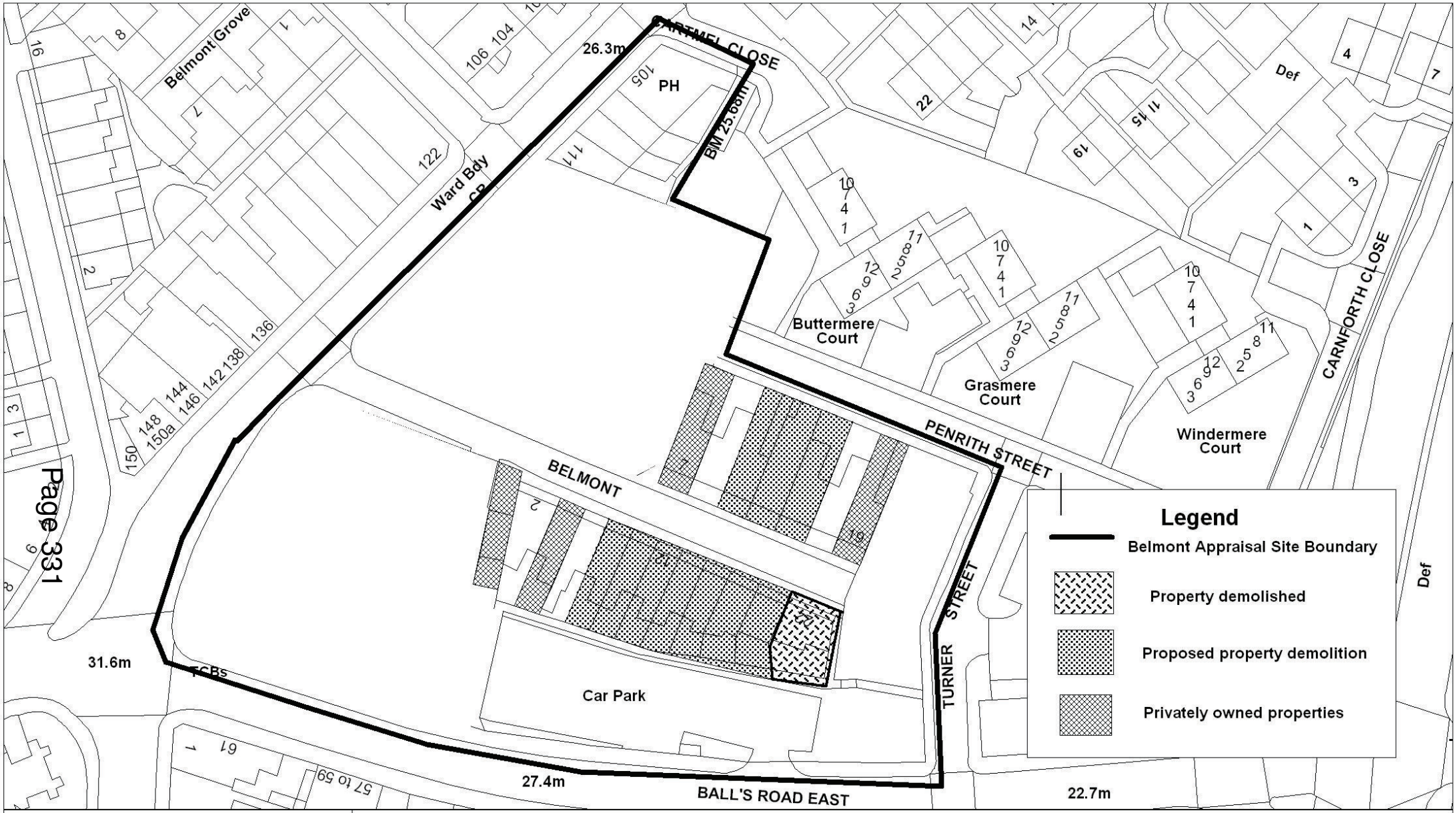

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APPENDIX B: BELMONT, BIRKENHEAD
SHOWING PROPOSED DEMOLITION
AND PROPERTIES IN PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

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COMMITTEE REFERRAL

ECONOMY AND REGNERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2012

50. AFFORDABILITY AND MORTGAGES INCLUDING FIRST TIME BUYERS

The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning submitted a report which updated the Committee on the current situation regarding housing market support, the availability of mortgages and which gave an analysis of how these issues were affecting Wirral. It also set out an overview of Government programmes and the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which were available to support and enable sustainable home ownership.

Responding to comments from Members, the Director and Lisa Newman, Housing Strategy Manager, gave further details on how the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme would work. 22 local authorities had launched the scheme so far and there had been no defaults. There was a risk as with all such schemes but some members expressed the view that the risk would only be if house prices went down and the risk was minimal although the benefits could be high.

Resolved –

(1) That Committee notes the contribution of the range of programmes / packages to assist home buyers, including first time buyers and the Affordable Homes Programme Framework, to support home ownership in Wirral.

(2) That Committee notes the issues relating to the housing and mortgage markets and the potential value and risks identified with operating a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.

(3) That Committee asks Cabinet to consider the establishment of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to assist first time buyers in Wirral.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8TH MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	**AFFORDABILITY AND MORTGAGES INCLUDING FIRST TIME BUYERS**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	***ACTING DIRECTOR OF HOUSING, PLANNING AND REGENERATION***
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on the current situation regarding housing market support, the availability of mortgages and analyses how these issues are affecting Wirral. It also sets out an overview of Government programmes and the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which are available to support and enable sustainable home ownership.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The turmoil in the financial and banking sectors has had a negative effect on the economy and on local housing markets. There have been constraints in the mortgage market for some time especially for First Time buyers. Many mortgage lenders will now not lend to First Time Buyers unless they have a significant deposit to place against the value of the property they wish to buy. Many banks and building societies have reduced the loan to value mortgages available from 95% to between 70-75%.

2.2 In Wirral the median house price for the Borough in Qtr 2 2011 was £135,000, which is lower than the national average of £177,000 but has remained stable when compared to the Borough's average price for the same period in 2010. This means for a First Time Buyer who is looking to purchase on average they would have to have access to a deposit of £33,750. For those properties within the inner area of the Borough the median house price is lower at £68,000 meaning on average a deposit of £17,000. These costs before consideration of stamp duty land tax , legal and other costs associated with purchasing a home is preventing most first time buyers from entering the property though legal costs are more competitive than they were and on these figures Stamp duty land tax is not payable .

2.3 This issue is affecting the Council's ambitions of substantial and sustainable growth in terms of housing and the economy as well as meeting the local needs and aspirations of people living in the Wirral area, stabilising local populations and attracting people to live and work in Wirral.

3.0 PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT HOME OWNERSHIP

3.1 Despite the context of market stagnation and lack of mortgage liquidity, home ownership is still seen as the aspiration for many households. The housing market is

cyclical and while falling house prices can mean that home ownership becomes a realistic financial option for many, there may still be need for public intervention and support, particularly for first time buyers, to make this happen.

3.2 Where it is an affordable and sensible option, the Council and its partners have an important strategic role to play in sustaining and promoting this form of tenure. Below is set out the current products being offered in Wirral and also those that could be available in the future :-

(a) Shared Equity/Loan Products

3.3 As a stepping stone to full owner occupation, shared ownership and shared equity schemes have proved to be popular in Wirral for a number of years. Shared ownership has traditionally been provided by RSLs and the Government's new Affordable Rent model to replace social housing should allow flexibility for increased shared ownership to be achieved at the end of fixed term tenancies. From the submissions made to the Homes and Communities Agency there is the potential over the next four years to see the development of possibly up to 679 new homes across Wirral using the Affordable Rent model.

3.4 Shared equity is a product usually provided by a private developer. Lovell has been offering shared equity on its developments in Tranmere and Rock Ferry since 2009 using its own resources or with money received from the Homes and Communities Agency under the previous government's Kickstart/Homebuy Direct programmes. Between April 2010 and December 2011 there were 20 Lovell Shared Equity completions at Sevenoaks in Rock Ferry and ten Lovell Shared Equity completions between April 2011 and December 2011 at Fountain Court in Tranmere. Shared equity sales on Lovell's sites in Wirral's former HMRI areas are outnumbering outright purchases and are a popular option in the current housing market. Elsewhere in Wirral, other developers have seen success in selling properties under the Kickstart/Homebuy Direct programmes and/or Shared Equity where there have been since April 2009 a total of 52 completions over four developments.

3.5 On 23 March 2011 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the Budget the Government's intentions to make available £400 million to support first time buyers to purchase a new-build property under the First Buy initiative designed to replace previous shared ownership and shared equity schemes. The First Buy programme hopes to assist over 10,500 households with an equity loan of up to 20% jointly funded with house-builders to help reduce the deposit purchasers need to provide from their own resources. Keepmoat. Redrow, Rowland Homes, Taylor Wimpey, BDW Trading Limited and Bovis Homes have all been successful in securing First Buy funds for their developments in Wirral. Through these successful bids, the house builders could be able to provide approximately 246 First Buy units in Wirral and to date there have been 4 First Buy completions to December 2011.

3.6 Whilst shared equity and loan products are offering an increasing choice available to local people sustaining these types of initiatives requires subsidy either from the developer, Council or government.

(b) The Local Authority Mortgage Scheme for First Buyers

3.7 Launched in March 2011, this scheme has been developed by a number of local authorities with Sector financial consultancy. Five local authorities were selected to

pilot the Scheme with Lloyds TSB Bank. This has now been extended and 22 local authorities have signed up and a further 200 have expressed an interest in joining. The Scheme is currently supported by eight mortgage lenders: two national lenders (Lloyds Banking Group and Leeds Building Society) and five smaller lenders: Furness BS, Saffron BS, Leeds United BS, Principality, Marsden BS and Teachers BS. The scheme is aimed at first time buyers, providing help for potential buyers who can afford mortgage payments - but not the initial deposit - to get on the property ladder. Under the scheme, each Local Authority would be able to specify three qualifying criteria: the maximum level of indemnity, the maximum level loan size (based on 95% of the maximum property valuation (undertaken by the lender) and the qualifying postcodes. The local authority does not however specify or control other lending terms such as the repayment period the potential buyer asks for, the type of loan (repayment only / interest only), any period for which interest rates might be fixed. The assessment of affordability of the loan is carried out by the lender based on information the borrower supplies not on any assessment carried out by the Council.

3.8 For potential buyers who meet the criteria applied by the lender and meet the criteria set out by the Local Authority to qualify for a mortgage under the scheme, the Local Authority will provide a 'top-up indemnity' to guarantee the value of the difference between the typical 75% and a 95% loan-to-value (LTV) mortgage. The buyer would, thereby, obtain a 95% LTV mortgage without the need to provide the substantial 15%-20% deposit usually required.

3.9 It is anticipated that the Local Authority will set a maximum annual limit for indemnities offered, either in total or for the forthcoming year. The indemnity could either be unfunded or 'cash backed', depending on the requirements of the lender. Based on lessons from other local authorities the option of the cash backed indemnity seems to be the preferred option with the majority of the participating lenders backing.

3.10 The main differences between the two options are:-

CASH BACKED INDEMNITY SCHEME	**UNFUNDED INDEMNITY SCHEME**
• LA required to place a five year deposit with a lender, to the full value of the indemnity being offered e.g. £2 million. • Deposit must remain in place for the term of the indemnity which is five years, with the possibility of a further two year extension, if a mortgage is in arrears at the end of the five year period or there is an early repayment of a mortgage. • The investment will return a favourable five year commercial deposit rate (currently 4% plus a premium of 0.7 basis points above the commercial rate). • The maximum amount a LA	• LA receives a fixed amount premium per mortgage completed. This is usually in the region of £500 per mortgage, so if LA supports 50 mortgages this will equate to £25,000. This amount needs to be set aside to meet future liabilities. • This scheme carries a high risk of the LA incurring costs depending on the number of defaults on mortgages. • The indemnity amount needs to be underwritten using indemnity resources. • The maximum amount a LA can place with either Lloyds or Leeds Building Society is £2

can place with either Lloyds or Leeds Building Society is £2 million. The minimum which can be placed is £1 million. • The maximum amount a LA can place with the five smaller building societies is £1million. The minimum is £0.5m. • This form of indemnity can be compared with other forms of transactions by the Treasury Management Team, as the investment carries a risk which there will be a return on.	million. The minimum which can be placed is £1 million. • The maximum amount a LA can place with the five smaller building societies is £1million. The minimum is £0.5m. • The indemnity amount must remain in place for five years, with the possibility of a further two year extension, if a mortgage is in arrears at the end of the five year period or there is an early repayment of a mortgage.

3.11 The Council would need to identify a resource to support the development of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme in Wirral. If based on the assumptions that £2m was available to deliver the scheme in Wirral and a ceiling on the value of loan that the scheme would support (based on the Borough average house price of £135,000) then the example gives an indication of the number of people who could be assisted.

Total Local Authority Indemnity	£2,000,000
Assumed Max Loan Size	£135,000
5% deposit required from FTB	£6,750
95% Mortgage	£128,250
Local Authority Indemnity (20%)	£27,000
Potential Number of Mortgages	74

(c) The New Government Indemnity Scheme (New Buy)

3.12 In December 2011 the Government launched 'Laying the Foundations': A Housing Strategy for England' which set out the Coalition Governments ambitious aims to help drive local economies and create jobs and unblock the market and provide opportunity in our society to stop people being locked out of home ownership.

3.13 Within the Strategy the Government spells out the problems with the current housing market including :-

- Buyers can't buy - with the average age of an unassisted first time buyer continuing to rise and families are struggling to trade up;
- Lenders are not lending enough – with high deposit requirements excluding young people and families from home ownership
- Builders are not building – without consumers ready or able to buy

3.14 To respond to this the Government has set out its support for a new and innovative New Build Indemnity Scheme led by the Home Builders Federation and the Council of Mortgage Lenders to provide up to 95% loan to value mortgages for new build properties in England backed by indemnities from both the Government and interested house builders. This scheme is similar to the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme and it is hoped the interest rates offered at the 95% LTV will be more on par with those of 75% LTV mortgages due to the indemnity guarantee offered which mitigate the lending risk. However the Governments new scheme is limited to the purchase of New Build properties only.

3.15 It is intended the scale of the new scheme will be market led building up in line with those properties that house builders wish to put forward to participate in the scheme. There is little information on how the scheme will work at present with indications that a prospectus will be released in Spring 2012. Discussions have taken place with lead developers who are in principle supportive of the scheme being offered through Wirral developments subject to further guidance being released by the Government. The Housing Strategy Manager has held discussions with the Homes and Communities Agency on the New Build Scheme. The Homes and Communities Agency have registered Wirral's interest with their Strategic Team for Wirral to work alongside the HCA where possible.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 In terms of the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme a full appraisal of the risks will be presented for Cabinets consideration to implement a scheme for the Wirral area. However initial risks identified would fall into three categories, financial, operational and reputational risks:-

4.2 The financial risks relate to the funding and potential defaults; The Council has to provide the initial funds which are invested with the financial institution to be used for indemnities. Whilst the interest rate paid by the lender is favourable there are concerns the investment does not comply with the Treasury Management Policy as in the Treasury Management Team view the purpose of the investment brings a greater risk than that permitted under the Policy. Sector has confirmed to the Authority that the Scheme if offered in Wirral using the cash backed option would be classed as capital expenditure but not classified as part of the council's Investment portfolio.

4.3 Any default in the mortgage that results in a loss to the lender will see the Council receiving a request for payment from the lender to meet the initial loss. The Council as guarantor is the first to be exposed to any fall in property prices with the lender taking little risk as they will only incur any loss in excess of the value of the indemnity covered i.e. based on a scheme with a maximum loan value of £100k – 5% deposit paid by FTB, original mortgage £95k, property is sold for £70k, Local Authority indemnity cover £20k = loss to lender of £5k. The Scheme mitigates, but does not remove the risk to the Council, as it is essential applicants meet the standard lending criteria as set out by the lender, and that the higher LTV mortgage is affordable. Whilst the overall financial outlook remains of growth the pace is subject to differing views. Increasing unemployment and a recognition that interest rates will rise puts pressures on mortgage repayments whilst house prices continue to fluctuate.

4.4 In terms of operational risk the impact on staffing is considered to minimal as the Scheme is administered by the financial institution. The Council is required to be involved in the setting up of the scheme, establishing and reviewing the criteria for issuing mortgages along with corresponding if there are any mortgage defaults. There is the requirement to nominate a Project Manager who can take the lead in communicating with Sector and with lenders for monitoring purposes. The Council would also be required to nominate a Monitoring Officer who will be given delegated authority by the Council to sign the legal paperwork and issue an opinion letter on behalf of the Council for the indemnity. This role is intended to have a minimal input

and is more for co-ordinating and monitoring the numbers of applicants, defaults and location of applicants.

4.5 A strategic and reputational risk is around a) the use of public money but the Scheme is in line with the Council priorities on supporting investment and improving the economy and b) buyer default. Any defaults occurring on mortgages could lead to re-possession and possible adverse publicity. However it is anticipated this would be mitigated based on the strict lending criteria and qualifying criteria established.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Reports to Cabinet on 26 November 2009 and 4 November 2010 have previously considered the options available to the Council to assist Wirral residents in the mortgage market including:-

- Internally run provision.
- Arrangements for third party provision of administration including mortgage application administration, vetting and collection.
- Partnership with lending institutions such as banks or building societies, perhaps either offering joint funding or guarantees.

5.2 Limited financial resources, limitations imposed by the housing act 1985 on lending on property acquisition ,no council staff trained as investment mortgage or insurance advisors, requirement to by registered with the Financial Standards Authority, combined with the remit of minimising the financial impact and operational risk on the Local Authority in entering the residential mortgage market, led to the view that a Partnership Arrangement, as was being developed with Sector and the Treasury was worthy of further consideration.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 There has been consultation with the Council's lead developers and other local authorities in preparing this report. With regards to the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme there have been discussions across Departments on the operations and implications of such a scheme and consultation with Sector. This consultation and discussion between Departments and external organisations such as Sector, Lenders and private developers will be continuous in the investigation into the implications of operating a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme in Wirral.

6.2 The Housing Strategy Manager has consulted with the Homes and Communities Agency on the proposal for the Governments Mortgage Indemnity Scheme 'New Buy'. A response has been received that Wirral's interest to work with them and the Government on the New Buy scheme has been registered and that a prospectus setting out further detail on the scheme is due to be launched in Spring 2012. Further consultation with private developers will continue as details on the Scheme are released by Government, particularly with the preferred developer partners the Council has engaged to work with in the Wirral's priority regeneration areas.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are none arising out of this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 The financing of a mortgage indemnity would be likely classed as capital expenditure. If so a capital programme bid would be required. Interest would be receivable on mortgage indemnities placed with a lender. The interest would need to cover any borrowing costs plus costs of default to avoid increased expenditure falling upon the authority.

8.2 In terms of the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme a full appraisal of the risks would need to be carried out if Members wished to consider Wirral operating a LAMS however officers have initially identified risks would fall into three categories, financial, operational and reputational risks:-

8.3 The financial risks relate to the funding and potential defaults; The Council has to provide the initial funds which are invested with the financial institution to be used for indemnities. Whilst the interest rate paid by the lender is favourable there are concerns the investment does not comply with the Treasury Management Policy as the Treasury Management Team view the purpose of the investment brings a greater risk than that permitted under the Policy.

8.4 Any default in the mortgage that results in a loss to the lender will see the Council receiving a request for payment from the lender to meet the initial loss. The Council as guarantor is the first to be exposed to any fall in property prices with the lender taking little risk as they will only incur any loss in excess of the value of the indemnity covered i.e. original mortgage £95k, property is sold for £70k, Local Authority indemnity cover £20k = loss to lender of £5k. The Scheme mitigates, but does not remove the risk to the Council as it is essential applicants meet the standard lending criteria as set out by the lender, and that the higher LTV mortgage is affordable. Whilst the overall financial outlook remains of growth the pace is subject to differing views. Increasing unemployment and a recognition that interest rates will rise puts pressures on mortgage repayments whilst house prices continue to fluctuate.

8.5 In terms of operational risk the impact on staffing is minimal as the Scheme is administered by the financial institution. The Council is required to be involved in the setting up of the scheme and the criteria for issuing mortgages along with resolving issues if there are any mortgage defaults.

8.6 A strategic and reputational risk is around the use of public money but the Scheme is in line with the Council priorities on supporting investment and improving the economy. Any defaults occurring on mortgages could lead to re-possession and possible adverse publicity, however it is anticipated this would be mitigated based on the strict lending criteria and qualifying criteria established.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Housing Act 1985 (as amended) provides the statutory framework for Councils to operate a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme. The Act allows Local Authorities to ‘advance money to a person for the purposes of acquiring a house/ (section 435 of the act). Section 442 of the Act allows a local authority to grant an indemnity to a lender to enable the lender to give the potential buyer a mortgage.

9.2 If the Council is to pursue the option of operating a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, the Council will need to develop a local policy for scheme eligibility. Possible elements for this policy to include are listed in Appendix A to this report which would need to be the subject of consideration and approval of Cabinet.

9.3 The full legal implications of operating a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme including any legal agreements will be contained within the report to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review can be found on:
http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/regeneration

The link above is where the existing Housing Strategy Equality Impact Assessment appears on the Council's website, but a refreshed Housing Strategy Equality Impact Assessment is currently under development.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Introducing financial assistance to support home ownership in relation to new build properties will provide a boost to the local housing market and support the building and sale of homes meeting current Building Regulations. In the case of new build on former Housing Market Renewal sites, properties will meet level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising out of this report

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 That Members note the contribution of the range of programmes/packages to assist home buyers including first time buyers, the Affordable Homes Programme Framework to support home ownership in Wirral.

13.2 Members note the issues relating to the housing and mortgage markets and consider the potential value and risks identifies with operating a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.

13.3 Members ask Cabinet to consider the establishment of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to assist first time buyers in Wirral.

