



Cabinet

Date:	Thursday, 19 March 2009
Time:	6.15 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. 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.

2. 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.

REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY

3. INTERIM PLANNING POLICY FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (Pages 1 - 14)

4. WORKING WIRRAL - WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND (Pages 15 - 24)

5. BUSINESS SUPPORT - RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE (Pages 25 - 46)

6. MERSEYSIDE RURAL ECONOMY STRATEGY (Pages 47 - 50)

7. WEST KIRBY REGENERATION - THE SAIL PROJECT (Pages 51 - 76)
8. LDF EVIDENCE BASE - STRATEGY FOR TOWN CENTRES, RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL LEISURE IN WIRRAL - EXTENSION OF CONTRACT (Pages 77 - 80)
9. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE NORTH WEST – PARTIAL REVIEW – CONSULTATION ON INTERIM DRAFT POLICIES (Pages 81 - 132)

COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

10. COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FUND AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOTS IN AREA FORUMS - EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Pages 133 - 138)
11. YOU DECIDE PILOT EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Pages 139 - 146)

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

12. HEYGARTH PRIMARY SCHOOL - NEW KITCHEN / IMPROVED DINING/ STORAGE FACILITIES - SCHEME AND ESTIMATE REPORT (Pages 147 - 154)
13. SECONDARY SCHOOL REVIEW: AMENDED CONSULTATION OPTION FOR PHASE 1 SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL STATUS UPDATE (Pages 155 - 194)
14. AREA YOUTH FORUM AWARDS - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING 2008/09 (Pages 195 - 200)
15. DELIVERING IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN, INFORMED BY THE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE REVIEW (Pages 201 - 218)
16. RAISING EXPECTATIONS: ENABLING THE SYSTEM TO DELIVER MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT CHANGES (Pages 219 - 246)
17. REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES - OUTCOME OF FURTHER CONSULTATIONS ON A JOINT CHURCH SCHOOL IN LEASOWE (Pages 247 - 308)
18. CONNEXIONS TRANSITION (Pages 309 - 314)

CORPORATE RESOURCES

19. NOMINATION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2009/10

The Cabinet is requested to make nominations for the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2009/10, which will be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 11th May 2009.

20. ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE (Pages 315 - 332)

21. PROPERTY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (Pages 333 - 352)

FINANCE AND BEST VALUE

22. TRANSITION FROM COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (Pages 353 - 366)

23. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Pages 367 - 398)

24. PROJECTED BUDGET 2010-11 (Pages 399 - 404)

25. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2009 TO 2012 (Pages 405 - 430)

26. PAYMENT OF SUPPLIERS WITHIN 10 DAYS (Pages 431 - 438)

27. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2009/10 (Pages 439 - 454)

28. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS (Pages 455 - 478)

ENVIRONMENT

29. CARBON REDUCTION COMMITMENT (Pages 479 - 486)

30. GRAFFITI PREVENTION AND REMOVAL - SERVICE UPDATE (Pages 487 - 492)

CULTURE, TOURISM AND LEISURE

31. MARKETING SUPPORT FOR WIRRAL'S TOURISM BUSINESSES DURING THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DOWNTURN (1 APRIL 2009 TO 31 MARCH 2010) (Pages 493 - 496)

32. MUSEUM ACCREDITATION (Pages 497 - 530)

STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES

33. 2009/10 LOCAL TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME - ROAD SAFETY. (Pages 531 - 542)

34. 2009/10 LOCAL TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME - ENVIRONMENT/AIR QUALITY (Pages 543 - 562)

35. **TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK - AREA FORUM CONSULTATION (Pages 563 - 566)**
36. **COMMUNITY SPEED INITIATIVE (ACCIDENTS 2ZER0) (Pages 567 - 578)**
37. **HIGHWAY AND ENGINEERING SERVICES PROCUREMENT EXERCISE - CONTRACT MOBILISATION UPDATE (Pages 579 - 608)**
38. **MERSEY GATEWAY BRIDGE PROJECT GROUP REPRESENTATION (Pages 609 - 612)**

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

39. **RE-ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS FOR WIRRAL HOUSING NEEDS AND MARKET ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC ECONOMIC VIABILITY ASSESSMENT (Pages 613 - 616)**

SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSION

40. **PROGRESS TOWARDS THE TRANSFORMATION OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES - FINANCIAL ISSUES (Pages 617 - 712)**
41. **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.

FINANCE AND BEST VALUE

42. **MOTOR AND ENGINEERING INSURANCE (Pages 713 - 718)**
43. **CONTRACT HIRE OF NEW MOTOR VEHICLES (Pages 719 - 724)**
44. **RATING OF FORMER DOCK PROPERTIES (Pages 725 - 732)**
45. **POSTAL SERVICES (Pages 733 - 738)**
46. **CULTURAL SERVICES VAT RECOVERY (Pages 739 - 742)**

CORPORATE RESOURCES

47. **VOLUNTARY FIRST REGISTRATION OF TITLE (Pages 743 - 746)**

**48. LAND AT WOODHALL AVENUE/ROYSTON AVENUE, WALLASEY
- SALE (Pages 747 - 756)**

49. PAYROLL AND HUMAN RESOURCES SYSTEM (Pages 757 - 760)

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

**50. PARENTING AND PREVENTION COMMISSIONING (Pages 761 -
772)**

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

**51. HMRI - APPOINTMENT OF LOVELL AS THE COUNCIL'S
PREFERRED DEVELOPER PARTNER FOR TRANMERE (Pages
773 - 826)**

52. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

INTERIM PLANNING POLICY FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council adopted an Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development in October 2005 to focus new housing development within a number of identified regeneration priority areas including the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (Cabinet, 20 October 2005, Minute 278 refers).
- 1.2 Cabinet on 6 November 2008 resolved that the Interim Planning Policy should be reviewed in response to the publication of the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021, following the outcome of a forthcoming planning appeal at Rockybank Road, Prenton (Minute 257 refers).
- 1.3 Planning Inspectors in two recent appeal decisions, at Rockybank Road, Prenton and at Beresford Road, Oxton, have concluded that the Interim Planning Policy would assist in meeting the objectives of in the new RSS, which sets out priorities for development across the Region. This report, therefore, recommends that the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development is retained unaltered.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council introduced an approach to restrain new housing development in west Wirral in December 2003 in response to Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13, March 2003) (Cabinet 17 December 2003, Minute 410 refers). This approach was amended in October 2005, to direct new housing development to a more limited number of identified regeneration priority areas including the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (Cabinet, 20 October 2005, Minute 278 refers).
- 2.2 RPG13 has now been replaced by the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS), which was issued by the Secretary of State in September 2008. The new RSS forms part of the statutory Development Plan for Wirral alongside the Council's Unitary Development Plan with implications for the determination of individual planning applications and other decisions under the Planning Acts.
- 2.3 Cabinet on 6 November 2008, resolved that the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005) should be reviewed following the outcome of an appeal, to be heard at a public inquiry, against the refusal of planning permission to convert property at Rockybank Road, Prenton, to self-contained flats (Minute 257 refers). A further appeal has now also been heard, raising similar issues, at Beresford Road, Oxton. These appeals have indicated how the Council's Interim Planning Policy has been viewed by Planning Inspectors in the light of the new RSS.

3.0 The Council's Interim Planning Policy

3.1 The Interim Planning Policy aims to direct new housing development to the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area and to other identified regeneration priority areas in New Brighton, Leasowe, Seacombe, Liscard, Bidston and St James, Birkenhead and Tranmere, Rock Ferry, Bromborough and at the Unilever Research Complex in Clatterbridge. A plan of the area affected can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/Images/Open/EWR10-550-1.jpg>

3.2 The Interim Planning Policy does not prevent residential development elsewhere in the Borough if it is a one for one replacement, the site has an extant permission and the number of units would not increase or where all of the following can be demonstrated:

- the proposal would not harm regeneration within the HMRA or within the other identified regeneration priority areas;
- the proposal would not harm the character of the adjoining area;
- the proposal would assist with the regeneration of the site; and
- the proposal meets an identified local housing need.

3.3 The text of the existing Interim Planning Policy can be viewed at http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/ercs051013rep4b_17941.pdf

3.4 The Interim Planning Policy influences the scale and location of the Borough's supply of land for new housing development and the level of new housing completions that can be achieved to meet Government targets, including the Council's Local Area Agreement and National Performance Indicator commitments.

4.0 Relevant RSS Policy Implications

4.1 The implications of the new RSS were reported to Cabinet on 6 November 2008 (Minute 257 refers). Within RSS, Policy RDF1 sets the spatial priorities to guide decision making and the targeting of resources and investment across the North West. This is followed by a series of sub-regional policies which together make the regional centres of Manchester and Liverpool the first priority for growth and development. Policy LCR1, linked to a key diagram (RSS, page 136), sets out the priorities for the Liverpool City Region.

4.2 RSS policies for the Liverpool City Region, effectively divide Wirral into the following three spatial areas:

- The Regional Centre and Inner Areas (RSS Policy LCR2) are identified as the first priorities for investment to secure a significant increase in population and to support major regeneration activity. This area covers the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area, which includes Wirral Waters, Birkenhead Town Centre, Woodside, Hind Street and Cammell Lairds. Other regeneration priority areas identified in the Council's Interim Planning Policy - including New Brighton and Leasowe, a small part of Seacombe, part of Liscard, part of Bidston and St James including Beechwood, parts of Birkenhead and Tranmere, part of Rock Ferry, all but

a small part of Bromborough and the Unilever Research Complex in Clatterbridge - are excluded from the Inner Area.

- The Outer Area (RSS, Policy LCR3) is the next priority for investment in Wirral. The area covers the remaining areas to the east of the M53 Motorway (RSS paragraph 11.9). Plans and strategies in the Outer Area should support significant intervention in areas where housing market restructuring is required and expand the quality and choice of housing. The regeneration priority areas identified in the Council's Interim Planning Policy (outside the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area) - in New Brighton, a small part of Seacombe, part of Liscard, part of Bidston and St James including Beechwood, parts of Birkenhead and Tranmere, part of Rock Ferry, all but a small part of Bromborough and the Unilever Research Complex in Clatterbridge - are included within the Outer Area. Leasowe (the area to the north of the railway between Pasture Road and the A554 Wallasey Approach Road) is the only regeneration priority area identified in the Council's Interim Planning Policy that is not to the east of the M53 Motorway and is not, therefore, included in the Outer Area in RSS.
- The Rural Areas (RSS, Policy LCR4) includes the remainder of Wirral to the west of the M53 Motorway (RSS paragraph 11.13). This area includes Leasowe and Moreton East. The Rural Area is defined by RSS as the lowest priority for investment in Wirral. Plans and strategies should be consistent with other regeneration programmes and policies and ensure the provision of housing to address barriers to affordability and to meet identified local needs. Leasowe is the only regeneration priority area identified by the Council in the Interim Planning Policy to fall within this lower priority Rural Area.

4.3 A plan illustrating the boundaries to these areas can be viewed at http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/Appendix_2_RSS_Spatial_Areas.pdf. Precise boundaries will need to be defined within the Council's Local Development Framework.

4.4 RSS Policy L3 – Existing Housing Stock and Housing Renewal, expects plans and strategies to respond to the need to substantially restructure local housing markets, particularly in Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Areas, manage the delivery of new build and its impacts on the existing housing stock, reduce vacancy rates to 3% through the increased re-use of suitable vacant housing and make the best use of the existing housing stock.

4.5 RSS Policy L4 - Regional Housing Provision, requires Wirral to make provision for 9,000 homes for the period 2003 to 2021 at annual average rate of 500 units per annum net of clearance (RSS, Table 7.1). The strategic priority in Wirral is provision of sufficient new residential development in the eastern part of the district to support the inner areas as a priority for economic growth and regeneration, including via the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder scheme (including replacement and renewal of housing stock). Elsewhere in Wirral, provision should focus on meeting local and affordable housing needs, with careful monitoring and management of housing provision to ensure that new housing development does not result in an adverse cumulative impact on local and neighbouring housing markets (RSS paragraph 7.18, item f).

5.0 Directors Comments

Housing Land Supply

- 5.1 One of the main issues is the need to ensure that there is enough deliverable housing land to meet the new RSS housing requirements and maintain a rolling five-year supply in accordance with national policy (Planning Policy Statement 3, paragraphs 7 and paragraphs 52-60 refer).
- 5.2 The annual average rate of housing provision (net of clearance replacement) has been increased to 500 dwellings per annum in RSS, from 160 dwellings per annum in RPG13. Wirral is expected to accommodate 9,000 additional homes between 2003 and 2021 with at least 80% provided on previously developed brownfield land (RSS Policy L4, Table 7.1). For the five year period from April 2003 to March 2008, net completions have totalled 1,786 (average 357 per year), with an increasing focus within the Interim Planning Policy regeneration priority area. In 2007/08, 60% of all new dwellings were completed within the Interim Planning Policy priority areas (460 units), compared to only 19% in 2004/05 (101 units), before the current Interim Planning Policy was introduced in October 2005.
- 5.3 The Council supported the increase in the housing requirement during the preparation of RSS, to accelerate regeneration at the heart of the urban area and to support wider opportunities, including the potential for up to 25,000 new jobs at Wirral Waters, as part of the Council's wider Investment Strategy. The delivery of an appropriate level of housing within Wirral Waters, which is now identified as part of the proposed Mersey Heartlands Growth Point (being prepared in partnership with Liverpool City Council and Peel Holdings), alongside the remainder of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative Area will be critical to the Borough's ability to meet this new requirement.
- 5.4 A programme of development for the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point was considered by Cabinet on 16 October 2008 (Minute 234 refers). The first tranche of funding (£6,332,389 to 2010/11) was announced by Central Government on 10 December 2008. The target is to support 600 net new dwellings each year across the Borough, of which an annual average of 425 net new dwellings would be supported within the Growth Point between 2008/09 and 2016/17. Were new dwellings to come forward at a slower rate, the Council's response would need to be determined by the wider housing land supply.
- 5.5 The wider housing land supply will be assessed through a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The Assessment is being jointly commissioned with Liverpool City Council to identify available housing land across the Borough within and outside the Growth Point area. The results of this Assessment are due to be reported in the middle of 2009. The Assessment will formalise the process of monitoring of housing land supply that has been carried out in Wirral for the last 30 years and has been used to successfully defend the Council's housing and planning strategies at appeal.
- 5.6 A summary of the current housing land supply can be viewed at http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/Appendix_3_Housing_Land_Summary_April_2008.pdf. Wirral's gross five year housing land supply at March 2008 was 3,494 dwellings with extant planning permission, including an allowance for net conversions and changes of use. The net supply taking account of demolitions is 2,244

dwellings. The housing land supply has been successfully defended at the recent planning appeals, mentioned below.

- 5.7 The need to back date the calculation (in accordance with RSS) to reflect actual performance since March 2003 reduces the net supply further to 1,530 dwellings, as net completions have only exceeded the RSS target of 500 by 6 dwellings in 2006/07 (736 dwellings gross) and by 15 dwellings in 2007/08 (771 dwellings gross). This is currently 970 dwellings short of the five year supply target of 2,500 net dwellings at 500 per annum or 1,470 dwellings short of a five year supply target of 3,000 net dwellings at 600 net dwellings per annum. This means that the Borough is currently relying on assumptions about the delivery of unidentified windfalls to meet its future housing requirements and that the Borough will need to see an annual average of 555 net new dwellings completed over the next thirteen years to meet the RSS target of 9,000 dwellings by 2021.
- 5.8 The additional requirement of 100 net new dwellings per annum arising from the Growth Point is additional to these calculations.

Appeal Decisions

- 5.9 The Council's approach to directing new housing development to identified priority areas has, so far, been successful. Overall 24 appeals have been upheld since the Council first adopted the approach of diverting housing to the metropolitan area in December 2003 (6 since the adoption of the Interim Planning Policy in October 2005). In the four appeals allowed, Planning Inspectors have accepted that the Council's approach was valid but concluded either that the proposals being considered conformed with the criteria in the Interim Planning Policy or that there were other overriding material considerations.
- 5.10 Two appeals have been determined since the introduction of new RSS. On 7 October 2008, the Council's evidence was presented to a public inquiry into the refusal of planning permission for converting 17-23 Rockybank Road, Prenton into eight self contained flats. Evidence was also considered on 14 October 2008 at an informal hearing into the refusal of a new building for ten apartments at Beresford Road, Oxtan. Both sites were located within the new RSS Policy LCR3 Outer Area but outside the boundary of the priority areas identified in the Council's Interim Planning Policy.
- 5.11 Both Inspectors noted the net shortfall in the five year housing land supply for the Borough but accepted that an allowance could be made for windfall development over the next 5 years. In the case of Rockybank Road, the tight Green Belt boundary and the Government defined areas where housing restructuring is necessary constituted genuine local circumstances to support the Council in making an allowance for windfalls. After noting that windfall rates had averaged 762 dwellings per annum over recent years, the Inspector concluded that the Council would have adequate provision to meet a five year demand in compliance with RSS Policy L4. The latest calculations show the annual average windfall generation rate over the last five years has increased to 980 dwellings.
- 5.12 In the case of Beresford Road, the Inspector stated that the Interim Planning Policy:

"...does not prevent the Council from meeting the increased level of housing provision within RSS. Its policy of restraining new housing outside the Pathfinder Area and giving priority for development within it, provides a balanced approach to regeneration. The IPP would assist meeting the objectives of RSS Policy LCR1 and I attribute considerable weight to it".

- 5.13 Overall, the Inspectors found that both those proposals could set a precedent that would materially harm the regeneration objectives for the most deprived areas of the Borough and went on to conclude that the development would be contrary to RSS Policies RDF1, L4, LCR1, LCR3 and the Interim Planning Policy.

Policy Implications

- 5.14 In the light of the above background, it can reasonably be contended that the Interim Planning Policy should be retained.
- 5.15 New housing development would continue to be directed to the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area and to the other regeneration priority areas identified in the Interim Planning Policy.
- 5.16 Leasowe (the area to the north of the railway between Pasture Road and the A554 Wallasey Approach Road) is the only regeneration priority area identified in the Council's Interim Planning Policy to fall within the lower priority Rural Areas defined in the new RSS. RSS Policy LCR4 states that development in the Rural Areas should be consistent with other regeneration programmes and policies. The retention of Leasowe as a regeneration priority area where new housing development would be supported, would, therefore, need to be argued as an exception to RSS when individual planning applications are being considered. This approach would continue to allow an increased contribution to the RSS housing requirement for Wirral from areas outside the RSS Inner Area.
- 5.19 Public consultation would not be required if the Interim Planning Policy is to be retained unaltered and the Policy can continue to be applied without any additional cost in time or resources.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Investment within the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area is a clear strategic priority for the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The Interim Planning Policy would retain that priority with the addition of development within the regeneration priority areas identified in the Council's Interim Planning Policy.
- 6.3 There is also a need to maintain the delivery of new housing to meet the new, higher RSS housing requirement figure, heightened by the need to make good shortfalls from previous years. Given that the Borough has already begun to exceed the new RSS target with the Interim Planning Policy in place, forecast demolition rates are slowing, development is beginning to take place on cleared sites within the Pathfinder, sites with large capacities are beginning to emerge as part of the Growth Point proposals, and the protection afforded by the Interim Planning Policy for areas of higher quality housing in east Wirral, retention is recommended as the most prudent approach at this time.

- 6.4 This position will, however, need to be kept under constant review. Housing land supply and the delivery of new housing will need to be closely monitored over the coming years not least because of the Council's delivery commitments under the Local Area Agreement and related national Performance Indicators.
- 6.5 The Council's wider approach to place shaping, including the contribution from new housing development, will be considered in further detail over the next two years as part of the preparation of a Core Strategy Development Plan Document for the Borough, as part of the emerging Local Development Framework for Wirral. Any necessary future amendments will be able to be accommodated as part of that process.

7.0 Financial and Staffing Implications

- 7.1 The delivery of housing and the maintenance of a five-year supply of deliverable housing land are National Indicators (NI154 – net additional homes provided and NI159 – supply of ready to develop housing sites). Following negotiations with the Government, the delivery of housing is now also a priority as part of the Local Area Agreement (NI155 – Number of Affordable Homes Delivered – Gross).
- 7.2 Performance in the delivery of housing and the maintenance of a five-year supply of deliverable sites are also a determinant in the award of the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (Cabinet 25 September 2008, Minute 202 refers).
- 7.3 The Interim Planning Policy has implications for the management of the Council's property and the Strategic Asset Review, particularly for property falling outside the identified regeneration priority areas and has an impact on the potential for maximising receipts from land sales.

8.0 Staffing Implications

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

9.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 9.1 The Interim Planning Policy is oriented towards supporting housing market renewal in areas where regeneration is a priority. This is likely to be important in tackling inequalities experienced by those living in poor quality or inappropriate housing.

10.0 Community Safety Implications

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

11.0 Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 11.1 The Interim Planning Policy aims to ensure that new housing development in Wirral takes account of the policies in PPS3 and RSS. These focus on new housing development making the most effective use of previously developed land in areas of the Borough most in need of regeneration.

12.0 Planning Implications

- 12.1 The Interim Planning Policy is a material consideration alongside national policy, the new RSS and the Council's Unitary Development Plan and has implications for the determination of individual planning applications.
- 12.2 It is the Government's clear wish that planning policies should be set through the statutory Development Plan process – through RSS or a Local Development Framework Development Plan Document and Proposals Map. The Interim Planning Policy was intended to provide a policy context until the adoption of the Council's Development Plan in its entirety.
- 12.3 Although RSS was re-issued in September 2008 and forms part of the Development Plan for Wirral, the policies for the Liverpool City Region are still not clear and require clarification in their application. Two Planning Inspectors have separately verified that the Interim Planning Policy can sit alongside the new RSS, to provide local clarity pending the adoption of the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document.
- 12.3 The Interim Planning Policy will be overtaken by the preparation of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document, which will be prepared in the light of all the available evidence, including the results of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, progress on the delivery of the Growth Point and more recent trends in housing completions to meet Government targets, subject to formal Public Examination.

13.0 Anti-Poverty Implications

- 13.1 The Interim Planning Policy seeks to support housing market renewal in areas where regeneration is a priority. This is likely to be important in tackling inequalities experienced by those living in poor quality or inappropriate housing or environments.

14.0 Human Rights Implications

- 14.1 Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights provides that everyone has the right to have their private and family life, home and correspondence respected. Article 1 of the First Protocol to the Convention establishes, among other things, that no one shall be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest.
- 14.2 The restraint of new housing development by refusal of planning permission may interfere with the Human Rights of site owners due to the restrictions that it would place on the future development of their land. However, this has to be set against the wider public interest. Article 1 of the First Protocol expressly provides that it does not impair the right of the State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest.

15.0 Social Inclusion Implications

- 15.1 The Interim Planning Policy seeks to support housing market renewal in areas where regeneration is a priority. This is likely to be important in tackling inequalities experienced by those of living in poor quality or inappropriate housing or environments.

16.0 Local Member Support Implications

- 16.1 This report has implications for all Ward members.

17.0 Background Papers

- 17.1 Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing (CLG, November 2006) can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/planningpolicystatement3.pdf>
- 17.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy – The North West of England Plan (September 2008) can be viewed at <http://www.gos.gov.uk/497468/docs/248821/476846/NorthWestEnglandRSS>
- 17.3 Cabinet Report Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West – Implications for Wirral can be viewed at [http://wir06metrognome.admin.ad.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000351/AI00002030/\\$CABCS081106REP1.docA.ps.pdf](http://wir06metrognome.admin.ad.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000351/AI00002030/$CABCS081106REP1.docA.ps.pdf)
- 17.4 The Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005) can be viewed at http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/485/content_0000039.html

RECOMMENDATION – That the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005) be retained unaltered for use in determining planning applications.

J. Wilkie
Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

This report has been prepared by Eddie Fleming in the Forward Planning Section of Strategic Development who can be contacted on 691 8129.

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Wirral MBC Housing Land Supply Summary - April 2008

Table 1 - Housing Land Supply at 31 March 2008 (Gross)

	Previously developed	Greenfield	Total
(i) New build sites identified at 31 March 2008			
Sites under construction > 0.4 ha	703	85	788
Units not started + under construction			
Sites not started > 0.4 ha	785	0	785
Units not started (with pp)			
Sites under construction < 0.4 ha	723	1	724
Units not started + under construction			
Sites not started < 0.4 ha	947	0	947
Units not started (with pp)			
Total identified sites	3158	86	3244
(ii) Future net gain from conversions			
	250	0	250
Total dwelling supply 2008-2013	3408	86	3494
% previously developed land			97.5%

Notes: Source WMBC Housing Land Availability.

Sites in category (i) - New build include greenfield commitments (sites under construction and not started with extant planning permission), together with all previously developed sites with extant planning permission or under construction.

The contribution to be made by net gain from conversions (category (ii)) is set at a rate of 50 units per annum for 5 years. This rate was recommended by the UDP Inquiry Inspector at paragraph 3.81 of his report. Actual rates are shown at Table 3.

Table 1 excludes a number of sites, particularly some allocated in the Council's UDP. The uncommenced UDP housing allocations have been treated as follows:

HS1/4	North of Rose Brae - previously developed - not available (owner currently unwilling to dispose of for housing) - 130 units
HS1/5	Laird Street Bus Depot - previously developed - not available (owner redeveloping for new bus depot) - 100 units
HS1/7	Manor Drive - greenfield - no planning permission therefore discounted - 60 units
HS1/12	SE Social Centre - greenfield - no planning permission therefore discounted - 15 units

Available supply to set against annual RPG13 requirement of 160 net units pa is 3,494 dwellings, representing 21.84 years supply, gross. When set against the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to RSS figure of 500 net units pa, the supply is 6.99 years, gross.

Wirral MBC Housing Land Supply Summary - April 2008

Table 2 - Recent Demolition Rates

A	B	C	D	E
Year	Total demolitions	Demolitions outside NWMA	Demolitions in NWMA outside HMRI	Demolitions inside HMRI
2001/2002	303	37	11	255
2002/2003	450	52	73	325
2003/2004	212	11	91	110
2004/2005	419	13	150	256
2005/2006	277	11	153	113
2006/2007	215	25	26	164
2007/2008	230	11	14	205
5 year total	1353	71	434	848
5 year annual average	271	14	87	170
Projected demolitions	250	10	40	200

Source Wirral MBC, both local authority and private sector demolitions

Notes: On-site replacement varies widely. One-for-one replacement is assumed, although most sites outside the NWMA are subject of on-site redevelopment proposal.

The figures for projected demolitions are those submitted to the RSS EIP based on an assumption of 200 demolitions pa within HMRI. The planned public sector demolition programme for 2008/09 and 2009/10 is now 92 pa (Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix 2008 refers).

Wirral MBC Housing Land Supply Summary - April 2008

Table 3 - Recent Net Change in Dwelling Stock

A	B	C	D	E	F
Year	Total demolitions	Total net conversions	Total new build	Net change (C+D)-B	Surplus above RPG13
2001/2002	303	104	378	179	(19)
2002/2003	450	43	591	184	24
2003/2004	212	74	581	443	283
2004/2005	419	81	440	102	-58
2005/2006	277	55	442	220	60
2006/2007	215	115	606	506	346
2007/2008	230	106	639	515	355
5 year total	1353	431	2708	1786	986
5 year annual average	271	86	542	357	197

Source: Wirral MBC, both local authority and private sector demolitions

Notes: Surplus figures in brackets relate to period before issue of RPG13

Conversion performance is supported by a current supply of 620 units made up of 96 units from conversions with planning permission not started (net 54 units), 89 units from conversions under construction (net 57 units), 116 units from changes of use with planning permission not started (net 99 units) and 319 units from changes of use under construction (net 310 units) at 31 March 2008.

Wirral MBC Housing Land Supply Summary - April 2008

Table 4 - Windfall Site Generation

A	B	C	D	E	F
Year	Base new build supply	Gross completions (including conversions)	Draft year end residual supply (B-C)	Actual year end new build supply	Derived new build windfalls (E-D)
2001/2002	2,426	525	1,901	2,289	388
2002/2003	2,289	645	1,644	1,580	-64
2003/2004	1,580	686	894	1,764	870
2004/2005	1,764	531	1,233	2,590	1,357
2005/2006	2,590	511	2,079	3,249	1,170
2006/2007	3,249	736	2,513	3,143	630
2007/2008	3,143	771	2,372	3,244	872
5 year annual average	2,465	647	1,818	2,798	980

Source Wirral MBC, annual housing land availability schedules, new build completions, net and gross change from conversions

Note: 205 units discounted from supply from 2002/2003 onwards (see Table 1 above) as they are greenfield allocations without planning permission (PPS3) or previously developed allocations that are no longer currently available.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE /DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

WORKING WIRRAL - WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the financial recommendations of the Wirral Economic Development and Skills Partnership (WEDS) and the Investment Board in relation to Working Wirral funding and note that the Government has now confirmed the Working Neighbourhoods Fund allocation for 2009/10 at £9,879,402.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Cabinet on 13 March (Item 26 Minute 553 refers) agreed that the Working Wirral resources (including Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), Deprived Areas Fund and the European Social Fund's Complementary Strand) should be used to commission activity to deliver the Investment Strategy priorities of tackling worklessness, improving skills levels and increasing enterprise, business growth and investment. It was further agreed that the commissioning process would be overseen by Wirral's Economic Development and Skills (WEDS) Partnership in respect of employment and skills, with the Investment Strategy Board advising on the priorities for investment and business growth.

2.2 Wirral had been originally allocated £28,267,778 of WNF from 2008 – 2011 through the Area Based Grant. However, only the first year's allocation was confirmed by Government. This was due to an error that had been made in the original calculation on how the funding should be allocated nationally across the local authorities. The Government has now announced the outcome of the consultation that has taken place on their proposals for revising the allocation criteria and how it will be applied for 2009/10. The revised criteria will mean that Wirral will receive an increased allocation.

2009/10 Original allocation: £9,841,046 Confirmed revised allocation £9,879,492
2010/11 Original allocation: £10,238,708 Expected revised allocation £10,344,843

2.3 The Government announcement of 24th February 2009 confirmed the 2009-2010 allocation of WNF at £9,879,492.

2.4 The first round of Working Wirral commissioning identified that a maximum of £5 million would be available to allocate to activity to increase employment, skills levels and enterprise that can take place up to 31st March 2011. As reported to Cabinet on the 23 July (Item 11 Minute 149 refers) a further £1.67 million of resources were allocated to Wirral through the ESF Complementary Strand making a maximum of £6.67 million available for Round 1 activity.

2.5 Cabinet on 15 January (Item 11 Minute 334 refers) agreed that consultants should be appointed to further develop the Investment Framework to enable targeted commissioning of the Working Wirral programme to be taken forward to deliver activity against the three priority areas set out in the Investment Framework (Competitive Wirral People, Competitive Wirral Places and Competitive Wirral Businesses) and it also

considers the implications of the economic downturn. This work will be completed by the end of March 2009 and reported to a future Cabinet meeting.

3.0 **WORKING WIRRAL ROUND 1 COMMISSIONING**

- 3.1 The WEDS Partnership meetings on the 20th January 2009 and 18th March 2009 agreed the recommendations from the WEDS Commissioning Group that the following projects should be recommended for approval.

Advocacy in Wirral – Wirral Bridges

- 3.2 This project supports individuals with severe and enduring mental health issues into work and provides further support once they are in employment. The project uses positive roles models of people with mental illness who have already made the transition from benefits to employment, and offers dedicated peer support. There are clear referral links into the scheme from GPs, Community Mental Health Teams and the Primary Care Advice Link project. The project will work with 30 participants with targets of getting 5 people into paid employment, 14 people into voluntary work and 11 people to receive in-work support.

- 3.3 It is recommended by the WEDS Partnership that this project is funded from April 2009 to the end of March 2011 up to a maximum of £49,246 subject to detailed contracting.

Wirral Learning Consortium – Supporting Wirral

- 3.4 This is a consortium project led by Leasowe Millennium Centre and delivered in partnership with North Enders Cafe Club, Beechwood Power House, Forum Housing Association and Tranmere Community Project. The project aims to provide support to all unemployed people from the target groups with a key focus on people living within Wirral's most deprived areas. Its intention is to enable unemployed people to gain specific training that meets their individual needs and that of local employers. The project will directly engage workless people aged 16 – 60 and support them into jobs. The consortium has an established track record in delivering training and support to Working Wirral target groups and they will use that experience to deliver this project.

- 3.5 The project targets 300 people into jobs as a direct result of this intervention, with indirect outcomes of a further 150 people into voluntary work and 190 people into further education or training.

- 3.6 It is proposed by the WEDS Partnership that this project is funded from March 2009 to the end of March 2011 up to a maximum of £1,104,998 subject to detailed contracting.

WIRRAL MIND MENTAL HEALTH - Project

- 3.7 The project employs people with chronic mental health issues on a 1-year fixed-term contract to work at a social enterprise cardboard recycling plant. Participants will gain skills, experience and qualifications to move into further employment opportunities. The project works with people who have been economically inactive for long periods, and have no/low qualifications as a result of chronic mental health issues.

- 3.8 The project will engage 25 participants per year, a total of 50 over the life of the project. It is expected that the retention rate will be 80%, retaining 20 participants per year, all of whom will progress into employment – a total of 40 employment outputs over the life of the project.

- 3.9 It is recommended by the WEDS Partnership that this project is funded on a pilot basis from April 2009 to the end of March 2011 up to a maximum of £752,783 subject to detailed contracting.

REMPLOY – Linking Wirral People into Employment

- 3.10 The proposal aims to assist economically inactive residents, primarily those suffering from learning, mental health and/or physical disabilities and claiming incapacity benefit, to progress along the continuum to access employment opportunities. The project uses a consortium approach including Remploy, The Social Partnership, Voluntary and Community Action Wirral, Scientiam, CPL Training and Liver Lifts.
- 3.11 The project anticipates that over the two years of the programme, 550 participants will gain employment within 6 months of the intervention, and 450 participants will gain NVQ Level 2 or above.
- 3.12 It is proposed by the WEDS Partnership that this project is funded from April 2009 to the end of March 2011 up to a maximum of £806,308 subject to detailed contracting.

CHESHIRE & WIRRAL NHS FOUNDATION HOSPITAL TRUST – Improving Health Conditions

- 3.13 The project will ensure that people with severe and enduring mental health conditions are provided with improved health outcomes and improved employment opportunities. Job coaches will work according to an evidence-based model of vocation rehabilitation called IPS, specifically designed for people with severe mental illness, with 3 elements: it places the patient and trains them on the job; it actively includes the employer in the rehabilitation process; and it provides ongoing unlimited in-work support. The job coaches will also coach professional staff within the Community Mental Health Teams (CHMT) to improve the response to employment issues for service users within the teams.
- 3.14 The project is match funded by the Richmond Fellowship who will provide 48% of the total funding, funding two of the four Job coach posts. The project will enrol 200 participants onto the programme over the two years. It is anticipated that 50-55 will progress into paid employment, all of whom will receive in-work support, and that 35-40 participants will progress into education and employment-enhancing activities. Additionally, 55 professional staff within CMHTs will be coached to improve the response to employment issues for service users of the teams.
- 3.15 It is recommended by the WEDS Partnership that this project is funded from April 2009 to the end of March 2011 up to a maximum of £163,140 subject to detailed contracting.

WIRRAL SOCIETY OF THE BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED – Training and Development project

- 3.16 The project aims to provide and enhance training and employment opportunities for blind and partially sighted people in Wirral. The project will provide specialist support tutors to deliver ICT training courses leading to IT qualifications within a purpose built training unit, and will provide post training support through referrals to specialist advisers in career guidance and self employment.
- 3.17 The project anticipates that at least 12 participants will achieve ITQ levels one and two, and at least four participants will achieve ITQ level 3. At least four participants will progress onto further training, education or employment, with the potential to progress towards becoming an IT tutor with Wirral Met College.

- 3.18 It is proposed by the WEDS Partnership that this project is funded from April 2009 to the end of March 2011 up to a maximum of £37,253 subject to detailed contracting.

WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE – First Steps to Employment

- 3.19 This project aims to add value to mainstream training provision by incorporating sector specific skills into entry level training. It is expected to meet an identified sector skills shortage whilst providing a clear progression route to Level 2 qualifications and realistic labour market objectives. Whilst this project will specifically seek to target people from Wirral's 53 most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs), access will also be available to other Wirral residents, particularly those who are workless, lone parents, people with low/no qualifications, women returners and BRM individuals.
- 3.20 It is recommended by the WEDS Partnership that this project is funded from April 2009 to the end of March 2011 up to a maximum of £130,000 subject to detailed contracting.

4.0 BUSINESS START PROGRAMME Enterprise Solutions – WIRRALBIZ – 3 MONTH EXTENSION

- 4.1 In June 2008 £1,069,000 of Working Wirral funding was approved to provide a comprehensive business start service for Wirral until March 2009 and to provide post start support for the new businesses for a two year period until March 2011.
- 4.2 This project has been very successful in creating new businesses and the new business start target for the period April 2008 to March 2009 is 290. To date 284 new businesses have been created and the target is expected to be exceeded by the end of the financial year. 184 of the new businesses created are within Wirral's 53 most deprived Super Output Areas (SOA's).
- 4.3 Creating new businesses is important for Wirral as the Borough seeks to reduce its significant enterprise gap with the rest of the North West Region which was clearly identified in the Regional Economic Strategy. Wirral also has a stretch target within the Local Area Agreement for new business starts.
- 4.4 The Government's Business Simplification Support Programme (BSSP) aims to reduce the number of business support interventions nationally to less than 100 by 2010 and to this end the North West Development Agency (NWDA) is working to introduce a standard North West business start service from 1st April 2009.
- 4.5 Wirral along with the other Merseyside Councils has been working constructively with the NWDA for some months to bring in the new arrangements by April 2009. It is a complex process and the timescales are tight. Progress is being made and the NWDA have recently confirmed that their Supplier Panel (consisting of the companies who will provide the business start up services) will be in place by 24th February 2009.
- 4.6 Once the Supplier Panel is in place the Council will have to undertake what is being called a "mini tendering exercise" to secure by competitive means the supplier or suppliers who will provide business start services in Wirral. This will obviously take some time to do and it will need to be followed by approval of the tenders by Cabinet. Once a decision is made on the supplier or suppliers they will need time to mobilize their resources before they can begin to deliver the business start service. This could be achieved in late April at the earliest but is likely to be May or June. In these circumstances it is recommended that the current business start programme is extended for three months to ensure that there is no loss of continuity in creating new businesses in Wirral.

4.7 The cost of extending the current programme for three months from April to June 2009 is £262,500. Over this period it is anticipated that a further 72 new businesses will be created in Wirral.

4.8 It is recommended by the WEDS Partnership that a maximum of £262,500 of Working Wirral resources are allocated to extend the WirralBiz programme from 1st April 2009 to 30th June 2009 subject to detailed contracting.

5.0 WORKING WIRRAL FUNDING

5.1 Subject to the agreement of the recommendations in this report, allocations progressed through Working Wirral Round 1 commissioning to date are as follows:

Commissioned Projects	£
WirralBiz	1,069,000
Connexions – Nextstep Plus	347,258
Involve NW – Reachout and Reachout Plus	1,685,079
Arch Initiatives – Mentoring into Employment	179,896
Wirral PCT – Working 4 Health	561,592
Wirral Change – BRM Employment Outreach	540,883
Advocacy in Wirral – Wirral Bridges	49,246
Wirral Learning Consortium – Supporting Wirral	1,104,998
Enterprise Solutions - Extension to WirralBiz	262,500
Wirral Mind – ABC Together	752,783
Remploy – Linking Wirral People to Employment	806,308
Cheshire & Wirral NHS Foundation Trust – Improving Health conditions Project	163,140
Wirral Society of the Blind and Partially Sighted – Training and Development	37,253
Wirral Metropolitan College – First Steps to Employment	130,000
Total committed to date (subject to detailed contracting)	7,689,936

5.2 If the recommendations brought to this meeting are approved, the total funding committed will be £7,889,736. This is an over commitment of £1,219,736 on the £6.67 million available for Round 1 commissioning. Funding for these activities is available following the confirmation by Government of Wirral’s WNF allocation for 2009/10.

5.3 The projects considered by the WEDS Commissioning group and recommended for approval by the WEDS Partnership have all been assessed to meet the criteria set out in the Round 1 Commissioning brief and will therefore contribute to meeting the outcomes of Wirral’s Investment Strategy. It is therefore proposed that these projects be progressed utilising the Working Neighbourhoods Funding allocation for 2009/10 as set out in section 2.2 above. These resources would then be included within the proposed resource allocation for Priority 1 which will be brought forward as part of the Investment Framework proposals (see 2.4 above) and reported to Cabinet in April 2009.

6.0 INVESTMENT STRATEGY BOARD

6.1 The Investment Strategy Board in 7th November 2008 and January 2009 identified a number of areas of activity that would support the Investment Strategy outcomes and should therefore be progressed through Working Wirral funding.

International Links

6.2 The International Links Project will include the following activities:

- the development of economic and cultural relations with China, including the engagement of an appropriate consultant on a retainer basis (approx £30,000 per year); The skills and expertise brought by such a consultancy will support both the development of Projects outlined in the Cabinet report to members on 27th November 2008 and help support trade initiatives between Wirral and the Chinese market. Some Wirral businesses are already trading in that market and the growing Chinese market offers potential opportunities for other businesses in Wirral. The consultancy would also be utilised to deliver seminars on potential businesses links and general advice on taking forward businesses opportunities and protocols, in addition to also supporting/advising Council officers on potential Inward Investment opportunities
- a post within the Corporate Services Department at PO10 (£34,976-£37,555) to co-ordinate activity on all matters relating to International Links. The post will support local businesses to understand and exploit new overseas trade and investment opportunities. The post would be funded from Working Wirral funds until 31st March 2011;
- To support, identify and develop future project activities up to a maximum of £100,000 per year in line with the proposals that were reported to Cabinet in January 2009 (Item 11 Minute 334 refers).

6.3 The overall cost of the project will be £180,000 per annum.

6.4 It is recommended by the Investment Strategy Board that this project is funded up to a maximum of £360,000 from April 2009 to the end of March 2011, subject to detailed contracting

Support for Businesses

6.5 Supporting Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Wirral is a key objective of the Investment strategy, the Enterprise Strategy and is a key priority for the Invest Wirral team. There are in excess of 3,000 businesses in Wirral that are not registered for VAT and it is envisaged that through growing those businesses, Wirral can increase the number of employment opportunities available to those residents.

6.6 Equally, given the current economic conditions, it is critical that support is available to businesses to enable their sustainability in what is an increasingly difficult time for them. The programme of support will be through a mixture of capital grant and also access to consultancy support. Capital Grant will be offered to Wirral businesses that have viable project proposals to support the sustainability or growth of the company. Grants will be subject to a robust health check and dependant on a business plan being in place.

6.7 The Consultancy support will assist with financial planning and developing a relevant business plan for current market conditions and businesses will receive up to 3 days consultancy free of charge. The total Working Wirral allocation will be £800,000 per annum over a two year period (up to 31st March 2011) and it will be used to provide grant and consultancy support. The project will work in tandem with the ERDF 4.2 project that Cabinet agreed for Working Wirral funding in December (Item 18 Minute 305 refers) as match funding for the European resource. The ERDF 4.2 project will provide support for micro businesses via three Business Advocate posts which will be provided by a third party. The activity will be fully in line with the support services available regionally and the principles of Business Support Simplification Programme. The project will be marketed using the Wirral Business Forum.

6.8 It is recommended by the Investment Strategy Board that this project is funded up to a maximum of £1,600,000 from April 2009 to the end of March 2011, subject to detailed contracting

7.0 INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

7.1 Addressing infrastructure constraints has been a key focus for Liverpool City Region partners for a number of years with several key employment sites suffering from significant power supply issues. Additionally, digital access is also an issue for many areas across the North West Region. Following discussion at the Investment Board in January 2009, investment in infrastructure in Wirral was identified as an area that needed specific focus over the next twelve months, particularly given the difficult economic climate. In order to understand Wirral's needs, Officers are exploring the possibility of undertaking work on identifying the issues and the exact infrastructure requirements that the Borough has in order to promote itself as a key investor location for when the economy starts to grow.

7.2 The Investment Board recommended the use of up to £50,000 of the Working Wirral allocation to further investigate infrastructure issues in relation to power and digital access.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Wirral has been allocated £28.4 million of Working Neighbourhoods Fund resources (subject to confirmation for 2010/11). The allocation is paid through the LAA's Area Based Grant.

8.2 In line with the principles set out in the Compact between Wirral Council and Wirral's voluntary and community sector it is proposed that, where necessary, claims from voluntary or community groups in receipt of Working Wirral funding, can be made in advance.

8.3 To comply with the compact and protect the Council's financial position as accountable body for the Funding It is recommended that if any advance funding for cashflow reasons is required, it is only done for voluntary and community sector groups on the maximum of a quarterly basis at a time and that it is subject to:

- i) the organisation clearly evidencing a need for advance funding, and
- ii) that the quarterly performance report submitted at the end of each quarter demonstrates that the project is performing to target and timescales before any further advances of funding are made.

9.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The post for the Corporate Services Department would be located within the Strategic Development team. The post would provide redeployment opportunities for officers who are part of the Council's redeployment process. The post would be on a fixed term basis until 31st March 2011 (subject to the Government's confirmation of WNF resources) and at the end of the funding the employee would be dealt with in line with the Council's workforce policies. A report will be submitted to Employment Committee in April.

10.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The implementation of Working Wirral will reflect the Council's commitment to equal opportunities.

11.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Projects proposed to be funded through Working Wirral are likely to have positive community safety benefits.

12.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific implications arising directly from this report.

13.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are none arising from this report.

14.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Working Wirral will have significant future benefits for this area.

15.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Working Wirral will have significant future benefits for this area.

16.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

16.1 This report will be of interest to all Members of the Council.

17.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 The Working Neighbourhoods Fund Statement – DCLG and DWP Paper November 2007

Sub National Review of Economic Development – Report to Cabinet 6.09.07

Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007 – DCLG December 2007

Area Based Grant 2008/09 to 2010/11 – Report to Cabinet 10.01.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 23.01.08

European Social Fund Complementary Strand – Report to Cabinet 07.02.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 13.03.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 09.07.08

European Social Fund Complementary Strand – Report to Cabinet 23.07.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 04.09.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 16.10.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 10.12.08

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Report to Cabinet 15.01.09

18.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 Cabinet as accountable body for the Working Neighbourhoods Fund agrees the recommendations of the WEDS Partnership and Investment Board, subject to detailed contracting Working Wirral expenditure for:

- Advocacy in Wirral – Wirral Bridges project up to a maximum of £49,246 for the period 2009 – 2011;

- Wirral Learning Consortium – Supporting Wirral project up to a maximum of £1,104,998 for the period 2009 – 2011;
- Wirral Mind ABC Together Project to a maximum of £752,783 for the period of 2009-2011
- Remploy- Linking people to Employment project to a maximum of £806,308 for the period 2009-2011
- Cheshire & Wirral NHS Foundation Trust – Improving Health project to maximum of 163,140 for the period 2009-2011
- Wirral Society of the Blind and Partially Sighted – Training and Development project to a maximum of £37,253 for the period 2009-2011
- Wirral Metropolitan College – First Steps to Employment project to a maximum of £130,000 for the period 2009-2011
- Enterprise Solutions - 3 month extension to the WirralBiz programme up to a maximum of £262,500 for the period 1 April to 30 June 2009;
- International Links Project up to a maximum of £360,000 for the period 2009-2011
- Support for Small Medium Sized Enterprises project up to a maximum of £1,600,000 for the period 2009-2011
- Infrastructure studies up to a maximum of £50,000 for the period 2009-2011.

18.2 It is recommended that if any advance funding for cashflow reasons is required, it is only done for voluntary and community sector groups on the maximum of a quarterly basis at a time and that it is subject to:

- i) the organisation clearly evidencing a need for advance funding, and
- ii) that the quarterly performance report submitted at the end of each quarter demonstrates that the project is performing to target and timescales before any further advance of funding is made.

J. WILKIE
Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 19TH MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/ DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

BUSINESS SUPPORT – RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Executive Summary

1.1 This report outlines the impact of the current recession on Wirral's economy and identifies the steps taken by the Council to assist businesses affected by the current economic challenges, and builds upon the budget proposals identified at Cabinet on 23rd February 2009.

1.2 Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Note the content of the report.
- (ii) Agree the proposals for the support mechanisms and programme interventions that are set out in this report, including the business support programme using the £50,000 identified within the budget resolution to support local companies during the current economic downturn in conjunction with £800,000 per year of Working Wirral funds.
- (iii) That the Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Corporate Services presents a monthly update report to Cabinet on the state of the local economy.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1 The UK economy is now officially in the midst of a recession, ending the extraordinary boom of the last decade. Conditions have deteriorated rapidly amidst global financial turbulence, weakness in major export markets, a property market crash as well as a surge in food and energy prices.
- 2.2 The Bank of England Agents' last summary of business conditions (December 2008) reported shrinking demand; reduced retail sales; falls in output in manufacturing, construction and business services; a slowing of export orders; and an easing of input and output price inflation. The Bank of England is unable at this stage to advise on the possible length or severity of the problems.
- 2.3 Significant redundancies are being reported nationally on a weekly basis, with the car industry and its supply chain particularly badly affected. With daily reporting on the effects of the recession and successive Government responses, the challenge is to understand how Wirral's economy is being affected and respond in appropriate ways.

Wirral partners are aiming to take forward a co-ordinated and coherent response to the economic situation. This focuses on the following key elements:

- Monitoring and assessing the evidence
- Adapting current provision to meet emerging requirements
- Agreeing specific responses eg to redundancies, increased unemployment, businesses
- Consultation with and support to local businesses

Labour market data

2.5 It is important to note the limitations of many official data sources. For example, data may not be available at the Wirral level or lower. Furthermore, much of the data has a significant time lag – thereby not accurately reflecting more recent worsening conditions. Notwithstanding that, the following is a summary of key indicators:

Employment rate: Latest data indicates that Wirral’s overall Employment Rate has decreased by 2.1% points from its December 2007 position of 71.4% to 69.3% (Jun 08) which is significantly more than the regional and national decreases of 0.2 and 0.1 % points respectively. However the volatility of this survey based measure must be taken into account. The December 2007 figures showed an increase significantly higher than those both regionally and nationally.

Worklessness: High rates of worklessness and severe concentrations of deprivation continue to present a significant challenge. Rising unemployment has had a significant impact on worklessness rates within the Borough. Latest Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimant count data to January 2009 indicates a significant increase, with Wirral’s rate now standing at 4.6%.

Table 1: Numbers claiming JSA Wirral

Oct-07	Jan-08	Aug-08	Sep-08	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08	Jan-09
5,793	6,355	6,621	6,703	6,811	7,247	7,822	8,499

Source: NOMIS

Redundancies: Analysis of HR11 redundancy notifications provided by Jobcentre Plus has demonstrated a relatively high volume of redundancies in the borough. In 2007/08, 5 employers notified a total of 1051 redundancies (821 of these were attributable to job losses at Burtons). Analysis of HR1s from April 2008 to January 09 shows a further 20 employers notifying and additional 942 job losses.

Job Vacancies: Statistical information shows that the number of Wirral vacancies notified to Job Centre Plus (JCP) have reduced to January 09. Furthermore, anecdotal information from the Greater Merseyside Connexions Service suggests a 12% decrease in their vacancies from this time last year.

Table 2: Vacancies Notified to JCP (Wirral)

Oct 07	Jan 08	Aug 08	Sept 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09
1,389	671	1,919	890	1,290	1,739	969	447

Source: NOMIS

Impact on local businesses

2.6 Recent examples include the announcement on 7 January 2009 of over 300 job losses by Tulip Foods in Bromborough. The food industry appears to be particularly impacted within the Travel to Work Area, with significant redundancies also announced in Ellesmere Port and Flintshire. Over capacity appears to be the major factor within this sector. Officers continue to work with local MP's and Tulip to investigate whether the situation can be resolved in a favourable manner for Wirral employment opportunities and the current employees.

General Motors' Vauxhall Plant in Ellesmere Port had an extended four week closure over Christmas to reduce productivity. GM employs about 5,500 people in the UK, with about 2,200 staff at Ellesmere Port, many of whom are Wirral residents. GM UK offered workers at the plant in Ellesmere Port the option of taking up to eight months leave between January 1 and September 1 2009, on 30 per cent pay. The company has been implementing shorter shifts, four-day weeks and pay cuts to avoid job losses. Discussions about cost-cutting at the plant are set to continue in the wake of the recent announcement by US parent General Motors to axe up to 47,000 workers around the world. Any job losses at Ellesmere Port will also have significant implications for local supply chains.

¹ Definition of HR1 notification: Employers are required by law to notify of a proposal to dismiss 20 or more employees as redundant at one establishment. Please note the final number of redundancies may be higher or lower than the number given.

2.8 Whilst the Council's Invest Wirral team continues to work with companies regarding expansion and investment plans, there are significantly more occurrences of them working with companies which are experiencing operating difficulties in the current economic climate. Invest Wirral is acting in a responsive manner in identifying and targeting such companies and is working much more closely with partner organisations to ensure a co-ordinated approach. The proposals outlined later in this report will build upon that co-ordinated approach and the package of support available.

Sectoral Impact

2.9 Regional analysis suggests a particularly adverse impact on sectors as follows:

Construction / Housing

- All supply chains are being affected (from brick suppliers to estate agents)
- Repossessions have risen in Northwest above national averages
- Increase in rental market
- Empty properties due to access to finance

Manufacturing

- Jaguar, Vauxhall, Bentley – reduced shifts/ shorter weeks

Food Industry

- over capacity is bringing consolidation and closure risk

Service/Finance

- Development related redundancies likely in early 2009 (such as planning, legal, surveyors)

Retail

- Some significant recent closures and job losses. Increasing concern over knock on effect to town centres, high streets and local businesses.

Additional evidence

Investment Inquiries

2.10 There has been a significant impact on inward investment enquiries, particular with on going negotiations. Many businesses are reviewing earlier decisions in light of the current circumstances and both access to credit and availability of premises remain major issues. Equally, the changed market conditions are

causing a review of decisions/need. For example, a manufacturing business that was close to investing in a new build facility at Bidston has decided to shelve the development, despite a number of incentives to bring them to the area. The reason for doing so quite simply revolves around the company's ability to now buy raw materials needed as part of its manufacturing process at a cheaper price than it can itself manufacture them for due to over supply and over capacity within the market.

Infrastructure Developments

- 2.11 Generally, in line with national trends, local developers are reporting difficulties in accessing finance which has resulted in speculative developments being put on hold. Many lenders are requiring already committed end users and fully pre let schemes before considering financial assistance. As well as impacting on the level of new development and ultimately job and wealth creation, this has also had an impact on the demand for ERDF funding which had been planned to part finance the initiatives. This is resulting in a significant level of potential under spend across the Liverpool City Region and causing great concern due to potential de-commitment of ERDF and the problem of reduced grant level intervention rates from 2010

Feedback from businesses

- 2.12 Businesses are indicating an overall reduction in demand for goods and services, with lower consumer demand cascading through supply chains. Cash and finance are the most urgent concerns. In relation to staffing, there is some evidence that businesses are reluctant to let skilled and committed staff go but are faced with reduced demand impacts. There is still evidence of skills disparities and it is interesting to note that there are hard to fill vacancies. Redundancies are acknowledged as the last resort.
- 2.13 There are still some growth markets and the issue is how companies can continue to grow within wider declining markets. Opportunities exist for some companies/sectors to take advantage of the economic situation. For example, some larger companies are considering outsourcing large aspects of their business processes. Within Wirral, there have been recent examples of local businesses winning contracts from larger companies to undertake outsourced production. This has been evident in some aspects of the pharmaceutical industry.

Wider Impact

Housing

- 2.14 There appears to be a significant collapse in sales and market confidence; apparently arising from the difficulties experienced by developers and individual householders accessing finance. Affordability still remains an issue,

whilst property prices are reducing, the increase in required deposits for mortgages means if anything, the ability to access housing through purchase has worsened.

- 2.15 Anecdotally there are a number of investment landlords getting out of property with consequent terminations of tenancies for disposal with vacant possession; this coupled with a pattern of rising mortgage or debt repossession is increasing pressure on social housing through growing homelessness presentations.
- 2.16 The current economic slowdown is having significant effects on key housing led regeneration schemes with demand falling sharply, causing caution among developers on land value offers.
- 2.17 Key indications are that volumes of house sales are falling across the Borough as are prices; and an increase in the empty properties in the more vulnerable neighbourhoods. Data produced by Land Registry has demonstrated that Wirral has seen a 3.57% decrease in median house prices when comparing data over the last 12 months. Similarly house sales in Wirral for the same period have highlighted a decrease of 46% with this rising to as high as 62% in one of the Borough's most deprived areas.
- 2.18 Recent figures from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors indicate that two areas in Wirral rank amongst the top 10 worst towns for house sales in the UK, when comparing the length of time that properties are on the market. Hoylake is the third worst and West Kirby placed seventh.
- 2.19 Latest statistics from the Ministry of Justice show that Mortgage possession claims in Birkenhead County Court were up by 16% in the first three quarters of 2008 compared with the first three quarters of 2007. Furthermore, they were up 35% in Q3 of 2008 compared with Q3 in 2007.
- 2.20 Mortgage possession orders were up 51% in the first three quarters of 2008, and up 59% in Q3 of 2008 compared with Q3 of 2007.
- 2.21 The Council is seeking to address the challenges in the housing market in a number of ways. It is working actively with Government, regional and sub-regional partners to address the very significant challenges which are currently being experienced. Specifically for Wirral it is continuing to progress its Housing Market Renewal Initiative, increasing the work of its Empty Property Strategy Team, taking part in the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme, restructuring its Re-housing Services to place a greater emphasis on preventing homelessness and working with its Registered Social Landlords to take forward a number of initiatives in relation to worklessness and financial inclusion.

Apprenticeships

- 2.22. Some anecdotal information on the impact of the downturn relates to in work training and apprenticeships. For example, the average cost of training for companies accessing Skillworks has decreased from around £7000 per intervention to £3500 per intervention as companies reduce their training plans / budgets.
- 2.23 We have also very recently gathered information from two of the Borough's large training providers to suggest that there has been an increase in apprentices losing their jobs. We are in discussion with the wider Work Based Learning Network to request some further detailed information on this front.
- 2.24 The underlying principle of responses is based on good economic intelligence and policy, with an understanding of business fundamentals and long term strengths. There is a need to maintain a long-term focus on skills, innovation and regeneration and it is important to keep a longer term strategy ready for when recovery starts.

National Policy Response

Pre-Budget Report / New Opportunities White Paper

- 2.25 Through the Autumn Pre-Budget Report (PBR), the government set out a number of immediate actions to help individuals and businesses most affected by the economic downturn. These actions are set in the context of a predicted range of major economic shocks which project that: economic growth will slow to 3/4% in 2008 and potentially -3/4% in 2009; inflation will fall; and borrowing could peak at £118bn in 2009/10. The PBR outlined that the economic situation we face is a global issue and not confined to the UK, with global solutions required to solve many of the issues. The report suggests that all countries of the world, with the sole exception of China, will continue to face growing economic challenges.
- 2.26 To help stimulate the economy, the Government announced that VAT will be lowered from 17.5% to 15% and public investment will be accelerated rather than cut by bringing forward £3 billion worth of capital projects, including £535 million on energy efficiency, rail transport and adaptation measures.
- 2.27 To help individuals, income tax personal allowance increases will be made permanent, child benefit and pension payments will be brought forward from April to January, and increased mortgage support schemes will be provided for homeowners in difficulty.
- 2.28 To help the unemployed, the PBR announced an extra £1.3 billion of investment in personalised support for those seeking work. This includes

support for those newly out of work to up-skill into new areas of employment and £500 million for those out of work for over 6 months.

2.29 To support businesses through the downturn, the measures announced in the PBR largely focus on the short to medium term challenges they face. For SME's, the Government will work in conjunction with the Regional Development Agencies to:

- launch the Small Business Finance Scheme, a new temporary guarantee scheme to enable up to £1bn of Government supported bank lending,
- introduce a temporary guarantee scheme in conjunction with the Export Credits Guarantee Department to support a £1bn facility providing smaller exporters with better access to short-term working capital,
- make available a capital fund of £50m providing equity or quasi-equity to SME's who are overleveraged,
- introduce transition loan funds for viable SME's facing financial difficulties,
- offer a single portal service through Business Link to direct credit-worthy SME's who are experiencing problems to appropriate finance schemes.

2.30 To promote enterprise, £10m of risk capital has been earmarked for social enterprise; the Government will take forward the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Custom (HMRC) led programme of regulatory reform to decrease the administrative burden; and research will be undertaken of current enterprise education in schools and colleges to bring forward new approaches.

2.31 DWP and DIUS have joined forces to announce a cash injection of £100m over the next three years to give much needed help to people who lose their jobs. The extra cash will be available for people who are currently facing redundancy and those looking for work to help them retrain and develop their skills so that they can quickly move back into sustainable employment, either in their existing sector or a brand new one. The additional money will come from the European Social Fund and funding from DIUS.

2.32 Skills Secretary John Denham also announced that small businesses will be the focus of £350 million of Government funds to help them train their staff via Train to Gain. The Government's approach will be reshaped and money will be available to deliver a new package of support to help small businesses get through the tougher economic climate by building the skills and expertise of their workers.

2.33 North West Regional Minister Beverley Hughes is leading the NW Regional Joint Economic Council, supporting the National Economic Council in

providing a new approach to co-ordinating economic policies across Government. The JEC has already called for evidence to better understand the impact of the current economic situation.

3. Actions Taken to Date

- 3.1 The Council currently operate a number of programmes of activity that have adapted to the current financial conditions. These include:

Key infrastructure projects

- 3.2 The Council recognises that it is essential to do everything possible to protect local businesses and jobs from the impact of the recession as well as continuing to play its part in stimulating the local economy. As agreed by Budget Council on 2nd March, the Council is planning a major £20M capital investment in new and modernised buildings over the next four years and over £25M of government money is also about to be spent on the building of a brand new secondary school. Contractors will be asked wherever possible to employ a high percentage of local labour and every opportunity will be taken to allow local businesses to showcase their wares through the Council's building programme.

The Council will also continue to support the delivery of several key economic infrastructure projects. In line with national policy, every effort is being made to focus and bring forward key infrastructure projects across the Borough to create employment opportunities and having a positive effect on the economy. Council officers continue to work with the private sector in accessing key external funding to support and where necessary, provide gap funding to key schemes and projects. There are a number of projects that developers are still actively progressing including Wirral Waters, New Brighton phase 2, the proposed foodstore in Birkenhead, the Europa Boulevard development, The Sail in West Kirby and Woodside,

Key infrastructure requirements

Officers are currently in the process of trying to identifying the needs for Wirral in respect of power constraints and digital access. There are a number of constraints that could potentially prevent key sites and premises being brought to the market in the future due for employment use. Addressing these issues not will provide where necessary for the economic upturn.

Business Support

- 3.4 Wirral Council meet monthly with the Wirral Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses to ensure that regular and accurate feedback is received on the issues facing small businesses locally, and this intelligence is being used to inform our responses to the current economic situation.

- 3.5 Providing enhanced business support: To complement existing business networking, every effort is being made to ensure companies can easily access the national support available. This includes:-
- Invest Wirral working with Business Link to ensure that information is cascaded through online business forums networks and Wirral Investment Network (WIN) which represents the Business and Professional Sector
 - Setting up an online local business support/events calendar using a mixture of Working Wirral and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support which further promotes key support services.
 - Seminar with NWDA in January regarding access to finance held at the Floral Pavilion.
- 3.6 Small Firms Rate Relief - this is being followed up with additional awareness promotion of the scheme for eligible businesses to pursue. In addition, the Government announced changes to the Ratings scheme for empty properties as part of the recession budget which come into force from April 2009 – these will of course also be promoted by the Revenues section.

Employment Support

- 3.7 Providing co-ordinated redundancy support - Key partners (Wirral Council, Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council) co-ordinate activity through the Wirral Economic Development and Skills (WEDS) Partnership.
- 3.8 Working Wirral: The Council provides a number of commissioned activities and development services across the Borough to help improve local people's skills and employment prospects:

Partner activity

- 3.9 These measures complement work being undertaken by partners including:
- Jobcentre Plus (JCP) - In addition to their core services, JCP has brought down the eligibility for certain programmes from six months to day one to enable the newly unemployed to access their enhanced offer.
 - The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) - the LSC works closely with JCP and to deliver an Integrated Employment and Skills programme across Greater Merseyside; and Train to Gain programme and the pre employment has been subsequent enhanced in response to the situation.
 - Business Link - is working with Council service areas to increase access to business support services.

- The Council is forming an action group of the main public sector agencies to co-ordinate collective responses to the current situation.
- 3.10 Strong partnership working at an operational level is being supported and developed by the WEDS partnership which is receiving regular updates on the downturn and partners share organisational intelligence and policy updates. Officers are also participating in Merseyside meetings to look at the effects of the recession, and agree some co-ordinated responses.
- 3.11 We are also in discussion with the Third Sector as to how they too can contribute to helping deal with the current economic situation.
4. New Interventions
- 4.1 In response to the economic downturn the Council agreed a specific set of interventions at Budget Council on 2nd March. This package included
- a) Measures to improve the cash flow of local businesses by targeting payment of invoices within 10 days for all creditors from small and medium sized enterprises employing fewer than 250 people. A report on this initiative is included elsewhere on this agenda.
 - b) The establishment of a grant fund of £50,000 for one year to give immediate support to previously successful micro businesses employing 10 or fewer employees who now face difficulties as a result of the credit crunch.
 - c) Proposals to use the Council's major capital programmes to assist the local economy. Contractors will be asked wherever possible to employ a high percentage of local labour.
 - d) The development of a construction employer integrator scheme to bring together information on all construction projects in Wirral. This will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet.
 - e) The investigation for the potential to establish a municipal bank either in conjunction either with other Merseyside authorities or separately, to assist local businesses with loans in a situation and could also serve the function of assisting domestic clients with mortgages where the supply has dried up and where it may be in the interests of the Authority to encourage the use of housing which may not be attractive to commercial lenders.
- 4.2 This report recommends a series of additional measures to help companies in the current economic climate. These measures are set out below.
- (i) BIG Support Grant: The Council is fully aware of the challenges that many businesses in our area are facing at the present time, and recognises the need for us to work collectively with our partners to minimise the adverse impacts of the economic downturn on businesses and their employees.

Access to capital and cash flow has been identified as a major problem. Wirral's business makeup is dominated by micro-businesses (those with fewer than ten employees) and a number of these have reported continued difficulty in speedy access to funds through current and indeed proposed arrangements.

Therefore a programme has been designed to specifically support (SME's 250 employees and less) with a specific focus on micro businesses. This programme will utilise the £50,000 agreed by Budget Council on 2nd March 2009 to support local companies during the current economic downturn and £800,000 per year of Working Wirral funds. The fund will be available for a wide range of support, including grants support and helping companies to access other sources of finance, It is hoped that the availability of such financial support will encourage banks and other lending institutions to also invest in these businesses. A more detailed project outline is attached at Appendix B to this report.

- (ii) The "Think Big" Investment Fund currently supports existing and inward investing businesses on a range of big projects that will support employment growth and business expansion. Given the current situation, Officers have drafted a new set of criteria for the fund which will allow businesses to safeguard jobs within a new set of defined criteria which will allow businesses to access finance for other outcomes rather than just growth.

The capital grant will be offered to Wirral businesses which have viable project proposals to support the sustainability or growth of the company. Grants must be in line with EU State Aid limits which have recently been revised upwards. The "Think Big" investment fund will operate accordingly and up to the maximums allowed under EU State Aid rules at the time of application. The draft criteria is set out in Appendix A of this report.

- (iii) BIG consultancy support. We are recommending the provision of consultancy support to assist with financial planning and the development of business plans which take account of current market conditions. It is proposed that businesses would receive up to three days consultancy free of charge.
- (iv) Additional support will be provided to businesses by the provision of three Business Advocate posts. These posts will be hosted within Business Link but will focus exclusively on supporting Wirral businesses. This element of the package will be funded from ERDF 4.2, as previously reported to Cabinet on 10th December 2008.
- (v) Business Conference - Wirral Council will host a seminar on the 25th and 26th of March which will focus on supporting business through difficult times. The main purpose of this event is to bring together public sector organisations with the private sector to outline the support services that are available. There will

also be drop in sessions which will discuss a variety of topics from information or advice on grants, funding, finance, staffing, health & safety, marketing, occupational health, legal rights and responsibilities. The event will include the North West Development Agency, Business Link North West and will include speakers from a number of other support agencies. We are working with the banking sector to use this event to promote dialogue between businesses and banks about how companies can maximise the prospect of obtaining bank finance in the current economic climate.

Apprenticeships

- 4.3. Further to the Budget resolution, Officers are exploring the options for the development of an apprenticeship programme for the borough, with access to all vocational areas.
- 4.4 Apprenticeships will support the council and its partners to continue tackling worklessness and skills issues by offering support within a structured apprentice programme. Any activity will add value to recent national announcements on supporting apprenticeships.
- 4.5 Details of a Construction Integrator scheme are currently being drawn up by officers, which will explore a variety of training and apprenticeship opportunities. A separate report setting out further details of this initiative will be brought to a future cabinet meeting.
5. Financial Implications
 - 5.1. BUSINESS SUPPORT: Working Wirral will fund the total project cost will be £800,000 per annum over a two year period (up to 31st March 2011) and will be used to provide grant and consultancy support. The project will work in tandem with the ERDF 4.2 project that Cabinet agreed for Working Wirral funding in December (Item 18 Minute 305 refers) as match funding for the European resource. The ERDF 4.2 project will provide support for micro businesses via three Business Advocate posts which will be provided by a third party. The programme of activity will be supported by £50,000 which was made available within the budget proposals in Cabinet in February 09.
6. Staffing Implications
 - 6.1. There are no staffing implications arising as a direct result of this report.
7. Equal Opportunities Information
 - 7.1. All of the activity outlined in this report promotes equal opportunities..
8. Community Safety Implications
 - 8.1. None as a result of this report

9. Local Agenda 21 Implications
 - 9.1. None as a result of this report
10. Planning Implications
 - 10.1 There are no planning implications arising as a direct result of this report
11. Anti-Poverty Implications
 - 11.1 None as a result of this result
12. Human Rights Implications
 - 12.1. None as a result of this result
13. Social Inclusion Implications
 - 13.1 None as a result of this report
14. Local Member Support Implications
 - 14.1. None as a direct result of this report
15. Background Papers
 - 15.1 Background papers are available by contacting Alan Evans in the Economic Policy Team on 0151 691 8426.

RECOMMENDATIONS - That

- (i) The contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) The proposals for the support mechanisms and programme interventions that are set out in the report be agreed, specifically:
 - The changes proposed for the Think Big Investment Fund
 - A programme of Support for Small Businesses (£50k budget resolution and £800k Working Wirral)
- (iii) The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services presents a monthly update report to Cabinet on the state of the local economy

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Corporate Services

Appendix B

Invest Wirral

Big Support

Purpose of the Fund

Wirral Borough Council is committed to supporting the sustainability and growth of its business community. This fund will utilise the £50,000 identified at Cabinet on 23 February 2009 to support local companies during the current economic downturn and £800,000 per year of Working Wirral funds. During the current economic downturn, this fund will be used to support SME's with potential for growth in Wirral, but importantly, will also support the sustaining of companies who may be having difficulty during this downturn. This fund represents a partnership between the business and the Council, investing in the future of the business and the Borough.

The aim is to make the fund as flexible as possible, to meet the funding needs of the business. The business must be sound, solvent and its plans well considered and prepared. The funding provided will recognise a range of factors, including the need for funding to enable the project to proceed.

This fund will be just one of a range of support services available to businesses including working with the business to identify and secure other sources of funding including NWDA (GBI), Alliance Fund Managers and Banks.

The fund will be available for a wide range of support, including access to consultancy and grants. It is also hoped that the availability of such financial support will encourage banks and other lending institutions to also invest in these businesses.

Business Eligibility Criteria

Invest Wirral Business Team will consider investment plans from local SME's (upto 250 employees) with particular focus on the micro businesses.

The business must be financially and organisationally sound and trading in legitimate activity and be able to demonstrate this.

The Company and its Directors must be solvent.

The business and its project must pass the “local competition test” in that their sales are not primarily to a local market or be primarily at the expense of local businesses.

Must comply with rules relating to EU State Aid.

Project Eligibility Criteria

In essence, the fund is available to support small firms with potential for growth in Wirral. This can take a wide number of forms – listed are a few examples.

- A company choosing to locate in Wirral for the first time.
- An established business in Wirral with a project to sustain or uplift the productivity and employment of their business through investing in their people, equipment or facilities.
- A new business with growth potential

What cannot be supported?

- Routine, replacement or renewal investment in the business
- Projects that do not require funding to proceed.
- Projects that have already commenced or that are contractually committed

Eligible Expenditure

Fixed and Project related Investment including:-

- a. Plant, Equipment etc excluding vehicles
- b. Buildings - acquisition, improvement, adaptation, extension
- c. Investment in new technology, systems, software, processes
- d. Initial running or one off expenditure
- e. Investment in people
- f. Working capital (in exceptional circumstances)
- g. Consultancy support

Level of Funding

The level of funding provided under this scheme ranges from £4,000 - £20,000.

This fund is entirely discretionary and the level of funding offered will be based upon the assessed need for funding and the benefit the project will bring to the business and to Wirral in both the short and long term. Long-term

safeguarding of jobs will be considered provided there is a significant uplift in business productivity.

Funding can be provided as a proportion of eligible project costs provided the overall level of public funding to business complies with EU State Aid Regulations.

Businesses should be able to demonstrate that they have exhausted all other conventional sources of funding available to them. In the case of inward investing companies a need for funding can be demonstrated by alternative location options open to the business or the internal rate of return on investment required for an investment to take place.

The grant will be awarded by means of a capital payment.

Application Process

Application starts with a telephone call or meeting with the Invest Wirral Business Team.

An Investment Manager will be allocated to work with the business to establish the details of the project, advise of eligibility and, subject to eligibility prepare a case for consideration by the Council. The financial information will be independently assessed by an allocated manager within the Council.

The allocated Manager will provide a report with recommendations to an independent panel for approval.

A panel will be set up to determine applications and will meet monthly to ensure that speedy decisions are made.

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Invest Wirral

“Think Big” Investment Fund

Purpose of the Fund

Invest Wirral “Think Big” Investment Fund supports existing and inward investing businesses with potential for growth in Wirral. This fund represents a partnership between the business and the Council, investing in the future of the business and the Borough.

The fund has previously been targeted at businesses creating new employment opportunities. However, given the current economic climate, it is proposed that the fund is made as flexible as possible, to meet the funding needs of the business. This in effect means supporting sustainability of business in addition to new job growth. The business must be sound, solvent and its plans well considered and prepared. The funding provided will recognise a range of factors, including the need for funding to enable the project to proceed. It will build upon the “big support” business investment grant for businesses that require higher levels of financial support.

This fund will be just one of a range of support services available to businesses including working with the business to identify and secure other sources of funding including NWDA (GBI), Alliance Fund Managers and Banks.

Business Eligibility Criteria

Invest Wirral Business Team will consider investment plans from businesses of all sizes, including inward investing and indigenous businesses.

The business must be financially and organisationally sound and trading in legitimate activity and be able to demonstrate this.

The Company and its Directors must be solvent.

The business and its project must pass the “local competition test” in that their sales are not primarily to a local market or be primarily at the expense of local businesses.

Must comply with rules relating to EU State Aid.

Project Eligibility Criteria

What does “Thinking Big” mean?

In essence, we equate Thinking Big to transformational projects – projects that transform the growth trajectory of the business in Wirral. This can take a wide number of forms – listed are a few examples.

- A company choosing to locate in Wirral for the first time. All such cases pass the “Thinking Big” test by adding to the national and international business base in the Borough.
- An established business in Wirral with a project to uplift the productivity and/or employment of their business through investing in their people, equipment and facilities.
- A new business with fast growth potential that requires funds to achieve growth.

What cannot be supported?

- Routine, replacement or renewal investment in the business
- Projects that do not require funding to proceed.
- Projects that have already commenced or that are contractually committed

Eligible Expenditure

Fixed and Project related Investment including:-

- a. Plant, Equipment etc excluding vehicles

- b. Buildings - acquisition, improvement, adaptation, extension
- c. Investment in new technology, systems, software, processes
- d. Initial running or one off expenditure
- e. Investment in people

Level of Funding

The funding available ranges from £20,000 up to a maximum of £100,000 per project. This fund is entirely discretionary and the level of funding offered will be based upon the assessed need for funding and the benefit the project will bring to the business and to Wirral in both the short and long term.

Funding must be within EU State Aid limits. Long-term safeguarding of jobs will be considered provided there is a significant uplift in business productivity.

Businesses should be able to demonstrate that they have exhausted all other conventional sources of funding available to them. In the case of inward investing companies a need for funding can be demonstrated by alternative location options open to the business or the internal rate of return on investment required for an investment to take place.

The grant will be awarded by means of a capital payment or a reduction in business rates over a two year period.

Application Process

Application starts with a telephone call or meeting with the Invest Wirral Business Team.

An Investment Manager will be allocated to work with the business to establish the details of the project, advise of eligibility and, subject to eligibility prepare a case for consideration by the Council. The financial information will be independently assessed by the Council's finance departments, who will also provide feedback and a recommendation.

This will involve a rigorous and independent due diligence process on the Company, the owners/directors of the Company and the project itself.

The Council will seek to make swift determination of projects once all of the information is received for assessment. The allocated Investment Manager will provide a report with recommendations to the Council's Cabinet Committee.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19TH MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF
CORPORATE SERVICES

MERSEYSIDE RURAL ECONOMY STRATEGY

1. Executive Summary

The Merseyside Rural Economy Steering Group has recently been established, bringing together the 6 Greater Merseyside Local Authorities, with St Helens as the lead. The aim of the group is to establish a clear evidence base of rural economic opportunities and challenges; to agree a common understanding of rural economic programmes and funding opportunities; and to understand the specific issues of each individual local authority.

This report asks members to approve a one-off contribution of £10,000 from Wirral towards developing the Merseyside Rural Economy evidence base, strategy and action plan implementation.

2. Background and Context

2.1. There are a number of rural economic funding programmes in place. These include:

- The Integrated Countryside and Environment Plan (ICEP), which aims to provide an umbrella project encompassing improvements to rural businesses and the environment in Merseyside. ICEP has been running for more than 8 years and has had a number of successes including The Mersey Forest which works to deliver ICEP through Community Forestry.
- Successful Wirral initiatives include Bidston Moss, where an ICEP Mersey Forest Grant has complemented investment by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), the Forestry Commission, Groundwork Wirral, Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority and Wirral Council to transform an area of brownfield land six times the size of Wembley Stadium into community woodland.
- ICEP has now been succeeded by the Leader Programme, under which Merseyside has been awarded £2.2m for the period until 2013. This programme will have six key areas of work:
 - Support Merseyside
 - Equine Business Support
 - Sustainable Biomass
 - Recycling and Carbon Auditing

- Rural retail business improvement
 - Attractions and tourism
 - In addition, the Northwest Development Agency has allocated between £1.5 m and £2m for rural economic development in Merseyside over the coming 3 year period.
- 2.2. There are a number of additional funding opportunities and initiatives that need to be considered, including: -
- Natural England and the Forestry Commission
 - Business Link and the Business Support Simplification programme
 - ERDF
 - Green Infrastructure policy
- 2.3. There is clearly a complicated funding and initiative landscape and the Merseyside Rural Economy Steering Group aims to bring a strategic overview of this through the production of a Rural Economy Strategy and Action Plan.
- 2.4. Current estimations indicate that, in the North West, the rural economy generates around £21bn of GVA relative to the £70bn of urban areas¹. It is therefore important to consider the extent and impact of the rural economy within the context of wider economic development – particularly as part of Wirral’s Investment Strategy, to ensure alignment and consistency with Wirral’s agreed strategic economic priorities.

3. Project Proposal

- 3.1. It is therefore proposed to commission a major two-phased assignment relating to Merseyside’s rural economy including:

Phase 1 - the production of an over-arching Merseyside Rural Economy Strategy to be informed by economic baseline and SWOT analyses,

Phase 2 - the production of a detailed, intelligence-led, fully costed integrated Rural Economy Action Plan (REAP) and associated bids to draw down funding and deliver the defined strategy.

- 3.2. It is proposed that Merseyside partners jointly share the cost of commissioning this piece of work and Members are therefore asked to approve a one-off contribution from Wirral of £10,000 maximum.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. Wirral's contribution to the Rural Economy Study will be contained within the budget approved by Cabinet on 16 August 2007 for specialist consultancy services as part of the delivery of the Investment Strategy.

5. Staffing Implications

- 5.1. There are no direct implications arising as a result of this report.

¹ State of the Rural Northwest 2005, PION Economics

6. Equal Opportunities implications

6.1. There are no direct implications arising as a result of this report

7. Community Safety implications

7.1. There are no direct implications arising directly from this report

8. Local Agenda 21 implications

8.1. There are no direct implications arising directly from this report.

9. Planning implications

9.1. There are no direct implications arising directly from this report

10. Anti-poverty implications

10.1. There are no direct implications arising directly from this report

11. Human Rights implications

11.1. There are no direct implications arising directly from this report

12. Social Inclusion implications

12.1. There are no direct implications arising directly from this report

13. Local Member Support implications

13.1. None as a direct result of this report.

14. Background Papers

14.1. The tender brief for the Merseyside Rural Economy Strategy and Action Plan is available from Rose Boylan in the Economic Policy Team, who can be contacted on 691 8037.

15. RECOMMENDATION

That a one-off contribution of £10,000 from Wirral towards developing the Merseyside Rural Economy evidence base, Strategy and action plan implementation be approved.

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

This report has been prepared by Rose Boylan in the Economic Policy Team who can be contacted on 691 8037.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19th March 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

West Kirby Regeneration - The Sail Project

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report informs Cabinet of the details of Carpenter Investments' revised design proposals for the Sail Project. The report asks Members to consider the design proposals in the context of the Council's aspirations for the regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby as well as the wider ambitions of the Council's Investment Strategy. The report seeks a decision from Cabinet on whether to continue their support for the revised proposal based on the designs submitted. If Members are supportive of the revised scheme design, a further report will be brought to Cabinet on 9th April on the associated financial package for the project, including the details of an independent valuation assessment to determine whether the scheme represents value for money to Wirral Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 In November 2004 Cabinet approved the Master Plan for the regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby. The plan was worked up between 2002 and 2004 and was the subject of considerable public consultation involving 13 public events with an estimated 1500 people in attendance culminating in a two page wrap-around in the local press.
- 2.2 The plan identifies a number of short, medium and longer term projects that will contribute to the regeneration of both towns, one of the short term schemes being the replacement of the Sailing School at the head of the marine lake. This scheme is now being taken forward through the Sail Project, which involves the creation of a new, state of the art Sailing School and boutique hotel complex funded entirely through the private sector and at no cost to the Council.

3. Update on progress

- 3.1 Further to satisfying the requirements of the lock-out agreement, Carpenter Investments submitted a revised, outline, scheme proposal in November 2008. At its meeting in December 2008 (minute 289 refers), Cabinet approved a three month extension to the lock out agreement to the 10th April 2009 to allow Carpenter Investments time to provide more details about their revised proposal, specifically in relation to what the scheme will look like and the associated financial package.
- 3.2 Carpenter Investments has now provided details of their revised scheme proposals. Plans and images of the revised scheme are attached to this report (see appendix 1 – 9). Carpenter Investments has also provided some financial information and are in the process of providing further financial detail at the point of writing this report. Officers from Asset Management are in the process of commissioning an independent assessment of the financial details to determine whether the proposed financial deal

represents value for money. This will be reported to members on 9th April Cabinet meeting, subject to members continuing their support for the scheme in the light of the revised scheme design.

- 3.3 Since the December Cabinet, no further consultation has been undertaken in relation to the scheme. There have been a number of requests for the developer to undertake further public consultation activities. However, Members should be aware that the programme of consultation undertaken by the developer during summer 2008 was consistent with the requirements of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement for potential new development at the pre-planning application stage. Further public consultation will be carried out by Carpenter Investments in the event that a planning application is submitted, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement.

4. Rationale for Revised Scheme Proposal

- 4.1 The revised scheme proposal being put forward is significantly altered from the stage 2 development proposal put forward by Carpenter Investments in December 2006.
- 4.2 The changes adopted in the revised scheme are a direct result of the developer seeking to take on board feedback received from the public consultation exercise. A significant concern expressed at the public consultation over the summer of 2008, related to the design, scale and massing of the proposed hotel building. The developer has appointed a new architect to the project and the new proposals for the hotel and sailing school reflect a significant change in design direction.
- 4.3 In terms of scale and massing, the new design for the Dee Lane element (the proposed hotel) occupies a smaller footprint than the previous proposal and leaves part of the Dee Lane car park with an open aspect onto South Parade. This responds directly to the consultation exercise in relation to concern expressed about the loss of views. However, feedback from an independent Design Review Panel indicates that the hotel design would be improved if it occupied the whole frontage of the Dee Lane Car Park along South Parade (see section 6).
- 4.4 The overall massing of the building has also been reduced from the stage 2 development proposal. On Dee Lane, the height is reduced to two storeys in line with guidance from Development Control officers, with the remainder of the building occupying three storeys. However, the inclusion of a rooftop pavilion set back and to the southern end of the building creates a fourth storey on part of the building which represents a change from the outline plans that were reported to Members in December 2008.
- 4.4 The overall reduction in the scale and cost of the scheme is also a reflection of changing economic conditions over the last six months. However, the reduction in scale does not reflect a reduced specification for the sailing school. Carpenter Investments has also indicated that the reduced scale does not reflect a reduction in the quality of the overall scheme.

5. Summary of revised proposal

- 5.1 The revised scheme involves the creation of a new state of the art Sailing Centre on the footprint of the existing building at the head of the marine lake and a boutique hotel on the Dee Lane car park.

- 5.2 The sailing school building has been designed to accommodate the Council's specification in terms of improved, high quality facilities both for users of the Sailing School and members of the public who hold a licence using the lake. The proposed new building is over two floors with ramped access to the first floor to a public viewing point out across the Dee Estuary. The new building includes provision of a café and ice cream kiosk which will not be operated by the Council but will be sub-leased by Carpenter Investments to third parties with rental income going to Carpenter Investments. The building also includes the re-provision of public toilets to be run by the Council. On site boat storage is increased and dedicated boat storage facilities for community sailing groups are re-provided. The Director of Regeneration is supportive of the sailing school design proposals being put forward.
- 5.3 The revised hotel proposal is a 40 bedroom facility which is smaller than that proposed in the stage 2 development proposal. The hotel includes a dining room, an informal bistro and wide terraces which were a feature of the original design. The conferencing element has been reduced in scale. However, the spa and leisure element of the hotel has been increased to include a pool, gymnasium and treatment room facilities. The enhanced spa and leisure facilities have been incorporated to improve the overall viability of the hotel offer and would be restricted to hotel guests and private membership. Carpenter Investments propose sub-letting the spa and leisure facilities to a leading, high-quality spa operator.
- 5.4 The revised hotel proposal does not include any basement car parking. In the light of building cost estimates, Carpenter Investments has indicated that the return on investment for this element of the scheme does not provide a sufficient level of return on the level of capital investment required. The basement parking would require a capital investment in excess of £1 million to create 54 parking spaces. The revised scheme now provides approximately 86 parking spaces at surface level which represents a net loss of 85 parking spaces on the current provision at Dee Lane. These parking spaces would be for users of the hotel and ancillary facilities as well as the general public. The Director of Technical Services has indicated potential concern about the impact of reduced parking provision and would require the Developer to demonstrate how these concerns would be overcome via detail with any subsequent planning application.
- 5.5 The hotel and sailing school are linked into a single, integrated scheme through the use of similar materials for both buildings. The scheme proposes recycling the red sandstone from the existing sailing school building into elements of the two buildings as this material is common to the area and sympathetic to the coastal environment. Both buildings are finished in similar materials including red sandstone and white render as well as making good use of glass to maximise the views and animate the frontages of the buildings.

6. Places Matter Design Review Feedback

- 6.1 In response to a request from the North West Development Agency (NWDA), the design proposals have been reviewed by Places Matter, an independent architecture and built environment review centre supported by the NWDA, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Royal Institute for British Architects (RIBA) North West. The feedback report from the review process supports the ambition of the scheme in creating a destination for both visitors and residents.

- 6.2 The report also recommends a number of suggested design improvements including the following:
- The panel recommended that the hotel building should fill the full length of the Dee Lane site along South Parade in order to reinforce the linear quality of the design.
 - The panel did not feel there was a justification for the basement car parking in view of the significant costs this would entail.
 - The panel felt that the entrance to the Hotel would be best located on South Parade rather than Dee Lane.
 - The panel felt that consideration must be given to the surroundings of these two strong architectural statements and the public realm design should be seen as a setting for them and treated in a robust way.
 - The viewing ramp on the Sail building itself was supported. However, the panel thought this could be improved to include more panoramic views.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Carpenter Investments has submitted a revised scheme design for the Sail project. The amendments to the scheme have been made to reflect feedback from the public consultation exercise in June 2008 as well as the significant changes that have taken place in the economy in the last six months.
- 7.2 Despite the scheme being smaller in scale, the Council's specification for the sailing school facility has not been reduced. Carpenter Investments also indicates that the reduced scale does not reflect a reduction in the quality of the overall scheme in delivering a state-of –the-art new sailing school and high-quality boutique hotel.
- 7.3 The scheme does not now include any basement parking and as such proposes a net loss of approximately 85 parking spaces. If the developer proceeds to the point of submitting a planning application, the Council will require a full traffic management assessment as part of the planning process.
- 7.4 An independent Places Matter Design Review panel has indicated clear support for the ambition of the scheme in creating a destination for both visitors and residents. The design review also makes a number of recommendations about how the design could be further improved. Subject to Cabinet indicating its continued support for the scheme, it will be at the discretion of Carpenter Investments as to whether to take on board the design improvement recommendations if they proceed towards the submission of a full planning application.
- 7.5 Subject to Cabinet indicating its continued support for the scheme, Officers will prepare a report for Cabinet on 9th April in relation to the financial package being put forward by Carpenter Investments. This report will also provide details of an independent valuation of the proposed financial package.
- 7.6 Subject to Cabinet indicating its continued support for the scheme and the proposal representing value for money for Wirral Council, the developer will undertake further public consultation through the planning application process, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement.

8. Asset Management Implications

- 8.1 The current Sailing School building is an operational facility and has not been declared surplus but is in need of significant repair. The Dee Lane car park has not been declared surplus.
- 8.2 The proposed development opportunity would involve the Council offering up the site on a long lease arrangement to be agreed with the Developer, with the Council retaining the freehold interest. The Council managed elements of the development i.e. the Sailing School would be leased back to the Council on a pepper corn rent.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The project would be financed entirely through private sector investment, with the new Sailing School being provided for within the value of the scheme and at no cost to the Council.
- 9.2 On completion of the land transaction, the Developer would be responsible for maintaining the site with an annual service charge payable by the Council for maintenance in connection with the Sailing School.
- 9.3 Disposal of the Dee Lane car park would result in loss of car parking revenue of approximately £28,000 per annum to the Council. This would be reported to Members in due course when an adjustment to Technical Services budget will be requested.

10. Staffing implications

- 10.1 There are no staffing implications. Liaison in relation to this project is provided by the Special Initiatives Team and Investment Strategy Team within the Corporate Services Department.

11. Equal Opportunities Implications

- 11.1 The provision of new, improved public facilities will bring about equal opportunities benefits in terms of access.
- 11.2 The current, free blue badge-holder parking provision at Dee Lane is likely to be affected by these proposals, although detailed discussions have yet to be held to determine whether and how such impact can be mitigated.

12. Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 Implementation of the project will result in Community Safety improvements with the increases in foot fall and general activity at the junction between Dee Lane and South Parade during evening time.
- 12.2 If the project is supported and goes through to a full planning application, the Police Architectural Liaison Officers will be engaged to ensure the principles of 'secure by design' are incorporated into the design detail.

13. Local Agenda 21 implications.

13.1 Implementation of the project proposals will result in major environmental improvements and a high quality sustainable development. Any final development proposal will need to satisfy an environmental impact assessment (including Habitats Regulations Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment if appropriate) and take on board the views of all relevant consultees including Natural England.

13.2 The proposal is an important element of the regeneration of the Borough.

14. Planning Implications

14.1 Proposals identified within the report will require planning permission and will be reported upon as and when they come forward. The proposals are in conformity with Regional Spatial Strategy Policy RDF3 in their support for improving the image of coastal resorts to attract inward investment and tourism, and Policy LCR4 in terms of consistency with regeneration programmes and policies.

14.2 The site of the existing sailing school is within the Developed Coastal Zone in the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and adjacent to the Dee Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest, which is also a Special Protection Area of International Importance. Redevelopment of the Sailing School is in principle appropriate, subject to UDP Policy CO1. The site of the Dee Lane car park to the East of The Parade is within the West Kirby Key Town Centre. Development of the hotel at Dee Lane is therefore in principle appropriate as a town centre use.

14.3 In due course, Carpenter Investments will be required to pursue further relevant consultation through the planning process in line with standard planning guidance and procedures.

15. Anti-poverty implications

15.1 There are no anti-poverty implications.

16. Social inclusion implications

16.1 There are no social inclusion implications.

17. Local Member Support Implications

17.1 This report is of particular importance to Members in Hoylake and West Kirby and Thurstaston wards.

18. Background Papers

18.1 Background papers in relation to this report are held by the Special Initiatives Team in the Corporate Services Department.