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APPENDICES

None attached.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

LAMS - Local Authority Mortgage Scheme: Sector. This reference material can be obtained through contacting the report author.

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Extension of Mortgage Guarantee Scheme Cabinet – Extension of Mortgage Guarantee Scheme	4 November 2010 26 November 2009

Appendix A
LOCAL ELIGIBILITY POLICY FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY MORTGAGE SCHEME

In order to participate in the scheme, the Council has to adopt a local policy for scheme eligibility. This policy should then be incorporated into the Councils policy framework, supporting the Council's vision for housing and economic growth in Wirral.

Proposed eligibility policy criteria include:

• The scheme will be available for purchase of properties in all locations within the local authority boundary
•
There will be a ceiling on the value of loan that the scheme will support. This may be the Borough average of £135,000 or could be based on the entry level for a two/three bedroomed home plus some headroom to allow for local variation).

• The property should be occupied by the mortgage applicant as their main home. The Scheme will not support buy to let arrangements.

• The scheme will support all property types, including new builds, where the lenders policy enables this;

• The Council will receive monthly monitoring reports, and will keep the scheme under review, including incorporating any updates following updates to the Housing Strategy

• Applicants will liaise directly with the lenders on all matters relating to the mortgage application, and subsequent mortgage issues

• The Council will not levy additional fees on applicants

• Applicants will need to seek independent financial advice to assess whether the scheme is suitable, and meets their financial needs

All aspects of the policy will be kept under review

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**20MPH SPEED LIMITS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR DAVID MITCHELL STREETSCENE & TRANSPORT SERVICES**
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report has been produced further to Minute 117 of Council on 1st March 2010 which set out a £1.1M four year programme relating to the provision of 20mph speed limits in residential areas within Wirral. The commitment to this initiative was reiterated in a Council Notice of Motion in July 2011 and in the 2012/13 budget approved by Council on 1st March 2012 (Minute 131 refers).

1.2 The report seeks approval for the key principles and timetable for the project and requests authority for the Director of Technical Services to progress the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to undertake the works commencing in October 2012.

1.3 The report also seeks approval for the use of external consultant resource up to a maximum value of £150k to support the delivery of the whole £1.1M project if required and Members are also asked to endorse the provision of further funding in 2013/14 and 2014/15 to complete the roll-out of the initiative as well as recognise the need for revenue growth in the future to cover the future maintenance liabilities associated with the project.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Wirral Council has been making steady progress in improving road safety since 2005, in particular with reference to the number of people killed or seriously injured (All KSIs) and children killed or seriously injured (Child KSIs). During the last 12 years, since the baseline for the most recent National Road Safety Target (average for the years 1994 to 1998), the number of road crashes which involved injuries to people have more than halved from 1318 down to just over 613 in 2010.

2.2 I am pleased to note that Wirral has met the long term national target for reducing the number of children killed or seriously injured (KSI) by 50%. There were a total of 19 children killed or seriously injured in 2010 compared

to the baseline average of 38 during the years 1994 to 1998. Further research into child KSI casualties has shown however that although total numbers of child KSI's are decreasing and the number of casualties is low compared to other road user groups, Wirral has twice the rate of child pedestrian KSI's per head of population compared to the Great Britain average for 2010. We are committed to continuing to take a range of measures to address this imbalance.

2.3 Progress has also been seen relating to the total number of road deaths and serious injuries with a reduction of 39.46% against the national target 40% set against the same baseline. There were a total of 108 people killed or seriously injured in 2010 compared to the baseline average of 178 KSI casualties.

2.4 Whilst the achievements to date are welcomed, progress against the current year's KSI target has slipped and it is recognised that Wirral's performance on road safety requires continued focus and further improvement hence road safety remains a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan.

At its meeting on 2nd November 2009, Council determined:

- That improving road safety, particularly for vulnerable road users such as children, adult pedestrians and cyclists should continue as a top priority.
- The use of permanent or time variable 20mph speed limits should be further explored by the Director of Technical Services in partnership with the Police if they believe it appropriate to do so.

2.5 At its meeting on 1st March 2010, Council resolved that a sum of £1.1m (over 4 years) be allocated to reduce traffic speeds outside schools and in residential areas, where there are higher numbers of vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists.

2.6 On 18th July 2011 following a notice of motion, Council resolved :

> *Therefore, instructs the Director of Technical Services, in consultation with residents, Area Forums and Ward Councillors to commence the programme of works necessary to implement 20mph speed limits on all non-major residential roads, setting out a prioritised timetable for completion of the scheme and starting with existing 'Accidents Down 2 Zer0' areas, where appropriate*.

2.7 In June 2011, the Department for Transport (DfT) published a statement announcing that relaxations were to be made to some of the bureaucratic legislation relating to the introduction of 20mph speed limits. The DfT also indicated that it wanted to reduce the need for Council's to use speed humps in 20mph zones and make it easier and cheaper for Council to implement variable speed limits outside schools. It was further indicated that the Signs Policy Review would be published in Summer 2011 and revised guidance on speed limit signing would be issued, which would provide more flexibility to local authorities

2.8 The DfT had indicated in its new Road Safety Strategic Framework that it would update its guidance on 20 mph speed limits, including providing an additional 'toolkit' to assist local authorities. My Officers have written to the DfT regarding this guidance and seeking clarification of 20mph speed signage and have been advised that a consultation is planned on speed limit guidance in 2012. Officers have also been awaiting the publication of the final report for the traffic signing changes and contacted DfT about the timing of this publication.

.

2.9 It was expected that a relaxation in signing requirements relating to 20mph speed limits and variable speed limits was likely to have significant implications for both the overall numbers of signs and their position on the highway to conform to any new requirements. Additionally long term maintenance cost savings were also expected following the changes identified by this Government review.

2.10 In October 2011, Government published this policy review of traffic signs, however, the changes in traffic signs regulations which it discussed are largely due to be introduced in 2014. In addition, the expected changes permitting formal legally enforceable time specific variable speed limits were not included, although the DfT have indicated a new sign assembly for *advisory* time specific variable speed limits for use outside schools. My Officers are currently investigating the implications of these changes to the signing regulations, however it is important to note that the number of accidents in the vicinity of schools on major routes has dramatically reduced in the past three years.

2.11 Physical works such as traffic calming to redress inappropriate speed are not always appropriate for main routes, and in some cases the introduction of variable speed limits have been trialled in a limited number of locations within the UK. Currently, the DfT are evaluating the effectiveness of these trial variable speed limits. Any such scheme would need specific design approval by the DfT and Minister before it could be implemented.

2.12 Despite Government circulating a consultation document to all highway authorities in December 2009, seeking views/comment on setting local speed limits, the Department for Transport Circular 01/06 is the most recent definitive guidance on this issue.

2.13 In its Circular 01/06 the DfT state that:

75 *"Successful 20 mph zones and limits should be generally self enforcing. Traffic Authorities should take account of the level of police enforcement required before installing either of these measures. 20 mph speed limits are unlikely to be complied with on roads where vehicle speeds are substantially higher than this and, unless such limits are accompanied by the introduction of traffic calming measures, police forces may find it difficult to routinely enforce the 20 mph limit…"*

82 *"Research into 20 mph limits carried out by Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) showed that, where speed limits alone were introduced,*

reductions of only about 2 mph in 'before' speeds were achieved. 20 mph speed limits are therefore, only suitable on areas where vehicle speeds are already low (the Department would suggest where mean speeds are 24 mph or below), or where additional traffic calming measures are planned as part of the strategy."

2.14 In November 2011, Merseyside Police wrote to the Chief Executives of each of the Merseyside local authorities setting out their support for widespread measures to improve road safety, including 20 mph speed limits. However, they did raise the long standing concern expressed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that unless there is full engineering there would be no *routine* enforcement. They support the guidance contained within the DfT Circular 01/06. The letter and extract of the ACPO guidance to Chief Police Officers is included in **Appendix 1.**

2.15 The Police have also raised general concerns over the implementation of 20 mph speed limits on main/strategic roads, or through routes where the overall design and layout of the existing highway is not conducive to routine compliance by drivers.

2.16 Whilst some residential routes may not be suitable for a 20 mph speed limit by signing alone, it would seem sensible that Wirral adopt the generic guidance suggested by the DfT of not implementing speed limits on roads where the mean speeds are 25 mph or above without also introducing further physical calming measures to encourage self-compliance.

2.17 Council reiterated its commitment to this initiative in its Budget Resolution for 2012/13 approved on 1st March 2012 (Minute 131 refers) and the detail of how it is proposed that this initiative will be implemented is set out in the next section of this report.

3.0 PROPOSED 20MPH IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS PROJECT

3.1 The purpose of this project is to introduce a 20mph speed limit on every residential road in the Borough where it is anticipated that mean vehicle speeds are already at or below 24mph. This obviously excludes the small number of residential roads where 20mph Zones with traffic calming measures are already in place.

3.2 The major and minor distributor road network (where speeds will typically be greater than 25mph and it would not be appropriate to introduce 20mph speed limits) dissects the Borough into over 100 areas. This project will see the introduction of approximately 2100 'gateways' into the lower speed areas which correspond to the introduction of approximately 4100 new sign posts and 6300 new signs in addition to approximately 4300 repeater signs on existing lighting columns.

3.3 So far an exercise has been undertaken to optimise these areas for operational purposes and when the existing 20mph roads have been taken into account this breaks the Borough down into 132 'zones' as shown on the

four plans in **Appendix 2. A large scale version of these plans has also been placed in the Members' Room.**

3.4 In terms of the implementation of this project it is proposed that the programme of work will be broken down into two broad phases with the first phase of work spread equally across the eleven Area Forum areas as far as possible. Officers have prioritised 'zones' for the first phase based on existing "Accidents Two Zero" areas, active community groups with an interest in road safety and the presence of schools, however it is proposed that Area Forums are formally consulted on this issue during the June cycle of meetings whilst the design, procurement and statutory advertisement processes referred to below are ongoing. The proposed phasing of the project for consultation with Area Forums is shown in **Appendix 3.**

3.5 In terms of funding for the project £550k has been approved for 2012/13 and it will be essential that the Council maintains its commitment to this initiative with a further £275k being required in 2013/14 and 2014/15 to ensure the holistic vision of reducing speed limits in all residential areas is achieved.

3.6 Based on this funding profile the timetable for the project is as follows:

April 2012 to September 2012:
- Statutory advertisement of all 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders
- Consultation with Area Forums
- Site surveys and preparation of sign schedules (Phase 1)
- Preparation of tender documents and invitation of tenders from suitable contractors (Phase 1)
- Cabinet award tender for Phase 1 Works in September 2012

October 2012 to March 2013:
- Implementation of Phase 1 Works
- Resolve any objections to 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders
- Site surveys and preparation of sign schedules (Phase 2)

April 2013 to September 2013:
- Conclude Phase 1 Works
- Preparation of tender documents and invitation of tenders from suitable contractors (Phase 2)
- Cabinet award tender for Phase 2 Works in September 2013

October 2013 to March 2014:
- Implementation of Phase 2 Works

April 2014 to September 2014:
- Conclude Phase 2 Works

3.7 An initial assessment has been undertaken of the staffing resource required to successfully manage and implement this project and due to the scale of the work programme for 2012/13 which includes the Transportation Capital Programme, improvement schemes at New Brighton and Hoylake Station and the 2012 Womens Golf and 2014 Open Golf, it is likely that external traffic

management consultant resource may be required to support the delivery of this project at least in the first year. For this reason approval is sought to commission external consultant support up to a value of £150k to deliver the whole £1.1M project if required however this work will be undertaken by in-house resource where possible and alternative delivery options such as a "design and build" tendering approach are also being investigated.

3.8 To maximise the impact of this initiative and help promote the 'culture change' of reduced speeds in residential areas it is proposed that up to £100k of the overall £1.1M allocation is set aside for complementary marketing and publicity campaigns and activities during the life of the project.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 Objections may be received as part of the statutory advertisement process for the proposed 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders and by the time such objections have been considered and resolved it may not be possible for the 'zones' concerned to be included in the first phase of works commencing in October 2012. To mitigate this risk it is proposed that all 'zones' will be advertised from the outset and if some of the 'zones' planned for the first phase cannot be implemented due to objections then they can easily be substituted for other second phase 'zones' with no objections in the Area Forum area concerned.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 An alternative option to improve road safety in residential areas would be to introduce conventional traffic calming measures rather than reduced speed limits, however this would be prohibitively expensive to treat all areas across the Borough.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 As described in section 3.4 above it is proposed that Area Forums are formally consulted on which 'zones' in their areas should be included in the first phase of this initiative.

6.2 As part of the statutory advertisement process for the proposed 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders there will be formal advertisements in the local press, notices posted on site and information posted at key locations accessed by local communities.

6.3 As described in section 3.8 it is proposed that up to £100k is set aside for complementary marketing and publicity campaigns and activities to promote this initiative.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are no specific implications under this heading arising from this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 Financial implications: £550k has been allocated for this project in the Council's revenue programme for 2012/13 and it is anticipated that a further £275k will be required in each of the years 2013/14 and 2014/15 to complete this initiative.

8.2 Staffing implications: It is normal practice for the in-house design and supervision fees associated with a project of this nature to be allocated against the overall cost of the scheme however as described in section 3.7 it is likely that external traffic management consultant resource may be required to support the delivery of the overall £1.1M project up to a maximum value of £150,000.

8.3 Asset management implications: This initiative will see the introduction of in the region of 4100 new sign posts and 10,600 new signs onto the highway network. Typically signs of this nature have a life of between 10 and 15 years and as they are 'mandatory' Traffic Order signs the Council has a statutory duty to make sure they are properly maintained and prompt action is taken to replace missing or damaged signs.

8.4 Based on the scale of this signing programme it is anticipated that a future allocation of £100k per annum revenue growth will be required from 2014/15 onwards to cover the future maintenance of the new signs introduced as part of this initiative and Cabinet are requested to endorse the principle of this allocation subject to a further report to a future meeting regarding the maintenance liabilities associated with the project.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Resources from the Council's Legal Services Department will be required to process the statutory advertisement of the proposed 20mph Traffic Regulation Orders.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Lower vehicle speeds may lead to reduced carbon emissions.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific implications under this heading arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Cabinet is requested to:

(1) Approve the key principles and timetable for the project as described in section 3.0;

(2) Endorse the proposal to allocate a further £275k for this project in each of the years 2013/14 and 2014/15 to complete the roll-out of 20mph speed limits in all residential areas;

(3) Approve the use of external traffic management consultant resource up to a maximum value of £150k to deliver the whole £1.1M project if required as described in section 3.7;

(4) Authorise the Director of Technical Services to progress the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to undertake the works commencing in October 2012;

(5) Endorse the principle of a future allocation of £100k per annum revenue growth from 2014/15 onwards subject to a further report to a future Cabinet regarding the maintenance liabilities associated with the project.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 The purpose of the recommendations is to enable the introduction of 20mph speed limits in all residential areas across the Borough.

REPORT AUTHOR: ***Dave Rees***
Group Leader – Road Safety
Traffic & Transportation Division
Technical Services Department
telephone: (0151 606 2111)
email: davidrees@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter from Merseyside Police
Appendix B: Proposed 20mph 'zones' (four plans)
Appendix C: Phasing of 'zones' by Area Forum area

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council	18 July 2011
Cabinet Budget Proposal 2011-12	21 February 2011
Cabinet Budget Proposal 2010-11	22 February 2010
Council	1 March 2010
Council	2 November 2009

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MERSEYSIDE
POLICE

→ DG
+ GB

Mr Jim Wilkie
Chief Executive
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Town Hall
Brighton Street
Wallasey
Wirral CH44 8ED

Our ref. AW/ht

Your ref.

Date 25th November 2011

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
29 NOV 2011

Dear Jim

Ref. 20mph speed limits/zones

Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Primary care NHS Trust are currently working together to introduce 20mph speed limits on most residential roads in Liverpool. This initiative does not include additional traffic calming (speed humps) but uses signage alone. Other Local Authorities, possibly your own, are already reviewing similar schemes in their areas and are likely to adopt a similar position.

I feel it would be remiss of me not to outline the police stance on these proposals and in particular whether the police are in a position to undertake enforcement activity on these roads.

The Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) position has remained to date that if a 20mph speed restriction is placed and there is no engineering/clear signing to effectively achieve compliance then there will be no routine enforcement by police officers. Only when an issue is identified would an enforcement operation be put in place.

Part of the current police rationale is that if the speed restriction is necessary as there are vulnerable road users, compliance is the aim not prosecution, and therefore engineering should be put in place rather than police enforcement. This position was also established as it is believed that compliance being passed to the police will lead to the capture of genuine drivers who simply do not know they are in this very low speed limit, with the resulting loss of public support.

I have attached a more detailed background into the history of 20mph speed limits / zones, however, if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Ward
Assistant Chief Constable

Andrew Ward
Assistant Chief Constable
Operations Support
PO Box 59, Liverpool L69 1JD Tel 0151 777 8005 Fax 0151 777 8033
e-mail: Andrew.Ward@merseyside.pnn.police.uk

Background

In 1998 the Government introduced 20 mph speed limits and zones. The then ACPO Traffic Committee considered this and identified concern that the speed was likely to be difficult for drivers to maintain and unless it was clearly engineered, there could be many errant drivers and the enforcement a considerable commitment, which could lead to a reduction in public support.

Since this date the ACPO guidance has been that unless there is full engineering there would not be routine enforcement but those found committing offences would be summonsed and prosecuted outside the current fixed penalty process. Mainly due to the fact that to exceed an engineered 20 mph scheme is dangerous to vulnerable road users, so the driver would not be offered a fixed penalty ticket and would be required to attend court.

Local Authorities have received guidance from Government to ensure continuity with their introduction. These documents state 20mph limits/zones should be self-enforcing and that their success is dependent upon having in place speed reducing features (speed bumps). These need to be of a significant number and appropriate design to be able to reduce the speed of most traffic to 20 mph or less without the need for police enforcement.

The existence of a speeding problem in a 20mph limit/zone may illustrate the need to re-assess the level of engineering or, suitability of the road for such a reduced limit. This would then need to be explored by the local authority in consultation with the police.

Over recent years there has been a proliferation of 20 mile an hour zones and limits across the whole of the United Kingdom. Local authorities are increasingly demanding police enforcement. The police response has been to resist the demands, citing the reasons for not enforcing as outlined in the ACPO guidance.

In 2007 the ACPO Secretariat circulated a letter on the ACPO Intranet confirming the enforcement guidance on 20 mph limits and zones:

"Whilst the benefit of reduced speed limits in residential areas is recognised, the means by which such a speed limit is achieved clearly rests with the advice provided by the department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). This advice to local authorities should ensure that sufficient engineering works are in place to result in an average speed of 20 mph or less. It is not acceptable for the Police service to enforce such speed limits as a matter of routine. In the event that offenders are detected in the normal course of police work, it is recommended that prosecution should be by way of process and that the evidence should reflect the

Speed limits/zones should have engineering/clear signing and not require expensive routine police enforcement. Offenders are severely increasing the risk to vulnerable road users and should be prosecuted and not offered fixed penalties or diversionary education.

Merseyside Police welcome any reduction in speed, which may drive down the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads. However, it is important that we do not raise the expectations of the local community who may have the impression that the police will automatically be available to undertake enforcement activity. The strategic objective must be to modify driver behaviour through education and where necessary prosecution, in order to protect road users from death and serious injury.

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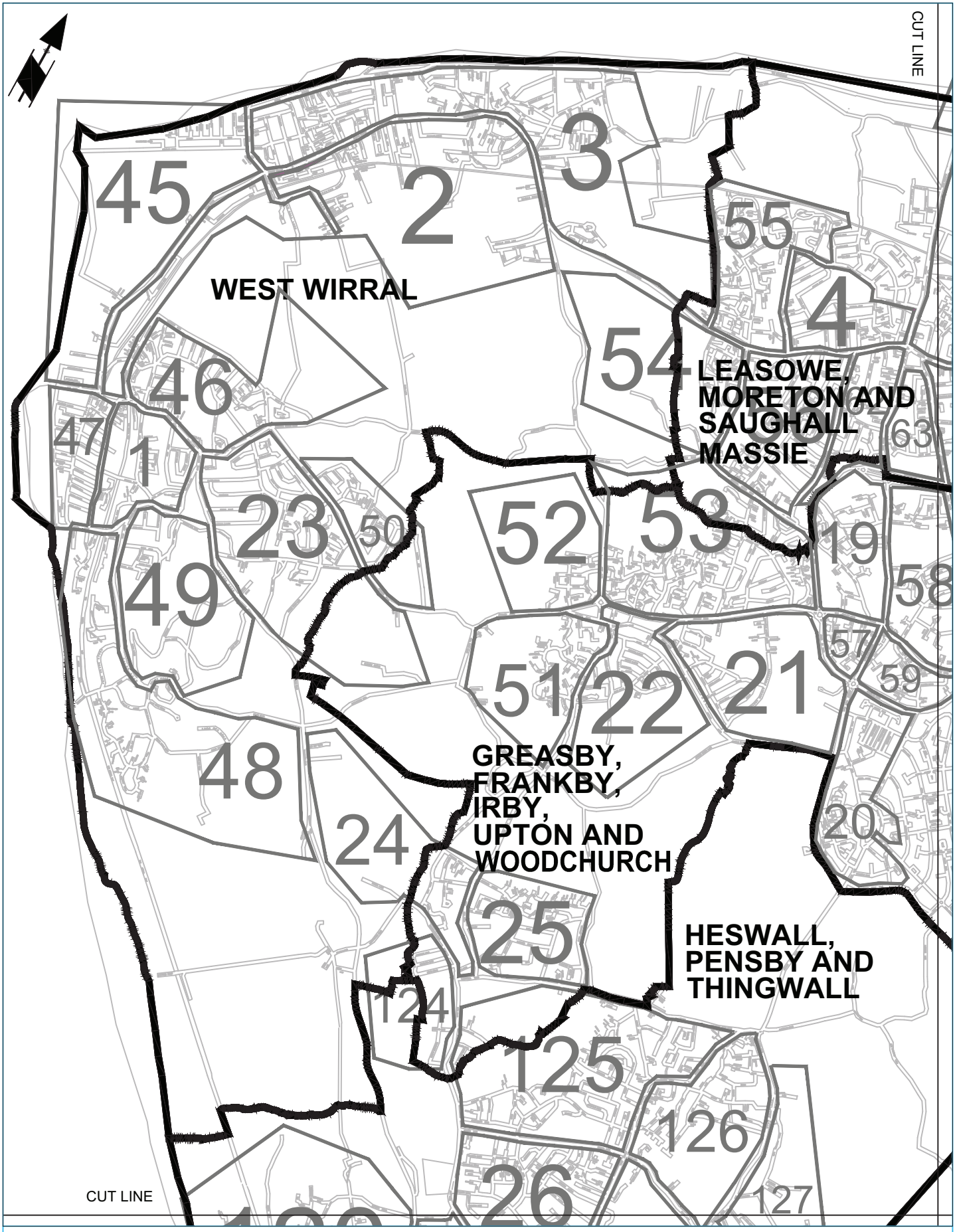

Wirral 20mph Speed Limit Areas
Appendix 2
North West

WIRRAL
Technical Services Department
David Green
Director

Scale	NTS	Date	April 2012	Plan Ref No.	DTS3560a

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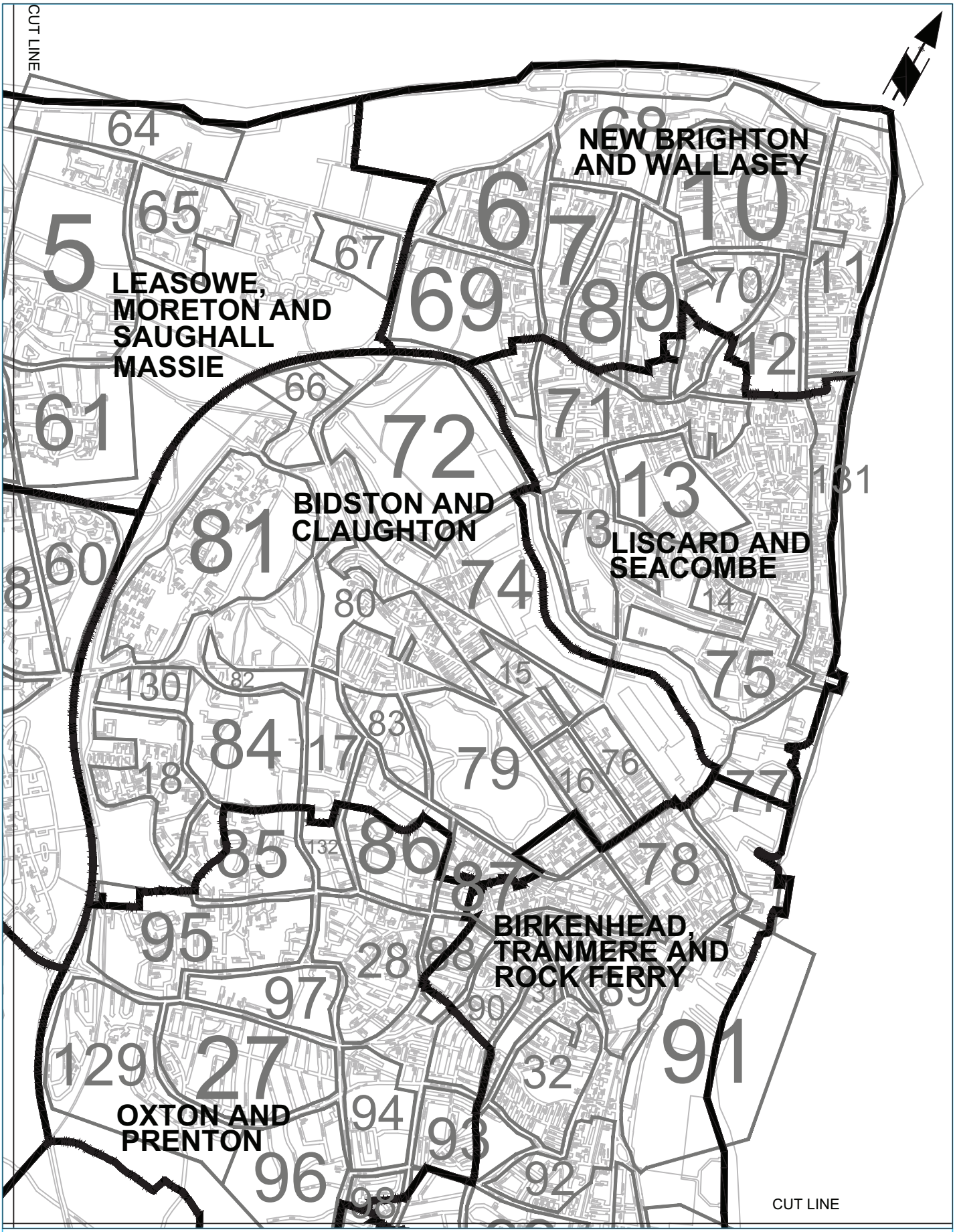

Wirral 20mph Speed Limit Areas
Appendix 2
North East

WIRRAL
Technical Services Department
David Green
Director

Scale	NTS	Date	April 2013	Plan Ref No.	DTS3560b

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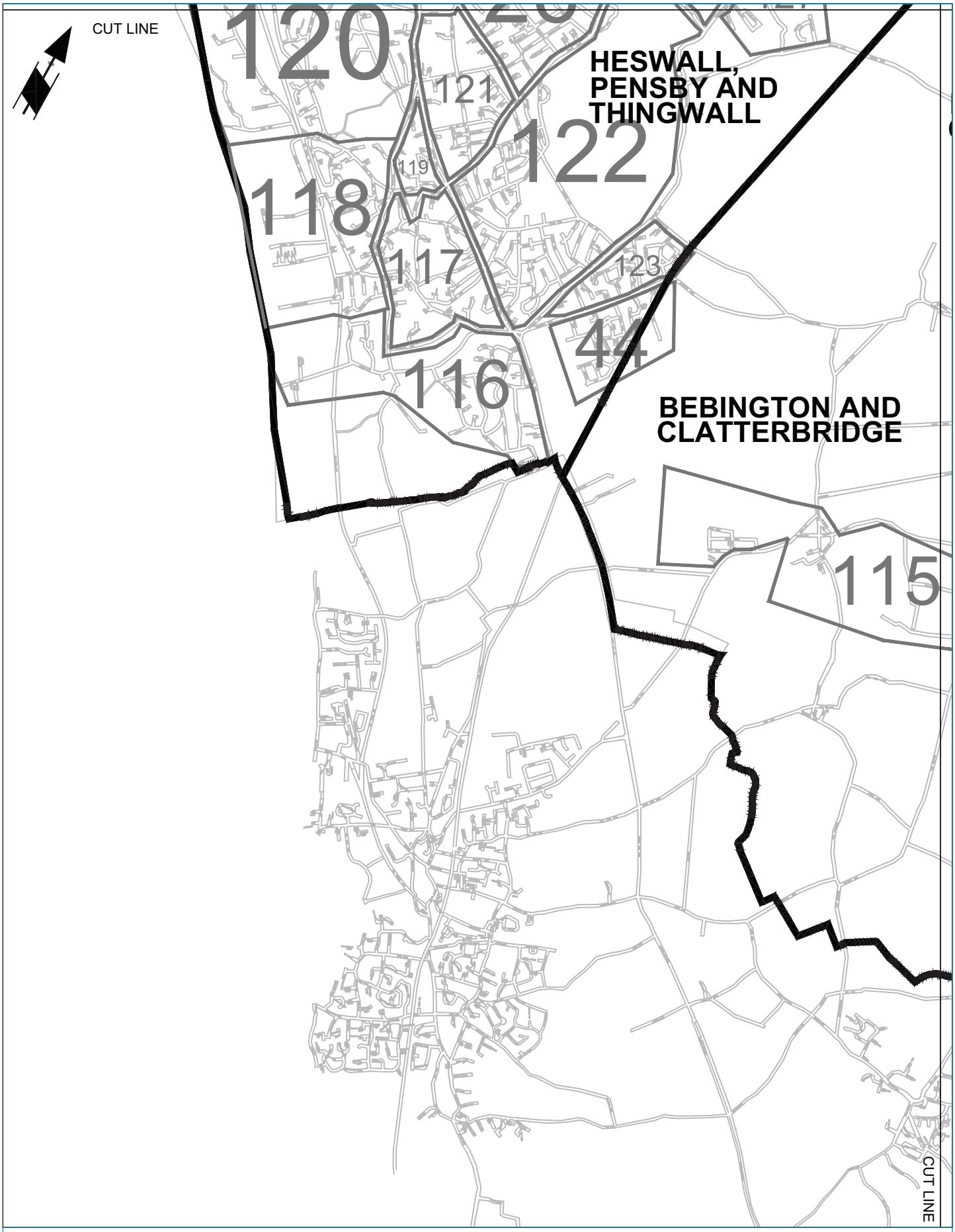

Wirral 20mph Speed Limit Areas
Appendix 2
South West

WIRRAL
Technical Services Department
David Green
Director

Scale	NTS	Date	April 2013	Plan Ref No.	DTS3560c

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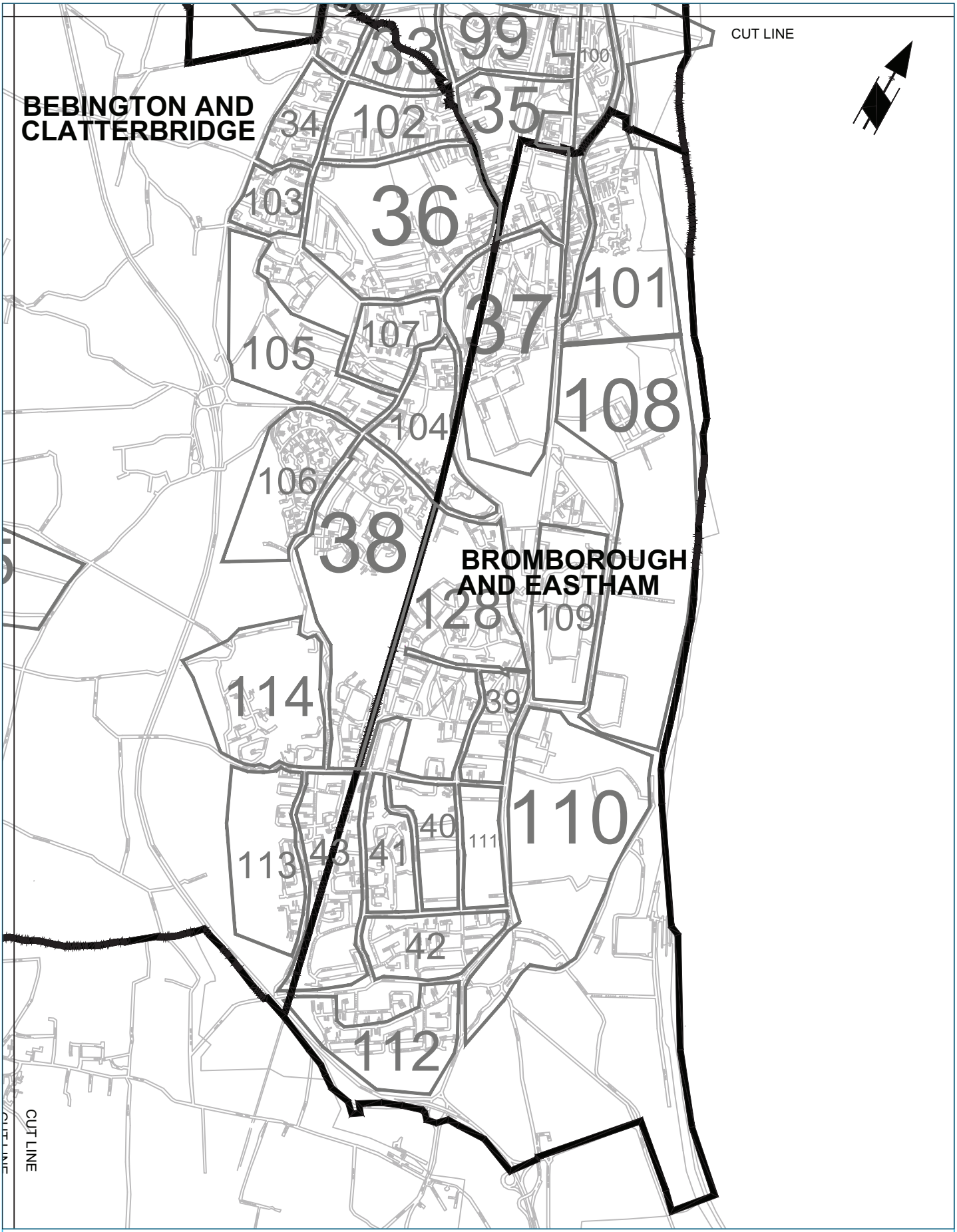

Wirral 20mph Speed Limit Areas
Appendix 2
South East

WIRRAL
Technical Services Department
David Green
Director

Scale	NTS	Date	April 2012	Plan Ref No.	DTS3560d

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Appendix 3

Area Forum	Phase 1 (2012/13) Zones	Phase 2 (2013 - 15) Zones
Bebington & Clatterbridge	34, 36, 106 107 114, 115	38, 98, 102, 103, 104, 105, 113
Bidston & Claughton	15, 16, 72, 81, 83, 84, 130	17,18, 66, 74, 76, 79, 80, 82
Birkenhead & Tranmere and Rock Ferry	29, 33, 78, 89, 92, 100	30, 31, 32, 87, 88, 90, 91, 99
Bromborough and Eastham	35, 39, 41, 101, 110, 112 128	37, 40, 42, 43, 108, 109, 111
Greasby/Frankby/Irby, Upton, Woodchurch	20, 22, 25, 52, 57, 60	19, 21, 24, 51, 53, 58, 59, 124
Heswall and Pensby & Thingwall	26, 44, 117, 119, 120, 125, 127	116, 118, 121, 122, 123, 126
Leasowe, Moreton and Saughall Massie	55, 56, 61, 61, 65, 67	4, 5, 54, 62, 63
Liscard and Seacombe	13, 14, 71, 75, 77	73, 131
New Brighton and Wallasey	9, 11, 12, 68, 69	6, 7, 8, 10, 70
Oxton and Prenton	28, 93, 95, 96, 132	27, 85, 86, 94, 97, 129
West Wirral	1, 3, 23, 45, 47, 48	2, 46, 49, 50

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND (LSTF) - 2011/12 PROGRESS REPORT & 2012/13 PROGRAMME***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**NEW BRIGHTON, WALLASEY, LISCARD, SEACOMBE, BIDSTON AND ST JAMES, CLAUGHTON, BIRKENHEAD AND TRANMERE, OXTON, ROCK FERRY, PRENTON, BEBINGTON, BROMBROUGH, EASTHAM, LEASOWE (PART) AND MORETON EAST (PART)**
REPORT OF:	***DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***COUNCIL DAVE MITCHELL STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES***
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 On the 24th November 2011 Cabinet approved the acceptance of £810,000 of Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF) from Merseytravel to deliver the 'Key Component' project. This funding, provided over a 4 year period 2011/12 – 2014/15, is to assist the Council to support residents of East Wirral to access employment opportunities, as well as encouraging the use of sustainable transport in order to contribute to reducing carbon emissions in the Borough.

1.2 At the 24th November 2011 Cabinet meeting it was resolved that Officers report back to a future meeting on the progress in delivering the 'Key Component' projects and provide detailed plans for 2012/13 onwards.

1.3 This report provides Cabinet with a review of the successful delivery of Year 1 of the project and seeks authority from Cabinet to continue delivery of the 'Key Component' Project as detailed in Section 4 of this report.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 On the 19th January 2011 the Government as part of the Local Transport White Paper, issued guidance regarding the creation of a £560million Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). The purpose of this fund was to help build local economies and address climate change. Authorities were invited to bid to secure funding via the Department for Transport (DfT). Metropolitan areas were required to bid through their respective

Integrated Transport Authorities (ITA's). The fund, both revenue and capital, was available over four financial years 2011/12 to 2014/15.

2.2. Applications were invited for small scale projects (up to £5million) or large projects (up to £50million). The Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) agreed to submit an application for the large project category and in order to do this a two stage application process was required to be undertaken. The first stage of this was to submit an application for 'Key Component' funding which was for up to £5million of the larger bid.

2.3. On 18th April 2011, Merseytravel, as the ITA, submitted an early smaller bid, known as the 'Key Component' bid, for £4.877m. The project was to "Facilitate Sustainable Access to Employment in Merseyside". The overall project was composed of three themes. These were:-

- Working with Employers
- Travel Solutions
- Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

2.4. £810,000 of the total Key Component bid was for the delivery of projects in East Wirral. The Wirral element of the project focussed on working with employers to support business travel and travel plans, providing information, advice and guidance to individuals regarding travel to employment and training, and also improving facilities for walking and cycling.

2.5. On the 5th July 2011 Merseytravel, on behalf of the MTP were told that the Key Component bid was successful and were invited to submit a full business case. This was submitted in December 2011, to support a £22million major bid. The decision regarding the major bid is anticipated to be announced by the DfT in Summer 2012.

2.6. The following tables illustrate the breakdown on the £4.877 million Key Component funding over the 4 year period for Merseyside as a whole and also detail the breakdown of the £810,000 which is Wirral's element of the total Key Component funding.

Merseyside Key Component Funding £4.877m

£000	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Revenue	450	834	848	787
Capital	405	801	431	321

Wirral's element of Merseyside Key Component Funding £810,000

£000	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Revenue	100	135	135	130
Capital	10	100	100	100

2.7. The following table breaks down the funding allocations of Wirral's Key Component project in to the relevant themes.

Wirral's Allocation of LSTF Key Component Funding

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	**Total**
Working With Employers	Revenue	25	40	40	40	**145**
	Capital	10	10	10	10	**40**
Travel Solutions	Revenue	75	95	95	90	**355**
	Capital	0	0	0	0	**0**
Sustainable Transport Infrastructure	Revenue	0	0	0	0	**0**
	Capital	0	90	90	90	**270**
Total	**Revenue**	**100**	**135**	**135**	**130**	**500**
	Capital	**10**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**310**

3.0 PROGRESS REPORT 2011/12

3.1. The deadline for returns to Merseytravel for Year 1 claims for LSTF project support is 10th April 2012. In accordance with the terms of the funding agreement Wirral will be making a full claim for £100k revenue and £10k capital. The details of the breakdown final claim are still to be finalised at the time of writing this report however they are anticipated to be as follows;

LTSF Key Component Element	**Intervention**	**Capital (£000)**	**Revenue (£000)**
Working with Employers	Business travel support (staffing)		25
Travel Solutions	Travel Solutions Support (staffing)		75
	Travel Cards		
	Scooter Loan Scheme		
	Cycle to Work Scheme		
Sustainable Infrastructure	Scheme Design (note this element has been brought forward from 12/13)	10	
	Total	**10**	**100**

3.2. The **'Working With Employers'** element of the package aims to raise awareness of sustainable travel choices and identify travel related concerns and issues for local businesses and initiate programmes with employers to address these concerns. The revenue provided through LSTF funds a Business Travel Support Post based in Technical Services who works with local organisations to minimise the cost of travel for their businesses in order to assist to make the Borough an attractive place for businesses to prosper. The Officer is working closely with the Wirral Business Forum through the Invest Wirral network as well as working closely with Merseytravel's Smarter Choices team. The project has currently engaged 26 local businesses and aims to deliver 20 travel plans over the 4 year period.

3.3. The Business Travel Support Officer also manages a small element of capital funding to provide a business travel grant scheme to assist employers with introducing initiatives or infrastructure in support of workplace travel plans. 13 applications have

been received for the business travel grant of which 4 have been approved. Depending on individual circumstances businesses may require planning permission e.g. for cycle storage, and therefore, due to the late start on this project as a result of delays by Merseytravel in finalising the funding agreement, it is considered unlikely that all these permissions will be granted and claims will be processed within the current financial year. We were therefore at risk of not being able to claim the £10k for this element of the programme. Following negotiations with Merseytravel it has been agreed that we can claim engineers design costs for the Sustainable Infrastructure scheme due to be implemented next year in order to compensate for this which will ensure we can make a full claim.

3.4. A webpage has been set up on the Council website to promote the business travel support https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/business/sustainable-transport-fund and an editorial has been included in local business magazine "The Edge". Invest Wirral and the Wirral Business Forum are also promoting the project to its members through newsletters, emails and Twitter feeds. Due to the project only commencing at the end of the financial year it is still relatively early days but the project is already attracting significant interest from local organisations and businesses.

3.5. Due to the short timescales required to enable this project to commence with out delay an existing member of staff from within Technical Services (Transportation Team) has been delivering the project. It is proposed to continue with the current staffing arrangements and review staff resources when the decision on the large bid is announced by the DfT in the Summer. Arrangements for longer term staffing of the project post Summer 2012 will then be considered and further recommendations will be reported to Cabinet as required.

3.6. The **'Travel Solutions'** element of the project encompasses the various interventions which assist to remove transport barriers for people seeking to access employment. Interventions to provide information, advice and guidance such as personalised journey planning and travel training provide people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to use public transport. Other interventions include a cycle to work scheme which will offer people a bicycle, training and equipment or a scooter scheme which provides the 6 month loan of a 50cc scooter to people whose new place of employment is not suitably serviced by public transport. Cost is also a major barrier to people using public transport and the scheme will offer travel cards to individuals to assist with the first month of employment prior to them receiving their fist months pay.