19. Recommendations

19.1 Members are requested to consider their continued support for the scheme in the light of the revised design proposals put forward by Carpenter Investments.

19.2 Subject to Members approving the scheme in its revised format, Officers prepare a report on the financial package being put forward by Carpenter Investments for the next meeting of Cabinet on 9th April.

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

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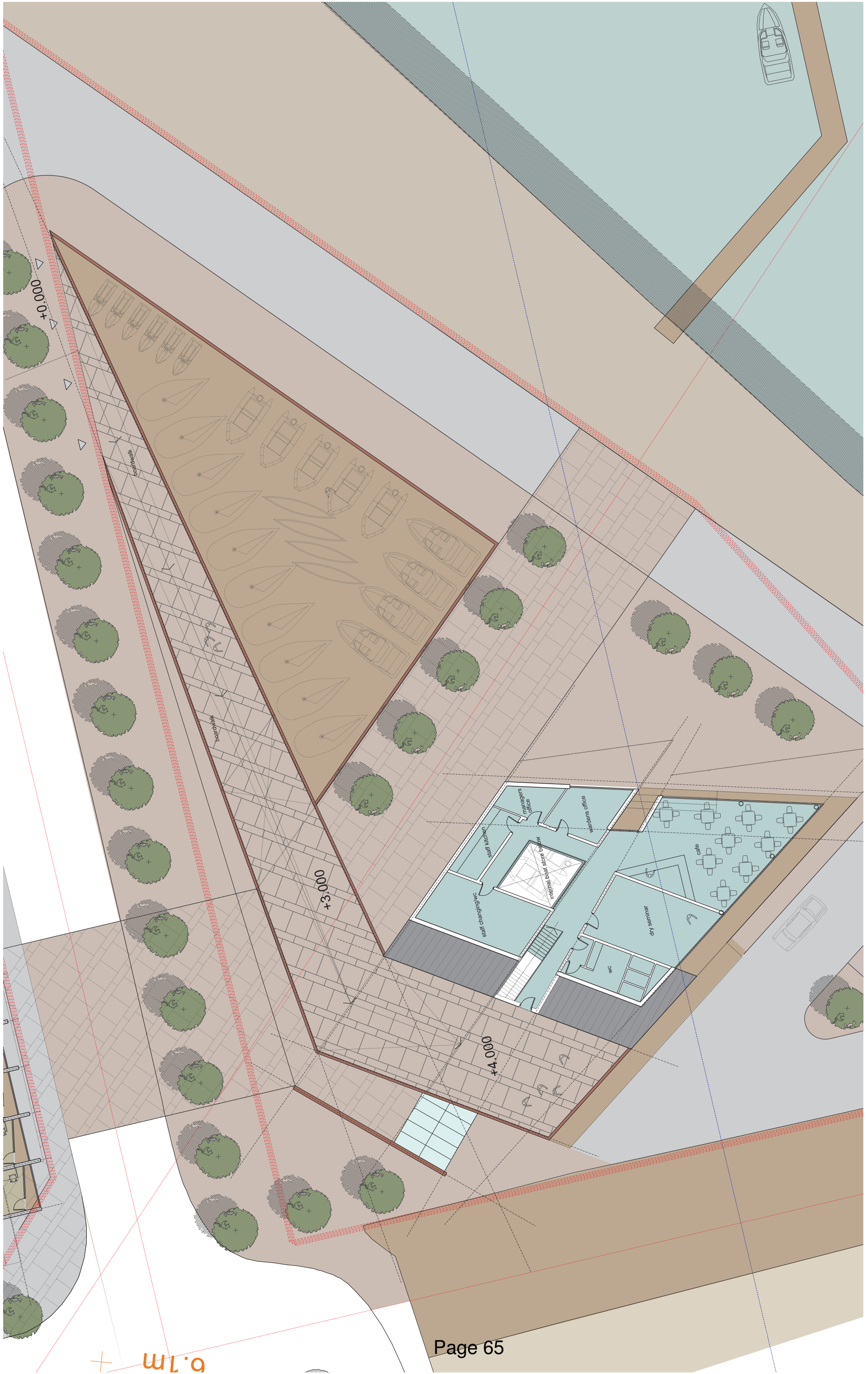
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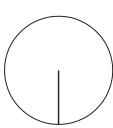


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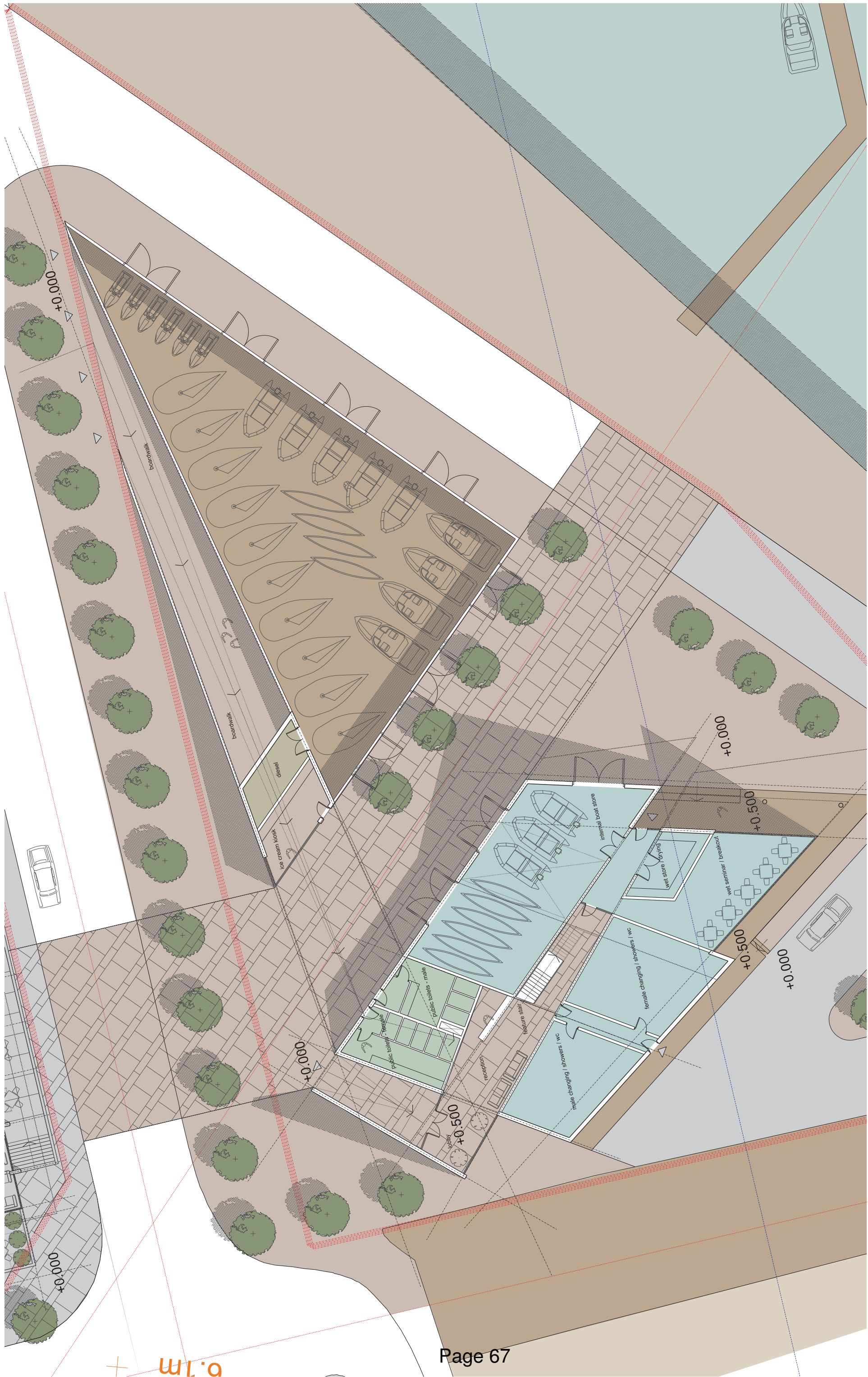
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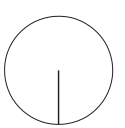
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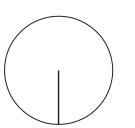
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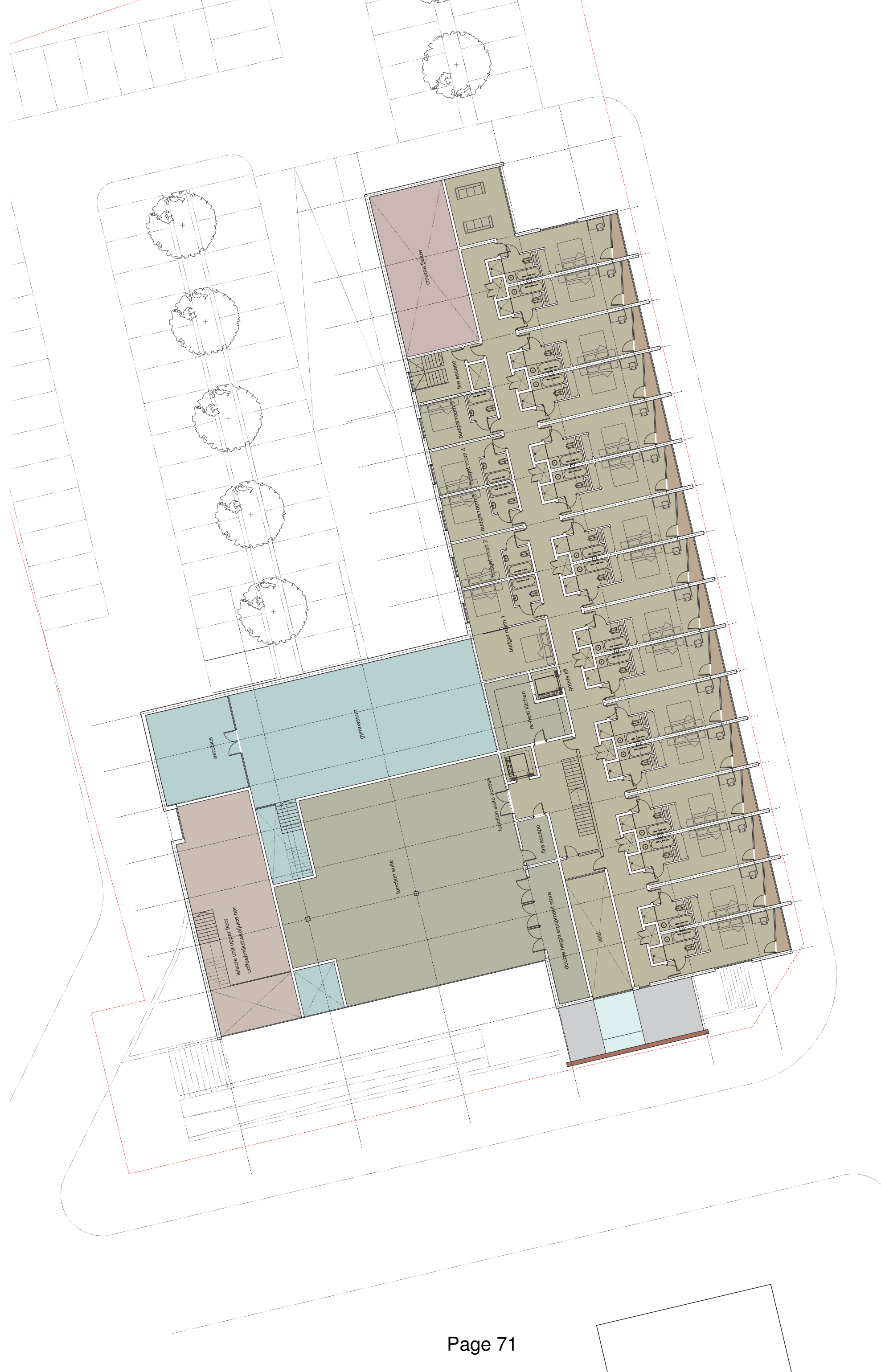
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TEL 0151 708 7024		CHECKED BY: AG	
FAX 0151 708 7025		DATE: 27.12.2008	
www.antonio-garcia.com		COMPUTER DRAWING REF: PROJECT No. W1001	
38 HUGHES STREET LIVERPOOL L1 9BX			

proposed upper ground plan 1:250



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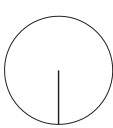
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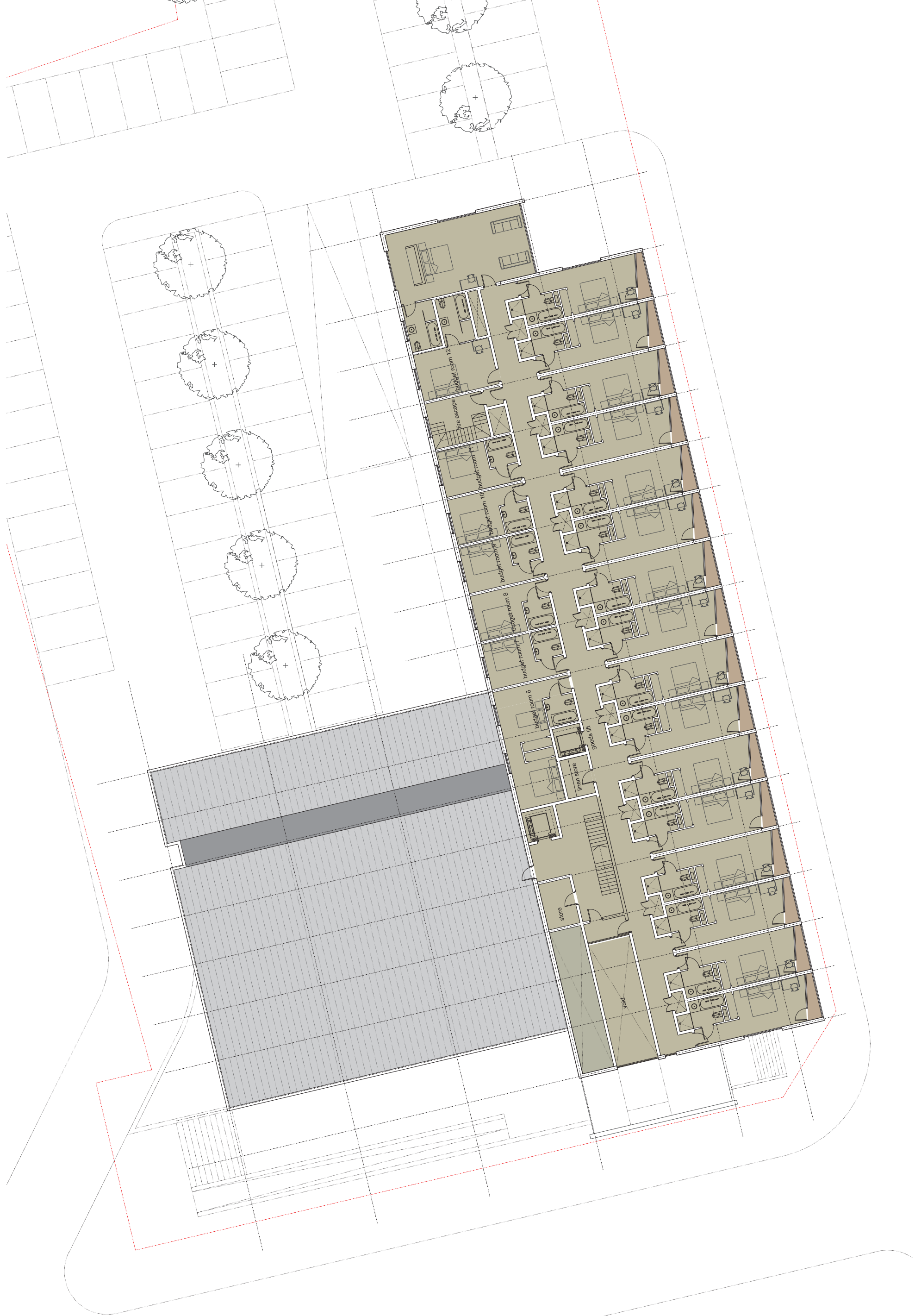
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proposed first floor plan 1:250

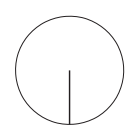


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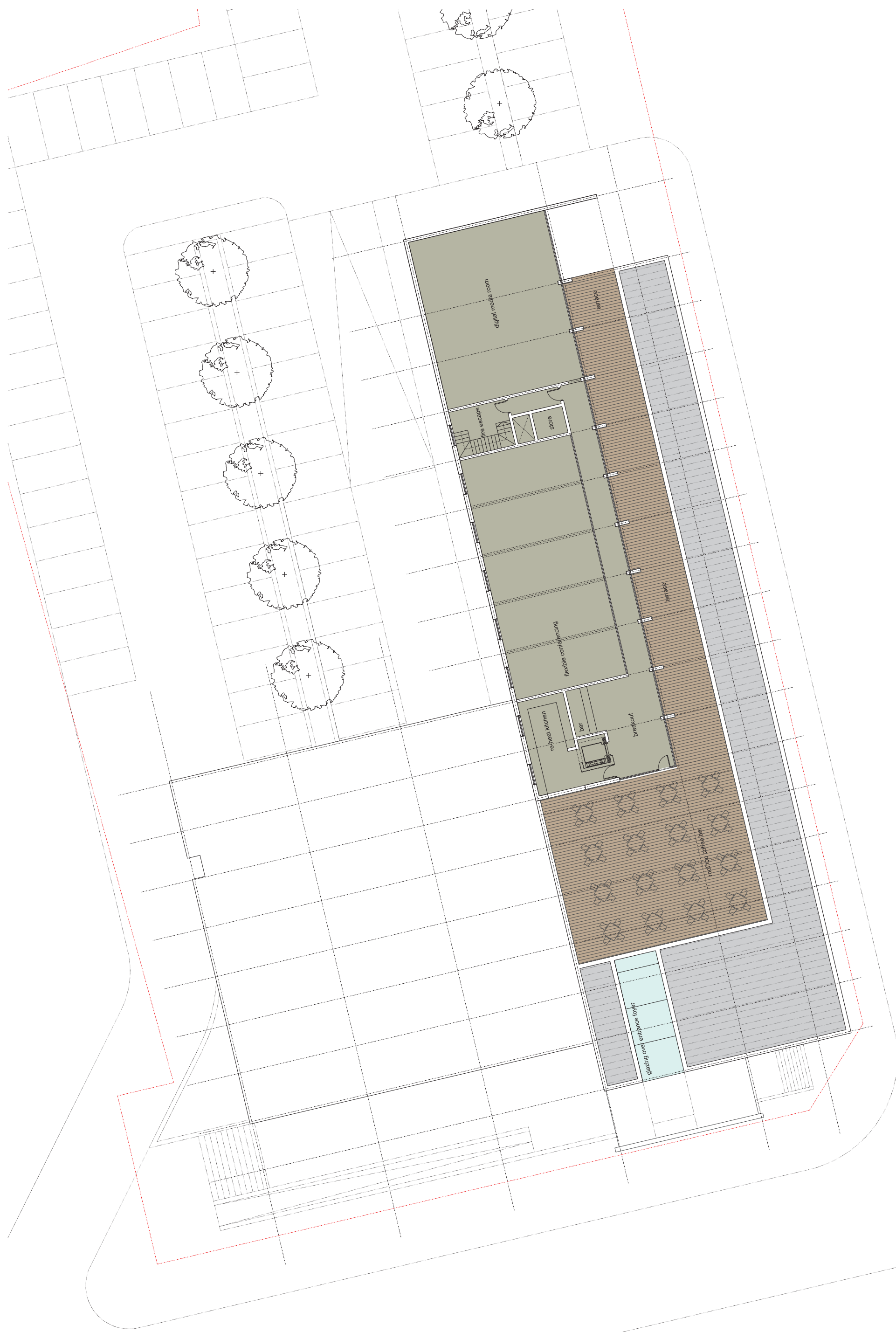


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ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN & VISUALISATION		SCALE: 1:250 @ A3	DRAWN BY: AG	CHECKED BY: AG
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proposed second floor plan 1:250

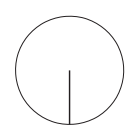


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antónio garcía architecture ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN & VISUALISATION TEL: 0151 708 7024 FAX: 0151 708 7025 www.antoniogarciaarchitecture.com		CLIENT: WEST KIRBY CARPENTER INVESTMENTS		DRAWING TITLE: PROPOSED THIRD FLOOR PLAN		DRAWING No: G253b	
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proposed third floor plan 1:250



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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19TH MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WIRRAL - EVIDENCE BASE – STRATEGY FOR TOWN CENTRES RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL LEISURE – EXTENSION OF CONTRACT

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Members will be aware that a series of consultancy studies have been commissioned as part of the process of assembling an evidence base for Wirral's Local Development Framework.

1.2 This report advises of an extension to the contract for the Retail, Town Centres and Commercial Leisure study currently being prepared by Roger Tym & Partners to carry out additional survey work to assess the impact of the Liverpool One development on the Borough. Roger Tym and Partners have submitted a fee proposal of an additional £10,885 exclusive of VAT to undertake this work, plus survey fees of £11,590 plus VAT (total of £22,475 plus VAT). The Council's Contract Procedure Rules (5.1.2) require Cabinet approval for the extension of an existing contract. However, in view of the need to commission this additional work as soon as possible, advice was taken from the Council's Procurement Section and the proposed extension of the contract was authorised by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services under delegated powers, in consultation with the Leader of the Council on the understanding the matter be reported to Cabinet. This report therefore recommends that Cabinet notes the action of the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services under delegated powers to agree the extension of the contract with Roger Tym & Partners to undertake an additional household survey and associated analysis for a fee of £22,475.

2. Report

2.1 Cabinet on the 15th March 2007 resolved to commission a number of background studies to provide an up-to-date evidence base for the preparation of a Core Strategy Development Plan Document for Wirral. Cabinet resolved that the studies be commissioned through Request for Quotation from a list of identified providers (Minute 284 refers). These included a Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study with an estimated budget of £35,000.

2.2 Cabinet on 7th February 2008 resolved to vary the scope of work and adjust the budgets and programming of a number of studies including the Town Centres Retail and Commercial Leisure Study and to carry over the commissioning process into the 2008/9 financial year (Minute 502 refers). Roger Tym & Partners (RTP) were subsequently appointed — for a fee of £44,946 excluding VAT but including expenses. Their appointment was subsequently reported to Regeneration and Planning Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th September 2008 in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (Item 5 refers).

- 2.3 One of the key elements of the Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study is a survey of households to assess shopping and expenditure patterns of Wirral residents, the findings of which inform much of the analysis and recommendations of the study. This was undertaken at the end of April 2008.
- 2.4 In the past few months it has become clear that the Liverpool One shopping development in Liverpool City Centre which opened after the survey was undertaken has had a very successful first few months of operation and has exceeded most expectations. Both RTP and officers are concerned that a study based only on the April 2008 survey may understate the impact which Liverpool One may have had on the Borough. The Wirral LDF Core Strategy is intended to provide a strategic planning framework for the next 15-20 years, so the evidence which informs it needs to be robust and long-lasting. A study based only on the April 2008 survey might be open to challenge as having been based on evidence which has been overtaken by events.
- 2.5 It is therefore proposed that the household survey be re-run so that an accurate "before and after" assessment of the impact of Liverpool One can be made. RTP have obtained quotes from the firm which undertook the survey in April 2008 (NEMS) together with a second company (Research and Marketing) in order to test the market. It is understood that these are the two leading companies experienced in this type of work. They have both provided RTP with 3 quotes for surveys based on 1,500, 2,000 and 2,500 household sample sizes. NEMS' quote for 1,500 households (which would be consistent with the previous survey) is £11,590 plus VAT, with Research and Marketing quoting £10,425 plus VAT. Although marginally more expensive, RTP recommend using NEMS in the interests of consistency with the earlier survey. RTP's fee for the additional analysis and amendments to their report which would be required is £10,885 (exclusive of VAT). This gives a total additional fee of £22,475 excluding VAT.
- 2.6 As this is an extension of RTP's existing contract rather than a cost variation, Section 5.1.2 of the Contract Procedure Rules requires that this is approved by Cabinet and provides value for money for the Council. In this case, RTP have already been appointed to undertake the preparation of the Town Centres, Retail and Commercial leisure study. They have a full understanding of the current issues relating to town centres and retailing in the Borough, have completed much of the background survey and other work needed to inform the conclusions of the study and have already issued an initial draft report. The additional analysis needed is limited to that arising directly from the re-run of the household survey. Incorporation of this additional survey work within the existing study will provide a comprehensive "before and after" picture in a single integrated and seamless report. If RTP were instructed to complete the report based only on the April 2008 survey, as indicated in 2.4 above, it might be open to challenge as having been based on evidence which has been overtaken by events, greatly reducing the value of the report to the Council.
- 2.7 Given the work already completed, it would not be value for money to appoint a different consultant to undertake this additional work. A fresh Request for Quotation process to undertake the survey work and new analysis would further delay the completion of a study which is of importance not only in an LDF context but also in terms of guiding and informing the consideration of retail and leisure planning applications such as those likely to be forthcoming.

in connection with Wirral Waters. A different firm of consultants may also wish to repeat some of the background work already undertaken by RTP, at additional cost. It is concluded therefore that extension of the existing contract with RTP will provide best value for the Council.

- 2.8 In view of the need to commission this additional work as soon as possible, advice was taken from the Council's Procurement Section and the proposed extension of the contract was authorised by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services under delegated powers, in consultation with the Leader of the Council on the understanding the matter be reported to Cabinet. Roger Tym & Partners were instructed accordingly on February 24th 2009. The survey work and additional analysis is expected to be completed by the end of April 2009.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The original contract sum of £44,946 excluding VAT has been increased by £22,475 excluding VAT for the reasons stated in the report. The additional fee of £22,475 excluding VAT can be met from existing unallocated Planning Delivery Grant.

4. Staffing Implications

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

5. Equal Opportunities Implications

- 5.1 There are no equal opportunities implications arising directly out of this report.

6. Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly out this report.

7. Local Agenda 21 implications

- 7.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 implications arising from this report.

8. Planning Implications

- 8.1 The Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Wirral Local Development Framework.

9. Anti-poverty implications

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

10 Human rights implications

- 10.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

11. Social Inclusion Implications

- 11.1 There are no social inclusion implications arising from this report.

12. Local member Support implications

12.1 There are no Local Member Support implications arising from this report

13. Background Papers

13.1 Report to Cabinet 15th March 2007 – Local Development Framework for Wirral – Evidence Base can be viewed at:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/viewagenda.asp?mtg=1972#17>

13.2 Report to Cabinet 7th February 2008 – Local Development Framework for Wirral – Evidence Base – Amended Financial Provisions can be viewed at:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/viewagenda.asp?mtg=2284#30>

13.3 Report to Regeneration and Planning Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee -10th September 2008 – Local Development Framework for Wirral – Appointment of Consultants can be viewed at:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/viewagenda.asp?mtg=2696#5>

14. Recommendation – That the action of the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services under delegated powers to agree the extension of the contract with Roger Tym & Partners to undertake an additional household survey and associated analysis for a fee of £22,475 be noted.

J Wilkie – Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Planning and Economic Development

This report has been prepared by John Entwistle of the Forward Planning Section who can be contacted on 691 8221

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY – PARTIAL REVIEW – CONSULTATION ON DRAFT INTERIM POLICIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Leaders Forum (4NW) has published Draft Interim Policies as the next stage in the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West. Following discussions with the Government, the scope of the Review has been amended and will now only cover policies for gypsies and travellers, travelling showpeople and parking standards. The remaining issues will be reviewed as part of the emerging single Regional Strategy which is the subject of a separate consultation process.

The deadline for comments on the Draft Interim Policies for gypsies and travellers, travelling showpeople and parking standards is 27 March 2009. This report recommends that the Directors Comments set out within the body of this report form the basis of the Council's response to 4NW.

1 Background

1.1 The Secretary of State published the latest Regional Spatial Strategy in September 2008 (Cabinet, 6 November 2008, Minute 257 refers). Prior to publishing the final Strategy, the Secretary of State indicated that there would be a need for an immediate Partial Review. Initially the Partial Review was to cover issues related to housing, gypsies and travellers, travelling showpeople, waste management, renewable energy and parking standards. The Council considered the emerging options for these issues in June last year (Cabinet, 26 June 2008, Minute 94 refers).

1.2 The scope of the Review was revised in September 2008 in light of

- changing circumstances in the housing market;
- the need to get a more complete evidence base on a number of issues including housing land availability and infrastructure capacity;
- feedback from stakeholders on the Options consultation exercise in June 2008;
- the policy position that was emerging in the publication of the final version of RSS; and
- work commencing in the North West on a Regional Strategy ahead of emerging legislation for a Single Regional Strategy.

- 1.3 The Partial Review will now only consider policies for gypsies and travellers, travelling showpeople and parking standards. Interim Draft Policies for these issues were published for consultation on 20 January 2009. The content of these policies is considered below.
- 1.4 Progress on the single Regional Strategy is the subject of a separate consultation process.

2 Content

- 2.1 Copies of the Interim Draft Policies for each topic are provided as Appendices to this report.
- 2.2 Respondents are being asked to indicate whether they support the Interim Draft Policies and the figures being proposed, alongside the reasons for their response. Respondents are also asked to provide any comments on the supporting text and to suggest any additional information or evidence that they would like 4NW to consider.
- 2.3 The deadline for comments is 27 March 2009.

3 Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers

Background

- 3.1 National policy and racial equality legislation requires provision to be made by every district council where accommodation is needed by gypsies and travellers. Sites must be provided to prevent illegal and unauthorised encampments in inappropriate areas and to tackle poor living conditions, including lack of water, toilets, showers, electricity, waste disposal and limited access to health and education. Residential pitches are required for long-stay accommodation and transit sites are required to accommodate short stay visits.
- 3.2 Gypsies and Travellers are defined as persons of nomadic habit of life including those who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependents' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, excluding members of an organised group or travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.
- 3.3 There are currently 955 authorised pitches for gypsies and travellers across the North West. Earlier sub-regional assessments had indicated a need for up to 950 additional residential pitches and 248 additional transit pitches across the Region by 2016. The assessment for Merseyside (the Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), February 2008) identified a requirement for 10 residential pitches in Wirral and for 10 additional transit pitches across Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral.
- 3.4 Wirral does not have any recognised sites for gypsies and travellers.

Draft Policy Content

- 3.5 The Draft Interim Policy L6 (provided at Appendix 1 to this report) seeks to provide at least 1,250 net additional residential pitches and at least 270 transit residential pitches within the North West Region by 2016. Beyond 2016 the policy provides for a further increase, equivalent to 3% each year. A coordinated review of future needs will be undertaken in 2013. Temporary accommodation in connection with festivals and other similar annual events is not included in the requirements for transit pitches.
- 3.6 Draft Policy L6 would require the Council to take account of the specific needs of different groups of gypsies and travellers; work to achieve the levels of provision for 2016 as soon as possible; and make provision on a range of sites and tenures. Provision should include opportunities arising from new major developments and the identification of sufficient sites in Local Development Documents.
- 3.7 Rural exception sites and the alteration of Green Belt boundaries should be considered, where necessary, to make the required levels of provision. Cross boundary working on joint Local Development Documents is encouraged and could allow the figures to be redistributed.

District Level Figures

- 3.8 The district level figures for gypsies and travellers being suggested for Wirral are set out below.

<i>Permanent Residential Pitches</i>	
Current Authorised Provision 2007	0
Minimum Additional Permanent Residential Pitches Required 2007 to 2016	10
Proposed Provision of Permanent Residential Pitches at 2016	10
<i>Transit Residential Pitches</i>	
Minimum Additional Transit Residential Pitches Required 2007 to 2016	5

Supporting Text

- 3.9 The supporting text suggests that there is an urgent need to address a shortage of suitable accommodation across the region (paragraph 3) and re-states that provision for gypsies and travellers is part of the Government's objective of providing decent homes for all (paragraph 1).

- 3.10 The figures proposed are said to take account of the needs of those currently resident in the area, natural change and net movements between other forms of accommodation. An additional allowance has now also been made for “hidden” overcrowding, undetected in earlier sub-regional assessments (paragraph 4).
- 3.11 The current pattern of provision across the Region is uneven. The Interim Draft Policy seeks to broaden choice and widen the geographical distribution by providing pitches where little provision has previously been made (paragraph 5). This follows the earlier decisions of the Regional Leaders Forum to ensure a more balanced share of meeting need across districts and to reflect a wider range of factors than “need where it arises”.
- 3.12 The Interim Draft Policy also seeks to reduce unauthorised encampments by providing places to stop without the threat of constant eviction or resorting to stopping illegally or inappropriately (paragraph 6).
- 3.13 A wide range of factors should be considered when identifying suitable sites including access to local services such as schools, shops, health and other community facilities, electricity, water and sewerage connections, the amenity of nearby residents and land uses, the character and appearance of the countryside, easy and safe access to the road network and the need to prevent overcrowding (paragraph 8). Current working patterns (paragraph 9) and the need to allow for both residential and business activities (paragraph 10) should also be considered.
- 3.14 Green Belt locations should only be brought forward through the plan making process, when all the available alternatives have been discounted (paragraph 12).

Results of Previous Consultation

- 3.15 In response to the previous Options Consultation, the Council supported Option 3 – distribution on a sub-regional basis as this would allow a sub-regional partnership to consider the local pattern of provision, linked to the actual requirements of the gypsy and traveller community.
- 3.16 In response to an earlier informal consultation on the emerging figures, undertaken between 24 November 2008 and 2 December 2008, which proposed 980 additional residential pitches and 269 additional transit pitches for the Region, including 10 residential and 5 transit pitches in Wirral, officers provided the following holding reply:

“Wirral Borough Council cannot accept these figures. It is not appropriate to consider these matters as part of an informal process as decisions on matters like this require high level political endorsement which is not possible in the timescales provided.

With regard to gypsies and travellers, at Issues and Options the Council supported Option 3 – working with sub-regional partnerships to allow cross boundary working. The Merseyside GTAA recommended a strategic approach. The Merseyside GTAA stated the split between local authorities as indicative only and that the numerical results of the apportionment should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should actually be met in that specific locality.

Wirral has had repeated nil caravan counts and has had no recent encampments.

The draft requirement for transit pitches at 5 per district or 20 in total far exceeds the need for only 10 transit pitches identified in the Merseyside GTAA across the sub-regional partnership as a whole. A need for 5 transit pitches in Wirral is not proven.”

- 3.17 Although the overall figures for the North West have been increased further to 1250 residential pitches and 270 transit pitches, 4NW’s proposed requirement for Wirral of 10 residential pitches and 5 transit pitches has remained unchanged.

Stakeholder Workshop

- 3.18 Housing and planning officers attended a 4NW workshop on 27 February 2009, where some additional explanations were provided.
- 3.19 The Options Consultation has led the Regional Leaders Forum to set a clear policy direction – to promote a more balanced share of meeting needs across districts, to reflect a wider range of factors than just “need where it arises”.
- 3.20 The sub-regional GTAAs have been used as a starting point. The latest figures are based on the results from informal consultation in November 2008 and a workshop with representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller community in December 2008. The workshop identified “hidden” overcrowding, initially estimated at 70% of the provision identified in GTAAs. The figures for most authorities have, as a result, been modified upwards, using the proportions identified in sub-regional GTAAs as a control. This has not, however, been based on a precise mathematical formula.
- 3.21 Figures have been allocated in multiples of 10 or 15, as the minimum viable size for the provision and operation of a permanent residential site.
- 3.22 Figures for transit pitches have been based on the history of unauthorised encampments recorded in GTAAs and have been applied in multiples of five, as the minimum viable size for the provision and operation of a transit site, depending on the scale of the history of unauthorised encampment.

Directors Comments

- 3.23 The resultant figures for Wirral for permanent residential pitches reflect the findings of the previous Merseyside GTAA and are low compared to surrounding districts.
- 3.24 For example, Liverpool will be required to provide 25 residential pitches in addition to the 14 they provide already plus 5 transit pitches; Sefton will be required to provide 30 residential pitches in addition to the 16 they provide already plus 5 transit pitches; and Cheshire West and Chester will be required to provide 80 residential pitches in addition to the 55 they provide already plus 10 transit pitches. Knowsley’s requirements are the same as for Wirral.
- 3.25 Many of these figures have been increased to take account of hidden overcrowding. Wirral has not been given any additional allocation for hidden overcrowding.

- 3.26 The requirement for 5 transit pitches per district (20 in total), nevertheless, exceeds the findings of the Merseyside GTAA, which identified a need for only 10 transit pitches across the sub-regional partnership area as a whole.
- 3.27 The twice-yearly caravan counts have shown a nil return for Wirral for at least ten years and there has been no record of unauthorised encampments since December 2006. There were, however, 22 unauthorised encampments during the previous four years, the maximum number of caravans present being nineteen.
- 3.28 No evidence has been provided on working and/or travelling patterns in support of the figures proposed.
- 3.29 The figures in Draft Interim Policy L6 are expressed as “at least” and the figures in Table 7.2 are the minimum to be provided and would not provide a ceiling where additional local need can be demonstrated.

Recommendation 1

Support Interim Draft Policy L6 – No

Why – Wirral Council has a firm and stated commitment to work closely with its partners to ensure that everyone living, visiting and working in the Borough will be treated fairly and with respect regardless of their race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or faith. However, in this case the Council is concerned that Draft Interim Policy L6 and the proposed pitch distribution figures set out in Table 7.2 are not supported by the available evidence.

In particular, it is not clear why the resultant numbers for the Region should exceed the needs assessed in sub-regional GTAAs prepared in accordance with national advice, especially as the figures in Draft Interim Policy L6 are already expressed as “at least” and the figures in Table 7.2 are expressed as the minimum to be provided. While the supporting text refers to an additional allowance for hidden “overcrowding”, it is not clear how this has been assessed and applied to each district.

The statement that where Local Development Frameworks look beyond 2016 provision will be made for the same proportion of the regional requirement as in Table 7.2 for 2007-2016 is not clear. It is, for example, not clear whether the annual 3% compound increase to be applied post-2016 will be applied pro-rata at district level, irrespective of evidence of local need or demand.

The requirement for new major developments to include provision for gypsies and travellers is unduly restrictive and poorly defined in terms of the types of land use or development being considered and appears contrary to the intention to identify sites through Local Development Frameworks.

The Policy text with regard to sites in the Green Belt should better reflect the comments provided in the supporting text, which make it clear that this option should be a last resort, in exceptional circumstances, where all other alternatives have been exhausted.

While the text on the possibility of redistributing provision through the preparation of joint or co-ordinated Local Development Documents is welcome, the implications of a “co-ordinated” approach should be clarified in the supporting text for the avoidance of doubt.

Support pitch distribution figures - No

Why – The assumption that every district should be required to make provision, unrelated to actual need or demand, is flawed. Wirral, for example, as a peninsula, is not a traditional resort for gypsies and travellers. The Borough has had nil caravan counts for at least 10 years and no record of unauthorised encampments since December 2006, suggesting that provision on the scale envisaged may rarely, if ever, be used.

The Merseyside GTAA recommended a strategic approach and stated the split between local authorities was indicative only and that the numerical results of the apportionment should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should actually be met in that specific locality. This is re-iterated in footnote 4 to paragraph 5 of the supporting text. No evidence has been provided on working and/or travelling patterns in support of the figures proposed.

The number of transit pitches identified for the Merseyside Sub-Regional Partnership area far exceeds (doubles) the local assessment carried out as part of the Merseyside GTAA. The statistical basis for this higher figure is not apparent and it is, for example, unclear how this is related to assessed need.

Comments on the supporting text – The supporting text should explain how “hidden” overcrowding and transit provision has been assessed, identified, verified and applied. Further information should also be provided on current working and travelling patterns in support of the figures proposed.

4 Accommodation for Travelling Showpeople

Background

- 4.1 The issues arising for travelling showpeople are similar to those for gypsies and travellers in terms of the Government’s objective of providing decent homes for all. Travelling showpeople require permanent yards for living accommodation and the storage of equipment, rides, stalls and vehicles. Existing sites are often too small, leading to overcrowding, illegal parking and health and safety issues.
- 4.2 Travelling showpeople are defined as members of a group organised for the purpose of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such) including such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependents’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, excluding gypsies or travellers.
- 4.3 There are over 20 existing yards within the Region, mainly concentrated in and around Greater Manchester, providing up to 492 existing plots across the North West. Earlier sub-regional assessments had indicated a need for up to 258

additional plots across the Region to 2016. The assessment for Merseyside (the Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), February 2008) did not identify any need in Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton or Wirral.

- 4.4 Wirral does not have any recognised plots for travelling showpeople.

Draft Policy Content

- 4.5 Interim Draft Policy L7 (provided at Appendix 2 to this report) seeks to provide at least 285 net additional plots for travelling showpeople within the North West Region to 2016. Beyond 2016, the policy provides for a further increase, equivalent to 3% each year. A coordinated review of future needs will be undertaken in 2013. Temporary stopping places in connection with festivals and other similar annual events are not included in the requirement for plots.
- 4.6 Draft Policy L7 would require the Council to take account of the specific needs of different groups of travelling showpeople; work to achieve the levels of provision for 2016 as soon as possible; and make provision on a range of sites and tenures. Provision should include opportunities arising from new major developments and the identification of sufficient sites in Local Development Documents.
- 4.7 Rural exception sites and the alteration of Green Belt boundaries should be considered, where necessary, to make the required levels of provision. Cross boundary working on joint Local Development Documents is encouraged and could allow the figures to be redistributed.

District Level Figures

- 4.8 The district level figures for travelling showpeople being suggested for Wirral are set out below.

Table 7.3 - Scale and Distribution of Travelling Showpeople Plot Provision for Wirral	
Current Authorised Provision 2007	0
Minimum Additional Plots Required 2007 to 2016	5
Proposed Provision of Plots at 2016	5

Supporting Text

- 4.9 The supporting text explains that travelling showpeople are often self employed business people who travel the country, often with their families, holding fairs and that many have done so for generations. Their work is mobile but requires secure, permanent bases, which could be permanently occupied by some members of the family, including children (paragraph 3).
- 4.10 There is an urgent need to address a shortage of suitable accommodation across the region (paragraph 4) and the figures proposed by 4NW are to take account of the needs of those currently resident in the area and natural change (paragraph 5).

- 4.11 The current pattern of provision across the Region is uneven. The Interim Draft Policy seeks to broaden choice and widen the geographical distribution by providing plots where travelling showpeople would like to live but little provision has been made (paragraph 6). Working patterns and the logistics of travelling are important considerations (paragraph 7) and sites must be suitable for both business and residential uses (paragraph 8).
- 4.12 The factors to be considered when identifying suitable sites are similar to those for gypsies and travellers (paragraph 9) and a similarly restrictive approach should be taken to the use of sites in the Green Belt (paragraph 11).

Results of Previous Consultation

- 4.13 In response to the previous Options Consultation, the Council supported Option 1 – distribution on the basis of need where it arises on the basis that no need had been identified for Merseyside to 2011 and that there appeared to be no current need or demand for a permanent site within Wirral. This appeared to reflect logistical issues, such as access to the motorway network and the pattern of fairs across the region.
- 4.14 In response to an earlier informal consultation on the emerging figures, undertaken between 24 November 2008 and 2 December 2008, which proposed 325 additional plots for the Region, including 1 in Sefton and 2 in Wirral, based on a Showmans Guild Preference Survey, officers provided the following holding reply:

“Wirral Borough Council cannot accept these figures. It is not appropriate to consider these matters as part of an informal process as decisions on matters like this require high level political endorsement which is not possible in the timescales provided.

With regard to travelling showpeople, at Issues and Options the Council supported Option 1 – distribution on the basis of existing need where it arises. The Merseyside GTAA showed no need or demand for pitches for travelling showpeople within the sub-regional partnership area.”

- 4.15 Although the overall figures for the North West have been reduced to 285, the requirements for Sefton and Wirral have been raised to 5 plots each. No provision is still being required in Knowsley or Liverpool. Cheshire West and Chester are being required to provide 10 plots in addition to the 13 they already provide.

Stakeholder Workshop

- 4.16 Housing and planning officers attended a 4NW workshop on 12 February 2009, where some additional explanations were provided.
- 4.17 The proposed figure for plots in Wirral for travelling showpeople does not reflect the findings of the earlier Merseyside GTAA because of a weakness in the national methodology for GTAAs, which does not address the needs of people, like travelling showpeople, who are not already resident in the Borough.
- 4.18 The figures proposed in the Interim Draft Policy have been based on a Showmans Guild Preference Survey, completed in Autumn 2007. The Survey shows where

travelling showpeople within the region currently live and work and indicates where, if given a choice, they would prefer to be based. Preferences were expressed for Sefton and Wirral but were not expressed for Liverpool, Knowsley, Halton, Ellesmere Port and Neston or Chester.

- 4.19 The increase to five plots is based on the minimum viable size for a permanent base for travelling showpeople and district allocations across the region have all been expressed in multiples of five.
- 4.20 As a general rule, one acre of land (0.4 hectares) can accommodate ten showmen's caravans and their accompanying vehicles and equipment. Ideally these should be provided in half acre areas (0.2 hectares) which can accommodate an extended family of five showmen, with their caravans, vehicles and equipment.
- 4.21 Travelling showpeople would prefer to own their own site and to locate within an industrial or commercial area to allow for the movement, storage and maintenance of their equipment and to minimise any potential conflict with neighbouring residential property.

Directors Comments

- 4.22 Despite the evidence provided by the Showmans Guild Preference Survey it is still not clear why Wirral and Sefton have been identified as preferred locations for permanent bases given the pattern of activity within the wider sub-region, including north Cheshire and North Wales. The use of the term "the Wirral" may also indicate a geographical confusion with the wider peninsula.
- 4.23 Appendix 3 of the Preference Survey expresses the number of recorded preferences for a location within Wirral MBC as "1.16". This implies that the figure has been apportioned in some way and may not, therefore, represent a focussed preference for a site in Wirral. The underlying data has not been provided. For these reasons, it is recommended that the Council does not support the Interim Draft Policy until further information has been provided.
- 4.24 The figures in Draft Interim Policy L7 are expressed as "at least" and the figures in Table 7.3 are the minimum to be provided and would not provide a ceiling where additional local need can be demonstrated.

Recommendation 2

Support Interim Draft Policy L7 – No

Why – Wirral Council has a firm and stated commitment to work closely with its partners to ensure that everyone living, visiting and working in the Borough will be treated fairly and with respect regardless of their race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or faith. However, in this case the Council is concerned that Draft Interim Policy L7 and the proposed pitch distribution figures set out in Table 7.3 are not fully supported by the available evidence.

The statement that where Local Development Frameworks look beyond 2016 provision will be made for the same proportion of the regional requirement as in

Table 7.3 for 2007-2016 is not clear. It is, for example, not clear whether the annual 3% compound increase to be applied post-2016 will be applied pro-rata at district level, irrespective of local need or demand.

The requirement for new major developments to include provision for travelling showpeople is unduly restrictive and poorly defined in terms of the types of land use or development being considered and appears contrary to the intention to identify sites through Local Development Frameworks.

The Policy text with regard to sites in the Green Belt should better reflect the comments provided in the supporting text, which make it clear that this option should be a last resort, in exceptional circumstances, where all other alternatives have been exhausted.

While the text on the possibility of redistributing provision through the preparation of joint or co-ordinated Local Development Documents is welcome, the implications of a “co-ordinated” approach should be clarified in the supporting text for the avoidance of doubt.

Support pitch distribution figures - No

Why – The Showmans Guild Preference Survey, on which the proposed distribution figures are based, does not explain why Wirral was identified as a preferred permanent base while surrounding districts such as Liverpool, Knowsley, Ellesmere Port and Chester were not identified, especially given the pattern of activity recorded across the wider sub-region including north Cheshire and North Wales. It is not evident, for example, why Wirral would be preferred ahead of a more accessible site in Cheshire West and Chester.

The reference in Appendix 3 of the analysis of the Preference Survey to the number of preferences for a preferred base location in Wirral MBC as “1.16” implies that the underlying figures have been apportioned in some way and may not, therefore, represent a focused preference for a site in Wirral. It is not clear how the figures in Appendix 3 (for single preferences) and the figures in Appendix 4 (for multiple preferences) relate. The use of the term “the Wirral” in some parts of the report could also indicate a potential confusion in the Survey responses between the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral and the rest of the Wirral peninsula. The underlying data has not been provided.

It is not clear whether the preferences recorded in the Survey relate to single plots or groups of plots (extended families). Assuming that they relate to single plots, the scale of preference indicated for Wirral would not appear to be strong enough to justify the identification of a 5 plot site in Wirral. The higher figure would not be justified where the figures in Draft Interim Policy L7 are already expressed as “at least” and the figures in Table 7.3 are expressed as the minimum to be provided.

Comments on the supporting text – The supporting text should provide a further explanation of how the figures proposed for individual districts have been arrived at and verified. Further information should also be provided on current working and travelling patterns in support of the figures proposed.

5 Parking Standards

Background

- 5.1 The Regional Parking Standards contained within the Regional Spatial Strategy issued in September 2008 were the same as those contained in RPG13 (March 2003). Unlike other regions, the North West has not yet seen a reduction in the proportion of people using the car as their normal method for travel to work. The Regional Leaders Forum believes that increasing the provision for parking is unlikely to reverse this trend or help to reduce the volume of traffic and emissions.
- 5.2 There was a previous commitment to review the Regional Parking Standards every five years. Consultants have now recommended expanding the standards, to include cycle, motorcycle, coach, HGV and disabled parking and to include an assessment of the actual accessibility of each development site by different modes of transport. The consultants report can be viewed at http://www.nwra.gov.uk/documents/?page_id=4&category_id=205
- 5.3 The Council's own parking standards were last reviewed as part of the preparation of SPD4, adopted in June 2007, based on joint work undertaken in support of the Merseyside Local Transport Plan.

Draft Policy Text

- 5.4 The Regional Leaders Forum propose to amend the final bullet point in Policy RT2 – Managing Travel Demand (RSS, September 2008) to read:
- “Plans and strategies...should...incorporate maximum parking standards that are in line with or more restrictive than Table 8.1 and define areas where more restrictive standards should be applied based on the approach outlined in Appendix 1. Parking for disabled people, motorcycles and cycles are the only situations where minimum standards will be applicable.”*
- 5.5 The supporting text and revised Table 8.1 and Appendix 1 are provided at Appendix 3 to this report.

Supporting Text

- 5.6 The supporting text sets out a revised approach to parking standards based on a combined assessment of the general location of development and the actual local accessibility of individual sites, with more restrictive standards being applied to sites with the highest level of public transport accessibility (paragraph 2).
- 5.7 This is a two stage process. Firstly, the Council will need to classify every area within the Borough between three predefined Area Access Categories, broadly defined as major city and town centres; more local district centres; and other areas (page 7 of Appendix 3 to this report refers). Secondly, the Council will need to assess the actual accessibility of individual sites by a choice of means of transport. This will involve the application of a pre-defined accessibility questionnaire to score each site against a series of criteria related to walking, cycling, access to public

transport and the frequency of public transport services (pages 8 to 10 of Appendix 3 to this report refer).

- 5.8 Residential development, car showrooms and petrol filling stations are not subject to the additional assessment by questionnaire (pages 4 to 5 of Appendix 3 to this report refer). Residential development is subject to additional advice based on the Area Accessibility Categories and the number of bedrooms (pages 11 to 12 of Appendix 3 to this report refer).
- 5.9 Special cases such as hot food takeaways, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres, secure residential units, law courts, outdoor leisure, amusement arcades, night clubs, laundrettes, hospitals, airports, ports, arena, stadia and events venues are excluded from the standards table and subject to separate advice (pages 12 to 15 of Appendix 3 to this report refer).

Results of Previous Consultation

- 5.10 In response to the Options Consultation, the Council supported the adoption of revised standards as this would support the joint work already undertaken by the Merseyside Districts as part of the Local Transport Plan.

Directors Comments

- 5.11 While the new approach will be more complicated and time consuming to apply, the results are likely to be more sensitive to local circumstances and the actual accessibility of individual locations. The approach will also lend further support to the joint work already being undertaken in support of the Merseyside Local Transport Plan. The transparency of the scoring system should also be beneficial to developers, when seeking to score their own sites.
- 5.12 The Council's existing Supplementary Planning Document 4 – Parking Standards does not fully reflect the approach now proposed. It does not, for example, follow a scoring approach to the assessment of each individual site and applies only two area accessibility categories, which it applies only to town centres uses.
- 5.13 The Area Accessibility Categories, Accessibility Questionnaire and the revised approach to residential parking will need to be incorporated into the Council's Local Development Framework, through the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan Document and a review of Supplementary Planning Document 4 – Parking Standards.
- 5.14 The Director of Technical Services has provided detailed comments related to residential parking, garage spaces and hospitals, which have been included under Recommendation 3 below.

6 Recommendation 3

Support Interim Draft Policy for Parking Standards – Yes

Why – The approach proposed is likely to be more locally sensitive and would lend further support to initiatives already in place to support the implementation of the Merseyside Local Transport Plan.

Support the parking standards proposed in Table 8.1 - No

Why – The standards as a whole appear to provide a comprehensive approach to the range and types of use most likely to require consideration. Wirral Council does not, however, fully agree with the approach to residential standards or hospitals.

The proposed standards for residential parking for Area Accessibility Category B would allow a maximum of 2 parking spaces for 2 to 3 bedroom dwellings and 3 spaces for 4 plus bedroom dwellings. This seems high for 2 bedroom accommodation and could provide an excess of parking for developments containing 2 bedroom dwellings, especially for flat developments with a mix of 1 and 2 bedrooms flats. It may, therefore be more appropriate to have 1 to 2 bedroom dwellings grouped together to provide a maximum of 0.5 to 1 space in Area Accessibility Category A and 1 space in Area Accessibility Category B. Table 8.1 and Figure 7.1 should be amended accordingly.

Wirral Council's current guideline is 1.5 spaces per dwelling. The proposed standards would double this for dwellings with 4 plus bedrooms and would go against the Council's commitment to encourage sustainable travel within the Borough. It may, therefore, also be more appropriate to have 3 and 4 plus bedroom dwellings grouped together to provide a maximum of 1.5 spaces in Area Accessibility Category A and 2 spaces in Area Accessibility Category B. Although still above the Council's current maximum of 1.5 spaces, this may be an acceptable compromise. Table 8.1 and Figure 7.1 should be amended accordingly.

The proposed approach to garage space, combined with the high levels of parking proposed, could provide a loophole that could be exploited to provide excessive parking. For example, a 4 plus bedroom dwelling in Area Accessibility Category B could potentially have 3 parking spaces plus garage spaces. The following amended wording is, therefore, suggested - "Garage spaces are not included within the space provision. However, if a development provides garages then, where possible, protecting the long term use for the storage of a vehicle by appropriate planning conditions should be sought."

The proposal to exclude hospitals from the parking standards could be seen as encouraging car travel and could undermine local attempts to encourage more sustainable travel to hospital sites. The following amended wording is, therefore, suggested - "A local parking standard for hospitals has a level of 1 car parking space per 4 staff and 1 space per 3 day visitors. However, in today's society hospital sites are multi-occupancy developments, which cater for more than just the district general hospital. To provide a true reflection of the complex range of uses on such sites a more detailed analysis of the land use should be provided to calculate the parking standard on a case-by-case basis."

Comments on the supporting text – Clarification should be provided that the sections of the Accessibility Questionnaire related to public transport apply equally to other forms of public transport such as the Mersey Ferries. Further information should also be provided on how the results of the scoring associated with the Accessibility Questionnaire should be used and on the practical implications of various scores or bands of scores when calculating any reduction in the number of

spaces that would normally be permitted in terms of the scales of reduction envisaged for any particular site or type of use.

7 Future Timetable

- 7.1 The timetable for the remaining stages in the preparation of the Partial Review is set out below. The next opportunity for the Council to comment will be after the final Draft Policies have been submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination, in July 2009.

Stage	Consultation period
Consultation on Interim Draft Policies	20 January 2009 to 27 March 2009
Consultation on Submitted Draft RSS	12 weeks from July 2009
Examination in Public	March 2010
Consultation on Secretary of State's Proposed Changes	8 weeks from September 2010
Final Issue	December 2010

- 7.2 The timetable for the preparation of the single Regional Strategy will be reported separately.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
- 8.2 The provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople may have financial implications if the sites were to be provided and/or managed by the Council. The provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople may also have financial implications for the provision of wider Council services.
- 8.3 The cost for the Council to provide a permanent residential facility for Gypsies and Travellers of the size being suggested in the Partial Review has been estimated to be in the order of £1.2 to £3.0 million, from initial calculations based on the experience of other authorities and national average costs. Costs are dependent upon local land values and it is, therefore, difficult to predict costs where site locations have not been identified. These figures do not include provision for transit pitches. If required to be progressed, this scheme would need to be submitted for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme.
- 8.4 Capital grants are available from CLG for up to 100% of the costs of acquiring land and developing suitable sites. However, the annual bidding rounds, which are usually announced in March each year, are very competitive with only 2 grants available per year for the North West area as a whole.
- 8.5 A review of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document – Parking Standards would cost in the order of £7,500, split over two financial years, which could be met from existing resources.

9 Staffing Implications

- 9.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly out of this report.
- 9.2 Staffing implications will arise from any future need to present the Council's case at any future Public Examination into the Partial Review, which could have implications for progress on the preparation of the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document.
- 9.3 The provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople may have staffing implications if the sites were to be provided and/or managed by the Council. The provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople may also have staffing implications for the provision of wider Council services.
- 9.4 The requirement to undertake additional site specific assessments to satisfy the amendments proposed to RSS Policy RT2 will have staffing implications for the Technical Services Department. The need to review Supplementary Planning Guidance Document 4 – Parking Standards will have staffing implications for the Corporate Services Department.

10 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 10.1 Provision for Gypsies and Travellers is subject to racial equality legislation.
- 10.2 Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers have been specifically recognised by the courts as ethnic groups covered by the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Commission for Racial Equality recommends that all local authorities include sub-categories for Gypsies and Irish Travellers within ethnic monitoring forms. There is a requirement that local authorities seek to promote good race relations between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community.
- 10.3 The Regional Parking Standards will make specific provision for disabled people.

11 Community Safety Implications

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

12 Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 12.1 Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and parking standards will have implications for Local Agenda 21.
- 12.2 The policies and proposals contained within the Partial Review will be subject to statutory appraisal processes including sustainability appraisal, strategic environmental assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment on which the Council will be able to comment.

13 Planning Implications

- 13.1 The policies and proposals contained within the Partial Review, once confirmed by the Secretary of State following public examination, will form part of the statutory

Development Plan for Wirral and will be a material consideration in future planning decisions including the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework.

13.2 Members will have further opportunity to comment on the Partial Review through statutory consultation on the final Submitted Draft Policies in July 2009.

13.3 Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will need to be included in the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document and considered as part of the emerging housing evidence base and the proposed Housing Allocations DPD.

13.4 The adoption of the revised Regional Parking Standards would require a review of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document – Parking Standards, last adopted in June 2007.

14 Anti-poverty Implications

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

14.2 The provision of modern facilities for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople may assist in addressing poverty amongst these groups.

15 Human Rights Implications

15.1 Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople does have human rights implications.

15.2 ODPM Circular 1/2006, paragraph 70, states that "The provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights should be considered as an integral part of local authorities decision making – including its approach to the question of what are material considerations in planning cases. Local planning authorities should consider the consequences of refusing or granting planning permission or taking enforcement action on the rights of the individuals concerned both gypsies and travellers and local residents and whether the action is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances."

16 Social Inclusion Implications

16.1 Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople has social inclusion implications in terms of decent homes for all, including access to health, environment, education and social services.

17 Local Member Support Implications

17.1 There are no specific Ward Member implications arising directly out of this report.

18 Background Papers

18.1 The following background papers are attached as Appendices to this report:

(1) Interim Draft Policy L6 - Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers

- (2) Interim Draft Policy L7 - Accommodation for Travelling Showpeople
- (3) Interim Draft Policy RT2 - Regional Parking Standards
- 18.2 The existing Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (September 2008) can be viewed at <http://www.go-nw.gov.uk/gonw/Planning/RegionalPlanning/?a=42496>
- 18.3 Regional Spatial Strategy – Implications for Wirral (Cabinet, 6 November 2007, Minute 257) can be viewed at [http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000351/AI00002030/\\$CA/BCS081106REP1.docA.ps.pdf](http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/Published/C00000121/M00000351/AI00002030/$CA/BCS081106REP1.docA.ps.pdf)
- 18.4 Regional Spatial Strategy – Partial Review – Options Consultation (Cabinet 26 June 2008, Minute 94 refers) can be viewed at http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/rsspialreviewoptionscab26jun08_27609.pdf
- 18.5 Regional Spatial Strategy – Partial Review – Responses to Options Consultation (4NW, July 2008) can be viewed at <http://www.northwestplanpartialreview.org.uk/stakeholders/consultation-results/stage2.html>
- 18.6 Regional Spatial Strategy – Partial Review – Responses to Consultation Forum (4NW January 2009) can be viewed at http://www.northwestplanpartialreview.org.uk/stakeholders/consultation-results/Stage3_Forum_Consultation_Report_Jan09.pdf
- 18.7 National planning policy Circular 1/2006 – Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (CLG, February 2006) can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/circulargypsytraveller>
- 18.8 Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Good Practice Guide (CLG, May 2008) can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/designinggypsysites.pdf>
- 18.9 Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment – Executive Summary (SHUSU, February 2008) can be viewed at http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/downloads/documents/feb_09/nwra_1235461381_Merseyside_GTAA_Executive_Summ.pdf
- 18.10 Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment – Full Report (SHUSU, February 2008) can be viewed at http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/downloads/documents/feb_09/nwra_1235461297_Merseyside_GTAA_Final_Report_.pdf
- 18.11 National planning policy Circular 4/2007 – Planning for Travelling Showpeople (CLG, August 2007) can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/circulartravellingshow>

- 18.12 Travelling Showpeoples Sites – A Planning Focus Model Standard Package (SGGB, September 2007) can be viewed at <http://www.showmensguild.com/Planning.pdf>
- 18.13 Best Practice Advice of Provision of Showmen’s Permanent Parking Sites (Showmens Guild of Great Britain, June 2008) can be viewed at http://www.northwestplanpartialreview.org.uk/downloads/Best_Practice_Guide_for_Showmens_Sites.pdf
- 18.14 The Accommodation Situation of Showmen in the North West (Showmen’s Guild, Lancashire Section, June 2007) can be viewed at <http://www.theshowmensguild.com/downloads/accommodation.pdf>
- 18.15 The North West’s Travelling Showpeople’s Current Base Location, Preferred Base Locations and Operating Patterns (4NW, November 2008) can be viewed at http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/downloads/documents/nov_08/nwra_1226910642_Travelling_Showpeople_in_the_N.pdf
- 18.16 Supplementary Planning Document 4 – Parking Standards (Wirral Council, June 2007) can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100006/200074/856/SPD4Parking25Jun07.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION

That the Directors Comments and Recommendations 1 to 3 set out in this report form the basis of the Council’s response to the Regional Leaders Forum.

J. Wilkie
Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

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

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Accommodation for Gypsies & Travellers¹

1. The context for policies on Gypsies and Travellers is the key Government objective of providing decent homes for all. The Government's key policy objectives in relation to Gypsies and Travellers are to ensure that sufficient, suitable provision is made throughout the region to meet the needs of these groups through the inclusion of appropriate policies in Development Plan Documents. RSS should identify the number of pitches required for each Local Planning Authority and these pitch numbers should be translated into site specific allocations in DPDs.

2. The identification of sites at a local level should be carried out in line with the existing national and regional policies. Sites should be identified which support the development of inclusive communities and fit with principles of sustainable development. In order to facilitate such an approach, policies should not repeat existing regional and national guidance.

Interim Draft Policy L6 – Scale & Distribution of Gypsy & Travellers Pitch Provision

To contribute to housing provision in the North West as a whole, provision will be made for at least 1250 net additional residential pitches for Gypsies & Travellers over the period 2007 to 2016. In doing so Local Authorities should: ensure there is no net loss in existing levels of provision; and distinguish between permanent residential and transit pitches to deliver the distribution of pitches contained in Table 7.2.

Beyond 2016 provision will be made across the region for an annual 3% compound increase in the level of overall residential pitch provision, equivalent to at least 351 additional pitches between 2016 and 2021. Where Local Development Documents look beyond 2016 provision will be made for the same proportion of the regional requirement as in Table 7.2 for 2007-16. A coordinated review of sub regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) should be undertaken in 2013 to provide the evidence base for a subsequent review of this policy.

The provision of temporary accommodation in connection with festivals and other similar annual events is an important requirement, but should not be regarded as formal transit provision to meet the requirements identified in Table 7.2

Local Planning Authorities should take account of the specific needs of different groups of Gypsies & Travellers. In doing so, they should work with housing and other professionals, site managers, local Gypsy & Travellers and settled communities, to achieve levels of provision required by 2016, as soon as possible across a range of sites and tenures through:

- **the development management process, particularly when opportunities present themselves in respect of new major developments; and**

¹ For the purposes of this policy - Gypsies & Travellers means: persons of nomadic habit of life who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such.

- the identification of sufficient sites in Local Development Documents.

Sites should be identified having regard to: Circular 01/2006; priorities in RDF1, RDF2 and RDF4; and the spatial principles in Policies DP1, DP2, DP4, DP5, DP7, EM5, L1 and L5.

Local Development Documents should consider the need for rural exception sites and the alteration of Green Belt boundaries where necessary to make required levels of provision.

The preparation of joint or co-ordinated Local Development Documents between two or more districts, to identify suitable locations for pitches is encouraged. Where joint or co-ordinated documents are produced provision can be redistributed across the areas concerned.

Table 7.2 - Scale & Distribution of Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Provision				
District	<i>Current Authorised Provision in 2007</i>	Minimum Additional Permanent Residential Pitches Required 2007- 2016	<i>Proposed Provision of Permanent Residential Pitches at 2016</i>	Minimum Additional Transit Residential Pitches Required 2007- 2016
<u>Cumbria Sub Regional Partnership</u>				
Eden	44	20	64	10
Carlisle	30	45	75	10
Allerdale	0	20	20	5
Copeland	0	0	0	5
Barrow in Furness	0	10	10	5
South Lakeland	0	10	10	5
<u>Cheshire Sub Regional Partnership</u>				
Cheshire East	95	80	175	10
Cheshire West & Chester	55	80	135	10
Halton	36	60	96	5
Warrington	22	35	57	5
St Helens	70	45	115	5
<u>Lancashire Sub Region Partnership</u>				
Blackburn with Darwen	48	60	108	5
Hyndburn	86	45	131	5
Burnley	0	20	20	5
Pendle	0	15	15	5
Blackpool	51	10	61	5

Table 7.2 - Scale & Distribution of Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Provision				
District	<i>Current Authorised Provision in 2007</i>	Minimum Additional Permanent Residential Pitches Required 2007- 2016	<i>Proposed Provision of Permanent Residential Pitches at 2016</i>	Minimum Additional Transit Residential Pitches Required 2007- 2016
Fylde	0	10	10	5
Wyre	0	10	10	5
Lancaster	142	45	187	5
Chorley	0	10	10	5
Preston	12	45	57	5
South Ribble	0	10	10	5
Ribble Valley	0	10	10	5
Rossendale	0	10	10	5
West Lancashire	0	20	20	5
<u>Merseyside Sub Regional Partnership</u>				
Knowsley	0	10	10	5
Liverpool	14	25	39	5
Sefton	16	30	46	5
Wirral	0	10	10	5
<u>Greater Manchester Sub Regional Partnership</u>				
Bolton	26	60	86	10
Bury	17	60	77	10
Wigan	34	45	79	10
Salford	31	45	76	10
Manchester	16	60	76	15
Oldham	0	45	45	10
Rochdale	27	45	72	10
Tameside	0	30	30	10
Stockport	0	35	35	10
Trafford	83	25	108	10
NW Total	955	1250	2205	270

Supporting Text

3. There is an urgent need to address the shortage of accommodation suitable for Gypsies & Travellers. This shortage creates additional problems for the Gypsy & Traveller community in terms of access to health, education, employment and other opportunities. It can also create tensions over the use of pitches without planning permission. This is a national issue, and one that has been evident for some time in the North West. Recent legislation and guidance² from the government has indicated a commitment to taking steps to resolve some of the long standing accommodation issues for members of the Gypsy & Traveller communities. The overarching aim is to ensure that members of the Gypsy & Traveller communities have equal access to decent and appropriate accommodation options akin to each and every other member of society.

4. Interim Draft Policy L6 seeks to meet the pressing needs for additional provision of residential pitches for Gypsies & Travellers. Using the evidence from regional and sub regional Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's)³ the level of provision to be made reflects the needs of those currently resident in the North West on pitches / sites without planning permission, anticipated natural growth and net movements between pitches and other forms of accommodation. In addition an allowance has been made to address the issue raised by the Gypsy & Traveller community of "hidden" overcrowding on existing sites and concealed Gypsy & Traveller households who currently reside on other caravan sites and holiday parks, who for various cultural and management reasons remain undetected in GTAA's.

5. The current pattern of provision of accommodation for Gypsies & Travellers is concentrated in particular parts of the region⁴. In light of feedback from the Options Consultation stage, the distribution of additional pitches in Interim Draft Policy L6 seeks to broaden the choice available to the Gypsy & Traveller community by providing some pitches in areas where previously little provision has been made. It also seeks to assist the delivery of pitches by widening the geographic distribution to increase provision in areas beyond those where the highest level of need is currently evident. However, the distribution of additional pitches remains to a significant degree concentrated in parts of the region where Gypsies & Travellers currently reside.

² Housing Act 2004 and ODPM Circular 01/2006 "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites".

³ "North West Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment" SHUSU, May 2007
"Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment" SHUSU, May 2007
"Lancashire Sub-Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment" SHUSU, May 2007
"Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment" SHUSU, February 2008
"Ribble Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment" SHUSU, March 2008
"Cumbria Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment" SHUSU, May 2008
"Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Service Delivery Needs in Greater Manchester – 2007/8" arc⁴, 2008

⁴ Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs are identified in GTAA's on a '**need where it is seen to arise**' basis. However, the results of these apportionments should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should actually be met to the identified degree in these specific localities. This distribution reflects the current uneven distribution of pitch provision and the Gypsy and Traveller population across the region.

Because of the historical inequalities in pitch provision, Gypsies and Travellers have constrained choices as to where and how they would choose to live if they had real choice. Over time, this has inevitably meant that Gypsies and Travellers have generally moved to areas they see as offering the best life chances; for example, an authority which provides a site; an authority which is perceived as having more private authorised sites than others; or, an authority that is attractive in some other way (slower enforcement, transport links, friends and family resident, etc.). Therefore, there is a tendency, when the need for additional accommodation is assessed in GTAA's, for the needs assessment to further compound these inequalities in site provision. For example, authorities which already provide Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (publicly or privately) are assessed as having greater need for additional pitch provision than authorities with little or no pitch provision. This is compounded further the longer-term the assessment is made (i.e. to 2016).

6. Although nomadism and travelling is currently restricted to a certain extent, this remains an important feature of Gypsy & Traveller identity and way of life, even if only to visit fairs or visit family. Some Gypsies & Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base, and others travel for significant parts of the year from a winter base. More Gypsies & Travellers might travel if it were possible to find places to stop without the threat of constant eviction. Currently the worst living conditions are commonly experienced by Gypsies & Travellers living on unauthorised encampments, who do not have easy access to water or toilet facilities, as well as difficulties in accessing education and health services. National policy is clear that there should be provision in order for Gypsies & Travellers who chose to travel to do so without resorting to stopping illegally or inappropriately.

7. It is clear that travelling and resulting unauthorised encampments are complex phenomena. In order to assist Gypsies & Travellers in maintaining their cultural practices, the development of sites need to accommodate the diversity of travelling. It is important to note that the provision of an inappropriate form of transit accommodation may fail to reduce unauthorised encampment. It is therefore important that flexibility is built into the provision of feasible and appropriate options for transit accommodation by working across districts, with private landowners and key Gypsy & Traveller groups. There are two fundamental aspects here:

- Larger pitches on residential sites provide the potential to meet the needs of short-term visitors.
- Variety in transit provision is needed to cater for the variety of needs. This might include
 - ~ formal transit sites;
 - ~ less-equipped 'tolerated' stopping places used on a regular basis; or
 - ~ temporary sites with temporary facilities available during an event, family gathering or for part of the year.

8. The location and design of pitches is a matter for Local Planning Authorities to address by setting clear and appropriate policies in Local Development Documents. In doing so they should also take account of Circular 01/2006 - which provides Government policy with regard to the location of provision, and the further guidance on the site layout and design and management⁵. Policies should also recognise the diversity of Gypsy & Traveller Communities found in different parts of the region. Those involved in Gypsy & Traveller site design and management (both permanent residential and transit) should approach this in a creative and innovative manner. Preferences and aspirations of Gypsies & Travellers should be taken into consideration. Important things to consider include:

- Location to local services and transport networks ensuring schools, shops, health and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance, and can be reached by foot, cycle or public transport
- Ensuring the site is served (or can be served) by adequate electricity, water and sewerage connections
- Ensuring there would be no significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or operations of adjoining land uses

⁵ "Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites - Good Practice Guide", Department for Communities and Local Government, May 2008

- Ensuring the siting and landscaping ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside is minimised including impacts on wildlife, biodiversity, nature conservation, and how the development can be assimilated into its surroundings
- Ensuring the development is not in an area at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains
- That the provision of a settled base will reduce the need for long distance travelling
- Ensuring easy and safe access to the road network
- Need to avoid overcrowding and “doubling up” by ensuring adequate pitch size which allows for
 - ~ space for short term visitors
 - ~ facilities
 - ~ amenity blocks
 - ~ □□mixture of accommodation (chalet, trailer etc.)
 - ~ utility of outside space (driveways, gardens etc.)
 - ~ Homes for life principles
 - ~ Health and safety
- Health and related support issues
- Tenure Mix
- Management

9. It is recognised that sites need to be situated in places which meet the current working patterns of Gypsies & Travellers and these may include countryside locations. However, issues of sustainability are important and decisions about the acceptability of particular sites need to take into account access to essential services and the impact on the settled community in the vicinity in order to promote coexistence between potential residents and the local community.

10. In line with Circular 01/2006, where Gypsies & Travellers want to run their business from the same site where their caravans are located, Local Planning Authorities should identify sites suitable for mixed residential and business uses with regard to the safety and amenity of occupants and their children, and neighbouring residents. If this is not possible, they should consider the scope for identifying separate sites for residential and for business purposes in close proximity to one another.

11. Where there is a demonstrated need identified in a needs assessment and a lack of affordable land to meet that Gypsy and Traveller need local planning authorities should include ‘rural exception sites policies’ allocated specifically to address that need in the same ways as rural exception sites for housing. Mixed uses should not be allocated on these sites.

12. New Gypsy & Traveller sites in the Green Belt are normally defined as inappropriate development as defined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts. All other alternatives should be explored before Green Belt locations are considered. If there is an identified need for a Gypsy and Traveller site in an area and no suitable sites outside the Green Belt boundary exist, in exceptional circumstances, limited alterations or sites inset in the Green Belt could be considered. Such proposals should be brought forward through the plan making process and specifically allocated as a Gypsy and Traveller site only.

13. It is recognised that some Gypsies & Travellers may prefer to buy and manage their own sites, often living in relatively small family groups. Private sector provision of sites should be encouraged. There is, however, still a role for provision of public sites and sites directly managed by local authorities or registered social landlords to help meet the needs of those who cannot develop their own sites or prefer to rent, as well as transit sites and emergency stopping places⁶.

⁶ Circular 01/2006 states "The Government recognises that many Gypsies and Travellers wish to find and buy their own sites to develop and manage. However, there will remain a requirement for public site provision above the current levels. Such sites are needed for Gypsies and Travellers who are unable to buy and develop their own sites, or prefer to rent, and to provide transit sites and emergency stopping places where Gypsies and Travellers may legally stop in the course of travelling. "

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Accommodation for Travelling Showpeople¹

1. The context for policies on Travelling Showpeople is the key Government objective of providing decent homes for all. The Government's key policy objectives in relation to Travelling Showpeople is to ensure that sufficient, suitable provision is made throughout the region to meet the needs of the community through the inclusion of appropriate policies in Development Plan Documents. RSS should identify the number of pitches required for each Local Planning Authority and these pitch numbers should be translated into site specific allocations in DPDs.

2. The identification of sites at a local level should be carried out in line with the existing national and regional policies. Sites should be identified which support the development of inclusive communities and fit with principles of sustainable development. In order to facilitate such an approach, policies should not repeat existing regional and national guidance.

Interim Draft Policy L7 – Scale & Distribution of Travelling Showpeople Plot Provision

To contribute to housing provision in the North West as a whole, provision will be made for at least 285 net additional plots for Travelling Showpeople over the period 2007 to 2016. In doing so Local Authorities should ensure there is no net loss in existing levels of provision and deliver the distribution of plots contained in Table 7.3.

Beyond 2016 provision will be made across the region for an annual 3% compound increase in the level of overall residential pitch provision, equivalent to at least 124 additional plots between 2016 and 2021. Where Local Development Documents look beyond 2016 provision will be made for the same proportion of the regional requirement as in Table 7.3 for 2007-16. A coordinated review of sub regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments should be undertaken by 2013 to provide the evidence base for a subsequent review of this policy.

The provision of temporary accommodation (including tolerated stopping places) in connection with festivals and other similar annual events is an important requirement, but should not be regarded as formal provision to meet the requirements identified in Table 7.3

Local Planning Authorities should take account of the specific needs of different groups of Travelling Showpeople. In doing so they should work with housing and other professionals, site managers, local Travelling Showpeople and settled communities, to achieve levels of provision required by 2016, as soon as possible across a range of sites and tenures through:

- **the development management process, particularly when opportunities present themselves in respect of new major developments; and**
- **the preparation of Local Development Documents.**

Sites should be identified having regard to: Circular 04/2007; priorities in RDF1, RDF2 and RDF4; and the spatial principles in Policies DP1, DP2, DP4, DP5, DP7, EM5, L1

¹ For the purposes of this policy "Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined in ODPM Circular 1/2006".

and L5.

Local Development Documents should consider the need for rural exception sites and the alteration of Green Belt boundaries where necessary to make required levels of provision.

The preparation of joint or co-ordinated Local Development Documents between two or more districts, to identify suitable locations for plots is encouraged. Where joint or co-ordinated documents are produced provision can be redistributed across the areas concerned.

Table 7.3 - Scale & Distribution of Travelling Showpeople Plot Provision			
District	<i>Current Authorised Provision in 2007</i>	Minimum Additional Plots Required 2007- 2016	<i>Proposed Provision of Plots at 2016</i>
<u>Cumbria Sub Regional Partnership</u>			
Eden	0	0	0
Carlisle	15	5	20
Allerdale	30	10	40
Copeland	0	0	0
Barrow in Furness	0	0	0
South Lakeland	5	5	10
<u>Cheshire Sub Regional Partnership</u>			
Cheshire East	6	10	16
Cheshire West & Chester	13	10	23
Halton	0	0	0
Warrington	3	10	13
St Helens	0	5	5
<u>Lancashire Sub Region Partnership</u>			
Blackburn with Darwen	0	5	5
Hyndburn	54	0	54
Burnley	0	0	0
Pendle	0	0	0
Blackpool	0	10	10
Fylde	2	10	12
Wyre	0	10	10
Lancaster	0	5	5

Table 7.3 - Scale & Distribution of Travelling Showpeople Plot Provision			
District	<i>Current Authorised Provision in 2007</i>	Minimum Additional Plots Required 2007- 2016	<i>Proposed Provision of Plots at 2016</i>
Chorley	0	10	10
Preston	0	10	10
South Ribble	0	10	10
Ribble Valley	0	0	0
Rossendale	0	0	0
West Lancashire	8	5	13
<u>Merseyside Sub Regional Partnership</u>			
Knowsley	0	0	0
Liverpool	0	0	0
Sefton	0	5	5
Wirral	0	5	5
<u>Greater Manchester Sub Regional Partnership</u>			
Bolton	88	40	128
Bury	20	10	30
Wigan	36	25	61
Salford	99	25	124
Manchester	75	25	100
Oldham	0	0	0
Rochdale	0	0	0
Tameside	38	20	58
Stockport	0	0	0
Trafford	0	0	0
NW Total	492	285	777

Supporting Text

3. In Circular 04/2007² the Government recognises that Travelling Showpeople are often self-employed business people who travel the country (often with their families), holding fairs. Many have done so for generations. Although their work is of a mobile nature, Travelling Showpeople nevertheless require secure, permanent bases for the storage of their equipment and more particularly for residential purposes. Such bases are most occupied during the winter, when many Travelling Showpeople will return there with their caravans, vehicles and fairground equipment. For this reason, these sites traditionally have been referred to as “Yards” (or “winter quarters”), with individual pitches generally referred to by Travelling Showpeople as “Plots”. A site with a number of plots on it is often referred to as a “Yard”. However, increasingly Travelling Showpeople’s quarters are occupied by some members of the family permanently. Older family members may stay on site for most of the year and there are plainly advantages in children living there all year to benefit from uninterrupted education.

4. There is an urgent need to address the shortage of accommodation suitable for Travelling Showpeople. This shortage creates additional problems for the Travelling Showpeople community in terms of access to health, education, employment and other opportunities. It can also create tensions over the use of plots without planning permission. This is a national issue, and one that has been evident for some time in the North West. Recent legislation and guidance from the government has indicated a commitment to taking steps to resolve some of the long standing accommodation issues for the Travelling Showpeople community. The overarching aim is to ensure that the Travelling Showpeople community have equal access to decent and appropriate accommodation options akin to each and every other member of society.

5. Interim Draft Policy L7 seeks to meet the pressing needs for additional provision of plots for Travelling Showpeople. Using the evidence from regional and sub regional Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA’s)³ and surveys of Travelling Showpeople⁴, the level of provision to be made reflects the needs of those currently resident in the North West and anticipated natural growth.

6. The current pattern of provision of accommodation for Travelling Showpeople is concentrated in particular parts of the region⁵. In light of feedback from the Options

² CLG Circular 04/2007 “Planning for Travelling Showpeople”

³ “North West Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment” SHUSU, May 2007
“Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment” SHUSU, May 2007
“Lancashire Sub-Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment” SHUSU, May 2007
“Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment” SHUSU, February 2008

“Ribble Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment” SHUSU, March 2008

“Cumbria Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment” SHUSU, May 2008

“Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Service Delivery Needs in Greater Manchester – 2007/8” arc⁴, 2008

⁴ The Accommodation Situation of Showmen in the Northwest” The Showmen’s Guild, Lancashire Section, June 2007 and “The North West’s Travelling Showpeople’s Current Base Location, Preferred Base Locations and Operating Patterns” 4NW, 2008 – produced with assistance from The Showmen’s Guild, Lancashire Section.

⁵ Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs are identified in GTAA’s on a ‘need where it is seen to arise’ basis. However, the results of these apportionments should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should actually be met to the identified degree in these specific localities. This distribution reflects the current uneven distribution of plot provision and the Travelling Showpeople population across the region.

Because of the historical inequalities in plot provision, Travelling Showpeople have constrained choices as to where and how they would choose to live if they had real choice. Over time, this has inevitably meant that Travelling Showpeople have generally moved to areas they see as offering the best life chances; for example, an authority which provides a site; an authority which is perceived as having more private authorised sites than others; or, an authority that is attractive in some other way (slower enforcement, transport links, friends and family resident, etc.). Therefore, there is a tendency, when the need for additional accommodation is assessed in GTAA’s, for the needs assessment to further compound these inequalities in site provision. For example, areas which already provide Travelling Showpeople accommodation are

Consultation stage, the distribution of additional plots in Interim Draft Policy L7 seeks to broaden the choice available to the Travelling Showpeople community by providing plots in areas where Travelling Showpeople currently work and would like to live, yet previously little provision has been made. It also seeks to assist the delivery of plots by widening the geographic distribution to increase provision in areas beyond those where the highest level of need is currently evident. However, the distribution of additional plots remains to a significant degree concentrated in parts of the region where Travelling Showpeople currently reside.

7. From our consultation with members of the Showmen's Guild, it would appear that a significant number of households work in the various sub-regions (particularly parts of Cheshire and Lancashire) but currently live in other sub-regions in the North West (particularly Greater Manchester – many of whose sites (yards) suffer from overcrowding problems) due to a lack of appropriate accommodation options in other areas. In addition there is a strong desire for some households to live in and around the areas which offer them the greatest opportunities to work. During the working season (mainly from March through to November), Travelling Showpeople will stay on legal fairground sites when working, but require secure places to stay whilst travelling with large fairground equipment for up to three or four days between one fair's end and the next fair's start date. In response to this an informal network of temporary accommodation (including tolerated stopping places) has developed with some landowners in parts of the region. The only other option is the expense of having to return to the Travelling Showpeople's own permanent base that may be many miles away. The logistics related to travelling long distances to and from permanent bases every few days and the cost and inconvenience in terms of sustainability, time, money, stress, fuel and pollution make a short stay near the next fairground location much more attractive to Travelling Showpeople.

8. The nature of Travelling Showpeople's sites is unusual in planning terms. The sites (yards) often combine residential, storage and maintenance uses. Typically a site (yard) comprises areas set aside for the Travelling Showpeople's accommodation and areas where vehicles and fairground equipment can be stored, repaired and occasionally tested. The area of land set aside for accommodation by one family unit and the area of land set aside for the storage and maintenance of their equipment would collectively form a plot. This means that the sites (yards) do not fit easily into existing land-use planning categories. The requirement for sites to be suitable both for accommodation and business uses is very important to the Travelling Showpeople's way of life as they find the principle of site-splitting unacceptable⁶.

9. The location and design of plots / yards is a matter for Local Planning Authorities to address by setting clear and appropriate policies in Local Development Documents. In doing so they should also take account of Circular 04/2007 - which provides Government policy with regard to the location of provision, and the guidance the Showman's Guild have produced on the design of sites.⁷ Policies should also recognise the diversity of Travelling Showpeople Communities found in different parts of the region. Those

assessed as having greater need for additional plot provision than areas with little or no plot provision. This is compounded further the longer-term the assessment is made (i.e. to 2016).

⁶ CLG Circular 04/2007 "Planning for Travelling Showpeople"

⁷ "Travelling Showpeople's Sites - A Planning Focus Model Standard Package" Showman's Guild of Great Britain, September 2007

involved in Travelling Showpeople site design and management should approach this in a creative and innovative manner. Preferences and aspirations of Travelling Showpeople should be taken into consideration. Important things to consider include:

- Location to local services and transport networks ensuring schools, shops, health and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance, and can be reached by foot, cycle or public transport
- Ensuring the site is served (or can be served) by adequate electricity, water and sewerage connections
- Ensuring there would be no significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or operations of adjoining land uses
- Ensuring the siting and landscaping ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside is minimised including impacts on wildlife, biodiversity, nature conservation, and how the development can be assimilated into its surroundings
- Ensuring the development is not in an area at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains
- That the provision of a settled base will reduce the need for long distance travelling
- Ensuring easy and safe access for large vehicles and equipment to the road network
- Need to avoid overcrowding and “doubling up” by ensuring adequate plot / yard size which allows for
 - ~ Adequate space to allow residential, storage and maintenance uses
 - ~ space for short term visitors
 - ~ facilities
 - ~ amenity blocks
 - ~ mixture of accommodation (chalet, trailer etc.)
 - ~ utility of outside space (driveways, gardens etc.)
 - ~ Homes for life principles
 - ~ Health and safety
- Health and related support issues
- Tenure Mix
- Management

10. It is recognised that sites (yards) need to be situated in places which meet the current working patterns of Travelling Showpeople and these may include countryside locations. However, issues of sustainability are important and decisions about the acceptability of particular sites need to take into account access to essential services and the impact on the settled community in the vicinity in order to promote coexistence between potential residents and the local community. Where there is a demonstrated need identified in a needs assessment and a lack of affordable land to meet that Travelling Showpeople need, local planning authorities should include ‘rural exception sites policies’ allocated specifically to address that need in the same ways as rural exception sites for housing.

11. New Travelling Showpeople sites in the Green Belt are normally defined as inappropriate development as defined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts. All other alternatives should be explored before Green Belt locations are considered. If there is an identified need for a Travelling Showpeople site in an area and no suitable sites outside the Green Belt boundary exist, in exceptional circumstances, limited alterations or sites inset in the Green Belt could be considered. Such proposals should

be brought forward through the plan making process and specifically allocated as a Travelling Showpeople site only.

12. It is recognised that many Travelling Showpeople would prefer to buy and manage their own sites, often living in relatively small family groups. Private sector provision of sites should be encouraged. However there may also be a role for provision of public sector owned sites and /or sites directly managed by local authorities or registered social landlords to help meet the needs of those who cannot develop their own sites or prefer to rent.

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Regional Parking Standards

The existing policy is set out in RSS Policy RT2. This current is as follows:

Policy RT2 – Managing Travel Demand

The Regional Planning Body, local authorities, and other highway and transport authorities should develop a coordinated approach to managing travel demand. Early consultation with the Highways Agency will be required for any proposal that may affect the trunk road network. In particular, efforts should be aimed at reducing the proportion of car-borne commuting and education trips made during peak periods and tackling the most congested parts of the motorway network including M6, M56, M60 and M62. In rural areas, the focus should be on major tourist areas where visitor pressure is threatening the local environment and quality of life. Measures to discourage car use should consider improvements to and promotion of public transport, walking and cycling.

Plans and strategies will need to be specific to the nature and scale of the problems identified, set clear objectives and specify what is being proposed, why it is necessary and what the impacts will be. They should:

- Ensure that major new developments are located where there is good access to public transport, backed by effective provision for pedestrians and cyclists to minimise the need to travel by private car;
- Seek to reduce private car use through the introduction of ‘smarter choices’ (see examples in paragraph 8.6) and other incentives to change travel behaviour which should be developed alongside public transport, cycling and pedestrian network and service improvements;
- Consider the effective reallocation of road space in favour of public transport, pedestrians and cyclists alongside parking charges, enforcement and provision and other fiscal measures, including road user charging;
- Make greater use of on-street parking controls and enforcement;
- incorporate maximum parking standards that are in line with, or more restrictive than, Table 8.1, and define standards for additional land use categories and areas where more restrictive standards should be applied. Parking for disabled people and for cycles and two-wheel motorised vehicles are the only situations where minimum standards will be applicable.

It is proposed that the wording of the final bullet point in the current policy in RSS (as set out above) should be changed to:

- incorporate maximum parking standards that are in line with, or more restrictive than, Table 8.1, and define areas where more restrictive standards should be applied based on the approach outlined in Appendix 1. Parking for disabled people, motorcycles and cycles are the only situations where minimum standards will be applicable.

This would be accompanied by a revised Table 8.1 and Appendix 1 (see below).

Supportive Text

1. The North West Parking Standards as set out in revised Table 8.1 (see Appendix 1) provides the framework for the identification at a local level of the upper limit of parking provision within new developments across the region. The numerical standards included in the table have been benchmarked against existing practice at both a local level within the North West and a

regional level across the rest of the country. However it must be noted that parking standards are only a single tool within the wider spatial planning policy and development management process undertaken by local planning policy and highway authorities. In order to control parking provision, the standards must be intrinsically linked with a range of other measures and issues within the wider context of the spatial planning process or their value and impact in delivering sustainable development will be limited.

2. The parking standards are based on a combined assessment of broad development location and local accessibility. This approach is designed to allow for varying levels of accessibility to be taken into account, both at a local level and across the region as a whole. Standards should be more restrictive in those areas that have the highest levels of public transport accessibility and development density and, where appropriate, in environmentally sensitive areas such as the Lake District National Park. In determining the quantity of parking provided at an individual site, a two staged approach has been developed. The first stage is to review the location of the proposed development in relation to the region's settlement patterns and allocate it to one of the three Area Accessibility Categories in order to determine the maximum amount of parking that would normally be permitted at a development. The three Area Accessibility Categories have been developed to broadly group different areas according to their general levels of accessibility rather than implementing uniform standards across the whole region. It will be the responsibility of each local authority to divide all areas within their boundary into the three Area Accessibility Categories. Further advice on the Area Accessibility Categories is provided in appendix 1. The second stage uses a questionnaire to assess the accessibility of the site by a range of modes of transport looking at the quality and quantity of choices available in the immediate vicinity of the site. This assessment provides a basis for calculating a reduction in the maximum number of spaces that would normally be permitted as a consequence of the potential for the site to be reached by modes other than the private car. The questionnaire and further advice is provided in appendix 1.
3. Standards for the provision of parking spaces for bicycles, motorcycles HGV and coaches have been developed and are included within the table. Cycling standards should take into account local variations as well as travel planning and any cycle network proposals in order to encourage cycling both for the specific development but also within the wider area. For developments that cater for a range of cycle users (e.g. staff and visitors), consideration should be given to providing a range of cycle parking allowing for both long and short stays. Along with motorcycles, cycling should be encouraged as an alternative to private car travel and parking should be provided at a level to assist in this. Both HGV and coach parking should be developed on a case by case basis through discussions between local authorities and developers, taking into account land use classes, local circumstances and operational requirements.
4. Disabled parking standards as detailed in the revised table 8.1 have been derived from national Government guidance¹. When setting parking standards, the developer should consider within their proposals whether developments are likely to have higher levels of use by disabled drivers, possibly due to development type and location. Furthermore, local authorities should assess whether there are any specific circumstances within their areas that indicate generally higher levels provision for disabled parking would be locally appropriate. The involvement of local disabled and elderly groups may be particularly useful in such an assessment and the monitoring of implementation. The disabled standards set out in the table should be taken as the minimum number of spaces and should be included as part of the overall parking provision of a development.

¹ "Traffic Advisory Leaflet 05/95 Parking for Disabled People", DfT.

PROPOSED PARKING **STANDARDS TABLE 8.1**

Interim Draft Policy – North West Regional Parking Standards – Proposed Revised Table 8.1

A Class	B Broad Land Use	C Specific Land Use	D Area Type A	E Area Type B	F Area Type C	G Apply Accessibility Questionnaire?	H Disabled Parking		J Bicycles	K Motorcycles	L Coaches		N Comments	O Considerations	
							Up to 200 bays	Over 200 bays			Parking (Minimum)	Drop Off (Minimum)		Parking Management and Design	Sustainable Travel
A1	Shops	Food Retail	1 space per 16 sqm	1 space per 15 sqm	1 space per 14 sqm	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 140 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 350 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	-	-	Smaller food and non-food facilities (say under 500sqm) may require significantly less parking due to serving local needs - each application to be judged on its merits	a) Charging should be considered for all major retail developments including out-of-town b) On-street parking controls should be considered c) Provision for parent & child spaces should be considered	a) Travel Plans covering staff, shoppers and deliveries b) Home delivery services (potentially a network with other retailers)
		Non-food Retail	1 space per 22 sqm	1 space per 21 sqm	1 space per 20 sqm	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 200 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 500 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	-	-	Includes hairdressers, undertakers, travel agents, post offices, pet shops, etc (say under 500sqm) may require significantly less parking due to serving local needs - each application to be judged on its merits		
		Retail warehouses	1 space per 60 sqm	1 space per 45 sqm	1 space per 40 sqm	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 200 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 500 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	-	-			
A2	Financial and Professional Services	Banks/Building societies, betting offices, estate and employment agencies, professional and financial services	1 space per 35 sqm	1 space per 32 sqm	1 space per 30 sqm	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 200 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 500 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	-	-		a) Charging should be considered for all major retail developments including out-of-town b) On-street parking controls should be considered c) Secure deliveries should be considered d) Parking standards should also be considered in the light of the pa	Whenever possible new facilities should consider travel plan measures for staff, even when numbers are small. Incentives for public transport use can be particularly important for some staff and reduce the demand for all day parking.
A3	Restaurants and Cafes	Restaurants, Cafes/Snack Bars, fast food & drive through	1 space per 8 sqm of public floor area	1 space per 6 sqm of public floor area	1 space per 5 sqm of public floor area	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 50 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 125 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis			
A4	Drinking Establishments	Public Houses/Wine Bars/Other Drinking Establishments	1 space per 8 sqm of public floor area	1 space per 6 sqm of public floor area	1 space per 5 sqm of public floor area	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 50 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 125 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis			
B1	Business	Office, Business Parks, Research and Development	1 space per 40 sqm	1 space per 32 sqm	1 space per 30 sqm	Y	Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total capacity whichever is greater	6 bays plus 2% of total capacity	1 space per 300 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 750 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	-	-	Provision at business parks may enable some sharing of spaces between development plots; this should be taken into account within proposals.	a) Locations which are not accessible by a range of modes of transport should be resisted. b) Parking provision should reflect a comprehensive approach to the accessibility of the site.	Even small office developments may be able to provide facilities for cyclists and incentives for staff to use public transport as part of a travel plan. A range of travel plan measures should be identified and secured as part of the grant of planning perm
		Call Centres	1 space per 40 sqm (starting point for discussions)	1 space per 32 sqm (starting point for discussions)	1 space per 30 sqm (starting point for discussions)	Y	Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total capacity whichever is greater	6 bays plus 2% of total capacity	1 space per 300 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 750 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	-	-	Use as a starting point with each application judged on its own merits. A less strict standard may often be appropriate but local authorities must be mindful of change of use issues.		
B2	General Industry	General Industry	1 space per 60 sqm	1 space per 48 sqm	1 space per 45 sqm	Y	Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total capacity whichever is greater	6 bays plus 2% of total capacity	1 space per 450 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 1000 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	-	-	Includes general industry in residential areas	a) Locations which are not accessible by a range of modes of transport should be resisted. b) Parking provision should reflect a comprehensive approach to the accessibility of the site.	A range of travel plan measures should be identified and secured as part of the grant of planning permission.
B8	Storage and distribution	Storage and distribution	1 space per 100 sqm	1 space per 100 sqm	1 space per 100 sqm	Y	Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total capacity whichever is greater	6 bays plus 2% of total capacity	1 space per 850 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 2000 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	-	-	1 space per 100 sqm suggested by EIP Panel Report		Staff numbers likely to be small limiting scope for travel plan measures.

C1	Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guesthouses	1 space per bedroom including staff parking provision	1 space per bedroom including staff parking provision	1 space per bedroom including staff parking provision	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 10 guest rooms (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 25 guest rooms (minimum of 2 spaces)	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	1 (hotels only)	The inclusion of ancillary uses such as conference centres and publicly available leisure centres should initially be treated as additional to the general hotel use. However, assessments should be made of potential efficiencies in parking provision, making	Parking provision must reflect accessibility.	Travel offers transport. There users remain informed of alternative	
C2	Residential Institutions	Residential care homes/Nursing Homes	1 per 4 beds	1 per 5 beds	1 per 5 beds	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 40 beds (minimum of 2)	1 space per 100 beds (minimum of 2)	-	-	These standards should cater for all users of the development, not just residents	Parking requirements must reflect the likely proportion of disabled residents and visitors.	Organic encourage alternative travel	
		Sheltered accommodation	1 space 2 beds	1 space 3 beds	1 space 3 beds	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 20 beds (minimum of 2)	1 space per 50 beds (minimum of 2)	-	-	These standards should cater for all users of the development, not just residents			
C3	Dwelling houses	Dwelling houses	1 bedroom	0.5 to 1	1	1	N	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	1 (allocated)	-	-	-	Cycle parking need not be provided if garages are available.		All residents more include a range of alternative
			2 to 3 bedrooms	1.5	2	2	N			2 (allocated)	-	-	-			
			4+ bedrooms	2	3	3	N			1 (communal)	-	-	-			
D1	Non-residential institutions	Clinics and health centres (excludes hospitals)	1 space per 2 staff plus 3 per consulting room	1 space per 2 staff plus 4 per consulting room	1 space per 2 staff plus 4 per consulting room	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	2 spaces per consulting room (minimum)	1 space per 2 consulting rooms (minimum)	-	-		Priority must be given to operational needs and people with mobility problems	Every encourage using provision people	
		Creches, day nurseries and day centres	1 per member of staff	1 per member of staff	1 per member of staff	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 space per 4 staff and 1 per 200 sqm for visitors (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 10 staff (minimum of 2 spaces)	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	Drop-off spaces to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Day care centres may require spaces for attendees (1 space per 4 attendees).			
		Schools (Primary and Secondary)	1 space per classroom	2 spaces per classroom	2 spaces per classroom	Y	Case-by-case basis	Case-by-case basis	1 space per 5 staff plus 1 space per 3 students.	1 space per 10 staff	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis (based on demand for school buses)	1	a) Classrooms include any teaching space within a school including such things as gyms, science rooms, drama studios, etc. b) These standards are the starting point but account should be taken of variations between primary and secondary schools and those	Walking, cycling and use of public transport should be encouraged by pupils and staff	All need travel sustain should well a	
		Art galleries, museums, libraries	1 space per 40 sqm	1 space per 25 sqm	1 space per 20 sqm	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 per 200sqm, (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 per 500sqm, (minimum of 2 spaces)	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	1				
		Halls and places of worship	1 space per 10 sqm	1 space per 6 sqm	1 space per 5 sqm	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 per 50sqm, (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 per 125sqm, (minimum of 2 spaces)	-	-		Need to consider the times at which these developments are used. Where evenings predominate account will need to be taken of the location and whether parking needs can be met by sharing with surrounding uses that do not have evening uses, or clash with r	Support development respect some difficult	
		Higher and Further Education	1 space per 2 staff	1 space per 2 staff+1 space per 10 students	1 space per 2 staff+1 space per 15 students	Y	Case-by-case basis	Case-by-case basis	1 space per 5 staff plus 1 space per 3 students	1 space per 12 staff plus 1 space per 10 students	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	1		Walking, cycling and use of public transport should be encouraged by pupils and staff	Travel mean parking	
D2	Assembly and leisure	Cinemas, bingo and casinos, conference centres, music and concert halls	1 per 10 seats	1 per 6 seats	1 per 5 seats	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 per 20 seats (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 per 50 seats (minimum of 2 spaces)	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	1		These facilities should only be provided where there is a choice of mode of transport.	Travel mean parking	
		General leisure: Dance halls (but not night clubs) swimming baths, skating rinks and gymnasiums	1 space per 25 sqm	1 space per 23 sqm	1 space per 22 sqm	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 per 20 seats (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 per 50 seats (minimum of 2 spaces)	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	1				
-	Miscellaneous/ Su Generis (Examples)	Theatres	1 per 10 seats	1 per 6 seats	1 per 5 seats	Y	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 per 20 seats (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 per 50 seats (minimum of 2 spaces)	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis	1		These facilities should only be provided where there is a choice of mode of transport.	Travel mean parking	
		Motor car showrooms	1 space per 60 sqm internal showroom	1 space per 52 sqm internal showroom	1 space per 50 sqm internal showroom	N	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	1 per 5 staff	Minimum of two spaces	-	-	Excludes operational spaces such as MOT spaces, external sales areas and storage			
		Petrol Filling Stations	1 space per pump	1 space per pump	1 space per pump	N	1 space minimum	-	1 per 5 staff	Minimum of two spaces	-	-	Ancillary retail units should be assessed separately			

Note: If coach drop-off spaces are provided off the public highway, they may be used as coach parking spaces
 Note: Local Authorities to define local coach standards, taking account of locally available coach parking and pick-up/set-down facilities

APPENDIX 1

Area Accessibility Categories

The three area accessibility categories below relate to Policy RDF1 – Spatial Priorities and broadly group different areas according to their general levels of accessibility.. It is accepted that, in comparison, accessibility in areas within Manchester and Liverpool city centres, for example, are significantly higher than in the centres of regional towns and cities. The proposed parking standards do not attempt to categorise every individual location in the region. Each local authority, while implementing standards, will divide all areas within their boundaries into the three Area Accessibility Categories. Therefore, local authorities will need to decide on the boundaries between different areas such as where the city centres finish and where the suburbs and wider urban areas begin.

Area Accessibility Category	Locations
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City and town centres in metropolitan areas, ▪ Regional town and city centres
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-metropolitan key service centre town centres ▪ District or local centres in metropolitan areas ▪ District or local centres in regional towns and cities.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All other areas

Area Accessibility Category A includes the main metropolitan city centres (i.e. Liverpool and Manchester), the town centres in metropolitan areas (e.g. Bolton and Stockport town centres) and regional town and city centres (e.g. Crewe town centre and Preston city centre).

Area Accessibility Category B includes the town centres within non-metropolitan Key Service Centres (e.g. Wilmslow and Ormskirk); together with District or local centres in metropolitan areas and in regional towns and cities (i.e. not the main town or city centres but those serving local areas and neighbourhoods).

Area Accessibility Category C includes all other development areas within the settlement hierarchy ranging from the urban area and suburbs in metropolitan areas and those in regional towns and cities to villages and rural and remote rural areas.

Accessibility Questionnaire

Mode	Criteria	Variation	Possible Scores	Actual Score
Walk	Quality of provision for pedestrians	<p>Good:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footways greater than 2m wide Choice of access points to the site for pedestrians enabling travel from the site in 3 or more directions (with more than 60° between them) All pedestrian routes well maintained, with high quality surfaces, provision of street furniture and good quality lighting 	3	
		<p>Moderate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footways defined (with kerbs) but of minimum 2m width At least two pedestrian accesses to the site giving access in different directions – at least 90° between them Footways maintained to a reasonable standard Street lighting present 	2	
		<p>Poor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No footways adjacent to site Pedestrians immediately on to an area where traffic has priority Access only available at one point Little or no street lighting 	0	
Cycle	Quality of provision for cyclists	<p>Good:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cycle parking provided, including some which is sheltered and/or secure Dedicated facilities for cycles – including cycle lanes, advance stop lines within 100m from the site Good choice of access points to the site and excellent permeability giving route choices to, from and within the site Part or all of the site available only to pedestrians and cyclists with traffic movements restricted Design and maintenance of surrounding area to high standards, sympathetic to needs of cyclists 	3	
		<p>Moderate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited ability to park a bike Shared space, but low traffic flows making this a satisfactory situation Road surfaces of an adequate standard for cyclists Some choice of accesses to the site – with reasonable permeability for cyclists giving at least two directions of access 	2	
		<p>Poor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No parking facilities for cyclists on the site All space shared with vehicular traffic Access on to a busy street/road where traffic dominates Only one practical access point for cyclists Restrictions on movement caused by one way streets 	0	
Bus	Walking distance to nearest bus stop from main entrance to building	<100m	3	
		<400m	2	
		>400m	0	
	Quality of bus stop (if within 800m walking distance)	<p>Good:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly marked stop with adequate space on footway Raised kerbs to allow easier access to the bus Clear written information or real time information available Shelter and seating available in waiting area Well lit Other security measures (e.g. CCTV to increase sense of personal security) 	2	

Mode	Criteria	Variation	Possible Scores	Actual Score
	Bus frequency of principal service from nearest bus stop (if within 800m walking distances)	Moderate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly marked stop on footway providing adequate width Written information about services available Shelter and seating available Adequate lighting 	1	
		Poor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positioned on footway of 2m width or less Marked only by pole and flag Little or no information about services No sheltered waiting facilities Environment affected by volumes of traffic Little or no street lighting 	0	
		15mins or less	4	
		30mins or less	2	
		60mins or less	1	
		>60mins	0	
	Distance to nearest bus station/major interchange (10 or more routes)	<200m	5	
		<400m	3	
		<800m	2	
		>800m	0	
	Number of bus services stopping within 400m walking distance of main entrance to building	6 or more	5	
		2 to 5	3	
1		1		
0		0		
Tram	Walking distance to nearest tram stop	<200m	4	
		<400m	3	
		<800m	2	
		>800m	1	
		No tram system	0	
Train	Number of railway stations within 1,200m walking distance	2+	3	
		1	2	
		0	0	
	Walking distance to nearest railway station	<400m	4	
		<800m	3	
		>1,200m	0	
	Quality of nearest railway station (if within 1,200m walking distance of the site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive waiting areas on platforms, including enclosed and heated space Toilets Excellent information about services including real time information Ability to change platforms and make connecting trains to different destinations Ticket office/ticket machines Staff available at all times CCTV and other security measures to provide sense of personal security Retail facilities – refreshments and range of other shops Fully accessible with lifts and ramps 	3	

Mode	Criteria	Variation	Possible Scores	Actual Score
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interchange to bus/tram and taxi from Immediate surroundings 		
		Moderate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable waiting areas on platforms and in enclosed spaces Toilets Good information about services including real time information Ticket office Staff available Some refreshments/ newsagents Lifts Taxi rank outside 	2	
		Poor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited waiting areas – not enclosed No toilets Information limited to timetable displays and recorded announcements No facilities to purchase tickets No staff present or only limited presence Limited assistance for those with luggage or disabilities No lifts – requirement to negotiate steps and stairs 	0	
	Number of services per hour per direction (arrivals and departures) from nearest station (if within 1,200m walking distance of site)	>10	5	
		5 to 10	3	
		3 to 4	2	
		1 to 2	1	
		0	0	
		Total		

Notes:

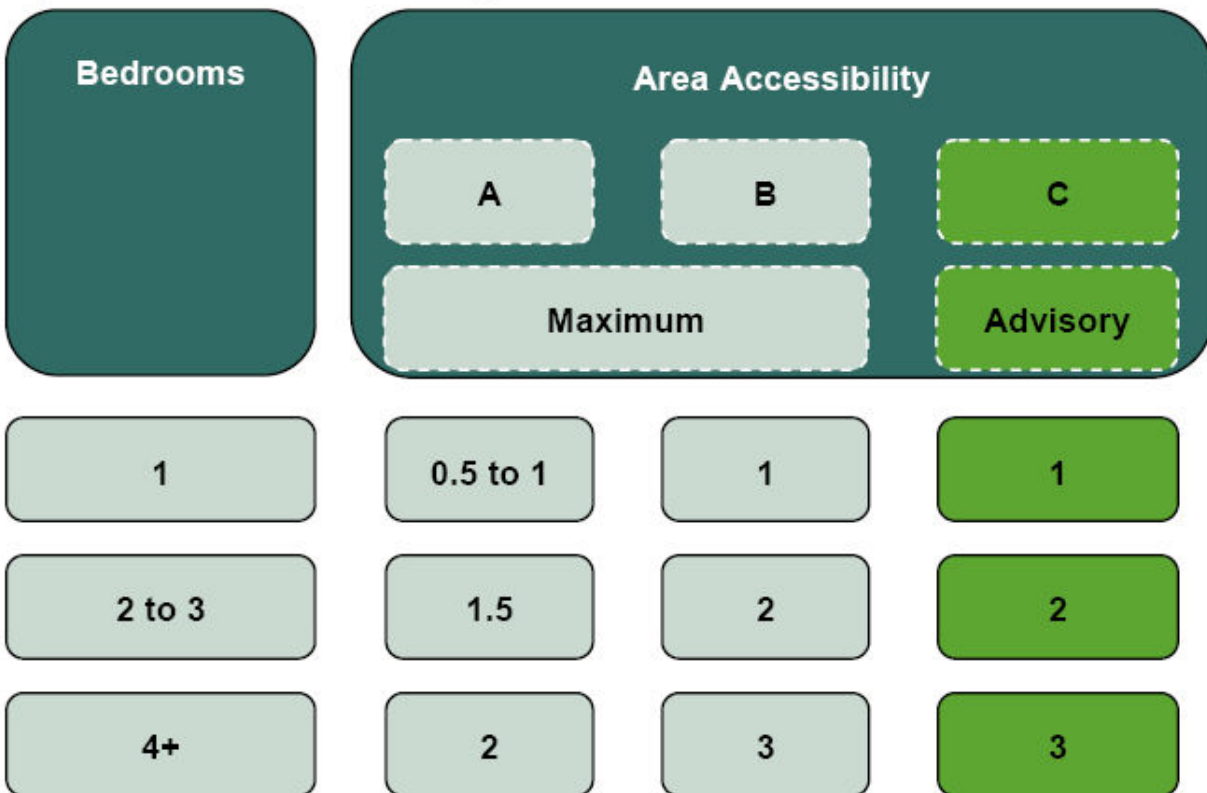
1. Walking distances are taken as the actual, 'on the ground', distances that people need to walk, taking account of footway and site layouts. These are not the direct, 'crow fly' distances.
2. The questionnaire should be completed with information gathered through a site visit and should not be solely reliant on a desktop study of the site and surrounding area.
3. Smaller sites which have no main building entrance more than 50m walking distance from a pedestrian access to the site, the point from which the level of access is assessed should be the main building entrance closest to the centre of the site. For sites with main building entrances further than 50m walking distance from a pedestrian access, the site may need to be split into plots or individual land uses as part of the assessment.
4. The information used in the completion of the questionnaire should form part of the usual content of a Transport Assessment/Statement, therefore, adequate justification for the scoring should be clear within the document.
5. The completed questionnaire should be appended to the Transport Assessment/Statement.

6. On submission of the Transport Assessment/Statement, local highway authorities should undertake a review of the completed questionnaire and form an opinion of its accuracy.

Residential Parking

- Parking provision for new residential developments should be based primarily on the broad area accessibility categories. A simplified approach is therefore proposed with the recommendation of the following standards:

Figure 7-1 – Residential Parking Standards



In addition to these standards, the following principles are proposed:

- Allocated parking can be defined as parking within the curtilage of a plot or communal parking specifically reserved for the use of one residential property. Unallocated parking is provided on a communal basis, where no one property is given specific rights to reserve a space or could be provided on-street.
- The standards are proposed on the basis of allocated or within curtilage provision. Where some or all spaces for residential developments are provided on an unallocated basis, a reduction in the overall provision may be appropriate.
- The standards for Area Accessibility Categories A and B are maxima, setting out the greatest level of provision within those locations.
- The Category C standards are advisory. Some developments may put forward car parking provision very much lower than these advisory levels. If these proposals are to

be granted planning permission with significant lower car parking provision, within Category C areas, the provision for and investment in alternative modes and mechanisms to reduce the need to own cars will be significant.

- Garage spaces are not included within the space provision. However, if development provides them and their long term use for the storage of a vehicle is protected by appropriate planning conditions it may be appropriate to include them.
- Consideration should be given to the reduction in provision at locations with very high accessibility within Area Accessibility Category A. In some locations, zero provision may be appropriate but subject to provision for operational needs such as deliveries, decorators, cleaners etc. Where such proposals are taken forward, they should be implemented in parallel with other sustainable travel measures including residential travel plans, access to car clubs etc. In addition, management and enforcement of unauthorised parking should be considered to avoid subsequent design and environmental issues.
- Consideration should be given as to whether reduced parking provision for affordable housing developments would be appropriate, justified and feasible within local authority areas.

Exclusions from the Standards Table

- A number of broad and specific land uses have not been included within the standards table for a number of reasons as set out below.
 - The majority of these land uses are not generally covered by local parking standards.
 - No requests for guidance on these land uses came from stakeholder consultation when developing the standards.
 - Many of these land uses will not generate significant demand for parking.
 - Many of these land uses are relatively rare and therefore parking standards would be infrequently used.

Please note that the following land uses have not been included in the standards table:

A5 – Hot Food Take-Aways

- Take-aways only require a very short stay car parking within close proximity to the development. The standards for A3 should be used as a starting point but the standards should be determined on a case by case basis. It may be appropriate to undertake an assessment of parking demand in the local area to determine whether there is potential to share the parking facilities of surrounding developments.

C2 – Boarding Schools, Residential Colleges and Training Centres

- These land uses can vary significantly in their trip generation patterns due to a number of factors including whether they are focused on providing education for school pupils or adults but also whether they are entirely residential or only partly so. The land uses are relatively rare so the development of a regional standard is not required so any parking demand should be assessed on the basis of anticipated travel patterns and modal share. The boarding schools should use non-residential school parking standards as the starting point for discussions between local authorities and developers.

C2A – Secure Residential Units

- These uses are relatively rare and specialised. The level of parking provision should be based on staff and visitor requirements which must be assessed for each development.

D1 – Law Courts

- These uses are generally located within town and city centres where minimal specific provision would be required (within the exception of operational parking).

D2 – Outdoor Leisure

- The range and variety of outdoor leisure facilities is significant, including such disparate uses as football pitches, country parks, tennis courts and golf courses. As the land use covers such a wide range of facilities and activities, a single parking standard would be inappropriate and the provision of individual standards within a regional policy would not be sufficiently comprehensive to cover all potential land uses. It should therefore be recommended that local authorities develop parking standards for the more common outdoor leisure land uses within their area.

Miscellaneous – Amusement Arcades, Night Clubs, Launderettes

- These land uses are unlikely to generate significant vehicular trips and tend to be located within town or local centres where other publicly available parking is provided. Night clubs are likely to require taxi rank facilities.

C2 Hospitals, D2 Arenas and Stadia as well as Airports, Ports and Event land uses have not been included in the table although they generate significant transport and traffic related issues, sometimes on a regionally or nationally important scale. However the provision of single standards for each land use could be misleading and could ignore the complex and extensive range of issues that surround these land uses. It is therefore suggested that parking for these uses is negotiated on a case by case basis with discussions informed by detailed master plans, transport assessments and travel plans.

C2 – Hospitals

- A regional parking standard for hospitals could potentially be misleading for local authorities and hospitals trusts and would not provide any satisfactory solutions to the considerable problems that presently exist at hospital sites. In today's society hospital sites are multi-occupancy developments, which cater for more than just the district general hospital. Therefore to provide a single car parking standard, based on beds or daily outpatients, would not provide a true reflection of the complex range of uses on such sites. Therefore car parking at each hospital site should be assessed on a case-by-case basis through negotiation between the local authorities, health trusts and staff and patient groups.

Airports

- Developments within airport sites are also complex with a significant range of parking related issues. In addition to the airport operation itself, there are often hotels, conference centres, business parks and a wide range of other ancillary uses on the site. Airport's should consult with a wide range of stakeholders including local authorities and the Highways Agency in order to determine the level of car parking, as well as other transport-related issues to be resolved in the long term. The issue of car parking should be addressed in airport master plans and surface access strategies which set out their long term development plans and strategies.

Ports

- In general, car parking at ports has two main uses, for staff (both ferry and freight ports) and for ferry passengers. In determining staff parking levels, it may be appropriate to use standards relating to warehousing and offices as a starting point. Car parking for ferry uses can be analysed in two parts, firstly parking for vehicles waiting to drive on to ferries and secondly vehicles dropping off foot passengers. The first of these uses is operational parking and requirements are dependant purely on operational demand. The second use could be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, again depending on demand. Parking for HGV should be treated in a similar manner, as operational demand dictates the level of provision required.

Arena and Stadia

- Over the past few years there have been a number of high profile stadium developments within the North West and parking has often been a significant issue during the planning stages. However these new stadiums are located in significantly different areas with vastly different levels of accessibility; these include Reebok Stadium Bolton (out of town), JJB Stadium Wigan (edge of town centre), City of Manchester Stadium (regeneration area) and soon to be developed Liverpool FC Stadium (inner city). Furthermore, such developments are relatively rare, particularly within local authority areas, so such a standard would be used relatively infrequently. Appropriate car parking for arenas and stadia should therefore be negotiated on a case by case basis taking into account the following:
 - The geographical and settlement location including parking issues in the surrounding area;
 - The parking and transport facilities operated at the development being replaced;
 - Potential improvements to transport and accessibility;
 - Size of the facility and the range and type of events proposed to be held there;
 - Seasonality and frequency of use;
 - Existing parking provision;
 - Attached mix of uses and any ancillary uses (hotel, training, facilities etc);
 - Parking for coaches.

Events

- Parking standards generally do not cover provision for major events and these already tend to be negotiated on a case by case basis. In many cases transport issues surrounding events tend to be traffic management related rather than specific to car parking. Furthermore, established major events already tend to have management systems that include formal consultation and negotiation with local authorities, highway authorities and the Highways Agency, through which traffic and parking matters are dealt with. Whether they are large annual events or smaller and more frequent, such land uses can vary significantly in their trip generation and car parking requirements, so a single standard would be unlikely to cater for all types of events.

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COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FUND AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING (PB) PILOTS IN AREA FORUMS – EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report is a review of the pilot process for allocating CIF funds via participatory budgeting. The pilots took place for Oxtou Prenton and Bidston Claughton area forums. Findings indicate that this process is a viable way of allocating funding and it is recommended that, with some modifications and improvements, the pilot is extended and this method is rolled out to other forum areas, with the option for forums to adopt different models of operation appropriate to the area.

2. Overview

- 2.1. As reported to and agreed at Cabinet 9 July 2008, Wirral is one of twelve second round pilot areas announced in December 2007 that is trialling approaches to participatory budgeting. As a pilot, Wirral is at the forefront of exploring approaches to this new area of community engagement and actively helping to bring local communities closer to the decision making on public budgets.
- 2.2. It was agreed that two pilot areas allocate their CIF funding through a participatory budgeting process whereby community groups applying for money assessed and voted on each other's projects to determine who received funding.
- 2.3. The process for applying for funding remained the same as set out in the existing Area Forum Funding Terms and Conditions. The major change to the process was that consideration of the applications and decision on who will get CIF funding for Bidston and Claughton and Oxtou and Prenton area forums was conducted at a 'participatory budgeting' session. Councillors were invited to attend this session as observers, but were not eligible to vote on projects.
- 2.4. Applicants were requested to attend the participatory budgeting session held at Wallasey Town Hall on 12 July and give a short talk of no longer than 2-3 minutes on why they should be funded. Attendance at this session by the applicant or a representative was a condition of funding.
- 2.5. A key element of this pilot process was to ensure that proper evaluation was undertaken to determine the success of the process itself, as well as assess the impact it has had on people's sense of involvement in their communities to use these findings as the basis for determining whether it should be continued or expanded in future years.
- 2.6. The primary source for this evaluation is the feedback of people who participated in the process.

3. Duty to involve

- 3.1. One of the challenges of the new local government act is the duty to involve local people. The local area will need to demonstrate not just consultation, but involvement of communities in decision making. In addition, the white paper *Communities in Control* (July 2008) lays down proposals to extend this duty to involve people in developing and commissioning local services to additional agencies. Participatory budgeting supports the implementation of the 'duty to involve'. Participatory budgeting enables councils to comply with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 in providing a process of citizen engagement.

- 3.2. Participatory budgeting is, supported and endorsed by CLG who has stated the ambition for all local authorities to take this approach by 2012. Participatory budgeting allows local people to participate in spending decisions through public meetings and votes to set local priorities and fund projects and services. The participatory budgeting pilot for CIF also included PCT small grant funding for those areas taking part in the pilot, further illustrating how Wirral is at the forefront in implementing new requirements around partner involvement for the new duty to involve

4. Comprehensive Area Assessment

- 4.1. In addition to the duty to involve, the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) inspection and assessment regime will have a strong focus on our understanding of local needs and aspirations and will be looking to see whether this knowledge has been used in the development of local priorities. Audit Commission will be judging how citizens, from all parts of the community, are encouraged and supported to feed their views into priority-setting, decision making, service development and evaluation within and across the partnership organisations and whether they know what has changed as a result of their input.
- 4.2. Allocating CIF via participatory budgeting provides strong evidence that the community is actively involved in decision making about funding which directly influences services provided in their area

5. Wider benefits of Participatory Budgeting

- 5.1. Participatory budgeting encourages community cohesion by bringing together people from different sections of the community that would not ordinarily meet each other to make decisions about their neighbourhoods. This provides an opportunity for everyone to meet and discuss the needs and aspirations of the community as a whole.

6. Links with area forum development.

- 6.1. The area forums are leading the way with innovative ways to involve communities in decision making about spending. In addition to the CIF participatory budgeting pilot, council allocated £20,000 per area forum (in 2008-09) for additional council services to be allocated through participatory budgeting methods. As well as empowering the community, these methods give in depth information to councillors and officers about what the priorities are for local communities.
- 6.2. As an example, the top five scoring projects in both area forums that trialled the CIF participatory budgeting method were for funding to support different types of support and activities for young people. This information helps to build consensus about what the priorities are for each of our area forum communities. Combined with this level of input over spending decisions, this potentially opens the way for area forums to be more directly involved in determining the provision of services at an area level.

7. Evaluation

7.1. Information and support

- In terms of the information and support provided on the day, the community engagement team was commended in feedback as being very helpful with the right approach to answering questions and providing a clear and transparent explanation of how the process was going to work.
- The overarching view from participants was the 'approval' of peer voting as a way of involving and empowering the community. This participatory method of allocating funding was preferred to the traditional funding panel method.

- Feedback highlighted that better information needs to be provided on the applicants/ organisations and bids in order to make better decisions. This could be improved by creating a 'delegate list' that also contains a short précis of each group and improving the voting sheets to include better information on the actual applications.
- Clearer guidance can be provided to presenters about what to expect on the day and what content should be included in their presentations.

7.2. **Timing**

- Feedback showed that three minutes to present an application may not be long enough to convey or understand each bid. This could be mitigated by providing better information to participants in packs as above (section 7.1) and with greater elected member involvement in, and facilitation of the events (see below).
- Feedback suggests that the length of the event was a major issue for participants and may have affected concentration and fairness. If the pilot is extended to other areas, it will be possible for forums to experiment with the format of the event to establish whether it would be more effective to hold one event per forum (shorter sessions, but requiring multiple forum applicants to attend several sessions and increasing the workload of the community engagement team), or to continue to hold dual forum events (longer, but fewer, sessions).
- Feedback shows that participants wanted more time to evaluate presentations to give a considered score (presentations were back to back with just one break for refreshments). This could be improved by having blocks of (e.g.) five presentations followed by a short break for scoring to take place, then the next five presentations and so on. This would also help to establish a fairer process as some feedback indicated that it was difficult to score presenters that went early (nothing for to compare against) or late (concentration waning).
- Some participants wanted time allowed for questions in order to clarify certain points and inform decision making. The introduction of question and answer sessions would increase the length of the event. If the pilot is extended to other areas, it will be possible for forums to experiment with the format of the event to establish whether it would be more effective for councillors to facilitate the sessions, using their expertise and experience to explain the impact of different options or decisions and helping to clarify any issues.

7.3. **Scoring**

- Scoring and part funding. Participants advocated a range of alternative scoring system such as 'yes - funding should be awarded' or 'no - funding should not be awarded' or part funding should be allocated (0%/ 20%/ 40%/ 60%/ 80%/ 100%). This part funding model could be considered for trial at any future CIF participatory budgeting events.
- It was further suggested that scoring could be against a range of criteria however this would make the process more complicated for participants. In terms of helping to ensure that funding is able to benefit the community in the most effective way, the option to part fund projects was preferred over setting a funding limit on applications.

7.4. **Networking and capacity building**

- Networking is a key benefit of participatory methods and additional time for networking needs to be allocated during any future events.

7.5. **Branding**

- In order to increase take up of CIF and maximise its benefit to our communities, the participatory budgeting process would benefit from a recognisable 'brand name'. It is proposed that this be 'Funds For You'.

8. Feedback from elected members

- 8.1. Two councillors attended the participatory budgeting event and applauded the positive contribution that the event had for community development.
- 8.2. Other councillors have indicated that they would like to have a greater level of involvement in the process in the future. The recent CLG publication, *'Giving More People a Say in Local Spending, Participatory Budgeting: a national strategy'* states that participatory budgeting must complement democratic institutions.
- 8.3. It goes on to say that local councillors can play a big part in approving and supporting participatory budgeting, by chairing or helping facilitate events, using their expertise and experience to explain the impact of different options or decisions, and through monitoring and scrutiny. Activities such as participatory budgeting offer additional opportunities for councillors and other area forum members to connect with their ward communities, helping raise their profile and that of the council.
- 8.4. The independent Councillors Commission report, *Representing the Future*, recognises the importance of the modern councillor being a vital part of participatory as well as representative democracy. One of its recommendations (number 4) is that councillors should be given the tools to engage with new participatory activity in their unique position as the interface between council services and the local community.

9. Alternative models for consideration

- 9.1. It is recommended that the Area Forum Chairs Group roll out the CIF participatory budgeting process and pilot it in other areas that want to trial it. There are a number of different models that could be adopted. The key elements are as follows but should be part of an open discussion at Chairs Group:

Size of events:

- Single PB events for each participating forum
- Joint / neighbouring forum events (this may be considered for any areas where the CIF application volume is low)

Voting model:

- Applicant voting (applicants vote on each other's projects)
- Public voting (anyone in the community can attend and vote)
- Different scoring models/ part funding allowed e.g. applicants scored 0-10
- Applicants scored yes/no
- Applicants scored in percentages e.g. 0%/ 20%/ 40%/ 60%/ 80%/ 100%

Event lead:

- Sessions led and facilitated by area co-ordinators
- Sessions led and facilitated by elected members
- Sessions led and facilitated by both area co-ordinators and elected members

Event format:

- Questions to presenters not allowed
- Questions allowed from the floor
- Questions allowed from facilitator

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report. However, the decision making process for how money is allocated to CIF applicants is amended so that Cabinet will be considering the recommendations of community groups who have voted on each others projects, rather than the recommendations of a funding panel.

11. Staffing implications

11.1. There are additional staffing implications for corporate policy in that workloads are already substantial and demanding and area coordinators are currently expected to deliver this programme within existing staff resources.

12. Equal Opportunities implications

12.1. Following equality impact assessment of the area forums, a risk has been identified that some sections of the community are not being engaged or are attending the forums. Extra communications will need to take place with these communities to ensure that all residents have an equal chance to participate.

13. Community Safety implications

13.1. There are potentially positive impacts for community safety as forums have the option to fund community safety related activities if bids are submitted.

14. Local Agenda 21

14.1. There are potentially positive impacts for the environment as forums have the option to fund environment related activities if bids are submitted.

15. Planning implications

15.1. There are no planning implications arising from this report.

16. Anti-poverty implications

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

17. Social inclusion implications

17.1. There are potentially positive impacts for social inclusion as forums have the option to fund social inclusion related activities if bids are submitted.

18. Local Member Support implications

18.1. The impact of this programme will be felt across the whole borough and communication with members will need to take place to ensure a full understanding of the process.

19. Background Papers

19.1. This report has arisen from the minutes of the council budget meeting of 21st February <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/viewmins.asp?mtg=2273#523> .

19.2. Further background information on participatory budgeting can be found on the Participatory Budgeting Unit website <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk/>

20. Recommendations

That

(1) the pilot for running participatory budgeting pilots for determining CIF be extended to additional area forums, with the additional participating forums to be agreed by the forums Chairs Group; and

(2) the participatory budgeting method of allocating CIF be branded as 'Funds For You'

21. Further Information

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

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YOU DECIDE – EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report is a review of the pilot process for allocating You Decide funds via a form of participatory budgeting. The pilots took place across all the area forums. Findings indicate that this process benefits the community by enabling additional services to be delivered in local communities, by involving residents in decision making and by enabling residents to have a greater understanding of the costs of services and associated choices. It has also provided departments with an additional intelligence source to help understand local needs and deliver services accordingly.
- 1.2. At Council on 2nd March 2009 it was agreed for the funding to be maintained at £260,000 which is £20,000 per Area Forum with the continuation of an additional £20,000 each for the Youth Parliament and the Older Peoples Parliament.

2. Overview

- 2.1. As reported to and agreed at Cabinet 9 July 2008, Wirral is one of twelve second round pilot areas announced in December 2007 that is trialling approaches to participatory budgeting. As a pilot, Wirral is at the forefront of exploring approaches to this new area of community engagement and actively helping to bring local communities closer to the decision making on public budgets.
- 2.2. The 2008-09 Council budget agreed a policy option to allocate £260,000 for the 'You Decide' initiative using a form of participatory budgeting. This initiative set out to deliver more choice for local people through the allocation of £20K for additional council services for each area forum area. The range of services offered were identified from existing documents and sources such as the area forums, resident's surveys, area plans and Sustainable Community Strategy. A further £260,000 has been agreed at Budget Council to continue the 'You Decide' initiative.
- 2.3. During September 2008 and the weeks leading up to the October 2008 round of area forums the community engagement team canvassed all wards of Wirral giving out leaflets and questionnaires to publicise You Decide. The consultation methods used were: on street interviews, postal questionnaires and an online questionnaire. 2118 people responded in total to the questionnaire.
- 2.4. Meetings were established to review the results from the consultation process. These meetings were attended by local councillors and community representatives who were provided with a clear set of results from the consultation. These results set out a ranked list of services for each forum highlighting the most selected suggestions at the top of each list. All forums selected services that demonstrated value for money and represented the maximum benefit to the community. (see Appendix 1)

3. Duty to involve

- 3.1. One of the challenges for Local Government is the duty to involve local people, . The local area will need to demonstrate not just consultation, but involvement of communities in decision making. In addition, the white paper *Communities in Control* (July 2008) lays down proposals to extend this duty to involve people in developing and commissioning local services to additional agencies. Participatory budgeting is part of the implementation of the 'duty to involve'. Participatory budgeting enables councils to provide a process of citizen engagement.
- 3.2. Participatory budgeting is supported and endorsed by CLG who has stated the ambition for all local authorities to take this approach by 2012. Participatory budgeting allows local people to participate in spending decisions through public meetings and votes to set local priorities and fund projects and services.

4. Comprehensive Area Assessment

- 4.1 In addition to the duty to involve, the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) inspection and assessment regime will have a strong focus on our understanding of local needs and aspirations and will be looking to see whether this knowledge has been used in the development of local priorities. The views and experiences of local people will be key sources of evidence for CAA and the joint inspectorate will be judging how citizens, from all parts of the community, are encouraged and supported to feed their views into priority-setting, decision making, service development and evaluation within and across the partnership organisations. It will assess the effectiveness of local partners in coordinating community engagement and communicating the impact on their decisions. CAA will also consider how local partners feedback and make changes as a result of engagement and inform residents of these changes.
- 4.2 Allocating You Decide funds via a form of participatory budgeting provides strong evidence that the community is actively involved in decision making about funding which directly influences services provided in their area.

5. Wider benefits of Participatory Budgeting

- 5.1. Participatory budgeting encourages community cohesion by bringing together people from different sections of the community that would not ordinarily meet each other to make decisions about their neighbourhoods. This provides an opportunity for everyone to meet and discuss the needs and aspirations of the community as a whole. It has also provided departments with an additional intelligence source to help understand local needs and deliver services accordingly

6. Links with area forum development

- 6.1. The area forums are leading the way with innovative ways to involve communities in decision making about spending. As well as empowering the community, these methods give in depth information to councillors and officers about what the priorities are for local communities.
- 6.2. This information helps to build consensus about what the priorities are for each of our area forum communities. Combined with this level of input over spending decisions, this will help us to assess how area forums may become even more involved in local service provision.

7. Evaluation

7.1. We evaluated the You Decide initiative by convening a number of focus groups that considered the process we had used.

7.2. Timetable and communication

- Participants were unsure of the 'timeline' for the project and when they could expect to see chosen services delivered. Some services (such as benches) will be installed with a plaque to identify that service as being delivered through 'You Decide'
- Participants were unsure what will happen with this initiative in future years or if it was a 'one off'. This is a result of funding being a policy option with uncertainty over future year's funding.
- Further activity is needed to report back to the participants and other residents to communicate the results and additional services that will now be delivered as a result of You Decide.
- There was insufficient knowledge or understanding of what the area forums are. Information about the forums can be disseminated in follow up communication about You Decide.

7.3. Process comments

- There was no involvement of under 16s in the questionnaire. This was a result of time constraints arising from the need for parental consent to take part for participants under 16 (in adherence with market research society codes of conduct). It is intended to explore the possibility of involving young people through school participation if funding is continued in future years.
- Participants reported that they wanted more involvement in the process with the questionnaire seen only as the first phase.
- A significant proportion of participants want to see more community involvement in discussion not just about *what* services but also about *where* these services should be located. Focus group participants saw discussion groups/ deliberative events as the next phase (following the initial consultation about what services).
- Participants felt that £20K is not enough money to make an impact on the facilities and improvements needed

7.4. Level of involvement in decision making

- Resident involvement in deciding local priorities was seen as very positive. However, some participants were unsure whether the council would really listen to the consultation results. The consultation process may have been complicated by the meetings held to review the results from the consultation process. These meetings were attended by local councillors and community representatives who were provided with a clear set of results from the consultation. However, the broader community were not involved in this part of the process.
- Participants described the You Decide process as 'teamwork' between residents and the council to effect targeted funding:
 - *"Well local people know the local issues rather than someone in an office somewhere"*
- There were reports of increased 'community spirit', sense of involvement and influence over decisions. This strongly suggests that You Decide (and other similar types of

activity) may have a positive impact on National Indicator 4, the percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality.

- There was evidence of complex decision making in relation to fiscal choices, with participants weighing up the pros and cons of selecting particular services based on the cost:
 - *“I altered my opinion because you look at the [option to buy] CCTV and think that would be quite good... but then saw the price of how much we’ve got to spend and I thought I would rather choose some other little bits”*
- There was evidence of complex decision making in relation to choice of services with cause and effect reasoning that selecting particular services would effect an overall change in the area, for example, that better lighting and levels of cleanliness may lead to a decrease in crime:
 - *“You see at the end of the day when we’re all living in the community, we want it nice”*
 - *“We don’t want to live in a scruffy place and a dark place where crime is, you know... we want nice areas”*
- You Decide was perceived as a large scale and wide reaching consultation process. Over 2100 people responded to the questionnaire.

8. Feedback from elected members

- 8.1. Many councillors took part. In ward canvassing to publicise the You Decide consultation and took the opportunity to interact with constituents and deal with ad hoc issues.
- 8.2. Councillors have indicated that they would like to have a greater level of involvement in the process in the future. The recent CLG publication, *‘Giving More People a Say in Local Spending, Participatory Budgeting: a national strategy’* states that participatory budgeting must complement democratic institutions.
- 8.3. It goes on to say that local councillors can play a big part in approving and supporting participatory budgeting, by chairing or helping facilitate events, using their expertise and experience to explain the impact of different options or decisions, and through monitoring and scrutiny. Activities such as participatory budgeting offer additional opportunities for councillors and other area forum members to connect with their ward communities, helping raise their profile and that of the council.
- 8.4. The independent Councillors Commission report, *Representing the Future*, recognises the importance of the modern councillor being a vital part of participatory as well as representative democracy. One of its recommendations (number 4) is that councillors should be given the tools to engage with new participatory activity in their unique position as the interface between council services and the local community.

9. Overall Community benefit of You Decide

- 9.1. Additional services are being delivered in local communities according to the views expressed during the process. Residents have been involved in the decision making about which services are being delivered. The benefits for residents include a greater understanding of the costs of services. The council now has additional intelligence source to understand local need for further use in service planning and design.
- 9.2. Evaluation shows that there is likely to be a positive impact on community cohesion from involving people in making decisions about their neighbourhoods and providing an opportunity for everyone to discuss the needs and aspirations of the community as a whole. This effect could be strengthened if people from different sections of the community

that would not ordinarily meet were brought together to discuss the needs and aspirations of the community as a whole (see section 10 below).

10. Alternative models for consideration

10.1. It is recommended that the Area Forum Chairs Group consider best practice for the operation for You Decide participatory budgeting. There are a number of different models that could be adopted. The evaluation process has shown that participants want a greater level of involvement in the decision making process so this should be considered when developing the process for operation.

10.2. How 'You Decide' worked in 2008:

- Departments identified services that could be offered 'for sale'
- Residents consulted via (quantitative) questionnaire survey on which services would be preferred
- Results considered forum pre-meetings by councillors and area forum community representatives and services to be provided decided.
- Liaison with departments to deliver selected services in each forum

10.3. Possible Alternative Models:

As shown in the 2008 model above, there are four main components to the process for allocation of the £20K per forum on additional council services. Alternative models can be created by choosing options from each of the components below:

1: Options for how the 'services for sale' could be identified

- a) Departments provide list of services that can be offered 'for sale' based on what is possible each year
- b) Use (edited/ revised) list from 2008
- c) Ask community for services they want – open suggestion scheme (not recommended as would raise expectation of delivery where none is possible)

2: Options for how the 'services for sale' could be prioritised

- a) Use quantitative questionnaire as in 2008 to include locations and postcodes of where services are requested.(costs in region of £15K)
- b) Use 2008 results and bypass fresh consultation exercise
- c) Conduct community meetings to reach consensus on priorities through discussion
- d) Series of service 'bundles' offered to residents to chose from to the value of £20k
- e) Departments and councillors decide priorities based on data/intelligence (this is not a participatory method)

3: Options for how the final choice of services could be decided

- a) Closed meeting of councillors and community representatives
- b) Ensure community involvement in discussion by conducting community meetings to reach consensus on final choices (as 2nd stage to 2a or 2c)
- c) Ensure community involvement in discussion by conducting community voting events (as 2nd stage to 2a or 2c)

4: Options for deciding where the chosen services will be located/ delivered to

- a) Departments decide based on hotspot data or service requests
- b) Ensure community involvement in discussion by conducting community meetings to reach consensus on service locations through discussion (as 3rd stage to 3b or 3c)
- c) Public partners involved in providing the services e.g. fire service working with young people

For example:

1. Departments identify services that can be offered 'for sale' based on what is possible each year

2. Use quantitative questionnaire as in 2008 to include locations and postcodes of where services are requested.
3. Decide services to be provided by conducting community voting events
4. Decide location of chosen services by liaising with departments using information from questionnaire to deliver selected services in each forum

11. Financial implications

- 11.1. Budget Cabinet 09-10 agreed for provision to be maintained at £260,000 which is £20,000 per area forum with the continuation of an additional £20,000 each for the Youth Parliament and the Older People's Parliament.

12. Staffing implications

- 12.1. There are additional staffing implications for corporate policy in that workloads are already substantial and demanding and area coordinators are currently expected to deliver this programme within existing staff resources.

13. Equal Opportunities implications

- 13.1. Following equality impact assessment of the area forums, a risk has been identified that some sections of the community are not being engaged or are attending the forums. Extra communications will need to take place with these communities to ensure that all resident's have an equal chance to participate.

14. Community Safety implications

- 14.1. There are potentially positive impacts for community safety as forums have the option to fund community safety related services.

15. Local Agenda 21

- 15.1. There are potentially positive impacts for the environment as forums have the option to fund environment related services.

16. Planning implications

- 16.1. There are no planning implications arising from this report.

17. Anti-poverty implications

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

18. Social inclusion implications

- 18.1. There are potentially positive impacts for social inclusion as forums have the option to fund social inclusion related services.

Local Member Support implications

- 18.2. The impact of this programme will be felt across the whole borough and communication with members will need to take place to ensure a full understanding of the process.

19. Background Papers

- 19.1. This report has arisen from the minutes of the council budget meeting of 21st February 2008 <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/viewmins.asp?mtg=2273#523> and the cabinet report of 9th July 2008 http://www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/public/cabcs080709rep1_27634.pdf .
- 19.2. Further background information on participatory budgeting can be found on the Participatory Budgeting Unit website <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk/>

20. Recommendations

That

- (1) departments identify services that can be offered 'for sale' based on what is possible each year.
- Use quantitative questionnaire as in 2008 to include locations and postcodes of where services are requested.
 - Decide location of chosen services using information from questionnaire by liaising with departments to deliver selected services in each forum
- (2) the Area Forum Chairs Group consider best practice for the operation for You Decide participatory budgeting. There are a number of different models that could be adopted. The evaluation process has shown that participants want a greater level of involvement in the decision making process so this should be considered when developing the process for operation.

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

This report was prepared by:
Abi Davey, who can be contacted on 8027
Tracey Smith, who can be contacted on 8026

Appendix 1

Area Forums	Sports and Youth Activity	Cleanliness	Safety	Environment	Road Signs	Education
Oxton and Prenton	£10,000.00	£5,000.00		£5,000.00		
Bebington and Clatterbridge	£7,500.00	£4,000.00	£4,550.00	£1,400.00	£2, 520.00	
Liscard and Seacombe	£11,500.00	£3,700.00	£1,500.00		£2800.00	£500.00
Greasby Frankby Irby Upton	£8,000.00	£6,000.00	£6,000.00			
Bromborough and Egtham	£12,000.00	£8,000.00				
Deswall Pensby and Thingwall	£12,000.00	£5,000.00				£3,000.00
Lasowe Moreton and Saughall Massie	£11,000.00	£2,000.00		£3,500.00	£3,500.00	
New Brighton and Wallasey	£4,000.00	£10,000.00	£6,000.00			
Birkenhead and Tranmere/Rock Ferry	£10,500.00	£5,000.00	£4,500.00			
West Wirral	£12,000.00	£3,000.00			£5,000.00	
Bidston and Cloughton	£6,500.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£1,000.00		

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19th MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

HEYGARTH PRIMARY SCHOOL - NEW KITCHEN / IMPROVED DINING/ STORAGE FACILITIES - SCHEME AND ESTIMATE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the work required for removal of existing kitchen and dining arrangement and to provide a new kitchen facility, store area and seating store and the existing hall to double as a dining room. This report sets out the scheme and estimate and Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the scheme.

1. Background

- 1.1 The school occupies purpose built 1930's buildings on a suburban site in Heygarth Road, Eastham. Health and safety issues have been the main driver of the proposed scheme. The kitchen/dining facility is a 1950's HORSAs building design and is one only a few left remaining in the Borough that requires investment. It is proposed that the existing hall will be incorporated into use for the dining facilities and upon completion of the scheme the HORSAs accommodation will be removed from the site. At over 200 metres squared, the existing hall is well above the average primary hall size and is suitable for dual use.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval for the proposed works; demolition of existing kitchen and dining facility, a new kitchen facility connected to the end of the existing hall, storage area to service such, and minor adaptations to the existing hall to accommodate dining seating, mechanical plant and external works to the access road and landscaping.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The Heygarth Road School development will require the following works:
- (i) Demolition of existing HORSAs kitchen and dining room which is at the end of its useful life and poses unacceptable health and safety risks and making good of the cleared footprint. The clear area created due to demolition will become a tarmac extension to existing car park facilities.
 - (ii) Construction of a new single storey extension to provide a new kitchen with ancillary store room. This will provide similar facilities as other recent kitchen developments at Town Lane primary and Stanton Road primary schools, with the development for equipment co-ordinated with Metro Catering.
 - (iii) Breakthrough to side wall adaptations to the existing Hall and new covered area to the side to allow general storage facility including dining seating.
- 2.2 The dining room will serve as a multi-function purpose to allow dining and school Hall use in accordance to DCSF guidelines.
- 2.3 Demolition of the existing kitchen and dining room will take place following the construction of the new extension to enable the school to continue with as few

interruptions as possible and to ensure whole works timetable and programme is executed efficiently.

- 2.4 The current Building Regulations (Part L2B), which came into effect on 06 April 2006, require that, when carrying out an extension or major works to building services on an existing building with a total useful floor area of over 1000 sq.m, 'consequential improvements' to the energy performance of the overall building shall be required where it is technically, functionally and economically feasible. The value of these consequential improvements shall generally be deemed under Requirement 17D to be not less than 10% of the value of the principal works. New boilers installed to the school in 2006 may be attributed to this area.
- 2.5 The new extension will incorporate the latest technology features for sustainable building and the use of materials which will provide a large degree of de-construction and recycling ability. Incorporation of renewable energy sources are planned i.e. intelligent lighting system, solar glass to prevent heat gain, high insulation values with passive air controls to reduce mechanical ventilation and recycling materials incorporated within the new construction (recycling aggregates).

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 All Professional Services for the scheme are being provided by staff within the Technical Services Department.
- 3.2 The Corporate Procurement Support Unit has been consulted and are satisfied with the procurement process implemented for this project.
- 3.3 The estimate for the proposed work is set out below:

Building Works (inc Consequential improvements to existing school 10% of building costs (as required by part L of building regulations yet to be defined)	£285,000.00
IT Provision	£ 15,000.00
Demolition works (existing kitchen & dining)	£ 47,100.00
SUB TOTAL	<u>£347,100.00</u>
3.4 Departmental Charges at 15% including: -	
Professional Fees	£ 41,403.00
Clerk Of Works Salary	£ 5,232.00
CDM Coordinator	£ 3,642.00
Building Regulation Fees	£ 1,118.00
Planning Fees	£ 670.00
SUB TOTAL	£ 52,065.00
TOTAL	<u>£ 399,165.00</u>

3.5 Funding for the proposed scheme is as follows:

DCSF Capital allocation modernization 2008/09	£10,000
DCSF Capital allocation modernization 2009/10	£400,000
TOTAL	<u>£410,000.00</u>

3.6 A £10,000 allocation was identified from DCSF modernisation 2008/09 to carry out a feasibility study to the existing area. The proposal is to allocate a further £400,000 from DCSF modernisation 2009/10 to provide a new kitchen facility to the school, using the existing hall as dining provision. The 2009/10 allocation was approved as part of the main 2008/9 programme.

4. Staffing implications

4.1 There are no staffing implications for the school within the proposals during or following completion.

5. Equal opportunities implications

5.1 Access will be provided for children and adults with disabilities to all areas of the proposed scheme.

5.2 The scheme will enhance the level and ease of access to the school. There are no implications in this report for equal opportunities in relation to women, ethnic minorities, or the elderly.

6. Community safety implications

6.1 The design of this project will take into account best practice to reduce the risk of crime and the local crime reduction officer has been consulted.

7. Local Agenda 21 implications

7.1 Thermal insulation is to be provided to meet the standards and guidelines recommended by the DCSF in the school premises regulations 1996 and part L2 of the Building Regulations. The design will also follow the DETR/DCSF guidelines for "Energy efficient design of new buildings and extensions for schools and colleges."

7.2 Low energy electrical fittings, heating controls and water saving devices will all be used as far as possible to help reduce the consumption of natural resources.

7.3 All timber used will be from sustainable sources as regulated by the FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) or equivalent.

7.4 A "Site Waste Management Plan" will be incorporated in line with recent statutory requirements.

7.5 The successful contractor will be requested to employ 60% local labour and source materials from local suppliers once construction commences, this will be monitored by officers involved in the contract.

8. Planning implications

- 8.1 Planning permission and building regulations approval will be required for this scheme. Building regulations and planning applications will be submitted by the Technical Services Department based at Cheshire Lines building.

9. Anti-poverty implications

- 9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

10. Social inclusion implications

- 10.1 The scheme will provide full accessibility for pupils, staff and visitors in a safe and inclusive environment.

11. Local Member Support implications

- 11.1 Heygarth Road Primary school is in the Eastham ward.

12. Background papers

- 12.1 A sketch plan is attached, outlining the proposed scheme layout.

13. Recommendations

That

(1) the Scheme and Estimate as presented be accepted;

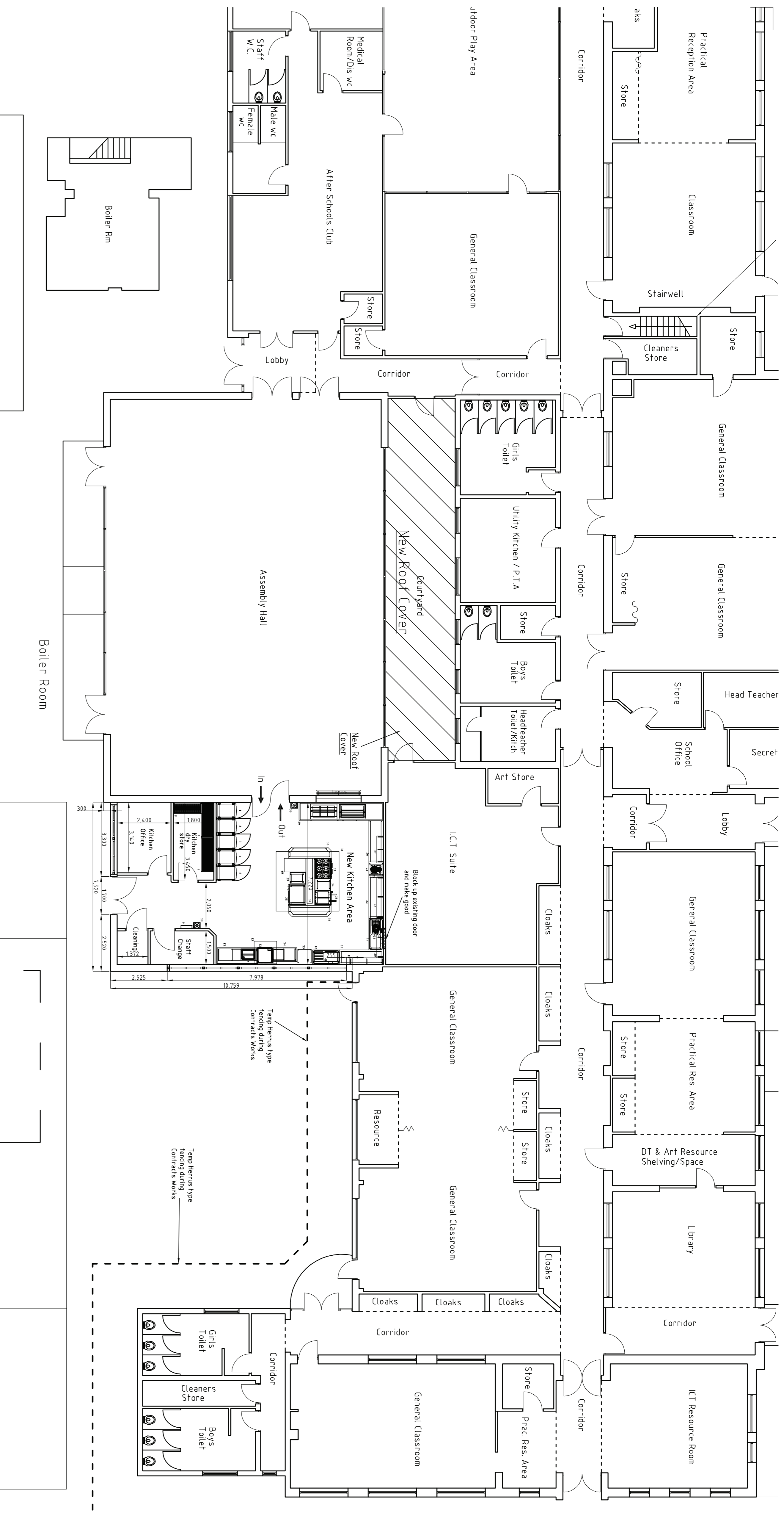
(2) approval be given for Technical Services department to obtain tenders for the scheme and report back to Cabinet;

(3) Technical Services be authorised to obtain all necessary statutory approvals for the scheme; and

(4) scheme costs to include the consequential improvements to be made to the existing premises as a result of complying to Building Regulation Part L and the scope of the work to be agreed with Building Control.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

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Existing Dining Hall and Kitchen
 To be demolished Following
 Completion of New Kitchen

Car Park Zone

REV.	DATE	INITIALS REVIEWED

WIRPAL
 TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
 CHESTER
 CHESTER LINES BUILDING,
 CHESTER STREET,
 WIRRAL, CH41 1ND,
 TEL: 0151-498 2000
 FAX: 0151-498 2188
 EMAIL: TECHNICALSERVICES@wirpalgroup.co.uk

PROJECT
 Heygarth Primary
 Heygarth Road, Eastham
 CH62 8AG

DRAWN	REVIEWED	AUTHORISED	DRAWING NO.	REV.
K.S.			C18447/03	
SCALE	1:100	Printed @ A1	UPRN	
DATE	Oct 08		170701062000	

PROPOSED TITLE: Proposed Site Plan

Q.A. DOCUMENT REFERENCE: 249.6-D (08 AUGUST 2008)

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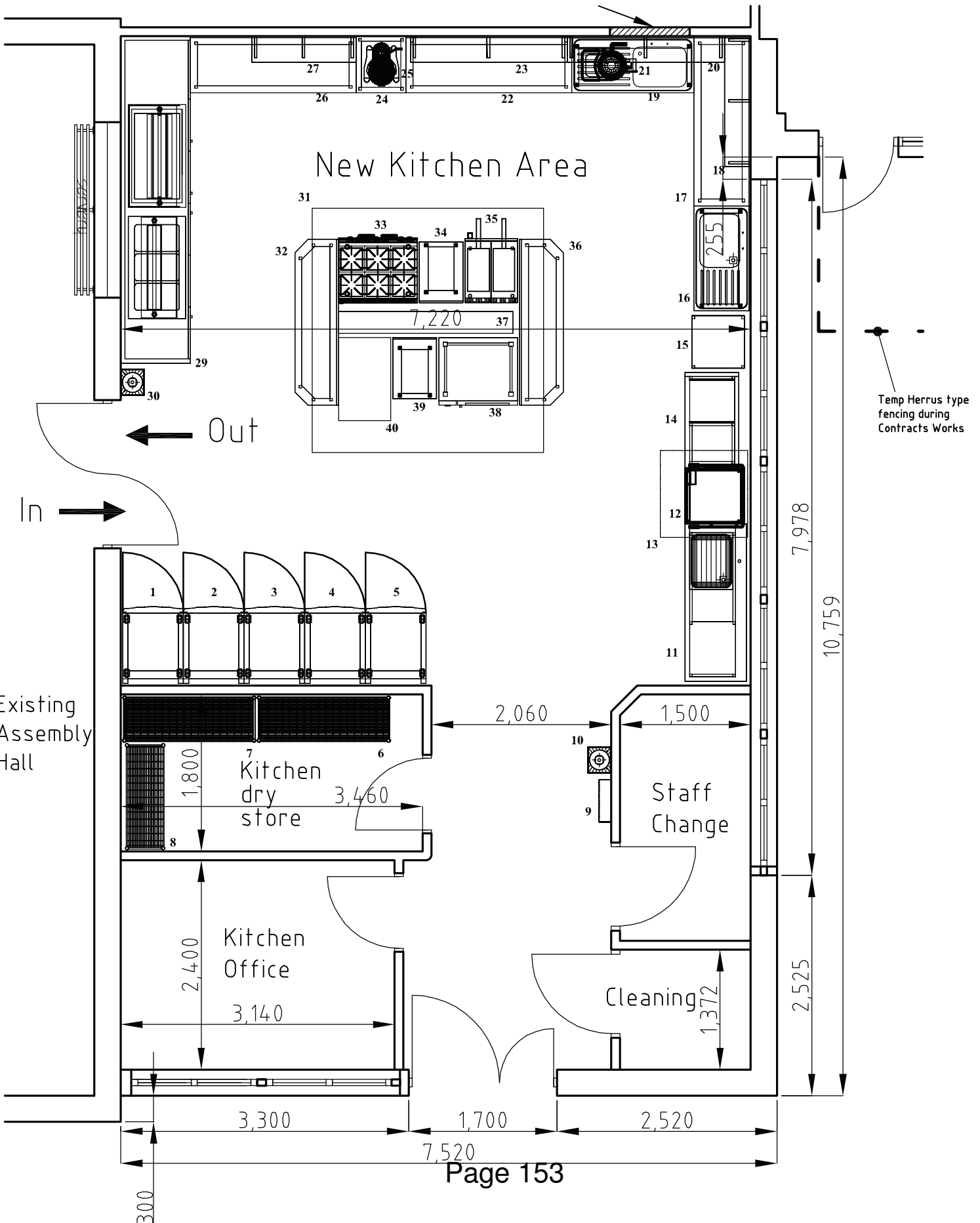
NOTES

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Block up existing door
and make good

WIRRAL
 TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
 Chesire House Bldg,
 Grosvenor Street,
 Wirral, CH41 1BB,
 Tel: 0151-5067500
 Email: enquiries@wirral.gov.uk

PROJECT	Heygarth Primary Heygarth Road, Eastham CH62 8AG		
DRAWING FILE	Proposed Floor Plan		
DATE	ISSUED	APPROVED	REV.
17/07/01			C18447/04
08			Printed @ A1
G.A. DOCUMENT REFERENCE: 249.0-D (08 AUGUST 2008)			



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REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SECONDARY SCHOOL REVIEW: AMENDED CONSULTATION OPTION FOR PHASE 1 SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL STATUS UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report advises the Cabinet of progress on the Phase 1 Area Review of secondary school places which comprises schools in the Birkenhead and Bebington areas. Following additional consultations with stakeholders, and preliminary discussions with potential sponsors for an Academy, this report puts forward further recommendations for consultation options in the Birkenhead area. It also provides an update on recent changes to school status, including the Secretary of State's decision on Birkenhead High School for Girls.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting of 29th November 2007, Cabinet instructed that Phase 1 of the Secondary Places Review should comprise schools in Birkenhead and Bebington. As in the review of primary school places, the first stage of the Review has been to conduct a process where, on a confidential basis, meetings have taken place with key stakeholders in each of the areas under review. These stakeholders included Ward Councillors as well as officers of the Diocese of Chester and Shrewsbury, headteachers and chairs of governors of schools potentially affected by the Reviews. This comprised the "pre-consultation" phase of the process.
- 1.2 The subsequent report to Cabinet of 26th June 2008 provided an update on the demographics for secondary schools in the Birkenhead and Bebington areas, based on the January Census 2008. The report and minute form Appendix A to this report.
- 1.3 Section 4 of the 26th June 2008 report raised the potential implications of the proposed new Academy at Birkenhead High School for Girls. At this time members agreed to await an independent assessment of Birkenhead secondary schools proposed by the Office of the Schools Commissioner, the outcome of the Feasibility stage of the Birkenhead High School for Girls Academy process, and more detailed information on the National Challenge programme, before recommending options to proceed to consultation in the Phase 1 area.
- 1.4 At its meeting of 6th November 2008, the outcome of the independent Gyte report was reported to Cabinet, along with recommendations for an option to proceed to consultation. This option involved the closure of Rock Ferry High and Park High Schools in order to establish a new 11 to 16 Academy in the Birkenhead area, with the Council as co-sponsor. Cabinet agreed that formal discussions with the DCSF and potential sponsors should begin, including more detailed feasibility studies on the size, location and potential impact of the new Academy on neighbouring schools. The report and minute are attached as Appendix B.

2.0 Implications of the initial consultation option

- 2.1 The option approved for consultation by Cabinet on 6th November 2008 involved the closure of Rock Ferry High School and Park High School. A new 11 to 16 Academy would in the first instance open in the existing buildings, with a new building for the Academy considered a high priority for the Authority's Building Schools for the Future programme, or through funding available via the national framework for Academies set up by Partnerships for Schools (PfS) subject to the availability of a suitable site. In many cases Academies open in the existing buildings of the schools they replace. The Government's aim is that new or refurbished buildings will be provided within three years of the Academy opening, although they acknowledge that some Academies replace schools that have already been rebuilt or

refurbished.

2.2 Through further discussions with various local stakeholders, including school and member representatives, it became clear that this initial option would leave some key issues unresolved.

Demographics

2.3 There are projected to be 24 forms of entry (FE) of pupils in 2013 (30 pupils per FE). Assuming that grammar school and Catholic high school entry continues at present levels, and that the new Birkenhead High School for Girls Academy will retain pupils who would otherwise have attended schools outside Birkenhead, it is sensible to plan for 27 FE of pupils, which allows a degree of surplus places to enable parental choice to operate.

2.4 Within this area, Woodchurch High School, the LA BSF One School Pathfinder, takes 9 FE of pupils, and as a newly built school can be expected to continue its long term popularity with parents. Prenton High School takes 5 FE of girls, and a conservative estimate of Birkenhead High School for Girls Academy intake is for 3 FE of girls to attend that school at age 11. This leaves 10 FE of pupils to be distributed between the remaining schools, of which 9 FE will be boys, and 1 FE girls.

2.5 The proposed establishment of Birkenhead High School for Girls Academy exacerbates the gender imbalance in places already present in Birkenhead, due to the presence of more single sex girls places than boys. There are currently no non-selective boys places available in Birkenhead. Existing mixed sex schools already demonstrate an imbalance in their intakes. Across all current mainstream Birkenhead schools, 52% of pupils are girls, and 48% are boys. Park High, Ridgeway High, Rock Ferry High and Woodchurch High already accommodate proportionately more boys than would be expected, a feature particularly demonstrated at Rock Ferry High where just 1 in 3 pupils are girls.

	Total Places 11-18	Boys places	Girls places	Mixed places	% Boys on roll
Park High	1250			1250	53.9%
Prenton High	791		791		0%
Ridgeway High	886			886	56.4%
Rock Ferry High	1232			1232	67.0%
Woodchurch High	1396			1396	55.0%
St Anselm's College (Catholic grammar)	981	981			100%
Upton Hall School (Catholic grammar)	954		954		0%
Birkenhead High School (proposed)	700		700		0%
Total	8190	981 (12%)	2445 (30%)	4764 (58%)	

Table above shows 2008 Net Capacity divided into single sex and mixed places. Percentage of Boys in mixed sex schools is as at January 2009 Census.

2.6 The Authority is committed to narrowing attainment gaps; this includes performance differences between boys and girls. Teenagers who attend single-sex schools do no better or worse in exams than those in co-educational schools, according to ESRC research (2007), but

they are twice as likely to study subjects not traditionally associated with their gender, for example boys are more likely to study English and languages. However, the study showed that in terms of exam results, boys and girls do no better in single sex education once their family background and previous ability were taken into account. No overall differences were found between the performance of boys in single-sex and mixed comprehensive schools. However, more detailed investigation by NFER (2002) revealed that boys with lower prior attainment achieved better average GCSE scores in single-sex schools, while boys with higher prior attainment took slightly more science GCSEs and achieved higher total GCSE science scores in single-sex schools.

- 2.7 The establishment of an 11 to 16 mixed sex Academy would not redress the balance of terms of access for Birkenhead parents to single sex boys non-selective places. In the light of this, it is proposed to consult upon the establishment of a single sex 5 FE non-selective Boys Academy, to complement existing high quality provision for girls at Prenton High School. The equivalent Boys school to Prenton High School for Girls was originally Prenton Secondary Modern School for Boys, accommodated in the buildings of what is now Devonshire Park Primary School until 1970/71. The last all boys community secondary school, Birkenhead Institute High School in Claughton, closed in 1993.
- 2.8 The new building for the Boys Academy would ideally be located centrally within Birkenhead, close to transport links to allow access from a wide area, and preferably near to Prenton High School for Girls. This would allow future close co-operation between the two schools, possibly including potential for shared facilities, community use and teaching expertise.
- 2.9 To this end, the Authority has examined a number of provisional sites, not all of which are owned by the Council, for a new secondary school in the Birkenhead area. The most suitable in terms of size, location and access is Borough Road playing fields, near to Tranmere Rovers Football club. Shaftesbury Youth Club pavilion, built in 1971, is located off Mendip Road, Prenton, on adjacent playing fields which could also form part of the extended site of the new Academy, with scope for continued and enhanced community use of the new school and the playing fields. There are planning implications as these are UDP designated playing fields. Shaftesbury Youth Club has been supported by the Council in a bid for £1.4 million as part of the "My Place" initiative. There are strong synergies with the Academy proposal. It is recommended that discussions with Shaftesbury Youth Club now take place regarding possible use of the site and their collaboration with the project.
- 2.10 Assuming the new school is established as a 5 FE 11 to 16 boys Academy, by 2013 there are projected to be 5 FE of mixed 11 to 16 boys and girls available to attend a further secondary school in Birkenhead. Examination of where pupils live, and where they choose to go to school, indicates that those pupils who live in north and north-west Birkenhead, e.g. Bidston, Beechwood, Claughton and Noctorum who currently attend Ridgeway High School and Park High School, would be unlikely to travel to either the proposed Boys Academy or Prenton High School for Girls. These pupils would be best served by a centrally located school within Birkenhead.
- 2.11 The two potential sites for the 11 to 16 mixed sex Academy are Ridgeway High School and Park High School. Ridgeway High School's main building is in poor physical condition, and would be considered a high priority for a rebuild under Building Schools for the Future. The Council is committed to maintain Park High School's high quality, recently renovated building until 2031 under a PFI contract, or face a likely expensive buy-out from the contract unless an alternative Council use could be found in the event of the school closing.
- 2.12 Cabinet is asked to consider an amendment to the original consultation option, whereby a 5 FE 11 to 16 Boys Academy would be established near to Prenton High School for Girls, and a 5 FE 11 to 16 mixed sex Academy established at the Park High site. This would require the contemporaneous closure of not only Park High and Rock Ferry High, but also Ridgeway High School.

- 3.1 Park High School's building can become a mixed sex Academy immediately on opening. Little or no alteration would be required, but the school could be considered for further enhancement under the Academy programme. Pupils attending Rock Ferry High School and Ridgeway High School would remain in their existing buildings ahead of the construction of a new building for the Boys Academy. A strategy to minimise disruption would need to be consulted upon as part of the Feasibility Stage.
- 3.2 If all stages of the Academy process are followed smoothly and speedily, it should be possible to formally establish the two Academies from September 2010. Pupils will be educated on existing sites during a transition period.
- 3.3 The Rock Ferry site and Ridgeway site would be closed and could be considered for other uses, declared surplus to requirements or designated wholly or in part as playing field in order to offset the use of UDP playing fields elsewhere. Distribution of any potential proceeds from any future site sale would be best agreed legally with the Academy Trust during the Feasibility stage. The Sanderling unit currently based at Rock Ferry High School would be relocated to another local school, possibly the mixed Academy at Park High School. The City Learning Centre and community facilities at the Ridgeway site would be retained.

4.0 Sponsorship

- 4.1 On 6th November 2008, Cabinet approved discussions with potential sponsors of new Academies in Birkenhead. The role of the sponsor in an Academy is vital, since not only is there a potential financial contribution, but the sponsor determines the ethos and vision of the Academy, including appointing the majority of governors, and appointing the first Principal.
- 4.2 The Council's Corporate Plan identifies raising the aspirations of young people, particularly those of low attainment, as one of its key objectives. This leads to priorities for improvement related to narrowing the gap in educational standards between those from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, and also increasing the proportion of poorer children transferring to further and higher education. These proposals are intended to make a significant contribution to meeting these aims. Raising the aspirations of young people is central to the philosophy of the Academy movement and the role of sponsors is regarded as a particularly significant feature. It is therefore very important that the sponsorship group for each Academy contains organizations able to make a practical contribution in this area.
- 4.3 Ideally, it is desirable that the sponsorship group for each Academy should contain:
 - A university: working with Academy to encourage progression into HE, to bring cutting edge expertise to the staff group and critically, to raise the sights of students;
 - A college: to act as a key post 16 partner to these 11 to 16 institutions, to encourage progression into post 16 education, develop 14 to 19 continuity and offer expertise in the vocational curriculum;
 - An industrial or commercial partner: to help the Academy to focus on employment skills, to provide expertise in enterprise skills and in business management;
 - Wirral Council: to ensure that the Academy remains linked to the community, close to the democratic process and also as the largest single employer in Wirral.

Initial approaches have been made to organisations in all these categories and have been positively received.

- 4.4 Sponsors are expected to jointly contribute £2 million over five years towards an endowment fund for the Academy, with £500,000 of this "up-front" at the time of the Funding Agreement. Educational establishments and the Council would be exempt from this requirement, and the size of the contribution from private sponsors would be reduced proportionately. If each proposed Academy has four sponsors, three of whom are exempt, the industrial sponsor would be liable for a quarter of the full amount, that is, £125,000 at the Funding Agreement, with the remaining £375,000 payable over five years. The proceeds of the endowment are

spent by the Academy Trust on measures to counteract the impact of deprivation on education in their local communities. Sponsors must be in place before the Expression of Interest can be approved by the Secretary of State.

4.5 Cabinet is asked to approve the principle of sponsors being drawn from the categories listed in 4.3, and to endorse Wirral Council's position as a co-sponsor for each Academy. Further, Cabinet is asked to give the Director all necessary authority to move to formal agreements with one or more of these co-sponsors to proceed to draw up the Expression of Interest (see 5.2 below).

5.0 Next steps

5.1 This is not a decision-making report, but one which begins the formal process of establishing the nature and feasibility, including consultation, on potential Academies in Birkenhead. Cabinet has already given approval for a consultation on changes to secondary school provision in Birkenhead, including the establishment of an Academy. As a Sponsor, the Council would need to formally sign the Expression of Interest, which would be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.

5.2 These Academy proposals are currently in the Brokering Phase, where potential sponsors and projects are identified. The Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC) when notified by the Authority following Cabinet's decision, will then send a Statement of Intent letter which allows the OSC to appoint consultants to work with the Authority and other sponsors on an Expression of Interest.

5.3 The Expression of Interest document (EOI) sets out the proposed vision for the Academy, including the Academy's ethos, specialism, proposed size, age range, location and information about predecessor schools. The EOI must be signed by the sponsors, and by the Local Authority before submission to the Secretary of State for approval to proceed to the Feasibility Phase. The EOI usually takes around 3 months to complete, however in this instance it is hoped to complete the EOI within 2 months.

5.4 Under Feasibility, the Council then undertakes formal consultations with schools and other interested parties on the proposals for change, including closure of the predecessor schools. Simultaneously, the DCSF appointed and funded project management consultants will work with the Authority to manage the Feasibility study for the two Academies. The key decision maker is the Project Steering Group, chaired by the lead Sponsor. This will include consultations with Shaftesbury Youth Club about land, and the nature of their association with the project.

5.5 Feasibility studies typically take between 6 and 12 months to reach a legally binding Funding Agreement between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State. If the process runs smoothly and takes nearer 6 months, Principal(s) Designate could be appointed by the end of 2009, with a view to closing the predecessor schools from August 2010 and opening the new Academies in September 2010. Pupils would, however, continue to be educated at their existing sites for some time in order to minimise disruption and allow time for various complex factors to be worked out.

5.6 Guidance indicates that there is at least two terms' work for a Principal Designate preparing for the opening of an Academy, and the Authority would recommend that the Sponsor appoint a Principal Designate at least one term prior to opening. Complexities include:

- Establishing two new institutions, including further development and implementation of the vision, curriculum, admission policy and staffing arrangements designed at the Feasibility stage. These are matters for the Academy Trust in partnership with the Principal Designate.
- Establishing a boys school and a mixed school from the pupil population of 3 mixed schools. Paragraph 3.2 above indicates an intended transition pattern.

- Maintaining parental confidence and avoiding adverse pupil movement during transition.
- For the Boys Academy, co-ordinating a build programme with the organisational changes.

5.7 In the event that the Principal Designate is appointed prior to the Funding Agreement being signed, the DCSF has prepared an interim fixed-term contract designed to bridge the gap until the Funding Agreement is signed and a permanent contract can be issued.

6.0 Foundation and Trust school status update

6.1 At its meeting of 13th March 2008, Cabinet was provided with information regarding different categories of schools. Appendix A to that report provided a list of secondary phase schools that had either published proposals to change status or indicated an intention to consider a change of status at the time of compiling the report.

6.2 At that time, three school governing bodies had approved a change from community to Foundation, with three more indicating an intention to consider a change of status.

6.3 Appendix C to this report provides an update on this table. A further two schools have approved a change from Community to Foundation, one from Community to Trust. An existing Foundation school, Calday Grange Grammar School for Boys, has now moved from Foundation to Trust.

6.4 Four further schools have indicated an intention to consider a change of status, three of these from Community to Trust. Members' attention is drawn to a pattern emerging – of the eight PFI secondary schools, four are now or will shortly become Foundation or Trust schools, with a further two schools indicating an intention to consider a change of status. At the end of the PFI term in 2031, the buildings and land which under Community status would previously have reverted to the Local Authority, under Foundation or Trust status will be signed over to the Governing body without any payment or compensation to the Authority. A high impact risk is that if a school were to close during the PFI term, the Council would be liable for the full unitary charge, and if a suitable alternative purpose could not be found for the building, may incur significant penalty costs to release the Council from the PFI agreement.

6.5 Members' attention is also drawn to the advised intention of Wirral Hospital School to consult on a change from Community to Foundation status, the first Wirral special school to do so. All schools, primary, secondary and special, have the option to investigate Foundation status. If carried through, this means that the Hospital school's governing body would become the employer of the school staff, and would take ownership of the school's land and assets. As in mainstream schools, the governing body would become the legally responsible admission authority for the school. However, as a special school in reality there would be little change to the way pupils are placed, either full-time by the Authority via a statement or part-time under negotiation with the pupil's mainstream school, and no possibility for the Governing body to amend the existing admission policy.

7.0 Birkenhead High School for Girls Academy update

7.1 Following the report to Cabinet of 15th January 2009, "Proposal to establish an Academy at Birkenhead High School for Girls", Cabinet's views were sought on the response to the consultation on this proposal. The relevant portion of the Cabinet minute is attached as Appendix D (item 329).

7.2 Point (2) of the Cabinet resolution relates to Cabinet's view that if approved, close partnership working between Birkenhead High School for Girls Academy and Prenton High School for Girls would be desirable.

7.3 Appendix E is a letter from Barbara Harrison, Chief Executive of the Girls Day School Trust (GDST). In this letter, the GDST's priority is to establish the Birkenhead High

School for Girls Academy as an institution and allow it to “bed down”, whilst not ruling out a partnership working arrangement with Prenton High School in the long term.

7.4 Following the closure of the consultation, the Authority was asked to confirm that consultation had taken place, and did so prior to 13th February 2009. At the time of writing, the Department has not officially been informed of the Secretary of State’s decision on this proposal, however a press release from the GDST indicates that the legally binding Funding Agreement has now been signed by the Secretary of State and the GDST in order to establish a 3 to 18 all-ability state funded Birkenhead High Academy for Girls from September 2009.

7.5 There are substantial and wide-ranging implications to the Authority, not only in terms of school place planning and data sharing with the new Birkenhead High Academy, but in terms of financial and staffing implications of the Authority’s involvement with the procurement and delivery of £11 million of capital works at the Birkenhead High Academy sites. These will form the subject of a further report to Cabinet in Summer 2009.

8.0 **Building Schools for the Future (BSF)**

8.1 As reported to Cabinet on 6th November 2008, a revised Expression of Interest for early entry to BSF was submitted to the DCSF at the end of November 2008.

8.2 The outcome of this Expression of Interest and revised national time scales is expected in March 2009. Preliminary indications released by the DCSF indicate that based on prioritisation by GCSE attainment and deprivation, in terms of initial projects, Wirral is ranked 26th out of the 70 local authorities for phase 1 initial projects in those authorities which have not yet begun BSF. The next stage in the process will be for the Authority to discuss readiness to deliver with Partnerships for Schools.

9.0 **Financial Implications**

9.1 There are none arising directly as a result of this report, though the proposed changes do have very significant implications.

9.2 Establishment of Academies would result in an on-going impact on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The Academies would be funded via an adjustment to the DSG through replication of the local formula, in addition, funding would also be removed based on the level of central expenditure within the schools budget. This funding adjustment would require the LA to cut central expenditure in line with the reduction in funding. Due to fixed costs, economies of scale and varying support provided for individual schools the budget reduction is unlikely to match the cost reductions achievable by no longer providing certain services to an Academy.

9.3 With regard to Foundation and Trust status, paragraph 5.11 of the 13th March 2008 report says the following: “If a PFI school opts for Foundation with a Trust status, the governing body will inherit all the contractual benefits and obligations of the PFI contract. Consequently, PFI Trust schools may not fully benefit from ownership of their assets or changes to the employment of service staff until the end of the PFI contract. The Authority remains liable for paying the unitary charge, and any governing body contribution remains the same.”

9.4 There are likely be cost implications to the Council for alterations to leasing and contractual arrangements when schools involved in the PFI scheme approve a change of status to Foundation or Foundation with a Trust.

9.5 At the end of the PFI term in 2031, the buildings and land which under Community status would previously have reverted to the Local Authority, under Foundation or Trust status will be signed over to the Governing body without any payment or compensation to the Authority. A high impact risk is that if a school were to close during the PFI term, the Council would be liable for the full unitary charge, and if a suitable alternative purpose could not be found for the building, may incur significant penalty costs to release the Council from the PFI agreement.

9.6 Academies that open in the predecessor school buildings may be entitled to a small additional capital grant to cover costs such as renewed signage and other small capital projects required to open the school as an academy.

9.7 Financial and staffing implications of the procurement of capital works at Birkenhead High Academy will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.

10.0 Staffing Implications

10.1 There are none arising directly as a result of this report. There are, however, important implications arising out of the proposals and these will be set out in a further report as proposals become more specific.

10.2 The staffing implications for the Authority of entering Building Schools for the Future will be significant. Again, this will be the subject of a future report.

10.3 In relation to Foundation and Trust schools status, since the Governing body of the school will become the employer of the school's staff, they will acquire additional employment responsibilities and legal commitments, for example, for Health and Safety. In Foundation or Trust PFI schools, the governing body will not be able to directly employ staff providing services under the PFI contract until the end of the contract.

11.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

11.1 It is essential to plan school provision across the Authority so that it is both efficient and effective in the interests of all pupils. Consultation will need to address very carefully the impact of any preferred options on pupils which are served by the schools concerned. The consultation option would improve the balance between boys and girls secondary school places in this area, as discussed in section 2 above.

12.0 Community Safety Implications

12.1 Rationalisation and refurbishment of schools allow the most vulnerable accommodation to be removed and other security improvements carried out.

13.0 Local Agenda 21 Statement

13.1 The provision of efficient and effective education is a vital part of serving local communities; inefficient use of resources is wasteful both in educational and physical resource terms.

13.2 New school buildings and extensions are required to achieve a minimum standard of BREEAM energy rating of "Very Good". In order to achieve this, the design of a new Academy building would follow as far as possible the DETR/DCSF guidelines in BB87 for "Energy efficient design of new buildings and extensions for schools and colleges". This includes items such as low-energy electrical fittings, water saving devices and the use of sustainably sourced timber.

14.0 Planning Implications

14.1 The relationship between housing development policy and school place provision is a factor in considering surplus place removal. The major regeneration drivers in Birkenhead are the Housing Market Renewal Initiative, with redevelopment proposals in Rock Ferry (Fiveways), Tranmere (Church Road) and North Birkenhead (currently the area to the west of the Laird Street Bus Depot), and Wirral Waters. Although the Wirral Waters proposals aim to provide a significant number of new dwellings in North Birkenhead, this is to be phased over 30-50 years and the annual output of new dwellings from the scheme is projected to peak at 650 in any one year. The Audit Commission says that 100 new houses generates approximately 4 pupils per year group and the Children and Young People's Department believe that this number can be accommodated in the existing and planned provision. Although new house building and conversion in the last 5 years has ranged from 511 (2005/06) to 771 (2007/08) gross across the Borough, the effect of demolitions has reduced this to between 102

(2004/05) and 515 (2007/08) net new dwellings, with no additional demand for new secondary school places. Over this period, when new housing development has been increasingly focused on the east of the Borough in Wallasey and Birkenhead, secondary school rolls have continued to fall due to the decrease in births.

- 15.2 Any proposals after the consultation and decision making process for school re-organisation would be subject to the usual planning processes. Policy L1 of the North West of England Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) requires local authorities to take account of the views of the local community (including service users) and carry out an assessment of demographic, sporting, recreational, cultural, educational, skills and training and health needs in local communities. Furthermore, they should ensure that accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling is a central consideration.
- 15.3 The development of land designated in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as a playing field or the removal of playing fields from community use may be required by these proposals. This could be offset by designating all or part of one of the existing school sites as green space/playing field, and/or by intensifying the use of existing playing fields through improvements.

The Shaftesbury Playing Field

- 15.4 The Shaftesbury Playing Field site (including the pavilion, Shaftesbury Youth Club and sports hall) is shown on the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan as a sports ground under Proposal RE6/18, whilst the adjoining Borough Road Playing Field is shown as RE6/17. Within the UDP these two sites were subject to Policy RE5, but this has now been deleted and development proposals on all playing fields are now subject to national planning policy for playing fields in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17, July 2002). This requires consultation with Sport England on developments that affect land used as playing fields and states that local authorities should give very careful consideration to any planning application involving development on playing fields.
- 15.5 PPG17 states that planning permission for such development that involves playing fields should not be allowed unless:
- (i) the proposed development is ancillary to the use of the site as a playing field (e.g. new changing rooms) and does not adversely affect the quantity or quality of pitches and their use;
 - (ii) the proposed development only affects land which is incapable of forming a playing pitch (or part of one);
 - (iii) the playing fields that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or fields of equivalent or better quantity or quality and in a suitable location; or
 - (iv) the proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field.
- 15.6 Development of the Shaftesbury Playing Field for a new school would impact strongly on the integrity of the playing field and any proposal should be subject to criterion (iii) above in that the lost playing field should be replaced in another suitable location. PPG17 defines suitable location and equivalent benefit as;

“At least as accessible to current and potential new users, and at least equivalent in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality. Wherever possible, the aim should be to achieve qualitative improvements to open spaces, sports and recreational facilities.”

Criterion (iv) of PPG17 may be addressed if existing facilities are improved so as to provide for more intensive use to compensate for the loss of the original facilities. This approach would be subject to consultation with Sport England and should be carefully considered, particularly if it would involve development (such as floodlighting) which might be detrimental

to the amenities of adjoining residents.

- 15.7 PPG17 recommends that local authorities prepare an assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation (including playing fields). Whilst a study was carried out in support of the UDP, this pre-dated PPG17 and requires updating to take account of changes in population structure and the quality of existing provision. The Shaftesbury Playing Field is shown as within an area of open space deficiency in the UDP.

Rock Ferry High School

- 15.8 The consultation option proposes that Rock Ferry High School would cease to be maintained. The site of the buildings of Rock Ferry High School is shown as within the Primarily Residential Area on the UDP and in principle, if no other factors were to be considered, residential redevelopment would be appropriate. The site lies within the priority area for new development identified in the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing. It is also in the area subject to Policy LCR3 of RSS, which supports new house building, stating that the quality and choice of housing should be expanded, in line with the approach set out in Policy L4 of RSS.
- 15.9 However, subject to the assessment of playing field need and the views of Sport England, it may be necessary to form additional playing fields to compensate for those lost at Shaftesbury Playing Field. The existing Rock Ferry High School playing fields were shown in the UDP as being subject to Policy RE7, although that is now deleted and national policy in PPG17 applies. The assessment of compensatory provision required by PPG17 might suggest the use of the entire existing site of Rock Ferry High School as a replacement for playing space lost at Shaftesbury. Only if an assessment concluded that it was unnecessary to use the site of the existing buildings at Rock Ferry for compensatory provision of playing space, then it may be possible to consider other uses for the built area of the Rock Ferry site. The assessment should also consider whether the existing playing fields adjacent to Rock Ferry High School alone might have the potential to compensate for the Shaftesbury Playing Field. Currently, Rock Ferry High School is not shown as being within an area of open space deficiency in the UDP.

Ridgeway High School

- 15.10 Ridgeway High School was shown as a School Playing Field subject to Policy RE7 on the UDP, but this policy has now been deleted and the site is subject to the same national planning policy as the Shaftesbury Playing Field site. Therefore redevelopment outside the existing building envelope that would impact on the playing fields is subject to national policy in PPG17 and notification to Sport England. The Ridgeway site is outside the priority area set out in the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing. The site of Ridgeway High School is not within an area of open space deficiency in the UDP. In any change to the status of Ridgeway High School, the Council would expect to retain usage of the building housing the City Learning Centre.

16.0 Anti-Poverty Implications

- 16.1 The redistribution of funding released by school reorganisation, in combination with the Authority's intention to realign the schools budget to give higher levels of funding to schools with high levels of deprivation, as well as improved accommodation, goes towards raising aspirations and narrowing the attainment gap for vulnerable groups.