3.7. It was originally anticipated that this project would be delivered through the voluntary and community sector. Due to the short timescales required to commence delivery, in order to avoid any risk of underspend, there was not sufficient time in line with OJEU requirements to go out to tender for this project and therefore at least in the short term it has been considered appropriate to deliver this project in house. Similar to the Working with Employers staffing arrangements it is proposed to review the arrangements when the decision on the large bid is announced by the DfT in the Summer. Arrangements for longer term staffing of this element project post Summer 2012 will then be considered and further recommendations will be reported to Cabinet as required.

3.8. The Travel Solutions project has been welcomed by Job Centre Plus and other local employment support organisations. Since February 113 referrals have been received

of to date which 64 interventions have been provided, 46 of these were travel cards, 8 cycles and 2 scooters. 54 personalised journey plans have been provided and 8 people have been travel trained specifically to assist with accessing employment and training. In addition there are a number of referrals still being processed in order to identify the appropriate intervention.

3.9. A dedicated webpage has been set up for the project which can be viewed at https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/jobs-and-careers/travel-solutions

3.10. Capital goods such as cycles and travel cards which have been purchased in 2011/12 which due to the short timescales in commencing delivery of the project have not yet been issued will be rolled forward for delivery in 2012/13.

4.0. PROPOSALS FOR KEY COMPONENT DELIVERY 2012/13

4.1. Delivery of the project for 2012/13 must meet the requirements of the funding agreement and as per the agreed spend under the individual themes of :-

- Working with Employers
- Travel Solutions
- Sustainable Transport Infrastructure.

4.2. It is therefore proposed to continue delivery of the Working with Employers and Travel Solutions Project in the same manner as during 2011/12.

LSTF Key Component Element	Intervention	Capital (£000)	Revenue (£000)
Working with Employers	Business travel grant to be offered through Invest Wirral network to assist employers with introducing initiatives or infrastructure in support of workplace travel plans e.g. cycle parking	10 + (10k from 11/12)	
	Business Travel Support Post based in Technical Services		35
	Promotional items / Business Support Items / events		5
	Total	**20**	**40**

LSTF Key Component Element	Intervention	Capital (£000)	Revenue (£000)
Travel Solutions	Travel Solutions Team		45
	Travel Cards		12
	Scooters		20
	Cycles		13
	Promotional items / events		5
	Total	**0**	**95**

4.3. £90,000 of LSTF Capital funding is also provided in 2012/13 to support the construction of “Sustainable Transport Infrastructure” to encourage walking and cycling. This element aims to improve accessibility to employment locations for

pedestrians and cyclists and will support Wirral residents to access employment destinations in a sustainable and cost effective manner.

LSTF Key Component Element	Intervention	Capital (£000)	Revenue (£000)
Sustainable Infrastructure	New Traffic Signals – Bromborough Road / The Wiend / Ellen's Lane	90 - (10k from 11/12	0
	Total	**80**	**0**

4.4. It is proposed that a scheme to introduce traffic signals at the junction of Bromborough Road / The Wiend / Ellen's Lane, Bebington be jointly funded between an allocation from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block Local Safety Scheme programme and the LSTF allocation. This proposal will provide significant safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, improved access to Port Sunlight Railway Station, the Unilever factory and improved links to the A41 corridor.

5.0. RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 The principal risks for the Council are attached to the failure to continue to deliver all or part of the project and therefore not satisfy the requirements of the funding agreement with Merseytravel. In theory this may result in the Council not being able to make a valid claim for the grant from Merseytravel.

5.2. This risk will be minimal due to close project management in house as well as through the MTP LSTF Project manager and Steering Group which would result in any issues being identified and managed at an early stage.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 No other options have been considered as this report sets out the proposals that have been developed as part of the successful MTP bid to the DfT and therefore the projects have to be delivered in accordance with the original bid to meet the terms and conditions of the funding agreement.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 This project has been developed with MTP and funding has been allocated through the LSTF. As individual projects are being delivered various other partners, including private sector and third sector organisations have already been engaged and will continue to be consulted with as appropriate. Officers in Technical Services are also working closely with Officers in Regeneration, Housing & Planning, Finance and Procurement and Legal regarding the on-going delivery of the project.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 The DfT is keen that authorities incorporate plans for partnership working with community and voluntary organisations in the delivery of the programme. This project

may offer opportunities for the voluntary and community sector to tender, and if successful deliver the travel solutions element of the package.

8.2 Further discussions regarding this will take place following the announcement of the DfT's decision on the MTP Major Bid. If this is successful this will provide significant additional funding for the Travel Solutions Project and it may be appropriate to consider external deliver of the project at this point.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 The Working with Employers and Travel Solutions projects will be fully funded through LSTF and there will be no additional financial implications for the Council. The project has secured £810,00 for Wirral over a 4 year period (2011/12-2014-15).

9.2. The Sustainable Infrastructure project will be part funded in conjunction with Local Transport Plan Capital Integrated Transport Block funding. (Cabinet 15th March 2012). LSTF Infrastructure schemes will be implemented and will become a quantified Council highway asset, and as such will be subject to the ongoing maintenance within existing resources, as required.

9.3. The DfT have indicated that they would like these projects to be sustainable in the longer term, and as such, during the life of the project, Officers will work with partners in the private sector, and with third sector organisations to identify options for on-going delivery.

9.4. Support to the Merseyside LSTF Steering Group and project delivery and development will be provided from within existing staffing resources in the Technical Services and Regeneration, Housing and Planning Departments.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Merseytravel as the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) are the accountable body for the LSTF project with the DfT. In order for Merseytravel to receive the funding from the DfT they have signed a legal agreement under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

10.2. On the 24th January 2012 Wirral Council signed up to a similar legal agreement between the Council and Merseytravel to ensure that the terms and conditions of the grant are met and to ensure that Merseytravel will authorise claims that the Council will make. Grant claims are made quarterly in arrears.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The development of walking and cycling infrastructure, and the promotion of walking and cycling as active and sustainable modes will contribute towards a reduction in single occupancy car trips and a reduction in carbon emissions. Encouraging and supporting the use of public transport through the 'Working with Employers' and 'Travel Solutions' elements of the package will also assist in reducing carbon emissions.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Any applications by employers for facilities such as bike shelters would be subject to the normal planning permission process.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Cabinet is requested to:

(1) Note the success of Wirral Council Officers in successfully delivering Year 1 of the LSTF Key Component Project

(2) Approve the detailed proposals for 2012/13 as set out in Section 4 and request officers to report to a meeting in early 2013 to provide a progress report on the delivery of the 2012/13 programme and detailed plans for 2013/14 onwards.

(3) Request Officers to report to a future meeting the outcome of the decision by DfT with regard to the submission of the business case for the large bid. This decision is expected over the Summer 2012.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 2011/12 has been the first year of the four year programme and DfT indicated that any unspent allocations could not be carried forward into future financial years. Although the grant was awarded in July 2011, due to delays in the Merseyside Transport Partners all signing up to the financial agreement the Council could not commence delivery of the project until late January 2012. Given the short timescales it has been a considerable undertaking to enable the full grant to be claimed from Merseytravel and to ensure that the Council did not failed to deliver all or part of the project.

15.2 Cabinet is aware of the significant reduction in funding for transport from the Local Transport Plan settlement. The funding available through the LSTF provides the opportunity to deliver additional projects and schemes in Wirral which will assist in the removal of transport as a barrier for people seeking employment, as well as supporting and delivering projects which will secure carbon reduction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – East Wirral – LSTF Key Component Area

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	**24 November 2011**

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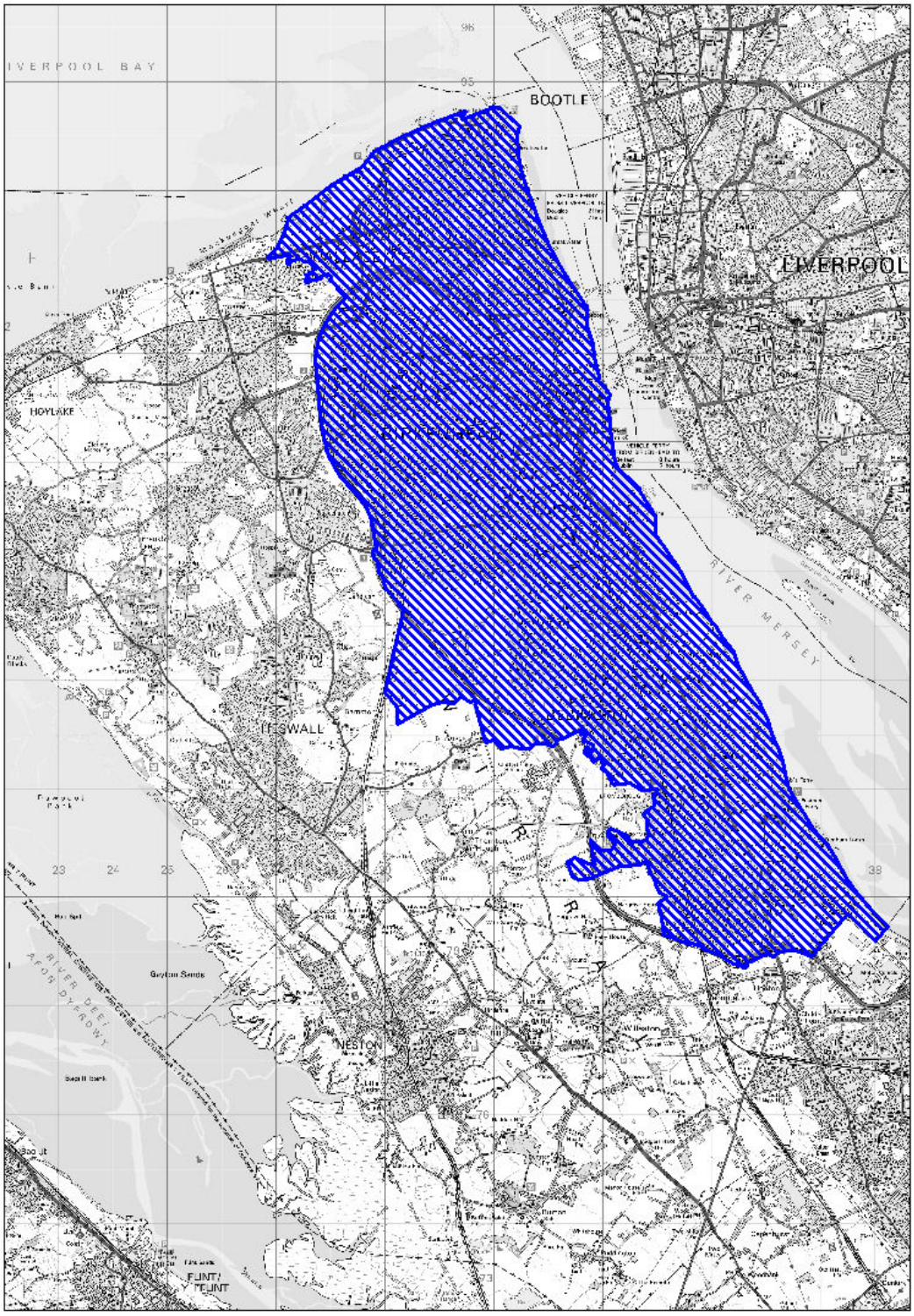
Appendix 1 – Key Component Area of LSTF bid.



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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**ENVIRONMENTAL STREETSCENE SERVICES CONTRACT FINANCIAL REVIEW**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR DAVE MITCHELL, STREETSCENE & TRANSPORT SERVICES**
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Recent amendments to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules include a requirement that all financial variations (of over £50K for the life of the contract) be reported to Cabinet. This report summarises all relevant financial variations to the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract that have been authorised by Cabinet, from the inception of the contract in August 2006. The Contract was awarded to Biffa on 8 May 2006 (Minute 598 refers).

1.2 This report also highlights an adjustment required to the 2011-2012 waste collection and disposal budget in order to fully fund the waste disposal and treatment costs of all waste collected from Council run premises. Cabinet approved an initial estimate of £70,000 on 22 February 2010. The additional growth of £53,000 now required in the Technical Services Waste budget will be offset by a corresponding reduced waste levy requirement.

1.3 In this report Cabinet is also requested to approve the Property Count Uplift applicable from 2011/12.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Environmental Streetscene Services Contract was awarded to Biffa Waste Services in May 2006 and came into force on 22nd August 2006.

During the past five years, the Contract has achieved significant successes including the following:

- The borough wide roll-out of the grey and green bin waste collection service to over 145,000 properties, including collections on Bank Holidays;
- The restructuring and expansion of the garden waste service to over 108,000 properties;

- The significant improvement in local environmental quality through better street cleansing and related activities has meant we have achieved the challenging Public Service Agreement (PSA) standard.

The current value of the core contract with Biffa is £12.594m for 2011/12 consisting of £7.805m for waste collection and £4.789m for street cleansing.

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the performance of the Environmental Streetscene Services contract annually. The fifth annual review was presented to Members on 30th January 2012 (Minute 63 refers).

At Cabinet on 23rd July 2009 (Minute 72 refers) a Contract Review report highlighted the need to fund a contractual Property Count Uplift that we expect to equate to annual growth of around £25k per year. This report details the actual requirement based on current property numbers.

3.0 ONGOING CONTRACT GROWTH REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Overview

The Environmental Streetscene Services Contract includes for an annual review and adjustment of contract payments in line with the requirement to collect waste from an increase in the number of households and the impact of movement in base RPI figures over the preceding 12 months. These adjustments apply on each 12-month anniversary of the contract start date, in August of each year and include the annual property count uplift and the Retail Price Index inflationary adjustment. Provision of £677K has already been made in the Council's 2012/13 budget to fully fund the full year effect of RPI applied in August 2011.

I am able to contain the 2011/12 part-year effects of these adjustments within existing Waste provisions through a number of one-off compensatory savings, totalling £389K.

3.2 Annual Property Count Uplift

The contract includes an obligation to vary the contract by an agreed formula on an annual basis to reflect additional new properties coming on stream during the preceding twelve months. The number of properties increased by 345 from 2010/11 to 2011/12. The on-going full year effect of this increase is £14,100. Cabinet are now requested to approve the Property Count Uplift, along with the associated budgetary implications, from August 2011.

4.0 COUNCIL OFFICE WASTE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL COSTS

From 2010/11 onwards the Council was requested by the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) to declare the quantity of residual and recyclable commercial waste it delivered to them. Previously, this waste tonnage was mixed with the household waste tonnage and paid for as part of the annual waste levy. At the time, the quantity of non-household waste was not known so an estimated figure was provided. However, this figure was under-estimated. After collecting tonnage data for two consecutive years, the current annual requirement is now known to be £120K p.a. as

opposed to the £70K p.a. projected in 2010. This difference also reflects the annual increases applied to the cost per tonne to cover increased processing costs including Landfill Tax increases of £8 per tonne per year on residual waste. Therefore Cabinet is therefore asked to approve the additional requirement of £53K p.a. so that the Council's quarterly waste disposal and treatment costs can be met. Whilst this is technically a growth item required by Technical Services, it will be offset by a corresponding reduction in the Waste Levy requirement of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority and is therefore cost neutral to the Council.

5.0 2012/13 BUDGET REQUIREMENT SUMMARY

I request that Cabinet approve the 2012/13 requirements within the Waste and Environment budget of £64,100, as summarised in Table 1 below. The Director of Finance is currently leading on a full review of the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract in association with Price Waterhouse Cooper. A further report detailing savings opportunities linked to the future of the contract with Biffa Waste Services review must be presented to Cabinet no later that June 2012. It is anticipated that Biffa will propose a substantial savings package in return for "buying back" the break clause thereby extending the contract to 2020. However this will be predicated on Cabinet accepting any terms that may be attached to such a package. In addition, some of these savings may not be realised until after the Environmental Streetscene Services "break clause" date of August 2013.

Table 1: Budget Requirement Summary

Additional Budgetary Requirement 2012 – 2013 onwards	
	(£) Expenditure
Property Count Uplift	14,100
Office waste disposal/treatment costs	53,000
TOTAL	**67,100**

6.0 EFFECT OF FINANCIAL CHANGES (VARIATIONS) TO DATE

6.1 Members will recall the recent changes to the Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) governing variations to contracts, and in particular the improvement in reporting to Cabinet on variations within Term Contracts such as the Biffa contract as set out in CPR Section 16A. In accordance with CPR 16A.2 and 16A.3, Table 2 below identifies all those variations to the contract with Biffa that have a value greater than £50,000 over the whole of the contract term (2006 to 2020). Technical Services will report all variations to the Environmental Streetscene Contract annually in future.

Table 2: Variations greater than £50,000 in value (Excluding RPI increases)

Variation	Estimated cost over the contract term (2006-2020, 14 years)	Comment (includes Variation Order (VO) reference.
Expansion of Garden Waste recycling to 10,500 properties	£1.7m	Introduced March 2008 (VO: Biffa 003 raised 23/01/08) Reported to Cabinet 03 April 2008 and 15 January 2009
Expansion of Garden Waste recycling to 4,900 properties*	£1.7m	Introduced March 2008 (VO: Biffa 004 raised 23/01/08) Reported to Cabinet 03 April 2008 and 15 January 2009
Removal of 1 x garden waste collection vehicle as a result of green waste procurement exercise	-£1.6m	From 2010/11: SAVING (Reported to Cabinet 15 June 2010)
Introduction of bulk bin recycling to multi-occ households	£1.7m	Introduced 2009/10 (Approved Cabinet 22 Feb 2010 minute 332 refers. VO: Biffa 005 raised 28/05/09)
Introduction of exclusion round to multi-occ households	£912K	Introduced 2009/10 (Approved Cabinet 22 Feb 2010 minute 332 refers) VO: Biffa 012 raised 19/03/12
Abandoned bin removal service	£56K	Introduced 2011/12 VO: Biffa 013 raised 19/03/12 From Provisional Items approved Cabinet 8 May 2006
Introduction of kerbside recycling to hard to reach properties	£69K	Introduced March 2011 VO: Biffa 008 raised 05/01/11 From Provisional Items approved Cabinet 8 May 2006
Removal of Schools service street Cleansing resource (1 x large mechanical sweeper	-£540K	From April 2011: SAVING VO: Biffa 011 raised 31/05/11 Budget Cabinet 21 Feb 2011
Keep It Local Deep Cleanse Initiative	85K (One off budget option 2011/12)	VO: Biffa 010 raised 21/04/11 Budget Cabinet 21 Feb 2011
Embankment Cleanse	131K	VO: Biffa 014 raised 19/03/12 Introduced April 2008 From Provisional Items approved Cabinet 8 May 2006

*Same cost as VO Biffa 003 as whole refuse collection vehicle resource required. 3300 Additional properties to be added at no extra cost April 2012.

6.2 Details of how these variations have impacted on the contract to date are shown in Table 3. The compounding effects of RPI and property uplift up to 2011/12 are also detailed. To summarise, the overall cost of the contract has increased by over £2.8M pa since its commencement date of August 2006. This increase is associated with the service changes detailed in Table 2, compounding property uplift charges and the significant impacts of RPI.

Table 3: Additional annual costs to the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract applied since the Contract start date of August 2006

Area	Additional costs (p.a.) as of 2011/12
Service changes (excluding RPI)	£383,635
RPI	£2,339, 819*
Property Uplift	£127068
Total	**£2,850,522**

*Includes RPI for core contract costs only plus service enhancements detailed in Table 2. Excludes RPI for variable provisional items such as rapid responses, "match day" cleansing, bin deliveries and bulky waste collections.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Council must ensure the Environmental Streetscene and Waste Services Contract is fully funded in 2012/13 to avoid the budget being overspent, and to facilitate good budget monitoring practice.

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 There is requirement to fully fund the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract and failure to do so would result in an uncontrollable overspend in the Waste budget provisions. Officers intend to report an opportunity for savings to Cabinet by June 2012 as a result of the conclusion of the Biffa Contract Review.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 No consultation has been required as a result of the recommendations proposed in this report.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

10.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

11.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

11.1 The key financial implications, arising from the initiatives contained within the main body of this report, have been summarised in Section 5 of this report (Table 1). Approval is requested for an additional budgetary requirement of £64,100 for inclusion in the base budget 2012/13.

11.2 The management of the Environmental Streetscene Services contract will be contained within existing staffing resources.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

14.1 All current and planned activity surrounding waste collection aims to reduce overall waste arising and divert waste from landfill, supporting the reduction in carbon.

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no planning implications arising from this report.

16.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

16.1 Cabinet is requested to: -

(1) Approve the budget growth for 2012/13 onwards totalling £14,100 associated with the Property Count Uplift adjustment is described in section 3.2 of this report;

(2) Approve the budget growth for 2012/13 of £53,000 to fully fund the disposal and treatment costs of the Council's own waste arisings as detailed in section 4 of this report;

(3) Note all financial variations to the Environmental Streetscene Contract over the value of £50,000 in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules 16A.2 and 16A.3 as detailed in section 6 of this report.

17.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 This report is necessary to ensure that the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract remains fully funded to August 2012 and that financial variations are reported in accordance with Contract Procedure Rule 16A.

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SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet: Environmental Streetscene Services Contract Review	23 July 2009
Cabinet: Budget 2010 - 11	22 February 2010

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**THE FLOOD AND WATER ACT 2010 – NEW POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**COUNCILLOR DAVE MITCHELL STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES**
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 established Wirral Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). LLFA's are required to lead the strategic management of local flood risk arising from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.

1.2 The statutory responsibilities attached to the LLFA role, place substantial new duties on Wirral Council in managing flood risk and this will require the introduction of new policies for:

- flood investigations
- a flood risk asset register

In addition, clarity is required in making decisions in supporting communities in planning for, or during, flooding, and a policy is also now proposed for :

- sandbag provision

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Flood & Water Management Act 2010

2.1.1 The first parts of the Flood & Water Management Act commenced on 1 October 2010. These included new definitions of flooding, the requirement to develop national and local flood risk management strategies within a reasonable timeframe, to co-operate and share information, establish Scrutiny Committee arrangements and amendments to Building Regulations in relation to flood resilience.