17.0 Social Inclusion Implications

- 17.1 School re-organisation and transforming accommodation through the forthcoming Building Schools for the Future programme and other schemes, provides opportunities to promote joint agency work to promote co-ordinated solutions for pupils and their families. There is scope for community participation in the design process of any new school buildings, raising the school's profile within the community.

18.0 Local Member Support Implications

18.1 School re-organisation and change of status has implications for all Wards.

18.2 The three secondary schools in the Phase 1 review area named in relation to the consultation option in this report, Birkenhead High School for Girls and the Wards in which these schools are situated, which are Claughton, Oxtan and Rock Ferry.

19.0 Background Papers

Pupil and Capacity data held by the LA

DCSF prospectus for Sponsors and Local Authorities - 400 Academies

Spielhofer, T., O'Donnell, L., Benton, T., Schagen, S. and Schagen, I. (2002). The Impact of School Size and Single-Sex Education on Performance (LGA Research Report 33). Slough: NFER

Leonard, D (2007). Single-sex and co-educational secondary schooling: life course consequences?: Full Research Report. ESRC End of Award Report, RES-000-22-1085. Swindon: ESRC

20.0 Recommendations

The Director of Children's Services recommends that:

- (1) Cabinet confirms that the option for consultation on secondary school re-organisation in Birkenhead will comprise the establishment of two 5 form of entry 11 to 16 Academies – one a single sex Academy for boys on a site to be confirmed, and the other a mixed sex Academy on the site of Park High School.
- (2) Discussions take place with Shaftesbury Youth Club regarding possible use of the Shaftesbury Playing Field site and their collaboration with the project.
- (3) The Director is given all necessary authority to formalise agreements with potential sponsors, and to co-operate with OSC and DSCF appointed consultants in relation to the Statement of Intent and Expression of Interest phases of Academy development.
- (4) The Director is authorised to take all necessary steps to ensure the prescribed procedures are followed, including consultations on the closure of predecessor schools, in furtherance of the two Academy option.
- (5) A report including the Expression of Interest is brought to Cabinet in Summer 2009.
- (6) The recent changes of school status are noted.
- (7) A report on the implications of the establishment of the Birkenhead High Academy for Girls from September 2009 is brought to Cabinet in Summer 2009.

Howard Cooper

Director of Children's Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report advises the Cabinet of progress on the Phase 1 Area Review of secondary school places in the Birkenhead and Bebington areas. Following meetings with key stakeholders in each of these areas, this report contains a summary of provision in each area and comments briefly on some of the issues involved.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council is required to monitor surplus places, both by the DCSF and by the Audit Commission. The Audit Commission recommends that surplus places overall should be no higher than 10%. Below 4%, there may be little scope for parents to exercise their right to express a preference, while above 10% the Council is considered to be wasting resources supporting empty space, rather than directly funding education. In the most recent Supply of School Places return to the DCSF in summer 2007, the overall surplus percentage for secondary schools was calculated at 11%.
- 1.2 The DCSF also uses the number of schools with more than 25% and more than 30 surplus places as a measure of how effectively the LA is managing places. In January 2007, two of Wirral's 22 secondary schools were in this category. This has risen to three schools in January 2008, and it is estimated that this will continue to rise to seven secondary schools by 2013. The Authority is obliged to make a statement about schools in this category, stating how and when the surplus place issue is to be addressed, or if no action is to be taken, the reasons for this decision.
- 1.3 Wirral is already above the Audit Commission's recommended 10% maximum for surplus places, and has at least three schools in the 25% and 30 places category. If no action is taken to address these issues, the overall Wirral surplus place percentage in secondary schools is projected to increase to 21% by 2013, more than double the Audit Commission's maximum acceptable level.
- 1.4 At its meeting of 29th November 2007, Cabinet instructed that Phase 1 of the Secondary Places Review should comprise schools in Birkenhead and Bebington. The minutes of that Cabinet meeting are attached for Members' information as Appendix A to this report. As in the review of primary school places, the first stage of the Review has been to conduct a process where, on a confidential basis, meetings have taken place with key stakeholders in each of the areas under review. These stakeholders included Ward Councillors as well as officers of the Diocese of Chester and Shrewsbury, headteachers and chairs of governors of schools potentially affected by the Reviews.
- 1.5 There is considerable analytic and background material available for Members on request. A brief description of this material is included at Appendix B. Numbers on roll provided in this report are from the annual School Census of January 2008.

2.0 Bebington

- 2.1 This area is served by five 11 to 18 secondary schools – two are single sex selective grammar schools, one is a Voluntary Aided Catholic school, and two are community secondary schools. The Governing body of South Wirral High School has recently informed the Council of their decision to change to Foundation status from July 2008. This date allows

little time for implementation, and is now the subject of discussion between LA officers and the governing body of the school.

2.2 The following table shows the current position in terms of capacity, number on roll and surplus places, as well as the pupil projections to 2013.

	Bebington	St John Plessington	South Wirral	Wirral Boys	Wirral Girls
2007 Net Capacity	1251	1404	1180	1013	1129
2008 NOR	993	1287	1153	1012	1048
2008 Surplus place %	20.6	8.3	2.3	0.1	7.2
2013 NOR (projected)	751	1248	1108	985	1044
2013 Surplus place % (projected)	40.0	11.1	6.1	2.8	7.5

2.3 Bebington High School is already demonstrating high levels of surplus places, and is projected to exceed 25% and more than 30 surplus places in the next few years. The sixth form at Bebington High is relatively small.

2.4 As shown in Appendix C, South Wirral High School also has a relatively small sixth form department, with the post-16 pupils comprising 12% of the total school population at South Wirral, compared with the Wirral non-grammar school average of 15% (19% with grammar schools).

2.5 As reported in Section 4 of the November 2007 report, the Wirral working group agreed that a definite size beyond which a school was no longer viable was impossible to determine in Wirral. However, the discussion group did agree that compromises became increasingly difficult for cohorts approaching 100 pupils. National research on secondary school size has been scarce, but a study carried out in 2002 suggests that the optimum cohort size for a comprehensive school is between 175 and 200 pupils. For an 11 to 16 secondary school, this would result in between 875 and 1000 total pupils. The current and projected average cohort size at each school is shown in the table below.

Average Cohort size	Bebington	St John Plessington	South Wirral	Wirral Boys	Wirral Girls
2008 11 to 16	171	216	204	150	152
2013 11 to 16 (projected)	134	211	196	147	155
Difference	-37	-5	-8	-3	+3

2.6 In terms of size, Bebington High School is projected to experience the greatest fall in average cohort size over the next five years of schools in the secondary area.

2.7 Analysis of where pupils live and attend school shows that there is an overlap between the pupil populations of Bebington High School, and nearby Rock Ferry High School, and options for change across the Phase 1 area should consider addressing falling rolls at Bebington High School.

3.0 Birkenhead

3.1 This area is served by two 11 to 18 single sex selective Catholic grammar schools, and five 11 to 16 schools. Four of these are community schools, one of which is single sex, and the fifth, Ridgeway High School, has recently changed status to become a Foundation school.

3.2 The following table shows the January 2008 census numbers on roll (NOR), the projected NOR in 2013, the capacity of the schools and the actual and projected surplus place percentages.

	Park	Prenton	Ridgeway	Rock Ferry	St Anselm's	Upton Hall	Woodchurch
2007 Net Capacity	1250	750	801	1250	1066	1043	1379
2008 NOR	868	640	759	689	844	891	1294
2008 Surplus place %	30.6	14.7	5.2	44.9	20.8	14.6	6.2
2013 NOR (projected)	510	686	679	410	822	824	1360
2013 Surplus place % (projected)	59.2	8.5	15.2	67.2	16.2 *	13.6 *	1.4

3.3 The level of surplus places in several of these schools is projected to increase. Two schools are already above the 25% and 30 surplus places DCSF indicator – Park High School and Rock Ferry High School.

3.4 By agreement with the headteachers of the two schools and the Diocese of Shrewsbury, a revision of the Net Capacity of St Anselm's Catholic College and Upton Hall School will reduce the projected surplus place percentage for these two schools (marked with an asterisk in the table above) with effect from the next Supply of School Places return to the Government in Summer 2008. Surplus places at the two schools are still projected to be above the 10% level by 2013.

3.5 Several of these schools are also relatively small. As reported in Section 4 of the November 2007 report, the Wirral working group agreed that a definite size beyond which a school was no longer viable was impossible to determine in Wirral. However, the discussion group did agree that compromises became increasingly difficult for cohorts approaching 100 pupils. National research on secondary school size has been scarce, but a study carried out in 2002 suggests that the optimum cohort size for a comprehensive school is between 175 and 200 pupils. For an 11 to 16 secondary school, this would result in between 875 and 1000 total pupils. The current and projected average cohort size at each school is shown in the table below.

Average Cohort size	Park	Prenton	Ridgeway	Rock Ferry	St Anselm's	Upton Hall	Woodchurch
2008 11 to 16	174	128	152	138	128	136	259
2013 11 to 16 (projected)	106	137	136	82	128	121	272
Difference	-68	+9	-16	-56	0	-15	+13

3.6 Over the next five years, average cohorts at Prenton High, St Anselm's College and Woodchurch High are projected to remain stable or grow in size, while average cohorts at Rock Ferry High and Park High are likely to experience a significant fall to close to or below the 100 pupil viable size for an 11 to 16 school.

4.0 Next steps

Academy

4.1 There are a number of possible options for changes to secondary schools in the Phase 1 area. The present situation is however further complicated by the potential introduction of an Academy at Birkenhead High School for Girls, which is discussed in greater detail in a report to Cabinet on the same agenda.

- 4.3 The Office of the Schools Commissioner have suggested that they be allowed to appoint an independent assessor to work alongside the Authority in order to fully examine the wider implications of the establishment of the proposed Birkenhead High Academy. At this stage, an informal meeting will be arranged with the independent assessor to discuss this suggestion.

National Challenge

- 4.4 On 10th June 2008, the DCSF announced the National Challenge, a three year £400 million programme targeting 638 schools in England where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve at least five GCSEs at A* to C, including English and maths. Details are not yet available, however, the programme is likely to offer extra funding, specialist advice, assistance from experienced headteachers and the involvement of neighbouring schools, with the intention of having no schools in the below 30% category by 2011. The National Challenge follows on from the London and City Challenge programmes. The DCSF document "City Challenge: For World Class Education" is attached as Appendix D.
- 4.5 Six Wirral secondary schools have been identified as part of the National Challenge, three of whom are included in the Phase 1 review area. They are: Ridgeway High School (27%), Park High School (23%) and Rock Ferry High School (18%).
- 4.6 The remaining three schools fall within the Phase 2 review area. They are Wallasey School (29%), Oldershaw School (28%) and Pensby High School for Boys (26%).
- 4.7 A distinction should be drawn between schools on a rising performance trajectory, and those with more static attainment, often in challenging areas, set against the backdrop of the selective system in Wirral. When comparing the performance of schools it is important to recognise the progress they have helped students make. In terms of Contextual Value Added between the end of primary school (Key Stage 2) and Year 11 (Key Stage 4), pupils in all six schools made average or above average progress compared with mainstream schools nationally – none were in the bottom 25% of schools for this performance measure. These six schools may not yet have met the DCSF floor target but with continued school development and support will progress. A plan of action for each school must be drawn up by the LA by the end of July 2008, ahead of results from the 2008 GCSE and equivalent examinations, which will be released in August 2008.

Further steps

- 4.8 Given the potential implications of the proposed new Academy at Birkenhead High School, and the recently announced National Challenge, it seems prudent to await the outcome of the Feasibility stage of the Academy process, and more detailed information on the National Challenge programme, before making recommendations to Cabinet for options to proceed to consultation in the Phase 1 area. On this basis it is intended to return to Cabinet with a further report on the Phase 1 review area in Autumn 2008.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are none arising as a result of this report.

6.0 Staffing Implications

- 6.1 There are none arising as a result of this report.

7.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 7.1 It is essential to plan school provision across the Authority so that it is both efficient and effective in the interests of all pupils.

8.0 Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 Rationalisation and refurbishment of schools allow the most vulnerable accommodation to be removed and other security improvements carried out.

9.0 Local Agenda 21 Statement

9.1 The provision of efficient and effective education is a vital part of serving local communities; inefficient use of resources is wasteful both in educational and physical resource terms.

10.0 Planning Implications

10.1 The relationship between housing development policy and school place provision is a factor in considering surplus place removal.

10.2 Any proposals that may arise out of options after the consultation and decision making process for school re-organisation would be subject to the usual planning processes.

11.0 Anti-Poverty Implications

11.1 The redistribution of funding released by school reorganisation, in combination with the Authority's intention to realign the schools budget to give higher levels of funding to schools with high levels of deprivation, as well as improved accommodation, goes towards raising aspirations and narrowing the attainment gap for vulnerable groups.

12.0 Social Inclusion Implications

12.1 School re-organisation and transforming accommodation through the forthcoming Building Schools for the Future programme and other schemes, provides opportunities to promote joint agency work to promote co-ordinated solutions for pupils and their families. There is scope for community participation in the design process of any new school buildings, raising the school's profile within the community.

13.0 Local Member Support Implications

13.1 The schools specifically mentioned in the report and appendices, and the Wards in which they are situated, which are Bebington, Claughton, Eastham, Rock Ferry and Upton.

14.0 Background Papers

DCSF Supply of School places return

DCSF guidance on Surplus Place Removal

Pupil and Capacity data held by the LEA

DCSF Press Release 10th June 2008 "National Challenge Strategy launched to ensure more children get better GCSEs" - http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0109

Recommendations

- (1) That Cabinet note the new demographic information in relation to schools in the Phase 1 area, including future projections of pupil numbers.
- (2) That a further report on the Phase 1 review be brought to Cabinet later this year, following the outcome of the Feasibility stage for the proposed Birkenhead High Academy and taking into account the implications of the National Challenge programme.

Howard Cooper

Director of Children's Services

Minutes - Cabinet - 26 June 2008

Present

Chair S Foulkes

Councillors

George Davies, PL Davies, G Gardiner, SA Holbrook, SE Kelly, RK Moon,
Jean Quinn, JV Stapleton

In attendance:

JE Green

Apologies

M McLaughlin

Minute 81 - CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING: REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES PHASE 1: AREA REVIEWS OF BIRKENHEAD AND BEBINGTON

The Director of Children's Services advised the Cabinet of progress on the Phase 1 Area Review of secondary school places in the Birkenhead and Bebington areas. Following meetings with key stakeholders in each of these areas, a report was presented which contained a summary of provision in each area and commented briefly on some of the issues involved.

Minute Decision :

Resolved - That

(1) the new demographic information in relation to schools in the Phase 1 area, including future projections of pupil numbers be noted; and

(2) a further report on the Phase 1 review be brought to Cabinet later this year, following the outcome of the Feasibility stage for the proposed Birkenhead High Academy and taking into account the implications of the National Challenge programme.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report advises the Cabinet of progress on the Phase 1 Area Review of secondary school places in the Birkenhead and Bebington areas. Following the report from an independent consultant, this report puts forward a recommendation for an option for consultation, and comments briefly on some of the issues involved, including the proposed Academy at Birkenhead High School for Girls and the implications of the National Challenge.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting of 29th November 2007, Cabinet instructed that Phase 1 of the Secondary Places Review should comprise schools in Birkenhead and Bebington. As in the review of primary school places, the first stage of the Review has been to conduct a process where, on a confidential basis, meetings have taken place with key stakeholders in each of the areas under review. These stakeholders included Ward Councillors as well as officers of the Diocese of Chester and Shrewsbury, headteachers and chairs of governors of schools potentially affected by the Reviews. This comprises the "pre-consultation" phase of the process.
- 1.2 The subsequent report to Cabinet of 26th June 2008 provided an update on the demographics for secondary schools in the Birkenhead and Bebington areas, based on the January Census 2008. The report and minute form Appendix A to this report.
- 1.3 Section 4 of the 26th June 2008 report raised the potential implications of the proposed new Academy at Birkenhead High School. At this time members agreed to await an independent assessment of Birkenhead secondary schools proposed by the Office of the Schools Commissioner, the outcome of the Feasibility stage of the Academy process, and more detailed information on the National Challenge programme, before recommending options to proceed to consultation in the Phase 1 area.
- 1.4 Recommendations for options to proceed to consultation can now be made. Considerable analytic and background material was used as the basis for the identification of options; this is available for Members on request. A brief description of this material is included at Appendix B. Numbers on roll provided in this report are from the annual School Census of January 2008. Use of this material indicated that it is not necessary to make recommendations at this time for changes to South Wirral High School, St John Plessington Catholic High School, Wirral Grammar School for Girls, Wirral Grammar School for Boys or Woodchurch High School, although changes to other schools may affect these schools and will need to be monitored.

2.0 Independent assessment of Birkenhead Secondary Schools

- 2.1 Following from paragraph 4.3 of the 26th June 2008 report, the Office of the Schools Commissioner appointed an independent assessor, Mr George Gyte, to work alongside the Authority in order to examine fully the wider implications of the establishment of the proposed Birkenhead High Academy in regard to Birkenhead schools. In view of the movement of pupils across the Birkenhead/Bebington border in both directions, Mr Gyte added the implications for Bebington High School to his considerations. He also considered with the Diocese of Shrewsbury the implications for the Catholic Aided sector.
- 2.2 George Gyte, of Gyte-Lawlor Ltd, currently works as an advisor to the Prime Minister's

Delivery Unit (PMDU) on the implementation of the National Strategies, Children's Services and the Childcare Strategy. He also works as an advisor to the DCSF on the London Challenge and latterly on the 14-19 Strategy and Building Schools for the Future. Previously he was Director of Education for the London Borough of Greenwich, and has acted as lead advisor to the Teacher Training Agency on headship qualifications and training. Mr Gyte led the development and implementation of the National Professional Qualification for Headship and the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads. Other former roles include: Chief Education Inspector at Northamptonshire Local Education Authority; a secondary headteacher in Cleveland and Director of the Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools at the University of York.

- 2.3 During early July 2008 Mr Gyte visited Rock Ferry High School, Prenton High School, St Anselm's College, Park High School, Bebington High School, Upton Hall School and Ridgeway High School, meeting with headteachers, several chairs of governors, staff and students. He also met with Cllr Phil Davies, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning, the Director of Children's Services and other local authority officers, as well as with Frank Field MP and the Director of Schools for the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury.
- 2.4 Subsequently, Mr Gyte's report, entitled "Independent assessment of the Wirral LA's context and secondary review" was submitted to the Director of Children's Services. The document is attached as Appendix C to this report.
- 2.5 The report identifies Wirral's existing and growing future surplus place issues and the need to respond to the National Challenge, reforms of 14-19 education, and the prospective Academy at Birkenhead High School. It lacks any discussion around the potential impact of Birkenhead High School establishing a single sex girls primary school in Birkenhead, or of how funding for any possible options would be provided.
- 2.6 The report proposes various options for Birkenhead secondary schools, including the establishment of one or more Academies, and National Challenge Trust schools. Suggestions are also made regarding various recent innovations in the secondary curriculum, such as Studio schools and 14 to 19 hubs.
- 2.7 As well as demographic and curriculum issues, many factors must be considered before making any decisions regarding school reorganization, including accommodation and site issues, the implications of the National Challenge, and Building Schools for the Future.

3.0 Options in relation to the National Challenge

- 3.1 As reported to Cabinet in June 2008, six Wirral secondary schools have been identified as part of the National Challenge, three of which are included in the Phase 1 review area. They are: Ridgeway High School, Park High School and Rock Ferry High School. The remaining three schools fall within the Phase 2 review area. They are Wallasey School, Oldershaw School and Pensby High School for Boys.
- 3.2 School improvement plans in relation to these six schools were submitted in accordance with DCSF requirements by 31st July 2008. The Local Authority received feedback from the National Strategies and the DCSF on 17th September, and was required to submit any revisions for those elements of the school plans requiring funding by 30th September 2008. All six schools are currently reviewing their plans. Agreement on the school improvement plans, allocation of National Challenge Advisers and supporting resources is now close to completion and will be completed by the time of this Cabinet meeting.
- 3.3 Draft GCSE and equivalent examination results for 2008 are now available, and the table below shows the following outcomes:

School	2007 CVA	2007 %	2008 %	2008 Estimate FFT B
Park High	1014.9	23	26	26
Ridgeway High	1037.2	27	38	28
Rock Ferry High	1000.2	18	23	21
Oldershaw	1028.8	28	18	22
Wallasey	996.2	29	30	42
Pensby High School for Boys	992.0	26	25	44
<i>Bebington High</i>	988.6	30	37	38

Percentages in the table above relate to the National Challenge criteria for pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE and equivalent, including English and Maths. FFT B Estimate for 2008 is based on similar schools nationally in terms of prior attainment and economic deprivation. 2007 KS2 to KS4 Contextual Value Added (CVA) is shaded where performance was below average, unshaded where performance was average or above.

Bebington High Sports College (*in italics*) is not a National Challenge school, but is included in the table for completeness since it is referred to in the Gyte report.

- 3.4 Four schools have increased the percentage of students gaining 5+ A*-C GCSE grades including English and Maths, but there are still four schools below the 30% floor target. Ridgeway High School has exceeded the 30% National Challenge target in 2008, however the DCSF and National Strategies have indicated that Ridgeway should remain part of the National Challenge as part of ensuring sustainability.
- 3.5 In relation to the National Challenge, the Gyte report suggests that within Phase 1 of the secondary school review, Bebington High and Ridgeway High should be considered for closure, reopening either as one or more Academies or National Challenge Trusts in order to “bring new ambition, partners and sponsors to help drive up improvement and raise attainment at a pace”.
- 3.6 Ridgeway High School already has Foundation status without a Trust. Bebington High School has formally begun the consultation process to become a Foundation school with a Trust, although not a National Challenge Trust. As part of this consultation, the governors of Bebington High School have asked whether the Council would like to become part of the proposed Trust. I shall bring a further report to Cabinet shortly to explore this and other issues to do with school governance so that a view can be taken.

National Challenge Trusts

- 3.7 National Challenge Trusts (NCTs) are intended as partnerships between National Challenge schools and successful schools or other education providers such as colleges or universities. In the same way as existing Trust schools, NCTs will be local authority maintained schools supported by a Trust with charitable status. The NCT enables those schools that do not have the capacity to reach the set target by 2011 to work towards sustainable improvement through collaboration with strong educational and/or business partners.
- 3.8 Unlike standard Trusts, the decision to create a NCT is triggered by local authority intervention rather than by the school. The Trust must represent a radical option for transforming the school, with a clear focus on school improvement and with the involvement of at least one strong education partner – which may be a school or a non-school education partner such as a Higher or Further Education college. Governance arrangements should allow the strong education partner to take over the running of the weaker school through the Trust appointing a majority of the governors, which is not generally the case with existing Trusts.
- 3.9 Up to £750,000 in funding over 3 years (or up to £1 million in the case of secondary modern schools – non selective schools in selective areas) is available to support National Challenge Trust schools where the NCT has been approved as part of the local authority’s National Challenge strategy. This funding cannot be used for capital works, but could go towards project management, legal costs, additional staff costs in partnering schools, recruitment of specialist teachers and senior staff, as well as staff restructuring and voluntary redundancy

packages.

3.10 However following information from DCSF advisors, it now appears likely that none of Wirral's six schools within National Challenge would be eligible to receive National Challenge Trust funding. This advice has been received verbally and is subject to confirmation. As a consequence of this, it is not my intention to propose any change to these two schools at this time.

4.0 Options in relation to Prenton High School and Birkenhead High School

4.1 Mr Gyte reports on the concerns of Prenton High School for Girls regarding the establishment of an additional girls school in the area, and suggests that Prenton High School should be considered for Academy status "as a means of securing its future" which could include the establishment of a Sixth Form. He also says that the two girl's schools should "work towards a formal collaboration". There is no indication as to the nature or structure of any such arrangement. Normal sorts of formal collaborations might include:

- to establish a single girls Academy, possibly operating on two sites
- a "hard federation" under a single headteacher and governing body. Each school retains separate budgets, admissions and performance data, and is inspected separately by Ofsted.
- a "soft federation" with both schools retaining separate headship, governance and budgets, but with shared elements of governance or a joint strategic committee with delegated powers.

A table showing the different kinds of federation, and less formal methods of collaboration, is included as Appendix D. However, there is no provision under current legal frameworks for federations between Academies and other kinds of schools.

4.2 Federations can only be proposed by the Governing bodies of two or more schools. Any form of collaboration between the two girls' schools would require the co-operation of the sponsor of the Birkenhead High School Academy, the Girls Day School Trust (GDST), the governing bodies of both schools and the Local Authority.

4.3 The DCSF have now appointed PKF (UK) LLP as project consultants for the proposed Academy at Birkenhead High School. A Project Steering Group is being established, comprising PKF, the GDST as sponsor and various DCSF representatives. The Local Authority has also been invited to nominate a representative, and officers attended the first Steering Group meeting in September 2008 at Birkenhead High School. The required Stakeholder Group has also been established, and headteacher representatives from both Primary and Secondary schools have been requested.

4.4 The establishment of a second, state funded and non-selective girls' school in Birkenhead, bound by the Code of Practice for Admissions, presents considerable challenges. There would be a significant imbalance in the number of places available to boys and to girls in the borough, particularly in single sex schools. The two girls' schools would be only 1.5 miles apart and neither would be a large school; Prenton High has an admission number of 150 representing 5 forms of entry whilst the proposals for Birkenhead High envisage a growth from 60 to 100 pupils per year in the secondary department. At just over 3 forms of entry, this school would not be considered sustainable by the Authority.

4.5 This analysis suggests that in the event that the Birkenhead High proposals are agreed by the Secretary of State, it will be vitally important for both schools that a strong collaboration exists. Such a collaboration needs to be formal and needs to be capable of development as the pattern of pupil choice emerges. I recommend in this report that I be authorized to discuss such arrangements with the Girls Day School Trust and the DCSF. The Authority has not yet been consulted formally about the proposals but such discussions would inform the Authority's response.

5.0 Establishment of a new Academy

The Gyte report proposes an option for reorganisation of secondary school provision in the Birkenhead area involving the closure of Rock Ferry High and Park High schools, combined with the establishment of an Academy, suggesting that a new building for the Academy should be constructed, rather than utilising either of the existing sites.

- 5.1 Under this option, both Rock Ferry High School and Park High School would be closed. A new Academy would in the first instance open in the existing buildings.
- 5.2 A new building for the Academy would be considered a high priority for the Authorities Building Schools for the Future programme, or funding may be available via the national framework for Academies set up by Partnerships for Schools (PfS) subject to the availability of a suitable site. In many cases Academies open in the existing buildings of the schools they replace. The Government's aim is that new or refurbished buildings will be provided within three years of the Academy opening, although they acknowledge that some Academies replace schools that have already been rebuilt or refurbished.
- 5.3 SEN provision currently based at the Sanderling Unit at Rock Ferry High would be relocated either to the Academy, or to another secondary school.
- 5.4 The Authority would expect that pupils attending both former schools would be guaranteed a place at the new Academy, although parents may choose to apply for places elsewhere if they wish to do so, in which case places would be allocated subject to the availability of places and according to the Admissions Code. It is understood that this has always been the case where academies have been established elsewhere.
- 5.5 The Gyte report suggests the inclusion of a 14-19 "hub" (referred to as a vocational centre) and the inclusion of a Studio school (see 10.0 below) to expand the current offer available to students at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training).
- 5.6 As a new Academy, there is no requirement for a statutory competition, although extensive consultation would take place including the invitation of sponsors for the Academy.
- 5.7 Guidance suggests that lead sponsor appoints the majority of governors, and takes on the full responsibility for setting up the Academy, making key decisions about the strategic direction of the new school in terms of staffing, as well as the academic, curriculum and admissions strategy. Co-sponsors can provide support through educational or other expertise. In practice, it is understood that at least in some instances, all sponsors can be involved in making key decisions about the strategic direction of the new school. Sponsors can come from a wide range of backgrounds, including colleges, universities, individual philanthropists, businesses, the charitable sector, existing private schools, educational foundations and the faith communities. The Council could decide to be a co-sponsor of the Academy. The arrangements involve the formation of a entity to promote and manage the Academy to insulate it from the future destiny of the individual sponsors.
- 5.8 New Academies are normally expected to be 11 to 18 in age range, which differs from the position in the non-selective schools in Birkenhead, all of which are currently 11 to 16 schools, and this will require further investigation with the Academies division of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Guidance indicates that the DCSF would need to be assured that the arrangements for post-16 provision for pupils leaving the Academy are as good in terms of accessibility and quality as those that could be provided by the Academy itself. The final decision on the establishment of an Academy is made by the Secretary of State.
- 5.9 Consultations are currently underway by the boards of both Birkenhead Sixth Form College and Wirral Metropolitan College for their own redevelopment and these two institutions are the progression routes for the majority of Rock Ferry High School and Park High School students, as well as those from Ridgeway High School and Woodchurch High School.

5.10 Should the Cabinet support the proposal for an Academy therefore, I recommend that the academy should be for the 11 to 16 age range with the possibility of incorporating the “hub” proposal in partnership with other schools, colleges and work based learning providers. The details of this development will require much further exploration with the institutions concerned and with the sponsor.

6.0 Nature of an Academy

6.1 Academies are non-selective state funded independent schools. These schools have one or more sponsors, and can have a religious character if this is set out by the sponsor. Staff are employed by the Governing body just as in Aided, Foundation and Trust schools, but unlike other kinds of schools, they do not have to follow the School Teacher’s Pay and Conditions document.

6.2 Ownership of the building and site is by the Academy company. The Academy is funded by the Academies Division of the DCSF, not via the Council, but the funding level is determined by reference to the LA budget formula, and is deducted from the Authority’s DSG (Direct Schools Grant).

6.3 As in Aided, Foundation and Trust schools, the Governing body is the Admissions Authority and must comply with the Admissions code. Academies have some flexibility with regard to the National Curriculum and do not have to follow the SEN code of practice.

6.4 Academies are inspected by Ofsted, as in all other categories of school, but any necessary intervention on standards is by the Academies division of the DCSF, not by the Local Authority.

7.0 Demographics

7.1 In January 2008, there were 689 pupils at Rock Ferry High School, and 868 at Park High School, 1,557 pupils in total. Between the two schools, there were 925 surplus places, resulting in 31% surplus places at Park High and 44% surplus places at Rock Ferry High School.

7.2 As the number of secondary age pupils falls over the next few years, the total number of pupils between the two schools is projected to fall from 1,557 in January 2008, to 988 by January 2013. If significant changes are not made to existing secondary school provision, this would produce 1,494 surplus places between the two schools, 55% empty places at Park High and 66% empty places at Rock Ferry High. This projection does not take into account the potential impact of a new Girls Academy at Birkenhead High School, which is likely to further reduce the total number of pupils available to attend neighbouring schools.

8.0 Site issues

8.1 As the Academy would open initially in the existing buildings of both schools, there are substantial ownership and land issues to resolve prior to the establishment of the Academy. The Academy Trust is expected to own the buildings and site in which the Academy is based, however Park High is part of the Council’s PFI scheme until 2031. Rather than reverting to Council ownership in 2031, ownership of the buildings and land would revert to the Academy Trust. Rock Ferry’s site is currently in Council ownership. A leasing arrangement would need to be agreed for one or both sites, otherwise ownership would be transferred to the Academy Trust at the inception of the Academy. The Council would like to ensure that ownership would revert to the Council.

8.2 If at some later date either or both existing sites are declared surplus to requirements as a school, the Council would need to find an alternative use for the Park High buildings until 2031 or consider buying out of the PFI contract which is likely to be at high financial cost. Any proposed sale of either site would be subject to the regulations on the sale of school playing fields and the Council’s planning regulations. The distribution of any potential proceeds from a future site sale would be best agreed legally with the Academy Trust during the Feasibility

stage.

- 8.3 Both existing buildings are well within the size requirements for a secondary school accommodating the projected 900 to 1000 pupils. The present capacity at Park High is 1,250 pupils, and at Rock Ferry High, 1,232 pupils.
- 8.4 A preliminary study of possible sites in the Birkenhead area has been carried out, and initial findings are that there are a small number of sites of sufficient size in a suitable location. These sites are however likely to require the release of Unitary Development Plan designated Urban Green Space or the removal of playing fields from community use. This could be offset by designating all or part of one of the existing school sites as green space/playing field.
- 8.5 More in-depth study of potential sites for a new building to house the Academy will be carried out prior to the Building Schools for the Future programme. As a matter of urgency if the Cabinet support the principle of the establishment of a new Academy, a further report will be presented.

9.0 **Building Schools for the Future (BSF)**

- 9.1 The criteria for allocation to the current BSF waves is based upon deprivation (free school meals) and examination performance. Wirral has been allocated Band D, Wave 12, which currently indicates an entry into full BSF around 2015. This later entry date reflects the recent investment in secondary schools through PFI, Aided school investment and other capital schemes and overall examination and deprivation factors in the national context.
- 9.2 Subsequently, LA's in the later waves of BSF have been allocated capital funding for a "One School Pathfinder" secondary school re-build. Woodchurch High School is the selected school and design work is underway, with a target completion date of September 2010 for a full school transfer to the new building.
- 9.3 On 26th June 2008, Cabinet approved a positive response to a consultation on entry into an earlier wave of BSF for some projects. In order to qualify for early entry to the programme, authorities "with projects at the front of the queue" will need to provide evidence that they are ready to proceed to the satisfaction of Partnership for Schools (PfS). LA's will need to be ready to start "immediately and quickly", which means that as well as committing to resource a BSF project team, the strategic vision must be in place and ideally that statutory decisions on re-organisation including closures and proposals for new schools or Academies should either have been made or be in progress.
- 9.4 The DCSF have subsequently asked for all Authorities not already participating in a full BSF programme to submit a revised expression of interest by 30th November 2008. This includes revised demographic data, a summary of the Authorities strategy for transformation and readiness to proceed, and will form the subject of a report to Cabinet later this month.

10.0 **Studio Schools**

- 10.1 The Gyte report mentions the inclusion of a Studio School within a new Academy in Birkenhead. This is a relatively newly launched concept in the UK, resulting from research conducted by the Young Foundation.
- 10.2 In essence, the studio school is aimed at 14 to 19 year olds, teaching the National Curriculum through interdisciplinary, enterprise-themed projects to prepare them for the world of work. The school operates one or more small businesses, and is staffed by a combination of teachers, and non-teachers with a business background. Studio schools are aimed at young people of all abilities wanting a more practical, entrepreneurial approach or those alienated by traditional education. Pupils would spend a minority of their time working in the school "business", with those over 16 receiving a wage, and can take either vocational or traditional qualifications.
- 10.3 The Gyte report indicates that this could be an option for pupils who are at risk of becoming NEET, although the Young Foundation states that studio school style education is unlikely to be suitable for pupils in Pupil Referral Units or those with complex and challenging needs.

These schools are not intended to replace conventional schools, being described as operating as a “school within a school” or in some documents as a small school with a comprehensive intake of up to 300 young people. Definitions of a studio school are varied, and would require further investigation in order to establish the benefits for young people in Birkenhead.

10.4 At present, the only studio school in operation is a pilot scheme between Barnfield College in Luton and two Academies which it sponsors. A group of around 30 students spend 2 days a week attending the College, studying business start-up and a vocational programme, with the remaining time spent at their home Academy.

10.5 Other Authorities reported to be interested in the Studio school concept are Newham, Barnsley, Blackpool, Kirklees, Oldham, Sheffield and South Tyneside. Contact has been made with the Principal of Barnfield College, and it is likely that a visit to the school will be made during the Autumn term.

11.0 Diocesan Issues

11.1 There is currently no Church of England secondary school in the Wirral area, and this should be considered as possibility within any options which create a new school.

11.2 While any voluntary or foundation school may be established with a religious character, it is not possible for any school to gain, lose or change religious character through the change of category process. To effect a change from, for example, a community school to a voluntary school with a religious character, the LA would need to publish a proposal to close the community school, and the relevant Diocese would publish a linked proposal to establish a new Voluntary Controlled or Aided school. Alternatively, a Diocese could act as a sponsor to an Academy, or as a member of a Trust for a Foundation school with a Trust.

12.0 Financial Implications

12.1 There are none arising directly as a result of this report, though the proposed changes do have very significant implications. These will be explored in a further report as proposals become more specific and before decisions are taken by the Cabinet.

13.0 Staffing Implications

13.1 There are none arising directly as a result of this report. There are, however, important implications arising out of the proposals and these will be set out in a further report as proposals become more specific.

13.2 The staffing implications of entering Building Schools for the Future will be significant. Again, this will be the subject of a future report.

14.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

14.1 It is essential to plan school provision across the Authority so that it is both efficient and effective in the interests of all pupils. Consultation will need to address very carefully the impact of any preferred options on pupils which are served by the schools concerned. Attention has been drawn, for example, to the imbalance of boys’ and girls’ places earlier in the report and the need to plan for pupils having special educational needs.

15.0 Community Safety Implications

15.1 Rationalisation and refurbishment of schools allow the most vulnerable accommodation to be removed and other security improvements carried out.

16.0 Local Agenda 21 Statement

16.1 The provision of efficient and effective education is a vital part of serving local communities; inefficient use of resources is wasteful both in educational and physical resource terms.

17.0 Planning Implications

- 17.1 The relationship between housing development policy and school place provision is a factor in considering surplus place removal.
- 17.2 Any proposals after the consultation and decision making process for school re-organisation would be subject to the usual planning processes.

18.0 Anti-Poverty Implications

- 18.1 The redistribution of funding released by school reorganisation, in combination with the Authority's intention to realign the schools budget to give higher levels of funding to schools with high levels of deprivation, as well as improved accommodation, goes towards raising aspirations and narrowing the attainment gap for vulnerable groups.

19.0 Social Inclusion Implications

- 19.1 School re-organisation and transforming accommodation through the forthcoming Building Schools for the Future programme and other schemes, provides opportunities to promote joint agency work to promote co-ordinated solutions for pupils and their families. There is scope for community participation in the design process of any new school buildings, raising the school's profile within the community.

20.0 Local Member Support Implications

- 20.1 The schools specifically mentioned in the report and appendices, and the Wards in which they are situated, which are Bebington, Claughton, Oxton, Rock Ferry, and Upton.

21.0 Background Papers

DCSF Supply of School places return

DCSF guidance on Surplus Place Removal

Pupil and Capacity data held by the LA

DCSF prospectus for Sponsors and Local Authorities - 400 Academies

DCSF strategy document "Back on Track - A strategy for modernising alternative provision for young people"

Barnfield College - www.barnfield.ac.uk/news.php?id=35

Young Foundation Studio Schools programme - http://launchpad.youngfoundation.org/fund/learning-launchpad/fund_home

22.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Director begins formal discussions with the DCSF and potential sponsors with a view to the establishment of a new Academy in Birkenhead.
- (2) Cabinet confirms that, in principle, the Council would wish to become a co-sponsor of the Academy.
- (3) detailed feasibility work begins with a view to establishing the size of the proposed Academy, its location and the probable impact on other schools in the borough in order to create an official Expression of Interest for an Academy.
- (4) in the light of (3), consultations begin on the closure of Rock Ferry High and Park High School in order to establish a new Academy for their pupils.

- (5) the Director undertakes formal discussions with the Girls Day School Trust and the DCSF to explore the future relationship between Birkenhead High School and Prenton High School and the relationship of both with the Authority.
- (6) no proposals are made at this time in respect of Woodchurch High School, Ridgeway High School, Bebington High Sports College, South Wirral High School, Wirral Grammar School for Girls, Wirral Grammar School for Boys or St John Plessington Catholic College, but that the impact of the other changes proposed is monitored.
- (7) that the revised Expression of Interest for Building Schools for the Future be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.

Howard Cooper

Director of Children's Services

CABINET

Thursday, 6 November 2008

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Foulkes (Chair)	
	Councillors	S Holbrook G Davies P Davies G Gardiner	M McLaughlin R Moon J Quinn J Stapleton
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	J Crabtree F Doyle L Fraser P Gilchrist JE Green T Harney	S Mountney L Rennie J Salter H Smith C Teggin K Wood
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillor	S Kelly	

248 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October had been printed and published. It was noted that Minute 213 (Land at The Warrens, Thingwall Road East) had been called in and would be considered by the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th November 2008.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and adopted.

249 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Committee were asked to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any of the items on the agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

The following declarations were made:

Councillor Moira McLaughlin - a prejudicial interest in Minute 250 (Follow up of disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)) due to a friendship with a potentially interested party and left the room whilst the matter was considered;

Councillor George Davies – a personal interest in Minute 252 (Secondary Review – Phase 1) due to his appointment as a governor of one of the schools mentioned in the report.

Councillor Steve Foulkes – a personal interest in Minute 251 (Progress towards the transformation of Adult Social Services) due to his wife's employment.

With the permission of the Chair, the Leader of the Conservative Group addressed the Cabinet. Councillor Green queried the support that would be available to enable staff to prepare an in-house bid and this was confirmed by the Director of Adult Social Services.

The Deputy Leader of the Council queried the transitional arrangements that would be in place to minimise any disruption to service users and the Director confirmed that they would be helped to develop where appropriate the services they required.

Resolved: That the proposals to outsource in-house provided services by open tender as set out in the report be agreed in principle, subject to a further report being brought to Cabinet outlining in particular the staffing, service and financial implications.

252 **SECONDARY REVIEW - PHASE 1**

The Director of Children's Services presented a report which advised the Cabinet of progress on the Phase 1 Area Review of secondary school places in the Birkenhead and Bebington areas. Following the report from an independent consultant, the report put forward a recommendation for an option for consultation, and commented briefly on some of the issues involved, including the proposed Academy at Birkenhead High School for Girls and the implications of the National Challenge.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning indicated that this was the start of a process that would be considered in manageable blocks. He was determined to raise standards in schools and felt that the proposal for new Academy in Birkenhead was an exciting option. He indicated that there would be thorough consultation with all Stakeholders and was pleased with the support of headteachers.

Councillor George Davies referred to the proposed Academy being for the age range 11-16 and it was agreed that the recommendation would be amended accordingly.

Resolved: That

- (1) the Director begins formal discussions with the DCSF and potential sponsors with a view to the establishment of a new Academy in Birkenhead with an age range of 11 to 16;**
- (2) Cabinet confirms that, in principle, the Council would wish to become a co-sponsor of the Academy;**
- (3) detailed feasibility work begins with a view to establishing the size of the proposed Academy and its location in order to create an official Expression of Interest for an Academy;**
- (4) in the light of (3), consultations begin on the closure of Rock Ferry High and Park High School in order to establish a new Academy for their pupils;**
- (5) the Director undertakes formal discussions with the Girls Day School Trust and the DCSF to explore the future relationship between Birkenhead High School and Prenton High School and the relationship of both with the Authority;**

(6) the Director brings back a further report to Cabinet on the implications of the above proposals on other schools and colleges;

(7) the revised Expression of Interest for Building Schools for the Future be the subject of a further report to Cabinet;

(8) the above recommendations be the subject of a detailed consultation exercise with key stakeholders and a further report be brought back to Cabinet on the outcome of this including any other suggestions raised during the consultation phase.

253 PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCIES

Cabinet on 12 December 2007 approved a projected procurement savings target of £2.25 million for 2008/09. The Director of Finance presented a report which informed Members of progress towards achieving the savings target and outlined future plans and targets for efficiencies, within the Procure to Pay (P2P) activity in line with the Procurement Strategy approved by Cabinet on 4 September 2008.

Resolved: That

(1) the procurement efficiencies delivered in 2008/09 be noted;

(2) the procurement efficiencies from corporate contracts estimated at £1.5m be agreed for 2009-10.

254 PROJECTED BUDGETS 2009 - 2011

At the request of the Chair, the Director of Finance provided the Cabinet with details of the Council's investments in Icelandic Bank.

The Director of Finance then presented the projected budgets for 2009-2011 to coincide with the period of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR).

It was reported that the Council had won an LGC Award for Investment Officer of the Year and the Cabinet requested that their congratulations be forwarded to the appropriate officer.

The Leader of the Council moved a motion, duly seconded, and it was –

Resolved: That

(1) In the light of the continued urgent need to close Wirral's £21million budget gap and avoid placing an unreasonable burden on Wirral's council tax payers, and in the light of the recommendations on Item 4, Progress towards the Transformation of Adult Social Services and Item 8 Procurement Efficiencies, Cabinet recommends the following to Council:

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APPENDIX C

Schools that have published proposals to change status

School	Change of status	Date of Notice	End of Comment/Objection period	Intended Implementation Date	Trust Partners (if applicable)
Ridgeway High School	Community to Foundation	Dec-07	23/01/2008	01/09/2009 Implemented 29/01/2008	
West Kirby Grammar School for Girls	Community to Foundation	Dec-07	18/01/2008	01/09/2009	
Wirral Grammar School for Girls (PFI)	Community to Foundation	Dec-07	18/01/2008	01/09/2009	
South Wirral High School (PFI)	Community to Foundation	Mar-08	14/04/2008	31/08/2008	
Calday Grange Grammar School for Boys	Foundation to Trust	Jun-08	23/06/2008	01/01/2009	Unilever, University of Liverpool, Maestro Services Ltd
Bebbington High School (PFI)	Community to Trust	Nov-08	10/12/2008	01/04/2009	Barnardo's, The Co-op, Liverpool John Moore's, Merseyside Sports Partnership, Tranmere Rovers and The Football League Trust
Weatherhead High School for Girls (PFI)	Community to Foundation	Dec-08	14/01/2009	01/09/2009	

Schools that have indicated an intention to consider a change of status

School	Change being considered	Stage	EOI Submitted?	Potential Trust identified?
Hilbre (PFI)	Community to Trust	Governors met on 18/11/2008 - outcome not yet notified to CYPD	Yes	Unknown
Prenton High School (PFI)	Community to Trust	EOI submitted 18/11/08	Yes	Unknown
Woodchurch High School (One School Pathfinder)	Community to Trust	Pre-consultation carried out on change to Foundation	Yes	Church of England, Maestro Services Ltd and "a university"
Wirral Hospital School	Community to Foundation	Governors met on 6th January 2009. Outcome not yet notified to CYPD	Unknown	

CABINET

Thursday, 15 January 2009

Present:

Councillor	S Foulkes (Chair)	
Councillors	S Holbrook	M McLaughlin
	G Davies	R Moon
	P Davies	J Quinn
	G Gardiner	J Stapleton
	S Kelly	

323 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting were printed and published.

Resolved - That the minutes be approved and adopted.

324 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

The following declarations were made:

Councillor Steve Foulkes declared a personal interest in Minute 325 (Transforming Wirral – Strategic Asset Review) on behalf of all Cabinet Members due to their memberships of Joint Management Committees and as users of services;

Councillor Jean Quinn declared a personal interest in Minute 327 (Disposal of land at The Warrens – main depot site) as she had discussed the matter with Wirral PCT and GP's in the area.

Councillor Simon Holbrook declared a prejudicial interest in Minute 341 (West Kirby Marine Lake Reconstruction – Award of Contract) due to his employment.

Councillor Phil Davies declared a personal interest in Minutes 328 (Multi-systemic therapy programme development) and 327 (Disposal of land at The Warrens – main depot site) as a non-executive director of Wirral PCT.

325 TRANSFORMING WIRRAL - STRATEGIC ASSET REVIEW

At its meeting on 27 November 2008, Cabinet considered a report on the Strategic Asset Review which set out options for the future of the authority's asset portfolio. Cabinet resolved to approve in principle the option for strategic consolidation of the Council's asset base and requested that this be subjected to public and staff

- (4) **call-in on this matter be waived and the Council be informed accordingly.**

328 MULTI-SYSTEMIC THERAPY PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The Director of Children's Services reported further on a report submitted to Cabinet on the 4th October 2007. At that time approval was granted for an application to the Department of Health for grant funding to set up a pilot project, as one of the 6 pilot sites the Department of Health was looking to support. That application was unsuccessful. Locally, professionals across agencies had remained interested in the potential of Multi-Systemic Therapy as a successful intervention with adolescents who presented with conduct and anti-social difficulties. Wirral Children & Young People's Department(CYPD), Youth Offending Service(YOS), Primary Care Trust(PCT) and the Cheshire & Wirral Foundation (NHS) Trust believed this evidenced- based method of intervening with young people (age 11-17yrs) who were at risk of care or custody would make a positive contribution to improving the lives of individual children and their families, reduce anti-social behaviour and make a contribution in reducing high cost placements outside of Wirral. Using funding from the PCT, YOS and CYPD a project plan had been developed that would enable an MST programme to be delivered on Wirral. The Director therefore sought Cabinet approval for the development of a Multi-Systemic Therapy programme on Wirral.

Resolved - That

- (1) **the setting up of an MST Programme be formally approved;**
- (2) **the report be referred to Employment & Appointments Committee; and**
- (3) **the bid for funding to the Council's Efficiency Investment fund be approved.**

329 PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ACADEMY AT BIRKENHEAD HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Cabinet was informed that the proposal to establish an Academy at the current Independent Birkenhead High School for Girls was now nearing the end of the formal feasibility stage. The steering group for the project had consulted with various stakeholders regarding the scheme. A letter from the Cabinet member to the steering group was attached as Appendix A to the report. The Council had now to decide formally whether it supported the establishment of the project, despite some of the reservations which had been expressed previously by officers and reiterated in the Cabinet member's letter. The Secretary of State would then make a decision on whether to proceed with the proposal or not. The "Expression of Interest" which set out the vision and rationale for the Academy was attached at Annexe B. The Director of Children's Services' initial response to that was given at Annexe C. The proposed Academy's admission arrangements were enclosed at Annex (D). The balance of the report set out the issues for the Cabinet to consider.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services moved a motion, duly seconded, as follows:

“(1) Cabinet welcomes the principle of an independent school choosing to enter the Local Authority’s mainstream school provision for Wirral children and young people.

(2) If the Academy is approved, members would wish to see that the Academy works closely with other Wirral schools, including further investigation of the possibility of close partnership working with Prenton High School for Girls;

(3) Cabinet requests that the Secretary of State consider amending the age range of the proposed Academy to 11 to 18 to reduce the impact on primary school provision, since there is already a precedent at the Belvedere Academy in Liverpool.

Cabinet wishes to reiterate the Director’s concerns on the following areas:

- The implications of this development against the background of surplus places and falling rolls
- The Academy’s impact on the gender imbalance in other schools due to the overprovision of girls places, compounded by the absence of an equivalent single sex boys school in Birkenhead
- The Academy’s likely compliance with Local Authority policies such as the Admissions Code, SEN and inclusion and 14 to 19 strategy
- The proposed admission policy for the Academy, which does not appear to meet the core function for the Academy, which does not appear to meet the core function of an Academy in serving disadvantaged young people from deprived areas.”

The Deputy Leader of the Council moved an amendment, duly seconded, as follows:

“In considering its response to the proposal for Birkenhead School for Girls to become an Academy, Cabinet expresses its concerns that:

- the admissions policy of the proposed school will be inconsistent with the principles underlying the Academy Programme, i.e. a tackling of long-term problems of under-achievement in areas of high deprivation, despite being geographically well-located to carry out such a roll.
- the proposal would increase the number of places available in secondary schools at a time of falling rolls and have the potential to further distort the gender balance in schools in the Birkenhead area.

Both these impact adversely on the ability of the Council to plan for secondary education in the Borough.

Whilst Cabinet would be minded to support the establishment of an academy where this would be demonstrated to raise standards and aspirations in historic areas of low attainment, Cabinet believes that, in the specific circumstances that pertain to this application, the case for an academy has not been made.

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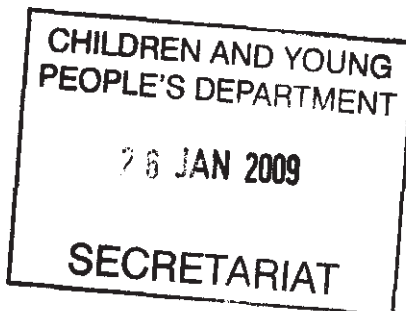


Girls' Day School Trust

100 Rochester Row, London SW1P 1JP TEL 020 7393 6666 FAX 020 7393 6789 EMAIL info@wes.gdst.net WEB www.gdst.net

From the Chief Executive

Mr Howard Cooper
The Director of Children's Services
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 4FD.



23 January 2009

Dear Howard

Thank you for coming to see me on 12 January and for the very positive discussion on our proposed Academy at Birkenhead High School.

I am also grateful for your willingness to share your emerging thinking on 11-16 school provision across the Wirral and in particular in the Birkenhead area. I believe that our meeting helped to clarify our respective positions and to point the way towards a positive future relationship.

As I stressed at our meeting GDST's priority is to concentrate, first and foremost, on making a successful transition for Birkenhead High School from independent fee-paying to independent Academy status. Our experience at Belvedere Academy shows that this is likely to take three or more years to bed down fully from start to finish – and we are still only in the second year of the process. This transitional phase is our top priority because we owe that commitment to the current parents, pupils and staff who have stood with us in support of the academy project and to the new families who will join the Academy when it opens. We believe that their continuing confidence in the Academy is fundamental to its success and sustainability. Consolidating Birkenhead High School's changed status as a 3-19 years girls' independent Academy is therefore the priority set by our Trustees.

Nevertheless, over the longer term, we are committed to considering a range of partnerships and you have put forward strong arguments for us to consider partnership possibilities at an early stage. Indeed, Birkenhead High has already started to look at opportunities that would complement its vision and aspirations as an Academy. The school will continue to be closely linked to its sister schools in the GDST family, particularly The Belvedere Academy in Liverpool. We are also aiming to build relationships, both formal and informal, with Universities and with schools locally and nationally, and would be happy to explore opportunities with specific schools, including Prenton High, in this wider context. And of course we want to build on the Academy's proposed specialisms in mathematics and particularly in music to



collaborate with other schools and colleges. So I do not rule out a partnership agenda of the kind you set out at our meeting, but it is one that our Trustees would have to consider when they are confident that their initial strategic goals for the Academy have been achieved.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara".

Barbara Harrison

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/ DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

AREA YOUTH FORUM AWARDS – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING 2008/09

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is:

- to inform Cabinet of the proposals received from youth projects for funding from the Area Youth Forums
- to inform Cabinet of the recommendations made by young people from the four Area Youth Forums in September/November 2007 regarding allocations to projects benefiting young people in their areas
- to request Cabinet agrees the transfer of the £10,000 budget from Corporate Services to Children and Young People's Department (CYPD) and that, in future, ratification for the awards be via the four CYPD District Boards.

Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendations of the four Area Youth Forums, agree to fund applications at the levels identified within the appendix of this report. The budget of £2,500 per Area Youth Forum is within the Corporate Services Budget, but all support for the Youth Forums is provided by the CYPD.

1. Background – Area Youth Forum Allocation

1.1 Four Area Youth Forums, co-terminus with the adult Area Forums, were established in 2002. In the financial years 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06, and, as part of the drive to increase participation by young people, each of the four Area Youth Forums received £500 from the Youth Service's Transforming Youth Work allocation. Transforming Youth Work was a government grant allocated to each local authority youth service between 2002 and 2006.

1.2 At the Cabinet meeting on 20th February 2006 the following policy option was agreed in Minute 504:

(K) YOUTH FORUMS

(i) That in addition to the £15,000 a year being allocated to each Area Forum for community projects, the sum of £2,500 be allocated to each of the four Youth Forums to be spent on projects beneficial to young people.

(ii) That this reflects Corporate Priorities 9.5.1 and 9.5.2 on involving local people in decision making and also Priority 3.2.7 (Ensuring that activities for young people are accessible and reflect their needs and aspirations). It also reflects the key priority of User Involvement and Community Engagement.

1.3 At Cabinet meeting on 7th February 2008 the young people's recommendations for 2007/08 allocations and amounts to be carried forward to 2008/09 financial year were agreed.

- 1.4 This financial year applications were assessed by a group of young people at three of the four Area Youth Forums between July and October 2008.
- 1.5 No applications were received in the South Wirral area. When young people met to discuss this at their Youth Forum in October, they recommended that, instead of advertising a second round for South Wirral area applications, they would like to use the money to organise large-scale area activities for all youth groups in the South Wirral area.
- 1.6 The young people were facilitated and supported by staff from the Youth & Play Service, Connexions and Extended Schools Co-ordinators. The young people scored applications against agreed and publicised criteria. Successful projects will be required to write a report for submission in April 2009.

2.0. Applications to Area Youth Forums

- 2.1. The availability of the funding was publicised widely, through email shots to the voluntary and statutory youth sectors across Wirral.
- 2.2. The Area Youth Forums met to fully consider the applications as follows:

Area Youth Forum	Date of Area Youth Forum meeting
West Wirral	9 th July 2008
Birkenhead	30th July
Wallasey	24 th September 2008
South Wirral	2nd October 2008

- 2.3. A summary of the bids received by each Area Youth Forum and the recommendations of the Area Youth Forums are provided in the appendix to this report.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The levels of funding are within the Area Youth Forum budget. In Aiming High for Young People the government have impressed as a policy that by 2018 young people will have direct influence over 25% of spending on their services.

4. Staffing Implications

- 4.1 There are no staffing implications as a result of this report.

5. Equal Opportunities Implications

- 5.1 The recommendations support wider engagement by young people and aim to promote equality of opportunity.

6. Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 The funding enables young people to engage in positive activities and away from risk taking behaviour.

7. **Local Agenda 21 implications**

7.1 There are no agenda 21 implications arising directly from this report.

8. **Planning Implications**

8.1 There are no planning implications arising directly from this report.

9. **Anti-poverty Implications**

9.1 These funds are concerned with enabling young people to have greater opportunities within Wirral.

10. **Social Inclusion Implications**

10.1 The allocations of these funds increases social inclusion opportunities for young people.

11. **Local Member Support Implications**

11.1 The range of applications relates to all 22 council wards.

12. **Background papers**

12.1 Cabinet meeting 20th February 2006.
Cabinet meeting 15th March 2007.
Cabinet meeting 7th February 2008

Recommendations

That:

- (1) this report and the proposed allocation of funding as detailed in Appendix 1 be agreed;
- (2) Cabinet agrees to the transfer of the £10,000 budget from Corporate Services to CYPD; and
- (3) Cabinet agrees that future ratification of these awards be via the four CYPD District Boards

	Original budget for 2008/09	Total funding agreed
West Wirral	£3,763.11 (£2,500 allocation plus £1,263.11 carry over 2007/08)	£3,763.11
Birkenhead	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
Wallasey	£2,835.12 (£2,500 allocation plus £335.12 carry over 2007/08)	£2,835.12
South Wirral	£3,717.17 (£2,500 allocation plus £1,217.17 carry over 2007/08)	£3,717.17

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2008/09 Applications for Area Youth Forum Awards

West Wirral	Allocation 2008/09 £3,763.11 (includes £1,263.11 carry over from last year)		
Project	Description	Requested	Allocated
Overchurch Community Centre	Weekend Music Project	£1,000	£710.52
Pensby Youth Club	Sport equipment for physical activity project	£602.46	£380.51
Fender Youth Club	Pool and table tennis table	£800	£640.52
Deeside Young People's Project	Holiday activities	£1,000	£710.52
Friends of Ivy Farm	Media equipment	£919.92	£710.52
West Kirby Youth Club	Equipment for health project	£646	£610.52
West Kirby Youth Club	Media suite	£463	nil
West Kirby Youth Club	Coaching sessions	£975	nil
Pensby Youth Club	Young women's project	£820	nil
TOTAL ALLOCATED			£3,763.11

Birkenhead	Allocation 2008/09		
Project	Description	requested	Allocated
Noctorum Young People's Project	Swimming project	£690	£700
North End Young People's Project	Health & fitness project	£650	£650
Callister Youth Club	Fitness project	£314.94	£350
Charing Cross Youth Club	MCing project	£1,117.99	£800
Shaftesbury Youth Club	Sports project	£1,000	nil
Powerhouse Youth Group	Activity project	£950	nil
TOTAL ALLOCATED			£2,500

2008/09 Applications for Area Youth Forum Awards

Wallasey	Allocation 08/09 £2,835.12 (includes £335.12 carry over from last year)		
Project	Description	requested	Allocated
Moreton Youth Club	Canal Boat weekend	£500	£500
Leasowe Youth Club/outreach	Manely Mere visit	£700	£583.78
Wallasey YMCA	Mountain Biking course	£980	£583.78
Wallasey Young People's Project	Outdoor pursuits residential	£1,246	£583.78
Oldershaw School	London visit	£1,000	£583.78
TOTAL ALLOCATED			£2,835.12

South Wirral

Allocation 2008/09 - £3,717.17 (includes £1,217.17 carry over from last year)

No applications were received from youth groups in the South Wirral area. When young people met to discuss this at their Youth Forum on 2nd October, they recommended that, instead of advertising a second round for South Wirral area applications, they would like to use the money to organise large-scale area activities for all youth groups in the South Wirral area to access e.g. visit to Alton Towers. Youth workers in the area would be prepared to organise such activities and to ensure that a wide range of youth groups from the area are able to access these activities.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

DELIVERING IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN, INFORMED BY THE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE REVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the strategy in place and the additional capacity required to deliver improved outcomes for children in need, at risk of significant harm or who have experienced significant harm. The major drivers are the findings of careful scrutiny of our own services following Baby P; the requirements set out in the Children and Young Person's Act 2008, the Children and Young People's Plan, Local Area Agreement and the Council's Corporate Plan. This report seeks Cabinet's approval to implement the following changes from agreed budget growth of £690,000.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Children and Young Peoples Department has previously reported to Cabinet its progress since 2006 (Value for Money report 7TH February 2008) and also provided a verbal report to Cabinet on 10th December 2008 outlining the immediate actions taken to review our work in safeguarding children in response to the Baby P case. In addition, in the light of the Ofsted Annual Performance Assessment which was reported in December, officers have been reviewing what measures need to be in place to improve our Staying Safe grade from adequate and ensure sustainability of our services for children. The department is also mindful that the inspection regime is likely to change from April, with quarterly performance reporting being introduced and unannounced inspections.

2 Local action taken in response to Baby P

- 2.1 The Director reported on the six actions being taken locally in response to Baby P at Cabinet on 10th December 2008. These are outlined below:
- 2.2 Actions led by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board for all statutory partners to refresh the 2003 Victoria Climbié audit; undertake a rapid appraisal of all children subject to a Child Protection plan; to review staffing levels to confirm stability of front line capacity to respond, and finally undertake an audit of supervision and management oversight. Each agency will produce an action plan to address any improvements required.
- 2.3 A meeting between Senior Officers from the Youth Offending Service (YOS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Police and Social Care with the Director of Children's Services to identify young people who posed the greatest risk, with a view to auditing the current plans for each young person and identifying improved ways of jointly meeting their needs and more safely managing the risks.
- 2.4 A review of Police, Social Care and Health joint working procedures and protocols, through the random identification of children within certain categories of referral to Social Care by the Police.

- 2.5 A review of Health procedures / practices in terms of meeting the requirements to safeguard children. Meeting with a full range of Health professionals; the focus for discussion with the Director of Children's Services was how we could ensure a robust local response to learning lessons from the Baby P case.
- 2.6 The review of Local Safeguarding Children's Board arrangements, with a particular emphasis upon the likely legislative requirement to recruit an independent Chair.
- 2.7 The review of Social Care practice and capacity to fulfil legislative requirements to meet the needs of children who require safeguarding. Within Social Care, the following actions have been taken to audit practice, the findings inform the recommendations contained within the second part of this report:
- Meetings in November 2008, by the Head of Branch Social Care with social workers in all Fieldwork Teams, immediately after the publication of the Baby P report and ensuing actions in Haringey;
 - A review of case files by District Managers of all children subject to a child protection plan;
 - A review of a random sample of 20 case files, by the Quality Assurance Unit, of children subject to a child protection plan, to assess the quality of the plan, and the impact of the plan through speaking to the children concerned;
 - Development of an improved case file auditing tool;
 - A review of staffing capacity and caseloads, resulting in additional agency social workers being deployed in 6 social work teams;
 - A review of the 46 Lord Laming actions for Social Care from 2003.

2.8 This report draws on the outcomes of the review of social care practice described in paragraph 2.7. The review identified many areas of improvement across Wirral services that have been put into place since 2006. It also identified areas of very good practice that have been introduced on a pilot basis and where there is now a need to extend the practice across Wirral and to embed it into our establishment.

These include:

- The remodelling social delivery work pilot supported by the Children's Workforce Development Council in Rockferry / Tranmere.
- The full time deployment of an Area Team Leader supported by Tranmere Together in Tranmere.
- The work on permanency by the Children in Care project team.
- The first contact service provided by the Central Advice and Duty Team.

The review also identified a number of areas where demand for services exceeds our capacity to respond in a sufficient and timely way. This has placed demands on middle managers which has affected our ability to recruit and retain these crucial colleagues. The next sections outline a proposed response to these issues.

3 Service Design

3.1 This report outlines 9 areas in service delivery and makes recommendations in each area. Each area is part of continuum of service for children and young people across different levels of need from the children with additional needs who require co-

ordinated support, to children in need of safeguarding, children in care and children who need permanent new placements. The 9 areas are as follows:

- Integrated preventative services
- Access to social care
- Social worker establishment – Assessment
- Social worker establishment – Care Management
- Leaving Care
- Systems support
- Management and supervision of practice
- Safeguarding, quality and review
- Workforce development

4 Integrated preventative services

- 4.1 Area Teams provide a vital function in responding to children with additional needs, through a co-ordinated approach in the community within which they live. The requirement to develop integrated approaches to children through the use of the common assessment framework is enshrined in the Children Act 2004. Increased and improved levels of co-operation and co-ordination of services by Health, Education, Social Care and other “mainstream agencies” has led to an increased ability of all services to assess and meet children’s needs leading to reduced levels of unnecessary child protection investigation.
- 4.2 11 Area Teams are each currently led by a 0.5 full time equivalent (fte) Area Team Leader, who is seconded from their substantive post. A review of Area Teams was undertaken in 2007 and the recommendations from that review have been considered and piloted as part of a re-modelling social work pilot funded by the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC).
- 4.3 The pilot has confirmed the findings of the 2007 review that the Area Team Leader post should be placed on a more permanent basis, and the benefits in areas of complex and diverse need of having a full-time post. The pilot has also confirmed the importance to planning services by having a robust and co-ordinated administration processes to collect data which can then inform local delivery of services and future commissioning. Partners are firmly committed to the model of integrated working and undertake Common Assessments and arrange meetings to meet the needs of children, but find the administrative demands heavy and complex.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the Area Team delivery model is consolidated through the establishment of 7.5 fte Area Team leaders but still covering the 11 Areas. Areas experiencing the highest of level of social stress would have a full time ATL whilst where demand is lower would remain at 0.5 fte. Currently there is £255,000 funding for 11 part time Area Team Leaders (5.5 fte), the proposal above increases this capacity up to 7.5 fte which will be funded through £100,000 of Area Based Grant (SDG ex BIP).
- 4.5 Additionally, it is proposed that each Area Team will be supported by an Information Sharing Co-ordinator, responsible for developing information systems so that at any point in time there was a clear understanding about which children and families are subject to a Common Assessment (CAF), and which of those children are being supported through the Team around the Child model. It is vital that this information about children is known and recorded. The Area Team must be in a position to

provide oversight of all CAF activity, intervening where appropriate and providing support to set up each initial Team around the Child meeting.

- 4.6 It is expected that these posts would need to be graded at Band E, the following costs would apply: 7.5 fte x £18,882 + pay award + on costs = £182,000. It is proposed that these costs will be met through the Area Based Grant (SDG). The Information Sharing Co-ordinator would sit alongside the Area Team Leader and work with and to them directly. The Area Team Leaders each have a role in co-ordinating and delivering training, which will be strengthened by the approach outlined above.
- 4.7 The configuration of Area Team leaders and the Information Sharing co-ordinator is outlined in Appendix 1.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
Area Teams	Team Leaders	PO8	2	£100,000	Met by ABG (SDG ex BIP)
Area Team	Information Sharing Coordinators	Band E	7.5	£182,000	Met from ABG (SDG).

5 Access to social care

- 5.1 Since the review of our access to social care undertaken by Professor David Thorpe, we have managed our Central Advice and Duty Team (CADT) for children by having a rota of social workers from each Assessment Team providing consultation and advice, as well as accepting referrals. Management cover has also been provided on a rota basis by the Assessment Team Managers.
- 5.2 This pilot has now run since September 2007. It has evidenced its intended outcomes – professionals can now get quick advice directly from a social worker, which is highly valued and the number of inappropriate referrals has now dropped significantly. In line with the development of Area Teams co-ordinating services for children with additional needs, referrals now made to children’s social care are more appropriate but also deal with children with more complex needs who may not yet be in need of safeguarding but require a specialised service from a social worker to support them and their families to prevent this need or a need to become looked after arising. As a result, the number of child in need cases being managed by children’s social care requiring an assessment and ongoing service has increased. Children are being supported earlier and are therefore safer.
- 5.3 This direction of travel is absolutely correct; if we can support children and families earlier and more appropriately, we can safeguard children more effectively and improve outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children.
- 5.4 Subsequent sections of this report address the impact this has on services and the pressure this has brought in delivering our model of service at CADT. Currently, Team Managers provide one week in four rotational management cover to the CADT; this is stretching capacity in the Assessment Teams where an on site manager is required at all times.
- 5.5 It is proposed that a Principal Team Manager (Access) post is established in order to carry forward the changes both with CADT, but also within the Emergency Duty Team

(which we are currently reviewing with colleagues in DASS) and access arrangements as a whole for Children's Social Care. This post will require additional funding. They would directly line manage the CADT Manager as well as providing support to the Strategic Service Manager – Children and Families, in taking on some direct reports that this post has acquired since its creation.

- 5.6 To ensure that CADT operates effectively and provides a consistent response, it is proposed that that a dedicated CADT Team Manager (Practice Manager), based full time at CADT, is required. This post holder will manage the rota, but also set clear standards and systems for recording, reporting and responding to requests for a service for children and prompt allocation of referrals where there are safeguarding issues. This post will be funded via the Care Matters element of the Area Based Grant.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
CADT	Team Manager	PO8	1	£46,070	Met from Care Matters ABG
CADT	Principal Manager	PO12	1	£50,560	Requires additional funding

6 Social Worker establishment

- 6.1 This section makes a number of recommendations to increase the social work establishment. Over the last 3 years, we have successfully recruited and retained social work staff to the level where in September 2009 we became fully staffed, against the current establishment.

6.2 Assessment

- 6.2.1 As outlined above social workers from the 4 Assessment Teams provide cover on a weekly basis at CADT. However, given the increase in complexity of work, this has had an impact on the social workers' capacity to complete assessments and close/transfer cases in a timely manner which can cause delay for children and families but also impacts on accurate and timely reporting of performance, when they also provide cover at CADT. Each Assessment team establishment is 5 social workers, a senior practitioner and a Team Manager. The 2 Assessment Teams in Birkenhead and the Assessment Team in Wallasey have experienced workload pressures.

- 6.2.2 It is therefore proposed that in 3 of the Assessment Teams (2 in Birkenhead and 1 in Wallasey), each team will have an additional social work post established. In South/West District, the volume of work has not increased and so no increase in establishment is proposed for that District's Assessment Team. The effect of this proposal is to consolidate into the establishment, the successful CADT pilot.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
Assessment	Social Workers	Scp 26 - 36	3	£114,230	Requires additional funding

6.3 Care Management

6.3.1 These teams provide services for children in need, children in need of protection and children in care. As outlined above, we are providing increasing services for children in need. We have reduced the number of children who require a formal child protection plan but still have higher number of children in care than our comparators. Safely reducing the number of children in care is a key council priority where we have achieved some success, but requires specific and focused attention to the planning for these children.

6.3.2 The Children in Care Project Team comprising four social workers has been in place since January 2006. The Team have been particularly effective in securing Special Guardianship Orders for children, Assisted Residence Orders and also to a lesser extent, in working to discharge Care Orders where Children are placed with their parents, and where it is assessed that an order is no longer required. The number of children subject to Special Guardianship Orders in Wirral is now 51 (this legislation was introduced on 1st January 2006). Children subject to Special Guardianship Orders are entitled to the same post Order support as children who have been adopted. This level of support is legislatively required and is vital to prevent children secured with carers, (many of whom have experienced damaging experiences within their families), from experiencing further placement disruption and needing to be looked after again at some time during the remainder of their childhood. It is therefore proposed that three social workers and one senior practitioner post is established and funded from the Care Matters element of the Area Based Grant. The Team should focus on post adoption and Special Guardianship support as well as assessing children and progressing the plan where Special Guardianship is required to meet the children's needs. Three of the four current post holders are seconded from the Care Management Teams and these posts will be released back into those Teams.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
CiC Team	Social Worker	Scp 26 - 36	3	£114,230	Met from Care Matters ABG
CiC Team	Senior Practitioner	PO4	1	£41,610	Met from Care Matters ABG

6.3.3 In addition it is proposed that a further 3 social worker posts be established in the Care Management Teams, which will require additional funding. The aim is to ensure that the Care Management teams have sufficient resources to work with children and families on a medium to long term basis and be able to undertake detailed and focused work with these cases to ensure children's outcomes are improved and we, in partnership with other agencies support children and families effectively. The strength of these Teams will be subject to further review as it becomes possible to safely reduce the number of children in care.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
Care Management	Social Worker	Scp 26 - 36	3	£114,230	Requires additional funding

6.3.4 There is likely to be a lead in time in order to fill these social worker posts. Although a full year cost is shown above, permanent appointments may not be achieved for a few

months. These are critical positions, which should be filled as soon as possible. Approval is requested for agency staff to continue in 2009-10 until appointments are made. The additional cost for 4 months is estimated to be £50,000.

6.3.5 The review of case files has identified a need for additional administrative support in the short term to bring file records up to date and for archiving. Five temporary administrative posts have been recruited. It is proposed to continue these appointments until July 2009.

6.3.6 The additional cost of agency social workers and administrative staff are estimated to be £80,000. It is proposed that unspent School Development Grant (Area Based Grant) in 2008-09 is rolled into 2009-10 to fund this.

7 Leaving Care

7.1 Wirral has increasing numbers of children supported through the Leaving Care Service. Each young person should, by statute, have a personal advisor allocated and a pathway plan. Where young people are in care under 18 years of age, they must be allocated to a qualified social worker. There are different criteria under the Leaving Care Act for whom we should be providing support – eligible children who were in care on their 15th birthday and were in care for 12 months before that date; relevant children who were in care on or after their 15th birthday and formally relevant children. In summary we should be providing a pathway adviser and support until 21 years old (25 if in education or have a learning disability) and we have not been able to provide this service to every care leaver. The above criteria are to be changed following changes in the law, through the Children and Young Person’s Act 2008. This places increased focus on support for care leavers. These are some of our most vulnerable young people who also show in our NEET figures and are at higher risk of poor outcomes as young adults.

7.2 Therefore it is recommended the 2 additional social workers temporarily placed in the Leaving Care Service, which are improving support to this group of young people, are established on a permanent basis and the funding is provided by the Care Matters element of the Area Based Grant.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
Leaving Care	Social Worker	Scp 26 - 36	2	£76,150	Met from Care Matters ABG

8 Systems Support

8.1 The Integrated Children’s System (ICS) has been developed to improve outcomes for children defined as being in need, under the Children Act 1989. It provides a conceptual framework, a method of practice and a business process to support practitioners and managers in undertaking the key tasks of assessment, planning, intervention and review. Because the work with children in need requires skilled use of detailed and complex information, ICS is designed to be supported by an electronic case record system. A key aim of ICS is to provide front line staff and their managers with the necessary help, through information communication technology (ICT) to record, collate, analyse and output the information required.

- 8.2 The implementation of the Integrated Children's System (ICS) received considerable coverage in the national press through the reporting of Baby P, where it was reported as being time consuming and problematic. In order to implement the system effectively in Wirral a Project Manager is urgently required. The post holder will work directly with the technical staff implementing the systems; will have a key role in working with practitioners and trainers to ensure that the system is adapted where feasible to support the delivery of best social work practice and that the training delivered supports practitioner to use the system in an effective way. A project management approach is required with clear milestones and targets to work towards. A Project Manager is required for a twelve month period initially. The Project Manager will work directly to the Strategic Service Manager Children and Families.
- 8.3 In addition to the above ICS phase 1C capital funding for 2008-09 has just been announced. The approval is £36,979 and will include improvements to make the system easier to use. However the necessary software to implement this will not become available until later in 2009. Therefore, in the short term the grant will be used to offset staffing costs for the ICS system administration and training teams in 2008-09. The software costs will require funding in 2009-10.
- 8.4 To fund this and support the compliance with accurate performance reporting, embedding ICS at a local level, and in anticipation of quarterly performance monitoring commencing in April 2009, it is proposed that unspent Care Matters Grant from 2008/09 be rolled into 2009/10. This will fund software and the recruitment of a Project Manager and 4 Data Officers, one of whom will be located in each District. The Data Officer would be responsible for training, support and setting standards for recording systems in each District, both electronic and paper based. The focus will be on the recording of children's information in ICS and paper based records and ensuring that accurate performance reporting is enhanced. It is recommended that these posts be established on a time limited basis for 12 months to embed the transition to electronic recording and file management.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
ICS	Project Manager	PO8	1	£46,070	Care Matters ABG (2008/09)
ICS	Data Officers	Band E	4	£97,070	Care Matters ABG (2008/09)
ICS Software	-	-	-	£36,879	Care Matters ABG (2008/09)

9 Management and Supervision of Practice

- 9.1 Since 2006 there have been incremental management changes within the Children's Social Care Branch. Four District Manager positions were established in 2006 and in 2007 two Strategic Service Manager positions were established and appointments made. In 2008 the Social Inclusion and Family Support Service was disaggregated into the Four Districts. The proposals below, relate to the generic fieldwork service for children and families. The management of specialist services for children, young people and families will be subject to a separate review.
- 9.2 The requirements upon front line Team Managers have increased, managing in a complex environment where their capacity to quality assure, audit, provide oversight

of the judgements being made by individual social workers have been starkly highlighted through the case of Baby P. The audit of Wirral's Social Care practice against Lord Lamings standards highlighted a number of areas of inconsistency, such as case file auditing, full case chronologies on every child's case file, and effective workload allocation and management systems.

- 9.3 A full complement of first line managers is required, with appropriate training, skills and clear expectations, to deliver consistent practice across the service. During the past three years we have recruited two external Team Managers, both of whom have now left the employment of Wirral, and there has been very little internal interest in applying for these positions. We currently have 4 Team Manager vacancies; 2 of which have been covered by agency workers, for almost 3 years in one case, and 12 months in another. We know from our workforce analysis that this situation will become even more difficult in the future. This is an area where the Authority is especially vulnerable. The key factor in retaining social workers is the quality of support and supervision they receive from their immediate line manager. The key factor in supporting safe practice for children and families is the quality of leadership and support by the front line team managers. Regarding fieldwork Team Managers the pay in Wirral is significantly lower than our immediate neighbouring authorities and this, along with the expectations placed upon first line Team Managers, has had a serious impact upon our capacity to recruit.
- 9.4 The following revised structure is proposed to achieve 3 outcomes. Firstly, it improves and provides the capacity to drive forward improved performance and professional practice at a team level which we need, secondly, it introduces a career structure for social workers, to ensure we retain our best staff at the front-line and thirdly, to attract candidates to management positions,
- 9.5 It is proposed that the post of Principal Team Manager is introduced and that existing Team Manager posts are re-designated as Practice Managers. The new post of Principal Team Manager will be responsible for the supervision of the Practice Managers. The Principal Team Manager will deal with workload management and allocation across the Team. The Principal Team Manager will have a critical leadership role in establishing a virtuous performance cycle, ensuring that performance data is provided and complied with, that performance targets are met for key performance indicators and sets a culture which continues to develop the professional practice within the Teams. The Principal Team Manager will support the District Manager in the day to day monitoring of Social Care within each District, and will work within a clear scheme of delegated decision making.
- 9.6 The Practice Manager will be responsible for the oversight and direction of case planning and compliance within the Team. This will entail chairing meetings for Children in Need, Child Protection, Children in Care and care planning meetings for children whose cases are before the Court. The Practice Manager will have a revised range of delegated decision making and will be responsible for managing and tracking cases in terms of outcomes and progress. The Practice Manager, will deputise in the Principal Team Manager's absence, and provide supervision to social workers
- 9.7 With respect to the Senior Practitioner position, post holders currently maintain a caseload as well as having responsibility for supervising some social workers in their Team. However, due to carrying a relatively high caseload it has often meant that caseload issues have precluded their role in promoting effective professional development and supervision. It is proposed that the role is clarified as being, the lead, experienced social worker within the Team responsible for the development of

professional practice, particularly students, newly qualified, and Level 2 social workers. The post holders will have a reduced caseload of complex cases. Their role will also be to mentor staff and also to co-work with Level 2 and Level 3 social workers. The focus of this social work role will be leading and developing professional practice.

- 9.8 These positions need to have revised job descriptions and be submitted for grade evaluation. However, the indicative grade we would be looking for would be PO12 for Principal Team Manager and PO8 for the Practice Manager. The Senior Practitioner grade would remain as PO4 but there will need to be revision of the job description. This revision will focus on a role involving leading excellent professional practice supporting newly qualified social workers and trainees.
- 9.9 In order to resolve workload and allocation issues specifically experienced within the Birkenhead District it has been decided that two District Managers out of the compliment of four will be placed in the Birkenhead District and the District be split into two parts, North and South. It is proposed that each District Manager in Birkenhead will manage two Principal Team Managers, one for Assessment and the other Care Management. In addition it is proposed to create an additional Team Manager (Practice Manager) post and uplift a Social Work post to Senior Practitioner level in order that in both Birkenhead North and South, where the workloads and pressures are similar, each has an equal number of Practice Managers and Senior Practitioners. This is to ensure additional capacity to track and monitor children's cases to achieve improved outcomes.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
Birkenhead (North)	Principal Manager	PO12	2	£101,130	New Post, requires additional funding
Birkenhead (North)	Care Management Team Manager	PO8	1	£46,070	New Post, requires additional funding
Birkenhead (North)	Senior Practitioner	PO4	1	£3,540	Uplift from SW, requires additional funding
Birkenhead (South)	Principal Manager	PO12	2	£101,130	New Post, requires additional funding
Wallasey	Principal Manager	PO12	2	£101,130	New Post, requires additional funding
South & West	Principal Manager	PO12	1	£50,560	New Post, requires additional funding

10 Safeguarding, Quality and Review

- 10.1 The expectations and requirements upon the Safeguarding service have increased significantly. Further requirements have been made upon the service in the immediate aftermath of Baby P, and more expectations are likely, following Lord Laming's Review.
- 10.2 Since 2006 the service has assumed responsibility for the development of the Child Death Overview Panel which became operational in April 2008, the authority was required to recruit a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate allegations against professionals, have systems in place to consider licensing

applications, plus a requirement to implement vetting and barring procedures across the authority. Expectations placed upon the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (established in April 2006) have increased, and there is likely to be guidance requiring increased independence of the Board through the appointment of an independent chair. The proposals below, will bring the authority in line with other LSCB's in the region. The LSCB receives funding from all statutory partner agencies, there is no funding formula currently and contributions are subject to local determination.

- 10.3 It is proposed that the Principal Safeguarding Manager is re-designated as Strategic Service Manager Safeguarding, a third tier post, and that the officer will become a member of the Departmental Management Team. It is also proposed that a new post of Local Safeguarding Children's Board Manager is established. The Board Manager will have line management responsibilities, for example for the LSCB Training Officer, the LADO, the Child Death Overview Panel administration and the CAF / Quality Assurance Officer; they will also service all the LSCB sub groups – ensuring they have appropriate project plans which track outcomes to ensure they are achieved.
- 10.4 Regarding the Quality Assurance and Review service it is proposed that a Child in Need Reviewing Officer is established to provide systematic overview mechanisms for these children; chairing the reviews of the most complex cases. It is further proposed that the complaints and children's involvement service are consolidated under separate managers drawn from within the service. It is proposed that the post of Professional Practice Officer is established to ensure that policies and procedures are both accessible and provide an effective framework for quality work.
- 10.5 It is proposed that the LSCB, made up of all statutory and voluntary sector partners should contribute to funding the LSCB Manager, and that the Local Authority contribution to the LSCB should fund the re-grading of the Principal Safeguarding Manager.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
Safeguarding	Strategic Service Manager	EPO21	1	£16,100	Uplift from EPO6, funded from Local Authority contribution to the LSCB
Safeguarding	LSCB Manager	PO14	1	£52,800	Funded from LSCB
Quality Assurance	CIN Reviewing Officer	PO8	1	£46,070	Met from Care Matters ABG
Quality Assurance	Complaints Manager	PO8	1	£2,240	Uplift from PO6, requires additional funding
Quality Assurance	Children's Involvement Manager	PO8	1	£4,460	Uplift from PO4, requires additional funding
Quality Assurance	Professional Practice Officer	PO4	1	£42,850	Met from Care Matters ABG

11 Workforce development

- 11.1 The establishment of the above posts contained within this report has implications for workforce development. From the point of entry into the service, if the above measures are implemented there is a clear career pathway for social workers, from entry to the service as a Level 2 social worker, through career grades of practicing social worker up to Senior Practitioner (Level 4), and then Practice Manager, Principal Manager to District Manager and above into more Senior Management positions. The Workforce Development Team will need to develop a clear training plan to support practitioners and managers at every step of the journey, commencing with NVQ L3 for residential and foster carers. To provide additional capacity to do this it is proposed to establish a Social Work development officer, to support the standards being piloted through the Children's Workforce Development Council. There is much to learn from the career development pathways established for Teachers and the Workforce Development Team, located within the Learning and Achievement Branch is ideally positioned to develop improved training pathways for all within Social Care.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
Work Force Development	Staff Development Officer	PO2	1	£40,300	Met from CWDC Grant

12 Implications for Legal Services

- 12.1 The provision of legal advice and assistance to Children's Services is an integral part of the overall strategy to protect children at risk of significant harm and improve outcomes for looked after children.
- 12.2 The Serious Case Review Executive Summary Report prepared by Haringey Local Safeguarding Children Board into the death of Baby P makes it clear that the provision of appropriate and timely legal advice was a material issue in the case and a series of recommendations were made about the provision of legal advice including:

'All staff in Legal should be reminded of the need to comply with case management and performance standards at all times including accurate recording, filing and adherence to agreed timescales.'

'Pending a strategic review, Legal Services should ensure that sufficient numbers of lawyers with strong experience of acting for a local authority in childcare proceedings are recruited or alternative methods of service provision are explored.'

- 12.3 Guidance issued by the Law Society recognises that the steps involved in the decision whether or not a child should be made the subject of care proceedings will inevitably be a complex process, requiring in-depth and regular consultation and discussion between lawyer and social worker. The Council's Legal Services Child Care team currently comprises three child care solicitors, managed by a Group Solicitor (who also holds responsibility for education and Adult Social Services). Further study is required of the caseloads carried by these colleagues and the likely impact of the changes proposed in this report.

12.4 One of the Council's aims underpinning its strategic objective of raising the aspirations of young people is safely to reduce the number of looked after children. Following Baby P it is likely and understandable that both individuals and agencies will become more risk averse in child care matters and this will create significant service pressures. The proposals contained in this report seek to manage these pressures proactively within CYPD. However, if the number of looked after children is to be safely reduced, this will require further changes in Legal Services.

12.5 Presently, given its very limited resources, the Child Care Team in Legal Services must give priority to cases where children are actively at risk. This means that work on discharging Care Orders (where it is safe and appropriate to do so) cannot be prioritised. This could lead to some children remaining in the looked after category longer than is reasonably necessary. Additional legal capacity could support CYPD in safely managing down the number of looked after children and ensure that lawyers are available sooner to attend gatekeeping meetings with social workers to review cases where discharging proceedings may be appropriate. In turn, by providing 'critical challenge' in such meetings the quality of the Council's Court applications for discharge orders will be improved,

13 Financial implications

13.1 The costs of all posts and sources of funding are detailed in the table below.

District/Area	Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Cost	Comment
Area Teams	Team Leaders	PO8	2.5	£100,000	Met by ABG (SDG ex BIP)
Area Team	Information Sharing Coordinators	B and E	7.5	£182,000	Met from ABG (SDG).
CADT	Team Manager	PO8	1	£46,070	Met from Care Matters ABG
Assessment	Social Workers	Scp 26-36	3	£114,230	Requires additional funding
CADT	Principal Manager	PO12	1	£50,560	Requires additional funding
Care Management	Social Worker	Scp 26 - 36	3	£114,230	Requires additional funding
Leaving Care	Social Worker	Scp 26 -36	2	£76,150	Met from Care Matters ABG
CiC Team	Social Worker	Scp 26-36	3	£114,230	Met from Care Matters ABG
CiC Team	Senior Practitioner	PO4	1	£41,610	Met from Care Matters ABG
	Agency Social workers and Admin support			£80,000	School Development Grant ABG (2008-09)
ICS	Project Manager	PO8	1	£46,070	Care Matters ABG (2008/09)
ICS	Data Officers	Band E	4	£97,070	Care Matters ABG (2008/09)
ICS software	-	-	-	£37,000	Care Matters ABG (2008/09)

Birkenhead (North)	Principal Manager	PO12	2	£101,130	New Post, requires additional funding
Birkenhead (North)	Care Management Team Manager	PO8	1	£46,070	New Post, requires additional funding
Birkenhead (North)	Senior Practitioner	PO4	1	£3,540	Uplift from SW, requires additional funding
Birkenhead (South)	Principal Manager	PO12	2	£101,130	New Post, requires additional funding
Wallasey	Principal Manager	PO12	2	£101,130	New Post, requires additional funding
South & West	Principal Manager	PO12	1	£50,560	New Post, requires additional funding
Safeguarding	Strategic Service Manager	EPO21	1	£16,100	Uplift from EPO6, funded from LSCB
Safeguarding	LSCB Manager	PO14	1	£52,800	Funded from LSCB
Quality Assurance	CIN Reviewing Officer	PO8	1	£46,070	Met from Care Matters ABG
Quality Assurance	Complaints Manager	PO8	1	£2,240	Uplift from PO6, requires additional funding
Quality Assurance	Children's Involvement Manager	PO8	1	£4,460	Uplift from PO4, requires additional funding
Quality Assurance	Professional Practice Officer	PO4	1	£42,850	Met from Care Matters ABG
Work Force Development	Staff Development Officer	PO2	1	£40,300	Met from CWDC Grant
Total				£1,707,600	

The sources of funding for a full year are:-

ABG (SDG ex BIP)	= £100,000
ABG (SDG)	= £182,000
ABG (Care Matters)	= £367,000
LSCB funding	= £68,900
ABG Care Matters (2008/09)	= £180,100
ABG School Development Grant (2008/09)	= £80,000
CWDC Grant	= £40,300
Budget Growth	= £689,300
Total	= £1,707,600

14 Staffing implications

14.1 The following posts are grant funded it is therefore proposed to establish these post as time limited appointments.

Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE	Comment
Area Team Leaders	PO8	2.5	ABG (BIP)
Information Sharing Coordinators	Band E	7.5	ABG (SDG)
CADT Team Manager	PO8	1	ABG (Care Matters)
Social Worker (CiC & Leaving Care)	Scp 26 - 36	5	ABG (Care Matters)
CiC Senior Practitioner	PO4	1	ABG (Care Matters)
ICS Project Manager	PO8	1	ABG (2008/09 – Care Matters)
ICS Data Officers	Band E	4	ABG (2008/09 – Care Matters)
CIN Reviewing Officer	PO8	1	ABG (Care Matters)
Professional Practice Officer	PO4	1	ABG (Care Matters)
Staff Development Officer	PO2	1	CWDC Grant

14.2 The post detailed below would be offered as permanent appointments.

Post	Grade (subject to evaluation)	FTE
Social Worker (Assessment & Care Management)	Scp 26 -36	6
Care Management Team Manager	PO8	1
Senior Practitioner	PO4	1
Principal Manager	PO12	8
Complaints Manager	PO8	1
Children's Involvement Manager	PO8	1
Strategic Service Manager (Safeguarding)	EPO21	1
LSCB Manager	PO14	1

15 Equal opportunities implications

15.1 Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken on the recruitment processes to be used and points raised within them have been addressed within the action plan.

16 Community safety implications

16.1 There are no implications under this heading.

17 Local Agenda 21 implications

17.1 The emotional and educational support put in place for children in care and care leavers in preparing young them for adulthood, which includes participating both socially and economically in society, will benefit the local community, reducing long term unemployment and the negative impact on young people's lives associated with unemployment.

18 Planning implications

18.1 There are no implications under this heading

19 Anti-poverty implications

- 19.1 The focus on improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers and working with partner agencies including Connexions through Wirral's Employment, Education and Training Strategy will enable more children and care leavers to find employment, training and education and reduce the number who are NEET at age 19.

20 Social inclusion implications

- 20.1 The proposals outlined above support children and care leavers and promote social inclusion and community cohesion.

21 Local Member Support implications

- 21.1 The proposals put forward effect services to vulnerable children all wards within the Borough.

22 Background papers

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008

- Care Matters: Time for Change White Paper, DCFS June 2007.
- Wirral 14-19 Joint Agency Employment, Education and Training Strategy.
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and associated Regulations

23 RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) That Cabinet formally approve the strategy set out in the report
- (2) That uncommitted 2008/09 ABG (up to £260,100) be carried forward in to 2009/10
- (3) The report be referred to Employment & Appointments Committee.
- (4) That the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management prepare a further report for Cabinet setting out proposed remodelling of legal support for children, in the light of changed circumstances.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

Appendix 1

Area Team Leader posts

District	Area	FTE
South	Clatterbridge and Bebington	0.5
	Bromborough/ Eastham	0.5
Birkenhead	Bidston & St James/ Claughton	1
	Prenton/Oxton	0.5
	Birkenhead and Tranmere/ Rock Ferry	1
Wallasey	Liscard/ Seacombe	1
	New Brighton/Wallasey	0.5
	Leasowe/ Moreton East & West/ Saughall Massie	0.5
West	Pensby and Thingwall/ Heswall	0.5
	Hoylake/Meols/ West Kirby/ Thurstaston	0.5
	Greasby/ Frankby/ Irby	1
Total Number		7.5

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

RAISING EXPECTATIONS: ENABLING THE SYSTEM TO DELIVER MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT CHANGES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the current stage in preparing for the transition of commissioning and funding of post-16 provision from the Learning and Skills Council to the Local Authority. Full transfer of commissioning and funding of post-16 funding will take place in 2010.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Machinery of Government changes announced on 28th June 2007 proposed that funding for 16-18 education and training would be delivered through Local Authorities – subject to full consultation and when the necessary legislation has facilitated this. These functions are currently carried out by the Learning and Skills Council. Consultation has now taken place and legislation is currently going through Parliament. The LSC will be abolished from September 2010 when the commissioning and funding of post-16 provision will transfer to the Local Authority.
- 1.2 The purposes of these changes are to:
 - put commissioning of provision for all 0-19 year olds in the hands of a single body, reflecting the principles of local decision making at the right level and supporting the delivery of the 14-19 entitlement;
 - enable Local Authorities to take a more integrated approach to provision of all Children's Services;
 - create, at a regional level, a good join up with regional economic planning;
 - simultaneously allow government to streamline the post-19 skills system to better support the policies in World-Class Skills, and therefore make faster progress towards our 2020 skills ambitions.
- 1.3 The basic objectives are:
 - to build on the year-on-year improvements that the Learning and Skills Council has helped deliver since its creation in 2001;
 - to drive the ambition to raise the participation age for every young person to pursue a programme that engages them and enables them to progress;
 - to place local leadership firmly with Local Authorities to successfully implement this vision;
 - to drive towards a more dynamic, demand-led approach within the adult education and skills market;
 - to ensure that we intervene less where there is success but take robust action where there is failure and minimise unnecessary costs and bureaucracy to support those delivering to focus on success;
 - to ensure that funding follows the learner's choice and comparable funding will be provided for comparable provision within a national funding formula.

2. Main Points of the Machinery of Government Changes

2.1 The participation in education or training will be raised to age 18 by 2015.

2.2 Every young person is entitled to the new 14-19 curriculum and new qualifications including the 17 new Diplomas alongside strengthened GCSEs and A levels and the guarantee of an Apprenticeship or pre-Apprenticeship place.

2.3 New national organisations are proposed:

- a streamlined Skills Funding Agency, designed to oversee the development of the FE sector and to route public funding effectively to where it is most needed;
- a Young People's Learning Agency, which will have responsibilities for budgetary control;
- a new National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).

2.4 Central to the changes are:

- implementing new secondary curriculum;
- making sure that the new qualification routes (Diplomas and the Foundation Learning Tier) are available to all;
- making sure there is good quality Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) to all young people through the transition of Connexions to Local Authorities and the development of Targeted Youth Support;
- making sure that those young people who need it get financial support especially for children with Learning Disabilities and/or Difficulties and through the support of Education Maintenance Allowances;
- support for every young person to make the transition from pre- to post-16 learning successfully by implementing the September Guarantee and extending this to age 17.

2.5 For 14-19 year-olds the aim is to build on the success of the current system while enabling Local Authorities to provide the leadership to bring about the necessary changes in their local area. The DCSF approach has four key features.

- Local authorities will discharge their responsibilities to provide a place in learning for every young person through strategic commissioning.
- Local authorities will cluster together in sub-regional groupings reflecting travel-to-learn patterns to commission provision for young people across the wider local area.
- This will be supplemented by a slim national Young People's Learning Agency, which will have responsibilities for budgetary control and for securing coherence in the event that agreement cannot be reached locally.
- There should be progressive devolution of power and authority to the sub-regional level as the collaborative arrangements become stronger, successful and more formal.

2.6 Local authorities individually and through the sub-regional grouping will judge demand for different forms of provision, and the extent to which the available supply meets that demand and makes a full reality of the new entitlements to

Diplomas, Apprenticeships and the Foundation Learning Tier. Local Authorities and the sub-regional grouping will then decide where to commission more provision, where to expand the best provision to fill gaps, and where to remove the least effective provision. In doing so, they will aim to make the new entitlements available in full to all young people at the highest possible standard.

- 2.7 As part of its Children and Young People's Plan, the Local Authority will be expected to produce a commissioning plan for post-16 learning. It must take particular account of the need to raise participation, raise achievement at levels 2 and 3 by age 19 and reduce the number of young people who are NEET. When it has been agreed, it will then provide the basis for funding allocation. The intention is that funding should follow the learner's choice and comparable funding will be provided for comparable provision within a national funding formula, which will continue on a very similar basis to the current formula. The intention is that Local Authorities will be funded according to the institutions which are in their area, not according to where young people live.
- 2.8 Knowing what young people want is important to ensure that the correct provision is commissioned. Since September 2007, it has been a requirement that every local area has an online prospectus setting out information about each course available across the area to inform choice. DCSF is strongly encouraging Local Authorities to develop a common online application process alongside the prospectus to manage and track post-16 applications.
- 2.9 Further Education Colleges and training providers may draw students from many Local Authority areas and so Local Authorities are expected to come together in sub-regional groupings to commission provision. This will involve sharing their 16-18 commissioning plans, analysing together how learners move across and within their borders and make sure that their collective plans accommodate them; aggregating demands for Apprenticeships in order to commission the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS); and deciding who is responsible for leading the planning, commissioning, procuring and funding for each college and provider.
- 2.10 Some specialist provision will have to be commissioned on a regional basis.
- 2.11 This framework will be supplemented by a national Young People's Learning Agency, which will have reserve powers to step in to secure coherence of plans and budgetary control in the event that agreement cannot be reached. The idea of this agency with some budgetary control is that funding can be plan-led rather than 'lagged' i.e. based on the previous year's student numbers.
- 2.12 A key part of the new curriculum and qualifications entitlement is that from 2013 every suitably qualified young person should be entitled to an Apprenticeship place. Local demand will be identified by each LA, aggregated within the region and agreed with the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). It will then be the task of the NAS to provide the necessary Apprenticeship places (through contracting with employers and training providers) to deliver the entitlement in every part of the country.
- 2.13 Sub-regional groupings will come together as a regional planning group in each of the nine Government Office regions to consider and agree the overall commissioning plan for the region. The Regional Development Agency (RDA) will co-chair this group, which will be convened by the Young People's Learning

Agency and include representatives from the Government Office and the adult Skills Funding Agency.

- 2.14 Sixth Form Colleges will become a distinct legal category for the first time.
- 2.15 Academies will be expected to collaborate and contribute through the local 14-19 Partnership. Where an Academy is unable to agree with the Local Authority what its provision should be, the Secretary of State has powers to decide.
- 2.16 Local Authorities will be primarily responsible for planning and funding of provision for learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD), who have an entitlement to education or training up to the age of 25, and for the education and training of young people in juvenile custody.
- 2.17 Through the planning and commissioning cycle Local Authorities will be able to expand strong and cease to fund weak provision. Local Authorities will also have powers to lead more significant reorganisations of 16-18 provision where this is necessary. Ultimately, there must be robust intervention where there is serious underperformance.
- 2.18 The “home” Local Authority will have the lead responsibility for improving quality and raising standards in relation to School Sixth Forms and Sixth Form Colleges, but the Local Authority will need to work through the DIUS Skills Funding Agency in relation to FE Colleges. School Improvement Partners (SIPs) will continue to hold performance discussions with School Sixth Forms on behalf of LA as part of the ‘single conversation’.
- 2.19 The DCSF aims to ensure that the system is supported by excellent data, collected in a low-burden way, shared efficiently and in a timely way with those who need it.
- 2.20 The transfer of revenue funding totalling more than £7 billion is important, but the organisational changes that will underpin the new arrangements are even more important – not least in terms of the LA commissioning provision across the 14-19 age range. In particular, the new arrangements need to allow and encourage provision to change and develop to meet new needs. The existing configuration of provision will need to continue to change to respond to demography, changing employer demands, changing learner demands, the changing curriculum offer and as a consequence of the raising of the participation age to 18.

3. Implementation

- 3.1 The 2008/2009 academic year is being referred to as a “Tracking Year” where Local Authorities are expected to track the activities of the LSC. The 2009/2010 academic year is being referred to as a “Transition Year” where Local Authorities are jointly working with the LSC.
- 3.2 The full transfer of commissioning/funding to Local Authorities is the academic year 2010/11 with the new system fully in place from September 2010. A move to a 14-19 funding formula, if agreed, would be implemented from the start of the 2011-12 financial year or later.

- 3.3 The LSC has started to identify those staff in local partnership teams who work on 14-19 reform and commissioning so that they can begin to work closely with the relevant LA.
- 3.4 The first stage of the process is for Local Authorities to agree to be part of a sub-regional grouping. In Greater Merseyside it is proposed that this is done as part of a Multi-Area Agreement with other Greater Merseyside Local Authorities.
- 3.5 Sub-regional groupings are required to submit proposals to the relevant Government Office up to the end of February 2009, subject to Council approval, which outline how they are preparing to work as a sub-regional grouping and how they are preparing for the Transition Year. These proposals should include:
- Governance arrangements across the sub-regional grouping
 - Decision-making processes
 - Dispute resolution
 - Staffing needs
 - Reporting processes
 - Financial and performance accountabilities
- 3.6 Appendix 1 contains the draft sub-regional Stage 2 Application for approval by Elected Members.
- 3.7 Once the proposals have been approved by the Government Office North West, the sub-regional group is expected to then work through the action plan and through the Transition Year Local Authorities working with LSC colleagues will start to formulate the framework for the commissioning process. Key to this will be guidance from the DCSF as yet to be published regarding the end-to-end commissioning process.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Implementation of these changes will, however, have significant financial implications as the Council will be in receipt of monies to fund post-16 provision in the Borough.

5. Staffing implications

- 5.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. However, there will be increased staffing requirements in order to implement these changes. It is expected that these will be funded from the transfer of grant from the LSC. This will give rise to a need to amend the structure and establishment within the Children and Young People's Department and to establish posts in good time for the full implementation of these changes. There may be TUPE implications for existing LSC staff. A further report will be presented in due course.

6. Equal opportunities implications

- 6.1 There are no equal opportunities implications arising directly from this report. Nevertheless it will be necessary to consider equal opportunity issues that may arise from any staffing changes and also as part of developing the commissioning framework.

7. Community safety implications

7.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly from this report.

8. Local Agenda 21 implications

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

9. Planning implications

9.1 There are no planning implications arising directly from this report.

10. Anti-poverty implications

10.1 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report. However, providing high quality education and training post-16 which engages young people and enables them to aspire and achieve will contribute to our anti-poverty strategies.

11. Social inclusion implications

11.1 There are no social inclusion implications arising directly from this report. However, providing high quality education and training post-16 which engages young people and enables them to aspire and achieve will contribute to our social inclusion strategies.

12. Local Member Support implications

12.1 These changes affect provision in all wards across the Borough.

13. Background papers

None

RECOMMENDATIONS

That

(1) the Stage 2 Application be approved for submission to Government Office North West; and

(2) the Director of Children's Services be requested to report back on staffing and financial implications of these changes as they arise.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

Greater Merseyside Sub Regional Grouping Second Stage Application

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1 Introduction

The proposal for a Greater Merseyside Sub-regional grouping is made on the basis of supporting the implementation of the 14-19 reforms around broadening curriculum choice and raising participation. It is closely aligned to improvements in information, advice and guidance and developing learner choice.

The model of governance has been submitted to each Cabinet in the six local authorities in Greater Merseyside for approval.

The submission is made on behalf of the six local authorities on Greater Merseyside, after consultation with the local area of Learning and Skills Council, Merseyside Colleges Association, Greater Merseyside Learning Providers network and 14-19 Partnerships. Secondary school networks in each borough have also been kept informed of this development.

The submission seeks to meet the criteria identified in the second stage guidance published by the DCSF in December 2008. The Greater Merseyside Sub regional grouping wishes to obtain model (b) as soon as possible and the proposals in this document seek to demonstrate a preparedness for this.

Greater Merseyside has strong active 14-19 Partnerships in each borough. It also has a strong and well developed record of collaboration of Directors of Children Services through the Learn Together Partnership established in 2002 with the support of the Innovations Unit.

There are excellent relationships between DCS and the local LSC and the acting Area Director of Greater Merseyside LSC has attended 4 LTP meetings since September 2008 to support planning the transition.

There is also a long history of partnership working between providers at a Greater Merseyside level. This is evidenced by the Greater Merseyside Colleges Association which supports a partnership between FE and sixth form colleges and the Greater Merseyside Learning Provider Network which is a partnership of work base learning providers. The Action Plan attached supports this submission and contains a programme of support for transition that is designed to help Greater Merseyside implement the full range of 14-19 reforms, including the raising of the participation age, the entitlement to diplomas and apprenticeships and the transition of funding.

2 Values

The Directors of Children Services have consulted their stakeholders on the values identified here as the basis for supporting the transfer of 16-19 funding from the LSC to local authorities.

We are committed to

1. Improving outcomes for all young people who will always be at the centre of what we will do.
2. Ensuring that the voice of the learner is heard; that learners are treated with respect; and that their individual needs are recognised.
3. Ensuring that a full range of high quality and accessible provision is available to meet the needs of **all** young people in the sub-region, including vulnerable and hard to reach groups.
4. Ensuring appropriate and impartial information advice and guidance is made available for all young people aged 14-19 and up until the age of 25 for those young people with learning disabilities and difficulties.
5. Joint accountability for the implementation of Machinery of Government changes and will work together, and with providers and other stakeholders, in a spirit of openness, co-operation, transparency and trust.
6. Ensuring a seamless transfer of responsibilities from the Learning and Skills Council to Local Authorities in the interests both of learners and provider organisations.
7. Developing and implementing an equitable approach towards all providers, recognising the value of a diverse range of provision and the different strengths and contribution that each provider brings.

3 Summary

The Governance of sub regional grouping seeks to locate the key decision making on planning and commissioning with each Children Trust. However given the nature of travel to learn patterns such decisions will be supported and informed by a strong sub regional structure. The drivers for the model proposed are the statutory duties placed on each Director of Children Service for ensuring the participation of 16-18 year olds as well as the statutory duties to ensure access to the full range of diplomas and apprenticeships.

The submission proposes the establishment of a formal sub regional grouping, the Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive with powers to develop an aggregated Greater Merseyside 16-19 commissioning plan based on the

individual borough plans. A key element of this aggregation will be an analysis of travel to learn patterns and a testing of how robust local plans are.

The Executive will develop a common commissioning framework which will align national statement of priorities, strategic needs analysis and the LCR Skills Strategy. This Executive will establish targets across the six boroughs linked to the implementation of the 14-19 reforms and which will raise key outcomes for young people in the six boroughs. The Executive will consider what capacity needs to be developed at a sub regional level to support this planning. Any seconded staffing to support sub regional working would sit alongside any staff that supports the Multi Area Agreement Employment and Skills strand.

The proposed commissioning process seeks coherence, commonality of treatment, transparency and speed in decision making processes.

In our consultation with stakeholders there was an anxiety expressed that we could introduce complicated layers into the decision making process and this would have a negative impact both for learning providers in Greater Merseyside and the young people they serve. The proposals outlined here seek to balance local accountability and inclusive decision making with the need for quick decision making in certain circumstances.

There were also concerns expressed by key stakeholders that the new arrangements need to treat all providers equally and we were tasked to ensure any performance criteria for all providers of post 16-19 is on a equal footing .We will work with LSC colleagues to ensure any commissioning decision is informed by the same set of criteria for all providers of 16-19 provision.

Performance management and commissioning intelligence at a sub regional level will also be shared to support those institutions and organisations that provide both pre19 learning and post 19 learning.

We foresee that the proposed sub regional grouping will develop over the transition period. The transfer of funding for 16-19 is due to take place by September 2010 subject to the passing of legislation in 2009.. We know that there will be further guidance from the DCSF as well as further discussions with our stakeholders across the Liverpool City region.

This submission is based on the recognition that many of the proposals outlined here will evolve in consultation as a result of these discussions. In the action plan attached to this report we outline the actions we envisage to implement the transitions.

The Action Plan has a central principle of ongoing review and we indicate that one of the first acts of the sub-regional grouping will be to ensure that we are on track to implement the transition. The key determinant of such reviews is how we best serve the values identified above.

4 Governance of Commissioning

4.1 Decision making processes

The proposed governance of commissioning seeks to place the key decisions in planning and commissioning 16-19 learning closest to the learner at each borough level. Providers can expect to have a single 16-19 commissioning conversation with their host local authority. However planning, commissioning and provider dialogue will occur within the support of a strong sub regional grouping which will set a common commissioning framework based on a standard set of performance criteria and a sub-regional skills strategy.

The establishment of Liverpool City Region Cabinet and the development of a Greater Merseyside Employment and Skills Board offer the opportunity for planning and funding of 16-19 provision across Greater Merseyside to tie in with an increased sub-regional focus on employment and skills, economic development, transport, health and housing. The decisions and operation of the sub-regional grouping would be subject to the developing scrutiny arrangements of the Liverpool City Region as well as the scrutiny of individual borough Children Trusts and borough councils.

Given the longstanding nature of the Learn Together partnership and the understanding and trust between individual authorities and their Directors of Children Services we are not anticipating disputes between authorities to arise from the proposed arrangements. However if disputes cannot be resolved by the Executive group the proposed memoranda of understanding will contain formal mechanisms for the resolution.

Terms of reference for each Children's Trust, the Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive will be drawn up. There will be a memorandum of understanding between the six local authorities which identifies the powers of the Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive to submit the draft Greater Merseyside 16-19 Commissioning Plan and powers of each Director of Children services in consultation with the Cabinet member for Children Services to agree the final 16-19 Commissioning plan for each borough.

The memorandum of understanding will also contain the powers between each council across the Liverpool City Region in dealing with any disputes that might arise between boroughs relating to 16-19 funding. The formal ratification of such terms of reference will be submitted for agreement by the six local authorities once the outcome of this submission is known.

Each of the six Cabinets in Greater Merseyside is considering in the current cycle the proposal that each borough will have the lead role in commissioning. (Variation 3). 5 boroughs have agreed this proposal. The sixth awaits a Cabinet decision on the 19th March. We will relay the outcome of that decision to the Government Office of the North West at the relevant time.

4.2 Commissioning Cycle

Greater Merseyside Directors have already agreed to pool some of the days allocated by the DCSF Commissioning Support programme to support the development of a common commissioning framework. We intend to continue working with the regional support for commissioning in order to design the commissioning framework.

The Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive would aggregate borough targets for improved outcomes for young people. These would relate to increased participation, raised achievement at 19 years of age and increasing numbers taking up new curriculum entitlements as a result of the implementation of the 14-19 reforms. The Executive would also monitor positive progression at 19 into employment and higher education. There would also be monitoring of the outcomes for targeted groups such as care leavers 18-24 and young people with LLDD 16-25. The commissioning framework would support the achievement of the outcomes set by the 14-19 Executive.

The cycle of commissioning would seek to combine the strategic analysis of each area, the Liverpool City Region Skills strategy and the national statement of priorities. It would also be informed by wider employer feedback from Chambers of Commerce, large employers and other employer networks and coalitions. Key stakeholders are sector skills councils. The framework would also capture the feedback from young people on the provision commissioned. Other agencies such as the RDA and Connexions would also be given the opportunity to inform the commissioning process.

Each borough would use the commissioning framework and provider performance in terms of recruitment and learner outcomes around value added to develop individual borough 16-19 commissioning plans these commissioning plans would contain both the commissioning priorities for residents in the borough as well as the projected volumes for providers in each borough.

The six plans would be aligned through a Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive Group consisting of DCS from the six local authorities. This alignment would result in a single overarching Greater Merseyside 16-19 Commissioning Plan. The draft plan would contain the provisional overall volumes and allocation to each provider in Greater Merseyside. This would be submitted in draft form to the Young People Learning Agency and Regional Planning Group.

Any comments or proposed modifications to the Greater Merseyside 16-19 commissioning plan made in light of comments from YPLA or the Regional Planning group would be submitted for the final decision of each borough's Director of Children Services in consultation with the relevant Cabinet member for Children Services under powers delegated (which will be formalised in the memoranda of understanding).

This commissioning model seeks to capture the strength of borough and sub regional approaches while balancing it against speedy decision making. It can be described as broad and inclusive on the way up to regional and YPLA submission but then speedy and quick in dealing with any proposed changes arising from the region's comments.

4.3 Travel to learn and working with other sub regional groupings particularly Cheshire and Warrington, Lancashire and Greater Manchester

We anticipate that informal discussions will take place with neighbouring authorities both within and outside the Greater Merseyside sub region to inform the planning assumptions for each local authority area plan.

The Executive Group will assess travel to learn patterns across the sub region and beyond. It will test the underlying assumptions around each borough's plans and the assumptions about travel to learn. The outcome of these discussions will be reflected in the sub regional plan.

The Executive will enter a formal dialogue with neighbouring sub regional groupings to facilitate planning and commissioning for young people from Greater Merseyside who travel outside of Greater Merseyside (currently 7% of 16-19 in learning).

4.4 Supporting Learners (aged 16-25) with a Learning Difficulty and/or Disability (LLDD)

We anticipate that the planning and commissioning of learning for young people aged between 16 and 25 with a learning difficulty and/or disability will occur at three levels. Borough commissioning plans will carry the majority of learning opportunities. However there will be scope both at a sub regional and regional level for securing more specialist provision.

The Regional LSC has already a regional group to look at the implications of ensuring a smooth transition of planning and funding for this important group of young people. The Action Plan also indicates the establishment of a sub regional working group which will support both the regional group as well as individual boroughs in developing commissioning for this group.

4.5 Transitional arrangements

We recognise that shadow and transitional arrangements will be in place for commissioning of 16-19 learning provision for 2010/2011 which is due to start later in 2009. We will be working with colleagues in the Learning and Skills Council to ensure a smooth transition which enables a widest opportunities of learning provision for young people.. The DCSF website indicates further guidance on 16-19 Commissioning will be published. This will be reflected in future development of the commissioning process.

However for 2011/2012 the arrangements identified above will be in full force Table 1 describes how the commissioning cycle might work but this will be developed in full consultation with providers as part of the commissioning group's activity

Table 1 Proposed 16-19 Commissioning Timetable 2011/2012

Date	Borough Level	Greater Merseyside
Summer 2010	Discussions with all providers on 2009 recruitment and likely achievement and plans for Autumn 2010 and 2011. Results from Framework for excellence to be included.	Employment and Skills Board agrees Greater Merseyside Skill Priorities Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive agree 16-19 Commissioning framework in light of skill priorities
October 2010	2009/10 Achievement reported by providers 20010/11 recruitment reported by providers	
November 2010	Providers submit planned numbers for 2011/12 Borough 14-19 officers discuss performance, recruitment and plans with providers 14-19 Plans drafted Borough 14-19 Plans finalised to include 16-19(25) commissioning plan as a separate component	Greater Merseyside 14-19 officers informally moderate volumes in borough plan and identify issues for each borough
December 2010	Draft Borough 14-19 plan signed off by Children and Young Peoples Trust	
January 2011		Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive combine each individual borough into a draft Greater Merseyside 16-19 commissioning plan (formally moderating volumes across sub region and dealing with travel to learn issues)
February 2011		Greater Merseyside 16-19 commissioning plan submitted to Regional Planning group and YPLA
March 2011	Response by YPLA/Regional Planning Group to each individual boroughs component Each DCS agrees 16-19 commissioning plan on behalf of CYP Trust Funding for each provider is allocated against the final commissioning plan	Greater Merseyside 16-19 commissioning plan is revised in light of individual decisions and then monitored by Greater Merseyside 14-19 executive

Summer 2011	Discussions by with all providers on recruitment. achievement and plans for 2010 and 2011	Employment and Skills Board revise Greater Merseyside Skill Priorities for 2012 Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive revise 16-19 Commissioning framework in light of skill priorities
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Greater Merseyside has two major challenges in planning and commissioning 16-19 provision. The first challenge is to raise the level of participation: currently around 20% of 16-18 years old do not participate in learning .To engage those young people there will need to be active support in each borough and across the sub region. One of the aims of the sub –regional commissioning framework will be develop and support learning for young people who currently don't participate.

The second challenge is the large drop in cohort up until 2015. This will need to be planned through an active engagement of all partners through Children Trusts but in the end hard decisions will need to adopt through the moderation of the Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive. However the final decision on volumes and commissioning will rest with individual Children and Trusts and each individual DCS.

5 Collaboration and Strategic Contribution

5.1 Key Strategic Drivers and Targets

The commissioning framework that we plan to devise will be based on a full engagement with a wide group of stakeholders. We also seek to align it with key strategic drivers across each borough and the sub region. The development of the Liverpool City Region enables the commissioning framework to take place within a demand led approach based on the Employment and Skills Board and its Skills Strategy.

The inclusive approach to developing commissioning plans will ensure alignment with each borough's Children and Young Peoples Plan as well as the Sustainable Communities Plan including Local Area Agreements.

We intend to identify key targets at a borough and a Greater Merseyside level associated with these plans for 14-19 around

Reducing NEET

Raising Level 2 and level 3 achievement at 19

Improving Progression at 18/19 into HE and employment

Specific Outcomes for targeted groups of young people such as Care leavers and young people with LDD

And increased numbers participating in diplomas, foundation learning tier qualifications and apprenticeships.

5.2 Consultation with Stakeholders

5.2.1 Consultation with providers of learning

The submission is based in part on the results of consultation with the local area of Learning and Skills Council, Merseyside Colleges Association, Greater Merseyside Learning Providers network and 14-19 Partnerships. A Learn Together Partnership event was held on the 15 December 2008. The summary of comments from this event and the list of attendees are on the Learn Together website. 14-19 Partnerships in each borough have been involved in the discussion around these proposals as well as school networks in each borough.

The relationships between Local authorities and FE and sixth form colleges are good on Merseyside and we welcome the national protocol between the Local Government association (LGA), the Association of Colleges (AOC) and the Association of Directors of Children Services (ADCS). We also welcome the emphasis in this protocol on partnership, communication, governance and the joint ownership of outcomes. The cornerstone of our Greater Merseyside Commissioning framework will be quality and improving outcomes for young people and we will endeavour to support all providers assure the quality of their provision through the developing "*Framework for Excellence*". One of the tasks identified in the Action Plan is awareness rising among LA staff on post 16 quality issues as well as the planned partner event in the summer through the Learn Together Partnership.

There are three specific events through the Learn Together Partnership. The first we are holding in March to develop the partnership's understanding on the MAA on employment and skills. We are particularly pleased that many of our work based learning partners are attending this event. The second event in the summer is planned to look at measuring quality 16-19 which will be particularly targeted at schools and colleges. The third is scheduled for autumn 2009 and will look at consulting partners across Greater Merseyside on the proposed Greater Merseyside 16-19 Commissioning framework.

Providers of learning whether they are work base learning providers, schools, further education and sixth form colleges have an expertise in engaging and supporting learners with a wide range of abilities and needs. We need to tap this expertise in our planning arrangements both in preparing for transition but also in delivering the 14-19 reforms. We have started the dialogue with them on how we best do this. We will use the next 12 months to ensure that they co-design the arrangements we collectively put in place to ensure the full participation of 16-18 year olds in learning

5.2.2 Consultation with Young People

We will ensure that mechanisms currently in place in each borough for consulting young people will be used. First of all this will be on the development of a Greater Merseyside Commissioning Framework and in particular how the voice of young people can be built into developing the commissioning framework as well as their active involvement in commissioning processes.

5.2.3 Consultation with Parents/Carers (particularly parents/carers of young people with LDD)

One of the key constituents for the planned change is parents and we will seek to raise awareness and seek parent involvement in planning 16-19 provision. One of the work streams we seek to establish on a greater Merseyside level is looking at planning provision for 16-25 year olds with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The engagement of parents of such young people will be a central element of this work stream.

5.2.4 Consultation with Employers

We will be seeking to capture the employer voice in several ways. We will consult employers themselves on how the best way for their voice to be heard through the emerging structures. Subject to such discussion we anticipate that employers' voice will come through four main routes. First of all the views of employers will be sought for the development of the employment and skills strategy. Secondly employer representatives will sit on the Employment and Skills Board. Thirdly we will engage at a sub-regional level with each sector skills council. Finally there are arrangements within each 14-19 Partnership for capturing the views of employers.

5.2.5 Working with the Learning and Skills Council

The Greater Merseyside Directors of Children Services see dialogue with the Learning and Skills Council as vital to ensure a seamless transfer of responsibilities. There are at least five elements to this

- 1) Understanding current LSC commissioning processes and decisions
- 2) Help and support with the skills audit (identified in the Action plan)
- 3) Putting in place transitional arrangements for 2010/2011 through shadow 14-19 teams to be established in September 2009
- 4) Working jointly to transfer staff in the course of 2010
- 5) Working with regional LSC staff to support data, performance information ,regional planning issues and in particular support for 16-25 young people with LLDD

We will continue this important dialogue and expect to establish shadowing arrangements later in 2009. We also want to align discussions with regional LSC staff and staff from the Regional Development Agency

6 Resources and Capacity

The Greater Merseyside sub regional grouping will be established to implement the full breadth of 14-19 reforms including full roll out of diplomas, the introduction of foundation learning tier, the expansion of apprenticeships, as well as the implementation of the raising of the participation age.

In order to support this ambitious programme of change a full skills audit will be conducted in the course of early summer 2009 to identify which skills are needed to support the transfer of funding and commissioning responsibilities as well as the wider 14-19 reform agenda. This audit will help facilitate the transfer of LSC staff who are designated as 14-19 staff as well as help LA's prepare capacity to implement the full range of 14-19 reforms.

We recognise the need to consult with all staff involved and their relevant trade unions both in the local authorities and in the LSC .We indicate our readiness to meet with relevant staff and or their representatives at the appropriate time. It is our intention to move to a shadowing arrangement as soon as possible after September 2009 and then establish enhanced 14-19 teams in each local authority from as soon as possible in 2010.

Data sharing protocols will be part of the memorandum of understanding between the six local authorities.

There will be a nominated senior officer in each Council's Treasury department to ensure that the transfer of funding will be smooth and efficient and will implement a training programme in 2009 and 2010 to ensure that staff is adequately prepared for this.

Greater Merseyside DCS firmly believe that through its preparatory work to date and the actions identified in this submission and its accompanying action plan that Greater Merseyside demonstrate a readiness to move to model (b) in 2010.

7 Policy and Planning

Work streams to support transition

The Action Plan outlines several work streams in order to secure proper transition. In the following areas:

- data
- LLDD
- legal and financial arrangements
- staffing
- commissioning
- E-prospectus and common application form

For the latter we will work through the current Greater Merseyside Common Application Process Steering Group.

We will continue to work with colleagues establishing the Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Board to get f to get a better understanding of learning infrastructure on Greater Merseyside and the important relationship between pre19 and post 19 learning..

7.2 Locating Transfer of 16-19 in the 14-19 Reforms

As indicated the transition can only be achieved successfully if it is part of a wider set of curriculum reforms for 14-19. In order to do this we need to instigate a review of membership, role and structure of each 14-19 partnership particularly against the challenges from the implementation of these reforms. These challenges are the move to a formal commissioning role of Children Trusts and the relationship of 14-19 partnerships to this change.

The need for an inclusive approach to identifying commissioning needs within each borough and in particular the demands of developing new curriculum opportunities through foundation learning tier (FLT), new diplomas and apprenticeships. Each borough will need to develop a 14-19 Plan, a part of which will be a 16-19 Commissioning plan. It is proposed that each partnership reviews its role in light of Children Trust developments and the broader changes associated with 14-19 reforms. Such reviews will include planning and delivery to ensure that adequate support arrangements such as information, advice and guidance and transport are in place to secure entitlement and raise participation. We note the specific changes on planning transport to Local authorities outlined in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill. We are in preliminary discussions with Merseytravel in anticipation of these changes.

We will formalise the current Greater Merseyside support arrangements for diploma development. This consists of sharing good practice and developing support in curriculum delivery. We will establish a Greater Merseyside Diploma plan which will indicate will institutions are delivering which lines up until the full roll out in 2013.

As part of our preparation for transition we will establish a Greater Merseyside 16-19 Data group comprising LSC and Local authority staff. This will support the establishment of a commissioning framework by looking at cohort data for Greater Merseyside schools and travel to learn patterns. It will also seek to establish datasets around the targets we propose to set on achievement, participation and progression. These targets are likely to be collected at borough/ sub-regional level for the following:

- NEET 16-18
- Level 2 at 19
- Level 3 at 19
- Progression to HIM at 18/19
- Progression to employment at 18/19
- EET figures for care leavers 18-24
- EET figures for LLDD 16-25
- % of young people on diplomas
- % of young people on FLT
- % of young people on apprenticeships

As indicated earlier the final work stream we want to establish is a group to plan and support the development of commissioning for 16-25 young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This group will support the work of the regional group established by the LSC for supporting LDD.

We will work the Employment and Skills Board to develop a Skills Strategy which will look at both supply and demand. One of the outcomes of the tracking/shadowing work with the LSC will be a greater understanding of the learning infrastructure across Greater Merseyside.

There are already arrangements for supporting the introduction of the e-prospectus and on line application the CAP Steering group. This is convened by the LSC .We intends to use this Group to establish a Greater Merseyside prospectus and a fully operational on line application service.

8 Conclusion

The second stage submission is put forward on the basis on the values identified to support the transfer of funding for learning provision at 16-19 as well as raise the proportion of young people attending such provision. It sets out new governance and commissioning arrangements for 16-19 which builds a greater awareness of each local authority of the learning needs of young people .It also sets out a series of actions to help achieve a smooth transition which will enable provision to be secured and learner outcomes to be raised.

We will develop the formal frameworks in the spring 2009 and seek political approval for them to establish the commissioning framework that will exist from 2010 onwards. It is our intention to consult fully all stakeholders on developing this framework. Greater Merseyside recognises in its values for

transition the importance of a smooth transfer and will be working with all relevant parties to achieve this, The shadowing arrangements proposed for later in 2009 are key to achieving this and maintaining the momentum on delivering the 14-19 reforms which we have already established on Greater Merseyside.

The challenges facing Greater Merseyside are clear. We need to raise participation in learning between 16 and 19. In order to achieve this we need to develop and embed the learning pathways that are part of the 14-19 reforms so that all young people can access and benefit from learning that is appropriate to them. In the current economic climate there is also a challenge to ensure that learning equips young people with the ability to progress to further or higher learning and employment. We also need to increase the number of young people on Greater Merseyside with qualifications

Annex 1	Action	Timescale 2009/2010	Responsibility	Proposed outcome
Governance	Agree through 6 local authorities terms of reference for sub-regional grouping	April/May 2009	Directors of Children Services in each borough	Establishment of Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive, comprising 6 DCS's.
	Establish Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive as sub regional grouping to oversee transition from LSC to LA	May/June 2009	Directors of Children Services in each borough	Review of actions/dates in this action plan
	Review of LSC commissioning of 16-19 provision, seeking to align broader CYP commissioning with 16-19 commissioning using the pooled hours from the DCSF Commissioning Support programme	May - September 2009	Learn Together Partnership	Alignment of 16-19 commissioning with CYP
	Establishing of governance arrangement for commissioning 16-19 provision from 2010 onwards	September 2009	Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive supported by 6 Borough solicitors	Formal processes through each council/CYP and the sub-regional group approved
	Draft a Greater Merseyside 16-19 commissioning framework	September/ October 2009	Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive	After consultation agree a Greater Merseyside Commissioning framework
	Each CYP Trust to develop its	Autumn	6 Children and	Formal involvement of

	<p>commissioning role through the transitional year</p> <p>Preparation for Local Government finance officers in each borough to prepare for</p> <p>a) allocation of funding to providers as agreed by LSC/LA commissioning process for 2010/2011</p> <p>b) establishing systems of financial monitoring ,accountability and audit</p>	<p>2009 and Spring 2010</p> <p>Autumn 2009</p> <p>Spring 2010</p>	<p>Young Peoples Trust</p> <p>6 Borough Treasurers</p> <p>6 Borough Treasurers</p>	<p>each Children Trust over commissioning process</p> <p>Proper preparation for transfer of funding including:</p> <p>Clear, transparent funding and speedy processes for each provider in 2010/2011</p> <p>Appropriate and proportional reporting and budgetary accounting</p>
Collaboration and Strategic Contribution	<p>Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive to establish formal links with Employment and Skills Board and employment and skills strand of Liverpool City Region Multi-Area Agreement</p>	<p>May /June 2009</p>	<p>Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive</p>	<p>Greater Merseyside Skills Strategy to be formally included with Greater Merseyside 16-19 Commissioning framework</p>

	and sub –regional groupings Cheshire/Warrington, Lancashire and Greater Manchester	May 2009 onwards	Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive	Agreements with other sub-regional groupings on travel to learn
	On going consultation with young people	May 2009 onwards	Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive	Each borough CYP forum to be involved in designing 16-19 commissioning framework
	On going consultation with parents/carers	May 2009 onwards	Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive	Awareness and understanding of changes (particular need to engage parents of young people with special needs)
	On going consultation with FE,WBL, sixth form colleges and schools	May 2009 onwards	Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive	Formal consultation about 16-19 commissioning with schools, sixth form colleges , FE and WBL providers as well as young people
		June 2009	Learn Together Partnership	Event on Performance reporting 16-19 in schools and colleges
	September	Learn Together	Greater Merseyside	

	<p>Developing Links with RDA, Regional Planning Group, GONW and sector skills councils</p> <p>Developing Links with REACT,DCSF, Learning and Skills Improvement Service</p> <p>(Note shadow/informal links will take place as appropriate in advance of the establishment of the formal sub regional grouping planned for May/June 2009)</p>	<p>2009</p> <p>May 2009 onwards</p> <p>May 2009 onwards</p>	<p>Partnership</p> <p>Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive</p> <p>Greater Merseyside 14-19 Executive</p>	<p>Conference on proposed 16-19 commissioning framework</p> <p>Alignment of sub regional 16-19 commissioning with regional planning and regional skills strategies</p> <p>sub regional decision making informed by and aligned to national discussion particularly around quality and commissioning</p>
<p>Resources and Capacity</p> <p>a)developing commissioning</p>	<p>Planning and commissioning 16-19 provision from 2010 onwards including managing relationships with providers Need to link 14-19 into wider CYP outcomes, sustainable communities strategies and multi-area agreement</p> <p>Resources needed for Budget allocation and Management</p>	<p>March-May 2009</p> <p>March – September 2009</p>	<p>Directors of Children Services</p> <p>Directors of Children Services</p>	<p>Identification of staffing resources</p> <p>Greater Merseyside Draft Commissioning Framework (sitting within CYP and national 16-19 framework)</p> <p>Common performance criteria across schools, FE and sixth form colleges</p>

b) developing staffing capacity	Resources need for performance and quality monitoring including alignment with Framework for excellence			
	Skills audit of staffing needs of 14-19 from 2010 onwards Audit to be carried out with support of LSC and REACT(if appropriate) Need to foreshadow additional duties to come in 2013 with the raising of the learning participation age to 17	March-June 2009	Directors of Children Services	Skills audit identifying needs at sub-regional and local level
	Establish shadow 14-19 teams in each borough	September 2009	Directors of Children Services	Shadow teams at sub regional and local level
	Establish revised 14-19 teams in each borough to take on all responsibilities within 14-19 reforms	Spring 2010	Directors of Children Services	Substantive teams in each LA inc. some staff seconded to sub – regional support
Policy and Planning	Review of each borough 14-19 Partnership in terms of preparedness for transition of funding and supporting commissioning in support of 14-19 statutory duties	March 2009	6 Children and Young Peoples trust	Revision of membership/structure and plans to fit new responsibilities
	Use Lean Together Data Group to build Analysis on projected learner numbers	February 2009	Learn Together partnership (with	Projections on learner numbers to support

	and likely transition and travel to learning at 16-19		LSC)	commissioning framework (likely numbers at each institution)
	Establish a Greater Merseyside LDD group comprising reps from each 14-19 partnership	March 2009	Directors of Children Services	Support for regional, sub-regional and borough planning for young people with LDD
	Develop a Greater Merseyside Diploma Plan	Spring 2009	14-19 Managers on Greater Merseyside	Support for commissioning framework
	Work with Employment and Skills Board to develop a Skills strategy which will look at supply and demand	Spring 2009	14-19 Managers on Greater Merseyside	Support for commissioning framework
	Revision of current e-prospectus to establish a Greater Merseyside prospectus	Summer 2009	14-19 Managers on Greater Merseyside	Improved access to IAG for young people and parents/carers
	Develop the current on line prospectus for a Greater Merseyside on line prospectus to be fully operational	January 2010	14-19 Managers on Greater Merseyside	Improved access to IAG for young people and parents/carers
Quality and Targets	Raise awareness within Local authorities of post 16 quality frameworks through a series of seminars using LSIS,LSC and	Summer 2009	Learn Together partnership and 14-19 Managers on	Better informed staff for planning and commissioning 16-19

	<p>others to look at</p> <p>a) Development of framework for excellence b) Common performance measure across all providers of learning for 16-19 providers</p> <p>Pooling 14-19 targets to establish Greater Merseyside targets up to 2011 for(and each boroughs element of each target)</p> <p>-NEET -Level 2 at 19 -Level 3 at 19 -% of young people on diplomas -% of young people on FLT -% of young people on apprenticeships</p>	<p>Summer 2009</p>	<p>Greater Merseyside</p> <p>14-19 Managers on Greater Merseyside</p>	<p>provision</p> <p>Quality and performance to inform commissioning decisions</p> <p>Raising outcomes for young people across Greater Merseyside</p>
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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 19th MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES – OUTCOME OF FURTHER CONSULTATIONS ON A JOINT CHURCH SCHOOL IN LEASOWE

Executive Summary

This report advises the Cabinet of the outcome of the further consultation process which has taken place in the Leasowe and Wallasey areas in respect of the option to establish a Joint Church school in Leasowe. This option was previously consulted upon in Spring 2007 during Phase 3 of the Primary Places Review. The report describes the option, the responses to it, and makes recommendations with regard to statutory proposals in relation to the option.

1.0 Background

1.1 Context Of The School Organisation Plan

Until March 2005, School Organisation Committees (SOC) were required by law to have regard to the School Organisation Plan (SOP) when considering statutory proposals for changes to schools' provision. The plan itself was approved on a regular basis by the SOC. However the SOP was one of seven statutory plans repealed by the Children Act 2004. The SOC itself was abolished by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 with effect from 25th May 2007. Nevertheless the policies and principles set out in the SOP remain an important context in which the Wirral Primary Review was set, and continue to be key guidance for the consideration of statutory proposals.

1.2 DCSF guidance on the School Organisation Plan states that

"The key purpose of the School Organisation Plan is to set out clearly how the Local Education Authority (LEA) plans to meet its statutory responsibility to secure sufficient education provision within its area in order to promote higher standards of attainment. It should be designed to help the key stakeholders – LEA, schools, promoters, parents and local communities, understand what school places are needed at present and in future, and how they are provided. Importantly it will be the starting point... in considering statutory proposals for changes to schools".

1.3 As indicated above, the plan contains the policies and principles proposed by the LA and agreed by the former SOC for the planning of school provision. These policies and principles are set out at Appendix A to the report. It will be seen that the intention (prior to the abolition of the requirement to consider the plan) was that any proposal should be considered within the context of the principles set out in paragraphs 3 to 5 of the Policies and Principles. There is an over-riding requirement that overall provision is effective and efficient, i.e. that there should be an appropriate balance between school places and the following principles/criteria:

- parental preference
- delivering the curriculum
- meeting statutory and desirable goals on class sizes
- maintaining or promoting diversity
- SEN
- standards
- accessibility

- (secondary schools only) post 16 provision
- contribution to the community.

Paragraph 4 of the Policies and Principles adds the issue of overall school size within the primary sector and paragraph 5 deals specifically with the objectives of the Diocesan authorities.

1.4 View of the Wirral Schools Forum

Members should note that in June 2005 the Schools Forum passed the following resolution:

“Resolved - That Wirral Schools Forum recognises that the local education authority has a duty to maintain and fund schools in an efficient and effective manner. This implies that the number of schools should reflect the pupil population and the needs of Wirral communities, which could mean the amalgamation or closure of schools for the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.”

Primary Places Review – Phase 3

1.5 Following the presentation of the Primary School Place Provision report on 16th March 2006, Cabinet instructed that six Area Reviews be carried out within Phase 3 of the Primary Places Review : Pensby and Thingwall, Heswall, Greasby, Upton, South Wallasey and North Wallasey. These areas equate to the small planning areas in the Authority’s School Organisation Plan. Following the subsequent report on 27th July 2006 advising Cabinet of the outcome of Ofsted’s inspection of Castleway Primary School, the small planning area of Leasowe was brought forward for inclusion in this phase of the review. The outcomes of these area reviews were reported to Cabinet on 14th December 2006.

1.6 Following consideration of that report, Cabinet agreed that no options would be brought forward for the Greasby, Heswall, North Wallasey and Upton small planning areas at this time, although numbers and place provision would be kept under review. A number of options for consultation were proposed in respect of the remaining areas.

1.7 In the Leasowe small planning area, these options were:

- A Closure of Castleway Primary School
- B Amalgamate Castleway Primary School and Leasowe Primary School either at the Castleway site (B1) or the Leasowe site (B2)
- C Closure of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

The following options relate to faith school provision. Option D1 was a joint suggestion by the Anglican Diocese of Chester and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury. Options D2 and D3 were suggested by the Catholic Diocese.

- D1 A joint denominational school to be established by the Anglican Diocese of Chester and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury
- D2 Expansion of Our Lady of Lourdes to a one form of entry primary school (210 places) whilst maintaining the current admission policy that welcomes applicants from other or no faiths whose parents want their children to have an education in a Catholic school
- D3 Maintain Our Lady of Lourdes with its existing planned admission number and its current admission policy that welcomes applicants from other or no faiths whose parents want their children to have an education in a Catholic school

These options were approved for consultation. The outcome of the consultation was reported to Cabinet at its meeting of 20th June 2007. The report and minute are

attached as Appendix B. The Consultation was carried out as stated in paragraph 2.10 of the 20th June 2007 report to Cabinet.

- 1.8 Further suggestions were made as part of the consultation process in the Leasowe area:
- Amalgamate Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and Leasowe Primary School
 - Close all three existing schools and establish a new primary school on a central site
 - Close Leasowe Primary School
- 1.9 Following a positive response from parents of pupils attending Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School to Option D1, a joint denominational school, Cabinet decided that the Director should be authorised to give all necessary support to the governing body of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, the Anglican Diocese of Chester, and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury with regard to publishing proposals to close Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and to establish a new joint denominational school on the Our Lady of Lourdes site, and that the position of community primary schools in the Leasowe planning area be monitored and reviewed in a future review phase pending the outcome of joint denominational school.
- 1.10 The concern raised by a single respondent at this stage was in regard to the loss of the existing school's ethos. Other respondents overwhelmingly felt that the school's ethos would be enhanced by joint denominational status, contributing to community cohesion.

Implications of the abolition of the SOC

- 1.11 Until the SOC's abolition on 25th May 2007, each Diocese was represented by a voting group on the SOC. Under the new guidance on school re-organisation proposals, each Diocese has the ability to object to any statutory proposal decided by the Local Authority Decision Maker, thereby referring the proposal to the School's Adjudicator. This is not a significantly different position to their former roles on the SOC. Full guidance has now issued by the DCSF and is available to read or download on-line at <http://www.dcsf.gsi.gov.uk/schoolorg/index.cfm> Key points of the guidance and a commentary in relation to this option is included within the report at Appendix C.

2.0 The New Consultation

- 2.1 Extensive discussions between the Diocesan authorities and the Local Authority having reached a conclusion, in December 2008 a new consultation on the option was instigated by all three bodies. The consultation document is attached as Appendix D.
- 2.2 On 28th November 2008, the consultation document was sent via the schools to parents/carers of pupils attending Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Leasowe Primary School, Leasowe Early Years Centre and Castleway Primary School, as well as to the headteachers of primary schools in the North and South Wallasey and Moreton planning areas.
- 2.3 A dedicated website on the Wirral Learning Grid was established and advertised in the parents consultation leaflets. This site provided access to all the information produced in paper form and allowed e-mail responses to a dedicated e-mail address. A consultation meeting for all interested stakeholders was held at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School on 3rd December 2008, which 7 people attended.

3.0 Commentary on Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

- 3.1 Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School currently has 108 pupils on roll and an LA designated F1 class which in January 2009 had 4 full-time and 25 part-time pupils.

This is a small school, and has been so for some considerable time. The school retains a third of the total Catholic choice pupils in its admission catchment (36%, 89) which includes the Parish of English Martyrs in North Wallasey. If the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is analysed separately, the school retains 62% (87) of total Catholic choice pupils. Almost a third of Catholic choice parents in the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish send their children to Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School (28%, 39). It may be worth noting that even if all potential Catholic choice pupils in the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish attended the school, it would remain small at 140 pupils.

The school has 27% (39) surplus places at present. This is projected to remain high at 25% (37 places) by 2014. In 2006-2007, expenditure per pupil was £4,113 compared with the Wirral average of £3,249.

3.2 The contextual value added score (99.1) for Key Stage 2 in 2007 shows pupils at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School were making the expected rate of progress.

4.0 Outcome of the Consultation

4.1 The consultation finished on 16th January 2009. In total, 94 responses to consultation were received, broken down by respondent category as follows.

Direct School	Total	Parent	Staff	Governor
Castleway	1	1	0	0
Leasowe	42	24	15	3
Leasowe EYC	1	1	0	0
OLOL	49	30	15	5
Sacred Heart	1	0	0	1

Note that in this table, numbers may not exactly add to the total since some respondents fall into more than one category, i.e. parent and governor.

4.2 Respondents using the feedback form provided were asked to say whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposal.

Direct School	Agree	Disagree	Percentage Agree
Castleway	1		100
Leasowe	1	41	2.4
Leasowe EYC		1	0
OLOL	46	3	94
Sacred Heart	1		100
Grand Total	49	45	52

4.3 As in the 2007 consultation, respondents related to Our Lady of Lourdes were largely in favour of the Joint Church option. Of the three who stated they were against the proposal, one respondent was concerned about an increase in school size, and the other two were concerned about the school being moved to a different site, which is not the case in this proposal.

4.4 Respondents allied to Our Lady of Lourdes were also asked for their view on a name for the new Joint Church school. The final choice would be a matter for the shadow governing body to decide, however the breakdown of responses is as follows:

Hope Catholic and Church of England Primary School	76%
Carmel Catholic and Church of England Primary School	9%
Gardenside Catholic and Church of England Primary School	4%
Sandhills Catholic and Church of England Primary School	4%

Other individual suggestions received were – Lourdes, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and The Foundation.

- 4.5 By far the greatest amount of opposition to the proposal came from people related to Leasowe Primary School. Some were under the impression that the new Joint Church school meant that Leasowe Primary School would automatically close, which is not the case.
- 4.6 Other respondents were concerned that the establishment of a Joint Church school in Leasowe would indirectly cause the closure of Leasowe Primary School, which has recently moved into a new PFI school building in an area which already has high surplus places.

There were several key themes in the combined responses from these consultees:

- Size and surplus places
- Impact on other schools, especially Leasowe Primary School
- Concerns about the consultation process
- Concerns about religious issues
- Concerns about traffic and road safety
- Removal of choice

Size, surplus places and impact on other schools

- 4.7 The Joint Church consultation document says that in the first year, the admission number of the school would be 25 pupils, identical to that for Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. From the second year of implementation, the admission number would be raised to 30 pupils, and the capacity increased through capital works to 210 pupils.
- 4.8 Respondents were concerned about the impact of this increase on the Leasowe community schools, and on overall surplus places. Their view was that the additional pupils required via an increase in the admission number of 5 from 2010 would come entirely or largely from the Leasowe area and questioned the justification for creating additional places in a school, and in an area, which already had high levels of surplus places.
- 4.9 The Diocesan view is that the additional pupils would be drawn from outside the Leasowe area with minimal impact on the remaining Leasowe primary schools. The North Wallasey area, for example, has 4% surplus places overall. Soundings via the Diocese of Shrewsbury with St Mary's Catholic College indicate that numbers to the Joint Church primary school from English Martyrs parish will be enhanced, and the Diocese of Chester has had positive feedback to the same effect from the Anglican parishes designated in 5.3.
- 4.10 As in the 2007 consultation, respondents from community schools stated that they would not choose Catholic primary provision in the event of their school's closure or amalgamation, and that those parents who wanted their child educated at a Catholic school had already made that decision. There is little indication from either consultation that existing community school parents would choose to transfer to the Joint Faith school if the school were expanded.
- 4.11 Leasowe Primary School occupies a PFI building, which the Council has committed to lease for 25 years until 2031. It may be possible to find an alternative non-school use for the Leasowe building, if it were subsequently to be declared surplus to requirements, however since there is no intention to close Leasowe Primary School as part of this proposal, this is a low probability risk. Parents in the Leasowe planning area would retain a choice of non-faith primary school education. There are no direct

implications for disruption of the education of community pupils, unless parents choose to transfer to the Joint Church school.

- 4.12 Expanding the Joint Church school significantly without a concurrent reduction in places at other schools in the area, and with no evidence of parental preference for the school, appears counter-productive when surplus in the area is already high. When a new school is established, the specification for the school is decided by the Authority, including the number of places, age range, gender balance and admission number.
- 4.13 It is recommended that Cabinet request that the two Diocese to make an amendment to their proposal so that the admission number remains at 25 for three years following implementation, followed by an impact assessment of preferences, before any additional capacity is added to the school building or the admission number is raised further. It should be noted that the existing admission number of 25, set by the Governing body of Our Lady of Lourdes, is already above the Net Capacity indicated admission number of 21 pupils.

Process and Procedure

- 4.14 This is now the second consultation on changes to schools in the Leasowe area in the last two years.
- 4.15 Some respondents thought that it was wrong for the Joint Church proposal to take place outside the Review cycle, and that insufficient consultation had taken place. This option was in the original consultation in 2007 and effectively arose from it as the Council's preferred option for the Leasowe area. It has taken from June 2007 to November 2008 to set out exactly how this innovative Joint Church primary school would operate in terms of staffing, governance, ethos and so on. It has been more than 12 months since the original consultation, and guidance says that in this instance, consultation should begin again.
- 4.16 One respondent was concerned that there was not enough space on the feedback form to provide proper comment, and that this implied that comments were not welcomed. The layout of the form was limited by the size of the paper. Other respondents, including the complainant, wrote either in the margins of the form, on the reverse, or on separate sheets of paper.
- 4.17 Some respondents felt that the inclusion of the Leasowe area in Phase 6 of the Primary Places Review, due to begin in Autumn 2009, would not allow enough time for the Joint Church school to settle prior to being reviewed.
- 4.18 On this basis, it is recommended that if the Joint Church proposal is implemented, that the Leasowe area be moved to Phase 8 of the Primary Places Review, due to begin in Autumn 2011.

Religious education, choice and diversity

- 4.19 A small number of respondents felt that the 60/40 split in responsibilities between the two Diocese, and if oversubscribed, in relation to admissions, was unfair and lacked equality. The 60/40 Admissions ratio has been proposed by the two Dioceses and neither see it as detrimental to the working ethic of the new school. They advise that of the existing 18 Joint Church Schools in England and Wales nearly all operate on different ratios as required by local circumstances.
- 4.20 One respondent felt that teaching children "two religions" would be confusing. The National Curriculum applies to all primary schools, so that pupils in Community schools and in faith ethos schools, including Catholic and Church of England schools, learn about Christianity and other major world faiths. Teachers in primary schools already teach pupils about different faiths, philosophies and beliefs, and there is no reason why attending a joint church school should make this confusing to children.

The two Dioceses advise that they have worked on policies relating to collective worship and Religious Education that will emphasize what the two Christian traditions have in common.

- 4.21 With regard to removal of choice, the Authority and both Dioceses are proposing a Joint Church School so that parents will retain the option of community or denominational education in line with Government policy on diversity. If the option goes ahead, parents of children living in Leasowe, New Brighton, Liscard, Seacombe, Wallasey and Poulton who currently have no choice of attending a Church of England primary school would have an opportunity to express a preference for the joint church school.

Traffic and transport

- 4.22 One respondent was concerned about the impact of additional pupils attending the Joint Church school on traffic and road safety on Gardenside. This is an important factor, and colleagues from Highways will be asked to examine parking and drop-off facilities at the Joint Church school accordingly.

5.0 Implications for Pupils

5.1 Admission Arrangements: present and future pupils

The new school would be Voluntary Aided, with the Governing body as its admission authority, subject to the Admissions Code. The DCSF have advised that there is no requirement to consult separately on any changes to admission arrangements as long as full details are provided to parents in the statutory public notices on the proposed alterations to the school provision. This would include details on how the Authority would propose to manage the transfer of pupils to alternative schools, and also deal with applications from parents living in the areas concerned for places in Foundation 2.

- 5.2 Current children and siblings attending Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School are to be automatically admitted – should they choose to be. Once the school is established, priority – after the legal commitment to children in public care– will be given to baptised members of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England on a 60:40 ratio from within the designated Roman Catholic parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, English Martyrs and the Anglican Parishes in Leasowe, Liscard, New Brighton, Poulton, Seacombe and Wallasey.
- 5.3 The current Catholic catchment parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes would remain unchanged, that is to say, Our Lady of Lourdes and English Martyrs. The Anglican parishes in Liscard, Leasowe, New Brighton, Poulton, Seacombe and Wallasey would be “zoned” to the new Joint Church school.
- 5.4 In relation to the potential transfer of existing pupils to alternative schools, the Authority would invite parents to indicate a preference. If their preference was for a placement in a community or controlled school, then the Authority would seek to meet that preference, within the admission criteria set out in the Authority’s booklets for parents.
- 5.5 If any pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs then the Statement will be amended to reflect the new school, and the provision specified in the Statement will be delivered appropriately. Any pupils who are currently placed in designated special provision such as a Special Needs Class would be transferred to an alternative placement according to parental preference. For all those pupils on the SEN register who are affected, the Authority would deploy an element of any savings to provide enhanced support at their new school. Details of how such a scheme may operate would need to be developed.

6.0 **Staffing Implications**

- 6.1 Under this proposal, an existing Aided school will close, and a new Aided school immediately opens on the same site. Technically all the existing staff would be made redundant. The consultation document indicates that the initial appointment of staff will be ring-fenced to the staff of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. Thereafter vacancies for the post of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, and RE Co-ordinator will be reserved to 'practising' members of the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church. For all other future teaching posts priority will be given first to 'practising' members of the two churches whenever possible and thereafter to practising members of churches within Churches together.
- 6.2 A small number of respondents felt that ring-fencing Our Lady of Lourdes staff to the Joint Church school was unfair in a situation where a community primary school was to close, however, this is not the case under this proposal.

7.0 **Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The recommendations contained in this report have capital implications in respect of allocation of future pupils to schools. The two Dioceses are intending to establish a Joint Church multi-purpose centre on site. In addition to signalling a new beginning and a new initiative, the Dioceses hope that its presence will demonstrate that they, in partnership with the Local Authority, are addressing the key issues of Extended Services and community cohesion. The project is costed at £220,000 and it is intended that this will be drawn down from the Local Authority administered LCVAP budget which is given over to capital projects in the Voluntary Aided sector. The two Dioceses are looking to contribute LCVAP allocated funds to the project on a 60:40 ratio. Given the funding available for Joint Church initiatives in the current Targeted Capital programme the Dioceses are also exploring the feasibility of a bid under that programme.
- 7.2 There are no revenue savings resulting from this proposal.

8.0 **Equal Opportunities Implications**

- 8.1 There are none arising out of this report.

9.0 **Human Rights Implications**

- 9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

10.0 **Local Agenda 21 Statement**

- 10.1 The removal of old, inefficient accommodation contributes to Council principles and targets in respect of Agenda 21.
- 10.2 New school buildings and extensions are required to achieve a minimum standard of BREEAM energy rating "Very Good". The design of any future extension would follow as far as possible the DETR/DCSF guidelines in BB87 for "Energy efficient design of new buildings and extensions for schools and colleges". This includes items such as low-energy electrical fittings, water saving devices and sustainably sourced timber.

11.0 **Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 Rationalisation and refurbishment of schools allow the most vulnerable accommodation to be removed and other security improvements carried out.

12.0 **Planning Implications**

- 12.1 The relationship between housing development policy and school place provision is a factor in considering surplus place removal.
- 12.2 Construction of any new classroom provision would be subject to the usual planning permissions.

13.0 **Local Member Support Implications**

- 13.1 Primary place planning and potential surplus place removal have relevance to all Wards.
- 13.2 The current option affects the following Wards directly: Wallasey, New Brighton, Seacombe, Leasowe and Moreton East.

14.0 **Background Papers**

Audit Commission Report: Planning School Places in Wirral September 2004.

School Organisation Plan.

LA document "Pursuit of Excellence: Primary Education in Wirral".

School pupil number returns, January 2009 (Annual Census return to DCSF).

School Net Capacity Calculation, July 2008, to DCSF requirements.

Consultation Documents

Other data held in Department including that provided by Wirral Health Authority.

15.0 **Summary**

The two Diocese have developed a scheme which satisfies both Anglican and Catholic requirements on ethos and admissions and opens up parental preference for a Church of England primary school places to an area of Wirral which has not previously had such a choice. This is an exciting proposal, and with the recommended amendments, would be the first such school on Wirral. If successful, this could form a template for other similar Joint Church schools elsewhere in the Borough.

16.0 **Recommendations**

- (1) The two Diocesan bodies be given all necessary assistance in submitting an application to the Secretary of State in order to seek a waiver of the requirement to hold a competition;
- (2) The Director of Children's Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to publish proposals, ensure the prescribed procedures are followed for the closure of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and the establishment of a Joint Church school at the Our Lady of Lourdes site, the exact procedure being dependent on the outcome of the application in (1) above.
- (3) the published admission number of the Joint Church school be maintained at 25 pupils for a period of three years from implementation, reviewed and amended if preference popularity is deemed to have increased.
- (4) should the Joint Church school be approved and implemented as in (2), the Leasowe area be moved from Phase 6 of the Primary Places Review to Phase 8 accordingly.

Howard Cooper

Director of Children's Services

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SECTION B

POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES SUPPORTING PLAN

- 1) This School Organisation Plan is not a "stand alone" document, it forms part of the local planning framework, both of the LEA and other agencies and bodies and also is part of the local delivery of national policy initiatives and priorities.
- 2) The most important planning element is to set out the factors which the Committee will take into account when considering proposals to add, remove, relocate or re-organise places and maintain the balance between the management of surplus place removal and additional place provision with the maintenance of maximum parental choice.
- 3) Within the requirement that overall provision is effective and efficient i.e. an appropriate balance between school places available and pupil numbers, the School Organisation Committee when considering proposals referred to it under the Education (School Organisation Proposals) Regulations 1999, will consider each proposal against the following principles, weighted as appropriate to the proposals under consideration.

- i) The desirability in considering any proposals of matching school places to patterns of parental preference for relevant schools as expressed over a reasonable period of time which would normally be five years.
- ii) The duty upon schools to provide the National Curriculum and so far as it has been adopted by the school, the curriculum of the Education Authority.
- iii) The duty on schools to secure infant class sizes of no more than 30 pupils; the Committee should in addition have regard to the desirability of achieving similar provision in junior and secondary classes taking account of the

- desirability in certain areas of the curriculum for smaller class sizes in accordance with health and safety guidance.
- iv) The desirability of diversity of provision (for example by gender, religious or denominational conviction or for special educational needs), consistent with the efficient and effective use of resources and that there should be no reduction in the proportion of denominational places. Note: diversity in this context does not include the issue of selection since the Schools Standards and Framework Act makes separate provision for considering the position of grammar schools. The question of selection therefore, lies outside the competence of the Committee.
- v) The desirability of actively promoting the integration of pupils with special educational needs into mainstream schools wherever this is appropriate and can be adequately resourced. Whenever possible, the option of mainstream denominational school provision should be available for pupils with special educational needs whose parents would prefer this.
- vi) The promotion of high standards in relevant schools as reflected in external inspection evidence and in end of Key Stage and post 16 performance data as appropriate.
- vii) The accessibility to suitable schools for children resident in the area taking into particular account the Local Education Authority's home to school transport policy.
- viii) The desirability of providing a range of opportunities for pupils at 16+ so far as this is consistent with the efficient and effective use of resources.
- ix) The desirability of schools meeting the needs of the wider community, in particular the impact upon facilities available to the local community which may be provided in the schools concerned.

4) The above principles are those adopted in the School Organisation Plan previously. It is proposed, in the 2004/5 academic year that the LEA consider further the implications of an increasing number of primary schools with less than one form entry – 30 pupils and therefore primary schools of fewer than 210 pupils ie. 7 x 30, with the same entry size applied to separate infant and junior schools. The LEA review will consider a range of issues, including curriculum provision, class and year group organization, staffing structures, financial efficiency and parental attitudes, as well as the surplus places issue. It is intended that any proposals arising from this review will be brought to the School Organisation Committee as part of the annual plan review in June 2005.

5) Denominational Provision

Voluntary aided provision made by Churches is normally related to a particular parish or parishes. In respect of the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury the principles underpinning such denominational provision are as follows:

Catholic schools exist to meet the needs of parents of baptised Catholics in fulfilling promises and responsibilities accepted by them during their child's baptismal ceremony. It is the purpose of those schools to offer a distinctly Christian education in accordance with gospel values and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is the policy of the Diocese to provide a place for every baptised Catholic child within a Catholic Primary and Secondary School. Such provision for schools within the trusteeship of the Diocese is based on a parish network and each parish has a designated Diocesan Primary and Secondary School which serves it. Catholic Secondary Schools under the trusteeship of Religious Orders serve all geographical areas within Wirral LEA.

Catholic schools are an integral part of the mission of the Church and that mission is held to be valid and valued through all stages in the education system. Within each of those stages the aim of the Diocese is to maintain a distinctive Catholic education and environment.

The Church of England Diocese of Chester will make decisions regarding the provision of school place with reference to the following principles:

- promoting high quality education demonstrating Christian beliefs as expressed in the worship and practices of the Church of England;
- recognising the role of all Church of England schools in the mission of the Church and the life of the communities;
- seeking to meet the aspirations of parents and serve communities by providing education in the voluntary aided category within the framework of the Church of England;
- seeking to maintain the historic position of the Church of England in serving all communities by working in partnership with all those who provide or are employed in education.

6) This School Organisation Plan links closely to the LEA Asset Management Plan (AMP) and the linked Statement of Priorities. These were most recently updated and approved by the DfES in November 2002. The Statement of Priorities sets out the links to national priorities, this School Organisation Plan, the LEA Education Development Plan and a number of other plans, including the Early Years and Childcare Plan, the Access Strategy, the Security Plan and the post OFSTED Action Plan.

7) The AMP Statement of Priorities identifies the following key links with this School Organisation Plan:

Early Years - national target of universal provision for all three and four year olds already achieved.

Primary - the main challenge over the next five years in respect of provision of places is the projected continued and significant fall in pupil numbers. Area reviews are proposed in those geographical areas with the lowest projected occupancy rates for 2008/9.

Secondary - Currently a very efficient position, with very high occupancy rates and no school in excess of the 25% plus surplus places benchmark. The September 2002 transfer cohort represents the peak number, with a secondary roll peaking at January 2004 and then declining year by year.

Special - Future developments are linked to the LEA SEN plan, which is included as Appendix B of this Plan. The establishment of more bases in mainstream schools for pupils with moderate and complex learning difficulties and the provision of a second secondary school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are the main links to this plan. These proposals in principle match well with the opportunities presented by increased levels of “spare” accommodation in mainstream schools.

8) The LEA Education Development Plan (EDP) links to this plan in the efficient use of funding for both existing accommodation and any reductions or increases in accommodation to achieve the best match to pupils’ numbers and changing curriculum needs. In the Early Years and Primary setting this means the removal of accommodation wherever possible to allow re-direction of revenue funding into curriculum priorities and only a modest capital programme to enhance ICT, resource, library and dining provision and ease overcrowding at a very small number of schools. In the secondary sector, the raising of Attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 is linked through the removal of surplus places – now completed at St Benedict’s and the major capital investments through PFI Capital Challenge, Targeted Capital, Aided Capital, Excellence in Cities funding and NOF funding to address a range of Suitability issues and when viewed as a whole, provide the most significant uplift in the Suitability and quality of secondary school accommodation for a generation. In addition the Specialist School initiative is fully supported by the LEA with around 50% of secondary schools already granted specialist status and others proposed.

This major investment is also supporting the EDP national priorities of narrowing attainment gaps, tackling under achievement and providing support for schools operating in challenging circumstances or which are causing concern.

As well as the national priorities outlined above, there are also links between this plan and the local priority targets in the EDP.

9) The capital investment in secondary schools and the current very efficient match between pupil numbers and overall capacity support the raising of standards and raising participation post 16 as well as enhancing specialist facilities to contribute to raising standards in Creative, Cultural, Emotional, Spiritual and Physical well being of pupils – both local priority targets. The projected reduction in secondary numbers over the next five years will also provide headroom for the greater inclusion principles set out in the LEA Special Education Needs plan attached as an appendix to this plan, which is the third local priority in the EDP. This plan also links with the post OFSTED Action Plan, which required the LEA to ensure that “the growth of surplus places in primary schools is controlled” and “reduce out of borough placements in special schools by expanding current provision which in turn links to the LEA Behaviour Support Plan”.

10) There are also implications arising from the School Organisation Plan for the LEA Access Strategy, the Security Plan, the LEA ICT Plan, the LEA Physical Education Plan, the Excellence in Cities Plan and the PFI Project Plan, in that careful decision making is required to ensure best long term returns from capital investment decisions.

11) In 2003/4 the LEA received a specific capital allocation of £251,000 to be used for the expansion of popular schools. This funding has been allocated to provide a three/four general classroom extension at Woodchurch High School, the most heavily over subscribed secondary school in respect of parental preferences in the LEA.

12) The LEA makes different arrangements for the following groups of vulnerable children:

- i. Children who are out of school because of illness and injury are provided for through Wirral Hospital School and Home Education Service. The LEA will shortly have finalised our policy on the education of children who are ill.
- ii. Pupils who are looked after by local authorities. Most children who are looked after attend a mainstream or special school. They are supported by the Looked After Children Education Support Team which is part of the Pupil Access Support Service. A small number of these children are in children's homes where education is provided on site. Sometimes these homes will be outside the Borough.
- iii. The LEA do not make arrangements for school aged pupils to attend college directly but many schools and the Pupil Access Support Service will arrange for placements at Wirral Metropolitan College and sometimes at colleges outside the Borough.
- iv. The Authority keeps a record of those children who are educated at home by their parents provided their parents have informed us that they are educating their children at home. The Authority's inspectors pay regular visits to children's homes to ensure that their education is sufficient.
- v. There are no psychiatric units or secure provision in Wirral but children with psychiatric difficulties may be educated in conjunction with the Child and Family Service which is the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service through the education provided at Wirral Hospital School. A base at Adcote House, which is the headquarters of the Child and Family Service, provides education for primary and secondary aged pupils. If necessary, following a period of assessment there, children may transfer to the main base of the Hospital School.

- 13) The Authority adopted in 2002 a Plan for the development of special educational needs which promotes the development of opportunities for children with special needs to be educated in a mainstream environment for some if not all of the time. The Authority also has ten successful special schools, in addition to the Hospitals School, which are developing strong links with mainstream schools to the benefit of pupils in both sectors. The objectives in the SEN Plan are complemented by the Accessibility Strategy adopted in 2003. This sets out the Authority's strategy to make all schools more accessible to

children with disabilities. The LEA plan is attached as Appendix B of this plan.

14) Post 16 Provision

The percentage of young people remaining in learning in Wirral post 16 is above the national average. The percentage in learning at age 17 is lower than the national average. There is an intention to increase the proportion of young people aged 16-19 in learning, although they need not necessarily be in learning in LEA provision.

Post 16 provision for learners in Wirral differs in different parts of the borough.

Birkenhead secondary schools do not provide post 16 education opportunities. Birkenhead students are able to apply for post 16 learning to the sixth form of a secondary school in another part of the borough, or to provision in the colleges or other training providers.

Maintained secondary schools in Birkenhead do not provide post 16 education opportunities. Birkenhead students are able to apply for post 16 learning to the sixth form of a secondary school in another part of the borough, or to provision in the colleges or other training providers. Catholic secondary schools which serve the Birkenhead area do offer sixth form education.

Secondary schools in Wallasey, Deeside and Bebington have sixth forms. Students are able to apply to either remain in their own school, join another school sixth form, or move to provision in the colleges or other training providers.

A 16-19 area-wide inspection took place in Autumn 2002; inspecting provision for 16-19 year olds in schools, colleges, training providers and Connexions. The findings relevant to this plan relate to equality of access the learning opportunities and retention rates in learning, particularly at age 17 years. The Area-Wide Inspection (AWI) Action Plan addressing these issues has been submitted to the Department for Education and Skills. An agreed action plan to improve these issues will be implemented from September 2003.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 20th JUNE 2007

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS ON
OPTIONS PUT FORWARD FOR THE PHASE 3 PLANNING AREAS**

Executive Summary

- 1.0 This report advises the Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation process which has taken place in the Pensby and Thingwall, South Wallasey and Leasowe planning areas, in respect of the options for consultation agreed at Cabinet on 14th December 2006. This report describes the responses to the various options put forward for discussion, including additional suggestions put forward during the consultation process, and makes recommendations with regard to statutory proposals in each area under review.

Background

2.0 Context Of The School Organisation Plan

Until March 2005, School Organisation Committees (SOC) were required by law to have regard to the School Organisation Plan (SOP) when considering statutory proposals for changes to schools' provision. The plan itself was approved on a regular basis by the SOC. However the SOP was one of seven statutory plans repealed by the Children Act 2004. The SOC itself has now been abolished by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 with effect from 25th May 2007. Nevertheless the policies and principles set out in the SOP remain an important context in which the Wirral Primary Review was set, and continue to be key guidance for the consideration of statutory proposals.

2.1. DfES guidance on the School Organisation Plan states that

"The key purpose of the School Organisation Plan is to set out clearly how the Local Education Authority (LEA) plans to meet its statutory responsibility to secure sufficient education provision within its area in order to promote higher standards of attainment. It should be designed to help the key stakeholders – LEA, schools, promoters, parents and local communities, understand what school places are needed at present and in future, and how they are provided. Importantly it will be the starting point... in considering statutory proposals for changes to schools".

- 2.2 As indicated above, the plan contains the policies and principles proposed by the LA and agreed by the former SOC for the planning of school provision. These policies and principles are set out at Appendix 1 to the report. It will be seen that the intention (prior to the abolition of the requirement to consider the plan) was that any proposal should be considered within the context of the principles set out in paragraphs 3 to 5 of the Policies and Principles. There is an over-riding requirement that overall provision is effective and efficient, i.e. that there should be an appropriate balance between school places and the following principles/criteria:

- parental preference
- delivering the curriculum
- meeting statutory and desirable goals on class sizes

- maintaining or promoting diversity
- SEN
- standards
- accessibility
- (secondary schools only) post 16 provision
- contribution to the community.

Paragraph 4 of the Policies and Principles adds the issue of overall school size within the primary sector and paragraph 5 deals specifically with the objectives of the Diocesan authorities.

2.3 View of the Wirral Schools Forum

Members should note that in June 2005 the Schools Forum passed the following resolution:

“Resolved - That Wirral Schools Forum recognises that the local education authority has a duty to maintain and fund schools in an efficient and effective manner. This implies that the number of schools should reflect the pupil population and the needs of Wirral communities, which could mean the amalgamation or closure of schools for the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.”

2.4 Following the presentation of the Primary School Place Provision report on 16th March 2006, Cabinet instructed that six Area Reviews be carried out within Phase 3 of the Primary Places Review : Pensby and Thingwall, Heswall, Greasby, Upton, South Wallasey and North Wallasey. These areas equate to the small planning areas in the Authority’s School Organisation Plan. Following the subsequent report on 27th July 2006 advising Cabinet of the outcome of Ofsted’s inspection of Castleway Primary School, the small planning area of Leasowe was brought forward for inclusion in this phase of the review. The outcomes of these area reviews were reported to Cabinet on 14th December 2006 and a copy of this report is attached as Appendix 2.

2.5 Following consideration of that report, Cabinet agreed that no options would be brought forward for the Greasby, Heswall, North Wallasey and Upton small planning areas at this time, although numbers and place provision would be kept under review. A number of options for consultation were proposed in respect of the remaining areas.

2.6 In the South Wallasey small planning area, these options were:

- A Closure of Poulton Primary School
- B Amalgamate Park Primary School and Poulton Primary School either at the Park site (B1) or the Poulton site (B2)
- C Closure of Brentwood Early Years Centre AND open new Foundation 1 (nursery) classes at local primary schools

2.7 In the Leasowe small planning area, these options were:

- A Closure of Castleway Primary School
- B Amalgamate Castleway Primary School and Leasowe Primary School either at the Castleway site (B1) or the Leasowe site (B2)
- C Closure of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

The following options relate to faith school provision. Option D1 was a joint suggestion by the Anglican Diocese of Chester and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury. Options D2 and D3 were suggested by the Catholic Diocese.

- D1 A joint denominational school to be established by the Anglican Diocese of Chester and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury
- D2 Expansion of Our Lady of Lourdes to a one form of entry primary school (210 places) whilst maintaining the current admission policy that welcomes applicants from other or no faiths whose parents want their children to have an education in a Catholic school
- D3 Maintain Our Lady of Lourdes with its existing planned admission number and its current admission policy that welcomes applicants from other or no faiths whose parents want their children to have an education in a Catholic school

2.8 In the Pensby and Thingwall small planning area, these options were:

- A Closure of Pensby Park Primary School
- B Amalgamate Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior to form an all-through primary school
- C Closure of Pensby Park Primary School AND amalgamate Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior to form an all-through primary school
- D Amalgamate Pensby Park Primary School, Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior School to form an all-through primary school on the current Infant/Junior site (D1) or the current Pensby Park site (D2).

The following option was suggested by the Anglican Diocese of Chester.

- E To include in any of the above options the establishment of a Church of England primary school in Pensby

These options were approved for consultation.

2.9 These options were within the context set out by the Director of Children's Services, of the need to reduce the growing number of primary school surplus places and took account of Audit Commission guidance on surplus places against a continuing fall in the number of primary age pupils, and issues identified in the recent Joint Area Review. In addition to removing unnecessary surplus places, the options were intended to make more effective use of resources, take account of patterns of parental preference, reflect the additional challenges of maintaining small schools in an urban area and contribute to the wider standards agenda through the more efficient use of resources.

2.10 In order for all stakeholders to have access to relevant background information and have the opportunity to comment and respond, the following methods of consultation have been employed :

- a) A range of documentation has been produced and distributed. This comprised:
 - (i) the full consultation document sent to all schools in each area; local One-Stop shops, libraries and the Central Library; Wallasey Town Hall and relevant community centres;
 - (ii) a review pack comprising all the relevant background information sent to all the locations in (i) above;
 - (iii) parents'/carers' consultation leaflets and comments forms to all parents/carers, via all schools named in the options;
 - (iv) standard letters to all the schools in the small planning areas, one format for schools named in the options and one for other schools in the small planning area.

- b) A dedicated web-site on the Wirral Learning Grid was established and advertised on the council web-site, the council Intranet, and in the parents' consultation leaflets and the standard letters to schools. This site provided access to all the information produced in paper form and allowed e-mail responses to a dedicated e-mail address.
- c) Meetings were arranged for all interested stakeholders at each of the schools named in options for closure or amalgamation. These meetings followed the same format, with a presentation on the overall position and the school specific position followed by around ninety minutes of time for audience comments, feedback and questions. The meetings were attended by parents, carers, staff, governors, Ward members and various other interested persons and bodies, including Diocesan representatives where appropriate. Each meeting was chaired by the Cabinet member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning. The dates for the meetings were in the parents' leaflets and on the specific web-site and a general notice was published in the local press.
- d) Opportunities have been provided for other means of response. Submissions have been received in paper and e-mail formats – all of which will be made available before and at the Cabinet meeting, in addition to the summaries contained in this report.
- e) All of the relevant LA documentation produced for the consultation has been shared with the Diocesan Bodies.

2.11 The importance of eliciting the views of pupils is sometimes raised and this is an issue which is taken very seriously. We are sensitive to the fact that school re-organisation is by its nature upsetting and potentially stressful, particularly for children. Throughout the review, discussions with headteachers have taken place as to whether pupils should be formally consulted, and if so, how this could be carried out with minimum impact. The professional opinion of headteachers involved in this Phase of the Review was that any formal consultation would be unnecessarily distressing to children, nevertheless, the consultation does include responses received from individual children, or as a joint response from a School Council.

2.12 The consultation process and the presentation of LA, small planning area and school data to this wider audience does appear to have persuaded most people of the need to reduce the number of school places, though understandably people wish to advocate the case for their school in respect of closure or amalgamation options.

2.13 In addition to the detail set out below, further records of views put forward during the consultation period are attached as Appendix 3. Feedback is set out school by school. The record for each school brings together the responses from the meeting held at the school, together with any points raised in written or e-mail submissions to the Authority.

Outcome of the Consultation

3.0 Further suggestions were made as part of the consultation process:

In the South Wallasey area

- Close Poulton Primary School and guarantee places to all former pupils at Park Primary School (this is a variant on South Wallasey Option A)

In the Leasowe area:

- Amalgamate Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and Leasowe Primary School

- Close all three existing schools and establish a new primary school on a central site
- Close Leasowe Primary School

In the Pensby and Thingwall area

- Build a new all-through primary school on same site as Pensby High School for Boys and Pensby High School for Girls
- Close Pensby Park, build a new primary school on the Infant/Junior site then amalgamate Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior once the building is ready

Further discussion of these suggestions is given with the related consultation options below.

3.1 There were several key themes in the combined responses from consultees:

- General understanding of the falling rolls situation and the need for change
- Effect of proposed housing changes on pupil numbers
- Respect for school staff in their skills and relationships with pupils and parents
- Educational standards and quality of provision
- Concern for the fate of closed buildings and sites
- Travel distance to school and the effect on traffic and road safety
- Disruption to pupils' education and confidence
- Class sizes
- Importance of small schools
- Effect of any change on children with special educational needs
- Importance of out of hours facilities, such as adult learning and breakfast clubs
- Importance of early years provision, including day care facilities
- Relationship between school and community
- Keeping friends and siblings together
- Staff redeployment
- Continuity of school over several generations.

3.2 **Responses from the Anglican and Roman Catholic Diocese**

The Diocese of Chester and the Diocese of Shrewsbury are key partners along with the LA in making provision for the education of children in Wirral. In the Leasowe area, Option D1 was a joint suggestion from both Diocesan bodies. Options D2 and D3 in this area originated from the Diocese of Shrewsbury, while Option E in the Pensby and Thingwall area originated from the Diocese of Chester. The written submission from the Diocese of Chester in the Pensby and Thingwall area has been included within the report at Appendix 4, that from the Diocese of Shrewsbury has been included within the report at Appendix 5. Cabinet is requested to give careful consideration to these responses.

Diocese of Chester Education Service submission (comment)

3.3 The Diocesan Director of Education for the Chester Diocese explains that they would welcome the opportunity to establish a joint denominational school in the Leasowe area, as there are currently no Church of England primary schools in either the

Leasowe or in the North/South Wallasey areas. In the Pensby and Thingwall area, the Diocese would be interested in establishing a new Church of England Controlled school if there is sufficient parental demand, although they acknowledge that the area is currently partially served by Dawpool CE Primary School in Thurstaston and St Peter's CE Primary School in Heswall.

Diocese of Shrewsbury Education Service submission (comment)

- 3.4 The Diocesan Director of Education for the Shrewsbury Diocese expresses their strong interest in maintaining a Catholic denominational presence in the Leasowe area, and in the benefits that could be made by establishing a joint denominational primary school on the Our Lady of Lourdes site.
- 3.5 It is understandable that the Diocese should be concerned if this consultation resulted in proposals which would mean there would no longer be a Catholic primary school in the Leasowe area. There are five Catholic primary schools within a 2 mile radius, the nearest of which is Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, 1.7 miles away.

Implications of the abolition of the SOC

- 3.6 Until the SOC's abolition on 25th May 2007, each Diocese was represented by a voting group on the SOC. Under the new guidance on school re-organisation proposals, each Diocese has the ability to object to any statutory proposal decided by the Local Authority Decision Maker, thereby referring the proposal to the School's Adjudicator. This is not a significantly different position to their former roles on the SOC. Full guidance has now issued by the DfES and is available to read or download on-line at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolorg/index.cfm> Key points of the guidance and a commentary in relation to Phase 3 options is included within the report at Appendix 6.
- 4.0 **Commentary on South Wallasey options**

The next section of the report comments on the agreed options, discussing individual schools separately where appropriate. Numbers on roll are from the January 2007 School Census.

A Closure of Poulton Primary School

- 4.1 Poulton Primary has 151 pupils on roll, less than half of the number on roll just 11 years ago (342). This is largely the result of the falling population, although 66% of potential community school parents living in the catchment zone choose to send their children elsewhere, principally to Park Primary School (21%, 65 pupils) and St George's Primary School (18%, 58 pupils). 30% of pupils on roll in Summer 2006 came from outside the school's catchment zone. There are a large number of surplus places (27%, 57). This is predicted to remain about the same at 25% (51 places) by 2012. In 2004-2005, expenditure per pupil was £3,486 compared with the Wirral average of £2,984.
- 4.2 The overall value added score (99.5) and contextual value added score (99.7) for Key Stage 2 in 2006 shows that pupils at Poulton Primary School are making the expected rate of progress (see Appendix 7).
- 4.3 Some respondents were concerned about the potential loss of the school's Foundation 1 (nursery) class if Poulton closed. In January 2007, there were 18 part-time pupils in the F1 class (9 FTE). If the school closed, the F1 class would be relocated to another local primary school. Nearby Park Primary School, for example, does not currently offer F1 provision. Legally, this would necessitate the publication of a statutory notice to make a "prescribed alteration" to the age range of the school. Subject to provisions for referral to the Adjudicator, the Authority could determine this alteration. Alterations or extensions to existing accommodation would be funded through the Council's Capital programme. Any new F1 provision would meet current

DfES regulations for room size, outdoor facilities and so on, and would be the right size for the number of expected pupils.

- 4.4 Some respondents were concerned about disabled access at alternative local primary schools. Poulton Primary occupies a two storey building, to which a lift has been fitted, providing full access to classrooms. Disabled access to Park Primary School is 40% at present, while other schools in the area have full, or almost full disabled access. Disabled access alterations to schools are made on a needs led basis. The lift at Poulton Primary was installed to meet the needs of particular pupils. Following discussions with parents of children with special needs, access alterations would be prioritised through the existing accessibility programme operated by the Children and Young People's Department. Aided school projects over £2000 would be eligible for funding through the Voluntary Aided Co-ordinated Programme (VCAP), by agreement with the relevant Diocese.
- 4.5 A small number of respondents were concerned about the loss of a historical building, possibly listed, that had served many generations of children in the area. Poulton Primary School is an Edwardian Board School, built originally as separate Infant and Junior buildings. The other building was demolished following bomb damage during the Second World War. Consequently, the Park Primary building was constructed as the Infant building of Poulton Primary School, only later becoming the base for a separate primary school. Poulton Primary's building is not on the Listed building register.
- 4.6 All current and projected pupils from Poulton Primary could be accommodated at primary schools within a reasonable distance without requiring any new classroom provision. As stated in 4.1 above, large numbers of parents living within Poulton's zone choose either Park Primary or St George's Primary, and there are 27 alternative primary schools within a 2 mile radius of the school. The catchment zone of Poulton Primary School would, in the main, be allocated to Park Primary, with the exception of a small area at the "top" of the zone which could be allocated to St George's Primary School. Some concerns were raised about the rationale for altering the catchment zones in this way. The intention was to better match where parents live and choose to send their children to school. Parents currently in-zone for St George's would continue to be in-zone and would be unaffected by this change.
- 4.7 Respondents from Poulton Primary were concerned that children would be "dispersed" in the event of closure, with a resulting loss of established friendships, which were seen as an important way of mitigating the impact of transition to new schools. In an amalgamation, former pupils from both schools are guaranteed a place at the new school. For this reason, as well as for community and staff cohesion, the majority of consultees allied to Poulton Primary School preferred amalgamation with Park Primary to the closure of Poulton Primary School.
- 4.8 Consultees allied to Park Primary School were largely in favour of the closure option, rather than the amalgamation of the two schools. While respondents understood the Council's reasons for proposing change, they were concerned about the impact of amalgamation on the standards and ethos of Park Primary, and saw the closure of Poulton Primary as the least disruptive option, since only one school would close, not two.
- 4.9 If this option were to proceed, depending on parental preferences, there may be a requirement for additional accommodation at other school sites, principally the Park Primary site, to which the majority of Poulton's catchment zone would be transferred. Following closure, retention of the Poulton site as a transitional measure whilst building work was on-going at the Park site could be considered, with a view to operating from a single site from 2009. The current capacity of the Park building is 280

pupils. If the new capacity following building works reached 350 pupils or more, a statutory expansion notice would be required.

B Amalgamation of Park Primary School and Poulton Primary School either at Park site (B1) or Poulton site (B2)

- 4.10 Park Primary School currently has 229 pupils on roll, having dropped from a peak of 311 pupils in 1999. As identified by respondents, the school has more than 180 pupils on roll, the number identified in the Authority's policy "In pursuit of Excellence" as the point below which schools become more challenging to manage financially and organisationally. Similarly to Poulton Primary School, a high proportion of parents living within the school's zone attend other community primary schools (61%). This loss of potential pupils is balanced by a small net gain from other local schools, principally from the Poulton zone. Some respondents cited this as an indication of the school's popularity with parents. Popular schools retain high proportions of in-zone parents. The pattern of parental preference in this area indicates a high level of mobility between catchment areas, facilitated by high levels of surplus places. The highest retention for a community school in South Wallasey is 59% at Somerville Primary School. The pattern of parental preference appears to demonstrate that regardless of catchment zone, within the immediate surrounding area, more parents choose Park than Poulton.

The school has 18% (51) surplus places, and this is projected to remain about the same at 18% (49 places) by 2012. While the surplus is lower than that at Poulton Primary, this is above the 5-10% surplus identified by the Audit Commission, beyond which money is being wasted, and it is right to look at ways of reducing this surplus.

- 4.11 The overall value added score (99.6) and contextual value added score (100.1) for Key Stage 2 in 2006 shows pupils at Park Primary School are making the expected rate of progress (See Appendix 7). By this measure, the standards achieved by the two schools are not significantly different. Good standards at Park were cited by many respondents as a reason not to amalgamate the two schools, on the basis that the ensuing disruption would impact upon the quality of education and threaten standards. Some parents indicated that they would not want their children to be educated with children from the other school due to a perceived difference in background. Geographical analysis of where parents live indicates considerable overlap in the pupil populations of the two schools. Staff from both schools have strongly expressed their commitment to ensure that all pupils would be welcomed in any setting, whatever the outcome of the consultation.
- 4.12 Respondents allied to both schools were concerned that the site for any amalgamated school should be carefully chosen. In addition to concerns about disabled access, respondents from Poulton Primary raised issues regarding the condition of Park's existing buildings, particularly the two mobile classrooms. Issues around parking, safe drop-off areas and the size of the playground were raised by respondents from both schools. Both schools currently use Central Park for outdoor PE in the summer months, as neither has their own playing field. Park Primary has an existing arrangement by which the school has exclusive use of caged courts belonging to Central Park in term-time, reverting to community use in school holidays. Excluding the caged area, the playgrounds of the two schools are similar in size.
- 4.13 There are currently 380 pupils on the combined roll of the two schools. If all pupils from both former schools attended an amalgamated school, it is estimated that the Park site (B1) would require between 4 and 6 new classrooms, including replacing mobile accommodation and integrating a new F1 classbase. The opportunity would also be taken to improve parking and drop-off at the front of the school, and with the Council's permission, in future there may be scope to relocate the existing caged area

a few metres further into Central Park to extend the school's play area. Discussions at officer level with appropriate officers in Regeneration are on-going. Accommodating all pupils at the Poulton site (B2) is estimated to require five new classrooms alongside some internal alterations to two existing rooms. The location of the site restricts any expansion, surrounded as it is by roads. In general, consultees felt that building an entirely new school would be disruptive, and a waste of money which would be better spent on refurbishing existing buildings. Nevertheless, it is worthy of consideration. Both buildings have significant condition issues related to their age and construction. Whichever site were chosen, the other building could be utilised to accommodate pupils whilst construction work was underway.

- 4.14 New housing in the area was mentioned as a potential source of additional pupils to fill surplus places, as well as source of additional traffic outside the Park site. New housing either under construction or with planning approval in the area includes 16 two bedroom flats on Poulton Road between Winterhey Road and Lindeth Road, five 3 bedroom houses on Poulton Road at the rear of the Rose and Crown, and a single terraced house on Rankin Street. A planning application for 57 homes at the former Marymount site was approved at the end of January 2007. At application, these 57 properties comprised 10 four bed houses and 11 three bed houses, the remainder being either 1 or 2 bed flats. In total, 79 properties (including flats) are being built locally. Even treating flats as houses, these developments are projected to produce just 22 primary age pupils, of whom 4-7 are likely to attend a Catholic primary school. Also, the additional pupils are likely to be existing Wirral residents and may already live locally, in which case they may continue to attend their existing school. Local housing changes are unlikely to make a significant impact on the issue of surplus places in this area.