2.1.2 In April 2011, further parts of the Act commenced, and these included a duty for the LLFA to investigate surface water flooding incidents in its area and identify responsibilities; and a duty to maintain a register of structures or features, which may have an effect on flood risk.

2.1.3 In April 2012, powers to designate features will be enacted within the legislation. This will enable LLFA's to designate a structure or feature from its flood risk register that could significantly affect flood or coastal erosion risk if altered or removed, such as culverts, bridges, private river and private sea defences. This will require any future alterations to them that may increase flood risk to be approved by the LLFA. In addition, The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 includes for amendments to other acts which will give LLFA's powers and duties in connection with the maintenance and consenting of works to ordinary watercourses.

2.1.4 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 will continue to place additional duties and responsibilities on each LLFA. All the new duties and responsibilities, including those which are not yet enacted, are detailed in **Appendix 1.**

2.2 Flooding Investigation Policy

2.2.1 The responsibility to investigate surface water flooding incidents has been shown to be an onerous one following a significant rainfall event in August 2011, when even with the additional resource now available to the Drainage Team, it was not possible to investigate all reported flooding without prioritising incidents by the location and the degree of flooding.

2.2.2 A policy to process and prioritise flooding incidents has therefore been developed for approval by Members. The policy states that Wirral Council will always investigate internal property flooding or where there has been an imminent threat of internal flooding or potential high risk to life, flooding to priority highways and other critical infrastructure. It will identify which risk management authority has responsibility for the flooding and that they are exercising that responsibility; and will aim to undertake this flood investigation within 72hrs of the flooding incident. Other flooding will only be investigated if resources permit. See **Appendix 2** for the proposed detailed policy.

2.2.3 A basic database for recording the flooding as required by the Act has been developed and has been integrated into the highway drainage maintenance management inventory, which has been re-engineered to support this flood data. The ability to map the incidents will prove valuable in the future in identifying flood hotspots

2.3 Flood Risk Assets Register Policy

2.3.1 The duty to establish and maintain a register of assets that may have an effect on flood risk is prescriptive, as is the need to record information about each feature including ownership and state of repair; and for the register to be available for inspection at all reasonable times. This includes inspection by the public but does not include the detailed information recorded. However,

what assets the LLFAs specifically record is not prescriptive, and the Act explicitly states that the assets recorded are those that in the opinion of the LLFA, are likely to have a significant effect on flood risk in its area. Neither Defra nor the Environment Agency (EA) have offered guidance on what nationally maybe considered significant so that the needs for the locality of the flood risk may take precedent. However, they have developed examples of templates for what a register of assets might look like, but again their use is not prescriptive. See **Appendix 3** for the proposed detailed policy

2.3.2 The expectation, by Defra, was that LLFAs would have their registers and records in place, and started populating them, by December 2011. It was intended to link the Wirral Flood Risk Assets Register with the Highway Asset Management System but as this had not progressed as originally planned due to the unaffordability of an integrated system. The Wirral register has therefore been developed utilising the example templates provided by the Environment Agency as a guide and produced as a database and further re-engineering of the highway drainage maintenance inventory to include the flood risk asset register is being investigated as this will enable the combined mapping of flooding, flood risk and flood risk assets; to be graphically represented and utilised to develop Wirral's flood risk management strategy.

2.4 Sandbag Provision Policy

2.4.1 In November 2004, a technical report on sandbags identified that the procedures at that time for the request, issue and delivery of sandbags to members of the public varied greatly throughout the Technical Services Department, with requests being received by different Sections and also the Streetscene call centre. It recognised a need to address these inconsistencies in order to deliver a standardised service to the public. The report identified that sandbags could be issued for a number of events, including Tidal, Sewer, River and Rainfall flooding and were issued on both a planned and reactive basis but that any future policy needed to consistently address the issuing of sandbags for all flooding eventualities. The development of a coherent and supportable sandbag policy has therefore long been required but has been difficult to establish.

2.4.2 Neither the EA, United Utilities (UU), or any of our neighbouring authorities issue sandbags to the public. The technical report recommended that the preferred option would be to 'Provide Emergency Response' only. This was a departure from the Council's then ad-hoc procedure and is detailed below.

"Discontinue current inconsistent supply of sandbags, with all requests for sandbags refused. Householders to be referred to commercially available flood protection products. Sandbags only made available for emergency purposes (criteria to be set)"

2.4.3 Difficulties remain since there have been no criteria set for what should be classed as emergency purposes as this still included provision of sandbags to the public and this led to the decision to supply or not supply sandbags remaining with individuals which has continued to lead to consistencies in the past provision. Hence, a formal policy is required for making decisions

concerning what is an emergency and whose need is greater. See **Appendix 4** for the detail of the proposed policy.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Wirral faces a significant risk of flooding with a substantial number of domestic properties identified as at risk from potential future flooding. The proposed policies will allow the Council to meet the relevant new duties/responsibilities brought about by the new flooding legislation and reduce this future risk.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation has taken place with other Local Authorities and flood risk management partners, United Utilities and the Environment Agency and the Department of Regeneration, Housing and Planning.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 Flooding affects all voluntary, community and faith groups whether it be directly with their properties being flooded, or in a responder or recovery capacity.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 There are no additional IT, Staffing or Asset resource implications although formalising the decision criteria for the provision of sandbags is likely to lead to the distribution of more sandbags and hence a reduction in highway drainage budget available for other drainage needs.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal implications other than the duties imposed under the new legislation.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Yes, and impact review is attached. (http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0)

9.2 The proposal to deliver sandbags to those that lack the physical ability to provide them themselves is intended to create equality by supporting these residents to satisfy the ‘self help’ approach.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific carbon reduction implications.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The development of a Flood Risk Asset Register will support the strategy to reduce future local flood risk and hence improve community safety.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That Cabinet approve the policies relating to:

- flood investigations;
- the flood risk asset register; and
- the provision of sandbags

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The proposed policies will allow the Council to meet relevant new duties/responsibilities brought about by new flooding legislation and support it in its strategy to reduce future local flood risk.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Summary of Local Authority issues that will require resourcing in the Floods and Water Management Act 2010

Appendix 2 Draft Wirral MBC Flooding Investigation Policy

Appendix 3 Draft Flood Risk Asset Register Policy

Appendix 4 Draft Wirral MBC Sandbag Policy

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None used.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	**21st July 2011**
Cabinet	**17th March 2011**

Appendix 1

SUMMARY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY ISSUES THAT WILL REQUIRE RESOURCING IN THE FLOODS AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010

Enacted sections October 2010

1. **Local Strategy (9)** Lead Local flood Authority (LLFA) develop maintain, apply and monitor a local strategy for Flood Risk Management (FRM). This must be consistent with the National Strategy.
2. **Co-operate and share information (13 & 14)** An authority must co-operate with other authorities in exercising flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM), this includes sharing data. LLFA has power to request information from other authorities.
3. **LLFA to establish Scrutiny Committee (31) (Schedule 2 Para 54)** Power to LLFA to allow for scrutiny committees in exercising FCERM.
4. **Building regulations: flood resilience (40)** Provides that building regulations can be made for any type of work in relation to flood resilience and resistance.

Duties and Powers enacted April 2011

1. **Powers & duty to investigate (19)** The LLFA must investigate flooding incidents in its area in order to identify what authority has the flood risk management function and to establish if that authority has or intends to respond. The LFFA must publish results of investigations.
2. **Duty to maintain a register (21)** The LLFA must establish and maintain a register of structures or features, which may have an effect on flood risk in its area. Records must include information on ownership and condition.

Duties and Powers enacted July 2011

1 **Amendment of other Acts (31) (Schedule 2)** Para 29; gives the LLFA powers to carry out works on Ordinary Watercourses in line with the local FRM strategy

Duties and Powers enacted December 2011

1. **Incidental flooding or coastal erosion (38 & 39)** Allows LLFA to carry out works that may increase flooding or coastal erosion if justified.

Duties and Powers to be enacted April 2012

1. **Designation of features (30) (Schedule 1)** Power enabling LLFA to designate a feature that affects flood or coastal erosion risk, this is to prevent future alterations that may increase flood risk.
2. **Ordinary Watercourses Consenting and Enforcement Responsibilities (Para 32 Schedule 2, Amendments to Other Acts - Land Drainage Act s23 & s24)** Transfer of responsibility for issuing and enforcing flood defence consents from Environment Agency to LLFA
3. **Additional Amendments to Other Acts (31) (Schedule2)**
    1. Para 31; gives LLFA power to enforce obligations to maintain or repair a watercourse or bridge
    2. Para 33; gives powers to LLFA to require works for maintaining flow of watercourse

Duties & Powers still to be enacted

1 **Duty to contribute to sustainable development (27).** LLFA must aim to contribute towards sustainable development whilst exercising FCERM.

2 **Sustainable drainage (32) (Schedule 3)** The LLFA will be the Approving Body with the duty to approve rainwater drainage systems before construction and then adopt and maintain the drainage system upon completion. This section of the Act is not likely to be enacted until late in 2012 as the Government has still to consult on issues. Schedule 3 also removes the right to connect to a public sewer in certain cases.

Appendix 2

Wirral MBC Flooding Investigation Policy

S19 Flood and Water Management Act 2010 states that:

(1) On becoming aware of a flood in its areas, a lead local flood authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate-

a) *Which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and*
b) *Whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.*

(2) Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1), it must-

a) *Publish the results of its investigation, and*
b) *Notify any relevant risk management authorities*.

Policy Statement

Wirral MBC aims to investigate all occurrences of surface water flooding in its local flood risk management area based on the priority listing detailed below but always as resources allow. It will identify which risk management authority, if any, has the relevant risk management function responsibility to respond to the flooding, and notify them accordingly.

Where foul flooding is occurring an initial desktop or visual investigation will be undertaken but it is likely that the responsibility will rest with either an individual or group of properties/business's: or the appropriate Water Company (United Utilities or Welsh Water).

Wirral will endeavour to investigate the flooding within 72hrs, unless it is a significant or an extreme rainfall event (as defined by a severe weather warning from the Met Office) or an event that covers a large area.

Significant Flood Event

For the purpose of reporting Flood Investigations, a flooding incident is deemed significant if it:

- caused internal flooding to 8 or more residential properties/business premises within a kilometre square area.

- flooded one or more items of critical infrastructure e.g., a pumping station, an emergency services station, electricity sub station, hospital etc.

- caused a transport link to be totally impassable for a significant period.
  Category 1 highways (motorways) and rail links – 1 hour or more
  Category 2 and 3a highways – 2 hours or more
  Category 3b, 4a, 4b highways – 4 hours or more

Priority Listing for Investigation of Flooding

Priority	Type of Flooding Incident	Investigate
1	Any internal flooding (affecting more than one property)	Always
2	Flooding to priority highways (category 1, 2 & 3a)/critical infrastructure.	Always
3	Flooding to gardens and open space where potential risk to life was high.	Always
4	Where there has been an imminent threat of internal flooding	Always
5	Flooding to non-priority highways (category 3b, 4a & 4b), that renders it totally impassable for a significant period (4 hours or more)	As resources permit
6	Flooding to gardens, farmland and open space where no risk to life was posed.	As resources permit

Where an investigation has been undertaken following a significant flood event, Wirral will prepare a report within 2 months (resources allowing and depending on extent of the event). The report detailing the investigations and resulting actions will be produced in an appropriate format and be published on the Council's website.

This policy will be reviewed annually and recorded within the annual flood risk management report of the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix 3

Flood Risk Asset Register Policy

S21 Flood and Water Management Act 2010 states that:

(1) *A lead local flood authority must establish and maintain -*

(a) a register of structures or features which, in the opinion of the authority, are likely to have a significant effect on a flood risk in its area, and

(b) a record of information about each of those structures or features, including information about ownership and state of repair.

(2) The Minister may by regulations make provision about the content of the register and record.

(3) The lead local flood authority must arrange for the register to be available for inspection at all reasonable times.

(4) The Minister may by regulations provide for information of a specified description to be excluded from the register or record.

Policy Statement

Wirral MBC will establish a flood risk asset register listing those assets in its local flood risk management area that have the potential to have a significant effect on flood risk. The individual flood risk asset record will hold relevant information such as the size, materials and any construction features, as deemed necessary, together with ownership (where this can be established) and the present state of repair. The register or list of flood risk assets will be accessible via the Council's website but the individual asset records will not.

Significant Effect

For the purpose of recording Flood Risk assets, an asset is deemed significant if it has the potential to:

- cause internal flooding to 8 or more residential properties/business premises within a kilometre square area.
- flood one or more items of critical infrastructure e.g., a pumping station, an emergency services station, electricity sub station, hospital etc.
- cause a transport link to be totally impassable for a significant period.
  Category 1 highways (motorways) and rail links – 1 hour or more
  Category 2 and 3a highways – 2 hours or more
  Category 3b, 4a, 4b highways – 4 hours or more

This policy will be reviewed annually and recorded within the annual flood risk management report of the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

APPENDIX 4

Wirral MBC Emergency Sandbag Policy

It should be noted that there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide sandbags for flood protection to assist private households or businesses. The primary responsibility for protecting property from the risk of flooding rests with the property owners themselves. However, both Wirral Council and the Environment Agency have over the years committed a large amount of resources enhancing flood protection and prevention infrastructure to limit this risk. In addition, the Environment Agency also notify property owners in known flood risk areas of the risks they face and encourage them to plan their own arrangements to protect themselves and their properties.

The Council supports this 'self help' approach and urges those living within areas identified as being at risk from flooding to follow the advice of the Environment Agency and register for Floodline Warnings Direct Service by calling Floodline on 0845 9881188 or visit the Environment Agency website. Property owners need to be aware that, in the event of the threat of flooding in the Borough, the Council may not have the resources necessary to support property owners at risk and that priorities will have to be made. This could inevitably lead to some properties flooding, which, with some pre planned preventative measures taken by the occupant, could have been avoided or minimised.

However, as a responsible authority, the Council recognises that the level of individual preparedness will vary enormously and it is prudent to plan for some additional support to those vulnerable sections local community and with this in mind the Council has developed the following policy:

In the event of deteriorating weather or tidal conditions leading to the issue of severe weather warnings or tidal flooding alerts that could potentially affect part of the Wirral Borough Council administrative area, officers from Technical Services will monitor the threat.

The resulting flood risk will be continually assessed and updated and these assessments could be area wide or site specific. They could include information obtained from the public and site visits by Council Officers or by other Professional Partners. In the event of the Council's flood risk assessment for a defined area identifying that the use of sandbags would be appropriate to minimise or mitigate the risk of flooding to properties the Council may start to issue sandbags but on a priority basis.

Any allocation of sandbags will depend upon a number of factors. These factors include:

- the limited number of sandbags available;
- an assessment of the viability of protecting a particular property with sandbags against the demands from other emergency flood defence measures involving the use of sandbags that might protect a greater number of properties;
- the need to protect infrastructure assets e.g. Roads, Energy Distribution Sites, Communication Network Sites, Hospitals and;
- the need to protect the Council's own Public Buildings etc. and;
- the availability of the Council's limited staff/workforce resources. (During out of hours, weekends and Bank Holidays, the available resources will be further limited and it may take up to 4 hoursor longer to deliver any sandbags)

Assistance may be given to the occupants of properties where protection from the risk of flooding using sandbags is assessed as viable but they lack the physical ability to provide them themselves. Thus the Council may subject to the availability of the necessary resources and the assessed priorities at the time provide sandbags to the elderly, the house bound and those with disabilities that prevents the 'self help' approach.

It must be emphasised that residents of the Council administrative area and particularly those that live in locations that have flooded in the past or have been identified as at flood risk should not solely rely upon the Council to respond to a threat of flooding to their property and are therefore recommended to put in place their own flood protection plan.

The provision of sandbags and assistance by the Council under this policy will not incur a charge, however, once the flood threat has passed, responsibility to dispose of any sandbags supplied rests with the property owner although again every effort will be made to support those unable to follow the 'self help' approach. In addition, the Council do not accept any responsibility for flooding to property that may occur when sandbags are either not delivered, are delivered but not in enough quantity or are delivered too late to be of any benefit, nor where they have been installed, at the owners request, by its Contractor.

This policy will be reviewed annually and recorded within the annual flood risk management report of the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**CHIEF INTERNAL AUDITOR**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***COUNCILLOR TOM HARNEY***
KEY DECISION ?	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To comply with best professional practice the Audit and Risk Management Committee is required to complete an annual report to Cabinet on the work undertaken by the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

1.2 Attached at Appendix A is the Annual Report prepared by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee in consultation with Internal Audit and agreed by the Audit and Risk Management Committee on 13 March 2012.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued amended regulations in 2006, to the 2003 Accounts and Audit Regulations – 'The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006.

2.2 One of the amended regulations impacts on the process for preparing the Statement of Internal Control (SIC) which is subsumed within the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and relates specifically to the the systems of internal audit in operation. This is:-

- Regulation 6 requires bodies to regularly review their system of internal audit, and for the findings to be considered by a committee of the body, or by the body as a whole.

2.3 Advice from CIPFA includes the assertion that the "systems of internal audit" can be considered to include the role and effectiveness of the Audit Committee which therefore should be assessed and evaluated.

2.4 To assist Councils in this evaluation exercise CIPFA has provided a self assessment checklist and recommended that this be completed annually by the Audit and Risk Management Committee. This has been completed by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and an action plan identifying areas for improvement prepared which was presented to Audit and Risk Management Committee on 13 March 2012.

2.5 The annual report for 2011/12 has been prepared by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee in consultation with Internal Audit and is attached at Appendix A.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Potential failure of the Audit and Risk Management Committee to comply with best professional practice and thereby not function in an efficient and effective manner.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 No other options considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee have been consulted throughout the process regarding the content of the annual report and their views are reflected in the final document attached.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are none arising from this report.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising from this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1. That the Annual Report be noted.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 To comply with best practice identified in the CIPFA publication 'A Toolkit for Local Authority Audit Committees'.

REPORT AUTHOR: Mark P Niblock
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APPENDICES

Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report 2011/12

REFERENCE MATERIAL

CIPFA Publication 'A Toolkit for Local Authority Audit Committees'

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Audit and Risk Management Committee	22 November 2010
Audit and Risk Management Committee	17 January 2011
Audit and Risk Management Committee	28March 2011
Audit and Risk Management Committee	13 March 2012

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APPENDIX A

DRAFT
AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

Councillor J Crabtree, Chair
Councillor D Dodd, Vice-Chair

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report produced by Wirral Council's Audit and Risk Management Committee has been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA best practice publication *'A Toolkit for Local Authority Audit Committees'.* The report demonstrates how the Audit and Risk Management Committee has fulfilled its terms of reference during a very difficult year and how it is fully committed to helping to improve the Council's governance and control environments during what should prove to be a very challenging year ahead, following the recent publication of external reports highly critical of the Councils governance arrangements.

2. SOME KEY INFORMATION

2.1. Audit and Risk Management Committee Membership

The Audit and Risk Management Committee has 8 Members:

Councillor Jim Crabtree - Chair
Councillor Darren Dodd - Vice-Chair
Councillor Alan Brighouse - Spokesperson
Councillor Simon Mountney - Spokesperson
Councillor Ron Abbey
Councillor Jeff Green
Councillor James Keeley
Councillor Irene Williams

There is strong officer support to the Audit and Risk Management Committee, through the regular attendance of the Director and Deputy Director of Finance, The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management and the Chief and Deputy Chief Internal Auditor. Other officers attend as and when appropriate.

.

2.2. Key Features of the Audit Committee and its Operation

The Committee meets CIPFA's definition of best practice as illustrated below:

Best Practice	Expectation	Met	Comment
Independence	Independent from the executive and scrutiny	√	The Committee reports to the Council
Number of Members	3 to 5 members	√	The Committee has 8 Members
Number of meetings	Aligned to business needs	√	The frequency of meetings, 5 times a year complies with best practice however discussions are currently ongoing regarding whether this enables all Council business to be considered in a timely manner and consideration is being

			given to possibly increasing the frequency.
Co-option	To be considered relative to skills	√	Training is currently provided to increase Members' skills, an evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of this is currently being conducted and appropriate actions will be taken to address any shortcomings in due course.
Terms of Reference	Accord with suggested best practice	√	The Committee has adopted the CIPFA recommended model TOR and a review is currently being undertaken to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.
Skills and training	Members have sufficient skills for the job	√	General and specific training is provided to increase Members' skills, an evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of this is currently being conducted and appropriate actions will be taken to address any shortcomings in due course

2.3. Meetings and Attendance

The Audit Committee normally meets 5 times per year in January, March, June, September and November.

Attendance by Members and approved deputies was over 90%.

3. CORE ACTIVITY 2011/12

3.1. Terms of Reference

The Audit and Risk Management Committee's Terms of Reference are comprehensive, cover all main areas and are attached at Appendix 1 to this annual report. The Committee's work and outcomes in each of its areas of responsibility are summarised in the following subsections.

Internal Audit

The Audit and Risk Management Committee:

- Approved the Chief Internal Auditor's audit plan
- Considered regular reports produced by the Chief Internal Auditor, highlighting internal audit work completed, internal audit performance against key indicators and any significant issues arising during the period
- Considered the Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report and assurance opinion on the Council's control environment

- Considered reviews of the effectiveness of the systems of internal audit
- Ensured internal and external audit plans were complementary and provided optimum use of the total audit resource
- Considered and approved revisions to Chief Internal Auditors Audit Plan
- Considered the Chief Internal Auditors Annual Report on the implementation of recommendations identified in Audit Commission reports.

We continue to provide support to the Internal Audit service to ensure management is responsive to recommendations made and agreed.