Foundation and Community schools

- 4.15 In an amalgamation, both existing schools close and a new school opens. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all new primary schools, as has been the case for some time in secondary schools, are subject to a "competition" where the Authority invites bids to establish the best provider for the new school. The Authority can enter its own proposal into the competition, and in most cases, particularly in primary school competitions, is likely to be the only entrant. Other possible proposers could include faith organisations, businesses, universities, colleges or a charitable organisation. A new school would be a Foundation school, not a community school. The Secretary of State can, however, decide to grant permission for Wirral LA to propose a new community school within a competition. The criteria that would be used are given in Appendix 6b. An application could also be made to the Secretary of State for permission to establish a new school without holding a competition. While each case is different, examples in the guidance do not appear to apply if Park and Poulton were to amalgamate. Reaching a decision under the statutory competition process is likely to take at least 6 months longer than would be the case without a competition.
- 4.16 Respondents were concerned about the impact that Foundation school status might have on education, admissions or staffing of a new school. The differences between community and Foundation schools are as follows:
- In a community school, the Local Authority owns the land, buildings and all the other assets of the school, employs the staff, and decides the admission criteria for the school. The running of the school is delegated to the governing body.
 - In a Foundation school, as well as running the school, the governors own the land and buildings, employ the staff, and decide the admission criteria. The governors have greater freedom to spend money on building projects, and can choose to set their own term dates.

Pupils at Foundation schools follow the same national curriculum as those in community schools, and staff are employed on the same nationally agreed terms and conditions. Funding for Foundation schools comes from the Authority in exactly the same way as for community schools. While the governing body of a foundation school could decide to have different admission criteria, the school still has to follow the same admissions code as community schools.

Other than the land and buildings, which must be conveyed from the Authority to the Foundation governing body or Trustees, other assets in the school (books, equipment etc.) remain the Authority's property. Excellent relationships continue to be maintained with Wirral's Foundation secondary schools, and there is no reason to believe that this position would differ in the case of a Foundation primary school.

Other suggestions raised during consultation for these schools

4.17 Variant: Close Poulton Primary School and guarantee all former Poulton pupils a place at Park Primary School

When statutory notices proposing the closure of a school are published, the notice must contain details of schools to which it is suggested former pupils may transfer. A variation raised during consultation which would resolve not only understandable concerns about dispersal of pupils after closure, but also remove the necessity for a statutory competition to open a new school, would be to propose the closure of Poulton Primary School (Option A), and to specify Park Primary School as the intended destination for former Poulton pupils. The pupil populations already overlap, and the building requirements would be the same as in Option B1.

It should be borne in mind that Option A including this variant may require further expansion of Park Primary School than Option A. As parental preference operates over coming years, this expansion may eventually result in further surplus places developing at Park Primary School.

Former Poulton parents who did not wish to take up the guaranteed place at Park Primary would be offered the opportunity to express a preference for an alternative primary school. Places at these schools would then be allocated based on the admission criteria published in the Authority's booklets for parents, within the limitations of the Infant Class Size limit.

4.18 With a modification to reflect the variant described above, Option A, Closure of Poulton Primary School is recommended to continue as a statutory proposal, alongside a linked statutory alteration proposal to extend the lower age range at Park Primary School to create a new Foundation 1 class. A further statutory alteration proposal to expand the capacity of Park Primary School may also be required at a later date.

C Closure of Brentwood Early Years Centre AND open new Foundation 1 (nursery) classes at local primary schools

4.19 Brentwood Early Years Centre is an LA maintained nursery school with 40 full-time equivalent early years places for three and four year olds. In January 2007 there were 6 full-time and 46 part-time pupils attending the school. The school is also registered with Ofsted to provide 20 full day care places for children aged birth to 5 years, 48 weeks of the year from 8 am to 6 pm, 10 out of school places for 3 to 5 year olds attending the "main" F1 provision, and 12 term-time only crèche places.

4.20 In 2000, the Foundation Stage curriculum was introduced nationally as a distinct phase of education for children aged 3 to 5, with six statutory areas of learning: creative development; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world;

and communication language and literacy. Guidance makes it clear the importance of continuity and progression across the Foundation stage between F1 (nursery) and F2 (Reception). Across Wirral, just over half of all infant and primary schools have an LA designated F1 class, which allows this continuity to be managed, and eases the transition for pupils into “big school”. Some schools have private pre-school provision on site, which while not part of the school, often allows a close working relationship to develop.

- 4.21 There are three maintained Early Years Centres in Wirral. Two of these, Ganney’s Meadow in Woodchurch, and Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre, are now designated as Children’s Centres for their respective areas. The site of the Children’s Centre in the South Wallasey area is Seacombe Family Centre.
- 4.22 Consultees were sometimes confused by the inclusion of Brentwood EYC in a review of primary school places. Brentwood is now the only Early Years Centre not to have become a Children’s Centre. In addition, school-based F1 settings are considered generally to be beneficial to children’s education, not only by the majority of respondents to consultation, but by the Authority, as there are sound educational reasons to operate continuous Foundation Stage provision. When discussing the future of primary education in this area, it is certainly valid to examine whether the needs of the community currently served by Brentwood Early Years Centre could be equally or better met by early years provision within primary schools.
- 4.23 Respondents praised the good work carried out by staff at Brentwood, particularly in relation to children with special needs, and the quality of the outdoor play provision at the school.
- 4.24 This option involves replacing the current F1 places at Brentwood EYC with F1 classes at local schools who do not currently have LA maintained classes. For example, Somerville Primary School, to which the majority of former Brentwood pupils transfer when they reach F2, has a small pre-school on site, and has expressed an interest in extending the school’s age range to incorporate a full-size F1 class.
- 4.25 A major outcome of the consultation was the high value placed by parents on the extended facilities provided at Brentwood, such as affordable day care and crèche places enabling parents to work or attend college.
- 4.26 Some respondents allied to Brentwood expressed concerns about F1 pupils mixing with older pupils. These issues are successfully managed in primary schools across Wirral on a day to day basis. The majority of schools have a designated, separate Foundation outdoor play area.
- 4.27 The Decision Makers guidance on the potential closure of nursery schools is included in this report under Appendix 6a. There is no doubt that F1 places could be created at local primary schools, which would be equivalent in number and educational quality to those at Brentwood. Further investigation is needed into the feasibility of replacing the existing day care and extended school facilities locally, as this vital resource must not be lost for those parents who need it.
- 4.28 **In December 2006, Cabinet agreed to return to the South Wallasey area once the Housing Market Renewal Initiative has progressed further, and I recommend that the position of Brentwood should also be re-examined at that time.**

5.0 **Commentary on Leasowe options**

All these options involve these three schools to varying degrees. To avoid repetition, each school will be commented on separately before the options for this area are discussed.

Castleway Primary School

- 5.1 Castleway Primary School currently has 174 pupils on roll, having fallen from a peak of 241 pupils in 1991. The school is now a “small school” under the Authority’s policy “In Pursuit of Excellence” with fewer than 180 pupils. Castleway retains 64% of non-catholic choice pupils living in-zone, and has a net gain of pupils from the Leasowe Primary zone. The pattern of parental preference in this area indicates a high level of mobility between catchment areas, facilitated by high levels of surplus places. The school has 17% (36) surplus places, and this is projected to reduce to 10% (21 places) by 2012. In 2004-2005, expenditure per pupil was £3,398 compared with the Wirral average of £2,984.
- 5.2 The overall value added score (98.1) and contextual value added score (98.5) for Key Stage 2 in 2006 shows pupils at Castleway Primary School are not making the expected rate of progress (see Appendix 7). In March 2006 Castleway was placed by Ofsted in Special Measures, the highest category of concern.

Leasowe Primary School

- 5.3 Leasowe Primary School currently has 130 pupils on roll, having fallen from a peak of 415 pupils in 1993, and is therefore also a small school. The school retains 45% of non-Catholic choice pupils living in-zone, and shows a net loss which is largely attributable to almost a third (29%, 82) of resident in-zone pupils attending Castleway Primary School.

Despite having recently relocated into a far smaller, new PFI one form entry building (210 places), the school has 38% (80) surplus places at present. This is projected to reduce to 17% (35 places) by 2012. In 2004-2005, expenditure per pupil was £5,014 compared with the Wirral average of £2,984, although it should be noted that the school occupied the old larger building during this period, causing a temporary distortion in the funding level which has now reduced.

- 5.4 The overall value added score (96.8) and contextual value added score (98.2) for Key Stage 2 in 2006 indicates that pupils at Leasowe Primary School made significantly below (VA) or below (CVA) the expected rate of progress (see Appendix 7).

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

- 5.5 Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School currently has 97 pupils on roll, almost half the size of the school at its peak of 180 pupils in 1994. This is a small school, and has been so for some considerable time. The school retains a third of the total Catholic choice pupils in its admission catchment (34%, 79) which includes the Parish of English Martyrs. If the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is analysed separately, the school retains 61% (73) of total Catholic choice pupils. Almost a fifth of Catholic choice parents in the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish send their children to Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School (19%, 23). It may be worth noting that even if all potential Catholic choice pupils in the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish attended the school, it would remain small at 120 pupils.

The school has 35% (53) surplus places at present. This is projected to remain about the same at 36% (54 places) by 2012. In 2004-2005, expenditure per pupil was £3,721 compared with the Wirral average of £2,984.

- 5.6 The overall value added score (98.9) for Key Stage 2 in 2006 shows pupils at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School were not making the expected rate of progress, However, the contextual value added score (99.8) indicates that pupils are making the expected rate of progress (see Appendix 7).
- 5.7 The school has an LA designated F1 class which in January 2007 had 1 full-time and 15 part-time pupils.

Ofsted issues

- 5.8 Some respondents thought that Castleway's placement in Special Measures in May 2006 had been unfairly used as a criterion to consider school re-organisation. When a school is placed by Ofsted in Special Measures, the Authority has a legal duty to consider whether the school should be closed or amalgamated with another school, and consequently in March 2006 Council's Cabinet decided that the Leasowe area should be brought forward to Phase 3 of the Review, which began in Autumn 2006.
- 5.9 Consultees allied to Castleway also stated that Leasowe Primary School should be inspected by Ofsted under the latest framework before any re-organisation took place. Some of these respondents appeared to believe that the Council was responsible for Ofsted inspections. To clarify, the Ofsted Inspectorate is responsible to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. Schools are inspected by Ofsted at least every three years. Leasowe Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2005, and we would expect the next inspection to take place through the normal process some time during 2008. The most recent Ofsted reports and up to date information about school buildings have been used by the Authority.

Commentary on small schools

- 5.10 The Authority funds its schools through the operation of its local funding formula. The formula is designed so as to ensure that sufficient resources are made available to schools for the pupils they have to teach. The formula ensures that, however small a school, it will have sufficient resources. One would not therefore expect any school, simply through smallness, to become financially unviable. What does happen is that small schools draw in a greater share of the resource per pupil from the total available for distributing among all schools.

Since the total sum available for spending on all our children does not increase if we choose as an Authority to organise our children in more schools than is necessary for the efficient and effective delivery of education, it follows that the maintenance of small schools, where this is not necessary, comes at the expense of all other children.

The key questions therefore in terms of use of resources are:

- i) How small does a school need to be within the context of Wirral before it would be considered as contributing to an ineffective use of resource?
 - ii) Are there reasons in specific cases why individual schools although "small" by Wirral standards should continue to be maintained even though they are relatively expensive?
- 5.11 With regard to Wirral's policy on small schools, the School Organisation Plan (agreed in 2003) contained the proposal that the LA "should consider the implications of an increasing number of primary schools with less than one form of entry – 30 pupils and therefore primary schools with fewer than 210 pupils i.e. 7 x 30". That review was carried out in great detail and with the involvement of a wide range of Headteachers, and culminated in the policy document "The Pursuit of Excellence", extracts of which are included in Appendix 8. This policy adopted in 2004 suggests that a school should have at least 180 pupils in order to be viable. The guidance to Decision Makers (Appendix 6a) makes no mention of school size. DfES guidance says that "Schools with fewer than 150 pupils may be educationally and financially sustainable only through substantial subsidies via their local authorities funding formula" :

www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/fallingschoolrolls/schools/educational_decisions

One problematic issue which is discussed in some detail in Appendix 8 is the potential difficulty of mixed age teaching, especially across key stages.

- 5.12 With regard to organisational viability there can be no question that small schools face greater challenges. This of course does not mean that at any one time a particular small school cannot produce excellence through having outstanding teachers. Furthermore it is often the case when small schools are considered nationally that many small schools enjoy a number of advantages as a result of their location and are attractive to staff. In many parts of the country it is a clear necessity to maintain small schools because the alternative would be that children be transported, perhaps for a number of miles, to the nearest school. Authorities who have such schools receive additional sparsity funding from the government which enables them to spend more on these schools without it being at the expense of others, in order for them to be organisationally viable. Wirral does not receive this element of grant.
- 5.13 Our experience in Wirral, has been that while overall until quite recently we have had few primary schools who have fallen into one of the Ofsted categories of concern, those that have done so have generally been among our smaller schools. We do not believe that this is coincidence: it arises because of the inevitable requirement on individual staff in small schools to take on wider burdens of responsibility and from the disproportionate impact which one weaker member of staff will have on the school as a whole.

Options in relation to community school provision

A Closure of Castleway Primary School

- 5.14 In general terms, respondents allied to Castleway were strongly against the closure of the school, as would be expected. Respondents allied to Leasowe felt that the new building should continue to be used as a school, and that more children could be accommodated if necessary if it were decided that Castleway should close.
- 5.15 Respondents from Castleway cited the school's relatively large size and low surplus place levels as reasons why the school should not be considered for closure. As stated above, all three schools in this area are now small schools under Wirral policy. The surplus place level is higher than the Audit Commission's guideline of 5 to 10 percent, above which money is being wasted. Surplus places are relatively high at all three primary schools in the Leasowe area, and the consultation options were intended to address the surplus place issue across the whole area and provide a better fit between pupils and places in schools. Surplus across the area is projected to remain high overall, at 19% by 2012, and it is right to look at ways of reducing this surplus.
- 5.16 Castleway's relative popularity and good reputation with local parents was a strong feature of responses to consultation, indeed the school retains the highest proportion of in-zone pupils of the three Leasowe schools. The destinations of pupils from Leasowe Early Years Centre follow closely the overall pattern of parental choice for the Leasowe planning area, which is that around 40% of Leasowe EYC pupils go on to attend Castleway Primary School, while around 30% attend Leasowe Primary School, the remaining pupils attending primary schools outside the Leasowe area.
- 5.17 Respondents identified the former Beacon status of Castleway and cited the withdrawal of the additional Beacon funding as a reason for the decline in standards at the school. Castleway Primary became a Beacon school for behaviour management for the three years following the school's 2000 Ofsted inspection. Beacon status came with time-limited additional central government funding which naturally expired at the end of the 3 year period. It should be noted that the 2000 Ofsted inspection also raised many areas where improvement was needed, including the use of ICT, pupil punctuality and attendance and standards at Key Stage 2. The Beacon programme has since been replaced by Primary Strategy Learning Networks, where groups of

local schools come together to help raise standards, supported by the Authority and funded by the DfES.

- 5.18 Concerns were raised by consultees about behaviour and levels of bullying at other schools. All Wirral primary schools have an anti-bullying policy, and the individual social, emotional and educational needs of children are the highest priority for staff in schools. I have no reason to believe that this would not continue to be the case following a school closure or amalgamation. Leasowe Primary's 2005 Ofsted report stated that "the school is very successful in dealing with difficult behaviour or bullying". Statements were made that large numbers of pupils had moved from the other two schools to Castleway Primary due to bullying. This claim has been investigated. Between 2000 and 2006, slightly more children have transferred from Leasowe and Our Lady of Lourdes to Castleway, than from Castleway to Leasowe and Our Lady of Lourdes, but the numbers involved are low. It is not possible to comment on individual parents reasons for transferring between primary schools.
- 5.19 Concerns were also raised by respondents from both schools about the possibility of children returning to a school which they had previously left. Pupils who have been permanently excluded from a particular school would not usually be expected to return to that school.
- 5.20 Some respondents suggested that new housing in the area would generate more children. The impact of new housing development has already been taken into account when making projections of how many school places will be needed in future years. Recently approved planning applications for new housing in the Leasowe area include 26 flats on the Leasowe public house site, an additional 12 flats on Reeds Lane and four 3 bed semi-detached houses at Garswood Close. All these developments are within the catchment zone of Eastway Primary School. The largest development of 131 dwellings (69 houses and 62 flats) at the former Leasowe Primary school site are within the Leasowe catchment zone. It is estimated that 48 primary age pupils might be generated by these new dwellings. The nature of the housing also has an impact. Flats and retirement housing will clearly generate fewer children. It should also be remembered that children moving into new houses will tend to be existing Wirral residents, and may continue to attend their existing primary school. None of the new housing developments are within Castleway's catchment zone, although patterns of parental preference indicate that some parents may decide to send their children to Castleway Primary School. It is unlikely that new schools would be required in the near future, as demographic trends indicate that the number of children born each year is unlikely to rise significantly. Any building work carried out as a result of this Review would allow for flexibility and extension at a later date, if it was required.
- 5.21 Travel distance, traffic congestion and safety were raised. The Castleway and Leasowe sites are just half a mile apart, and many children already travel across the area to attend various schools. A minority of parents said that they would prefer to travel to schools outside the Leasowe area if Castleway were closed or amalgamated. When a school closes, parents are asked to submit their preferences for alternative primary school places, and may choose to apply to out of zone schools if they wish to do so. Places are then allocated on the basis of the admission arrangements published in the Authority's booklets for parents. One parent said that they would prefer to home-school their child. Every parent/carer has the right to decide to home school their child, either themselves or by hiring a tutor, but it is a complex decision which must be taken very seriously and in the best interests of the child concerned.
- 5.22 Concerns were raised about the future of the redundant site if the school closed. Decisions about sites are made only after the educational decisions have been made, and are not, as some respondents suggested, the sole aim of the review. If school

playing fields are to be sold, the Council usually has to ask permission from the Secretary of State. There are no plans or planning applications in relation to any of the sites involved in this Phase of the review.

- 5.23 Parents are often concerned about increased class sizes following school re-organisation. However, a distinction should be made between small schools, and small classes. If the overall number on roll at a school goes up, this does not mean that class sizes would necessarily go up. This is because the money a school receives in its budget depends mostly on the number of pupils on roll. Larger schools can afford to employ more teachers, so that class sizes are not necessarily different to those in smaller schools. Larger schools also have more flexibility to spend money on additional resources such as classroom assistants, books and equipment. At Key Stage 1 (Infants) there is a national class size limit of 30 pupils with which all schools are expected to comply, regardless of the overall size of the school. The average class size for a Wirral primary school is lower than this at 25-26 pupils. If new classrooms are needed to accommodate pupils at receiving schools, this would be funded as a priority investment in school buildings.

B Amalgamation of Castleway Primary School and Leasowe Primary School at the Castleway site (B1) or the Leasowe site (B2)

Many of the concerns raised by consultees apply equally to Option B as to Option A. Additional points and differences are identified in the following paragraphs.

- 5.24 In relation to 5.18 above, a new amalgamated school would have an anti-bullying policy, just as in all Wirral primary schools.
- 5.25 In relation to pupil places, while all children at both former schools would be guaranteed a place at the newly established school in an amalgamation, some parents may not wish to take up that place. Parents would be asked to express a preference, and places would be allocated using the admission criteria, which include keeping brothers and sisters together at the same school wherever possible, and subject to the Infant Class size limit.
- 5.26 In relation to staff issues, if Castleway and Leasowe were amalgamated, at either site (Option B), all the staff from both former schools are technically redundant and are available for redeployment. The new school's shadow governing body is drawn from the governors of the former schools prior to the new school's creation. The shadow governing body is then responsible for appointing the headteacher as well as deciding the staffing structure, and is expected to give prior and preferential treatment to staff on the redeployment register.
- 5.27 The distinction between community and Foundation schools has been covered in paragraphs 4.14 and 4.15 of this report. Regulations relating to statutory competitions would apply and are covered in brief in Appendix 6b.
- 5.28 Before and after school provision, and extended services such as adult learning, are currently offered by both schools. While this would be a matter for the new governing body to decide, it is likely that facilities provided would continue in a new school.
- 5.29 The consultation documents were drawn up using the most recent data available at the time, which was the January 2006 Census, at which time Castleway Primary had 192 pupils (now 174) and Leasowe Primary had 140 pupils (now 130). The total roll of both schools combined was 332 pupils (now 304). In order to accommodate all pupils from both schools, it was projected that Leasowe would require 4 to 5 additional classrooms and associated facilities, and that Castleway's building would require 2 or more new classrooms, alongside some internal alterations to return rooms currently in use for other purposes into classrooms. Building alterations to classrooms and other

provision would be agreed between the Authority and the new school and funded from the Capital programme.

- 5.30 With regard the location for an amalgamated school, respondents from Leasowe Primary were concerned about the potential loss of the new building and its facilities, emphasizing the capacity of the building to accommodate additional pupils, including expansion if this was necessary. Generally, it was felt that an amalgamation would be too disruptive for pupils so soon after the move to the new building.
- 5.31 Castleway respondents were concerned about traffic congestion, parking and access at the Leasowe site. While some acknowledged that Castleway's building required refurbishment, the ability to expand on the site was emphasised. Building a new school was generally considered too expensive in comparison to refurbishing and extending the existing buildings.

Options in relation to denominational provision

C Closure of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

- 5.32 Respondents related to Our Lady of Lourdes were universally against the closure of the school since there would no longer be any denominational provision within the Leasowe area. The benefits of small schools, improving standards at the school and the importance of links with the community were raised.
- 5.33 Concerns were raised about the distance to alternative Catholic primary schools (see 5.5 above), and the possibility of pupils losing priority status on admission to Catholic secondary school if they attended a non-Catholic primary school.
- 5.34 The Diocese of Shrewsbury predicts a rise to 125 pupils on roll (excluding the nursery) by 2011, and suggests that the Authority is in agreement. The projections in the consultation document indicate a fall to 88 by 2011. Following the 2007 census, the Authority's latest projections suggest a small stable roll at Our Lady of Lourdes, with 92 pupils in 2011, and 96 in 2012.
- 5.35 The former parents room at the school is now used exclusively for the purposes of Interdiocesan Fuel Management, and this has been cited by the Diocese as removing surplus places. The parents room was already discounted from the DfES Net Capacity of the school, and consequently the change of use has had no impact on surplus places.
- 5.36 Those with affiliations to other schools who expressed an opinion regarding the denominational options, were largely in favour of the closure of Our Lady of Lourdes, although one respondent said that there should be a choice of a "faith" and a community school in the Leasowe area.

D1 A joint denominational school established by the Anglican Diocese of Chester and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury

- 5.37 Respondents allied to Our Lady of Lourdes were, with a sole exception, in favour of this option.
- 5.38 The concern raised by a single respondent was in regard to the loss of the existing school's ethos. Other respondents overwhelmingly felt that the school's ethos would be enhanced by joint denominational status, contributing to community cohesion.
- 5.39 This is an exciting option, and if it were to be enacted, would be the first such school on Wirral. The process of establishment of a joint denominational school is likely to be complicated. The religious ethos of the school cannot simply be changed. Legally, a proposal to close Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School would be made either by the Governing body or by the Authority. A linked proposal would be published jointly by both Diocesan Authorities to establish a new joint-denominational Aided primary

school. The consultation document suggested that an alternative school site, or a new site, could be used, however, the Diocese of Shrewsbury have indicated their intention to remain at the Our Lady of Lourdes site, to which the Diocese of Chester have not objected. In Aided schools, the buildings and site are owned by Trustees, and there may be land and financial implications to be resolved by the two Diocesan bodies. The regulations on competitions for new schools would usually apply. However, an application could be made by the two Diocesan bodies to the Secretary of State for permission to propose the establishment of the new joint denominational school without a competition. The example given in the official guidance is for replacement of two or more schools with a single school with the same religious ethos, which is not the case in this situation. However, the Diocese of Shrewsbury has had provisional unofficial advice that the Secretary of State may be prepared to grant an exemption from the competition process, as the new Aided school would replace an existing Aided school.

D2 Expansion of Our Lady of Lourdes to a one form of entry primary school (210 places) whilst maintaining the current Admission policy that welcomes applicants from other or no faiths whose parents want their children to have an education in a Catholic school

- 5.40 Concerns were raised by some respondents about the quality of the land on which the existing school is built, suggesting that subsidence may be an issue in future if the school is extended. Further investigations would need to be carried out in this matter.
- 5.41 Respondents from community schools stated that they would not choose Catholic primary provision in the event of their school's closure or amalgamation, and that those parents who wanted their child educated at a Catholic school had already made that decision.
- 5.42 To expand Our Lady of Lourdes without a concurrent reduction in places at other schools in the area appears counter-productive when surplus in the area is already high. There is little indication from consultation that community school parents would choose to transfer to Our Lady of Lourdes if the school were expanded.

D3 Maintain Our Lady of Lourdes with its existing planned admission number and its current Admissions policy that welcomes applicants from other or no faiths whose parents want their children to have an education in a Catholic school

- 5.43 This is effectively a "no change" option for Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, understandably attracting little comment from respondents. As such, this option requires no legal change to the school, and consequently no specific decision by Cabinet.
- 5.44 **Other suggestions raised during consultation for these schools**

Close all three schools and build a new primary school on a central site

This suggested option would mean that Leasowe had a single primary school, which on current numbers on roll would cater for 401 pupils, or approximately two forms of entry. This is not large in Wirral terms, and would maintain a single viable school in the Leasowe area for the foreseeable future. The cost of building a primary school of this size is estimated at £4 to £6 million pounds, excluding any site purchase costs. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, a statutory competition would operate to ascertain the best bidder to operate the new school. As this suggestion would include the closure of a Catholic Aided school, it is unlikely that the Diocese of Shrewsbury would support such an option unless the resulting school were either Catholic Aided, or a joint denominational school in conjunction with the Anglican Diocese, so that

there would no longer be a community primary school in the Leasowe area. PFI issues in relation to the former Leasowe site would also need to be resolved.

This suggestion is not recommended for further consideration.

Amalgamate Leasowe Primary School and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

The rationale behind this suggested option is to amalgamate the two smallest schools with the highest levels of surplus to form a new school at the Wallasey end of the Leasowe estate, with Castleway remaining at the Moreton end as a community school. Were these two schools of the same status, that is, both community schools or both Catholic Aided schools, this would be an attractive option.

As in any amalgamation, both schools would close, and a new school then established on one of the two sites. There are benefits to amalgamation over closure for pupils and staff. Legally, however, it is not possible to combine community and Aided provision into a single school. It might be beneficial to community cohesion to relocate one of the existing schools onto the same site to form a “joint denominational campus” of separate schools, but this would be costly and unlikely to resolve surplus place issues in the area. Another alternative which would achieve the same end would be to propose closure of Leasowe Primary School, linked with relocating Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School into the Leasowe building, which would require a statutory alteration, not a competition, however, the Diocese of Shrewsbury has indicated that their preferred site is the existing site next to the Church.

This suggestion is not recommended for further consideration.

Close Leasowe Primary School

Leasowe Primary School occupies a PFI building, which the Council has committed to lease for 25 years. It may be possible to find an alternative non-school use for the Leasowe building, if it were to be declared surplus to requirements. Leasowe Primary School is a small school in terms of number on roll, with a large proportion of surplus places. However, new school buildings are usually attractive to parents, and this should have a positive impact on the school’s roll over the next few years.

This suggestion is not recommended for further consideration.

- 5.45 **In the light of the positive consultation response to Option D1, the joint denominational school, it is recommended that this option be explored in more depth with the Anglican and Catholic Diocesan Boards and the publication of any necessary proposals in relation to this option be undertaken. The number of non-catholic choice parents that might be attracted to a joint denominational school must be considered. On this basis, it is also recommended that a decision on changes to community school provision in the Leasowe area be delayed until a future review phase, pending further discussions with interested parties on the options provided by the Education and Inspections Act (2006). Numbers on roll and standards at all the schools in this area will continue to be monitored.**

6.0 Commentary on Pensby and Thingwall options

All these options involve these three schools to varying degrees. To avoid repetition, each school will be commented on separately before the options for this part of the area are discussed.

Pensby Infant School

- 6.1 There are currently 77 pupils on roll at Pensby Infant School, which means there are 36% (43) surplus places. The peak was 166 pupils in 1993, more than double the

current roll. The number on roll is projected to be about the same at 75 pupils by 2012. The catchment zone of Pensby Infant School is the same as that for Pensby Junior School, and together the two schools retain 47% of in-zone non-Catholic choice pupils (49% Infant, 47% Junior). The remaining in-zone non-Catholic choice Infant pupils attend various schools in small numbers, of which the largest group attend Pensby Park (15%, 17 pupils), with roughly equal numbers from the Pensby Park zone attending Pensby Infant (11%, 15 pupils).

- 6.2 The expenditure per pupil in 2004-2005 was £3,468, compared with the Wirral average of £2,985.
- 6.3 Average points scores at Key Stage 1 in 2006 for all core subjects were significantly above the national averages (see Appendix 7).
- 6.4 The school operates a F1 class, which was attended by 34 part-time three and four year olds in January 2007. Wrap-around care and a joint before/after school club runs from mobile classrooms on the site.

Pensby Junior School

- 6.5 Pensby Junior has 112 pupils on roll, less than half the size of the school at its previous peak of 228 pupils in 1998. The school has 36% (64) surplus places, and this is predicted to increase slightly by 2012 to 40% (70) surplus places at 106 on roll. As mentioned in 6.1 above, more than half of non-Catholic choice parents living in the catchment zone send their children to other schools. Various other schools are attended in small numbers, of which the largest group attend Heswall Primary (11%, 17 pupils). Just 7% (11) of potential Pensby Junior pupils attend Pensby Park – the number making the opposite journey is far higher (20%, 29 pupils). There is demonstrably a high level of overlap between the pupil populations of the existing Infant/Junior and Pensby Park schools, and a high level of mobility in the area as demonstrated by the number of different schools that pupils attend.
- 6.6 The expenditure per pupil in 2004-2005 was £3,164, compared with the Wirral average of £2,985.
- 6.7 The overall value added score (99.3) for 2006 and contextual value added score (99.7) show that pupils are making the expected rate of progress (see Appendix 7).

Pensby Park Primary School

- 6.8 Pensby Park Primary now has 90 pupils on roll and has reached 25% (30) surplus places, the point at which the DfES requests an explanation of how this situation will be addressed. The number on roll is projected to fall to 67 by 2012, which would increase surplus places at the school to 44% (53) surplus places. Pensby Park attracts just 38% (55) of non-Catholic choice pupils residing in its zone. The majority of the remaining 62% (87) of potential pupils attend Pensby Infant and Junior (31%, 44 pupils) – almost as many pupils attend Pensby Infant and Junior as attend Pensby Park.
- 6.9 The expenditure per pupil in 2003-2004 was £3,551 compared with the Wirral average of £2,985.
- 6.10 The overall value added score (100.1) for 2006 and contextual value added score (99.7) show that pupils are making the expected rate of progress (see Appendix 7). There was no significant difference in the progress made by pupils at Pensby Park and at Pensby Junior.
- 6.11 A pre-school playgroup operates from the school's building, which in Summer 2006 was attended by 13 children, equivalent to 4.3 full-time.

The options for this area will be commented on in the next section.

A Closure of Pensby Park Primary School

- 6.12 Pensby Park is a small school with high levels of surplus places. All current and projected Pensby Park pupils could be accommodated at other local schools. The Pensby Park catchment zone would be allocated to Pensby Infant/Junior, at which there are ample places to accommodate former Pensby Park pupils.
- 6.13 Consultees related to Pensby Park blamed the small size of the school on scaremongering and uncertainty in the community caused by a previous review of primary schools carried out by the Council in 2000, suggesting that if the threat of closure were lifted, more parents would choose the school, causing rolls to rise. Rolls have, however, been falling at the school for more than 20 years, predating both the current review, and the 2000 consultation. The pattern of falling rolls at this school has been of a long slow decline – the last year in which there were more than 180 pupils was 1983, when there were 188 on roll. Ten years ago in 1997, there were 123 pupils on roll, now 90 pupils in 2007.
- 6.14 The possibility of new families moving into the area was raised. In recent years, Wirral has had only a small net gain of people from outside the area, about 50 people per year. Families moving into houses are likely to be existing Wirral residents, and often children continue to attend their previous school rather than transfer to a new school. Pensby is within the Council’s planning restraint area for new housing, and it is clear that new housing will have no significant impact on surplus places for the foreseeable future.
- 6.15 Concerns were raised that the Authority had not properly considered changes in age demographics in Pensby. The following table shows actual **proportions** of people living in the Pensby and Thingwall ward, and across Wirral at the last National Census in 2001 (shaded), and projected for Wirral in 2028.

Age group	Pensby and Thingwall	Wirral	Wirral-Pensby difference	Wirral 2028	Wirral change to 2028
0 to 9	11	12	-1	11	-1
10 to 14	7	7	0	6	-3
15 to 19	8	9	-1	5	-4
20 to 44	27	31	-4	28	-3
45 to 59	21	20	+1	18	-2
60 and over	29	23	+6	32	+9

Source: Office for National Statistics. Total persons living in Pensby and Thingwall, 13,316, total in Wirral 312,293 (2001). Percentages may not add exactly due to rounding.

Wirral, in common with many other parts of the UK, has an aging population as fewer children are being born and more people are living for longer. Projections produced by the Office for National Statistics indicate that across Wirral between 2003 and 2028, there are expected to be 5,600 fewer children and young people aged under 15, 10,000 fewer 15 to 44 year olds (the age group that could reasonably be expected to have children), 4,400 fewer 45 to 59 year olds, but 28,800 more people aged 60 and above.

Pensby and Thingwall ward already accommodates a higher proportion of persons aged 60 and over than in Wirral generally, and is unlikely to differ significantly from the overall Wirral age demographic trend.

- 6.16 The DfES Net Capacity method and the Authority’s pupil projection methods were both questioned. The Net Capacity of every primary school is determined by a national formula which uses the number and actual size of classbases, and the admission

number of the school, to calculate the total capacity of each building. Rooms that may formerly have been classbases but are now used for other purposes, are excluded from the calculation. At Pensby Park, originally designed as a school for 210 pupils, three classbases have been redesignated as an ICT suite, parents room and preschool playgroup respectively, leaving 4 classbases in use as such.

Wirral's methodology used to project future pupil numbers has been ratified by the Audit Commission. Actual pupil numbers in each year group at each primary school are collected in the Annual Census and rolled forward accordingly. Estimates of the number of children entering Foundation 2 are based on actual live births provided by the Health Authority, to which a three year average of the transition rate to F2 is applied. This overall number is then apportioned to individual schools on the basis of a three year average of intake. In 1981, 622 pupils attended community primary phase schools in Pensby. By 2007, these schools were attended by 279 pupils, 343 fewer. Projections to 2012 indicate 249 pupils between these three schools.

The birth rate also indicates that the average number of children in each family is significantly fewer than when these schools were built – more than 40 years ago in the case of Pensby Infant and Pensby Park, more than 70 years for Pensby Junior. In the late 1960's, the average number of children per woman was 2.9. This reached 1.6 in 2000, and is expected to settle at 1.7 children per woman. The proportion of women who never have children has also risen in recent years, from 1 in 10 in 1981, to 1 in 5 by 2001.

Parental preference of individual schools can indeed vary over time, but there are demonstrably fewer children attending schools in Pensby, and this is not projected to increase significantly for the foreseeable future.

- 6.17 The possibility of additional government funding to keep the school open was raised. As mentioned in paragraph 5.12, Wirral maintains small schools at the expense of all other schools, and consequently all other pupils, as the authority does not qualify for additional sparsity funding from the government.
- 6.18 As mentioned in 6.8 above, Pensby Park now has 25% and at least 30 places. The parents group response stated that this measure was a solely a local performance indicator (BVP 34a) that was no longer reported nationally. The Authority is required to make an annual statutory return to the DfES showing numbers on roll, Net Capacity and surplus places for every primary and secondary school on Wirral. For every school in the 25% and 30 or more surplus place category, the DfES requires an individual statement on how this surplus is being addressed. Pensby Infant, Pensby Junior and Pensby Park are all now in this category.
- 6.19 Standards at alternative schools were of concern. Pensby Junior School has operated an Authority designated Special Needs Class, which tends to impact on overall results. However, value added scores at schools in the Pensby and Thingwall area in 2006 indicate that all pupils are making the expected rate of progress, with the exception of Ladymount Catholic Primary School, where pupils made above the expected rate of progress. There is no significant difference between the progress made by pupils at Pensby Junior and at Pensby Park (Appendix 7).

Lower standards in larger schools was mentioned in the parents group response. In Wirral primary schools, little correlation has been found between total number on roll and performance.

- 6.20 Some Pensby Park parents stated that they had chosen Pensby Park specifically because they did not wish their child to attend separate Infant and Junior schools. The other primary school in Pensby is Ladymount Catholic Primary School, and these parents were concerned about increased travel to community primary schools outside

Pensby. Three-quarters of current Pensby Park pupils would reside in the combined zone formed by merging the existing zones of Pensby Park and Pensby Infant/Pensby Junior. In the event of closure, parents would be asked to express a preference for a school, and places would be allocated through the usual procedures.

- 6.21 Increased traffic congestion was also raised, although it should be remembered that the distances between existing sites are not great, for example, Pensby Park and Pensby Junior are 0.7 miles apart. The pupil populations show a significant overlap.
- 6.22 Concerns have been raised that the on-site pre-school would be lost if the school were to close. While some preschools are co-located in school buildings or on school sites, privately run pre-schools operate successfully across the Borough without any special tie or proximity to a particular school. Discussions would take place to find alternative accommodation for the pre-school, such as co-located with other community facilities or a Children's Centre.
- 6.23 Concerns about increased class sizes have been discussed in paragraph 5.23 of this report.
- 6.24 Pensby Park's building and site are owned by the Authority, and alternative uses could be considered if it were no longer in use as a school, including the possibility of siting a Children's Centre, Area team or other community facilities.
- 6.25 This school generated the highest number of consultation responses of any school involved in this phase of the review. It is worth considering that the majority of these, almost 70%, were from people with no, or only an indirect connection with the school (See Appendix 3a). Guidance says that "The Decision Maker should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on proposals. Instead the greatest weight should be given to representations from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by the proposals" (see Appendix 6a).
- 6.26 Resolving parental uncertainty about the future of primary schools in this area was a strong feature of many responses. Projections indicate that pupil numbers in this area are unlikely to rise significantly. If the decision were once again that no change would be made, this uncertainty would remain, leaving three small schools to cope with the financial and organisational difficulties that inevitably follow, which may have a detrimental effect on children's education.

B Amalgamate Pensby Infant School and Pensby Junior School

- 6.27 Amalgamating these two schools would involve the closure of both, followed by the establishment of a new primary school on the combined site, with a total current number on roll of 189 pupils.
- 6.28 Under this option, Pensby Park would remain open and this option was the preferred option for consultees allied to Pensby Park. Respondents allied to the Infant and Junior schools did not express strong opposition to this option. On average 90% of Pensby Infant pupils go on to attend Pensby Junior school.
- 6.29 Respondents were enthusiastic about the possibility of a new school building if an amalgamation went ahead, rather than refurbishment or extension of either of the existing buildings. Construction of a new building would allow the site to be landscaped, with improved drop-off and parking facilities.
- 6.30 One consultee felt that the consultation documents had not properly considered the benefits of separate Infant and Junior schools, focusing instead on the benefits of all-through primary education.

- 6.31 The main concern for Infant parents related to a perception of lower educational standards in Pensby Junior school in comparison to Pensby Infant school. In terms of attainment, 2006 Key Stage 2 results demonstrate that pupils at Pensby Junior are making the expected rate of progress. Headteachers and governors at Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior have already committed to working together closely to ensure that standards are maintained across the primary age range. Were the two schools to come together as a primary school with a single headteacher and governing body, continuity of educational provision would be resolved.
- 6.32 Other concerns raised related to older and younger pupils mixing in the same playground, poor quality of the accommodation in the Junior school (if a new school was not to be built) and the importance of minimising disruption to children's education that might be caused by major building work on the adjacent part of the site.
- 6.33 As mentioned under Option A, a Children's Centre is due to be sited in Pensby. It would be an option during the design and construction of a new purpose built primary school to incorporate the Children's Centre, alongside the new primary school's F1 class. Efficiency savings would be available not only in ceasing to maintain old, inefficient school buildings, but in the construction costs, which are estimated at around £3 million for a primary school of this size.
- 6.34 Under the recently introduced legislation, there may be a duty to operate a statutory competition to operate the new primary school, however, in the case of an Infant and Junior amalgamation, it is possible that this may be waived by the Secretary of State (Appendix 6b).

C Closure of Pensby Park Primary School AND amalgamate Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior to form an all-through primary school

- 6.35 This is effectively a combination of Options A and B.
- 6.36 The Governing bodies of Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior School supported this option, but with a **variation** which would stagger the change, so that Pensby Park would close first, with the Infant and Junior School amalgamation delayed until a new school building was ready to be occupied. Former Pensby Park parents who have specified that they do not want separate Infant and Junior schools would then have to either travel elsewhere, or accept attendance at the separate schools as a temporary change pending the new school building. The rationale behind this request for a staged implementation appeared to be to ensure that funding for a new school building is in place, and does not disappear if the amalgamation occurs ahead of the commencement of building work. From a practical perspective in relation to design and construction of the new school, it would be significantly less complicated and time-consuming to work in partnership with a single headteacher and governing body, rather than two, or indeed three including Pensby Park.
- 6.37 One consideration with regard to this option is that as an Infant and Junior amalgamation (rather than as in Option D, the amalgamation of all three schools), the Authority could ask permission from the Secretary of State to waive the duty to advertise a competition to open the new primary school, reducing the length of time before a decision was reached.
- 6.38 It is a legal requirement of statutory proposals that the Council (or other sponsor) identifies the source of funding for any changes that result from a proposal, whether extension or new build, prior to consideration by the decision maker. Appendix 9 to this report is the DfES Schools Building and Design Unit cost guidelines. In order to accommodate all 279 pupils from the existing Pensby Park, Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior, the minimum gross floor area required under Building Bulletin 99 would be approximately 1480 m². Using the DfES cost guidelines and allowing for 3% annual

inflation since 2003, the cost of building a new school of this size (excluding Children's Centre or extended school services) is likely to be in the region of £2 million, however officers experience would be nearer to £3 million. Paragraph 9.0 of this report indicates some potential sources of funding. In some circumstances, such as PFI arrangements, Building Schools for the Future, or when awaiting capital receipts from site sales, the decision maker can give conditional approval of a proposal with a defined date by which the funding must be secured. This should resolve governor's concerns about amalgamating ahead of the commencement of building work on site, whether new build or extension and refurbishment.

D Amalgamate Pensby Park Primary School, Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior School to form an all-through primary school on the current Infant/Junior site (D1) or the current Pensby Park site (D2)

- 6.39 Although this is the most radical of the options under consultation, the outcome would be a new primary school with 279 pupils on roll (January 2007), which is not by any means a large primary school in Wirral terms. This should produce a school of a viable size, providing stability to primary education in the Pensby area for the foreseeable future.
- 6.40 As an amalgamation of three schools, the statutory duty to operate a competition for a new school would apply. While there are unlikely to be a many bids to run the new school, it is estimated that the necessary consultation and legal processes would add around 6 months to the whole procedure of closure and amalgamation. Experience from other phases of the Review, and from consultees, it is desirable that decisions are made as quickly as possible to avoid uncertainty in the community regarding the future of primary schools in this area.

E To include in any of the above options the establishment of a Church of England primary school in Pensby

- 6.41 This option was raised as a possibility by the Diocese of Chester, based on strong links between local churches and schools in this area.
- 6.42 Those allied to Pensby Park who stated their preference for a CE school in Pensby, saw this option as a way to "save the school" by communicating to the community at large that the school was not about to close and therefore raise admissions. The possibility of additional funding from Church of England status has been raised. The only additional funding available from central government to Church schools is the LA co-ordinated Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP), which provides capital funding for Aided schools (not for Controlled schools) towards building works identified as a priority by the school, the Diocese and the Authority. This funding cannot be used for non-capital expenditure such as staff salaries or the purchase of resources.
- 6.43 If Pensby Park were to become a Church of England primary school, the existing school would close and a new school opened on the same site. This new school would be subject to the duty to hold a competition. Respondents from Pensby Park have been keen to emphasise the unique ethos of the school. It should be borne in mind that gaining Church of England status is not simply a matter of changing the school's name. If approved, as in any such closure, all staff would be made redundant, although of course the new school would need staff. The new governing body would be different in composition to that of the existing school. There is no way of predicting whether a Church of England school on the Pensby Park site would prove any more popular with parents than the existing school. The limitations of the building mean that this would always be a small school, with the possibility that if the number on roll did not improve, the school could be reviewed again within a few years.

- 6.44 Most consultees did not comment on the prospect of a new school having Church of England status. A single comment was made about money being wasted on creating a Church of England school, and another that any such school should be Controlled, not Aided, so that the admission policy of the school would be open to all.
- 6.45 There are already two Church of England Aided schools in the surrounding locality, Dawpool CE Primary School in Thurstaston and St Peter's CE Primary School in Heswall. Parents from the Pensby area do not live in zone or Parish for either of these schools, but 11% (49 pupils) from the community catchments have obtained places at them. Excepting some respondents from Pensby Park, consultation on this issue has produced an ambivalent reaction from local parents, and it is possible that the desire for denominational education in this area is largely being met by Ladymount Catholic Primary School and these two CE primary schools.
- 6.46 If under any of the options, a competition is required, the Diocese of Chester may decide to enter a bid to operate a new school in this area and will be provided with every support by the Authority according to the regulations. If the Authority enters its own bid, the final decision maker would then be the Schools Adjudicator.

Other suggestions for changes to schools in this area

- 6.47 **Build a new all-through primary school on same site as Pensby High School for Boys and Pensby High School for Girls**

This is a variant on Option C or Option D, using a location other than existing primary school sites. Campus style accommodation with primary and secondary schools sharing certain facilities, such as sports halls, operate successfully all over the country, and the Authority has no particular reason to object to such an arrangement.

Considerations include increased traffic congestion, parking, and issues of security. The Pensby High site is towards the edge of Pensby, whereas current primary sites are more centrally located within Pensby. In addition, the minimum size of the site which would be required for a primary school of 280 pupils may be unacceptable to the secondary school, as this area would effectively be "lost".

There are likely to be planning issues in relation to loss of greenbelt land.

This suggestion is not recommended for further consideration.

- 6.48 **Option C is recommended as the Council's preferred option, without the Governing body's variation to apply the proposals in stages. Prior to publication of proposals, detailed work must be carried out to provide indicative costs for a new build primary school of an appropriate size, relative to the costs of refurbishing and extending either of the existing buildings, as well as an appropriate funding source secured, should the option be chosen. I will bring a report to Cabinet with a full option appraisal later this year examining it in detail, with further advice on options for a Children's Centre in this area.**

Implications of the Review Process for Pupils

Admission Arrangements: present and future pupils

- 7.0 The closure and/or amalgamation of primary schools will have implications for the Authority's admission arrangements. The DFES have advised that there is no requirement to consult separately on any changes to admission arrangements as long as full details are provided to parents in the statutory public notices on the proposed alterations to the school provision. This would include details on how the Authority would propose to manage the transfer of pupils to alternative schools, and also deal with applications from parents living in the areas concerned for places in Foundation 2.

Re-zoning of areas

- 7.1 In the event of any reorganisation, school catchment areas would have to be reviewed. In the case of an amalgamation it might be assumed that the catchment areas of the schools involved could simply be merged but it is likely that we would take the opportunity to consider any other necessary adjustments. In the case of a school closure, zones of neighbouring schools would have to be re-drawn. Changes would need to take into account consideration of home address in relation to nearest appropriate schools, the new capacity of schools in the area, and other factors such as planned housing development.

In relation to the potential transfer of existing pupils to alternative schools, the Authority would invite parents to indicate a preference. If their preference was for a placement in a community or controlled school, then the Authority would seek to meet that preference, within the admission criteria set out in the Authority's booklets for parents.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

- 7.2 If any pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs then the Statement will be amended to reflect the new school, and the provision specified in the Statement will be delivered appropriately. Any pupils who are currently placed in designated special provision such as a Special Needs Class would be transferred to an alternative placement according to parental preference. For all those pupils on the SEN register who are affected, the Authority would deploy an element of any savings to provide enhanced support at their new school. Details of how such a scheme may operate would need to be developed.

Staffing Implications

8.0 Amalgamation

An amalgamation requires both schools to close, and a new school to open. A 'shadow' governing body is established, and decides on the appropriate staff structure. Posts are ring-fenced initially to staff from both schools, and appointments made. Options such as early voluntary retirement would be made available, if appropriate, after consultation with staff. Every effort will be made to find suitable alternative employment for staff not appointed to the new school

8.1 Closure of Schools

If a school closes, staff would technically be redundant. However, the neighbouring schools to which pupils relocate will require additional staff, and these schools would be requested to give prior and preferential treatment to redundant staff.

8.2 Redeployment

In previous years, Wirral has had an excellent record of finding alternative employment for school staff. When posts are advertised in Wirral, schools are requested to give redundant staff who meet the advertised criteria, either a prior and preferential interview or an interview in competition with other candidates.

Financial Implications

- 9.0 The recommendations contained in this report have capital implications in respect of the re-location of current pupils and the re-allocation of future pupils to schools. The level of capital required will depend upon the final, approved proposals and will require further, detailed development work. An amount of £500,000 is included in the draft 2007/08 Schools Capital Programme for "scheme development resulting from primary reviews" due to be considered at the Executive Board meeting of 7th June 2007, which will allow schemes to be drawn up, costed and tendered, with any balance contributing

to build costs. The balance of the capital build costs would need to be drawn from the following sources: DfES Modernisation Grant, council capital including capital receipts from the disposal of surplus assets, Prudential Borrowing and capital forming part of other national initiatives. It is a requirement that funding is clearly identified when proposals are submitted to the decision maker for approval.

- 9.1 The recommendations contained in this report include the closure and amalgamation of schools, which in turn will produce revenue savings, to the benefit of other schools as the funding is re-distributed. In the short term the Authority could be required to fund any staff severance costs following closures and amalgamation but they may be partly or entirely offset by savings.

Equal Opportunities Implications

- 10.0 There are none arising out of this report.

Human Rights Implications

- 11.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Local Agenda 21 Statement

- 12.0 The removal of old, inefficient accommodation contributes to Council principles and targets in respect of Agenda 21.

Community Safety Implications

- 13.0 Rationalisation and refurbishment of schools allow the most vulnerable accommodation to be removed and other security improvements carried out.

Planning Implications

- 14.0 The relationship between housing development policy and school place provision is a factor in considering surplus place removal.
- 14.1 Construction of any new classroom provision would be subject to the usual planning permissions.

Local Member Support Implications

- 15.0 Primary place planning and potential surplus place removal have relevance to all Wards.
- 15.1 The current consultation affects the following Wards directly: Seacombe, Leasowe and Moreton East, Pensby.

Background Papers

- 16.0 Audit Commission Report: Planning School Places in Wirral September 2004.
School Organisation Plan.
LA document "Pursuit of Excellence: Primary Education in Wirral".
School pupil number returns, January 2007 (Annual Census return to DfES).
School Net Capacity Calculation, July 2006, to DfES requirements.
Consultation Documents
Other data held in Department including that provided by Wirral Health Authority.
- 17.0 **Appendices**
See list attached.

Summary

18.0 No one closes schools lightly. However, there is general agreement amongst all stakeholders that action must be taken to address the issue of surplus capacity. Officers are required to offer clear advice as to appropriate action in order to spend public money wisely and ensure all Wirral's children benefit equitably from the funding available. The recommendations below I believe will ensure best value for the future generations of children in the review areas, and more equitable spending for the benefit of all Wirral's pupils, from the savings made.

19.0 Recommendations

A) I recommend that statutory proposals be published in respect of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 below:

1 Closure of Poulton Primary School

2 Extend the lower age range of Park Primary School to provide an LA designated F1 class

These two proposals to be regarded as linked.

3 Closure of Pensby Park Primary School

This proposal to be regarded as separate.

4 Closure of Pensby Infant School

5 Closure of Pensby Junior School

6 Establishment of a new Community Primary School at the Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior site

These three proposals to be regarded as linked.

- B) That I be authorised to take all necessary steps to publish these proposals, ensure the prescribed procedures are followed, including requesting permissions from the Secretary of State and proposals for the re-zoning of schools, in furtherance of the proposals.
- C) That I be authorised to give all necessary support to the governing body of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, the Anglican Diocese of Chester, and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury with regard to publishing proposals to close Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and to establish a new joint denominational school on the Our Lady of Lourdes site.
- D) That the position of community primary schools in the Leasowe planning area be monitored and reviewed in a future review phase pending the outcome of C) above.
- E) That the position of Brentwood Early Years Centre be re-assessed in conjunction with primary schools in a future review of the South Wallasey planning area.
- F) That prior to publication of statutory proposals in regard to items 4, 5 and 6 above, I be authorised to instigate an evaluation of potential sources of funding related to building work at the Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior site and return to Cabinet with an option appraisal report on this matter.

Howard Cooper

Director of Children's Services

List of Appendices

Appendix	Description
1	Extract from School Organisation Plan: Policies and Principles
2	Cabinet Report and resolution from 14 th December 2006
<i>Consultation</i>	
3a	Analysis of Consultation
3b	Summary of responses
<i>Diocesan issues</i>	
4	Response submission, Anglican Diocese of Chester
5	Response submission, Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury
<i>Education and Inspections Act 2006</i>	
6	Summary of new regulations on school re-organisation
<i>Standards</i>	
7a	Standards – KS2 data; Value Added
7b	Standards – Extracts from Ofsted reports
<i>Issues concerned with size and viability</i>	
8a	Extract from “ In Pursuit of Excellence”, written by Wirral Headteachers and the Primary Team, School Effectiveness
8b	Extract from “Small Schools: How well are they doing?” (Ofsted 2000)
8c	Size and viability in consultation areas
<i>Building Costs</i>	
9	DfES School Building and Design Unit – Information on costs and performance data, April 2003

Minutes - Cabinet - 20 June 2007

Present

Chair: S Foulkes

Councillors: PLDavies, G Gardiner, PJ Hackett, SA Holbrook, SE Kelly, RK Moon, Jean Quinn

In attendance: JE Green, Mrs LA Rennie

Apologies: George Davies, M McLaughlin

Minute 84 - CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING - REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS ON OPTIONS PUT FORWARD FOR THE PHASE 3 PLANNING AREAS

The Director of Children's Services presented a report which advised the Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation process which had taken place in the Pensby and Thingwall, South Wallasey and Leasowe planning areas, in respect of the options for consultation agreed at Cabinet on 14th December 2006. The report described the responses to the various options put forward for discussion, including additional suggestions put forward during the consultation process, and made recommendations with regard to statutory proposals in each area under review.

With the permission of the Chair, Mike Collins, Chair of Governors at Pensby Junior School addressed the Cabinet. Mr Collins referred to the governors wish to see a new school built to serve the existing infant and junior schools, but expressed the view that the schools should not be amalgamated until such time as the new build was completed.

With the permission of the Chair, Councillor Sarah Quinn, a member of the governing body of Pensby Infant School, addressed the Cabinet. Councillor Quinn added her support to the issues raised by Mr Collins previously and expressed a wish to see the two schools (and their governing bodies) remaining separate until such time as the new joint school was completed.

With the permission of the Chair, Tom Howarth, headteacher of Poulton Primary School, addressed the Cabinet. Mr Howarth requested that children at Poulton Primary School be guaranteed places at The Park Primary School to discourage parents attempting to move their children prior to the school closing.

With the permission of the Chair, Ted Tindall, chair of governors at Pensby Park Primary School, addressed the Cabinet. Mr Tindall stressed that the

school had always attempted to balance its books and that, by proposing closure, the Cabinet would be losing an excellent school.

The Director of Children's Services responded to issues raised by the speakers. Mr Cooper felt it was preferable to appoint a new shadow governing body for the proposed Pensby Primary School at the earliest opportunity to enable the headteacher and other senior staff to be appointed. To avoid disruption to the pupils, it was proposed that the two existing school buildings would remain open until the new school was completed. There would be a further report on the location of the final round of children's centres to the Cabinet in due course. In terms of Mr Howarth's points, Mr Cooper referred to the previous rounds of reviews that had been managed successfully and indicated that further work would be undertaken on how the transition would occur.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning thanked everyone that had contributed to this phase of the review and the consultation process. In addition, he thanked the Director and his staff for co-ordinating the review and reiterated that the purpose was to ensure that public money was used wisely. Councillor Davies supported the views of Mr Howarth and indicated that he would ensure that the transition was as smooth as possible. With reference to the proposals for the Leasowe area, he felt it made sense to work with the two Dioceses. With regards to the proposals for Pensby, he suggested that there were exciting funding proposals around but in terms of the amalgamation, he was more in favour of taking the action forward at the earliest opportunity.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group indicated that proposals to close schools were never easy decisions. He paid tribute to the staff and governors of the schools concerned and stressed that the decisions did not reflect on the performance of the schools. He noted that the governing bodies of Pensby Infant and Junior Schools welcomed the proposals for a new school. He suggested that the governors could form a joint project board to make decisions on the new school but felt that managing the transition from two schools to the new build would be easier with one school governing body. Councillor Holbrook indicated that he supported the site of Pensby Park Primary school to be the most appropriate for a new Children's Centre.

The Director of Children's Services indicated that it was essential to keep the issue of the Children's Centre separate to the proposals under consideration and a full options appraisal would be required. In terms of timing, the proposals would be in place for September 2008.

With the permission of the Chair, the Leader of the Conservative Group addressed the Cabinet. He placed his thanks on record to all those who had taken part in the consultation exercises and those members of staff that had worked on the review. He stressed that the money saved by the review would be spread out across all other primary schools in Wirral, and not kept centrally by the Council. He associated himself with the remarks of Councillor Davies regarding the Leasowe area. He indicated that he was a supporter of separate

infant and junior schools but indicated a preference for keeping the two schools separate until such time as further plans were available regarding the new build school, operating the two schools as at present until the capital become available for the proposed new building. He felt that the discussions regarding the new Children's Centre should be kept separate. Councillor Green queried whether there was a plan for Pensby Park Primary School if further children left the school over the 2007/8 academic year and whether the new competition regulations would apply to Pensby.

The Director of Children's Services responded that Pensby Park would be able to work in collaboration with neighbouring schools prior to the proposed closure, and that this would be assisted by his officers within Children's Services. Mr Cooper indicated that the amalgamation of infant and junior schools was exempt from the competition regulations.

Councillor Holbrook queried whether the site at Poulton Primary School could be retained as a transitional measure.

The Director of Children's Services indicated that the proposals could involve significant development at the Park site and the use of the Poulton site would be considered.

The Leader of the Council stated that this was one of the most difficult decisions that the Cabinet was required to make. This was the third phase of the review and would ensure that more money per pupil would be available across the borough. He indicated that he had seen the benefits of the Children's Centre within his own ward and supported the establishment of a centre at Pensby Park Primary School site. In terms of Pensby Infant and Junior Schools, he felt it was better to amalgamate the schools now.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning moved an additional motion, duly seconded, regarding the decision of the School's Adjudicator regarding St Mary's CE Primary School in Eastham.

Minute Decision :
Resolved - That

(1) statutory proposals be published in respect of a, b, c, d, e and f below:

a Closure of Poulton Primary School

b Extend the lower age range of Park Primary School to provide an LA designated F1 class

These two proposals to be regarded as linked.

c Closure of Pensby Park Primary School

This proposal to be regarded as separate.

d Closure of Pensby Infant School

e Closure of Pensby Junior School

f Establishment of a new Community Primary School at the Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior site

These three proposals to be regarded as linked.

(2) the Director of Children's Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to publish these proposals, ensure the prescribed procedures are followed, including requesting permissions from the Secretary of State and proposals for the re-zoning of schools, in furtherance of the proposals;

(3) the Director of Children's Services be authorised to give all necessary support to the governing body of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, the Anglican Diocese of Chester, and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury with regard to publishing proposals to close Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and to establish a new joint denominational school on the Our Lady of Lourdes site;

(4) the position of community primary schools in the Leasowe planning area be monitored and reviewed in a future review phase pending the outcome of (3) above;

(5) the position of Brentwood Early Years Centre be re-assessed in conjunction with primary schools in a future review of the South Wallasey planning area;

(6) prior to publication of statutory proposals in regard to items 1(d), 1(e) and 1(f) above, the Director of Children's Services be authorised to instigate an evaluation of potential sources of funding related to building work at the Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior site and return to Cabinet with an option appraisal report on this matter; and

(7) the decision of the School's Adjudicator to support the Council's decision to close St Mary's CE Primary School in Eastham be noted and the Cabinet's thanks be extended to all the staff and governors at St Mary's CE Primary School.

Footnote :

Councillors Jeff Green and Jean Quinn declared a personal interest in this matter (minute 83 refers).

APPENDIX C

Key points from DCSF guidance on School Re-organisation

Closure of maintained schools

This would apply to the closure of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School.

Who can propose the closure of a school?

The LA can propose the closure of any school.

The governing body of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School could choose to propose the closure of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Linked proposals

If proposals are related to others they would be published together, for example, the proposed closure of Our Lady of Lourdes (either by the LA or the governing body) could be published together with the related establishment of a new joint denominational school on the same site by the two Diocesan Authorities.

Representations

A six week representation period follows publication of notices. Representations are to be sent to the LA.

Decision Makers

This is either the LA, or the Schools Adjudicator. The Adjudicator's decision is final but there are limited rights of appeal following LA decisions.

The School Organisation Committee has been abolished. The form of the LA Decision Maker is not prescribed and has been determined in Wirral as full Cabinet.

What if there are no objections?

As long as the closure proposal was made by the LA, and there are no linked proposals which receive objections, the proposal can be determined by the LA within 2 months. This does not require the LA Decision Maker. Conditional approval cannot be given.

There is no right of appeal to the decision.

And if there are objections?

If there are objections to the closure, or if the linked proposal to establish a Joint Church school receives objections, the proposals must be passed to the LA Decision Maker, who must make a decision within 2 months of the end of the representation period.

In relation to primary school closures, conditional approval can be given in relation to:

- Changes to admission arrangements at another school
- The occurrence of any other condition with a specified date for any other school or proposed school

The date for conditional approval is set by the LA Decision Maker, but can be extended before the expiry date if the proposer, i.e. LA, requests this modification. If the condition is not met by the specified date, the proposal must be considered afresh by the LA Decision Maker.

If the proposals are not decided within 2 months, the proposal must be passed to the Schools Adjudicator with one week of the end of the 2 month period.

Who can appeal against an LA decision?

Where objections have been received, the following bodies may appeal against the LA Decision Maker's decision in relation to primary schools:

- The Anglican Diocese of Chester
- The Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury
- The governing body/trustees of a Foundation or Voluntary school that is proposed for closure – such as Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School.

What happens if an appeal is made?

Appeals must be submitted to the LA within 4 weeks of the notification of the LA's decision. The LA then sends the proposal to the Schools Adjudicator within 1 week of receipt of the appeal. This includes any related proposals.

What factors are taken into account by Decision Makers?

These are the factors that must be examined in this instance. Other factors are listed in guidance, but not relevant in these circumstances.

- Will the proposal raise local standards of provision, and lead to improved attainment for children and young people? Are attainment gaps likely to be narrowed?
- Will SEN provision be improved, including wider school activities? Transport, funding, staffing and placement arrangements must be clearly stated.
- Local diversity, the range of schools in the area, the impact on the aspirations of parents and whether the proposal will help raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.
- Closure of schools with a religious character should not normally be approved where the proposal would result in a reduction in the proportion of denominational places in the area, unless the school concerned is severely under-subscribed, standards have been consistently low or where an infant and junior school (at least one of which has a religious character) are to be replaced by a new all-through primary school with the same religious character on the site of one on the predecessor schools.
- Will the proposal help children achieve the Every Child Matters principles? This includes extended services, personal development, and support for children and young people with particular needs.
- Is there sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils taking into account likely future demand? The quality and popularity of schools with surplus places should be considered.
- Proposals to close schools with 25% or more unfilled places, and at least 30 surplus places, where standards are low for the Authority, should normally be approved. For all other proposals, standards, geographical, social and community use should be considered.
- Alternative sources of extended services

- The effects of any other changes to school provision in the area
- Accessibility planning, particularly for disadvantaged groups
- Proposals should not unreasonably extend journey times or increase transport costs, or result in too many children being unable to walk or cycle to school.
- Any sex, race or disability discrimination issues
- If the school currently includes early years provision, whether alternative provision will integrate pre-school education with childcare and other services for young children and their families, and whether educational standards and access for parents will be maintained or enhanced at alternative provision, which could be private, voluntary or independent.
- The Decision Maker should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on proposals. Instead the greatest weight should be given to representations from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by the proposals.

What decisions can be made?

The Decision Maker can decide to reject, approve, approve with a modification (such as the closure date) or conditionally approve (see above). A reason for the decision must be given.

What if the proposal needs to be withdrawn?

As long as the decision has not been made, the proposal can be withdrawn in writing by the proposer.

What if the proposal needs to be modified after the decision has been made?

The proposer must apply to the Decision Maker for a simple modification, such as a change to the date of implementation.

More complicated changes which substantially change the nature of the proposal would require a revocation notice, followed by fresh proposals which then follow the statutory process.

Approval of a revocation notice would only be given by the Decision Maker if circumstances have changed so substantially that implementation would be inappropriate, or if implementation of the original proposal would be unreasonably difficult.

Establishment of a new maintained school

This would apply to the establishment of a new Joint Church school.

Establishing a new school

Most new schools are now expected to be established by a “competition”, where the LA invites proposals to establish the new school. This process involves the invitation of bidders, and is expected to add at least 6 months to the process for the establishment of a new school.

Are there exemptions to a competition?

There are situations which qualify for an automatic exemption, but none of these apply in relation to this proposal.

Consequently, permission not to hold a competition must be sought from the Secretary of State.

The LA can apply for consent from the Secretary of State to publish proposals for a new school without running a competition. This does not mean permission to establish a new school has been granted, and the proposal would be subject to the usual statutory process.

Other proposers, in this case the Diocese of Chester and Diocese of Shrewsbury, can also apply for the Secretary of State’s consent to publish proposals for a new school without a competition, and this is their indicated intention in this case.

When will the Secretary of State give consent to not hold a competition?

In relation to this proposal, guidance indicates that consent might be given in the case where there is to be a reorganisation of religious schools in the area, and schools with a particular religious character are to be replaced by schools with the same religious character or where an independent proposer proposes a new school to increase diversity in the area, rather than in response to an LA’s need to reorganise.

What factors are taken into account?

Each application would be considered on its merits. In relation to this proposal, guidance indicates that the following factors will be considered:

- The contribution the school would make to levels of local diversity (including distinct character and ethos) of provision within the area
- the views of interested parties e.g. parents and the local community;
- whether the proposals will contribute to raising standards: taking into consideration performance across the LA and local schools;
- whether the core offer of extended services will be provided and if there will be a varied menu of interesting activities.
- urgency for the new school to be in place and the impact of the competition process.

Who would be the Decision Maker?

Whether or not there is a competition, the final decision on the establishment of a new joint denominational school proposal would be decided by the LA Decision Maker, which is Council's Cabinet.

Who can appeal the decision?

As the LA is the Decision Maker, there is no provision to appeal the decision.

If the decision is not made within 2 months of the end of the representation period, the proposals must be referred to the Adjudicator. The Adjudicator's decision is final.

IF A COMPETITION IS REQUIRED

What are the stages of competition?

- 1 Consultation, including on any linked closures – recommended minimum of 6 weeks, no upper limit, including at least one public meeting. Followed by:
Invitation to bid (notice published)
- 2 Proposer engagement and submission of proposals – minimum of four months from invitation to bid
- 3 Publication of proposals (notice published) and promotion of public awareness – within 3 weeks of the expiry date for submitting proposals. Any linked closure proposals would be published at the same time.
- 4 Representations – 6 weeks, with a public meeting within the first 2 weeks
- 5 Decision – within 2 months of end of representation period (LA) or whenever (Adjudicator)
- 6 Implementation – as specified in the proposal notice

Does this mean we will need to consult again?

No. The recent consultation covers the location and specification of the new school, which means the proposals can proceed to invitation to bid.

Advertising for proposers

The DCSF appoints mandatory consultants to market the competition, place adverts and act as a first point of contact. When potential proposers have been identified, the consultants will hold a seminar to provide advice to proposers.

The LA has the opportunity to attend the seminar and to take part in the question and answer sessions.

Specification of the new school

The LA decides the outline specification for the new school, including

- Number of places
- Age range including any early years provision
- Mixed or single sex
- Admission number
- Location, playing field provision and transport links
- Opening date

- Estimated capital costs and funding sources
- Provision for pupils with SEN
- The area and community to be served
- Extended services or other community use
- Preferred specialism (secondary)
- Arrangements for transport and sustainable transport alternatives.

Capital funding

The Dioceses of Chester and Shrewsbury have indicated that they will allocate £78,000 of capital funding during 2009/2010 from the LA VCAP grant. The governing body of the new joint church school would be responsible for funding 10% of capital costs.

Sites

In the case of a new Voluntary Aided school in Leasowe, there is an existing site owned by Trustees. The use of existing buildings should always be considered on value for money considerations.

Commentary on the recommended proposal

Closure proposal

Experience tells us that closure proposals are likely to receive objections, and would consequently pass to the LA Decision Maker. If necessary, conditional approval can be given in relation to events at other schools.

Referral to the Adjudicator on these decisions can only be made on appeal by the two Diocesan Authorities, or by the governing body of Our Lady of Lourdes in relation to closure of their own school if proposed by the LA. As the closure of Our Lady of Lourdes is linked to the establishment of a new joint denominational school, appeal would be unlikely as indications are that all three parties will support the proposal.

New school proposal

A new joint denominational school in Leasowe may not receive consent from the Secretary of State to waive the duty to hold a competition, as the new school would have a different religious character from its predecessor, however guidance also says that all applications will be considered on their merits.

If a competition must be held, the Diocesan bodies would submit a joint proposal to establish a new Aided school to the competition. If the LA does not enter an alternative proposal, the LA Decision Maker would take the final decision. The current Our Lady of Lourdes site is owned by Trustees of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. Any conveyancing issues would need to be resolved between the two Diocese.

**OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL
GARDENSIDE, LEASOWE, WIRRAL**

**Proposed
Joint-Church
Primary School**

**Consultation Document
November 2008**

**Mr F M Clarke
Director of Schools
Diocese of Shrewsbury**

**Mr J Turnbull
Director of Education
Diocese of Chester**

**Mr H Cooper
Director of Children & Young People's Department
Wirral Council**

INTRODUCTION

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School in Leasowe was established as a one form entry voluntary aided school for pupils aged 4 to 11. It rests within the Trusteeship of the Diocese of Shrewsbury and is maintained by Wirral Authority. The school has undergone a large investment in buildings and facilities to provide an improved working environment and further developments are planned for the near future.

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School was established to meet the education needs of Catholic children within the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes and a designated section of English Martyrs Parish. The school itself was originally built in 1963 with a further extension in 1967. It is well supported by applications on behalf of Catholic children from the Leasowe Estate, plus some entrants from that private housing which surrounds the estate.

The school provides full time education for pupils aged 4 to 11 years and nursery education on a part time basis. The 2005 OFSTED Report commented thus on the school:

“Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School is providing a good education for its pupils. This is the result of the very good leadership of the Headteacher and the hard work and commitment of the teachers. The pupils make at least satisfactory progress and in the Foundation Stage they achieve well. The pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are good, reflecting an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust founded on the school’s Christian ethos. The pupils benefit from visits and participate enthusiastically in an appropriate range of extra curricular activities”.

There is no doubting that Our Lady of Lourdes is a distinctive believing and integrated Christian community with a culture where every child is encouraged to develop their talents to the full in a spirit of mutual trust and co-operation.

SO WHY LOOK TO CHANGE ...

In considering the creation of a Joint Church Primary School within Leasowe the Dioceses of Chester and Shrewsbury with the support of Wirral Authority see the opportunity to secure a range of benefits whilst maintaining the existing strengths and qualities of Our Lady of Lourdes. A Shared Church School will

- Build on and carry forward the recognised strengths and successes of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School; so seeking to achieve the highest possible quality of education and care.
- The planned capacity of one Form of Entry will strengthen and ensure the future of the school and, therefore, the enhancement of faith based education in Leasowe and its environs.
- Promote the formation of a flourishing Christian community in which unity and diversity can be celebrated.
- Offer major improvements in the school environment to further develop the quality of teaching and learning and enhance community cohesion.
- Retain the distinctive and special atmosphere and ethos enjoyed by the whole community.
- Meet the needs as yet unfulfilled, for Church of England primary education within North Wallasey.
- Bring the support of both Dioceses to the children, staff and community of the school.

BEFORE LOOKING TO THAT CHANGE

Though both Dioceses witnessed a positive response to the idea of a Joint Church School during Wirral Authority's Review of primary places in Leasowe, it was felt essential to research definite proposals to bring forward for consideration by parents and other stakeholders. To this end:

- Eight meetings have taken place so far involving diocesan officers ranging across issues associated with the establishment of Joint Church Schools including Trust Deeds, Governance, Admissions, Religious Education Schemes and Collective Worship
- External input to three meeting has been provided by David Rushton, Deputy Director of Schools for Salford Diocese; Frank Cogley, Director of Schools for the Archdiocese of Liverpool and Frank McDermott, formerly Director of Schools for Hallam Diocese, who has overseen the establishment of three Joint Church Schools.
- Visits have taken place to St Joseph's Catholic and Church of Wales College (Wrexham), Holy Family Catholic and Church of England College (Heywood), Faith and Emmaus Primary Schools (Liverpool).

Arising from this process the following proposals have been drawn together for consultation after being monitored by a Bishops' Working Party and finally approved by the Bishops of Shrewsbury and Chester.

PROPOSALS : JOINT CHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

It will remain a one form entry primary school with 30 places per year group and 210 pupils in total. In addition there would be 26 places in a maintained nursery on-site within the primary school.

The school will be a Voluntary Aided Primary School of a religious character in joint trusteeship of the RC Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Church of England Diocese of Chester, aided by Wirral Local Authority and its principles may be set out under the following headings.

Vision/Mission

The school will be a Christian Primary School, fully Roman Catholic and fully Church of England, serving at all times as a witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ and offering the highest possible quality of education. The wholehearted desire to emphasise what we hold in common should not lessen the commitment to the full expression of each tradition. The children must know and appreciate more not less of each tradition and have a respect for other Faiths.

Legal Matters

Property issues including Trust Deed will be dealt with by the relevant diocesan bodies and their solicitors. From April 2009 financing of build and maintenance at the new school will be undertaken by the Dioceses of Shrewsbury and Chester on a 60:40 ratio.

Governors

Foundation Governors will be appointed by the Bishop of Shrewsbury and by the Bishop of Chester according to an agreed 60:40 proportion reflecting the ratio of Catholic/Anglican admissions. At the appropriate time a shadow governing body for the new school will be formed. The role of the Foundation Governors will be to uphold the provisions of the Trust Deeds on behalf of the Bishops and thereby to safeguard and further develop the religious character of the school.

Staffing

The initial appointment of staff will be ring-fenced to the staff of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. Thereafter vacancies for the post of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, and RE Co-ordinator will be reserved to 'practising' members of the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church. For all other future teaching posts priority will be given first to 'practising' members of the two churches whenever possible and thereafter to practising members of churches within Churches together.

Admissions

Current children and siblings attending Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School to be automatically admitted – should they choose to be. Once the school is established, priority – after the legal commitment to children in public care– will be given to baptised members of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England on a 60:40 ratio from within the designated Roman Catholic parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, English Martyrs and the Anglican Parishes in Leasowe, Liscard, New Brighton, Poulton, Seacombe and Wallasey.

Uniform

Decisions on uniform rest with the Temporary Governing Body for the new school but it is accepted that all children can continue with the existing uniform until it needs replacing. In order to establish compatibility in dress the Diocese will propose to the Governing Body that it retains a similar style of uniform to that used at present.

Secondary Education

Given that parents of children currently at Our Lady of Lourdes applied there knowing that its partner secondary school was St Mary's Catholic College and, in the absence of a Church of England Secondary School in Wallasey, the new primary school will retain its partnership status with the College.

Building/Environment

As indicated earlier the Diocese of Shrewsbury has already spent considerable sums on accommodation at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. The two Dioceses will continue to develop those improvements in order to provide that level of build appropriate to the deliver of educational priorities in the 21st Century. In addition and to reflect the distinctive nature of a joint Catholic/Church of England School a new Joint Church School Centre will be established within the Parish Church of Our Lady of Lourdes. Diocesan Building Officers to liaise with all appropriate stakeholders and partners.

Name of new school

To be determined.

Worship

The aim is to give expression to the Instrument of Government, being as inclusive as possible, concentrating on what unites within the Christian community not what divides, authentically expressing both traditions so learning from each other. The Bishops will decide on the appropriateness of the Eucharist within the life of the school.

Religious Education Curriculum

Governors will be requested to approve a policy that will reflect the joint nature of the school based on the 'Here I Am' programme. That policy will apply to children joining Reception in September 2009 and a curriculum time devoted to Religious Education will be ten percent

Section 48 Inspections

To be agreed jointly by the two Dioceses to focus on the distinctive nature of the school.

Parish Links/Chaplaincy/Pastoral Support

Close liaison will be maintained with both parties in order to bring children and families more actively into the life of the Churches. A team approach will be adopted to include where possible parish clergy and appropriate approved lay workers from parishes.

Neighbouring Schools

In drawing together the proposals the Dioceses have worked to ensure that these will not be detrimental to other schools in the local area. Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School was designated as a one form entry school and if the proposed Joint Church School is established the Admission Number will be 25 in September 2009. Thereafter the proposed school will be designated as one form entry and both Dioceses give categoric assurance that there is no intention to extend that figure beyond 30 pupils in the future. What the new school would allow however is the continued option for parents in the Leasowe area and beyond to express a preference for a Community school or a Denominational school. The Dioceses would also wish to build on the existing links between schools in the two sectors and so encourage a spirit of partnership to the benefit of all.

NOTES

HOW DO I COMMENT ON THE PROPOSALS

- You can complete the attached form or complete the on line version which can be accessed via the Council's website at: <http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces>. Emails can be sent to primaryplaces@wirral.gov.uk.
- Receipt of communications will be acknowledged and those with specific enquiries will be responded to in detail.
- Further information can be found on the website <http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/Leasowe.asp>. You can also contact the Children and Young People's Department by email to the address above, or in writing to:
Joint Church Primary School Consultation
Children & Young People's Department
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
CH41 4FD
- If you wish to make comments direct to the Dioceses these should be addressed to Mr F M Clarke, Director of Schools, Diocese of Shrewsbury, 2 Park Road South, Prenton, CH43 4UX, and/or Mr J Turnbull, Director of Education, Diocese of Chester, Church House, Lower Lane, Aldford, Chester, CH3 6HP.

WHAT NEXT?

After consideration of all responses by the Trustees to the Dioceses, the Governing Body and the Council a decision is made on whether to proceed with the proposals. If that is the case then the Dioceses and the Council make an application to the Secretary of State to publish statutory proposals and to waive the requirement for a competition when a new school is proposed. Should this request be granted the Council and the Dioceses jointly arrange the publication of Statutory Notices as per the prescribed regulations with the Authority proposing the closure of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and the Dioceses proposing the opening of a Joint Church Primary School.

Once proposals are published there follows a six week statutory period during which representations (e.g. objections or comments) can be made. These must be sent to the Local Authority. The representation period is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposals and ensure that they will be taken into account by the Council as Decision Maker.

Following that, and after a decision to proceed, the proposals will be implemented with the intention of opening the school on September 1 2009.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

**Proposal to Close Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
And Open a Joint Catholic/Church of England Primary School**

Consultation Response Form

Please tick the relevant boxes to indicate your views and add any comments you wish to make.

Do you agree with the proposal to close
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and
open a Joint Catholic/Church of England Primary School
with effect from 1 September 2009?

Agree Disagree

Comments

Please tick the relevant box(es) to indicate any of the following that apply to you:

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School Neighbouring Schools/Community

Parent /Carer of Present Pupil(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms*
(*delete as appropriate)

ADDRESS

.....POSTCODE.....

SIGNED DATE

Please return this form to: Joint Church Primary School Consultation, Children & Young People's Department, Hamilton Building, Conway Street, Birkenhead, CH41 4FD by Friday January 16 2009. Alternatively, you can complete the online version which can be accessed on the Council's website at: <http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/Leasowe.asp>

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CONNEXIONS TRANSITION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on the arrangements for the future commissioning of Connexions Services.

Cabinet are recommended that :

- i. The existing contract with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership is amended to cover the period to 30th September 2009, pending the completion of procurement processes;
- ii. The new contract for 'connexions services' should cover the period 30th September 2009 to 31st March 2012 with an option of an extension to the contract for a further period of up to 3 years, but for the contract to accommodate an appropriate break clause in the event of poor performance or reduced financial capacity to commission the service to the level previously agreed;
- iii. Halton Borough Council is the lead Authority for procurement of the new arrangements on behalf of the 6 participating Merseyside Local Authorities; and
- iv. Halton Borough Council becomes the contract holding Authority on behalf of the 6 participating Merseyside Local Authorities from the City Region for the new contract when awarded with the appropriate cross Authority commitments.
- v. Wirral Council should enter into an agreement with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Limited to extend the current contract to 30 September 2009 provided the other five Merseyside Local Authorities agree to the extension and to pay their previously agreed proportion of the payments due to the company under the extended contract.

1. Background

1.1 Youth Matters

"Youth Matters" required that by April 2008, responsibility for Commissioning Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and the funding that goes with it to be devolved to Local Authorities working through children's trusts, schools and colleges. Local Authorities are expected to lead a genuinely collaborative approach and develop new arrangements for delivering IAG that clearly meet the needs of Young People in the area. These arrangements will be planned and implemented in a way that not only supports the delivery of the 14 - 19 learning entitlement but are integrated into a wider set of youth support services for teenagers and their parents.

- 1.2 Local Authorities are responsible and accountable for youth policy in their area and are taking responsibility for integrated planning and commissioning of the full range of

services for teenagers from universal activities through to more specialist and targeted support.

This will enable, over time, universal and targeted services to work closely together to provide integrated support for Young People and to improve outcomes for them.

- 1.3 The Connexions Service operates a universal and targeted service for all young people in Wirral aged 13-19 (up to 25 for particular groups of vulnerable young people). Personal Advisers (PA s) are attached to all schools, colleges and training providers delivering high quality Information, advice and guidance on a full range of issues such as careers, further education, training, relationships, physical/sexual health, housing, substance misuse; and placing into employment, education and training.
- 1.4 More recently the publication of PSA Delivery Agreements and in particular PSA 14 focuses upon the objective to 'increase the number of children and young people on the path to success' and has at it's heart the drivers to secure 'increased participation and resilience' by young people measured by their engagement in education, employment and training (EET) and more participation in positive activities. Additionally, it seeks to 'tackle negative outcomes' as measured by indicators of substance misuse, reduction in the under 18 conception rate, and the reduction in the number of first-time entrants to the criminal Justice System aged 10 - 17.

Connexions Services

- 1.5 On 25th March 2008 the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families wrote to Local Authorities notifying them of interim arrangements for the delivery of 'connexions services' and assessments for young people with learning difficulties from 1st April 2008. The Education and Skills Bill, currently before Parliament, proposes that legal responsibilities be brought into line by effecting the transfer to Local Authorities of the statutory responsibility of 'connexions services'. Specifically these include:
 - i. The provision of 'connexions services' under Section 114 of the Learning and Skills Act;
 - ii. The conducting of assessments relating to learning difficulties under Section 140 of the Act; and
 - iii. The provision of careers services under Sections 8 and 9 of the Employment and Training Act 1973.
- 1.6 This came from the last Cabinet report. In preparing for implementation of these arrangements the Cabinet agreed the following in November 2007:
 - a) Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership should have the status of "preferred provider", subject to the agreement of the council following detailed negotiations
 - b) The cost of the contract be limited to a sum no greater than the level of the grant provided for the purpose by HMG, within the Area Based Grant;
 - c) Negotiations should ensure that Wirral's contributions to Greater Merseyside central costs is minimised and seek to maximise the resource spent in Wirral;

- d) A contract should be negotiated for the period 2008 to 2011, with provision for the detailed arrangements to be varied annually as the service develops;
- e) The arrangements should seek the benefits of integrated working across the Wirral Children and Young People's Partnership
- f) Should it not be possible to complete the full process of commissioning by 31st March, 2008, the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Acting Monitoring Officer and Proper Officer, be authorised to enter into a transitional arrangement with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership to ensure a continuity of service to young people;
- g) The Council agrees to provide a financial guarantee for Wirral's share of the Greater Merseyside Connexions potential unfunded pension liabilities; and
- h) Members request that Wirral's MPs provide further assistance regarding amendment to the funding formula.

1.7 Progress towards these arrangements has been overseen by a Transition Steering Group which comprises:

Chief Executives – Halton, Liverpool, St Helens
 Directors of Children's Services – Knowsley, Sefton, Wirral
 Chair – Chief Executive of Halton Borough Council

The work of the Transition Group receives the support of the Liverpool City Leaders Group.

1.8 In 2008 legal advice received by the participating Local Authorities indicated that the commissioning of Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership could only occur for 2008 / 2009 and that EU procurement regulations would need to be followed from 2009 onwards. As a consequence work has been underway to secure the commissioning of 'connexions services' from 2009 - 2011.

1.9 To assist in this work support has been secured from the Merseyside Improvement Partnership (MEIP) which is funding consultants to advise on the details of the specification and procurement process. That work is nearing completion and the next stage will lead into procurement through a process of open competitive dialogue. Additional resources are being sought from the Merseyside Efficiency and Improvement Partnership to fund the project management costs associated with this work.

Contractual Arrangements

1.10 For the period 1st April 2008 until 31st March 2009 arrangements have been in place for Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council to be the contract holding Authority (on behalf of the 6 Merseyside Local Authorities) with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Ltd.

1.11 From the period of the new contract it is proposed that Halton Borough Council becomes the contract holding Authority on behalf of the 6 Merseyside Local Authorities. Contracts will be held with the respective 5 Local Authorities to ensure prompt payment on a monthly basis to Halton BC for their share of the contractual commitments with the provider of 'connexions services'. A model for this arrangement is already in place with Wirral MBC.

- 1.12 The current contract is worth approximately £17.5m, and is funded from the LAA 'single pot', allocations of which have been confirmed until 30th March 2011.
- 1.13 Consideration has been given to the length of any new proposed contract and whether it should be limited by the period of the current funding round. It is proposed, that due to the scale of the contract, and the extensive preparations undertaken across the 6 Local Authorities that letting the new contract for the remaining period of ABG would represent poor value for money. It is therefore proposed that the new contract to be let should run for the period from 30th September 2009 until 31st March 2012 with a further proposed option of extension for up to 3 years. Contractually, an appropriate break clause would be included in the contract enabling it to be reduced or ceased subject to appropriate consideration of factors relating to performance or financial sustainability.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Since the 1st April 2008 funding for 'connexions services' has been directed to Local Authorities through the LAA 'single pot'. Agreement had previously been secured to passport the indicative allocation to enable the commissioning of 'connexions services' collaboratively with the 6 Merseyside Authorities. It was anticipated that the commissioning arrangements would be for 3 years from 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2011. More recent legal advice has confirmed that the current arrangement for commissioning Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership could only be secured for 1 year, and that EU Procurement Regulations would need to be followed thereafter.
- 2.2 Funding would be committed for a period beyond the existing funding period covering the period up to 31st March 2011. Notwithstanding this Local Authorities will continue to have statutory duties for the delivery of 'connexions services'.

3. Staffing Implications

- 3.1 If Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Limited are unsuccessful in winning the contract, most of their employees should transfer under TUPE to the successful tenderer.

4. Equal Opportunities Implications

- 4.1 The success of the Connexions Service is crucial to the delivery of the Every Child Matters Outcomes. One of the key Connexions outcomes is to reduce the number of 16 - 18 year olds in Wirral who are not in employment, education or training. This target is currently within the suite of LAA targets and has recently been announced as part of PSA Delivery Agreement 14 – 19 - to increase the number of children and young people on the pathway to success.

5. Community Safety Implications

- 5.1 High quality information, advice and guidance will inform young people on the benefits and options in achieving economic well being.

6. Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 6.1 These proposals encourage the positive engagement of young people.

7. Planning Implications

7.1 There are none arising directly out of this report.

8. Anti-poverty Implications

8.1 None directly apply to this report.

9. Social Inclusion Implications

9.1 Connexions Service seeks to address social exclusion and promote inclusion.

10. Local Member Support Implications

10.1 Young people who use Connexions Services reside in all parts of the Borough.

11. Background Papers

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Youth Matters

Aiming High for Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities (DCSF – 2007)

Education and Skills Bill

RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) the existing contract with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership be amended to cover the period to 30th September 2009, pending the completion of procurement processes;
- (2) the new contract for 'connexions services' cover the period 30th September 2009 to 31st March 2012 with an option of an extension to the contract for a further period of up to 3 years, but for the contract to accommodate an appropriate break clause in the event of poor performance or reduced financial capacity to commission the service to the level previously agreed;
- (3) Halton Borough Council be the lead Authority for procurement of the new arrangements on behalf of the 6 participating Merseyside Local Authorities;
- (4) Halton Borough Council becomes the contract holding Authority on behalf of the 6 participating Merseyside Local Authorities from the City Region for the new contract when awarded with the appropriate cross Authority commitments; and
- (5) Wirral Council enter into an agreement with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Limited to extend the current contract to 30 September 2009 provided the other five Merseyside Local Authorities agree to the extension and to pay their previously agreed proportion of the payments due to the company under the extended contract.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE AND NEW POLICY PROPOSALS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the implementation of the Office Accommodation Strategy; to seek approval of new Policies relating to Disposals and Community Asset Transfer; and to authorise officers to progress Disposals and Community Transfers, in accordance with these policies.

2. Background

Office Accommodation Strategy

- 2.1 The Council's Office Accommodation Strategy was appended to the Asset Management Plan 2008/11. It set a target of 10 square metres of space per full time employee and set out the various methodologies that would be used to achieve that target and further rationalisation of office accommodation.
- 2.2 The Strategic Asset Review has added urgency to the implementation of this Strategy by requiring budgetary savings of £1 million in respect of office accommodation costs and a requirement to reduce the Council's office space by at least 20% by 2011
- 2.3 Accordingly, the following steps will now be undertaken to accelerate progress:
- A project team will be established to deliver the office change Programme. This team will comprise officers from across the Council, in particular, from the key resource areas of Asset Management, IT, HR, Finance and Transformation and from the service department whose staff will be affected.
 - A detailed programme will be developed to deliver the targeted savings. This will identify areas of focus for change and buildings to be vacated, plan for staff moves and the development of agile working in those areas most suited for it, in the early stages of the programme.
 - The centralisation of the control and management of administrative accommodation and Facilities Management Budgets, as confirmed in the Strategic Asset Review, will be implemented.
 - A procurement exercise will be undertaken to select space planning experts who will design working environments in retained buildings, that will be more efficient and will support new ways of working.
 - A further procurement exercise will be used to select specialist consultants to select a business case for the Council's future administrative requirements.

3. New Policies for Disposals and Community Asset Transfer

- 3.1 In order to deliver the objectives of the Strategic Asset Review, it is necessary for the Council to have clear and consistent policies to dispose of surplus assets and to transfer community assets.
- 3.2 The Disposal Policy is attached as Appendix 1. It outlines a series of principles, which the Council has to take into account in order to follow its statutory duty to sell assets at best price. This obligation needs to be balanced against those disposals that are undertaken for less than market value using the “well being” provisions, where maximisation of social and community benefit is paramount.
- 3.3 The Community Transfer Policy is attached as Appendix 2. This Policy is to be used to pass over the ownership and control of assets to community based groups. The Policy explains in detail the key principles and bases of transfer, together with the procedures that community groups will follow in order to achieve transfer.
- 3.4 These Policies will enable the Council to progress these asset management issues more quickly and efficiently. They demonstrate the Council’s commitment to take forward this important strand of the Strategic Asset Review.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 A programme of disposal of surplus assets is currently underway. However, given the current adverse financial conditions affecting the property market, it is difficult to estimate the likely capital receipts that may be achieved by sales either by Private Treaty or Auction.
- 4.2 Under the Community Assets Transfer Policy, the Council will need to expend monies on essential repairs in respect of some buildings that are to be transferred. The Strategic Asset Review identified funding to help support this transfer process. Provisions were identified to allow funding for community centres for up to two years whilst the transfer process progresses towards a successful outcome. Specific three month provisions were also made in relation to Eastham and Woodchurch libraries. In addition, community based groups can apply for financial assistance from the Community Fund. This Fund is jointly administered by Wirral Partnership Homes and the Council and officers are exploring how best it can be used to support capacity building, asset repairs and time-limited financial support whilst local community groups become self-sufficient. Arrangements for financial support will not normally extend beyond two years and will usually be on a tapering basis.
- 4.3 The Strategic Asset Review has committed the Council to achieve savings of £3.1 million in respect of its current operational property portfolio and to seek an additional £1 million annual saving from its expenditure on administrative and municipal buildings.
- 4.4 A budgetary provision of £1.5 million per year for four years has been included in the Capital Programme for ICT works in support of the Strategic Asset Review.
- 4.5 Under the current arrangements each complex has its own budget in support of Facilities Management. It is proposed that these budgets be consolidated to become the responsibility of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, in order that expenditure on administrative and municipal buildings is undertaken in support of the strategic objectives of the Office Accommodation Strategy.