External Audit

The Audit and Risk Management Committee:

- Considered the external auditor's Audit Plan
- Considered progress against the plan presented by the external auditor
- Received and considered all external audit and inspection reports issued in the year and considered management's response to them, ensuring robust and thorough responses
- Reviewed the Council's progress on all external audit and inspection recommendations on a regular basis and asked managers to explain progress where appropriate, thereby holding them to account
- Received and considered all of the external auditors reports on the Merseyside Pension Fund
- Considered the external auditors Annual Report on Governance
- Considered a report on the future of local public audit.

We continue to provide support to external audit to ensure management is responsive to recommendations made and agreed.

Risk Management

The Audit and Risk Management Committee:

- Received details of the risk management system, how it works and arrangements in place for mitigating risks
- Considered reports on the departmental and corporate risk registers and promoted risk management across the Council
- Considered reports on Corporate Risk and Insurance Management
- Considered a report on the Corporate Risk Management Strategy and the Management of Risk and Opportunity.

We continue to provide support to promote effective Risk Management policy and procedures across the Council and ensure best practice is achieved.

Internal Control and Governance

The Audit and Risk Management Committee:

- Agreed the Council's Annual Governance Statement and action plans to improve identified weaknesses
- Considered and supported changes to the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy
- Reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption arrangements
- Supported work undertaken as part of the Audit Commission's National Fraud Initiative
- Considered and supported the production of an Anti Bribery Policy and its promotion across the Council
- Considered a report on Fraud Prevention in the Council
- Considered and supported amendments to the Council's Money Laundering Policy.

The Annual Governance Statement is a key document which summarises the Council's governance arrangements and the effectiveness of the arrangements during the year.

Accounts

The Audit and Risk Management Committee:

- Agreed the Council's accounting policies
- Agreed the Annual Statement of Accounts
- Received and considered the external auditor's report on the accounts, and ensured that the Council responded to the auditor's comments
- Agreed the annual Merseyside Pension Funds accounts
- Agreed the Merseyside Pension Fund's Annual Governance Statement and action plans to improve identified weaknesses
- Received and reviewed the Insurance Fund Annual Report
- Considered the implications of the introduction of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) within local government
- Considered financial reports on budget projections for 2012/15.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee received regular reports on the Council's Treasury Management arrangements in the context of the economic downturn.

Specific Issues

The Audit and Risk Management Committee also considered reports on the following specific issues which arose in the period:

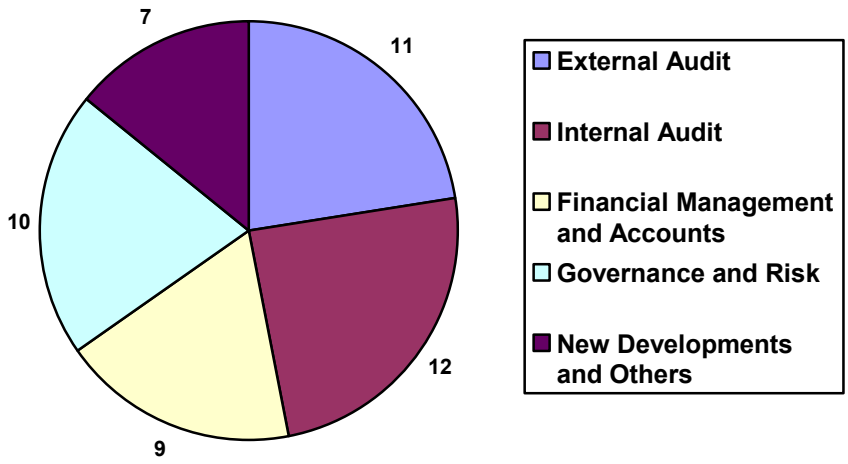
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Insurance arrangements and performance
- HESPE PIDA Follow Up
- Single Fraud Investigation Service
- Care Homes Contingency Planning.

To give a flavour of our business during the year, the following shows the

types and numbers of reports considered between April 2011 and February 2012:

3.2. Numbers & Types of Reports Considered by the Audit Committee

The Audit and Risk Management Committee covered a wide range of business



4. OTHER ACTIVITIES

During the year, the Committee demonstrated its commitment to good governance by:

i) Authorising amendments to the draft Annual Governance Statement.
ii) Arranging special meetings and devoting significant resource to addressing the issues arising from the PIDA disclosures which were made.
iii) Referring several matters to Cabinet for attention.
iv) Asking Chief Officers to attend as appropriate and present reports on issues identified which affected governance.

5. OUTCOMES

The Audit Committee aims to focus on adding value through its activity. By concentrating on outcomes the Committee can identify the benefits of its work. In particular this year the Audit Committee:

- Oversaw work on the Statement of Accounts
- Encouraged and presided over a strengthening of the control environment, specifically by overseeing various targeted reviews and the production of the Annual Governance Statement
- Encouraged and presided over the development of the Council's Counter Fraud arrangements by overseeing the CIPFA Managing Fraud initiative

as acknowledged by the Audit Commission's recognition of good practice in a national publication.

In addition, individual Members and the Audit Committee collectively continued to develop and learn about our roles, and deliver these roles effectively.

6. PLANS FOR 2012/13

During 2011/12 the Audit and Risk Management Committee has consolidated the progress that has been made in previous years, and going forward will look to develop further and become a champion of good governance for the Council helping to address many of the reported issues in what promises to be a very challenging and difficult environment. Our priorities for 2012/13 are to continue to meet our duties as specified in the Constitution by developing and building on our current status. For 2012/13 we will:
:

- Continue to develop the Wirral Council Audit and Risk Management Committee to review governance issues following recent failings in this important area
- Continue to drive up standards and meet the demanding requirements of the external inspection and assessment regime
- Continue to review all governance arrangements to ensure the Council adopts the very latest best practice
- Continue to support the work of Internal and External Audit and ensure appropriate responses are given to their recommendations,
- Ensure we maintain and further improve our standards in relation to the production of accounts
- Review the process for the appointment of auditors to replace the Audit Commission
- Continue to closely monitor the implementation of the International Financial Reporting Standards
- Continue to help the Council to manage the risk of fraud and corruption
- Continue to develop the Wirral Council Audit and Risk Management Committee to review risk and partnerships' issues and safeguard public sector interests
- Equip existing and any new Members to fulfil our responsibilities by providing more detailed and effective training on all key areas of responsibility including financial arrangements and risk management, governance and audit planning.

Councillor Jim Crabtree (Chair)
Wirral Council Audit and Risk Management Committee
February 2012

7. APPENDIX 1

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.

2. The Committee has the following duties, powers and authorities:

2.1. approval of the Council's statement of accounts;

2.2. the responsibilities of the Council under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make proper provision for its financial affairs;

2.3. to consider and make recommendations to Council or Cabinet as appropriate on;

2.3.1. the annual Audit Report and the Management Letter of the external auditor;

2.3.2. any other statutory report of the external auditor;

2.3.3. any internal audit report that may be referred to the committee by the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance or the Head of Legal and Member Services (as Monitoring Officer);

2.3.4. summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested;

2.3.5. the effectiveness and adequacy of the response by the Council, the Cabinet, any committee or sub-committee of the Council or of any officer to any internal or external audit report or management letter;

2.3.6. the systems of control and the arrangements for the prevention of fraud and corruption within the Council;

2.3.7. any other matter relevant to the audit of the Council's accounts and financial records or its systems for the control and safeguarding of all the Council's assets;

2.3.8. a report from Internal Audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale; and

2.3.9. the Head of Internal Audit's annual report and opinion, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the

level of assurance it can give over the Council's corporate governance arrangements;

2.4. to approve (but not direct) the strategy, plan and performance of the Council's internal audit service;

2.5. to oversee the production of the Authority's Statement on Internal Control and recommend its adoption;

2.6. to maintain an overview of the Council's Constitution in respect of contract procedure rules, financial regulations and codes of conduct and to make recommendations to Council or Cabinet, as appropriate;

2.7. to monitor the Council's policies on "Raising Concerns at Work", to the anti-fraud and corruption strategy and the complaints procedure;

2.8. to liaise with the Audit Commission over the appointment of the Council's external auditors.

3. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee shall act as the Council's Risk Management Champion.

4. Executive Members will not normally be members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**CHURCH ROAD (TRANMERE) HMRI ACQUISITION OF 25A SEYMOUR STREET AND 41 CHURCH ROAD**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**BIRKENHEAD AND TRANMERE**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR & ASSET MANAGEMENT**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**TOM HARNEY**
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To seek approval to the acquisition of two commercial properties included within the Church Road (Tranmere) Housing Market Renewal Initiative Area.

1.2 The appendix to the report contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of third parties, and is therefore not for publication.

1.3 Following the acquisition and subsequent demolition of these properties, the site will be redeveloped to help achieve the corporate goal to provide new and affordable homes which has a target of 200 new homes across the Borough in 2011/2014.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 January 2012 noted that the Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) Transitional bid had been accepted and that Wirral would receive £2.7 M additional capital funding which, when combined with match funding, would enable the completion of most of the existing clearance commitments throughout the former HMRI area.

2.2 The acquisition of two commercial interests included in the Church Road (Tranmere) Masterplan have now been provisionally agreed, details of which are outlined below.

25A SEYMOUR STREET

2.3 A company known as Foundations and Structural Repairs Limited (FSR) is a Structural Engineering and building repair company operating from premises at 25A Seymour Street, Tranmere.

2.4 These comprise a workshop extending to 750 sq ft linked to a two storey office of 1100 sq ft along with a separate single storey office of 530 sq ft, all set in a secure enclosed yard. All are maintained to a high standard.

2.5 FSR is a private limited company run by two Directors who are the only Shareholders. In the particular circumstances Section 46 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 permits a claim to be made on the basis of the total extinguishment of the business. In addition they are entitled to the freehold value of the property plus the cost of closing down the business such as redundancy payments and professional fees.

41 CHURCH ROAD

2.6 The premises at 41 Church Road are operated as a Chemists/Pharmacy and comprise a large semi-detached property originally built as a house but extended to the front to provide additional retail space. The retail accommodation takes up most of the ground floor including some of the original residential accommodation. The remaining residential accommodation is now accessed by a separate side access and comprises the rear of the ground floor, first floor and attic providing Hall, 2 Living Rooms and Kitchen to ground floor, 4/5 bedrooms to first floor, plus attic room.

2.7 It is the intention of the owner to provide vacant possession of the whole of 41 Church Road on completion of the acquisition in favour of the Council and to relocate to new retail premises soon to be constructed at the junction of Church Road and Seymour Street. The basis of compensation will therefore be on the basis of the freehold value of the property plus trade disturbance, which is intended to facilitate the relocation. The latter payment can only be assessed once the relocation has been completed and will include such items as removals, any specialist adaptation works, temporary double overheads, new signage and stationery, redirection of mail, telephone reconnection and any temporary loss of profits.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Failure to acquire the properties will prevent the redevelopment of the site in line with the Church Road Masterplan.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Extensive consultation has previously been undertaken with local residents and property owners in connection with the development of the original Masterplan for Church Road.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 None

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The acquisition costs fall within the Regeneration Capital Programme – Housing Market Renewal Residual Clearance Programme.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The sites are within a Primarily Residential Area in the Council's Unitary Development Plan and are within a key redevelopment area in the Council's Church Road Masterplan. Planning permission W/OUT/11/00038 for 100 dwellings, 55 self-contained apartments and 9 A1 retail units was granted 1st April 2011 to the Council's development partner Lovell Partnerships.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That the acquisitions are completed on the terms now reported.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 To enable the acquisitions to be completed.

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APPENDICES

Exempt Appendix

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	8 September 2005
Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	16 January 2012
Cabinet	2 February 2012

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	***ROCK FERRY LIBRARY & ONE STOP SHOP SCHEME & ESTIMATE***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ROCK FERRY***
REPORT OF:	***THE DIRECTOR OF LAW HR & ASSET MANAGEMENT***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	***COUNCILLOR TOM HARNEY***
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report seeks approval to obtain tenders for the works to allow a merged service to operate from the Rock Ferry Centre. Whilst the project is not a statutory duty, it will enable more efficient delivery of the services provided at the Centre.

1.2 The project is fully in accord with the Council's Asset Management Plan in that it helps maximise the future use of this building, and will support the Corporate Priorities.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Cabinet minute (248) 9 December 2010 states 'Cabinet instructs the Director of Finance to bring forward and implement proposals to integrate the one stop shop service within libraries including the co-location of facilities where practicable. Libraries and One Stop Shops are to be managed as one seamless information service with staff interchangeable between both functions.

2.2 The proposed scheme will re-organise internal spaces on the ground floor to allow the Library and One Stop Shop to operate as a linked space with a single reception point with a number of adviser desks and private interview rooms. There will be a suite of rooms available for community use including the large relocated Community Room for activities, a bookable meeting room and a room that can be used for ward councillors' surgeries.

2.3 There will also be an IT suite for taught courses and a series of public access computer terminals, lounge and study areas with wi-fi, and these areas together with the existing library will open onto the rear garden space. As part of the works the areas will be refurbished and upgraded to provide more efficient lighting, heating and ventilation, and a new draught lobby provided to the front entrance.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The relevant risks are those normally associated with building contracts, which are adequately dealt with under the contract. Temporary closure of the service due to an

unforeseen incident is the greatest risk to the service provision, and to the offices on the upper floors.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The alternative is to do nothing. This would leave both the Library and the One Stop Shop providing a disjointed service to the public. It does not adhere to a Cabinet instruction or maximise staffing and building resources.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation has been carried out by the Centre Management with ground and upper floor users, and is ongoing with all building users as the design develops. The Architects have provided interim drawings for this purpose. Consultation with the ward councillors, who use the centre for their surgeries, will be taking place now that the design drawings are complete. Statutory consultations have begun and will continue until the detailed design is completed.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There will be no long-term impact on any community groups using the building as the spaces will be enhanced by the final scheme, although there may be some planned interruption of spaces during the building works. All building users will be consulted and kept informed of progress.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The budget for the works has been allocated from the Capital Programme, and any further purchases such as new furniture if required will come from existing budgets.

7.2 Some IT works will be required to relocate and install additional data points for staff and public access use. WITS are aware of the project and will be copied into the finished drawings; the design team will liaise with WITS to ensure the works are carried out to the appropriate standard.

7.3 The merger of the services has been agreed and the management of the services are working together with staff and unions on staffing and training issues in order to successfully merge the staff and services.

7.4 The Estimate for this work is set out below. All costs are at second quarter 2012:

Building costs	£520,000
Departmental Charges including:	
Professional Fees:	
Design Consultancy fees @ 16%	£83,200
CDM Coordinator & Planning and building regulation fees	£6,800

ICT Costs (infrastructure and hardware) & Furniture fittings and Equipment.	£20,000
TOTAL	**£630,000**

The scheme will be funded from the following:-

Capital programme 2012/2013

TOTAL	**£630,000**

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The building contract will be signed on behalf of the authority once tenders are accepted.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

Yes and the impact review is attached – http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/law-hr-asset-management

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Consultation with the Energy Section has been carried out. A new boiler has been installed which should heat the building more efficiently and the electrical engineer is investigating the use of low energy lighting in areas of the building while additional windows to the rear will reduce daytime artificial lighting use.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Planning permission and Building Regulations approval will be required for this project and will be sought as soon as this report has been approved.

11.2 Pre-application consultations have been carried out with both Planners and Building Control and their comments incorporated into the design.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be authorised to obtain tenders for the works as described in the report.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 The Business Case detailing the proposals for this site with a cost of £630,000.00 was presented to Cabinet on 9th December 2010 as part of the Capital Programme.

13.2 The recommendation will enable this Capital Programme scheme to be progressed.

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APPENDICES

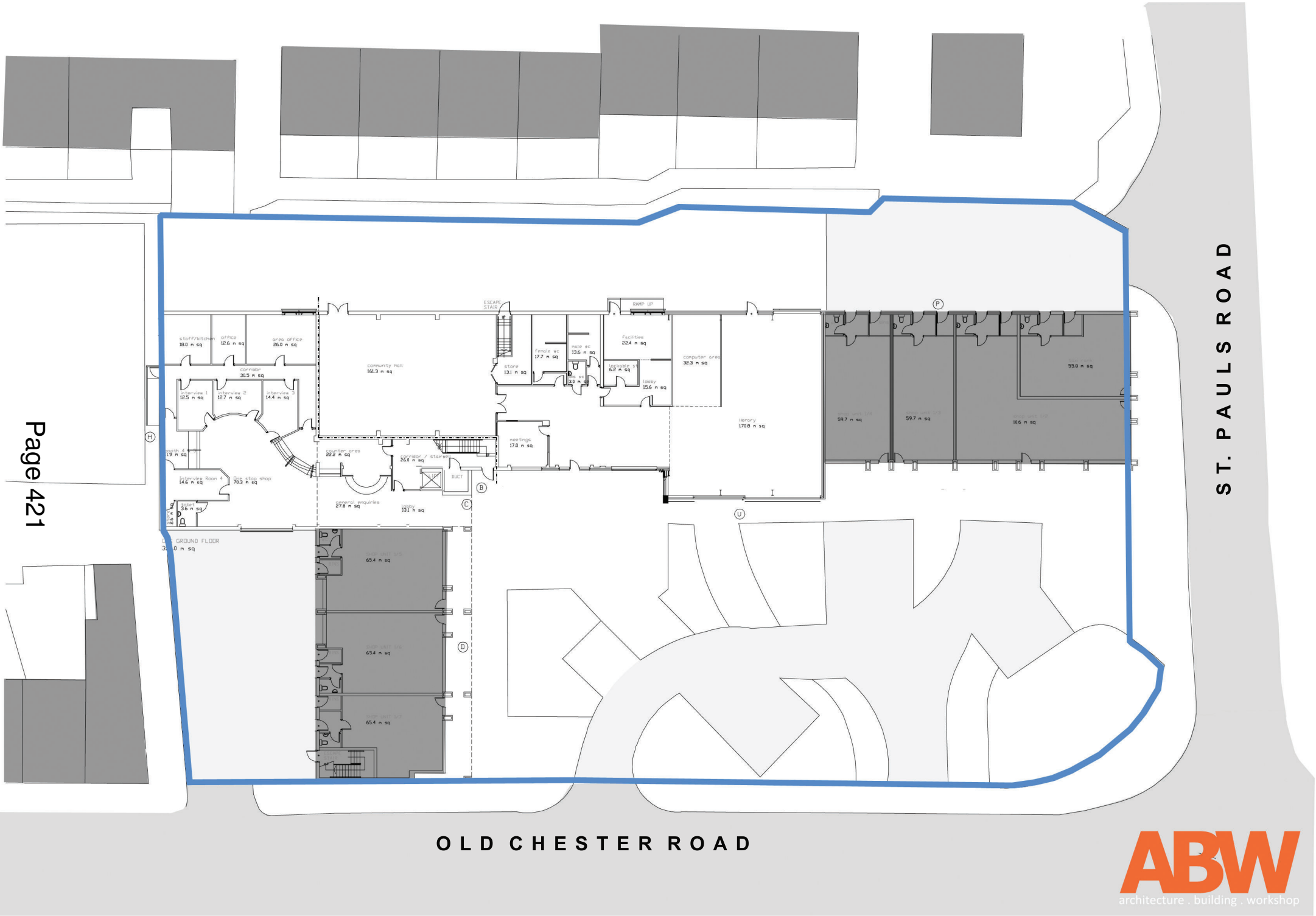
3669-502
3669-504
3669 – Location Plan

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Job file BO2526 and Quantity Surveyors working papers. Asset Management.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Business Case Approval	9 December 2010



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ABW
architecture . building . workshop

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Rm 08: Staff Room
Rm 07: Office
Rm 06: Meeting Room 4
Rm 09: Meeting Rm Corridor
Rm 03: Meeting Room 1
Rm 04: Meeting Room 2
Rm 05: Meeting Room 3
Rm 02: Community Hall
Rm 10: Learning Zone
Rm 11: Advice Zone
Rm 01: Community Hall Lobby
Rm 12: Foyer
Rm 13: Draught Lobby
Rm 14: Reception
Rm 15: Reception Office
Rm 16: PC Space
Rm 17: Reading Zone
ESCAPE STAIR
RAMP UP
NO WORKS
store
male wc
female wc
disabled wc
LIFT
DUCT
SHOP UNIT 1/5
SHOP UNIT 1/6
SHOP UNIT 1/7
BINS
shop unit 1/4
shop unit 1/3
shop unit 1/2
taxi rank
Shops 2
Page 423
OLD CHESTER ROAD
ST. PAULS ROAD
ABW
architecture . building . workshop

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3669 Rock Ferry One Stop Shop
Location Plan

ABW ARCHITECTS

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12 APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	**CROSS LANE WALLASEY – WEST WALLASEY VAN HIRE**
WARD AFFECTED:	**WALLASEY**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	**TOM HARNEY**
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To report to Members an approach from West Wallasey Van Hire which seeks the relaxation of a requirement to cease van storage on two sites currently in their ownership located at Mill Lane and Wallasey Village, and to seek Members views.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Council entered into a development agreement with West Wallasey Van Hire in December 2008 whereby the Council made a commitment to sell 3 acres of land at Cross Lane, Wallasey, to the company once it had completed works to construct a van storage compound on the site.

2.2 The original development period was to run for 12 months but this has subsequently been extended twice and is presently due to expire on 31 August 2012.

2.3 A condition of the agreement stipulates that, on completion of the works and subsequent sale of the land to West Wallasey Van Hire, the company would then cease to use two sites in its ownership in Mill Lane and Wallasey Village presently used also for van storage.

2.4 West Wallasey Van Hire has now approached the Council with a request that this restriction on the sites in Mill Lane and Wallasey Village be removed. It says that this is because the business has grown strongly over the last three years and the continued operation of those sites is now required.

2.5 West Wallasey requires around 94 parking spaces per 1,000 vehicles operating on the fleet.

2.6 When the development agreement and associated covenants were entered into the company operated a fleet of 3,000 vehicles and had parking requirements of 272 spaces. The company anticipated that the new compound at Cross Lane could accommodate approximately 400 spaces, allowing the sites at Wallasey Village and Mill Lane to be vacated whilst still allowing for some future growth.

2.7 The company now operates a fleet of circa 7,000 vehicles and requires around 658 parking spaces. It says that the new site would fail to accommodate the parking spaces it needs without the continued use of the Wallasey Village and Mill Lane sites

2.8 Although the new site would generate 400 spaces the loss of the 250 spaces located on the existing Wallasey Village and Mill Lane sites means that only 150 additional parking spaces would be created.

2.9 The company is a national supplier of vehicles with over 50% of its business South of Birmingham. Geographically Wirral is no longer an ideal location for the operation of the business but it was established here in 1974, employs 218 personnel and would like to remain here.

2.10 The company estimates that the cost of the new development will be in the region of £1m, which is significantly higher than the cost of relocation. It has said that to justify the cost of this significant investment it must be satisfied that the new development will meet the current needs of the business and facilitate future growth. It does not consider that it is commercially or operationally viable to proceed with the project without the continued use of the Wallasey Village and Mill Lane sites. If it cannot proceed with the project on this basis then it has said that relocating the business away from Wirral will be seriously considered.

2.11 To support its request the company has drawn attention to benefits arising for Wirral from its continued operation in the borough, including:

- Potential for future business growth and jobs
- Protection of existing employment
- Reduced vehicle movements – it says that by proceeding with the new development West Wallasey will be able to consolidate its main business operations and substantially reduce its vehicle movements The focus of the Wallasey Village and Mill Lane sites would become for longer term storage
- Support to satellite businesses
- Training schemes and apprenticeships

2.12 In considering this request members will wish to balance the case made by the company against any concerns that may exist over the continued operation of the business at the Mill Lane and Wallasey Village sites.

2.13 Further work will be required to report on the highways and traffic implications arising from the proposal. It should also be noted that other discussions are taking place with the company to explore access improvements to the Cross Lane site.

2.14 Finally, what is being sought is an amendment to the agreed terms for disposal of the land at Cross Lane. Those terms – which were incorporated into the development agreement – were based on a valuation of the Cross Lane site undertaken in 2005. If the terms of the development agreement are to be amended (including as a result of any further request for an extension of the development period) a further valuation should be undertaken.

2.15 At this stage, views from Cabinet are requested.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The company could relocate from the Wirral should this request not be granted.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None at this stage.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 None

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 None

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Any variation to existing agreements will require the completion of appropriate legal documentation.

8.2 In the event of any amendment to the existing development agreement an up to date valuation should be obtained so that the Council can consider its duty under s.123 Local Government Act 1973 to dispose of land for the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The proposed development of the compound has planning consent.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That Cabinet advises how it wishes to respond to the request received from West Wallasey Van Hire.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 To enable a response to be given to a request received by the Council.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

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COUNCIL EXCELLENCE O&S COMMITTEE
26 March 2012

93 MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) PROGRAMME

Further to minute 52 (17 November 2011), the Chair referred to the report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management in relation to the return on investment of the MBA Programme and referred also to minute 352 (Cabinet – 15 March 2012), which had agreed the award of the contract for the continued delivery of the MBA programme to the University of Chester. The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance provided an explanation to Members for the non-attendance of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development. The report provided details of the MBA return on investment and highlighted the benefits of the MBA qualification, which was one element of the Council's suite of leadership development options. The report considered how best to improve the return on investment and commented that leadership development was essential to organisational success and was critical when the organisation faced tough challenges and hard times.

Members expressed their dismay that the Cabinet had approved the award of the contract prior to consideration of the matter by this Committee and questioned whether the Cabinet's decision had been fully informed, particularly in relation to negative views expressed by managers who had completed the course that were set out in an evaluation survey. Members suggested that the Council should assess how managers were utilised, having completed the qualification and questioned whether the MBA Programme represented value for money. Further information was also requested in relation to the leadership development options offered by other local authorities.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance commented that the Cabinet's decision was to agree that if the MBA course was to continue then, having regard to the outcome of a procurement exercise undertaken between June and November 2011, it should be with the University of Chester.

Resolved –

(1) That the Cabinet be requested to note the significant concerns expressed by the Council Excellence O&S Committee in relation to the MBA Programme, in particular –

(i). that it had not had regard to any comparative information on leadership development programmes from other local authorities;
(ii). that the skills and knowledge gained by managers who have completed the training programme have not been fully utilised;
(iii). that value for money has not been demonstrated;
(iv). that had the Cabinet seen the report now presented, it may have made a more informed decision.

(2) That a further more detailed report be presented to the next appropriate meeting, to address the concerns highlighted in (1) above, and to include also, details of the training budget and the percentage of that budget utilised by the provision of the MBA Programme.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	**MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRTAION MBA QUALIFICATION**
WARD/S AFFECTED:	**ALL**
REPORT OF:	**DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSESTS**
KEY DECISION?	**NO**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides information on the return on investment of the MBA programme.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 On the 17th November 2011, the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked that a further more detailed report be presented at the earliest opportunity , upon the issues of senior office training within the organisation, to include information as to how applications to attend the MBA course are assessed in relation to the costs and benefits to the Council.

2.2 A report recommending the award of the contract to the University of Chester for the continued delivery of the MBA Programme was agreed at Cabinet on the 15th March 2012.

3.0 OVERVIEW

3.1 Leadership development is essential to organisational success and is critical when organisations face tough challenges and hard times. Supporting both current and aspiring leaders at Wirral Council is an important strand of the People Strategy 2011 - 2012.

3.2 Our current corporate offer of leadership development comprises three main elements-:

- The Skills for Wirral Managers Programme (core skills for managers around policy, procedure, personal development and managing others delivered in-house)
- The Institute of Leadership and Management Award and Certificate (management qualifications accredited by an external organisation at Level 3 and Level 5 delivered in-house)

- The Masters in Business Administration (an academic qualification delivered by Chester University as previously reported on the 15th September and the 17th November)

4.0 MBA RETURN ON INVESTMENT DETAILS

4.1 The three year MBA programme requires an investment of £7,800 per person. Based on the uptake of the programme since 2006 of 57 managers, our entire investment to date has been £491,400. In order to calculate the return on this investment for the organisation (the cost v benefits) an examination of factors such as financial benefits, improved performance, labour savings (less effort to achieve current outputs) have been considered. Ultimately the Return on Investment is the extent to which the benefits (outputs) exceed the costs (inputs).

4.2 Appendix One details the results of an evaluation survey carried out in November 2011 indicating the areas in which managers felt both they and the organisation had benefited from the programme and to what extent. These comments include reference to improved performance and labour savings as well as indicating where the organisation could maximise it's return on the investment made. Highlights worthy of note are as follows-:

- 84% reported that they are confident in the new skills and knowledge they have gained. *"I have gone from being a team of 1 to managing and leading a large group of staff. My section has been restructured several times and there have been many changes that staff have needed leading through. I have gained more confidence to lead staff and answer questions on why we are going the way we are as a council".*
- 100% reported a benefit in their personal development *"Since embarking on the MBA I have changed jobs into a more corporate role and been seconded onto project teams for a number of corporate projects".*
- *"The Council has received income, both revenue and capital as a result of my participation on the MBA Programme. This has been by providing me with the skills to identify strategic opportunities and link these to the Corporate Objectives and by improving my abilities to research and write bids for funding. A number of "Cornerstone Projects" have benefited from the funds secured and has allowed for capital receipts to be realized as has the current Strategic Change Programme in re-modelling services and creating efficiencies".*

4.3 In year two of the MBA managers carry out work-based projects with the aim of identifying improvements and efficiencies within the workplace. Projects carried out to

date by the delegates have identified the potential for efficiencies and savings as well as general improvements in the way services are delivered. The examples below detail where potential savings have been identified -:

- Non- fixed Assets – a review of the management and use of non-fixed assets identified potential savings of £440,550.
- Budget Management Training – a review of the time spent by finance officers as a result of budget holders not having the correct skills and knowledge resulted in potential savings of over £100, 000 on the proposed introduction of a mandatory e-learning package.
- A Social Media Strategy – the proposed use of social media as an engagement tool resulted in identified potential savings of £ 72,201

The managers delivering the projects emphasised the fact that in order to realise these potential savings further work would be required along with the allocation of council resources to take the work forward.

5.0 BENEFITS OF THE MBA PROGRAMME

5.1 The aim of investing in an MBA programme is ultimately to develop managers to ensure that they have a sound knowledge base of business and management principles and theoretical approaches. The evaluation we have carried out supports this principle in that 82% of managers believe that the learning has enabled them to take on new and more challenging leadership roles.

Managers have also reported significant improvement in their own personal development with 100% of delegates reporting that they had developed their personal skills as a manager including those to allow them to work more collaboratively outside the organisation as well as on corporate projects, service planning and change projects.

5.2 An anticipated benefit of the MBA programme is that new leaders are developed in order to lead the organisation into the future and the challenges this may bring. An indication that this benefit is being realised is based upon the numbers of managers being promoted as a result of their studies. The feedback received from managers

indicates the following in terms of changes to job roles over the duration of their studies as a result of the MBA programme-:

Promotion	8%
New role	17%
New responsibilities	42%
No change in job role	33%

5.3 We are also aware of Managers who having commenced the MBA programme as an employee of Wirral Council, have decided to moved on from the organisation in order to secure new posts, representing a personal promotion.

Drop out rates from the programme have also been considered as Managers commence the programme and do not complete due to work or personal pressures, or other changes in their circumstances.

Moved to another organisation	7 out of 60 = 11%
Left the programme	8 out of 60 = 13%

5.3 Benefits to the Council include both those that are quantitative and qualitative (where it is more difficult to attribute a quantifiable return on investment figure). Managers listed the following as benefits to the organisation-:

- Better working across departments. Networking and opportunities to gain assistance improving problem solving and saving time.
- Work-based assignments that really benefit the workplace as they are tailored to real- time workplace situations.
- Time to reflect on problems and scenarios and put forward suggestions to peers for their consideration and feedback saving time and improving effectiveness.
- Educational attainment and opportunities for managers to discuss common issues and problems and apply learning to issues such as Management, Finance, HR practices.

6.0 IMPROVING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

6.1 As well as containing some very positive information about the MBA programme, the evaluation data shown in Appendix One also provided us with evidence that much more can be done to harness the benefits of the MBA. Linking the Projects more

closely with service based issues and harnessing the power of the Dissertation process by adopting a "Commissioned Dissertation" model whereby Chief Officers specifically commission final year dissertations to meet a service need, are just two suggested improvements. One manager responded that, "*The project work undertaken by the cohorts should be more effectively utilised to corporate issues. Students must already use their time on a project and carry it out in a rigorous manner. These opportunities have not been exploited to the best effect*".

6.2 A further improvement to the programme has already been put into place which again relates to the projects and dissertations delivered in Years 2 and 3 of the programme. Managers are to be asked to provide projects and dissertations that not only identify improvements but also identify potential cash savings. Good practice in other Authorities sees the Year 2 projects being used to identify potential savings and then the Year 3 dissertations actually carrying out feasibility studies and impact assessments on the same. Having invested this level of resource into the identification and testing of improvement and efficiency ideas, the Council would then benefit form identifying tangible resources to deliver the projects going forward, thereby realising the savings.

6.3 The creation of "space" within the Council to allow graduates of the programme to release their capacity into the organisation is one of the challenges facing the Council. Studies done elsewhere have indicated that the creation of dedicated project teams comprising graduates from their MBA programmes have enabled the new skills and knowledge to be utilised to the best effect. The pressures of service delivery pressures "back at the ranch" have so far not enabled Wirral to follow this model and this is reflected in some of the feedback received from mangers in terms of their concerns that their new skills and knowledge have not been optimised by the organisation. This issue is linked to the wider organisation development strategy around succession planning and the progression of leaders and managers within the organisation when opportunities for internal promotion are sometimes limited. Managers themselves have suggested the use of cross departmental secondments, task and finish groups and corporate project teams all of which would enable the organisation to benefit more widely from the managers' skills, knowledge and learning.

6.4 Improving the selection process for access the MBA will also improve the return on the investment made by the organisation. Entrants will be required to not only justify their personal reasons for applying and their commitment to the programme but will also be required to demonstrate support from their Chief Officer and areas of the workplace in which they will expect to see improvements or savings realised. Progression from year to year of the programme will also not be automatic as performance improvement will be expected throughout and will need to be measured and demonstrated in order for the manager to progress to the next year.

At the end of Year One managers will have accrued credits equivalent to a Post – Graduate Certificate. At the end of Year Two managers will have accrued credits equivalent to a Post Graduate Diploma. At the end of the final year subject to successful progression through the programme managers will receive the MBA.

RELEVANT RISKS

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The MBA is part of a suite of leadership development options

8.0 CONSULTATION

None

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

There are no implications arising from this report

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

The resource implications of this report will not be confirmed until the actual numbers of the next cohort going forward are agreed but the cost will be no more that £8,100 per head.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – http://www.wirral.gov.uk/downloads/4014 .

13.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

There are no carbon implications arising from this report

14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no planning and community safety implications arising from this report

15.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 That the return on investment of the MBA programme be noted

16.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

REPORT AUTHOR: ***Chris Hyams***
Head of HR and Organsational Development
Telephone: 0151 691 8590
email: chrishyams@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix One – MBA Evaluation Survey Results

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny	17 November 2012
Cabinet	15 March 2012

WIRRAL

EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACHIEVING

Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

Section 1: Your details

Council officer: Melissa Holt

Email address: melissaholt@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Service: Chris Hyams

Chief Officer: Bill Norman

Department: HR/Law/Assets

Date: 15th March 2012

Section 2: What Council function / proposal is being assessed?

The MBA Programme

Section 2b: Is this EIA being submitted to Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes **If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date**

Council Excellence Committee 26th March 2012

And please add hyperlink to your published EIA on the Council's website

http://www.wirral.gov.uk/downloads/4014

Section 3: **Will the Council function / proposal affect equality in ……?** (please tick relevant boxes)

☐ **Services**

✓ **The workforce**

☐ **Communities**

☐ **Other** (please state)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

☐ **None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: **Within the Equality Duty 2010, there are 3 legal requirements. Will the Council function / proposal support the way the Council** ……(please tick relevant boxes)

☐ Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

✓ Advances equality of opportunity

☐ Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

☐ **None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5: **Will the function / proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?**

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications

Section 5a: **Where and how will the above actions be monitored?**

See attached EIA

Section 5b: **If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

See attached EIA

Section 6: **What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

See attached EIA

Section 7: **Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council function / policy?**

Yes / No – (please delete as appropriate)

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place?

Before you complete your consultation, please email your 'incomplete' EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

Appendix 1

Wirral MBA Programme Impact Evaluation
November 2011

1. Why did you apply for the MBA?

- Improve the Council's productivity and effectiveness. Improve knowledge and skills. Personal development.

- To assist in my personal development, as a challenge and to re-familiarise myself with academic rigour.

- I was asked by my line manager if I would like to apply. I followed this up as I was interested in doing further training to broaden my understanding of Public Sector Leadership.

- I am committed to continuing professional development and saw this as a good opportunity to take part in formal learning. I also thought it would be a good qualification for career progression. I wanted the opportunity to study some wider areas of management such as Finance and Marketing which were not core functions of my role at that time.

- Because I wanted to develop the skills necessary to progress my career

- I enjoy learning and it had been a few years since my last professional training. I had always hoped to study at post graduate level and had registered my interest in this on my Key Issues document.

- To support my career development. At the time of applying, the role I was in did not offer many career development or progression opportunities and the MBA clearly provided this for me.

- Our cohort didn't- it became an MBA part way through. I had been led to believe the training we put ourselves forward for was specifically for senior managers and this felt appropriate.

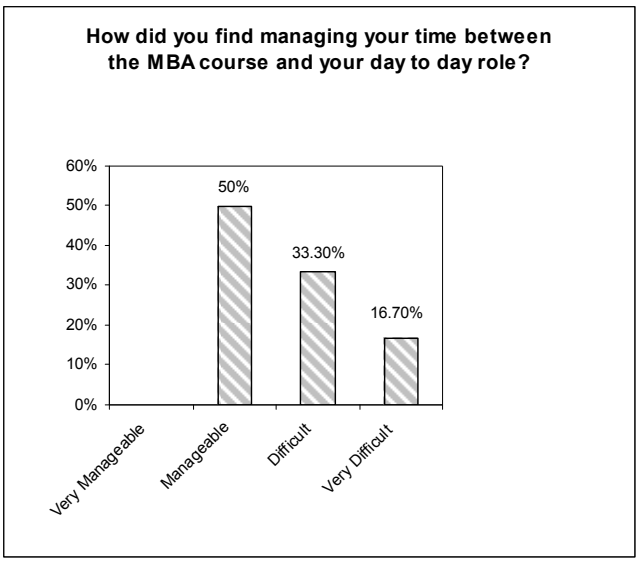
- Several reasons: 1. Aware of other managers both internally and externally having MBAs so element of competitiveness and ensuring skills/qualifications are comparable 2. Keen to learn wider management skills 3. Awareness from others of benefits from strengthening cross department links 4. Keen to experience a modern university learning experience. Gives a better understanding of what younger colleagues have experienced as my first degree was undertaken over 25 years ago.

- I believed it would be a useful qualification that would assist me in my current role and provide opportunities to progress into more strategic roles.

- To further my career, for my own personal development. To be able to take future developments forward for the Councils.

- I wanted to stretch myself mentally and develop myself on a personal level/management style etc.

2. How did you find managing your time between the MBA course and your day to day role?



- Apart from the designated days at University I did not spend any work time doing my MBA coursework, it was all done in my own time.

- The time away from the office had to be managed and did add pressure. The work required outside of the office was considerable and so overall the course requires a lot of personal commitment.

- Extra time was necessary as you would expect to do at this level. I did extra work at week-ends and some nights.

- It was difficult and sometimes stressful to find the time to study and complete assignments alongside working full time and my home responsibilities. That said, I was committed to the MBA programme and as it was paid for by the Council and I had some time off to attend university, I felt my contribution was to complete tasks and study in my own time - so I had to find the time. I think going to Chester University for academic input was helpful and it enabled you to focus on your learning, but this sometimes caused problems as there was work piling up whilst you were away form the office. On occasion I had to leave uni early / go in late in order to attend to something at work - although my time attending Chester was prioritised by me and my manager, it was sometime unavoidable. In summary there were some difficulties but it was manageable.

- It was made clear at the outset that the MBA was not something to be undertaken during work time - this meant there was a clear division between work in the day and MBA in the evening / weekends / non-work days - so I'm not sure I understand the question?

- The vast majority of my MBA work was completed outside of work hours which was difficult but achievable with dedication. Due to the nature of the work (especially the dissertation) it was necessary to conduct some tasks in work time. It was sometimes

difficult to meet with my study group when meetings were arranged in work time but my line manager was quite accommodating.

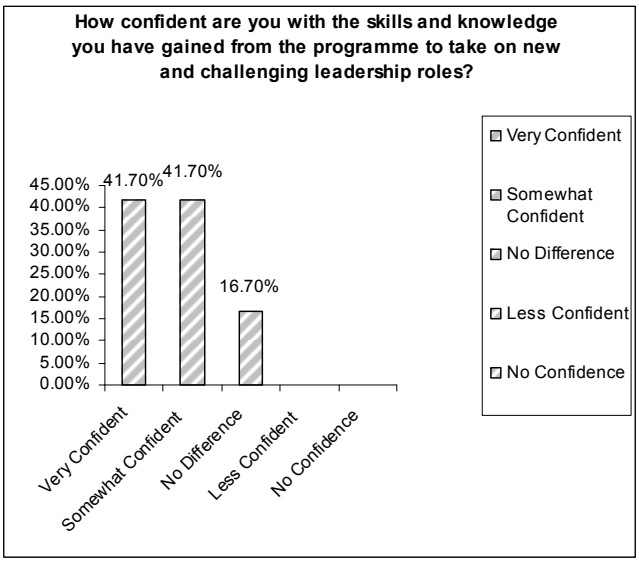
- This is not a straightforward tick box response. In the first year, organising time between work and study was manageable. However, it was noticeable the level of commitment and time required to complete the MBA increased year on year. Therefore by the time of the dissertation it became more difficult.

- I think the catching up we had to do caused some difficulties as a result of the course changing to an MBA.

- Main problem was fitting in the hours with home life MBA is a major time commitment although I was aware of this when I signed up for the course.

- I linked and used my MBA studies to enhance the work I was doing.

3. How confident are you with the skills and knowledge you have gained from the programme to take on new and challenging leadership roles? Please give examples.



- Since my MBA I have taken on a new leadership role. I am confident in tackling this role. Line manager feedback is positive.

- The knowledge that you gain provides frameworks against which you can analyse your situation and assists you to doing the right things on a day to day basis. You also have a sounder basis for planning your continued development.

- A better understanding of change management and applying change management to service planning.

- I have undertaken a new role and changed departments since undertaking the MBA. I have also been asked to support the governance improvement plan. I think this has given me the opportunity to reflect on my learning and put some of it into practice. I

think the Council hasn't really harnessed the MBA programme as a resource. There were no clear expectations of the MBA cohort and some people have found roles and career development outside of the Council.

- I started out confident, but was demoted from my management role a couple of weeks after graduation, so opportunities to use the skills and employ the learning have been limited, which has affected it.

- I feel the MBA has vastly developed my management skills although I find it difficult to practice those skills in my current role. I was one of the more junior members of staff on the course and the information I learned from discussion with other managers was just as valuable as the academic course content. My team has diminished over the last year and any high profile or strategic issues are generally addressed by my line manager or the Corporate Procurement Manager, and although I feel more than capable, I am restricted by my job description and reporting hierarchy.

- The MBA is a good overall programme in support of management development. However, leadership itself is just one module on the MBA rather than the overall focus.