5. Staffing implications

- 5.1 None at this stage. However, the staff resource implications will be kept under review as these Policies and this Strategy is implemented.

6. Equal Opportunities implications

- 6.1 None

7. Community Safety implications

- 7.1 None

8. Local Agenda 21 implications

- 8.1 None

9. Planning implications

- 9.1 Future planning applications for the redevelopment or alternative use of surplus property would be subject to policies in the statutory Development Plan, which currently comprises of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (saved September 2007) and the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (September 2008).

10. Anti-poverty implications

- 10.1 None

11. Human Rights implications

- 11.1 None

12. Social Inclusion implications

- 12.1 None

13. Local Member Support implications

- 13.1 This will be of interest to all Members.

14. Background Papers

- 14.1 The Strategic Asset Review and the Asset Management Plan.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 Cabinet endorses the progression of the Office Accommodation Strategy.
- 15.2 Cabinet approves the new Policies on Disposals and Community Asset Transfer and instructs the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to progress their objectives.

15.3 That the Director of Finance works towards amalgamating the existing budgets for building complexes into one budget, to become the responsibility of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management.

Bill Norman

Director of Law, HR and Asset Management

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER POLICY

Introduction

Wirral Council believes that community asset transfer is fundamentally about giving local people and community groups greater control in the future of their area and their community.

If local groups own or manage community buildings – such as community centres or village halls – it can help foster a sense of belonging and bring together people from different backgrounds. Community ownership of buildings can also play a part in raising local people's aspirations, in enhancing the local environment and in alleviating poverty.

The Council is committed to working constructively with community groups and local people to ensure that community asset transfer in Wirral is successful.

Purpose of this policy

1. This policy describes how the Council will work with the community to support the successful transfer of Council-owned land and buildings to local people, for the benefit of the community.
2. This policy explains what is meant by the term community asset transfer; explains the background to how the concept has developed; and sets out how asset transfer will be achieved. This policy provides a clear framework to support the transfer of land and buildings from the Council to local people. Usually this will mean transfer to a formally organised group of local people (a 'community based group'). Transfer to a community based group of local people will maximise the likelihood that the transfer will be successful and sustainable in the longer term.

What is meant by Community Asset Transfer?

1. The Council owns and manages a wide variety of property 'assets': these include buildings and land.
2. Asset 'transfer' means moving the responsibility for the ownership, management and running of assets from the Council to community based groups.

The background to Community Asset Transfer

The national context

There is a clear commitment from central government to the transfer of ownership and management of public sector land and assets to community organisations. Transfer is increasingly seen as a means to achieve a range of key objectives, from promoting civil renewal, active citizenship and improving local public services to tackling poverty and promoting economic regeneration.

Appendix A to this policy contains further information on a number of sources that demonstrate this growing commitment from central government.

The local context

Wirral Council believes that community based groups are key partners in the delivery of services and provide a vital link with local people. We recognise that working in partnership with thriving community based groups can help us achieve the outcomes of our Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement; and help promote the social, environmental and economic well-being of the Borough. Recently we have been working closely with the Development Trust Association to assist us engage constructively with community based groups to progress community asset transfer.

The Council endorses the emerging national framework to support community asset transfer. It recognises that:

- the way its physical assets are managed can have a very positive impact on the long-term strength of local communities and the third sector more generally.
- through asset ownership, community based groups can grow and become more secure, gaining access to sources of additional investment that the Council itself may not be able to access.
- successful asset transfer requires a long-term partnership approach between the Council and the community based groups that take over the management of an asset.

Aims of Community Asset Transfer

1. The Council's land and buildings are used for a variety of different social, community and public purposes. For some of these assets community management and ownership could deliver benefits to the local community; benefits for the community based group; and benefits to the Council and other public sector service providers
2. Public assets could often be used more frequently and more effectively. Changing ownership or management offers opportunities to extend the use of a building or piece of land, increasing its social value in relation to the numbers of local people that benefit and the range of opportunities it offers. Community-led ownership offers additional opportunities to secure resources within a local area and to empower local citizens and communities.
3. Where the Council transfers assets to community based groups it will work to promote the greatest public value. This may include:
 - Community empowerment
 - Area-wide benefits
 - Building the capacity of the third sector and encouraging a sustainable third-sector
 - Economic development and economic well-being
 - Social enterprise and social well-being
 - Environmental improvements and environmental well-being
 - Improvements to local services
 - Value for money

Links to other policies

Community asset transfer is one of the mechanisms the Council can use to support the delivery of the Sustainable Community Plan and its Corporate Plan. This policy forms part of the Council's wider policy framework and should also be read in conjunction with

- The Local Development Framework, which guides statutory land use planning within the borough
- The Asset Management Plan, which explains how the Council uses and manages its land and buildings, and
- The Disposals Policy, which explains the Council's approach to the disposal of assets

The framework for asset transfer on Wirral - Key principles

The Council's policy on community asset transfer is underpinned by the following principles:

- Any proposed asset transfer must promote social, economic or environmental wellbeing and/or support the aims and priorities of the Council;
- We will not guarantee exclusivity' on a first come first served basis when considering asset transfer and will consider other expressions of interest, as appropriate, in relation to any proposed asset transfer;
- We will encourage collaboration between community based groups and the sharing of assets to optimise social value and value for money across Wirral;
- Asset transfers to community based groups will be in exchange for agreement by the community based groups to deliver agreed benefits for local people.
- Opportunities will be explored to extend this approach to asset transfer to other public bodies through the Wirral Strategic Partnership and Community Networks.

Assets covered by the policy

An asset is land or buildings in the ownership of the Council. The policy does not specifically include or exclude any asset from potential transfer to a community group, allowing each case to be considered on its own merits and in the context of the disposal policy. For example, the Council would welcome expressions of interest from community based groups in relation to redundant library buildings that will be surplus to the Council's requirements following its recent Strategic Asset Review. The Council's Head of Asset Management will make recommendations to the Council as whether a property is appropriate for asset transfer.

Who can apply?

Expressions of interest will be welcomed from Community and Voluntary sector groups. Appropriate groups may be area- based, based around particular social groups or have some other shared interest. Ideally, applicants should meet the following criteria:

- They must be community-led, with strong links with the local community. Local people must be able to control the organisation's decision-making processes;
- Their primary purpose must be non-commercial and they must have an understanding of the activities they wish to deliver;

- They must demonstrate good governance by operating through open and accountable processes, with clear management and financial systems
- They must be open to and demonstrate an inclusive approach to members of the wider community.

In addition, applicants should either:

- Have the skills and capacity to effectively deliver services and manage the asset to be transferred and/or have access to the necessary skills and capacity; **OR**
- Be aware of any need to build capacity within their organisation and demonstrate how they intend to do this, perhaps by working with the Council or other partners.

The assessment process will require applicants to provide information to enable the Council to assess how they satisfy these detailed criteria.

Where applicants have shortcomings in any of these areas the Council may be able to offer advice and support to help them prepare for asset transfer.

The basis of transfer

1. 'Transfer' may take a number of legal forms. At one extreme, a transfer of the 'freehold' of a property would mean the entire ownership of the building would pass from the Council to the community based group. However, restrictions (called 'covenants') would normally ensure the property remained available to local people to use and prevent it being sold for development.
2. At the other end of the spectrum, a 'licence' would allow a community based group to use a building, but sharing its use with other groups or individuals. In between these extremes, a 'lease' will give a community based group the exclusive right to use the property for the duration of the lease. A lease can run for any period - commonly from a few months, up to 999 years. At the end of the lease or licence the building will return to Council control.
3. The Council will discuss with community based groups what sort of transfer will be most suitable to meet the needs and expectations of the groups and local people. Whilst the Council will normally wish to retain the freehold of the property and grant a lease to the community based group, we will consider other options if it is in the best interest of local people. For example, funding bodies may have requirements that must be met if a community based group is to be eligible to receive grant monies.
4. During the lease period 'Rent' may be payable. During a licence period a 'fee' may be payable. Because the Council is committed to making community asset transfer successful we will not normally seek any payment from community based groups, unless substantial commercial use of buildings generates large profits in excess of the running costs of the property. However, the Council will normally expect community based groups to be responsible for the running costs of the building, including repairs, maintenance and all insurance.

5. The Council is committed to the successful transfer of assets to community based groups. However, we also recognise that running a building is an onerous commitment. We do not want local people to be deterred from engaging in community asset transfer because they are apprehensive about the possible risks of transfer. Therefore the Council will normally be willing to accept a transfer back of a building, without any payment or penalty, if the community based group no longer wishes to manage the facility. In these circumstances the building would then normally be sold on the open market, unless another community based group expressed an interest in its management.
6. In accepting return of an asset the Council will not normally assume any responsibilities or liabilities of the community based group. In addition the Council will not normally act as guarantor for a community based group when transferring an asset (or subsequently).
7. The Council will share with any interested community based groups all its information regarding the condition and operating costs of any asset that may be transferred. The Council may be willing to invest some money towards making the transferring asset structurally safe and sound (as set out in Appendix B). However, community based groups will also be expected to satisfy the Council that they are able to maintain the building satisfactorily after transfer. In addition, the level of any Council investment will need to be proportionate to the likely future community benefits flowing from the transfer of the asset having regard to the current physical condition of the asset and its likely economic life. It should be noted that the Council's funds are limited; that it cannot afford to pay for all repairs; and that community based group will be expected to play a fair part in putting the asset into full repair, including undertaking decoration and furnishing.
8. The Council will encourage collaboration between community based groups and the sharing of assets to optimise social value and value for money across Wirral. This may mean that the Council will refuse to transfer specific assets where alternative local premises are reasonable available to community based groups.
9. There may be competing groups interested in the same building. In such cases the Council will expect community based groups to work together and organise themselves in such a way that sharing and use of the asset is optimised between them. If a joint approach is not agreed, the Council will balance the merits of the different organisations' proposals and decide to which organisation (if any) the asset should be transferred. Failure of competing interested community based groups to collaborate on a joint approach may make it less likely that any acceptable proposal for asset transfer will be achievable.

How applications are assessed and decisions made

Community based groups applying for asset transfer will need to set out the following:

- Proposals for the use and maintenance of the asset
- Benefits to the Council, the community based group and the wider/community
- Capacity of the community based groups to manage (and insure) the asset
- A robust business plan
- Type and key terms of transfer sought
- Capacity building plan – where appropriate - and how this will be delivered
- Liabilities and how these will be addressed

Any application received will be assessed, using the Council's standard template (to be made available on its website) and must show how it demonstrates the following criteria:

- A sustainable business plan, including future investment in and maintenance of the asset (including a how health and safety responsibilities will be met).
- The planned outcomes and benefits to result from the asset transfer.
- A community governance structure (how local people will be involved in decision-making in relation to the building and its use)
- Evidence of the capability and skills within the community based group to sustain the asset transfer (and/or any capacity/skills building requirements)
- Where transfer is requested at less than market value, the benefits to the community and/or the Council to justify the subsidised transfer.
- Sources of finance that asset transfer will release or attract
- How much space is required and its potential usage
- How services and activities will be 'joined up' with those of other organisations to maximise the efficient use of the asset

Where the community based group is already long-established, evidence of a track record in delivering services and/or managing property (if available) should also be provided to the Council.

It is accepted that there are a number of risks which may arise from asset transfer. A non-exhaustive list of examples is set out below and risk assessment will form part of the overall assessment of applications.

- Potential for a negative impact on community cohesion
- Potential loss of existing community services or facilities
- Capacity of recipient to deliver promised services/outcomes
- Control of asset by unrepresentative/extremist minority
- Transfer contravenes State Aid and procurement rules
- Conflict with other legal, regulatory constraints
- Potential for ongoing Council liability
- Lack of value for money
- Conflict with other funders
- Potential unfair advantage for one group over another

The Council is determined that the concept of community asset transfer will be successful in Wirral and will provide guidance and support by way of officer time to help applicants through the transfer process. In addition the Council will need to expend monies on essential repairs in respect of some buildings that are to be transferred. The Strategic Asset Review identified funding to help support this transfer process. Provisions were identified to allow funding for community centres for up to two years whilst the transfer process progresses towards a successful outcome. Specific three month provisions were also made in relation to Eastham and Woodchurch libraries. In addition, community based groups can apply for financial assistance from the Community Fund. This Fund is jointly administered by Wirral Partnership Homes and the Council and officers are exploring how best it can be used to support capacity building, asset repairs and time-limited financial support whilst local community groups become self-sufficient. Arrangements for financial support will not normally extend beyond two years and will usually be on a tapering basis. Conversely, if at any stage it appears to the Council that there is little or no likelihood of a community based group taking over a building, the asset will be considered for disposal in line with the Council's Disposal Policy.

The table below summarises the process the Council will follow where it declares an asset surplus to its requirements, with key milestones and target timescales.

Applications may, however, be made by community organisations at any time, and there are other situations in which an asset transfer may be requested or sought before an asset has formally been declared surplus.

Illustrative Timetable

Stage	Who is responsible	Timescale for completion
Asset declared surplus and expressions of interest invited for transfer	Wirral Council – Asset management Division	Start of process
Expression of interest submitted	Interested CBO (s)	Initial registration of interest to be made within 3 weeks of start of process Detailed expression of interest to be made within 6 weeks of start of process
Expression of interest appraised	Wirral Council – corporate group	3 weeks
Decision to proceed to next stage	Wirral Council – Cabinet	3 weeks
Detailed business case prepared for transfer	CBO	13 weeks
Appraisal of business case by Council	Wirral Council – corporate group	6 weeks
Decision to proceed with transfer	Wirral Council - Cabinet	3 weeks
Detailed terms agreed and transfer completed	Wirral Council – Asset Management and Legal Divisions CBO	13 weeks

Additional Qualifications to the Illustrative Timetable

(1) These timescales run consecutively. They will be monitored and where insufficient progress is made the Council may withdraw from the transfer process and dispose of the asset in accordance with its Disposal Policy. The Council will be prepared to consider reasonable requests for extensions of time to facilitate proposals.

(2) Whilst community based groups are expected to take their own advice the Council will try to help and support them as appropriate through the application process. It will make appropriate resources available to provide that support and to appraise applications within the target timescales. In return it expects applications for transfer to contain, at each stage, sufficient information to enable appraisals to be completed and decisions made.

- (3) The Council's assessment of an asset transfer request and any subsequent decision to proceed will take into account the physical condition of the building, the availability of other suitable premises from which the proposed activities could take place, support required from the Council to enable the transfer to proceed and the value for money offered by the proposal.
- (4) Detailed proformas and guidance set out the information necessary to enable a decision to be made. These will be made available on the Council's website or from its Asset Management division.
- (5) Where there is little or no likelihood of a community based group taking over a building, the asset will normally be considered for disposal in line with the Council's Disposal Policy.

Appendix A

Relevant sources for further reference to the government's commitment to asset transfer include the following:

The 2006 *Local Government White Paper* confirmed the Government's intention to increase opportunities for community asset ownership and management, and promoted asset transfer as part of a local authority's 'place-shaping' role.

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongprosperous]

In May 2007 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published "Making Assets Work" the report of an independent review led by Barry Quirk, the Chief Executive of Lewisham Council. The review found that a careful increase in the community's stake in an asset can bring a wide range of additional benefits for the community, the organisation receiving the asset and the local authority facilitating the transfer. The benefits of community ownership and management can outweigh risks and opportunity costs.

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communitites/makingassetswork]

All the Review's recommendations were accepted by the Government and published a week later as an implementation plan in *Opening the transfer window: the government's response to the Quirk Review*.

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/openingtransfer]

The Government's Empowerment Action Plan published in 2007 includes actions relating to the transfer of assets and to a programme of support for community anchors, including the availability of funding to support the development of anchors.

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communityempowermentactionplan]

In July 2008 the DCLG's White Paper "Communities in Control: real people real power" confirmed ongoing support for the Quirk review, announced the establishment of a national Asset Transfer Unit, extended the Advancing Assets programme by a further year and announced a £70m "Communitybuilders" fund.

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol]

All these publications are available on the websites listed above.

Appendix B

Where an asset transfer proceeds the Council will, subject to the availability of funding and the anticipated economic life of the building, carry out outstanding essential repairs to the following building elements:

The main structure to include foundations, floors, walls, roofs, guttering and rainwater goods, windows, external doors, external physical features such as car parks, paths and gates.

The Council will also assess the condition of the following internal elements of the building:

- The electrical wiring, main fuse board and fire alarm system (if any)
- The boiler, heating systems, lifts and kitchen equipment
- The toilets and plumbing
- DDA compliance and internal decoration
- Internal doors and woodwork, fixtures and fittings and decoration

The Council will normally seek a fair and reasonable contribution from the applicant to address any disrepair of these elements, as part of the transfer process.

DISPOSAL POLICY

Objective

The objective of this Policy is to set out a consistent and transparent basis to be adopted by the Council to identify and dispose of surplus assets.

Principles

1. The Council will only retain ownership of land and buildings which are required for any of the following:
 - service delivery
 - redevelopment or regeneration
 - to deliver the Council's Strategic Objectives
2. The Council will dispose of all land and property assets which are identified as surplus. Assets that are surplus are defined as follows:
 - Those that make no contribution to service delivery, either directly or indirectly
 - Those that generate no income and have no potential for future service delivery or community regeneration purposes
 - Those that under-perform in that their revenue return is unsatisfactory compared to the capital value of the asset

Statutory Considerations

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the consideration should not be less than that which can reasonably be obtained, with the exception of sales under the following.

The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 provides for the Council to dispose of assets at less than market value provided:

- The purpose for which the asset is to be disposed of is likely to contribute to the promotion of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the Borough
- The difference between the unrestricted or market value of the asset and the consideration for disposal does not exceed £2 million

Implementation and Procedures

Assets declared redundant by a Service Department, or deemed to be under-performing by the Head of Asset Management, will be referred to the Corporate Asset Management Group to undertake the following option appraisal:

- Is the asset required by the Council?
- Is the asset required by any partner organisation?

OR, IF NOT

- Is the asset required by the Community?

The results of this option appraisal will determine how the surplus asset is to be sold or transferred.

Any asset of interest to the Community will be dealt with in accordance with the Community Asset Transfer Policy, normally by way of leasehold transfer. However, if the criteria under that Policy are not met and, at any stage, it appears to the Council that there is little or no likelihood of a community based group being able to take over a building, the asset will be dealt with in accordance with this Disposal Policy.

Methods of Disposal

Once an asset has been declared surplus, the Head of Asset Management will decide on the most appropriate method of disposal, selecting from one of the following options:

Public Auction

Surplus assets may be sold at Auction subject to a reserve price previously approved by Cabinet. Once the reserve is reached, the property will be sold to the highest bidder, with completion usually within 28 days. This option demonstrates that the Council has obtained best consideration.

Private Treaty

Assets will be marketed with an asking price and offers considered as they are received. Most common method employed for the sale of private dwelling houses. Local Agent may be retained, subject to the Council's procurement rules.

Special Purchaser

Negotiations undertaken with just one 'special purchaser'. Examples include sales of land adjoining dwelling houses or businesses to provide space for extension or expansion, or the sale of 'ransom' strips which release the development value of adjoining land.

Development/Building Agreements

Used mainly for in sales to Registered Social Landlords and private developers where the consideration is reflected in the type and cost of development that the Council wishes to achieve. The freehold is only transferred on completion of the scheme.

Informal Tender

Sale of property following appropriate advertising seeking informal offers or bids that meet a given specification or set of objectives. Further negotiations in respect of more detailed terms with one or more bidders can be undertaken to secure the best deal for the Council.

Lease

The Council may wish to retain the freehold of the asset and grant a lease. The length of the lease and the terms and conditions will reflect the degree of control that the Council wishes to retain.

Approval of Terms

In the case of Public Auction a reserve price will be agreed by the Cabinet or (if delegated) the relevant Portfolio Holder in advance. All other terms for disposal will require Cabinet's or (if delegated) the relevant Portfolio Holder's approval. The report will include the reasoning behind the choice of the disposal method.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

PROPERTY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 On the 5th February 2009, Cabinet considered a report on Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Use of Resources for 2008. This indicated that a score of 3 had been achieved overall for "Use of Resources" which includes Asset Management. This report updates members on a number of Asset Management issues, relating to Managing Resources assessment.

2. Background

- 2.1 This report addresses the action, which has been taken in relation to section 3.2, Managing Resources Key Line of Enquiry, (KLOE) focus, "Does the organisation manage its assets effectively to help deliver its strategic priorities and service needs?".
- 2.2 In its 2008 review of the Council's Use of Resources, the Audit Commission accepted that "The Council manages its asset base adequately". It went on to say: "The Capital Strategy and guidance were kept up to date and approved by Cabinet during the year and again in July 2008 when they were updated in line with the new corporate priorities. The Capital Strategy is also better linked to the updated MTFP and Asset Management Plan (AMP) and is based on an up to date asset register as well as taking into account planned maintenance. The Council has a designated property function and is strengthening capacity with the reorganisation of asset management under a new asset manager and Head of assets." Also "The strategic asset review is now underway and regular reporting to members continues".
- 2.3 The Audit Commission scored this KLOE at 2, although the overall score for use of resources was increased from 2 to 3.
- 2.4 The Council's Asset Management Plan, 2008-11, together with its associated Action Plan was approved by Cabinet on 23rd July 2008.
- 2.5 On 5th November 2009, a new Corporate Plan was agreed by Cabinet which identified the issue "to improve the use of the Council's land & assets" as a key priority in 2009/10.
- 2.6 The Asset Management Plan/Capital Strategy are reviewed annually and relevant areas will be updated as part of those reviews. This will include the Property Performance Indicators established to improve the management and monitoring of the performance of the Council's assets.

3. CAA - Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 The change from CPA to Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will “raise the bar” in terms of Central Government’s expectations for Managing Resources. The overall question is “**How well does the organisation manage its natural resources, physical assets, and people to meet current and future needs and deliver value for money?**”.
- 3.2 There are 2 areas of focus under Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) 3.1 “***Is the organisation making effective use of natural resources?***” and 3.2. “***Does the organisation manage its resources effectively to help deliver its strategic priorities and service needs?***”
- 3.3 KLOE focus 3.1 is that the organisation :
- 3.3.1. “***understands and can quantify the use of natural resources and can identify the main influencing factors.***”
 - 3.3.2. “***manages performance to reduce its impact on the environment: and***
 - 3.3.3. “***manages the environmental risk it faces, working effectively with partners***”
- 3.4 KLOE focus 3.2 is that the organisation :
- 3.4.1. “***has a strategic approach to asset management based on an analysis of need to deliver strategic priorities, service needs and intended outcomes.***”
 - 3.4.2 “***manages its asset base to ensure that assets are fit for purpose and provide value for money***”: and
 - 3.4.3. “***works with partners and community groups to maximise the use of its assets for the benefit of the local community***”

4 Matters in hand to address the KLOE’s

- 4.1 The Council is making substantial progress in the area relevant to **KLOE focus 3.1**, particularly reduction of the Council’s Carbon Footprint, as set out below.
- 4.1.1. Earlier this year staff and Members achieved the Council target to reduce its CO₂ emissions by 20% before 2010. As we all need to continue to reduce our emissions the Council has adopted the CRed community carbon reduction programmes target of a 60% reduction by 2025 and at the same time obtain the benefits from reduced energy bills.
- 4.1.2. A Council-wide Energy Awareness campaign has been launched to encourage staff to take simple steps, which collectively will help to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide. The awareness campaign and the recruitment of local energy champions provides help and support for staff to encourage them to manage their energy consumption both at work and at home. It builds on some of the many

measures the Council has already put in place to reduce the borough's carbon footprint.

4.1.3. The Investment in Energy Efficiency Programme continues to reduce the Council's CO2 emissions. Progress was reported to Cabinet in September 2008 and a further update report will go to Environment O&S in April 2008. The Water Efficiency Scheme and BEMs phases 2 & 3 are now complete and operational.

4.1.4. On the 28 Jan 2009 Employment & Appointments Committee approved the establishment of the Climate Change Officer and Sustainability (Cred) Liaison Officer posts in the Sustainability Unit within the Department of Law, H.R. and Asset Management. The posts will shortly be advertised and it is hoped to have these posts filled by July 2009. These officers will drive improved working with Businesses and the Community to raise awareness of the urgent need to reduce Wirral's Carbon footprint, to take action to reduce Carbon emissions and to sign up to the CRed community carbon reduction programme.

4.1.5. The two recently appointed Energy Awareness officers have been implementing the Awareness programme over the last 3 months. Progress on the Awareness Campaign was reported to Environment O&S Committee on 28 Jan 09, and includes the following outputs :

1. Development of the Energy Awareness Campaign Strategy.
2. Launch events at 7 municipal buildings in November 08 visited by 850 staff.
3. Poster Campaign.
4. Staff survey for initial benchmark undertaken.
5. Site visits.
6. Energy Champion Recruitment & Training (out of an initial target of 30, to date 26 members of staff have been recruited).
7. Deliver School workshops.

4.1.6. As part of the work of the Nottingham Declaration Working Group, we launched our co-funded poster campaign with our partners Wirral PCT and Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust in November 2008 to coincide with Energy Saving week. A formal media launch with the C Exec officers of each organisation is planned for Spring 2009.

4.2 **Challenges remaining:**

4.2.1. Energy costs have risen significantly over the last 12-18 months and are likely to add around 3.5 million pounds to the Council's annual expenditure.

4.2.2. A large part of the authority's energy consumption is buildings related and therefore the energy investment programme will align with the authority's Strategic Asset Review. Energy conservation is a key consideration during the current Strategic Asset Review (SAR) of all the Council's buildings. A number of IEEP phase 2 projects are on hold awaiting the outcome of the SAR. Officers are beginning to detail the SAR programme of works required and this will enable energy investment work to proceed on the buildings that are being retained.

4.3 Further Improvements:

4.3.1. Preparations are being made to take part in the government's Carbon Reduction Commitment scheme (CRC) which is expected to assist in further carbon reductions. An update on the implementation of the CRC was reported to Environment O&S Committee on 28 Jan 09 and will be reported to Cabinet on 19 March 09.

4.3.2. IEEP phase 3 is being progressed with the roll-out of further Street Lighting efficiency measures and the introduction later this year of Automatic Meter Reading Systems, which will also provide financial benefits when the CRC is introduced in 2010.

4.3.3. Display Energy Certificates are being produced for 158 sites. A greater number of sites than expected are producing above average results.

4.4 Strategic Asset Review

4.4.1. The Strategic Asset Review (SAR), is fundamental to the KLOE 3.2 area of focus. As mentioned in paragraph 2.2 above, Cabinet will be aware of various reports on the subject, the most recent being 15th January 2009. (Minute 325 refers.) The SAR is fundamental to challenging the way services are delivered and the Council's use of buildings. It is anticipated that, as the SAR is progressed, the concentration of services into delivery "hubs" will effect reductions in costs by reducing the number and areas of buildings occupied together with higher standards of energy use in those remaining, or their replacements.

4.4.2. The Office Accommodation Strategy, Community Asset Transfer Policy and Disposal Policy are all linked to the SAR, as part of the drive to review and challenge the current use of buildings. These items are the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.

5. Performance Indicators

5.1 In line with national guidelines for Asset Management, promoted jointly by the Association of Chief Corporate Property Officers (COPROP) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the Council maintains and is further expanding, a suite of property management performance indicators (PMI's). The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) endorses these guidelines and the Council subscribes through the Institute of Public Finance (IPF) Asset Management Group, to a national benchmarking scheme. The Indicators currently held are:-

5.1.1. **Running costs** - See Appendix 1. This details energy and water use and CO² emissions.

5.1.2. **Maintenance backlog** - See Appendix 2. The number of buildings surveyed has been increased from 148 in 2007/08 to 387 in 2008/09. The total maintenance backlog, in respect of structural elements only (not mechanical and electrical) is now approximately £5.8 million. As a rule of thumb guide, where £6 of expenditure is needed on structural repairs, a further £4 is likely to be required to address mechanical and electrical repairs. In the corresponding report of 13 March 2008, the total maintenance backlog figure, including M & E costs, was estimated to be £9.89 million. There are only a handful of additional properties to be surveyed and once that

information is included, the figures now reported will confirm this estimate, based on more detailed and accurate information.

5.1.3. **Disabled access** - See Appendix 3. This indicator has been modified to indicate the proportion of buildings that have reasonable access for disabled people.

5.1.4. **Delivery of capital projects** - See Appendix 4. This measures those projects within 5% of target for delivery, in terms of cost and time. This is a revised indicator and deals with project delivery monitored by the Director of Technical Services

5.1.5. **Return on investment property** - Internal Rate of Return for 07/08 is **13.28%**. This is considered a good rate of return, benchmarked nationally.

5.1.6. **Space utilisation and running costs of assets** - The Council has set a target of **10** square metres per employee for its main administrative buildings.

5.2 These PMI's are being developed and an Action Plan will be produced with the Asset Management Plan in order to improve management, monitoring and performance of the Council's Assets.

5.3 The Council is also a member of an informal benchmarking group facilitated by the North West Branch of the Association of Chief Estates Surveyors (ACES) which is in the process of refining a suite of performance indicators based on the COPROP national indicators, which will be used to compare Local Authority performance on a Regional basis.

6. Financial implications

6.1 Use of assets as a resource is an extremely important aspect of the Council's responsibilities. In 2007/08 it achieved through disposals capital receipts of £3,356,169, including its share of Right to Buy receipts. In addition, through challenging of rates assessments, in 2007/08 £513,181 was saved, with ongoing savings for 2008/09 and 2009/10 projected to be £339,604. The Council has set a target to save £3,101,000 in property costs over next financial year with a further £1 million in office accommodation costs.

7. Staffing implications

7.1 None

8. Equal Opportunities implications

8.1 None

9. Community Safety implications

9.1 None

10. Local Agenda 21 implications

10.1 The implementation of strategies and the application of new technologies, designed to reduce the Council's Carbon footprint of its buildings, is a key element in delivering successful Asset Management. The reduction in consumption of energy and the modification of buildings to improve their energy efficiency, help to make the Council's asset base more environmentally sustainable.

11. Planning implications

11.1 Achieving sustainable development is the core planning objective and strategies for minimising energy consumption and maximising efficiency are encouraged by the Statutory Development Plan.

12. Anti-poverty implications

12.1 None

13. Human Rights implications

13.1 None

14. Social Inclusion implications

14.1 None

15. Local Member Support implications

15.1 None

16. Background Papers

16.1 The Asset Management Plan, Capital Strategy and Accommodation Strategy.

17. RECOMMENDATION

17.1 That the actions taken responding to the issues raised by the Use of Resources Assessment, in respect of Asset Management, be approved.

Bill Norman

Director of Law H.R. & Asset Management

(AM/AMN/E0)

Invoice Apportioned Usage and Cost per Site from Apr 2007 for 12 month(s)

Code	Name	ENERGY		WATER		EMISSIONS Tonnes- CO2/m ²
		kWH/m ²	Cost/m ²	m ³ /m ²	Cost/m ²	
0175	Hillcroft	247.02	10.22	0.29	1.32	0.056
0179	Media Centre (The)	128.43	5.44	0.19	1.85	0.029
0221	Alexander Hall	265.25	8.89	0.79	4.66	0.055
0222	Arrowe Park	411.99	19.00	1.16	2.55	0.103
0229	Beechwood Community Centre	170.86	9.15	0.99	3.53	0.046
0230	Beechwood Library	157.71	12.38	0.12	2.80	0.054
0231	Beechwood Recreation Centre Birkenhead	278.07	12.74	0.23	2.17	0.068
0234	Birkenhead Central Library	192.06	7.88	0.23	1.18	0.045
0235	Birkenhead Park	415.11	34.63	1.43	2.90	0.110
0236	Wirral Museum	149.64	6.83	0.08	1.72	0.037
0237	Borough Road Playing Field	115.70	4.43	0.00	4.30	0.026
0243	Bromborough Library & Community Center	281.75	12.31	0.49	3.49	0.066
0251	Central Park	141.09	7.82	0.02	0.57	0.041
0252	Concourse Leisure Centre	804.56	30.60	5.03	11.05	0.192
0261	Europa Pools	1506.86	61.10	4.50	8.56	0.375
0264	Floral Pavillion Theatre			NEW DEVELOPMENT		
0267	Gautby Road Community Centre	230.44	14.93	0.41	2.65	0.070
0271	Grange Road West Sports Centre	172.82	7.77	0.60	2.30	0.042
0273	Greasby Library	191.43	10.90	0.17	2.33	0.053
0278	Grosvenor Ballroom	216.80	11.60	0.69	2.72	0.059
0280	Guinea Gap Leisure Complex	Insufficient Data		6.68	7.02	
0287	Heswall Library	276.11	18.89	0.18	0.60	0.075
0291	Hoylake Community Centre	200.45	9.26	0.65	2.09	0.049
0292	Hoylake Golf Club	419.37	22.24	0.61	2.67	0.113
0293	Hoylake Library	186.48	9.91	0.14	2.26	0.048
0300	Ivy Farm Complex	85.58	4.27	0.38	1.21	0.022
0307	Leasowe Leisure Complex	801.04	29.52	2.01	5.94	0.184
0310	Leasowe Play & Community Centre	162.64	6.30	0.22	1.21	0.036
0313	Library Archive Store	23.60	1.49	0.02	1.23	0.007
0318	Liscard Community Centre	211.02	8.81	1.04	2.62	0.049
0319	Livingstone Street Community Centre	312.23	14.99	0.74	2.54	0.078
0337	New Ferry Village Hall	271.45	14.33	0.71	1.67	0.072
0342	Oval Sports Centre			MAJOR REFURBISHMENT		
0343	Overton Community Centre	245.72	12.92	0.52	1.92	0.065
0345	Pacific Road Theatre	150.93	7.70	0.24	0.57	0.040
0346	Kylemore Community Centre	226.91	9.14	0.00	4.52	0.052
0347	Pensby Library	265.48	12.83	0.22	2.83	0.067
0353	Quarry Recreation Ground	218.80	22.79	7.31	-6.13	0.089
0355	Rake Lane Cemetery	85.20	9.38	1.40	2.56	0.037
0370	Wirral Tennis Centre	192.01	8.64	-0.05	0.14	0.048
0372	The Grange	144.07	5.99	0.37	1.22	0.031
0377	Wirral Transport Museum	243.65	11.23	0.15	1.76	0.060
0378	Upton Library	151.91	7.65	0.11	1.76	0.038
0379	Vale Park	190.30	12.63	0.89	2.22	0.051
0383	Victoria Hall	252.61	8.00	0.44	3.74	0.054
0387	Wallasey Central Library	239.85	9.29	0.14	1.13	0.053
0388	Wallasey Village Library	303.80	11.48	0.09	1.81	0.067
0391	Warrens Nursery	33.74	4.70	5.50	8.05	0.015
0392	Westbourne Hall	173.81	6.51	0.29	1.94	0.034
0394	Williamson Art Gallery	82.90	4.80	0.04	0.59	0.024
0395	Windsor Close Community Centre	56.13	3.33	0.00	5.56	0.016
0397	Woodchurch Leisure / Community Complex	394.25	14.90	2.85	4.08	0.094
0440	Balls Road Learning Difficulty Group	344.36	13.48	1.17	2.62	0.077
0444	Bromborough Family Centre	190.79	9.66	0.77	2.39	0.049
0446	Cambridge Road Day Centre	249.66	10.00	2.67	5.68	0.056
0450	Eastham Adult Training Centre	219.43	9.58	1.98	5.88	0.052
0451	Eastham Community Centre	234.75	9.51	0.34	3.43	0.053
0452	Esher House	211.95	9.85	0.47	2.64	0.052
0454	Feltree House	414.91	18.11	1.47	3.13	0.099
0455	Fernleigh	624.91	26.75	1.66	3.56	0.146
0456	Bromborough Social Centre	538.73	27.14	0.56	1.53	0.138
0457	Girtrell Court	512.62	23.71	1.38	2.91	0.126
0459	Handcart Ceramics	103.04	5.12	0.17	2.07	0.027
0460	Heswall ATC	389.34	14.69	0.53	1.42	0.085
0461	Highcroft E.S.C.	284.93	11.94	0.67	1.52	0.066
0463	Kennet Close	360.20	11.43	0.94	2.18	0.073
0466	Manor Road Learning Difficulty Group	361.43	14.46	1.84	4.09	0.073

Invoice Apportioned Usage and Cost per Site from Apr 2007 for 12 month(s)

Code	Name	ENERGY		WATER		EMISSIONS
		kWH/m ²	Cost/m ²	m ³ /m ²	Cost/m ²	Tonnes-CO ₂ /m ²
0467	98 Bidston Road (formerly Mapleholme)	106.32	4.78	0.12	0.30	0.026
0469	Mendell Lodge	350.24	19.91	1.80	3.81	0.102
0470	Moreton Adult Training Centre	124.37	7.62	0.69	1.49	0.037
0471	Moreton Family Centre	294.34	11.15	0.42	2.87	0.065
0472	Moreton Special Care Unit	848.26	29.24	2.18	4.68	0.178
0475	Pensall House	292.72	14.81	1.43	3.01	0.076
0477	Pensby Wood Day Centre	523.89	26.32	0.44	1.07	0.134
0479	Poulton House	365.01	14.58	2.00	4.27	0.086
0480	Prenton Resource Centre	268.75	13.43	0.76	1.76	0.072
0483	Rosclare House	328.66	10.96	4.39	17.66	0.069
0485	Rosewarne	415.87	14.48	0.77	1.74	0.089
0486	Seacombe Community Association	140.18	4.51	0.37	0.90	0.028
0488	Seacombe Children's Centre	207.42	9.98	0.44	2.42	0.052
0489	Star Design	195.58	11.79	0.14	4.37	0.059
0490	Sylvandale	410.31	17.81	3.08	22.68	0.095
0494	Riverside Day Centre	Insufficient Data		0.46	1.03	
0496	Willowtree Resource Centre	506.85	27.05	1.41	4.50	0.121
0498	Youth Justice Centre	173.18	10.42	0.37	2.94	0.050
0499	Mapleholme (formerly Birkett House)	302.86	13.79	1.43	4.56	0.073
0609	Cheshire Lines Building	170.20	11.94	0.28	1.95	0.061
0611	Bebington Town Hall	165.16	7.98	0.10	2.52	0.042
0612	Bebington Town Hall Annexe	165.26	6.62	0.18	3.25	0.038
0613	Beechcroft	117.57	4.83	0.05	0.49	0.027
0616	Conway Centre	200.46	12.28	0.31	1.29	0.058
0619	Hamilton Building	229.07	14.56	0.35	1.99	0.074
0620	Oakenholt Road Inspection Unit	284.56	14.20	0.43	1.03	0.074
0621	Old Court House	127.71	6.70	0.71	1.52	0.034
0622	Mayer Hall	239.70	8.48	0.13	1.26	0.049
0623	Moreton Area Offices	148.65	5.73	0.57	3.31	0.033
0625	New Municipal Offices	199.76	8.98	0.46	3.94	0.049
0626	Oakenholt Complex / ATC	218.12	10.59	2.36	5.49	0.055
0632	Wallasey Town Hall & North Annexe	183.02	9.85	0.25	2.32	0.047
0634	Wallasey Town Hall South Annexe	152.22	7.04	0.26	3.20	0.039
0635	Westminster House	114.70	6.20	0.28	4.60	0.033
0639	Transport / Construction Services Depot	283.63	13.52	0.34	2.40	0.069
0644	Rock Ferry One Stop Shop	153.18	8.71	0.35	1.92	0.043
0812	Council Kennels	568.55	29.47	2.29	5.70	0.148

Appendix 2

NUMBER	P.M.I A, B, C & D: CONDITION & REQUIRED MAINTENANCE (National Indicator)	2007-2008 (Based on 148 Condition Surveys)	2008-2009 (Based on 387 Condition Surveys)
OBJECTIVE	<p>To measure the condition of the asset for it's current use</p> <p>To measure changes in condition</p> <p>To measure the annual spend on required maintenance</p>		
INDICATOR: A	% Gross internal floor space in condition categories A - D	<p>Condition Category A – 68%</p> <p>Condition Category B – 15%</p> <p>Condition Category C – 17%</p> <p>Condition Category D – 0%</p>	<p>Condition Category A – 16%</p> <p>Condition Category B – 64%</p> <p>Condition Category C – 8%</p> <p>Condition Category D – 12%</p>
B	<p>Required maintenance by cost expressed:</p> <p>i) as total cost in priority levels 1 – 3</p> <p>ii) as a % in priority levels 1 – 3</p> <p>iii) overall cost per square meter GIA</p>	<p>i) Priority Level 1 - £217,015</p> <p>Priority Level 2 - £855,256</p> <p>Priority Level 3 - £2,023,469</p> <p>Total Cost Priority Level 1-3 £2,023,469</p> <p>ii) Priority Level 1 – 7%</p> <p>Priority Level 2 – 28%</p> <p>Priority Level 3 – 65%</p> <p>iii) £16.21 per square meter GIA</p>	<p>i) Priority Level 1 - £427,011</p> <p>Priority Level 2 - £2,149,219</p> <p>Priority Level 3 - £3,257,793</p> <p>Total Cost Priority Level 1-3 £5,834,024</p> <p>ii) Priority Level 1 – 7%</p> <p>Priority Level 2 – 37%</p> <p>Priority Level 3 – 56%</p> <p>iii) £2.81 per square meter GIA</p>

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Appendix 3

Access Assessment Criteria

For use with the building stock

1. External Access to the Building

Includes principal entrance, alternative entrance intended for general use and entrance from car parking.

Width and gradient of paths.

Dropped Kerbs.

Tactile surfaces.

Hazards

2. External Ramps

Where approach includes ramp with gradient steeper than 1:20.

Surface.

Width.

Gradient.

Landings

Kerb Edge.

Handrails

3. External Steps

Tactile Warning Surface.

Nosings.

Width.

Rise of Flight.

Landings.

Rise of Step.

Going of Tread.

Open Risers.

Tread/nosing profile.

Handrails.

4. Handrails

Height.

Extension.

End closure.

Profile.

5. Entrance Doors and Entrance Lobbies

Clear opening width.

Manoeuvring Space.

Visibility Panels.

Revolving Door.

Entrance Lobbies.

6. Internal Doors

Door Width.

Manoeuvring Space

Visibility Panel

7. Corridors, Passageways and Internal Lobbies

Corridor Width.

Lobby Dimensions

8. Lifts

Landing.

Door width.

Car Size.

Landing and Car Controls.

Landing and Lift Call Button – Tactile indication.

Tactile Indication within Lift.

Visual and Voice indicators

Signalling System.

Appendix 3

9. Wheelchair Stairlifts

10. Platform Lifts

11. Internal Ramps

12. Internal Stairs

Nosings.
Width.
Rise of Flight.
Landings.
Rise of Step.
Going of Tread.
Open risers.
Tread/nosing profile
Handrails

13. Toilet Facilities

Visitors Facilities
Size.
Door width.
Door Opening Out.
Position of WC & Basin.
Handrails.
Height of WC Seat.
Number of WC's suitable for ambulant disabled people.
Door Opening Out.
Handrails.
Size.

14. Communications

Induction Loop provided to reception counters/booking offices.
Aid to communication installed to large reception areas.
Aid to communication in large meeting rooms and auditoria.

15. Changing Facilities

Shower Size.
Shower Controls.
Handrails/seat in Shower Compartment.
Dressing Cubicle.

16. Restaurants , Bars and Other Public Areas

Suitable Access to the full range of Services.
All bars, counters and minimum of 50% seating accessible to wheelchair users.
Minimum 50% of facilities available to wheelchair users where service varies and is divided into different areas and storeys.

17. Audience or Spectator Seating

Adequate number of spaces. (6 or 1/100 whichever is greater)
Size of spaces.
Location and Distribution of Spaces.

SUPPLEMENTARY CRITERIA

- 18. Fully Glazed Doors
- 19. Door Opening Pressure
- 20. Door Ironmongery
- 21. Door Entry System
- 22. Counter Heights
- 23. Public Telephones
- 24. Minicom facilities
- 25. Fire Alarm Installation
- 26. Signs
- 27. Car Parking

Wirral Building Public Areas Accessibility Performance Indicator December 2008		Building accessibility	Year Audited																														
Audit criteria																																	
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Accessible</td> <td>Non-Accessible</td> <td>Not Applicable</td> <td>Adjusted as far as practicable</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				Accessible	Non-Accessible	Not Applicable	Adjusted as far as practicable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Accessible	Non-Accessible	Not Applicable	Adjusted as far as practicable																														
1	2	3	4																														
5	6	7	8																														
9	10	11	12																														
13	14	15	16																														
17	18	19	20																														
21	22	23	24																														
25	26	27																															
Location																																	
Albany Elderly Persons Club			2006																														
Alexander Hall			2001, 2004																														
Arrow Park Golf Club			2004																														
Bebington Civic Centre			2004																														
Bebington CVS			To be audited																														
Bebington Library (Civic Centre)			2004																														
Bebington Oval Sports Centre			2003 refresh audit to be undertaken																														
Bebington Oval Athletics Grandstand			2003																														
Bebington Town Hall			2004																														
Bebington Youth Centre			2004																														
Beechwood Library			2004																														
Beechwood Play & Community Centre			2004, 2006																														
Beechwood Recreation Centre			2003, 2004, 2006																														
Birkenhead Central Library			2004																														
Birkenhead Priory			2003, 2006																														
Birkenhead Town Hall (Listed Grade II*)			2003, 2004																														
Birkenhead Tram Terminus and Store			2003																														
Brackenwood Golf Course			2004																														
Bromborough Civic Centre (inc Civic Hall)			2006																														
Bromborough Library			2006																														
Bromborough OSS			2006																														
Brotherton Park Rangers Office			2006																														
Cambridge Road Day Centre			2008																														
Central Park Rangers Office and Visitor Centre			2005																														
Cheshire Lines Building			2004																														
Conway OSS (Listed Grade II)			2003																														
Delamere Play & Community Centre			2004																														
Dog Compound			2004																														
Eastham Country Park and Visitor Centre			2005																														
Eastham Day Centre			2008																														
Eastham Youth Centre			2008																														
Eastham Library and OSS			2004																														
Eastway Centre Moreton			2005																														

	Performance Indicator	Description	Projects Measured	Projects Passed	Percentage Passed
B	Time Predictability Design	Actual time between Commit to Design and Commit to Construct is within, or not more than 5% above, the time predicted at Commit to Design.	5	3	60%
C	Time Predictability Post-contract	Actual time between Commit to Construct and Available for Use is within, or not more than 5% above, the time predicted at Commit to Construct.	9	1	11%
E	Cost Predictability Design	Actual cost at Commit to Construct is within +/- 5% of the cost predicted at Commit to Design.	10	1	10%
F	Cost Predictability Post-contract	Actual cost at Available for Use is within +/- 5% of the cost predicted at Commit to Construct.	10	3	30%

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2008

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

TRANSITION FROM COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides Cabinet with an update on the changes to the Audit Commission's approach to assessing the performance of partnerships and other public bodies, including local authorities.

2. Background

- 2.1. Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was introduced in 2002 as a way of providing a holistic view of an authority's performance and providing a method of comparing authorities. Updated in 2005, it is being replaced for 2009. Under CPA, a star rating for each authority is determined by a range of judgements balancing corporate capacity, use of resources and the quality of a range of services. In addition a new assessment, direction of travel, was introduced in 2005, which, whilst not part of the scoring formula, provided a view of the rate of improvement across the authority.
- 2.2. Whilst the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is in its final year, meaning we will get a final CPA scorecard in early 2009, performance for the first year of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will be judged on 2008/9 data, i.e. this current year. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, enshrined the new CAA methodology in legislation, and the Audit Commission has now published the final guidance on how the assessment will be carried out.

3. CPA 2008

- 3.1 The CPA score for 2008 (financial year 2007/8) has improved and the authority is now classed as **three stars, improving well** (NB: This information was embargoed until 5 March). CPA is an assessment of the organisation as a whole as well as making individual judgements on services. For the score to improve, all departments need to play their part. The authority had been two stars since 2005 and the current performance reflects significant improvements across a wide range of areas. These include the new corporate plan and enhanced departmental plans, an improvement in the use of resources criteria, increases in service block scores and overall rates of improvement, the authority's budget process, the development of increased corporate and managerial capacity, including in asset management and significant achievements in reducing crime, improving education, significantly improving recycling and regenerating Wirral's communities. Whilst the use of resources score was the major blocking factor in achieving three stars, all other services needed to maintain their performance to ensure a successful result.
- 3.2 The Audit Commission in assessing Wirral's Direction of Travel considers that the authority is improving well. The Audit Commission states that "*Wirral Council is improving well. Good overall progress is being made against local priorities. The Council has significantly improved levels of recycling and cleanliness. Good progress*

is also being made to regenerate the areas and the Council has been successful in attracting and supporting new business in the Borough. Educational attainment continues to improve and youth support and leisure activities are contributing to reduced levels of anti-social behaviour. Crime is reducing in most areas. The Council has a good understanding of the different needs of its communities, and is effectively managing and improving access to its services. Areas for improvement include getting young people into education, employment or training and homelessness prevention. The Council continues to develop its capacity for future delivery and has improved its arrangements for managing its resources. Ambitions and priorities for the area have been clarified and performance management arrangements are being strengthened. The Council has improved the way in which it manages its financial resources and is making good progress in delivering overall costs efficiencies.” (The CPA scorecard for Wirral is attached as Appendix 3).

3.3 This is clearly a significant achievement for the authority, but CAA will provide a different and harder challenge. It is essential to avoid complacency across services if we are to continue to deliver successfully against the vision for Wirral.

4. Main changes proposed under CAA

4.1 The CAA regime is a significant shift from CPA. The major changes are summarised below and are covered in more depth, with potential implications for Wirral identified further in the report.

4.2 From central government’s perspective, the reason for changing to CAA was to ensure that assessment of local authorities, other public bodies and local strategic partnerships was:

- A robust assessment for value for money and efficiency savings
- Outcome and area focussed
- Risk based – local issues / challenges / priorities
- Citizen centred – what matters most to citizens
- Less burdensome

4.3 There are four underpinning themes of CAA, which will influence all aspects of the regime. These are:

- Sustainability
- Tackling inequality, disadvantage and discrimination
- People whose circumstances make them vulnerable
- Value for money

4.4 The goals of CAA are stated above. The major changes include a number of significant differences from CPA:

- CAA is now a partnership assessment, with individual organisational assessments underneath
- There will be no corporate assessment or individual service scores (other than children’s services and adult social care) and a more ‘fluid’ inspection
- It is critical that our priorities are soundly based. We will also need to comprehensively evidence how we gain an understanding of the views of citizens, service users and other stakeholders

- Whilst a CAA judgement will be issued (in November), the processes for CAA will take place throughout a whole year, and not just during a narrow inspection period.
- There will be a more forward looking element to the judgements. Previous judgements have only been backwards looking, whereas CAA will discuss the prospects for future improvement and this is being discussed as the most important part of the inspection process
- Reduced inspection burden, and more proportionate inspection based on highlighted risks / weaknesses instead of general rolling programme
- All inspection and judgements to be made by a combined inspectorate team involving the Audit Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation, Commission for Social Care Inspection, Healthcare Commission and Ofsted
- An enhanced public reporting tool is being developed that will give more detail to members of the public via the Audit Commission website.

4.5 The new assessment will have two main components, with each having several sub elements. One judgement will be made of the performance of the local strategic partnership (the area assessment) and another made on individual organisations, including the local authority, PCT and fire and rescue service. More detail on these two judgements is given in the following sections.

5. The area assessment

5.1 This assessment will be based on three main questions (with a number of sub-questions), which are listed below:

- **How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations?**
- **How well are the outcomes and improvements needed being delivered?**
 - How safe is the area?
 - How healthy and well supported are people?
 - How well kept is the area?
 - How environmentally sustainable is the area?
 - How strong is the local economy?
 - How strong and cohesive are local communities?
 - How well is inequality being addressed?
 - How well is housing need met?
 - How well are families supported?
 - How good is the well-being of children and young people?
- **What are the prospects for future improvements?**

5.2 Evidence for answering these questions will come from a number of sources, including performance against LAA outcomes and national indicators, local performance management, any inspection work, other regulatory regimes, partnership self-assessment, place survey and other consultation work and any other relevant sources of data. (A table showing the evidence requirements for each of the partners is included as Appendix 2).

5.3 Whilst the area assessment won't be scored, it will contain a narrative judgement on the area and include a series of red and green flags. The Commission does not intend to attribute a large number of flags, and they are there to highlight only important issues.

- 5.4 Green flags will be awarded for any areas of exemplary good practice that should be shared with other partnerships.
- 5.5 Red flags will be attributed to areas where two conditions apply at the same time. Firstly, in areas where desired outcomes / improvements are not being achieved, a red flag may be raised, but *only* if the partnership does not have realistic and effective plans in place to tackle them. This may be because the partnership is not aware of the problem or does not accept it is an issue, or because plans are not robust or adequately resourced.
- 5.6 The enhanced reporting tool being proposed seeks to make a wider range of information available to the public in a more accessible format. This will give details on both the area and organisational assessments, as well as explaining the red and green flags. It is also anticipated that partnerships will take their own steps to communicate performance and other data to their communities in appropriate ways.
- 5.7 Finally, the last question, prospects for improvement, is considered to be the most significant for CAA. The stated purpose of the assessment is to ensure that improvement to outcomes for local people takes place, and a considerable amount of weight will be given to improvement planning as a result of CAA. An improvement programme for the LSP will be developed and taken to the LAA Programme Board.

6. Organisational assessments

- 6.1 Underneath the area assessment will be a raft of organisational, scored assessments. The Council will be judged on two elements: use of resources and managing performance. The Direction of Travel assessment will be subsumed into the managing performance section.
- 6.2 The key lines of enquiry for the organisational assessment are provided below:

Theme	Key lines of enquiry
<p>Managing finances How effectively does the organisation manage its finances to deliver value for money?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the organisation plan its finances effectively to deliver its strategic priorities and secure sound financial health? • Does the organisation have a sound understanding of its costs and performance and achieve efficiencies in its activities? • Is the organisation's financial reporting timely, reliable and does it meet the needs of internal users, stakeholders and local people?
<p>Governing the business How well does the organisation govern itself and commission services that provide value for money and deliver better outcomes for local people?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the organisation commission and procure quality services and supplies, tailored to local needs, to deliver sustainable outcomes and value for money? • Does the organisation produce relevant and reliable data and information to support decision making and manage performance? • Does the organisation promote and demonstrate the principles and values of good governance? • Does the organisation manage its risks and maintain a sound system of internal control?

<p>Managing resources How well does the organisation manage its people, natural resources and physical assets, to meet current and future needs and deliver value for money?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the organisation making effective use of natural resources? • Does the organisation manage its assets effectively to help deliver its strategic priorities and service needs? • Does the organisation plan, organise and develop its workforce effectively to support the achievement of its strategic priorities?
<p>Managing performance How well does the organisation manage and improve its services and contribute to wider community outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well is the organisation delivering its priority services, outcomes and improvements that are important to local people? • Does the organisation have the leadership, capacity and capability it needs to deliver future improvements?

6.3 The consultation on the use of resources assessment changes was carried out last year, and reported to cabinet on June 7, 2007.

6.4 The emphasis of the managing performance assessment will be on:

- Identifying and delivering priority services, outcomes and improvements;
- Providing the leadership, capacity and capability it needs to deliver future improvements;
- Contributing to improving wider community outcomes, including those set out informal agreements such as Local Area Agreements or Multi-Area Agreements; and
- Tackling inequality and improving outcomes for people in vulnerable circumstances.

6.5 Clearly, there will be strong links between the area assessment and the organisational assessment, particularly for local authorities, given their community leadership role. Areas flagged in area assessment will be explored further in organisational assessments and vice versa, balancing individual organisation and partnership accountabilities. The organisational assessment effectively replaces the reporting of individual services; however, a judgement will still be made by Ofsted on key children's services and the Care Quality Commission (formerly Commission for Social Care Inspection) on adult social care. These judgements will be reported through the organisational assessment and will contribute to the area assessment.

6.6 The organisational assessment will have an overall score between one and four. This score will average the result for use of resources and managing performance. Where this average results in a half point score, the CAA team will make a judgement as to whether to round up or down.

7. Improvement planning, inspection and timescales

7.1 As discussed above, the major focus for CAA will be on ensuring local authorities, other public agencies and partnerships drive improvement in their own areas. Support is available regionally and sub-regionally, through the improvement and efficiency

partnerships. Wirral is well placed to access this support through participation in the Merseyside improvement and efficiency partnership.

7.2 There will be no automatic programme of rolling inspections other than for people whose circumstances make the vulnerable and who may cause others to become vulnerable. These will be in the areas of safeguarding children, looked after children and youth offending.

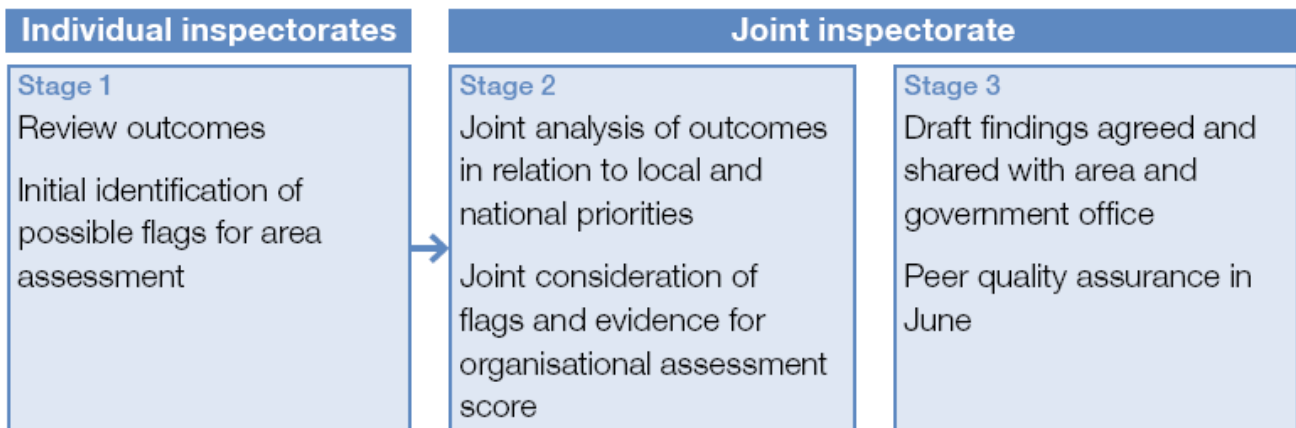
7.3 However, use will be made of targeted and triggered inspection for areas where the following circumstances exist:

- Where performance or improvement levels are unsatisfactory, declining or not improving sufficiently quickly
- Where a service, outcome or one of more service user groups has been identified as being subject to significant risk
- Where underperformance can best be addressed by inspection
- Where ministers have given directions for an inspection to take place
- In exceptional cases where performance levels are currently satisfactory but are declining substantially and rapidly
- Where there is indication of unsatisfactory performance but insufficient evidence is available to make a robust judgement.

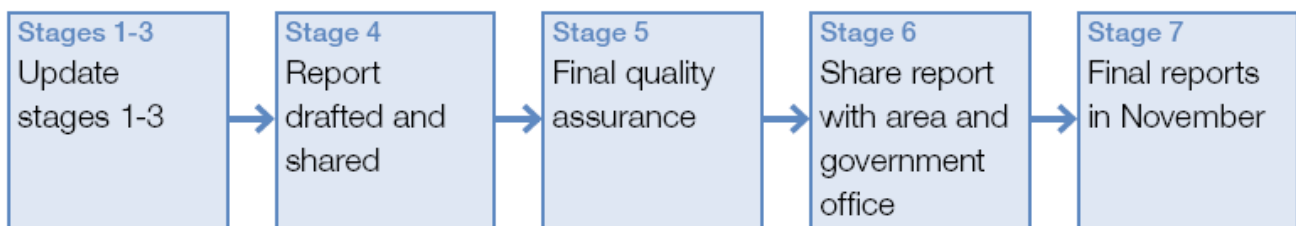
7.4 The annual cycle is described below.

CAA annual cycle

Each January/March/June



September



8. Issues and implications

8.1 The authority has made good progress across a wide range of areas that influenced CPA judgements. These include service performance, value for money, risk, asset

management, performance management, community engagement and equality and diversity.

- 8.2 However, CAA will assess different things and in different ways – the rules have changed significantly. Despite achieving three stars, it will be essential to avoid complacency. The approaches we have used so far will need to be reviewed to ensure they reflect the changes in assessment methodology.
- 8.3 The CAA regime will focus much more strongly on councils' and partnerships' understanding of the needs of service users, citizens and other stakeholders and using those views to inform priorities and plans and deliver services. Wirral has good examples of innovative consultation and engagement work, including the older people's parliament, You Decide, neighbourhood management pilots and a range of consultation mechanisms. Under CAA, the authority will be expected to evidence our clear understanding of the different needs of our communities and how we meet the needs of those most vulnerable groups. It will be necessary to explore how to better co-ordinate consultation across the authority to not only ensure we understand the views of all communities but also to avoid 'consultation fatigue' and duplication. Whilst the authority has implemented innovative schemes such as the You Decide programme, older people's parliament, and participatory budgeting, the new CAA regime will place additional emphasis on engaging with communities and groups. It will also be necessary to build on existing work around neighbourhood management.
- 8.4 The Use of Resources assessment now incorporates a significant number of new components, including judgements on our approaches to managing people, IT, natural resources and governance. The creation of the sustainability unit, the climate change strategy and the work of the environmental sustainability appraisal group provide a solid platform to address these challenges. However, these are in the early stages of their development and may lack evidence at present to demonstrate the outcomes. Similarly as noted by Cabinet on 15 January 2009, the strategic asset review will demonstrate the authority's approach to asset management and will be closely observed by the Audit Commission.
- 8.5 Our performance management has made significant improvements over the last three years. Under CAA, clear, transparent and objective performance management that identifies where services are not performing at the required level is also highly important. The red flags in area assessment will only be attributed to areas where we do not have effective plans in place to tackle any weaknesses. Therefore it is essential that we have an honest and evidence-based appraisal of our performance. Delivery and improvement plans will also be needed for LAA and council improvement priorities. All performance management must be evidence based and focused on identifying areas for improvement. The focus for performance management must be on identifying areas that need improvement. Success in CAA will require a high degree of co-operation and participation both within the Council and between the Council and its partners.

9. Preparing for CAA

- 9.1 The CAA regime is a very wide ranging assessment and requires the whole organisation's performance to be improving. The Corporate Plan's fifth objective: "create an excellent council" provides a framework for co-ordinating the Council's approach to Comprehensive Area Assessment. The plan included in appendix one

identifies the key strategies and actions under a series of headings that reflect the key lines of enquiry for CAA. It is proposed that these are:

- Understand the needs of Wirral residents
- Engage with customers and residents
- Manage our finances
- Manage resources
- Manage our performance
- Develop and manage our people
- Maintain effective governance mechanisms
- Work in partnership
- Plan for risks and contingencies

9.2 Corporate Improvement Group will conduct a diagnostic review of the headings in the plan for an excellent council and report back to Cabinet on the action required to maximise performance under the CAA regime.

10. Financial implications

10.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. However financial implications for use of resources have previously been reported to Cabinet by the Director of Finance.

11. Staffing implications

11.1 Many other partnerships have a dedicated partnership team, able to co-ordinate performance management, communication, equalities and development work across the partnership. Wirral has a limited capacity to do this work through the corporate policy team.

12. Equal Opportunities, community safety, LA21, planning, anti-poverty, social inclusion and local member support implications

12.1 Comprehensive Area Assessment will test all of the above areas, although this report does not have any direct impact on any of them.

13. Background Papers

13.1 Report to Cabinet: *Transition from comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) to comprehensive area assessment (CAA)*, 7 June 2007

13.2 Audit Commission: *Comprehensive Area Assessment, Framework document*

14. Conclusion

14.1 The CAA regime represents a significant change to the government's approach to assessing local authorities, other public agencies and local strategic partnerships. The emphasis is strongly articulated around understanding and engaging with communities, having a clear plan for delivery and achieving that plan and ensuring that underperformance is addressed. A whole council approach to developing the plan for an excellent council will prepare the authority for the new regime. It is also important to note that the new framework attempts (with some success compared to CPA) to articulate what an excellent council would be aiming to achieve, and thus it is important that we do not simply view this as an assessment process, and instead use the opportunity of its feedback to support the achievement of the Council's vision and objectives.

15. Recommendations - That

- (1) the changes arising from the introduction of the CAA framework be noted; and
- (2) an improvement plan be brought back to Cabinet that integrates the organisational and area assessments, use of resources and managing performance elements on the assessment, and that provides a diagnostic evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement.

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services.

Appendix One – Plan for an excellent council

Heading	Goal	Key strategies / documents	Milestones / activity	Leading department
Understand the needs of Wirral residents	Understand the needs of Wirral residents and communities to ensure services match needs	Joint strategic needs assessment Economic assessment IMD analysis	Citizens panel / place survey	Corporate Services
Engage with customers and residents	Improve accountability, accessibility and openness and involve those who use our services in their design and delivery	Customer access strategy Comprehensive engagement strategy E&D strategy	Area forums Neighbourhood management pilots Equality assessment for level three	Corporate services Regeneration Adult Social Services / Corporate Services
Manage our finances	Set a balanced budget that reflects our priorities and manage within that budget Create a sustainable and stable budget providing value for money Improve the Council's budgeting process to fully reflect its priorities	Change programme Medium term financial strategy Capital strategy VFM reviews Procurement strategy	Budget agreed	Finance
Manage resources	Improve the use of the Council's land and assets. Manage our natural and physical resources.	IT strategy Climate change strategy Strategic Asset Review	Creation of the sustainability unit ESAG appraisal report	Law, HR and Asset Management
Manage our performance	Use innovative performance	Data quality policy CAA self assessment	COMT / Cabinet performance reports	Corporate Policy

	management to identify areas where improvement is needed.	Scrutiny work programmes		
Develop and manage our people	Provide a modern, effective workforce with the right skills.	Workforce development plan(s) People strategy	liP review	Law, HR and Asset Management
Maintain effective governance mechanisms	Ensure our governance is appropriate and fit for purpose.	Constitution Partnerships register / toolkit	Scrutiny review	Law, HR and Asset Management
Work in partnership	Improve partnership working with the public, private & voluntary sectors.	CAA self assessment LSP improvement programme Partnerships register SCS / LAA	Annual review of LSP	Corporate Services
Plan for risks and contingencies	Ensure we understand our risks and that our services are resilient enough to deal with emergencies.	Risk register Emergency plan Business continuity strategy	Refresh of the corporate and partnership risk register	Finance

Appendix two - assessment areas under CAA

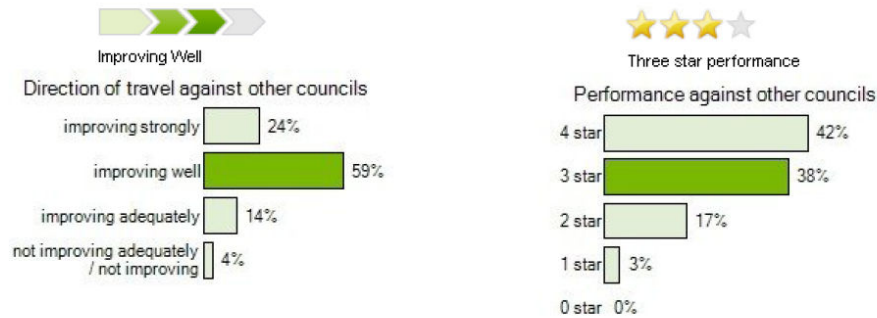
Assessment	Evidenced by	Assessment will cover	Outcome will be
Area assessment	NIS LAA Other data Local performance management Self assessment Outcome of other regulatory regimes Evidence from inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations? How well are the outcomes and improvements needed being delivered? What are the prospects for future improvements? 	Overall narrative judgement, with detail on 3 questions Red and green flags Identified areas for improvement
Council organisational assessment –	NIS LAA Other data Self assessment Evidence from inspections	Use of Resources Managing Performance	Score for UoR Score for managing performance Possibly overall score
PCT organisational assessment –	DoH data NIS LAA	Use of resources annual health check	Star rating for PCT Score for UoR
Fire & Rescue Service organisational assessment –	NIS LAA Other data	Use of Resources Managing Performance	Overall score for service UoR score Managing performance score
Police organisational assessment –	NIS LAA APACS	Use of Resources APACS	UoR score APACS judgement

APPENDIX 3

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) scorecard 2008

Overall performance for this Council

This is a council that is **improving well** and demonstrating a **3 star** overall performance.



We reached this overall rating by looking at:

- What progress Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council has made in the last year – direction of travel
- How Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council manages its finances and provides value for money – use of resources
- How Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council's main services perform – service performance
- How Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council is run – corporate assessment

Service assessments, use of resources and corporate assessments are scored on the Local Services Inspectorate Forum scale:

- 1 = Inadequate performance – below minimum requirements
- 2 = Adequate performance – only at minimum requirements
- 3 = Performing well – consistently above minimum requirements
- 4 = Performing strongly – well above minimum requirements

APPENDIX 3 (cont)

Direction of travel

The progress Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council has made in the last year

Direction of travel	2005	2006	2007	2008
This assessment indicates the progress being made, or otherwise, to achieve improvement.	improving adequately	improving well	improving adequately	improving well

The following summary has been provided to support the 2008 direction of travel assessment:

Wirral Council is improving well. Good overall progress is being made against local priorities. The Council has significantly improved levels of recycling and cleanliness. Good progress is also being made to regenerate the area and the Council has been successful in attracting and supporting new business in the borough. Educational attainment continues to improve and youth sport and leisure activities are contributing to reduced levels of anti-social behaviour. Crime is reducing in most areas. The Council has a good understanding of the different needs of its communities, and is effectively managing and improving access to its services. Areas for improvement include getting young people into education, employment or training and homelessness prevention. The Council continues to develop its capacity for future delivery and has improved its arrangements for managing its resources. Ambitions and priorities for the area have been clarified and performance management arrangements are being strengthened. The Council has improved the way in which it manages its financial resources and is making good progress in delivering overall cost efficiencies.

Use of resources

How Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council manages its finances and provides value for money

Use of resources	2005	2006	2007	2008
We have assessed how well the Council manages its finances and provides value for money.	2	2	2	3

This use of resources judgement is drawn from five individual judgements provided by the Council's appointed auditor:

Auditor judgements	2008
Financial reporting	2
Financial management	3
Financial standing	3
Internal control	3
Value for money	2

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING SUMMARY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This is one of a series of reports submitted throughout the year presenting an overview of the performance of the Council in delivering the Vision for Wirral as set out in the Corporate Plan and is for the quarter-ended 31 December.

2. OVERVIEW

- 2.1. The volatility of the world financial markets is the dominant factor as the financial pressures within the global economy have repercussions at national and local levels. The British Government has injected large sums of public money to support the financial and private sectors and has maintained funding for local authorities at the initially projected levels for 2009/10. However, the recovery is not expected to be short-term and the projections are for significant public sector efficiencies to be required from 2010/11 onwards.

- 2.1.1 To date Wirral has benefitted through exercising prudent financial management around cash flow and investments that has realised additional income and a reduced need for temporary borrowing. The impact upon the banking sector placed at risk a £2 million investment with an Icelandic bank although there remains every possibility that this sum will be recovered.

- 2.1.2 The world economic position places additional pressures upon those reliant upon the financial sector with implications for the delivery of the Wirral Investment Strategy, major investment schemes and the NewHeartlands initiative. To date the impact upon planned programmes has been effectively contained but the developing links with the China economy do present an opportunity for securing additional investment to Wirral.

- 2.1.3 Against this background the Council continues to maintain progress in achieving the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan whilst recognising the impact on the private sector including the building industry. This has had a consequential impact upon demands for services such as care services and benefits as well as in delivering priority areas such as worklessness.

- 2.2. Towards the end of the financial year there were high profile cases regarding the provision of care services for children in other parts of the country. The safeguarding of children is one of the areas kept under review as part of the Corporate Risk Register. Further actions are being implemented in this area and are to be reported to Cabinet.

- 2.3. In reviewing the progress made at the end of December the table gives a brief summary for each of the key areas which are expanded upon in the subsequent sections of the report. As agreed by Cabinet on 27 November 2008 the

supporting appendices, together with this covering report, are now placed in the Virtual Committee.

Area	Progress Summary
Corporate Plan	The majority of performance indicators are achieving or exceeding targets at quarter 3. The underpinning projects are presently either on target or actions are in place to enable them to be achieved during the year.
Performance	Improvements in recycling during 2007/08 recognised Wirral as the most improved metropolitan and also reflected in score increasing for 2 to 3 under the Environment Assessment of the CPA. Considerable time spent reviewing processes to ensure that Wirral is dealing effectively with Looked After Children in light of recent cases.
Financial	The projected overspends in Adult Social Services, Regeneration and Technical Services are partially offset by the savings within Treasury Management. The release of 'one-off' resources to balances should ensure the projected year-end position is as originally projected. The 2009/10 budget is set to be agreed in March 2009.
Capital	The period saw the completion of the Children's Centres, the re-opening of the Oval Sports Centre and the opening of the new Floral Pavilion Theatre. The forecast spend remains in line with the programme as approved for 2008/09 with the future years programme agreed in December 2008.
Risk	The Corporate Risk Register was revised by Cabinet in December 2008 and any required actions are being addressed through the developing Departmental Plans for 2009/10. The actions in respect of existing risks are being progressed with the profile recently raised regarding the safeguarding of children. The delivery of the Change programme, including the Strategic Asset Review, now has an increased profile.

2.4. The key issues highlighted as requiring to be addressed in the forthcoming period are the:-

- Impact of the economic downturn
- continuing development of the Adult Social Services personalisation agenda;
- the impact of the recent child care services cases;
- progression and implementation of the strategic asset review;
- management of the potential overspends in 2008/09 within Adult Social Services, Regeneration and Technical Services;
- decisions to enable the setting of the Council budget for 2009/10.

3. CORPORATE PLAN AND PERFORMANCE

3.1 On 13 March 2008, Cabinet agreed the Council's Corporate Plan which detailed how the vision 'of a more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities and people to thrive and achieve their full potential' would be achieved. The vision set five clear objectives, and identified eleven immediate priorities for improvement in the year ahead.

3.2 This section includes narrative and performance indicators on the priorities for improvement areas for 2008/09. The narrative includes the progress made to date, challenges remaining and further improvements to be completed. It should be noted that the narrative refers to some matters that occurred after the end of the 3rd quarter (31st December) that have been included due to the particular relevance to the issues being considered.

3.3.1 Reduce worklessness

Progress made:

Wirral continues to make steady progress in reducing the number of residents claiming Incapacity Benefit (the latest available data, to May 2008, shows a rate of 10.4% of the working age population which is a reduction of 0.1% points or 160 fewer claimants on the previous quarter) and Lone Parent Benefit rates remaining stable (at 2.9% with a reduction of 20 claimants).

However, these reductions are negated by more recent figures for Job Seekers Allowance, which show a rise in the number of people claiming JSA (an increase of 0.8% points or 1,145 additional claimants since May 2008). This rise is in line with national trends but slightly better than the regional average.

The Wirral Economic Development and Skills (WEDS) partnership continues to progress in ensuring the Working Wirral programme contributes to the reduction in worklessness.

Working Wirral continues to commission activity against the Employment and Enterprise Investment Framework to support mainstream activity and its 'Reach Out' programme has achieved impressive outcomes which include supporting 635 workless residents from Wirral's most disadvantaged communities into employment in the first 3 quarters of the year.

Challenges remaining:

The global downturn has put the economy into recession, resulting in a continuing rise in unemployment nationally. The situation is expected to worsen over the next 12 months with JSA trends in Wirral rising above the national average.

Worklessness data is released quarterly (and up to six months later in some areas), so it is difficult to demonstrate the impact of the global economic downturn in real time. However, we continue to measure JSA data sets which is made available monthly to identify trends within that claimant group.

Residents who are in employment but have low skill levels or no qualifications may struggle to return to the labour market if they lose their jobs.

How we're making further improvements:

We continue to work with partners to ensure Wirral has the provision to support residents and to identify and design interventions to continue to tackle worklessness. Partners are committed to addressing the longer term structural problems that cause worklessness.

3.3.2 Increase enterprise

Progress made:

Wirral continues to support enterprise growth through the Wirralbiz programme. The last LAA stretch targets have been achieved in terms of the number of new business starts and their survival rates after one year of trading.

Invest Wirral continue to signpost and encourage local firms to take up the support offered by regional business support programmes.

We are working closely with the NWDA to ensure that future business support programmes are in line with the National Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP) and complements other NWDA funded activities.

Challenges remaining:

Given the current economic conditions it is vital that we continue to support new and existing businesses. The current transitional funding for new business starts finishes in March 2009. Negotiations are taking place with NWDA to ensure that contingency arrangements are in place if the post-March contract has not been agreed by the end of March.

Wirral has a high proportion of small businesses that are not VAT-registered and support for to grow these businesses will be tailored around the BSSP model to encourage future growth.

How we're making further improvements:

We continue to work with the NWDA to ensure that future programmes meet business needs and local firms take up the support available.

The Wirral Investment Board gave their support (In November 2008) for Wirral Officers to develop a programme to provide consultancy and grant assistance to micro businesses (those with fewer than 10 employees) in the borough.

3.3.3. Increase levels of recycling

Progress made:

DEFRA has recognised Wirral as the most improved metropolitan Council for recycling and composting performance in England for 2007/08. The Council has improved from a 2 to a 3 Star rating under the Environment Block of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Recycling rates for October-December 2008 are 34.67 %, 35.67% and 29.04% and we are predicting a 35-36% recycling/composting rate for the end of the 2008/09 financial year, meaning we will meet 2009/10 LAA target 35.5% one year ahead of schedule.

A new garden waste contractor has been appointed and will start on 1 April 2009, resulting in financial efficiencies and environmental improvements.

A survey into the composition of domestic waste has been undertaken. It shows problems with materials going into the wrong bins and the opportunities for recycling being lost. Officers are currently looking at the survey results in order to target communications more effectively.

Merseyside Waste Partnership has secured £195,000 funding for the Merseyside-wide 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign.

Multi-occupancy premises have been assessed for recycling services and we are currently consulting with landlords to improve the position.

Challenges remaining:

The 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign is being developed that will encourage further waste reduction.

More effort is required to improve waste segregation and further increase the levels of recycling.

How we're making further improvements:

A targeted enforcement campaign (backed up with a borough-wide information campaign) will begin in March / April targeting areas of high contamination & side waste. Target areas will be agreed between by the Council and Biffa.

Multi-occupancy recycling will be rolled out in March 2009, which will help to increase levels of recycling.

On street recycling receptacles are being placed in 4 main shopping areas in February to raise the profile of recycling and encourage the public to recycle.

3.3.4. Reduce the Council's carbon footprint

Progress made:

The Investment in Energy Efficiency Programme (IEEP) continues to reduce the Council's CO2 emissions. Progress was reported to Cabinet in September 2008, a further update report in April 2008. The Water Efficiency Scheme and BEMs phases 2 & 3 are now complete and operational.

28 January 2009 Employment & Appointments Committee approved the establishment of the Climate Change Officer and Sustainability (Cred) Liaison Officer posts and it is hoped to have them filled by July 2009. These officers will drive improved working with businesses and the community to raise awareness of the urgent need to reduce Wirral's carbon footprint and to sign up to the CRed community carbon reduction programme.

The two recently appointed Energy Awareness officers have been implementing an awareness programme over the last 3 months. Progress on this campaign was reported to Environment Committee on 28 January 2009.

As part of the work of the Nottingham Declaration working group, we launched a co-funded poster campaign with our partners (Wirral PCT and Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Trust) in November 2008 to coincide with Energy Saving week. A formal media launch with the Chief Executive officers of each organisation is planned for Spring 2009.

Challenges remaining:

Energy costs have risen significantly over the last 12-18 months and are likely to add around £3.5 million to the Council's annual expenditure.

Much of the authority's energy consumption is building-related. Energy conservation is a key consideration in the current Strategic Asset Review (SAR) of all Council buildings.

A number of IEEP phase 2 projects await the outcome of the SAR. Officers will begin to detail the SAR programme of works required and this will enable energy investment work to proceed on the buildings that are being retained.

How we're making further improvements:

Preparations are underway to take part in the Government's Carbon Reduction Commitment scheme (CRC), which is expected to help to further reduce carbon emissions. An update will be reported to Cabinet on 19 March 2009.

IEEP phase 3 is being progressed with the roll-out of further Street Lighting efficiency measures and then the introduction of Automatic Meter Reading Systems, which provide financial benefits when the CRC is introduced in 2010.

Display Energy Certificates are being produced for 158 sites. A greater number of sites than expected are producing above average results.

3.3.5. Reduce number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents.

Progress made:

Initiatives under the Roadsafes partnership with Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service continue to be rolled out and regular coordination meetings ensure progress made / corrective action taken.

The numbers of people killed or seriously injured continued to fall towards the LAA and DfT targets.

A successful pilot campaign - Bring accidents down 2 zero - is still underway, although its results so far show that 74% of drivers preferred the new scheme with the voluntary 20mph speed limit to physical speed reduction measures. 89% of drivers also thought that the scheme should be provided in other areas of Wirral. Area forums are being asked to nominate other areas for consideration in the next tranche of this popular scheme.

Working in partnership with the Police a Christmas Drink Driving campaign was implemented over the last quarter with marked success.

Challenges remaining:

While those of school age are relatively easy to engage and educate with road safety messages, other groups are harder to-reach; These include senior citizen drivers and 'born again' adult motorcyclist and cyclists. Roadsafe partners are making progress communicating with such groups.

How we're making further improvements:

A 'theatre in education' programme was rolled out in February to those secondary schools that wished to take up the offer. It encourages young people to have a responsible attitude and behaviour around roads and 4,268 young people are expected to benefit from the initiative.

Road Safety will support the annual motorcyclist Egg Run which will allow us to communicate Bike Safe messages and promote Bike Safe training courses.

The '4 Wheel Ed' campaign, which is run in partnership with the Police, Response (Drug & Alcohol) and MFRS and 'Drive to Arrive' (in partnership with MFRS) will continue to be delivered in schools to Y6, Y7, Y10.

An anti-speeding and anti-use of mobile phones in cars campaign is being run in partnership with the Police in the current quarter.

The Council and Police will be supporting the DfT's Think campaign with media messages and a detailed communications strategy is being developed.

The Streetscene and Transport Services Committee will received the annual programme of proposed engineering measures designed to improve the safety record on the roads on 24 February.

We are currently installing a sign posting scheme on 6 main corridors giving road users the message on just how many collisions have occurred to encourage drivers to take more care.

Cabinet will receive a report on vehicle-activated signs outlining a policy and strategy for their further deployment across the borough and to be used at collision sites where the conventional signing fails to curb motorists' speeds.

3.3.6. Promote greater independence and choice

Progress made:

The Department of Adult Social Services (DASS) was rated as a 2 star authority by the Commission for Social Care Inspection, continuing to provide good outcomes for adults with promising capacity to improve.

The Department has continued to progress its major restructure to transform social care. The majority of senior appointments have been made and the formation of new locality structures, co-terminus with NHS Wirral, is underway.

A major Personalisation conference was held in December. The event featured keynote national and local speakers who set out the latest developments in policy, as well as presentations from stakeholders. The objectives of the Conference were to develop awareness and for attendees, including elected

members to further understand the changes that Personalisation is bringing to social care and health services in Wirral.

Wirral PCT (now NHS Wirral) was assessed against the World Class Commissioning standards in November 2008. The assessment included a detailed examination of how the PCT works with its partners. Although the PCT is awaiting final confirmation they were awarded a score of 3 for Partnership with praise for the partnership with Local Authority.

The Department continues to develop of the system dynamic modelling tool based on Wirral's Dementia Pathways working with CSED. NHS Wirral has produced a draft Commissioning Strategy for Dementia and has announced planned investment of £500,000 in 2009/10 in dementia services.

Progression has been made on a Pilot for Personal Budgets that will enable increased choice and control and greater independence for people who use services, and improved outcomes for individuals and their carers.

The need to develop different models of care and support for older people is a key objective with NHS Wirral. The plans are being made in response to demographic, health, well being and lifestyles changes in the older population. One initiative is extra care housing which affords the opportunity for older people to live in independent accommodation (be it privately owned, shared equity or rented) while benefiting from a wide range of facilities on site.

Wirral has secured capital grants of £4m for 70 units, and a further £2.6m for 49 units with these schemes also providing a range of facilities for primary care and the local community and significantly advance the development of new and improved models of care and support in Wirral for older citizens.

An extended Carers Development Committee was held with a number of speakers in attendance and enabling the newly appointed 'Carers Champion' Cllr Sheila Clarke to meet key stakeholders.

Challenges remaining:

The Department continues to face significant financial pressures. The three year strategy has been adopted to address financial pressures, with the Efficiency Plan (Budget Stabilisation Strategy) monitored at Strategic Leadership Team, linked to the Transformational Change Programme Board.

How we're making further improvements:

The development of integrated posts, services, and work to reduce duplication contributes to sustaining improvement as part of the Wirral Integrated Services Programme (WISP): working across the health & social care economy. This includes working at locality level and engaging in a new community model

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

Progress made:

Results at Key Stage 3 show that standards have risen (against the national trend) in English, remained static in mathematics (against a national rise) and declined by less than the national trend in science. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 and above in English and mathematics combined has risen slightly compared with a national fall. However, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4 has improved by 1.5ppts with a strong upward rise of 4.4ppts for 5 good GCSEs.

The LA is the second most improved nationally for reducing the number of Persistent Absence schools.

There is a clear vision for school improvement that has been shared with stakeholders across the LA and with the SIPs. Progress against the milestones in the CYP plan is reviewed at monthly intervals. There are a range of focus groups at all phases which are charged with identifying ways to improve the attainment of all pupils, but especially vulnerable groups including looked after children. The performance of SIPs is monitored closely with careful scrutiny of all SIP reports by the LA's SIP Manager and the Strategy Manager. Attention is paid to the level of challenge represented in the reports in terms of the targets being set by schools and the reviews of the schools' performance. The agenda for SIP conversations with schools includes the LA priorities for raising attainment for all pupils and in particular in mathematics, and the 14-19 agenda.

Challenges remaining:

Improving the outcomes for Maths at all Key Stages.

National Strategies through the Target Setting Guidance expect all schools to set targets at FFT-D, and SIPs in Wirral have engaged with schools so they set targets that are appropriately aspirational to FFT-D.

The Government has produced combined statistics for English and Maths, with the aim of ensuring standards in both subjects are improved simultaneously.

There is the challenge of increasing the proportion of pupils who make two levels progress across the Key Stages.

Improving the performance of National Challenge schools.

Improving tracking and monitoring of progress of Looked After Children, using FFT data to ensure LAC achieve their potential, taking into account prior attainment.

How we're making further improvements:

Continue to implement the programme around Children's Centres.

Raise outcomes for Foundation Stage in line with targets and especially with regard to language and literacy.

Continue to implement, embed and further develop the Extended Schools programme.

Implement and evaluate a number of projects focusing on Narrowing the Gap involving multi-agency support and Results Based Accountability methodology.

3.3.8. Safely reduce the number of looked after children

Progress made:

Plans continue to be implemented to support more children in the community and consequently, safely reduce the children in care population; however, performance at 31 December was 91.9 per 10,000, which is an increase upon the previous quarters report. This figure continues to increase.

A Senior Manager chairs all pre-proceedings meetings (PLO), which ensures consistency of practice, and working with CAF/CASS nationally to evidence the impact upon outcomes for children through the new Court processes.

An outcome based accountability action plan has been developed to support the safe discharge of Care Orders of children placed with parents, which remain high, although there has been a small decrease during the last quarter. Local practice seminars are supporting this activity.

Repeat referrals - the changes made to Wirral's Central Advice and Duty Team (CADT), have been in place for a full 12 months; as projected the re-referral rate has decreased month on month since 1 April to 24.7% (31/12/08) from 27.6%, which is more in line with our statistical neighbours / national average. We are projecting a comparable outturn this year to referral rates for 2007/8.

Weekly meetings, chaired by the Strategic Service Manager, Children and Families, involving all District and Assessment Team Managers continue, overseeing and scrutinising all incoming work; focusing on consistency of threshold application.

Challenges remaining:

Events in Haringey and consequent media attention have impacted upon the type of referrals being received by Social Care. There has been an increase in children being considered by the legal gate keeping panel and more children have become looked after during this quarter. There is an inevitable greater degree of cautiousness in decision making regarding children's welfare and safety. It is firmly predicted that there will be more children in care at the end of this financial year than 31 March 2008, and that the targeted reduction to 590 children will not be achieved.

Steps described in a separate report to this Cabinet explain how further investment by the Council will be used to address the issues raised above and help to bring the reduction of numbers looked after back on track during 2009/10 financial year.

How we're making further improvements:

Social Care is identifying where there are delays in children being discharged from local authority care, where there are plans to do so, some of which are attributable to delays in appointing CAFCASS guardians.

One meeting with senior CAFCASS officers took place to raise these issues in December 2008, with a further meeting planned. The authority is also focusing on children who have recently become looked after voluntarily, to determine what packages of care can be implemented to support children, where possible, to safely return to their family.

External review of the strategy to support more children in the community is being sought from the CWDC (Remodelling Social Work Delivery Pilot), to determine whether there are additional measures which can be implemented, to reinforce preventative intervention to safely reduce the need for children to become looked after. Work is underway to develop a Multi Systemic Treatment (MST) programme in Wirral, in partnership with the PCT, to provide intensive intervention to young people on the edge of care / at serious risk of offending.

There has been an increased level of auditing and scrutiny of social work practice following Baby P, to ensure that children are being adequately assessed, monitored and supported – for example, there has been an audit of all children subject to a child protection plan to ensure that visits comply with procedural timescales and that they have clear plans which are meeting children's needs. Caseloads are being monitored, and the impact upon case work, of any social worker absence, is being continuously reviewed. Senior fieldwork managers are now reporting to the Director on staffing and caseloads on a monthly basis. Additional temporary social workers have been located in 6 social work teams where there are the greatest pressures.

Staff are being supported through the continued roll out of the well being programme.

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

Progress made:

The Council's Strategic Asset Review has been approved following extensive public consultation. The Review considered the whole of the borough using

seven agreed geographical areas and focussed on public facing assets. A strategic consolidation of the asset base has now been agreed, with a package of borough-wide proposals based on a vision of fewer but better assets and optimum value for money for local people.

This has:

- Created a framework that will be used to maximise opportunities for partnership working
- Endorsed the principle of asset transfer to take place over an anticipated period of two years as an alternative to closure
- Proposed a programme for the development of multi-purpose complexes strategically located across the borough, and
- Proposed substantial rationalisation of the council's administrative accommodation underpinned by a drive to transform ways of working.

A revenue saving of £3,101,000 has been agreed as a result and a provision of £1,863,000 created to cover amendments to the review and any necessary transitional funding.

Challenges remaining:

Approval of the Strategic Asset Review starts the process of substantially modernising the Council's estate. A programme of investment in enhanced facilities will be coupled with changes to service delivery designed to meet customers' needs more effectively. Several current development projects will be examined to see how they fit with the new framework of the Strategic Asset Review and whether they should continue as previously proposed, particularly where there are compelling reasons to avoid delay.

There was a concentration in the review on Leisure and Cultural Services' assets, but it was recognised that the other main operational asset groups need to be more effectively joined into corporate asset review processes. In particular the schools' estate and children's' centres have major roles in delivering a broad range of services and activities within local communities. In addition the modernisation of adult social care will lead to different forms of service provision which are likely to reshape future property requirements. The continuous process of property review across the remainder of the corporate estate will create further opportunities for modernisation and efficiency.

Rationalisation of the Council's administrative accommodation will require the modernisation of current working arrangements and substantial investment in Information Technology.

How we're making further improvements:

Investment will now be made in the development of five major multi-purpose complexes at Bebington, Birkenhead, Liscard, Moreton and West Kirby. In addition, smaller community-focused, multi-purpose complexes will be developed at Greasby, Heswall, Leasowe, Rock Ferry, St. James and Bromborough. Delivery of services in the Upton / Woodchurch area will be concentrated on Woodchurch Leisure Centre, Upton Library and Upton One Stop Shop in the Department for Work and Pensions site.

Where the community expresses an interest, the transfer of assets to community management will be explored within a two-year period and finances will be available to help communities with the transition.

In addition the review of Office accommodation will be prioritised that will deliver savings of £1 million by 2001.

3.3.10 Create a sustainable and stable budget, providing value for money

Progress made:

Council Budget 2008/09 was agreed in March and was supported by the s151 officer statement as being sustainable.

Regular financial monitoring updates to Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Chairs highlight potential overspends, primarily within Adult Social Services, and increased 'one-off' resources.

Annual Efficiency Statement 2007/08 reported to Cabinet in June was submitted to, and subsequently, agreed by Government in July.

Review of the high spending areas as identified by the Audit Commission 'spend profiles' was reported to Cabinet on September 25.

Clarification received around reporting of NI 179 (the net value of ongoing cash releasing gains) and projection for 2008/09 sent to Government in October.

Director of Finance regularly updates Cabinet on the Projected Budget position. Supported by regular liaison between Cabinet and Chief Officers to assess the implications and address the gap between likely spend and resources.

Challenges remaining:

Address the identified areas of overspending in 2008/09 to ensure overall spending remains within the resources available.

Report to Government, after the financial year-end, the achievements in respect of NI 179.

Agree a sustainable and stable budget for 2009/10 by March 10 2009.