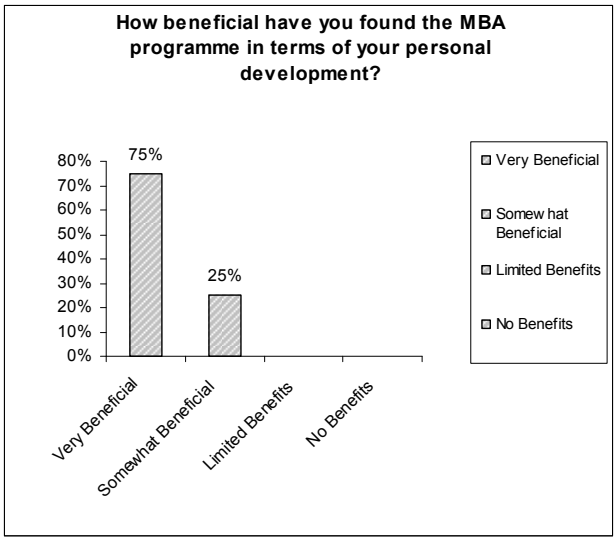
- It is difficult to say specifically how the course affected taking on new challenges as we are always developing anyway and to some extent the challenges themselves present a development opportunity. The time to come out of the day to day tasks and reflect on our approaches and consider new approaches was very helpful. I think the process of learning through the MBA made us think about how to approach things differently.

- I feel more confident in taking on senior leadership roles both due the course content but also in being able to research more effectively into new areas that I may need to develop in order to develop and implement strategy.

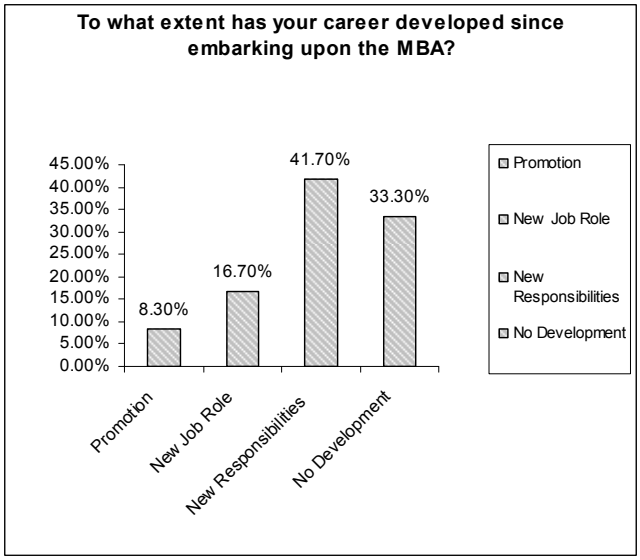
- This is due to me not having the opportunity to use my additional experiences, skills and qualification.

- I have gone from being a team of 1 to managing and leading a large group of staff. My section has been restructured several times and there have been many changes that staff have needed leading through. I have gained more confidence to lead staff and answer questions on why we are going the way we are as a council.

4. How beneficial have you found the MBA programme in terms of your personal development?



5. To what extent has your career developed since embarking upon the MBA? Please give examples.



- I have taken a new leadership role.
- I have undertaken a new role and changed departments since undertaking the MBA. I have also been asked to support the governance improvement plan. I think this has given me the opportunity to reflect on my learning and put some of it into practice.
- Totally the opposite - given my demotion after graduation.

- I have been unable to act beyond my current job description. I was hoping to be nominated for a secondment to the Merseyside Procurement Partnership where I felt that the lessons learned from my dissertation on Collaborative Procurement between Merseyside Authorities would provide a valuable insight and I felt I could have really made an impact in that role. Unfortunately I was not nominated due to resource issues in my team.

- Since embarking on the MBA I have changed jobs into a more corporate role and been seconded onto project teams for a number of corporate projects.

- Hard to say if new responsibilities and roles are directly through the MBA or would have occurred anyway

- Sadly opportunities within Wirral Council have been few and far between. The voluntary severance and EVR process led to some reorganization and I have willingly accepted additional responsibilities. However there have been no opportunities for promotion advertised as the majority of promotion opportunities have been filled without an open selection process.

- My career has taken a step back, due to a Senior Management within the department. They have chosen not to recognise my experience or the MBA as a qualification.

- I have taken on a new area of work and have the confidence to rollout the new service area to the Council and maybe one day....take over the world! I could do it.....

6. To what extent has the Council benefited from your participation in the MBA programme?

- Extensively.

- I am better equipped to lead my areas of responsibility and have made changes in the way I manage. I am particularly interested in the social identity approach to leadership and have used this as the basis for management of teams.

- Approaches to service planning and evaluation and needs assessment. The need to build in external factors into planning is taken account of in planning. Links with other agendas and priorities are also better explored.

- I think the Council hasn't really harnessed the MBA programme as a resource. There were no clear expectations of the MBA cohort and some people have found roles and career development outside of the Council. The biggest benefit from the MBA for the council is the networking amongst officers who might not ordinarily work together day to day. The MBA enables officers to get to know each other and service areas, as well as how the council runs.

- It has felt rather like I spent 3 years working very hard, emerging with a Post Graduate Certificate in Leadership and a Masters in Business

Administration....which the authority has totally failed to take advantage of. Although it's been good in terms of my personal development, it does seem slightly wasteful.

- The Council has benefited by the excellent working relationships I have made with other managers on the programme. This means issues are resolved with a quick phone call and more people seem to be contact me for procurement advice.

- One of the most apparent benefits to the organisation is the creation of internal networks of middle managers which means there is greater corporate working across departments.

- We have had excellent outcomes over the last 2 years with comments from ofsted about leadership being outstanding.

- I think benefits are from number of factors: 1. Better working across departments. Networking and opportunity to gain assistance 2. Assignments are tailored to workplace situations - time to reflect put forward suggestions 3. Group project work/dissertation tailored to Wirral situation 4. Educational e.g. opportunities for managers to discuss common issues/problems and learn over issues such as Management, Finance, HR practices

- The Council has received income, both revenue and capital, to the value of around £1.5 Million and realized savings of £500,000 as a result my participation on the MBA Programme. This has been by providing me with the skills to identify strategic opportunities and link these to the Corporate Objectives and by improving my abilities to research and write bids for funding. A number of "Cornerstone Projects" have benefited from the funds secured and has allowed for capital receipts to be realized as has the current Strategic Change Programme in remodeling services and creating efficiencies.

- The service I manage has improved but has not been recognised by Senior Management. It is a service the Council appears to be uncomfortable with. I have however gained respect as a person/manager within the wider community and business world.

- I have taken on more high level tasks and a new service area of work. I am a better and happier manager and leader of people.

7. What savings or service improvements have resulted from your studies?

- Service business process streamlining, increasing effectiveness, productivity, value for money. Improved strategic planning and stakeholder involvement. Improved financial monitoring. Improved leadership and team management.

- It is difficult to isolate the effect of the improved knowledge and understanding has on service delivery. On a qualitative basis I think that my ability to lead and manage has improved but to link that exclusively to a specific measurable improvement I cannot.

- Better performance management which have established performance measures and outcomes.

- I wouldn't say there has been any quantifiable service benefits that can be directly attributed to the MBA.

- There may have been some, but given I have no management responsibility they're difficult to quantify.

- My dissertation focused on improving collaborative procurement and addressed the inertia that was beginning to develop. Collaborative procurement has the potential to make real cost savings on the goods and services we buy, but from a Wirral perspective, cross authority relationships are deteriorating as the fundamental issues are not being addressed by the new post holder and lead authority. I feel Wirral could have made a greater contribution to reinvigorating the collaboration and pushing for further savings through standardisation and economies of scale.

- Not aware of any directly as bigger organisational changes have been delivered through EVR/VS and the subsequent restructuring.

- Developments in foster care recruitment, service reform for children with disability services

- Hard to pin point direct improvements. I would hope that quality of decision making is better to reflect learning from the programme Group reports and dissertation produced which may be of benefit. However some of these require a need to take things on further at a corporate level. Officers producing the reports may not be placed or have the time to build on the outcomes

- The quality of service, staff moral, community involvement, charitable finances, the environment has improved a great deal since returning in April.

- I can see the wider dynamics of a puzzle, challenge or situation and I think more efficiently.

8. In your opinion could the MBA be improved in any way? If 'Yes' in what way?

- A clear Council vision for outcomes related to MBA participation. Higher quality lecturers and tutors providing a higher quality course. All dissertations and projects should be linked to Council priorities and the work from them effectively utilised for Council improvement.

- The project work undertaken by the cohorts should be more effectively utilised to corporate issues. Students must already use their time on a project and carry it out in a rigorous manner. These opportunities have not been exploited to the best effect.

- Using the Project element to address council priorities

- The programme should have been targeted at specific individuals with clear expectations on both sides - expectations of the council in terms of identifying value

(service improvements savings etc) commitment to stay in Wirral and expectations of the individual as to how this will improve their career and prospects within Wirral.

- Better integration between the course and day to day job role. Standard approach to study leave (some people in some departments got it, others didn't and had to take annual leave)

- I think further emphasis could be made on work based activities - we worked so well as a team on academic projects that I think this could be easily transferred to work based cross departmental projects.

- Greater buy-in from executive management team to get greater organisational benefit from the year 2 projects and final year dissertations. Year two projects provide opportunities for management consultancy or feasibility studies for new projects/ways of working. The final year dissertations provide the opportunity for very focused research and intelligence.

- I think it has after the first cohort

- However need to be aware that an MBA is based upon an academic syllabus - it is not always translatable to practical situations

- The projects and Dissertations for the MBA need to be closely aligned to the Strategic Change Programme with these areas being viewed either as research projects into potential efficiencies that may be created or by actually implementing savings projects.

- There really needs to be some advice and guidance and practical help with the demands on your time as a senior/middle manager. It's not enough just to say it will be time intensive you need some folks who have been through it to tell it like it is, I have done this with many folks and it doesn't put them off it just gives them a clearer idea of the challenge ahead. To say it is demanding on your time is like saying childbirth may be a little painful.....

9. How can the Council best use your new skills and knowledge?

- The Council is effectively using my skills and knowledge. Re Question 10, it depends on how you are evaluating value for money. It would benefit the Council to have a clear expected framework of outcomes before commissioning any future expensive courses. Staff development is crucial to any organisation. The Council will get value for money from some participants but not others.

- The MBA provided an excellent opportunity to work with staff from other departments. For many this was a major plus. It helped to understand the environments that people worked in and provided a platform for innovative ideas based on differing experiences and perspectives. Perhaps, using MBA students we should set up cross departmental task groups to tackle Council projects/issues. Further opportunities for development need to be available - temporary secondments in other depts that offer opportunities to stretch individual’s abilities.

- My job role has been evolved to take account of this.

- I think the council should allocate specific tasks and finish project work to people who have been on the MBA. For three years Officers have attended University for approx 15 days and have managed this as well as any additional study leave etc. alongside the "day job". The council should expect MBA students to commit to 15 days project work per year, outside of officers day to day rile. It would be good development and would keep some of the networking aspects that have proved beneficial form the MBA.

- I think it may have been wiser not to have removed my management responsibilities so soon after graduation. The Council could be getting a great deal more return on its investment if opportunities were available within the organisation. I do appreciate the economic climate does not lend itself to such opportunities being made available, but it seems a shame I'm having to look externally for opportunities. It seems to have offered great value for money for me personally (in terms of emerging from three years of funded study with two qualifications), but not so much for the organisation

- By providing opportunities for progression to enable me to play a greater, more strategic role in the section in which I am based or opportunities for secondment onto specific projects where procurement plays a role.

- Through the use of more corporate project teams to deliver change programmes.

- It should build on opportunities for us to work across departments more.

- May be opportunities for using MBA cohorts to undertake group working for particular tasks. Otherwise useful in building a sizeable body of managers to build on and deliver culture change

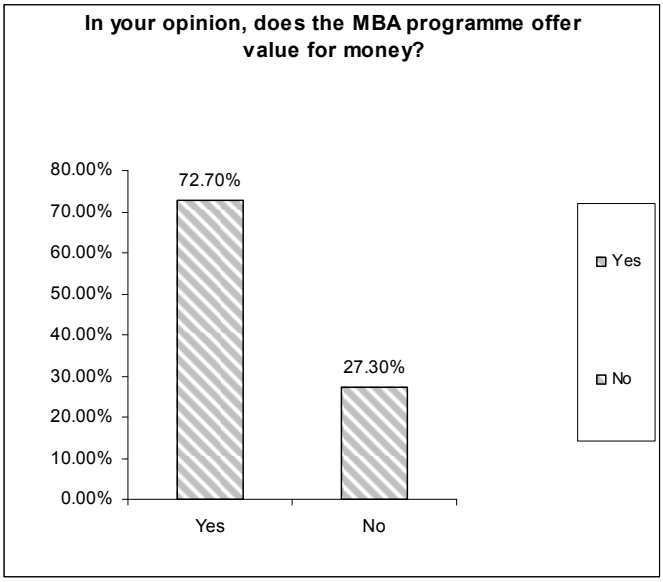
- II feel that the Council could benefit from adopting a fast track management approach for MBA graduates. Moving those who have completed MBA's to different areas in order to break down some of the organizational barriers that still exist in the Council and bring new ideas to some of the problems the Council has struggled with for some time. The Council could benefit from defining a career progression pathway for MBA graduates so that they can move into more responsible areas sooner and make a difference.

- I have transferable skills, which are reflected in my employment history. I have a reputation for getting things done and for thinking out of the box. I am a natural leader and developer. I am there to be used but it appears I may have upset a couple of people in high positions. Question 10 I am saying no because WBC have not utilised my skills. I personally have gained from achieving the MBA.

- Look at our dissertations and see what big issues we are looking at and what our findings are. Ask us to buddy up with folks who need support for a little while or longer if they need it. Get us to talk to candidates who are on the MBA now WE WON'T PUT THEM OFF but they feel they are the only folks who have sat in the

classroom thinking they can't do it. Use us for delivering training or as part of departmental inductions or as part of a training day if appropriate.

10. In your opinion, does the MBA programme offer value for money?



End of Report

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

29 MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	***TACKLING DOG FOULING IN WIRRAL***
WARD/S AFFECTED:	***ALL***
REPORT OF:	***DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT***
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report is to provide information to Cabinet in respect of the strategy and associated activity to be undertaken by the Dog Fouling Enforcement Team and partners aimed at preventing and controlling dog fouling.

1.2 The report seeks the endorsement of Cabinet for a zero tolerance approach to the enforcement of dog fouling infringements.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 In response to the increasing public concern in respect of dog fouling the budget resolution of 2011/2012 established a Dog Fouling Enforcement Team to continue the work of a previous team of trainees set up with “Future jobs Funding”. This team is now established and comprises a team leader and 4 enforcement officers.

2.2 In 2011/2012, the Area Forums prepared their local Neighbourhood plans. After consulting with residents eight area forums of the eleven cited dog fouling as a priority for them. As well as a general concern about the issue some specific themes were apparent:

- Concern about specific street locations.
- Issues in parks and play areas and other amenity areas.
- The need for more dog fouling bins.
- Enforcement against those who fail to clean up after their pet.

2.3 In recognition of the significance of the problem to Area Forums the budget for 2012/2013, has made provision to enable the Dog Fouling Team to be doubled in size which will increase the resource available for the activities of the team. This activity includes,

- Enforcement activity in the form of general patrols and targeted observations at hot spots.
- Education and awareness raising at events and in the course of patrolling

- Working with partners, Area Forums and Friends groups as part of a coalition against to support responsible good ownership and tackle those who behave irresponsibly.
- Noting and reporting other streetscene issues such as littering and graffiti. (2860 this financial year)

3.0 THE APPROACH TO TACKLING DOG FOULING

3.1 One of the key objectives in tackling dog fouling dog fouling is concerned with changing the behaviour of those individuals that do not clean up after their pet. Hence the approach is aimed at bringing about that behaviour change based principally upon the following:

- Education and awareness – challenging the unwanted behaviour and influencing the adoption of the desired behaviour. This is usually achieved through campaigns like Wirral's own "Give a Dog a Bad Name". It is also achieved by contact with individuals, and building coalitions with Area Forums and friends of parks groups, park rangers, schools etc

- Enforcement – education and enforcement is then backed up by robust zero tolerance enforcement policy to deal with people who break the law and ignore the educative approach. Enforcement action will provide a deterrent for those who do the wrong thing and incentive for individuals to do the right thing. The majority who now pick up after their pets want to see those that do not punished. Publicity is also sought through the local press for cases of dog fouling successfully prosecuted at Birkenhead Magistrates Court.

3.2 This kind of approach is commonly seen in other local council campaigns and the elements mentioned above were components of the "Pick Up or Pay Up", campaign of South Ayrshire Council in their submission to the Municipal Journal Awards in 2011.

4.0 MAKING IT HAPPEN

4.1 Education and awareness-raising is a continuous process and the Team seek opportunities to talk the groups and the public about responsible dog ownership. In May, an ambassador initiative is being launched at a doggy event called "Bark in the Park"; where the Team are hoping to recruit volunteer dog walkers to be ambassadors for responsible dog walking.

4.2 A number of other ideas to raise education and awareness are being considered, for example:

- To encourage dog walkers to pick up an extra fouling for every one of theirs. (Possible use of a volunteer to help coordinate this work)
- The purchase of dog poop bag holders in the shape of a bone to reward responsible owners and encourage others to comply.
- Purchase of "thank you" cards for distribution to responsible owners
- The potential for another broad campaign with a message similar to that of the "Pick Up or Pay Up" campaign of South Ayrshire.

4.3 In respect of enforcement the Team has been taking a more robust approach to dog fouling and have issued 109 fixed penalty notices so far and four have been prosecuted with four more awaiting due process. This more robust approach involving a zero tolerance for those breaking the fouling laws is supported by comments made by members of Area Forums when reflecting their concerns about the problem. An enlarged Team will enable more patrols and generally enhance the "presence" of enforcement officers.

4.4 The enforcement patrols are proactive and intelligence led and focus on the areas where complaints are concentrated, the obvious hotspots (e.g. the approaches to parks and outside schools) and during times when dog walkers are most active. The Team will liaise more closely with Area Forums to ensure that they respond to the specific concerns that they have clearly articulated.

4.5 To further enhance enforcement activity the Team has:

- Planned "plain clothes" patrols in hot spot areas to increase the possibility of enforcement as dog walkers will pick up if they see a uniformed officer

- Police Community Support Officers were trained and authorised last year to issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling.

- Adhesive dog fouling warning signs were made available to the public so that they could display them themselves (subject to guidance as to where they are may be placed)

In addition the potential need to seek additional legal powers to assist enforcement, particularly in high risk areas is being evaluated.

4.6 In order to build the coalition against dog fouling working with partners and interest groups is important and the Team are doing the following to bring interested parties together:

- A Dog Fouling Steering Group has been convened which comprises representatives of Technical Services, Dog Fouling Enforcement Team, Environmental Health Service and Animal Wardens and its role is to co-ordinate the response to dog fouling. It is proposed that the group will also include external stakeholders in the future.

- Joint working with RSL wardens to support area based dog fouling initiatives

- Attendance at, and liaison with, Area Forums to identify areas to be targeted for enforcement.

- Through Park Rangers to make links with park and amenity users and friends groups.

5.0 CLEANING UP THE MESS

5.1 Regrettably, there is clear evidence left on Wirral's streets which attests to the fact that not all people pick up after their pets. The removal of fouling from the highway is part

of the street cleansing contract and dog fouling is monitored as part of the environmental audits carried out by Streetscene officers.

5.2 The street cleaning contractor is currently evaluating new equipment which has been distributed to operatives and which facilitates the effective and sanitary removal of fouling from the highway. If successful this should improve performance in this aspect of the contract.

5.3 The issue of additional dog fouling bins has been raised by some Area Forums. Part of the solution to this may lie in making it clear that normal litter bins can be used for the disposal of dog fouling. However, the concerns of the Area Forums will be considered as part of the ongoing work of the Steering Group as mentioned in 4.6 above.

6.0 SEEKING BEST PRACTICE AND INN0VATION

6.1 The Team is continually trying to find the best and most innovative ways to improve the response to dog fouling. Links are maintained with the national body "Keep Britain Tidy "and are valuable in providing the shared knowledge from other council areas. Information from submissions for national awards (such as South Ayrshire) can be another source of inspiration. During the last broad campaign in Wirral "Give a Dog a Bad Name" (2009) a prize draw was offered to owners picking up after their dog. This was an example of initiatives utilised successfully in other council areas.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Council has a duty to consider the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 The report contains ideas to be considered within the overall strategy to tackle dog fouling.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 The problem of dog fouling has been identified as a significant issue for residents by the consultation process that developed the Neighbourhood Plans for the Area Forums.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

10.1 None

11.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

11.1 The budget for 2012-2013 has allocated an additional £120,000 to be used to double the size of the Dog Fouling Enforcement Team.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Where cases are referred for prosecution to the Council's Legal Services Section, such prosecution will be instigated and progressed in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy as quickly as possible. Where convictions are secured, the nature

and significance of the impact of the offence(s) will be brought to the attention of the Court for the purposes of sentencing in accordance with Court Sentencing Guidelines.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

13.1 No because there is no relevance to equality.

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Dog faeces can contain the eggs of the Toxocara parasite which pose a risk to children who may put their fingers in their mouths or eat sweets etc. after handling dogs or falling in areas where dogs have fouled. The eggs can still infect after lying dormant in the ground for up to 12 months.

16.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

16.1 That Members note the actions and approach to dog fouling and endorse a zero tolerance approach to the enforcement of dog fouling.

17.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

17.1 The robust enforcement against those that fail to pick up after heir pet is supported by residents and is apparent in the neighbourhood Plans of Area Forums.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

South Ayrshire Council, submission to Municipal Journal Awards 2011.
http://awards.themj.co.uk/library/media/pdfs/MJ%20Awards%20EH_Tackling%20DF.doc

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	**3 December 2008**

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