How we're making further improvements:

Director of Adult Social Services provides regular progress reports to Cabinet on Transforming Social Care including stabilising the departmental budget.

Projected Budget position is regularly reported to Cabinet with investment / saving decisions being taken at the appropriate times.

Cabinet receiving and considering reports around longer-term issues eg Strategic Asset Review.

3.3.11 Improve the Council's budgeting process to fully reflect its priorities

Progress made:

2008/09 Council Budget resolution included references to, and linkages to, the Council priorities.

Efficiency Investment Fund of £5.3 million created as part of the 2008/09 budget with further amounts set aside for future years.

Council strategies including Customer Access, Medium Term Financial, IT and Risk were revised per Corporate Plan and approved by Cabinet on 23 July.

Cabinet in September re-affirmed that the Corporate Plan priorities for 2008/09 remain as the priorities for 2009/10.

Budget process further refined in terms of the information flow to Members and Officers. The regular updates give greater clarity and focus upon the key changes.

Challenges remaining:

The current financial climate is bringing additional pressures on available resources and the delivery of the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan.

Responding to demand lead pressures for care services – adults and children.

Links to the setting of a sustainable and stable budget for 2009/10.

How we're making further improvements:

The Efficiency Investment Fund is available for initiatives that require resources to deliver future benefits and invest in priority areas of the Council. This continues as part of the budget setting process.

Any submissions for increased resources, including from the capital and IT programmes require a Business Case which is weighted towards meeting the agreed priorities.

Capital programme 2009/12 agreed by Council in December 2009.

3.4 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

This following section shows the performance indicators and key projects for the priority for improvement areas 2008/09.

3.4.1 Reduce worklessness

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
NI 152	Working age people on out of work benefits	17.74% (Lower is Better)	17.28%	17.79%	17.28%	Green	n/a	
NI 153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods (WNF)	35.22 (Lower is Better)	34.98	35.22	34.98	Green	n/a	

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 Status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective Action (Amber & Red only)
Implementation of the Full Employment and Skills plan	Corporate Services	GREEN	
Implementation of the City Region Employment Strategy	Corporate Services	GREEN	
Strategically plan and align activity and resources of all partners to support the delivery of sub regional and local employment and skills strategies	Corporate Services	GREEN	

3.4.2 Increase enterprise

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
LOCAL 4128	Number of new business start-ups supported through Wirral Biz or Business Link in Wirral as measured	262	262	200	248	Over Performing	↑	This is a demand led initiative. The performance over the last quarter recognises the increased demand for the

by data from both organisations								service. However we expect the numbers of new business starts to slow considerably in the final quarter due to the prevailing economic conditions, therefore the year end forecast remains unchanged.
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Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Implementation of the Enterprise Strategy	Corporate Services	GREEN	
Co-ordinate the implementation of local, sub regional and regional enterprise development and business support strategies	Corporate Services	GREEN	

3.4.3 Increase levels of recycling

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
NI 191	Residual household waste per household	636 (Lower is Better)	585	480	446.21	Amber	n/a	The Q3 performance figure is unverified and subject to change due to data not yet verified.
NI 192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	34%	35.4%	35%	33.34%	Green	n/a	The Q3 figure is unverified and subject to change due to data not yet received. The year end forecast figure is subject to all recovered recyclates being sent to reprocessors.

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Increase participation in alternate weekly collection scheme	Technical Services	GREEN	

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Promote waste minimisation initiatives to householders	Technical Services	GREEN	
Encourage recycling and minimisation of municipal waste	Technical Services	GREEN	

3.4.4 Reduce the Council's carbon footprint

There are no performance indicators to report for this priority area at Q3.

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Continue the Energy Efficiency Investment Programme	Technical Services	AMBER	Have commenced IEEP Ph 2 projects, however some held up by SAR, awaiting outcome of the public consultation
Develop and implement Wirral CRed initiative	Law, HR & Asset Management	Awaiting Status	
Produce a Developer's Guide for Sustainable Development	Technical Services	RED	Timescales for the Guide have extended from the initial target for various reasons which include recent legislative changes and the reliance on other sections for their input, both internal and external to Technical Services Dept. It is now anticipated that a Developers Guide will be produced by the end of 2009 calendar year.
Development of Sustainability Unit within Wirral Council	Law, HR & Asset Management	AMBER	Posts for the sustainability unit have now been approved but have not yet been recruited for.

3.4.5 Reduce number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents.

There are no performance indicators to report for this priority area at Q3.

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Develop initiatives to deliver road safety education, training and publicity	Technical Services	GREEN	

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Implement engineering measures to improve road	Technical Services	GREEN	
Work with Merseyside Police via the Accident Reduction Partnership to improve road safety	Technical Services	GREEN	

3.4.6 Promote greater independence and choice

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
NI 130	Social care clients receiving Self Directed Support (Direct Payments and Individual Budgets)	322.3	175	291.5	152.10	Red	n/a	Performance continues to be monitored with the Personal Budgets Steering Group focused on improving performance and the take up of Direct Payments. In Jan 2009 a Personal Budgets Pilot will commence. A new definition for this indicator from April 2009 will mean performance will be reported as a percentage.
NI 135	Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information	18.0%	22%	15.0%	23.13%	Over Performing	n/a	Performance for this new national indicator has exceeded targets at present. Monthly monitoring of performance will continue, and consideration will be made to refresh targets as part of the LAA review.
NI 136	People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)	2185.80	2185.80	2173	2160.29	Green	n/a	
NI 146	Adults with learning disabilities in	8.3%	5%	7.9%	4.16%	Red	n/a	The JOBS (Jointly Overcoming Barriers equals

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
	employment							Success) programme is currently working with its first 20 people (just starting to go to work) but there is a concern that the current economic crisis will limit the availability of employment and reduce opportunities for those on the programme.

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Enablement and re-ablement	Adult Social Services	GREEN	
Carers Strategy	Adult Social Services	GREEN	
Access and assessment arrangements	Adult Social Services	AMBER	Full implementation strategy in place, with majority of appointments made to posts. Implementation due from Feb 2009, with some delay to full locality moves post April 2009.
Promoting independence	Adult Social Services	GREEN	
Develop Self Directed Support services	Adult Social Services	GREEN	
Implement the Strategic Framework for Health and Wellbeing	Adult Social Services	AMBER	Appointments have been made at a senior level, and restructuring of the Integrated Communities and Wellbeing Branch is underway to deliver on the strategic framework.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	Adult Social Services	GREEN	

3.4.7 Raise overall educational attainment, particularly lower achieving young people

There are no performance indicators to report for this priority area at Q3.

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Project plan to close the attainment gap where poverty affects achievement	Children & Young People	GREEN	
Strategies Intervention Project	Children & Young People	GREEN	
Ensure there are no schools in Ofsted categories	Children & Young People	AMBER	Intervention and support provided to the one school in a category, now expected to come out of category on next inspection in the Spring.
Develop a range of intervention strategies to support underachieving and underattaining pupils	Children & Young People	GREEN	
develop literacy and numeracy via family learning programmes	Children & Young People	GREEN	

3.4.8 Safely reduce the number of looked after children

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
NI 61	Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption	68.0	68.0	50.0	50.0	Green	n/a	This indicator is sensitive to small numbers. 50% represents 4 out of the 8 adoptions being completed within 12 month of the adoption decision. Children have taken longer than expected to settle within their adoptive placements and this has led to delays in adoption proceedings. It is expected that 7 more adoptions should take place in the last quarter.
NI 62	Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements	11% (Lower is Better)	11.0%	11%	11.9%	Amber	↓	Work continues to build capacity of foster care, to increase placement choice and family matching. The latest inspection of foster care graded the service as good. This figure of 11.9% falls

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
								within the OFSTED "Very Good" category.
NI 63	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement	63.0	65.5	63.0	65.5	Green	↑	
LOCAL 1401	Percentage of referrals progressed to CIN assessment (NI 68 proxy)	71	71.0	71	68.3	Green	n/a	

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Project plan to safely reduce the number of looked after children	Children & Young People	GREEN	

3.4.9 Improve the council's use of land assets

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
LOCAL 6275	The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	8.5 (Lower is Better)	10.20		10.25		↔	Targets for next year are currently under review.

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Undertake a Strategic Asset Review	Law, HR & Asset Management	GREEN	
Deliver and implement the people strategy	Law, HR & Asset Management	GREEN	

3.4.10 Create a sustainable budget, providing value for money

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
NI 180	The number of changes of circumstances which affect customers' HB/CTB entitlement within the year.	620	620	400	595.44	Over Performing	n/a	Reflects a higher percentage of changes identified by Wirral than originally anticipated in this new PI. Will continue to review during year but no service delivery issue.
NI 181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change.	16.4 (Lower is Better)	16.4	16.4	16.99	Green	n/a	
LOCAL 2067	Efficiencies gained through procurement.	£2200000	£2200000	£1400000	£1495690	Amber	n/a	Performance more than 5% above target for the 3rd quarter. No service issues.
LOCAL 2073	Percentage of Council Tax collected	96.8%	97.2%	84.5%	85.1%	Green	↔	

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Agree a budget which is sustainable, and which identifies resources for further developing Council Services.	Finance	GREEN	
Contain expenditure within agreed budgets and provide services to agreed standards.	Finance	GREEN	
Review comparative data to ensure we provide our services most cost effectively taking into the	Finance	GREEN	

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
needs of our community			
Implement our procurement strategy to ensure that services and goods are acquired economically and efficiently, and if advantageous, in partnership with others.	Finance	GREEN	
Implement agreed change programme.	Finance	AMBER	Agile working has been introduced into a number of areas including CYPD (use of push email by school inspectors) and Technical Services (use of remote scheduling). All 15 highways inspectors have been 'home based' since October. Areas within the Environmental Health service (Regeneration department) have been selected for initial trials of flexible working with a view to the approach subsequently being applied more widely. Cabinet resolved in July 2008 to procure an Oracle implementation system. This has not taken place. A report for Cabinet is being prepared by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management. The Change Programme, as agreed by Cabinet in December 2008, now focuses on 4 areas for improvement: the Customer Access Strategy, Common Administrative Processes, Strategic Asset Review and ICT Technological Developments.
Exceed government standards for Housing and Council Tax benefits and Council Tax collection.	Finance	GREEN	
Delivering the pay review	Law, HR & Asset Management	GREEN	

3.4.11 Improving the council's budgeting process to fully reflect its priorities

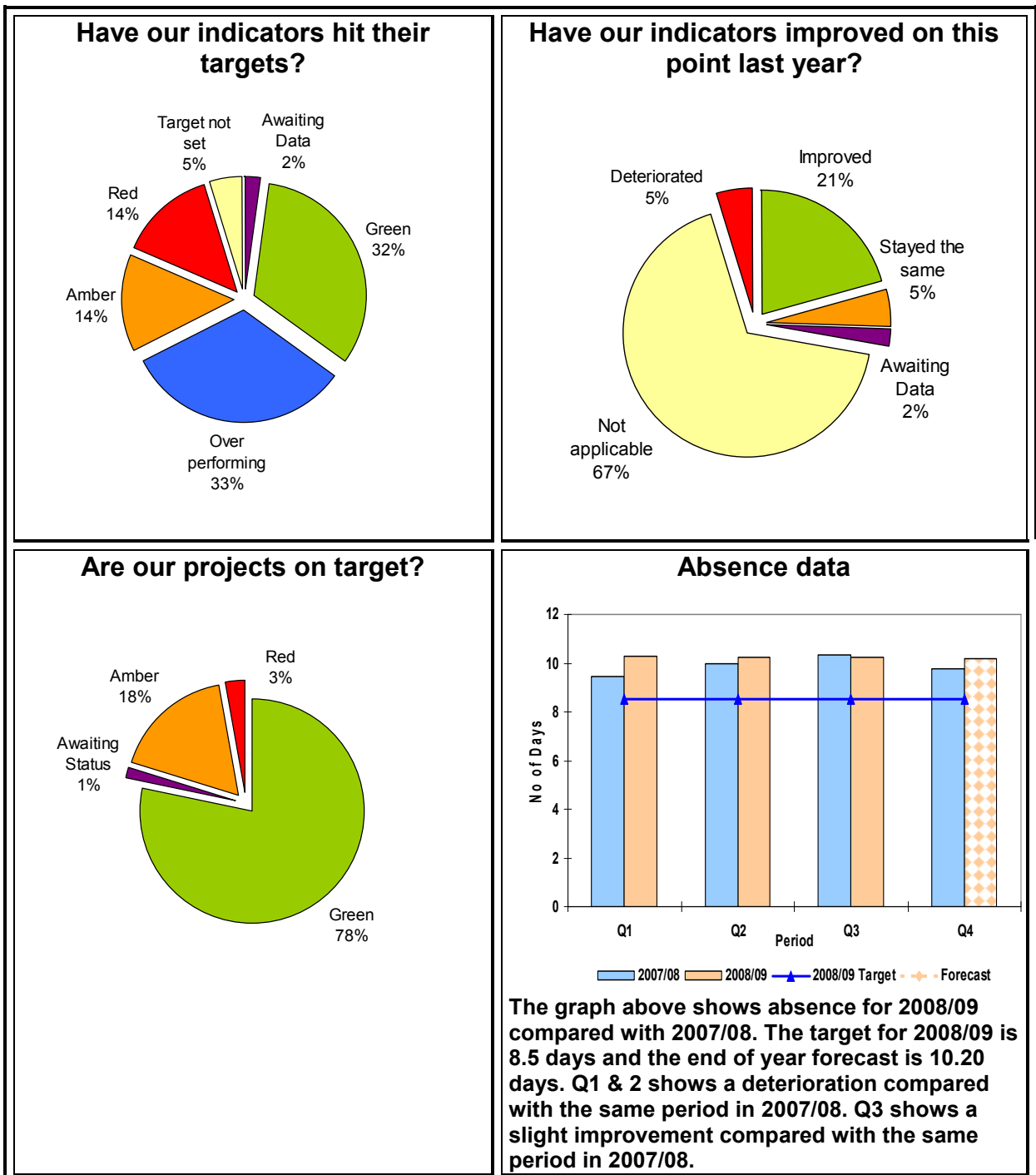
There are no performance indicators to report for this priority area at Q3.

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 2 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Further integrate the risk management, planning and financial processes to enable	Finance	GREEN	

better-informed decision making and enhanced service delivery.			
Reflect the implications of the priorities in the Corporate Plan in our Medium Term Financial Plan and corporate planning processes.	Finance	GREEN	

3.5 Corporate Plan Performance Summary

3.5.1 The charts below show the overall council position for all key performance indicators and projects within the council's 2008/09 corporate plan at the third quarter.



3.6 Performance Exceptions

This section includes all corporate plan indicators which are red at Quarter 3 not including priority for improvement indicators.

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 3 Target	Quarter 3 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
NI 117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	7.4% (Lower is Better)	9.0%	7.4%	8.5%	Red	↑	The performance for December is showing a year on year improvement, whilst also continuing a month on month improvement commencing with a peak in August 2008 of 12.11%. The return for December is therefore a significant achievement, against a difficult economic back drop. Work continues apace in January towards meeting the target.
NI 195a	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter)	8% (Lower is Better)	8%	7%	8%	Red	n/a	There is the possibility of further changes to the second survey performance figures until Waste Data Flow achieves full validation of data. Two of three surveys have been completed for the annual return. Litter and detritus are on track to hit target.
LOCAL 2069	Number of visits to the Council's website	61725	61725	60851	54507	Red	n/a	Seasonal fluctuations generally reflect a downturn in web performance. No service delivery issues.
LOCAL 4049	Total number of homes acquired, demolished, refurbished or built as a result of HMRI investment	950	920	466	383	Red	↓	Energy efficiency improvements as a result of targeted marketing will report in Q4. Take up of Equity Renewal loans very low because of current "credit crunch". The latter is the reason for adjustment of end of year forecast.

3.7 Corporate Plan Project Exceptions

This section includes all corporate plan projects which are red, amber or awaiting status at Quarter 3 excluding priority for improvement projects.

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Develop and implement the 2008/9 NEET strategy for the Borough.	Children & Young People	RED	The Borough EET Action plan is in place which outlines partner responsibilities and contributions to achieving the NEET target. Confirmation was received in December that the Activity Agreement Pilot would continue until at least 2010. The Activity Agreement pilot is a programme that focuses on structured activities and incentive payments for NEET young people and is delivered through Greater Merseyside Connexions. It continues to bear fruit with clear evaluation demonstrating improved progression rates, increased employability and reduced time spent NEET (on average 60% progressing into EET which is a significant achievement with some of the most marginalised young people).
Progressing the production of the Local Development Framework	Corporate Services	AMBER	New staff are in the process of being appointed which will accelerate delivery for this activity. Consultation on an Issues Report is currently being undertaken with stakeholders including Area Forums.
Improve environmental quality across the Borough through improved operational performance of the strategic contract	Technical Services	AMBER	Additional pump priming grant secured for final quarter to address primary and secondary retail areas due to increased smoking related litter and other similar detritus. Final Survey to be conducted Feb/ March. Due to other 2 surveys this year, over performance is now necessary to achieve BV199 target. Currently on Target (GREEN) for NI 195 LAA Target)

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
Develop neighbourhood management approach in deprived communities including education & enforcement	Technical Services	AMBER	Reduction in HMRI funding and uncertainty of future of Warden Services has affected planning of integrated/ mainstreamed neighbourhood management approaches. However, pathfinder areas have made significant progress and more recently, Technical Services have increased community engagement in deprived areas. A targeted education and enforcement campaign for the prevention of fly tipping and section 46 offences is now scheduled for March 2009.
Homelessness Strategy	Regeneration	AMBER	Some non-critical milestones have slipped but many actions are achieved
Develop comprehensive engagement strategy and compact agreement with the voluntary and community sector	Corporate Services	AMBER	Draft framework for consultation will be circulated to the local strategic partnership.
Customer Access Strategy	Finance	AMBER	<p>Customer Care standards have been launched to the public and to all staff. Web usage and e-citizen registrations continue to increase. Web software is being reviewed in order to enhance the current product.</p> <p>Partnership working with diverse groups and local organisations continues to flourish. Building access is being addressed within the Strategic Asset Review.</p> <p>A revised Customer Access Strategy programme was agreed by Cabinet in December 2008. The four year programme is already underway and is initially focusing on Streetscene - looking at whole processes rather than individual systems.</p> <p>Amendments to the CRM software were made in November. These will resolve the key job scheduler problems with the ERIC Service and address all but two of the outstanding</p>

Key Project	Lead Department	Quarter 3 status (green, amber or red - see below)	Corrective action (amber or red only)
			technical issues. Work continues on allowing Pest Control and other potential users to make full use of the mobile solution.
Review partnership and governance arrangements for LSP	Corporate Services	AMBER	A revised governance structure has been presented to the LAA Programme Board for endorsement and comments. This structure will be presented to the LSP board in March. Further work is required regarding the roles and responsibilities of both of these boards as well as a review of the member representation.

3.8. Customer feedback is now recorded on the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and includes both complaints and compliments. Of the Stage 1 complaints in the last quarter these primarily related to the Strategic Asset Review. A total of 9 enquiries were received from the Ombudsman across all services of which 3 (2 for planning and 1 for sports and leisure services) are being investigated. Of the compliments recorded the number received continues to increase particularly in respect of waste services.

4. FINANCIAL MONITORING

4.1. The net Council spend for 2008/09 is £299 million. The monitoring compares spend against the approved budget which includes growth and policy options as well as the agreed savings targets. When setting the 2008/09 budget the projected balances at 31 March 2009 were £5 million.

4.2. The latest position is as follows:-

Details	£million	£million
Projected General Fund balances at 31 March 2009 when setting the budget for 2008/09		5.0
Cabinet decisions		
26 June - Financial out-turn for 2007/08 showed an underspending and contribution to balances (see 4.3)		+2.5
9 July - Release of Insurance Fund reserve to general balance (see 4.4)		+3.0
23 July - Receipt of Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) grant to general balance (see 4.5)		+1.3
23 July - Funding for street lighting energy and Children & Young People transport costs (see 4.5)		-0.9
16 October - Net impact of reduced capitalisation of highways maintenance spend (see 4.6)		-2.0
6 November - Use of Efficiency Investment Fund to fund change / reform teams (see 4.7)		+2.2
10 December - Release of reserves and provisions to		+0.3

the general balance (see 4.8)		
Projected variances		
Overspend		
Adult Social Services (see 4.9)	+3.5	
Children & Young People (see 4.10)	-	
Regeneration (see 4.11)	+0.8	
Technical Services (see 4.12)	+0.5	
Underspend		
Treasury Management (see 4.13)	-2.6	-2.2
Potential liability		
Reported to Cabinet 23 July in respect of fuel and energy costs in 2008/09 (see 4.5)		-2.6
General Fund balances at 31 March 2009 based upon the latest projections		6.6

- 4.3. The completion of the year-end accounts resulted in an increase in the projected balances at 31 March 2008 by £2.5 million. The main spending pressures within Adult Social Services more than offset by the increase in Housing Benefit grant and the benefits from Treasury Management activities.
- 4.4. The release of £3 million from the Insurance Fund reserve to the general balance is a result of the continuing improved performance in respect of insurance and risk management. This improved performance evidenced by the annual Actuarial assessment and the potential liability for claims.
- 4.5. The receipt of the final payment of the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) grant of £1.3 million, which related to the 2007/08 financial year, was added to balances. In terms of fuel and energy costs it was agreed that £780,000 be provided from balances this year to meet the increased energy costs for street lighting in Technical Services and £125,000 for fuel costs relating to Children & Young People transport costs. Financial pressures were identified based upon the likely outcome of the energy contracts due to be tendered later in 2008 and which were to be finalised and reported to Cabinet in February 2009.
- 4.6. Following the Audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2007/08 the amount included within the 2008/09 budget for the capitalisation of highways improvements was reduced by £2 million.
- 4.7. Cabinet agreed to fund a number of improvement teams from the Efficiency Investment Budget in 2008/09 totalling £2.2 million. These included the Adult Social Services Reform Team and the Finance department areas covering Procurement and Creditors, Change and Customer Services Development.
- 4.8. The review of Reserves and Provisions identified the release of sums totalling £360,000 into the General Fund balances. It was also agreed that the £230,000 which related to Regeneration be used to offset the projected departmental overspend.
- 4.9. Within Adult Social Services the pressures of increasing demand for care services that resulted in an overspend in 2007/08 remain. In terms of savings there are issues around the achievement of the total required this year. The present projections continue to indicate a £3.5 million overspend. The Director presented a detailed report to Cabinet on 4 September including the actions

being taken to mitigate the projected overspend. Cabinet noted this and regular updates on progress are being presented to Cabinet.

- 4.10.. The Director of Children and Young People has taken action to offset the pressures within the areas of Special Education Needs (SEN), care services and the delivery of employee related savings targets. The maximisation of grant opportunities has seen the projection from £3 million be eliminated.
- 4.11. Within Regeneration income and energy costs are projected to be at variance with the budget and efforts are being made to contain spend within the budget allocated. However, the options proposed to deliver the Service Re-engineering savings targets brought forward from 2007/08 are now incorporated within the Strategic Asset Review meaning an overspend of £0.8 million is likely. This has partially been offset by the release of reserves and provisions identified in 4.8.
- 4.12. The technical services budget is reliant upon income from car parking and planning and, as in previous years, the Director is highlighting shortfalls in these areas which will be difficult to accommodate from within the departmental budget. Whilst actions to address these by a series of budget virements were agreed by Cabinet pressures remain and with winter maintenance costs there is a projected £0.5 million overspend.
- 4.13. Treasury Management includes the management of cash flow and the need to borrow to fund investment has been re-engineered reducing the requirement for temporary borrowing. The savings achieved in 2007/08 continue and will deliver £0.5 million in 2008/09. With further benefits being a reduced need to borrow to fund the capital programme delivering £0.6 million savings and the opportunity to access the increased rates offered by the banking sector taken earlier this year the additional income realised is in the order of £1.1 million. Given the unpredictability in the financial sector any surplus resources are now being invested in lower risk / lower return investments.

5. CAPITAL MONITORING

- 5.1. The capital programme 2008/11 was approved by Council on 17 December 2007 and confirmed as part of the budget by Council on 3 March 2008. The 2009/12 programme was approved by Council on 15 December 2008. Monitoring compares the original programme with the latest forecast and incorporates changes, including slippage, agreed by Cabinet.

Spend	Original	Forecast	Forecast
	Approval	September	December
	£000	£000	£000
Adult Social Services	2,952	3,815	3,128
Children & Young People	32,221	26,426	25,455
Corporate Services	410	1,160	1,160
Law, HR and Asset Mgt	1,860	2,111	2,111
Regeneration	29,079	36,876	37,276
Technical Services	11,318	12,589	10,433
Total programme	77,840	82,977	79,563

- 5.2. The resources table similarly compares the developing programme and reflects the agreed changes. The generation of capital receipts through the sale of assets is used to fund the programme and at this stage £4 million is included for

use in 2008/09. Income from sales, whilst uncertain in the exact timing of receipt, offers flexibility in the timing of its use and can be used to either balance the current programme or to address future budgetary issues.

Spend	Original Approval £000	Forecast September £000	Forecast December £000
Borrowing	31,092	31,073	27,816
Grant – HMRI	9,800	8,900	8,900
Grant – Education	20,899	17,100	16,359
Grant – Other	11,636	21,487	22,025
Revenue	413	417	463
Capital Receipts	4,000	4,000	4,000
Total resources	77,840	82,977	79,563

- 5.3. The main reasons for the changes between the forecasts for September and December relate to the cancelling of the Poulton House project and the reduced capitalisation of highways maintenance which were agreed at Cabinet on 16 October 2008.
- 5.4. The Director of Adult Social Services has commenced the consultation on a review of intermediate care that will also impact upon the decisions regarding adult accommodation provision. This resulted in the Cabinet agreeing to the scheme for Poulton House being deleted from the programme. Other schemes are therefore subject to review pending the outcome of the consultation.
- 5.5. Within Children and Young People the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) - One Pathfinder project continues to progress in accordance with the timescales agreed with the Department for Children, Schools and Families. A start on site is expected early in 2009. Under the national scheme to develop Children's Centres Phase 1 and Phase 2 has now seen all 19 centres opened.
- 5.6. Under Regeneration the Oval Sports Centre successfully re-opened after a substantial programme of works and the redevelopment of New Brighton is progressing well. This includes the creation of the new Floral Pavilion which was officially opened in December.
- 5.7. The Special Initiatives element of the programme includes schemes and related funding in respect of Objective One (£5.5 million) and the Single Regeneration Budget (£4.5 million). The schemes contribute towards the conclusion of the Merseyside-wide programme which will be further refined as it is not due to complete until 2010.
- 5.8. The Housing Market Renewal Initiative (NewHeartlands) continues to progress although the impact of the worldwide and national financial situation is affecting developers. The size and nature of the programme requires both the programme and the funding to be more flexible with the re-phasing of expenditure and resources kept under review to maintain progress.
- 5.9. The Technical Services programme and financing reflect the decision of Cabinet agreeing to the reduction in the amount of works that could be capitalised in 2008/09.

6. RISK MONITORING

- 6.1. The revised Corporate Risk Register was agreed by Cabinet on 13 March 2008 and is the baseline document which is reviewed quarterly. The register was further reviewed by Cabinet on 10 December 2008 and is to be refined as Departmental Service plans for 2009/10 are produced.
- 6.2. For most of the risks the planned improvements in control actions have been implemented along with further identified actions to ensure that the risks are being controlled. Examples of positive developments include:-

Risk No.	Description	Positive Developments in Control Actions
1.	Death or serious injury to a service user, staff member, or anyone to whom the Council owes a duty of care.	3 IOSH Managing Safely Courses covering 35 managers now delivered. In October the Corporate Health & Safety Committee ratified 6 revised health & safety arrangements.
2.	Failure to prepare adequately for/manage the impact of a pandemic.	Critical employees from Adult Social Services, Children & Young People and Cemeteries & Crematoria identified as priorities for anti-viral drugs.
4.	Changing need and demand for services (driven by legislative, social and demographic change) is not managed effectively	In connection with the Equalities Policy & Standard a Single Equality Scheme produced and is subject to consultation.
9.	Partnerships are not well planned and we do not work effectively with others	As part of its preparation for CAA the Partnership took part in a self-evaluation toolkit pilot and lessons learnt are now being fed into CAA planning.
11.	Failure to effect a workforce development plan to ensure that we have a workforce in place which meets the planned changing needs of the Council, including effective succession planning	An external provider has been selected to develop an online application tool attached to a number of national electronic recruitment portals. Workforce planning has been incorporated into departmental services plans for 2009/10.
12.	We do not fully exploit all available resources, including technology.	Cabinet was provided with an update report on delivery of the Change Programme on 10 December 2008.
14.	Failure to plan and manage performance (CAA) and finances in accordance with plans and budgets	A report detailing the Audit Commission's project brief for the CAA Use of Resources Assessment 2009 to Audit & Risk Management Committee on 26 January.
17.	Failure in safeguarding arrangements (adult or child)	With the exception of the development of formal links and training to the Wirral Multicultural Centre staff actions planned by Adult Social Services implemented.
22.	Adverse effect on Council budgets of rising energy prices.	Developments in the Strategic Asset Review have been reported to Cabinet in December and January.
24.	Impact of volatility and downturn in the economy	Treasury management policies have continued to be reviewed as have

Risk No.	Description	Positive Developments in Control Actions
		enhancements to the monitoring of key budget areas.
29.	Serious failure in information governance.	Revised ICT Security Policy reported to Cabinet on 10 December 2008 and communicated to staff in January 2009.

6.3. Those areas where progress in implementing controls has not proceeded to timetable or where information is not available are:

Risk No.	Description	Areas where Control Actions have yet to be progressed
3.	Key Council services are not resilient to disruption and business continuity arrangements are inadequate.	The date for finalising all business continuity plans has been revised to January 2009 as some departments have yet to supply their plans to the Health, Safety & Resilience Operations team.
6.	Community expectations are not properly understood or managed well.	The programme for the sustainability appraisal of the LAA remains slightly behind schedule.
15.	Failure to execute the Council's Investment Strategy (or failure of the Strategy to deliver).	After a slight delay the Corporate Investment Group is being established.
19.	Failure to progress the regeneration of economically disadvantaged areas	After a slight delay the Corporate Investment Group is being established.

6.4. A further issue proposed was considered to be of corporate significance and will be added to the Register.

- Failure to deliver the Change Programme.

6.5. All risks previously on the register were still considered to present a sufficiently large corporate threat and none have been removed. The recent high profile cases in respect of child care services have enhanced the existing corporate risk relating to safeguarding arrangements. The management of this area continues with increasing monitoring and, if appropriate, a report on any further planned actions will be taken to Cabinet.

7. REPORTING OF 2008/09 FULL YEAR PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

7.1 It has not been possible to present this quarter three report earlier given that the Cabinet meeting of 23rd February was reserved by members for budget discussions.

7.2 The timeliness of future reports continues to be problematic due to the timing of Cabinet meetings. The full year report will be the next performance and financial report that Cabinet will receive and will include performance and financial information for 2008/09. The table below sets out the future Cabinet meeting dates and explanations for potential timelag in reporting the full year position:

Year end date	Cabinet Meeting	Explanation
Tuesday 31 st March 2009	9 th April 2009	The server deadline for this report is the 23 rd March which is earlier than the year end date.
	23 rd April 2009	The server deadline for this report is the 30 th March which is earlier than the year end date.
	12 th May 2009 (provisional subject to approval by Cabinet 19.03.09)	This Cabinet meeting has been identified for the selection meeting. Should Cabinet agree that the performance and financial information can be reported to this meeting, it should be noted that departments have indicated that some performance information will not be available for this report due to the validation process. For example social care data within the Children and Young People's Department will still be subject to validation.

- 7.3 Given the issues set out above the earliest opportunity to present full performance and financial information for 2008/09 would be the Cabinet meeting which is provisionally scheduled for 3rd June 2009.
- 7.4 Should members agree to receive the report at the 3rd June Cabinet meeting then officers will make the information within this report available on the virtual committee and Chief Officers will brief Executive Members at the earliest opportunity after the year end. This issue has been discussed with the Audit Commission who consider it to be a reasonable approach.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no equal opportunities, human rights, community safety, local member support, local agenda 21 or planning implications arising directly from this report.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Wirral Corporate Plan 2008/11.
- 9.2 This report and the following supporting appendices have been placed in the Virtual Committee:-
Appendix A – Performance Monitoring Summary.
Appendix B – Financial Monitoring Summary.
Appendix C – Capital Monitoring Summary.
Appendix D – Corporate Risk Monitoring Summary.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1. That Cabinet review the performance to date as detailed in this report and identify any areas for further action.
- 10.2. That full year performance and financial information is presented to Cabinet in June. The Cabinet meeting prior to the 3rd June is the Cabinet selection meeting (13th May). Should Cabinet request to receive the performance and financial information at the selection meeting it is important to note that the performance and financial information in some cases will be provisional and unvalidated.
- 10.3. Should Cabinet approve that the report is taken to the 3rd June Cabinet as recommended in 10.2; then the full performance and financial information will be made available on the virtual committee and Chief Officers will brief the relevant Executive Members at the earliest opportunity after the year end.

STEPHEN MADDOX
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

PROJECTED BUDGET 2010-2011

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report presents the projected budget for 2010-2011 which will be the final year of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR).

2. BUDGET 2009-10

- 2.1. The summary budget for 2009-10 as agreed by the Council on 2 March 2009 is as follows:

	£m
Base Budget	316.9
Resources	
Formula Grant	152.8
Area Based Grant	31.0
Council Tax	129.0
Collection Fund	-0.7
Use of Balances	<u>4.8</u>
	316.9

3. COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW

- 3.1. The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2007, was announced on 9 October 2007. An initial report on the Pre Budget Statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer including the CSR was presented to the Cabinet on 1 November 2007. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced the three year provisional Local Government Finance settlement on 6 December 2007 and the final settlement on 24 January 2008.
- 3.2. The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2009-10 was issued by the DCLG on 26 November 2008. The provisional settlement restated the indicative figures included in the settlement issued on 24 January 2008 and was reported to Cabinet on 10 December 2008.
- 3.3. The final settlement was issued on 21 January 2009 which again confirmed the indicative figures for 2010-11. However, as the global recession gathers pace there must be concern about whether the Government will be able to deliver the indicative settlement for 2010-11.

3.4. The next Comprehensive Spending Review is scheduled for 2010 which will outline the Government expenditure plans for 2011 to 2014. The extent of the support that the Government will need to provide to the economy in a global recession could result in a cash freeze in Government grants for the period of the next CSR.

4. **VARIATIONS IDENTIFIED FOR 2010-2011**

4.1. **Inflation** – Provision is included for pay and prices at 2% and for income at 3%.

4.2. **Capital Financing** – Cabinet on 10 December 2008 agreed the capital programme for 2009-2012 at an additional financing cost totalling £2.9m for 2010-11.

4.3. **Waste Disposal** – The waste disposal levy is projected to increase by 15.7%, £2.6m.

4.4. **Pension Fund** - The Pension Fund was actuarially revalued as at 31 March 2007. The phased implementation of the revised contribution rates over three years was agreed by the Cabinet on 12 December 2007.

4.5. **Merseytravel** – The Merseytravel levy is projected to increase by 4% in 2010-11, £1.0m.

4.6. **Invest to Save Schemes** – The Cabinet has agreed a number of invest to save schemes which will reduce expenditure by £0.4m in 2010-11.

4.7. **Private Finance Initiative** – Increase in PFI payments of £1.1m in 2010-11 as the PFI reserve reduces.

4.8. **Benefits Subsidy** – The Department for Work and Pensions has announced that benefits subsidy will be reduced by 3% per annum in real terms, 5% per annum in cash for certain elements of the subsidy, a reduction of £0.3m per annum.

4.9. **Other Unavoidable Growth** – A number of relatively minor items of unavoidable growth of less than £0.2m will arise. These should total less than £1m.

5. **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

5.1. There are a number of other developments which are likely to impact on the financial position of the Authority during 2010-11. The impact of these issues will be reported to the Cabinet as and when they are resolved. Some of the potentially most important issues are:-

(a) Global recession. This is likely to impact on the budget in many ways and will be kept under continuous review.

- (b) Review of the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme. A consultation paper on a revised scheme to commence in 2009 was reported to the Cabinet on 29 November 2007. A further consultation paper has been received which if implemented could result in a grant of £0.2m in 2009-10 and £0.5m in 2010-11.
- (c) Review of Supporting People Grant to be undertaken in 2009 with the grant to be absorbed into the Area Based Grant from 2010-11.
- (d) Implementation of supplementary business rates which was reported to Cabinet on 29 November 2007.
- (e) Review of the Area Cost Adjustment.
- (f) Review of the population statistics to include the effects of recent migration, which was reported to the Cabinet on 16 April 2008.
- (g) Review of the funding of social care with proposals to be released in 2009.
- (h) Transfer of the responsibilities of the Learning and Skills Council to Local Authorities from 2010-11.
- (i) Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in October 2009.
- (j) Implementation of International Financial Reporting Standards from 2010 which will increase leasing costs.

6. **BALANCES**

- 6.1. The balances for 2009-10 have been set at £6m.

7. **EFFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS**

- 7.1. The gap between projected expenditure and anticipated resources will need to be bridged by a combination of savings and/or increased Council Tax.
- 7.2. The efficiencies agreed in preparing the budget for 2009-10 included £0.5m which will become effective from 2010-11.
- 7.3. Apportionment of the efficiency requirement in line with the agreed three year efficiency plan would produce the following targets:-

	£000
Adult Social Services	2,070
Children & Young People	1,200
Corporate Services	70
Finance	530
Law/HR/Asset Management	190
Regeneration	920
Technical Services	620
	<u>5,600</u>

- 7.4. Part of the Efficiency Investment Budget for 2010-11 is again being used to fund the following teams which are working on the delivery of the corporate change programme:-

	£m
Procurement and Creditors	1.3
Change	0.7
Customer Services Development	0.2
Adult Social Services Reform	<u>0.5</u>
	2.7

- 7.5. I am assuming an annual Council Tax increase of 4%.

- 7.6. The Minister for Local Government has stated that the Council Tax capping limit is likely to remain at 5%.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. The projected budgets for 2010-11 is compiled from the base budget for 2009-10 approved by Council on 2 March 2009, the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2009-2012 agreed by the Cabinet on 23 July 2008, and updated for the issues outlined in this report. The projected budget is shown in the Appendix.

9. **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. There are none arising from this report.

10. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. There are none arising form this report.

11. **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1. There are none arising from this report.

12. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. There are none arising from this report.

13. **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1. There are none arising from this report.

14. **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1. There are none arising from this report.

15. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

15.1. There are none arising from this report.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1. Comprehensive Spending Review – Treasury – October 2007
Medium Term Financial Strategy – 2009-2012 – July 2008
Formula Grant Settlement 2009-10 –DCLG –January 2009.
Estimates 2009-10 – March 2009

17. RECOMMENDATION

17.1. That the projected budget for 2010-11 be updated and reported regularly to the Cabinet.

IAN COLEMAN
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

FNCE/23/09

**WIRRAL COUNCIL
PROJECTED BUDGET 2010-11**

	£m
Base Budget	314.2
Increased Requirements	
Pay Inflation	3.3
Price Inflation	3.6
Capital Financing	2.9
Waste Disposal	2.6
Pension Fund Revaluation	0.5
Merseytravel	1.0
Private Finance Initiative	1.1
Benefits Subsidy	0.3
Supporting People	10.3
Unavoidable Growth	1.0
Efficiency Investment Fund	<u>2.6</u>
	343.4
Reduced Requirements	
Income Inflation	-1.0
Invest To Save	-0.4
LABGI	-0.3
Area Based Grant	-0.4
Agreed Efficiencies	<u>-0.5</u>
Forecast Expenditure	341.1
Resources	
Formula Grant	157.9
Area Based Grant	41.0
Council Tax	129.0
LAA Reward Grant	1.4
LABGI	0.5
Reserves	<u>0.5</u>
Forecast Resources	330.3
Shortfall	10.8
Council Tax Increase	5.2
Efficiencies required	5.6

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2009 TO 2012

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report sets out the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2009-2012 in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services.

2. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY STATEMENTS

- 2.1 Attached to this report is the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2009 to 2012 which incorporates the Investment Strategy.
- 2.2 This provides a comprehensive analysis of the financial position of the Council and complies with the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Approval and implementation of this strategy will limit financial risks whilst helping to minimise financing costs and maximise investment returns.

4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are none arising out of this report.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are none arising out of this report.

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are none arising out of this report.

7. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are none arising out of this report.

8. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are none arising out of this report.

9. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are none arising out of this report.

10. **SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1. There are none arising out of this report.

11. **LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. There are no implications for any particular Member or Ward.

12. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1. Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services – CIPFA 2002

12.2. Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities – CIPFA 2003.

13 RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2009 to 2012 be approved;
- (2) the Prudential Indicators be adopted; and
- (3) the Council Officers listed in Appendix D be authorised to approve payments from the bank accounts for all treasury management activities.

IAN COLEMAN
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

FNCE/38/09

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2009-2012

Contents

- 1. Background**
- 2. The Treasury Position**
- 3. Outlook for Interest Rates**
- 4. Borrowing Requirement and Strategy**
- 5. Debt Rescheduling**
- 6. Investment Policy and Strategy**
- 7. Balanced Budget Requirement**
- 8. Annual MRP Statement**
- 9. Reporting**
- 10. Other Items – CIPFA Review of the Prudential Code**

Appendices

- A. Prudential Indicators**
- B. Interest Rate Outlook**
- C. Specified and Non-specified Investments for use by the Council**
- D. Authorised Signatories**

1. Background

1.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services (the "CIPFA TM Code") requires local authorities to set the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for borrowing each financial year.

1.2 CIPFA has defined Treasury Management as:
"the management of the organisation's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

1.3 The Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Treasury management risks are identified in the approved Treasury Management Practices; the main risks to the treasury activities are:

- Liquidity Risk (Inadequate cash resources)
- Market or Interest Rate Risk (Fluctuations in interest rate levels and thereby in the value of investments).
- Inflation Risks (Exposure to inflation)
- Credit and Counterparty Risk (Security of Investments)
- Refinancing Risks (Impact of debt maturing in future years).
- Legal & Regulatory Risk (i.e. non-compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, risk of fraud).

1.4 The strategy also takes into account the outlook for interest rates, the current treasury position and the approved Prudential Indicators (attached as Appendix A). The PIs relevant to the treasury management strategy are set out below:

PI No		2008-09 Approved	2008-09 Revised	2009-10 Estimate	2010-11 Estimate	2011-12 Estimate
6	Authorised Limit for External Debt	£445m	£465m	£475m	£490m	£500m
7	Operational Boundary for External Debt	£435m	£450m	£460m	£475m	£485m
9	Upper Limit for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure	100 %	100 %	100 %	100%	100 %
10	Upper Limit for Variable Rate Exposure	100 %	100%	100 %	100 %	100 %
12	Upper Limit for total principal sums invested over 1 yr	£10m	£30m	£30m	£30m	£30m

1.5 The TMSS also incorporates the Investment Strategy.

2. The Treasury Position

2.1 The estimated treasury position for 31 March 2009 is:

	31 March 2009 Estimate £m	%
External borrowing:		
Fixed rate - PWLB	136	44
Fixed rate - Market	164	53
Variable rate - PWLB	0	0
Variable rate - Market	10	3
Total external debt	310	100
Investments:		
Managed in-house		
- Short-term deposits	75	88
- Long-term deposits	10	12
Total Investments	85	100

2.2 The estimate for interest payments in 2009-10 is £14.4m and for interest receipts is £1.4m.

3. Outlook for Interest Rates

The economic interest rate outlook provided by the treasury advisor, Arlingclose, is attached at Appendix B. It is summarised below.

(a) Background

Central bankers acted decisively in October 2008 as the effective breakdown of financial systems threatened to destabilise the global economy. It included Government sponsored recapitalisations, interventions through the provision of liquidity and guarantees for lending; in some instances nationalisation of private sector financial institutions; the removal of compromised assets from banks' balance sheets through special finance mechanisms; and co-ordinated emergency interest rates cuts. The UK, Eurozone and US economies contracted in the third and fourth quarters of 2008.

(b) Outlook

- **Availability of credit** is likely expected to remain restricted and credit conditions challenging, particularly as banks change their lending behaviour and lower their lending risk. The poorly functioning transmission mechanism for lower rates to be passed to consumers could cause governments to intervene directly between banks and corporations/individuals.

- **Inflation:** The elevated levels of commodity, food and energy inflation which exerted a powerful squeeze on real incomes in 2008 are expected to fade in 2009. CPI, which had risen to 5.2% in 2008, is now expected to fall below the Monetary Policy Committee lower boundary of 1%. Whilst this will provide consumers with some relief, lower inflation erodes debt burdens more slowly.
- **Labour market:** Unemployment, already at 6%, is expected to rise further. The fear of unemployment will keep wage bargaining and wage inflation to a minimum.
- **Housing / Consumer Confidence:** The prospect of negative housing equity, and/or rising unemployment and depressed asset values could culminate in a further loss of confidence. Consumers and businesses will scale back spending to conserve or repair their balance sheets.
- **Growth:** The effort to reduce ballooning debt will hit economic activity and growth in the UK, US and in Europe. The prospects for growth remain uniformly poor in for much of 2009. Asset values are forecast to drop further, particularly those which are commodities- and housing-related.
- **Interest rates / Central Bank policies:** To avoid deflation and to mitigate the severity of the economic slowdown, there will be a growing willingness by Central Bankers to resort to abnormally low interest rates and/or some form of quantitative easing (i.e. using more unconventional methods such as expanding the central bank balance sheet and injecting cash into the economy), sooner rather than later.
- **UK:** During the autumn of 2008 and in early 2009, the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee cut rates by a cumulative 4%, bringing the Bank Rate down to 1%, a level the Bank deemed appropriate for the prevalent economic conditions. Over the next year the Bank Rate may yet be cut again.
- **US:** The Federal Funds rate was cut to 1%, before the decision in December 2008 to lower the rate to a range between 0% and 0.25% alongside the announcement of quantitative easing policies (among them, the purchase of large and unlimited quantities of agency and mortgage backed debt and the potential purchase of longer term Treasury debt).
- **Euroland:** The European Central Bank is expected to cut rates more cautiously from the current level of 2% due to the different imbalances in each of the member states.

Market conditions and volatility: Market volatility remains high, risk appetite is at low ebb; markets are expected to continue in 'capital preservation mode' into early 2009. Although LIBOR is falling, the gap between official and market interest rates is likely to remain relatively wide for some months to come.

The deterioration in public finances – both via the cost of shoring up the financial system and also as recession hits the Government revenue streams – and the growing budget deficit will require significant new gilt issuance in 2009. This excess supply is expected to push longer dated yields higher although not aggressively so. Short-dated gilt yields are however expected to fall with the gathering momentum of a fall in official policy rates.

The price destruction in equities will keep stock markets subdued and, even though there may be tentative signs of stability, it would be too early to say if the bottom has been reached.

The Arlingclose forecast for the UK Bank Rate (January 2009) is:

	Mar-09	Jun-09	Sep-09	Dec-09	Mar-10	Jun-10	Sep-10	Dec-10	Mar-11
Official Bank Rate									
Upside risk							+0.25	+0.25	+0.25
Central case	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	2.50
Downside risk	-0.50	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50

The probability of zero or near zero interest rates – unthinkable just a few months ago – is now very high. The economic outlook provides both opportunities and challenges for the treasury strategy in 2009-10.

4. Borrowing Requirement and Strategy

- 4.1 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by reference to the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) – see Appendix A. The CFR will determine the requirement to make a Minimum Revenue Provision for Debt Redemption (MRP) from within the Revenue budget. Physical borrowing may be greater or less than the CFR.

<i>PI No. 3</i>	31/3/2009	31/3/2009	31/3/2010	31/3/2011	31/3/2012
Capital Financing Requirement	Approved £m	Revised £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m
CFR	336	334	347	359	367

- 4.2 In accordance with the Prudential Code, the Council will ensure that net external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for the current and next two financial years.
- 4.3 Capital expenditure not financed from internal resources (i.e. Capital Receipts, Capital Grants and Contributions, Revenue or Reserves) will produce an increase in the CFR (the underlying need to borrow) and may in turn produce an increased requirement to charge MRP in the Revenue Account.

- 4.4 The cumulative estimate of the long-term borrowing requirement is calculated as follows:

	31/3/2009 Estimate £m	31/3/2010 Estimate £m	31/3/2011 Estimate £m	31/3/2012 Estimate £m
Capital Financing Requirement	334	347	359	367
Less: Existing Profile of Borrowing	284	270	255	242
Cumulative Borrowing Requirement	50	77	104	125

- 4.5 The Council maintains maximum control over borrowing activities as well as flexibility on the loans portfolio. Capital expenditure levels, market conditions and interest rate levels will be monitored during the year in order to minimise borrowing costs over the medium to longer term. A prudent and pragmatic approach to borrowing will be maintained to minimise borrowing costs without compromising the longer-term stability of the portfolio, consistent with the Prudential Indicators.
- 4.6 In conjunction with advice from the treasury advisor, Arlingclose, the Council will keep under review options in borrowing from the PWLB, the market and other sources identified in the Treasury Management Practices Schedules up to the available capacity within the CFR and Affordable Borrowing Limit (defined by CIPFA as the Authorised Limit).

The outlook for borrowing rates:

- 4.7 *Variable Rate borrowing* : The shocks in the financial markets in the second half of 2008 leaves the UK in a different era in respect of official interest rates which are forecast to fall below 1%. By December 2008 the rates for PWLB variable-rate borrowing had fallen substantially and are forecast to fall to very low levels in 2009 as the Bank Rate is cut further.
- 4.8 *Fixed rate borrowing* : Gilts across all maturities will initially benefit from their status of safe haven assets in uncertain economic times. As yields fall initially, fixed PWLB rates across most maturities could challenge historic lows. As the UK Bank Rate falls to 1% or lower, short-dated yields and PWLB rates should provide some attractive fixed rate borrowing opportunities.
- 4.9 I will evaluate with Arlingclose the relative merits of a strategic exposure to variable rate debt. Decisions to borrow at low, variable rates of interest will be taken after considering the absolute level of longer term interest rate equivalents and the extent of variable rate earnings on the investment balances. Should longer term rates move below the cost of variable rate borrowing any strategic exposure to variable interest rates will be reviewed and, if appropriate, reduced.

- 4.10 Actual borrowing undertaken and the timing will depend on capital expenditure levels, interest rate forecasts and market conditions during the year, in order to minimise borrowing costs. This may include borrowing in advance of future years' requirements provided that overall borrowing is maintained within the projected CFR and the approved Affordable Borrowing Limit.
- 4.11 The Council will undertake a financial options appraisal process to establish the 'value for money' judgement in the use of resources.

5. Debt Rescheduling

- 5.1 The Council will continue to maintain a flexible policy for debt rescheduling. Market volatility may provide opportunities for rescheduling debt from time to time. The rationale for rescheduling would be one or more of the following:
- Savings in interest costs with minimal risk.
 - Balancing the volatility profile (i.e. the ratio of fixed to variable rate debt) of the debt portfolio.
 - Amending the profile of maturing debt to reduce any inherent refinancing risks.
- 5.2 The rescheduling of PWLB debt since the introduction of its repayment rates on 1 November 2007 has not ceased, but has become undoubtedly harder and places greater emphasis on the timing and type of new borrowing. PWLB rates exhibited a fair degree of volatility in 2008-09; should a similar pattern emerge in 2009-10, this could provide some rescheduling opportunities.
- 5.3 Any rescheduling activity will be undertaken within the treasury management policy and strategy. The debt portfolio will be monitored against equivalent interest rates and available refinancing options on a regular basis.
- 5.4 All rescheduling activity will comply with the accounting requirements of the local authority SORP and regulatory requirements of the Capital Finance and Accounting Regulations (SI 2007 No 573 as amended by SI 2008/414).
- 5.5 Any borrowing and debt rescheduling activity will be reported to the next Finance and Best Value Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

6. Investment Policy and Strategy

Background

- 6.1 Guidance from the Government on Local Government Investments in England requires, similarly, that an Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) be set. The Guidance permits the TMSS and the AIS to be combined into one document.

Investment Policy

- 6.2 The general policy objective is to invest surplus funds prudently. The investment priorities are:
- security of the invested capital;
 - liquidity of the invested capital;
 - an optimum yield which is commensurate with security and liquidity.

The speculative procedure of borrowing purely in order to invest is unlawful.

- 6.3 Investments are categorised as 'Specified' or 'Non Specified' investments based on the criteria in the Government Guidance. Potential instruments for use within the investment strategy are contained in Appendix C.
- 6.4 The credit crisis has refocused attention on the treasury management priority of security of capital money invested. The Council will continue to maintain a counterparty list and will monitor and update the credit standing of the institutions on a regular basis. This assessment will include credit ratings and other alternative assessments of credit strength (for example, statements of potential Government support). The Council will also take into account information on corporate developments of, and market sentiment towards, investment counterparties.
- 6.5 The estimated levels of investments are set out in paragraph 2.1 of this report.

Investment Strategy

- 6.6 The global financial market storm in 2008 has forced investors of public money to reappraise the question of risk versus yield. Income from investments is a key support in the Council budget.
- 6.7 By February 2009 the UK Bank Rate had fallen to 1%, its lowest level since the 1950s. It is expected that the Bank Rate will fall to near zero in 2009-10, short-term money market rates will continue to fall to very low levels which will have a significant impact on investment income. The Council strategy must however be geared towards this development whilst adhering to the principal objective of security of invested monies.
- 6.8 The Director of Finance, under delegated powers, will undertake the most appropriate form of investments in keeping with the investment objectives, income and risk management requirements and Prudential Indicators. Decisions taken on the core investment portfolio will be reported to the Finance and Best Value Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (see section, 7 Policy on Delegation)

Investments managed in-house:

- 6.9 The shorter term cashflow investments are made with reference to the outlook for the UK Bank Rate and money market rates. For this money, the Council will mainly invest in
- The Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility (The rates of interest from the DMADF are below equivalent money market rates. However, the returns are an acceptable trade-off for the guarantee that capital is secure.)
 - AAA-rated Money Market Funds with a Constant Net Asset Value (Constant NAV) investing predominantly in Government securities
 - AAA-rated Money Market Funds with a Constant Net Asset Value (Constant NAV) investing in instruments issued primarily by financial institutions;
 - Deposits with other local authorities
 - Business reserve accounts
 - Term deposits (Investing money with Banks and Building Societies for a fixed time period or term in return for a rate of interest)
 - Certificates of deposit.
- 6.10 Protection against the downward movement in interest rates through 1-year deposits and through longer-term secure investments will be actively considered within the limits the Council has set for Non-Specified Investments and will likely include:
- **Supranational bonds (bonds issued by multilateral development banks):** The joint and individual pan European government guarantees in place on these bonds provide security of the principal invested. Even at the lower yields likely to be in force, the return on these bonds could be attractive relative to the increasingly low outlook for official interest rates.
 - **UK Government guaranteed bonds and debt instruments issued by banks/building societies :** The UK Government Credit Guarantee Scheme 2008 permits specific UK institutions to issue short-dated bonds with an explicit Government guarantee. The bonds are issued at a margin over the underlying gilt and would be a secure longer-term investment option. These bonds would, under existing statute, be capital expenditure investments.

Investments which constitute capital expenditure

- 6.11 Investments meeting the definition of capital expenditure can be financed from capital or revenue resources. They are also subject to Government Guidance on “non-specified investments”. Placing of such investments has accounting, financing and budgetary implications. Whilst it is permissible to fund capital investments by increasing the underlying need to borrow, it should be noted that under the MRP Guidance, MRP must be applied over a 20 year period.

- 6.12 The Council has determined a maximum of £10m limit to investments which constitute capital expenditure.
- 6.13 All investment activity will comply with the accounting requirements of the local authority SORP.

Icelandic Investments

- 6.14 In early October 2008 all three of Iceland's major banks (Glitnir, Kaupthing and Landsbanki) collapsed following difficulties in re-financing short-term debt coupled with a run on deposits. In the UK, the Financial Services Authority (FSA) put Kaupthing, Singer & Friedlander (the UK subsidiary of Kaupthing) and Heritable Bank the UK subsidiary of Landsbanki) into Administration. The Administrators will be seeking to find purchasers for, and will continue to manage, the banks' businesses and loan books to maximize recovery for creditors.
- 6.15 Wirral had a deposit of £2m with Heritable Bank. The process of Administration will determine the extent of any recoverable amount and also the timescale over which any such payments will be made. The Council will however be required under the SORP to account for the impairment of these financial assets in the 2008/09 Income and Expenditure Account. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published draft Regulations in December 2008 aimed at deferring the impact of impairment until 2010/11. The consultation deadline for the draft regulations was 23 January 2009. Once these regulations have been agreed the Council will assess the options available and decide the best course for any potential impairment.

7. Policy on Delegation

- 7.1 The Council has responsibility for all matters concerned with treasury management. These are delegated to the Director of Finance in accordance with the Constitution scheme of delegation.
- 7.2 On a day to day basis the Treasury Management Team within the Financial Services Division carries out the treasury management activities.
- 7.3 Decisions on short term investments and short term borrowings may be made on behalf of the Director of Finance by the Group Accountant for Treasury Management or any of the treasury management team who are empowered to agree deals subject to their conforming to the treasury management strategy and policies outlined in this report.
- 7.4 Actual authorisation of payments from the bank accounts will be made by the Director of Finance, the Deputy Director of Finance, the Finance Heads of Service or the Chief Accountants, listed in Appendix D.

7.5 Decisions on long term investments or long term borrowings (i.e. for periods greater than one year) may be made on behalf of the Director of Finance by the Group Accountant or the Senior Assistant Accountants on the Treasury Management Team and will be reported to the Finance and Best Value Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.6 All officers will act in accordance with the policies contained within this document.

8. Balanced Budget Requirement

8.1 The Council complies with the provisions of S32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget.

9. Annual MRP Statement

9.1 The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/414) place a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision has been issued by the Secretary of State and local authorities are required to "have regard" to such Guidance under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

9.2 The four MRP options available are:

Option 1: Regulatory Method

Option 2: CFR Method

Option 3: Asset Life Method

Option 4: Depreciation Method

9.3 MRP in 2009/10: Options 1 and 2 may be used only for supported expenditure. Methods of making prudent provision for self financed expenditure include Options 3 and 4 (which may also be used for supported expenditure if the Council chooses).

9.4 The MRP Statement will be submitted to Council before the start of the 2009/10 financial year. If it is ever proposed to vary the terms of the original MRP Statement during the year, a revised statement should be presented to Council at that time.

9.5 The Council will apply Option 1 in respect of supported capital expenditure and Option 3 in respect of unsupported capital expenditure.

10. Reporting on the Treasury Outturn

10.1 The Director of Finance will report to the Finance and Best Value Overview and Scrutiny Committee on treasury management activity / performance as follows :

(a) Quarterly against the strategy approved for the year.

(b) The Director of Finance will produce an outturn report on treasury activity no later than 30 September after the financial year end.

Prudential Indicators FY 2009-10 to FY 2011-12**1 Background:**

There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 for local authorities to have regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the "CIPFA Prudential Code") when setting and reviewing Prudential Indicators. It should be noted that CIPFA undertook a review of the Code in early 2008. The outcome from that review has yet to be published.

2. Estimates of Capital Expenditure:

2.1 This indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and, in particular, to consider the impact on Council Tax.

No. 1	Capital Expenditure	2008-09	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
		Approved £m	Revised £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m
	Total	78	83	80	72	58

2.2 Capital expenditure will be financed as follows:

Capital Financing	2008-09	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
	Approved £m	Revised £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m
Capital receipts	4	4	4	5	5
Capital Grants	43	48	48	40	29
Revenue contributions	0	0	0	0	0
Supported borrowing	8	8	7	7	7
Unsupported borrowing	23	23	21	20	17
Total	78	83	80	72	58

Note: the element to be financed from borrowing impacts on the movement in the Capital Financing Requirement.

3. Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream:

3.1 This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet borrowing costs. The definition of financing costs is set out at paragraph 87 of the Prudential Code.

3.2 The ratio is based on costs net of investment income.

No. 2	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	2008-09	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
		Approved %	Revised %	Estimate %	Estimate %	Estimate %
	Total	6.61	5.11	7.04	7.24	7.25

4. Capital Financing Requirement:

4.1 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. The calculation of the CFR is taken from the amounts held in the Balance Sheet relating to capital expenditure and its financing. It is an aggregation of the amounts shown for Fixed and Intangible Assets, the Revaluation Reserve, the Capital Adjustment Account, Government Grants Deferred and any other balances treated as capital expenditure.

No. 3	Capital Financing Requirement	31/3/08	31/3/09	31/3/10	31/3/11	31/3/12
		Approved £m	Revised £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m
	Total CFR	312.3	333.5	347.6	359.4	367.2

4.2 The year-on-year change in the CFR is due to the following

Capital Financing Requirement	2008-09 Approved £m	2008-09 Revised £m	2009-10 Estimate £m	2010-11 Estimate £m	2011-12 Estimate £m
Balance B/F	312.3	315.2	333.5	347.6	359.4
Capital expenditure financed from borrowing (per 2.2)	36.3	31.1	28.2	27.1	23.7
Revenue provision for debt Redemption.	-8.2	-8.3	-9.6	-10.8	-11.4
Principal repayments of transferred debt by other Merseyside Local Authorities	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5
Balance C/F	335.9	333.5	347.6	359.4	367.2

4.3 In order to ensure that over the medium term net borrowing will only be for capital purposes, the Council should make sure that net external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the Capital Financing Requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years.

4.4 Wirral had no difficulty meeting this requirement in 2007-08 nor are difficulties envisaged for the current or future financial years.

5 Actual External Debt:

5.1 This indicator is obtained directly from the balance sheet. It is the closing balance for actual gross borrowing plus other long-term liabilities. This Indicator is measured in a manner consistent for comparison with the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit.

No. 4	Actual External Debt as at 31/3/2008	£m
	Borrowing	287.2
	Total	287.2

6. Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions:

6.1 This is an indicator of affordability that shows the impact of capital investment decisions on Council Tax. The incremental impact is calculated by comparing the total revenue budget requirement of the current approved capital programme with an equivalent calculation of the revenue budget requirement arising from the proposed capital programme.

No.	Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
		Approved £	Estimate £	Estimate £	Estimate £
	Increase in Band D Council Tax	27.22	24.87	9.69	5.79

6.2 The increase in Band D Council Tax reflects the increases in running costs and/or increases in the provision for Capital Financing Charges of £2.6m to undertake borrowing of £28m arising from the proposed capital programme.

7 Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt:

7.1 The Council has an integrated treasury management strategy and manages the treasury position in accordance with the approved strategy and practice. Overall borrowing will therefore arise as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the Council and not just those arising from capital spending reflected in the CFR.

7.2 The **Authorised Limit** sets the maximum level of external borrowing on a gross basis (i.e. not net of investments) for the Council. It is measured on a daily basis against all external borrowing items on the Balance Sheet (i.e. long and short term borrowing, overdrawn bank balances and long term liabilities). This Prudential Indicator separately identifies borrowing from other long term liabilities such as finance leases. It is consistent with existing commitments, proposals for capital expenditure and financing and the approved treasury management policy statement and practices.

7.3 The Authorised Limit has been set on the estimate of the most likely, prudent but not worst case scenario with sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for unusual cash movements.

7.4 The Authorised Limit is the statutory limit determined under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 (referred to in the legislation as the Affordable Limit).

No.	Authorised Limit for External Debt	2008-09	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
		Approved £m	Revised £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m
	Borrowing	445.0	455.0	465.0	480.0	490.0
	Other Long Term Liabilities	0.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Total	445.0	465.0	475.0	490.0	500.0

7.5 The **Operational Boundary** links directly to the estimates of the CFR and estimates of other cashflow requirements. This indicator is based on the same estimates as the Authorised Limit reflecting the most likely, prudent but not worst case scenario but without the additional headroom included within the Authorised Limit.

7.6 The Director of Finance has delegated authority, within the total limit for any individual year, to effect movement between the separately agreed limits for borrowing and other long-term liabilities. Decisions will be based on the outcome of financial option appraisals and best value considerations. Any movement between these separate limits will be reported to the next meeting of Cabinet.

No. 7	Operational Boundary for External Debt	2008-09	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
		Approved £m	Revised £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m
	Borrowing	435.0	445.0	455.0	470.0	480.0
	Other Long Term Liabilities	0.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Total	435.0	450.0	460.0	475.0	485.0

8. Adoption of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code:

8.1 This indicator demonstrates that the Council has adopted the principles of best practice.

No. 8	Adoption of the CIPFA Code of Practice in Treasury Management
	The Council approved the adoption of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code at the Cabinet meeting on 30 March 2005.

9. Upper Limits for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure and Variable Interest Rate Exposure:

9.1 These indicators allow the Council to manage the extent to which it is exposed to changes in interest rates. This Council calculates these limits on net principal outstanding sums, (i.e. fixed rate debt net of fixed rate investments)

9.2 The upper limit for variable rate exposure has been set to ensure that the Council is not exposed to interest rate rises which could adversely impact on the revenue budget. The limit allows for the use of variable rate debt to offset exposure to changes in short-term rates on investments.

9.3 In order to increase the understanding of this indicator, separate upper limits for the percentage of fixed and variable rates are shown for borrowing and investment activity, as well as the net limit.

		2008-09	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
		Approved %	Revised %	Estimate %	Estimate %	Estimate %
No. 9	Upper Limit for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure					
	Borrowings	n/a	100	100	100	100
	Investments	n/a	100	100	100	100
	Net	100	200	200	200	200
No. 10	Upper Limit for Variable Rate Exposure					
	Borrowings	n/a	50	50	50	50
	Investments	n/a	100	100	100	100
	Net	100	150	150	150	150

9.4 The limits above provide the necessary flexibility within which decisions will be made for drawing down new loans on a fixed or variable rate basis; the decisions will ultimately be determined by expectations of anticipated interest rate movements as set out in the treasury management strategy.

10 Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate borrowing:

10.1 This indicator highlights the existence of any large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates and is designed to protect against excessive exposures to interest rate changes in any one period, in particular in the course of the next ten years.

10.2 It is calculated as the amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate maturing in each period as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate. The maturity of borrowing is determined by reference to the earliest date on which the lender can require payment.

No. 11	Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing	Lower Limit %	Upper Limit %
	under 12 months	0	100
	12 months and within 24 months	0	100
	24 months and within 5 years	0	100
	5 years and within 10 years	0	100
	10 years and above	0	100

11. Upper Limit for total principal sums invested over 364 days:

11.1 The purpose of this limit is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise as a result of the Council having to seek early repayment of the sums invested.

No. 12	Upper Limit for total principal sums invested over 364 days	2008-09	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
		Approved £m	Revised £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m
		10	30	30	30	30

The Arlingclose Forecast for Interest Rates (January 2009)

	Mar-09	Jun-09	Sep-09	Dec-09	Mar-10	Jun-10	Sep-10	Dec-10	Mar-11
Official Bank Rate									
Upside risk							+0.25	+0.25	+0.25
Central case	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	2.50
Downside risk	-0.50	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
1-yr LIBID									
Upside risk									
Central case	2.50	1.75	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.75	2.00	2.75	3.00
Downside risk	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
5-yr gilt									
Upside risk									
Central case	3.00	2.75	2.50	2.00	2.00	2.50	2.75	3.00	4.00
Downside risk		-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50			
10-yr gilt									
Upside risk									
Central case	3.40	3.10	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.75	4.00	4.50
Downside risk	-0.25	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50			
20-yr gilt									
Upside risk		+0.10	+0.10	+0.10	+0.10	+0.10			
Central case	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.75	4.75
Downside risk		-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10			
50-yr gilt									
Upside risk	+0.10	+0.10	+0.10	+0.10	+0.10	+0.10	+0.10	+0.10	+0.10
Central case	3.90	3.90	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50
Downside risk	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10

- The inflationary threats of 2008 turn into the deflationary reality of 2009. Central Banks under pressure to reduce rates decisively – even to zero or near-zero – to avoid the perils of a destructive and prolonged recession.
- The downturn in the UK gathers pace and the economy contracts for much of 2009. Prospects for Bank of England “quantitative easing” increasingly likely.
- Pension, hedge and insurance fund values struggle and lead to enhanced demand for longer dated gilts.

Underlying assumptions

- Despite central bank intervention to raise bank capital and improve liquidity, conditions in money and credit markets remain very difficult as banks’ lending behaviour changes fundamentally.
- Consumer spending and business investment stall, hampered by the credit drought.
- Falling house prices compel households to review savings levels and repair balance sheets (where possible).
- Commodity prices continue to fall. CPI is projected to fall below the MPC 1% lower threshold in 2009, providing some relief for the overstretched consumer, but eroding debt burdens more slowly.
- Fear of rising unemployment dampens confidence and any prospect of sizeable wage demands.

- UK public finances will worsen as the recession bites, resulting in a slew of gilt issuance in 2009. This will ultimately push gilt yields higher, although not aggressively so.
- Global growth and activity continue to weaken. The Federal Reserve has already cut rates to a range between 0% and 0.25% and has engaged in 'quantitative easing'. The ECB could bring rates down to 2% as European economies struggle with falling domestic and international demand.

Specified and Non Specified Investments

Specified Investments identified for use:

Specified Investments will be those that meet the criteria in Government Guidance, i.e. the investment:-

- is sterling denominated
- has a maximum maturity of 1 year
- meets the “high” credit criteria as determined by the Council or is made with the UK Government or is made with a local authority in England, Wales and Scotland.
- is not defined as capital expenditure under section 25(1)(d) in SI 2003 No 3146 (i.e. the investment is not loan capital or share capital in a body corporate).

“Specified” Investments identified for use are:

- Deposits in the DMO Debt Management Account Deposit Facility
- Deposits with UK local authorities
- Deposits with banks and building societies
- Certificates of deposit with banks and building societies
- Gilts : (bonds issued by the UK Government)
- Bonds issued by multilateral development banks
- AAA-rated Money Market Funds with a Constant Net Asset Value (Constant NAV) investing predominantly in Government securities
- AAA-rated Money Market Funds with a Constant Net Asset Value (Constant NAV) investing in instruments issued primarily by financial institutions;
- Other Money Market Funds and Collective Investment Schemes– i.e. credit rated funds which meet the definition of a collective investment scheme as defined in SI 2004 No 534 and SI 2007 No 573.

For credit rated counterparties, the minimum criteria will be the short-term / long-term ratings assigned by one or more of the following agencies (Moody’s Investors Services, Standard & Poor’s, Fitch Ratings)

**Long-term minimum : Aa3 (Moody’s) or AA- (S&P) or AA-(Fitch).
Or : Short-term P-1 (Moody’s) or A-1 (S&P) or F1 (Fitch).**

This means that the Council will only make investments that have a very high credit rating, or above, for both long and short term investments.

For information, the table below shows the various ratings that are given to investments by the various rating agencies and a description of the perceived risk.

Agencies	Ratings			Notes
	Fitch	Moody's	Standard & Poor's	
Short Term	F1+ F1	P-1	A-1+ A-1	Highest credit quality with an extremely high or superior ability to repay
	F2	P-2	A-2	Good credit quality with a satisfactory or strong ability to repay
	F3	P-3	A-3	Fair credit quality with an acceptable or adequate ability to repay
	B		B	Speculative grade. Vulnerable to adverse changes in financial and economic conditions
	C		C	High Default Risk
	D		D or SD	Payment Default Imminent
Long Term Investment Grade	AAA	Aaa	AAA	Highest credit quality, minimal credit risk, extremely strong ability to repay.
	AA+ AA AA-	Aa1 Aa2 Aa3	AA+ AA AA-	Very high credit quality, very low credit risk, very strong ability to repay.
	A+ A A-	A1 A2 A3	A+ A A-	High credit quality, low credit risk, strong ability to repay.
	BBB+ BBB BBB-	Baa1 Baa2 Baa3	BBB+ BBB BBB-	Good credit quality, current expectations of low credit risk, adequate ability to repay.
				The ratings extend downwards to weaker and weaker credit strength and quality

* Bold items highlight the Council's investment criteria.

Source: Fitch, Moody's, Standard and Poor's, Arlingclose.

The Council will also take into account information on corporate developments of, and market sentiment towards, investment counterparties and will not rely solely on these credit ratings

Non-Specified Investments determined for use:

Having considered the rationale and risk associated with Non-Specified Investments, the following have been determined for use :

	In-house use	Use by fund managers	Maximum maturity	Max % of portfolio	Capital expenditure?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deposits with banks and building societies ▪ Certificates of deposit with banks and building societies 	✓	✓	<u>5 yrs</u>	<u>40%</u> in aggregate	No
Gilts and bonds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gilts ▪ Bonds issued by multilateral development banks ▪ Bonds issued by financial institutions guaranteed by the UK Government ▪ Sterling denominated bonds by non-UK sovereign governments 	✓ (on advice from treasury advisor)	✓	<u>10 years</u>	<u>40%</u> in aggregate	No
Money Market Funds and Collective Investment Schemes (pooled funds which meet the definition of a collective investment scheme as defined in SI 2004 No 534 and SI 2007 No 573) but which are not credit rated	✓ (on advice from treasury advisor)	✓	These funds do not have a defined maturity date	<u>50%</u>	No

-Government guaranteed bonds and debt instruments (e.g. floating rate notes) issued by corporate bodies			<u>10 years</u>		
-Non-guaranteed bonds and debt instruments (e.g. floating rate notes) issued by corporate bodies	✓(on advice from treasury advisor)	✓	<u>10 years</u>	<u>£10M</u>	Yes
-Collective Investment Schemes (Pooled funds) which do not meet the definition of collective investment schemes in SI 2004 No 534 or SI 2007 No 573			These funds do not have a defined maturity date		

1. In determining the period to maturity of an investment, the investment should be regarded as commencing on the date of the commitment of the investment rather than the date on which funds are paid over to the counterparty.
2. The use of the above instruments by fund managers will be by reference to the fund guidelines contained in the agreement between the Council and the individual manager.

Authorised Signatories

The following officers are authorised to make payments, either via the online banking system or by signing cheques, and issue other instructions relating to Treasury Management transactions on behalf of Wirral Borough Council:

Director of Finance – Ian E. Coleman

Deputy Director of Finance – David L.H. Smith

Head of ICT – John O. Carruthers

Head of Benefits, Revenues and Customer Services – Malcolm J. Flanagan

Head of Financial Services – Thomas W. Sault

Head of Support Services – Stephen J. Rowley

Head of Change – Jacqueline Roberts

Chief Accountant – Peter J. Molyneux

Chief Accountant – Robert D. Neeld

Chief Accountant – Jenny Spick

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

PAYMENT OF SUPPLIERS WITHIN 10 DAYS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend changes to the payments processes to reduce the period of time taken to pay providers and suppliers from receipt of invoice.
- 1.2 The proposal is to achieve payment of SME suppliers and providers within 10 days of invoice receipt. The current performance target is 32 days.
- 1.3 This report outlines the volume of transactions processed by the Council and identifies a number of measures which are necessary to improve the payments cycle

2. PAYMENTS ANALYSIS

- 2.1 During 2007/08 the following performance was delivered:
 - a) 166,000 invoices were processed. This represents an average of 3,192 per week.
 - b) 6,000 suppliers and providers submitted invoices to the Council.
 - c) The total expenditure, excluding schools, was £139.3m.
 - d) The total expenditure with SME's, excluding schools, was £71.3m, 51.2% of the total.
 - e.) The number of invoices issued against electronic purchase orders was 37,426, 22.54% of all invoices received.
 - f.) The number of invoices processed for Schools was 36,379. This is an average of 700 per week and represents 21% of all invoices received.
 - g) 21% of invoices received are for less than £51.00 in value.
 - h) The performance in paying invoices within 32 days of receipt was 72.83% (including disputed transactions).

3. DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITY

3.1 The percentage of invoices processed per department, is as follows:-

Children and Young People	31%
Adult Social Services	24%
Regeneration	16%
Corporate Services	13%
Technical Services	8%
Finance	8%

3.2 The following table details the speed of processing these invoices:

Department	% paid within 10 days	% paid within 32 days (Existing Target)	% paid greater than 32 days
Adult Social Services	31.21%	72.43%	27.57%
Corporate Services	17.48%	75.15%	24.85%
Children	27.95%	67.59%	32.41%
Finance	49.48%	89.23%	10.77%
Regeneration	4.96%	82.19%	17.81%
Technical Services	24.31%	81.70%	18.30%
Schools	1.95%	63.47%	36.53%
Total Average	22.48%	76.01%	23.99%

4. PROPOSAL TO PAY SUPPLIERS WITHIN 10 DAYS OF RECEIPT OF INVOICE

4.1. The Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) announced on 21 October 2008 that the Government had committed to paying businesses within ten days and that BERR was speaking to the wider public sector to extend this commitment. The ten day target is currently a best practice guide designed as a direct response to the current economic position. A number of public sector organisations have voluntarily agreed to introduce similar arrangements.

4.2. In recognition of the impact on local authorities of the earlier payment of invoices, the Welsh Assembly Government has agreed to bring forward the dates of revenue support grant payments to help to mitigate the cash flow implications for local authorities in Wales. No such arrangement has been made in England.

5. ACTION PLAN TO PAY SUPPLIERS WITHIN 10 DAYS OF RECEIPT OF INVOICE

5.1 The Action Plan at Appendix 1 has been devised to facilitate the speedier processing of payments. Much of this action plan is dependent on changes to working practices in service departments. The Procurement Team is liaising with departmental staff to implement the Action Plan and its delivery.

5.2 The Corporate Improvement Group (CIG) has recently been informed that following an initial report in May 2008 consideration of the overall Procurement Co-ordination and Control is to be followed up with a report that examines the benefits of shifting resources and responsibilities for all purchasing coordination to the Procurement Team. It is anticipated that significant savings can be made through this initiative:

- More efficient use of the system through increased use of purchase ordering
- Fewer paper invoices
- Reduced transaction costs
- Fewer staff handling invoices
- Reduced number of suppliers

6. FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 It will be necessary to conduct a number of administrative tasks to facilitate the Action Plan. It is proposed to allocate a temporary team of two payments officers for six months, from within the current team, who have the appropriate skills and knowledge to implement this action plan. The cost of “back filling” these posts will be approximately £20,000 with other administration costs expected to total £10,000.

6.2 Support will also be required from all Departments. It has not been possible to estimate these costs but it is expected they will be contained within current resources.

6.3. The cash flow implications of targetting payment of SME invoices within 10 days instead of 32 days will be £140,000.

6.4 The introduction of file transfers within departments will result in changes to activities of those individuals who have responsibilities for batching and despatching invoices and may be viewed as additional tasks.

6.5 It is not yet possible to assess the savings that will result from centralising the purchasing co-ordination role. The savings arising from the efficiency of processes will be assessed as part of the overall Change Programme delivery.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

9. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

10. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

11. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

11.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

12. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

12.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None were used in the production of this report.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) the Authority targets the payment of SME invoices in ten days at a cost of £170,000.
- (2) the measures proposed in this report be agreed as the appropriate means of achieving improvements to the payments process.
- (3) the staffing arrangements required to deliver this Action Plan be implemented immediately.

IAN COLEMAN
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

FNCE/28/09

ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE PAYMENT TO SUPPLIERS WITHIN 10 DAYS OF RECEIPT OF INVOICE

	Action	Effect	Action By	Completion date
1	Implement receipt and approval reminder features within Oracle procurement system	Unreceipted orders cause delays in invoice payments as the Payments Team cannot match invoices to purchase orders. This action will reduce the time spent on chasing departments to enter receipts enabling better use of resources for the processing of all transactions.	Procurement Team	March 2009
2	Re issue procedures to departments for the correct methods of transaction creation and management with strong emphasis on using the procurement system and receipting. Departments need to ensure that all invoices are stamped 'date received'	Many invoice processing delays come about by poor admin practices, such as non receipting and failure to use the procurement system to generate official purchase orders. This action will enable more invoices to be matched within central payments and fewer invoices going direct to departments which will reduce the risk of invoice loss or transition delays.	Procurement Team Payments Team	Completed
3	Establish a key link officer in each department to coordinate payments issues	This will improve communication between the Payments Team and departments and will assist in departments taking appropriate ownership of payment delays.	Payments Team Departments	Ongoing

	Action	Effect	Action By	Completion date
4	Develop and implement file transfer process within each department to avoid delays in the transition of paper invoices from departments to the Payments Team	The most significant cause of payment delays is the circulation of paper invoices around and between departments. This action will remove the requirement of departments to send invoices to the Payments Team, will provide an electronic record of all invoices received within departments, and will reduce the Payments Team time in processing payments.	Procurement Team Payments Team Departments	March 2009
5	Liaise with, and validate account information with all utility companies. Allocate and verify account details with departments. Implement electronic file transfer payments process with utility suppliers to reduce paper invoice volumes received by the Council	This action will remove paper invoices from the process making the validation and payments function entirely electronic. This will improve efficiency within the Payments Team. The Council currently successfully operates this scheme for BT transactions.	Procurement Team Payments Team Technical Services	June 2009
6	Instate a minimum order value of £50 for all office supplies to reduce the receipt of invoices for small value transactions	This action will reduce the number of invoices being received by the Council and will therefore improve efficiency within the Payments Team and departments	Procurement Team	March 2009
7	Initiate weekly league tables of departmental payment performance.	This action will assist the Council in identifying problem areas which can then be explored and resolved. This will also demonstrate the progress and achievements the Council has made. This information will be sent to "Link" and Chief officers	Procurement Team Payments Team	March 2009

	Action	Effect	Action By	Completion date
8	Identify suppliers who transgress the requirement for invoices to include purchase order details and submission to the Payments Team only.	Invoices must display clear information about the authorisation of the transaction and PO reference number. Many invoices are received without this detail and can cause significant delays in identifying the source of the transaction to initiate the payments process. This action will improve efficiency within the Payments Team and departments and restrict the circulation of unidentified invoices. All invoices without an official purchase order reference shall be regarded as disputed.	Procurement Team Payments Team	March 2009
9	Ensure that purchase orders are created before the receipt of invoices to prevent invoices being handled as receipt notes and enabling the Payments Team to match orders on receipt of invoice.	This is a widespread activity which provides poor control over the transaction process and violates contracts procedure rule 4.2. This action will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the number of invoices with PO reference numbers, • ensure that suppliers charges are in accordance with pre agreed values, and • enable more invoices to be matched within the Payments Team and fewer invoices going direct to departments which will reduce the risk of invoice loss or transition delays. 	Procurement Team Payments Team Departments	April 2009
10	Explore potential for schools transactions to be submitted to payments as an electronic file from SIMS or as a separate file	Schools invoices represent a considerable proportion of all supplies and services transactions processed by the Payments Team. These processes are all manual and include significant collection and handling issues. This action would remove the requirement for Schools to send invoices to the Payments Team and will reduce the Payments Team time in processing payments.	Payments Team CYPD	March 2009

	Action	Effect	Action By	Completion date
11	Identify and investigate options for improving mail collections from schools	The existing collection arrangement for school invoices is a single weekly Thursday service. This is not sufficiently frequent and the day they are collected may not be the most appropriate for minimising the payments cycle. This action may directly reduce the number of days in the process.	Procurement Team Payments Team CYPD	March 2009
12	Progress electronic procurement within schools via the Department for Children, Schools and Families OPEN project.	The OPEN system is an electronic procurement system which operates on a “marketplace” basis. This means that electronic invoicing capability is greatly enhanced. This action will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a more efficient transaction process, • reduce errors • remove paper invoices from the payments cycle, and • more orders will be created using electronic catalogues which will improve the matching process 	Procurement Team Payments Team CYPD	October 2009
13	Develop methods of paying for goods and services by electronic means including P Cards, OCR Scanning, and Electronic Invoicing.	There are a number of electronic options for invoice processing; therefore there is a significant task in ensuring the most appropriate method for each type of transaction. This action will result in significant efficiencies in the payments process and will reduce the cost of operation. This action is part of the overall Change Programme	Procurement Team Payments Team	September 2009
14	Review tolerance settings in electronic payments system	Tolerance levels allow flexibility of processing when invoice and order values are not precisely matched. This action will identify whether existing tolerance levels are appropriate and will scope improvement if tolerance settings are adjusted.	Payments Team	March 2009

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEE CALENDAR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2009/10

1. **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report recommends dates for Council, Cabinet and committee meetings for the municipal year 2009/10. The proposed calendar is set out in Appendix A. The report also describes various issues that have been taken into account in compiling it.

2. **Factors Affecting the Calendar**

- 2.1 The calendar has been prepared on the basis that in 2009/10 there will be the same number of regulatory committees and, until a decision is made on the number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, provision has been made for 10. As in previous years these would meet in 5 cycles throughout the year. A date has also been set aside for the Youth Parliament / Council meeting - 13 October, which falls within Local Democracy Week.. The dates for Cabinet meetings have already been agreed with the Leader in accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 1.6.
- 2.2 In addition to the Council, Cabinet and standing committees, as many other meetings of which I have been made aware have been included, such as those of the Local Strategic Partnership and LAA Programme Board, as well as dates set aside for pre-Council group meetings and Area Forums. I was also asked to reserve three dates for an Area Forum Chairs Group, meeting shortly before each cycle of area forums.
- 2.3 Dates have been included in the calendar for member training, for which a programme will be drawn up by the Member Training Steering Group.

3. **Changes to the Calendar**

- 3.1 The attention of all members of the Council will be drawn to this report. They will be asked to let me have any comments that they might have, particularly if they believe there are strong reasons for making any changes to the calendar.
- 3.2 With regard to requests to change dates of meetings during the course of the municipal year, members will be aware that they can cause difficulties in the currently crowded calendar Under the scheme of delegation, I have authority to approve amendments to the calendar after consultation with the leaders of the political groups. In practice,

changes are usually left to the relevant committee officer in consultation with the spokespersons, and he/she can be put in an invidious position in trying to explain why a change is being requested, particularly if by an individual member. Every committee has a panel of deputies, and also should have appointed a Vice-Chair, to deal with problems of attendance.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1. None arising directly from this report, though it should be noted that any reduction in the number of committees could result in a corresponding reduction in the number of special responsibility allowances, and fewer meetings would save on associated costs (printing, refreshment, etc.).

5. Staffing implications

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report.

6. Equal opportunities implications

- 6.1 The scheduling of meetings may have implications for carers and families, depending upon individual circumstances (and for that reason a carer's allowance has been included in the Members' Allowances Scheme), but none specifically for older people, people with disabilities and those from ethnic minorities.

7. Other implications

- 7.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report in relation to social inclusion issues, human rights legislation, Local Agenda 21, community safety and planning issues.

8. Local member support implications

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report, other than in relation to the dates suggested for meetings of Area Forums. Ward councillors are being consulted on the allocation of those dates.

9. Background papers

- 9.1 None used in the preparation of this report.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1 That the calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2009/10, attached as Appendix A, be approved.

Bill Norman

Director of Law, HR and Asset Management

APRIL**2009**

Wednesday	1	Streetscene & Transport Serv. O&S	School Standards Sub
Thursday	2	Planning	
Friday	3		
Saturday	4		
Sunday	5		
Monday	6	Pensions	
Tuesday	7	Environment O&S; Employment and Appointments	
Wednesday	8	Community & Customer Engagement O&S	
Thursday	9	Cabinet	
Friday	10	GOOD FRIDAY	
Saturday	11		
Sunday	12		
Monday	13	Easter Monday	
Tuesday	14		
Wednesday	15		
Thursday	16		
Friday	17		
Saturday	18		
Sunday	19		
Monday	20	Group meetings	
Tuesday	21		
Wednesday	22	Members' Training	
Thursday	23	Cabinet	
Friday	24		
Saturday	25		
Sunday	26		
Monday	27	COUNCIL	
Tuesday	28		
Wednesday	29		
Thursday	30	Planning	

MAY

Friday	1	
Saturday	2	
Sunday	3	
Monday	4	Bank Holiday
Tuesday	5	
Wednesday	6	
Thursday	7	
Friday	8	
Saturday	9	
Sunday	10	
Monday	11	ANNUAL COUNCIL Part 1
Tuesday	12	Cabinet (Selection Meeting)
Wednesday	13	
Thursday	14	Area Forum Chairs
Friday	15	
Saturday	16	
Sunday	17	
Monday	18	ANNUAL COUNCIL Part 2
Tuesday	19	Licensing Act 2003; Licensing, Health & Safety and GP
Wednesday	20	LAA Board; Scrutiny Chairs
Thursday	21	Planning
Friday	22	
Saturday	23	
Sunday	24	
Monday	25	Bank Holiday
Tuesday	26	
Wednesday	27	O&S (1); O&S (2)
Thursday	28	O&S (3)
Friday	29	
Saturday	30	
Sunday	31	

JUNE

Monday	1	O&S (4); O&S (5)
Tuesday	2	O&S (6); O&S (7)
Wednesday	3	Cabinet
Thursday	4	EUROPEAN ELECTIONS
Friday	5	
Saturday	6	
Sunday	7	
Monday	8	Area Forums (Bid/Clau and GFI/Upton)
Tuesday	9	Local Strategic Partnership; Area Forum (Lea/Mor/Saug)
Wednesday	10	Area Forum (Lisc/Seac)
Thursday	11	Planning
Friday	12	
Saturday	13	
Sunday	14	
Monday	15	O&S (8) Employment & Appointments
Tuesday	16	Area Forums (Oxt/Pren and Beb/Clatt)
Wednesday	17	Area Forum (West Wirral)
Thursday	18	Area Forums (Hes/Pens/Thing and Bhead/Tran/RF)
Friday	19	
Saturday	20	
Sunday	21	
Monday	22	O&S (9)
Tuesday	23	Area Forums (Brom/East and NB/Wall); Virtual School Govs
Wednesday	24	O&S(10) Pensions
Thursday	25	Cabinet
Friday	26	
Saturday	27	
Sunday	28	
Monday	29	Audit & Risk Management
Tuesday	30	Standards <i>LGA Conference</i>

JULY

Wednesday	1	<i>LGA Conference</i>
Thursday	2	Planning <i>LGA Conference</i>
Friday	3	
Saturday	4	
Sunday	5	
Monday	6	Group Meetings
Tuesday	7	
Wednesday	8	LAA Board; School Standards Sub
Thursday	9	Members' Training
Friday	10	
Saturday	11	
Sunday	12	
Monday	13	COUNCIL
Tuesday	14	
Wednesday	15	Members' Training
Thursday	16	Cabinet
Friday	17	
Saturday	18	
Sunday	19	
Monday	20	
Tuesday	21	
Wednesday	22	
Thursday	23	Planning
Friday	24	
Saturday	25	
Sunday	26	
Monday	27	
Tuesday	28	
Wednesday	29	
Thursday	30	
Friday	31	

AUGUST

Saturday	1	
Sunday	2	
Monday	3	
Tuesday	4	
Wednesday	5	
Thursday	6	
Friday	7	
Saturday	8	
Sunday	9	
Monday	10	
Tuesday	11	
Wednesday	12	
Thursday	13	Planning
Friday	14	
Saturday	15	
Sunday	16	
Monday	17	
Tuesday	18	
Wednesday	19	LAA Board
Thursday	20	
Friday	21	
Saturday	22	
Sunday	23	
Monday	24	
Tuesday	25	
Wednesday	26	
Thursday	27	
Friday	28	
Saturday	29	
Sunday	30	
Monday	31	BANK HOLIDAY

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday	1	Scrutiny Chairs
Wednesday	2	Area Forum Chairs
Thursday	3	Cabinet
Friday	4	
Saturday	5	
Sunday	6	
Monday	7	O&S (1); O&S (2)
Tuesday	8	O&S (3)
Wednesday	9	Members' Training
Thursday	10	Planning
Friday	11	
Saturday	12	
Sunday	13	
Monday	14	Licensing, Health & Safety and GP
Tuesday	15	Employment & Appointments
Wednesday	16	O&S (4); O&S (5)
Thursday	17	O&S (6)
Friday	18	
Saturday	19	
Sunday	20	
Monday	21	O&S (7); O&S (8)
Tuesday	22	O&S (9)
Wednesday	23	Audit & Risk Management
Thursday	24	Cabinet
Friday	25	
Saturday	26	
Sunday	27	
Monday	28	Pensions
Tuesday	29	Standards
Wednesday	30	LAA Board

OCTOBER

Thursday	1	Planning
Friday	2	
Saturday	3	
Sunday	4	
Monday	5	
Tuesday	6	Area Forums (Oxt/Pren and Beb/Clatt)
Wednesday	7	O&S (10)
Thursday	8	Area Forums (Lea/Mor/Saug and Bid/Claughton)
Friday	9	
Saturday	10	
Sunday	11	
Monday	12	
Tuesday	13	COUNCIL (Youth Parliament)
Wednesday	14	Area Forums (West Wirral and Bhead/Tran/RF)
Thursday	15	Cabinet
Friday	16	
Saturday	17	
Sunday	18	
Monday	19	Area Forum (GFI andUpton)
Tuesday	20	
Wednesday	21	Area Forums (Hes/Pen/Thing and NB/Wall)
Thursday	22	Planning
Friday	23	
Saturday	24	
Sunday	25	
Monday	26	Group Meetings
Tuesday	27	
Wednesday	28	Members' Training
Thursday	29	
Friday	30	
Saturday	31	

NOVEMBER

Sunday	1	
Monday	2	Council
Tuesday	3	O&S (1); O&S (2)
Wednesday	4	O&S (3)
Thursday	5	Cabinet
Friday	6	
Saturday	7	
Sunday	8	
Monday	9	Licensing, Health & Safety and GP; Licensing Act 2003
Tuesday	10	O&S (4); O&S (5)
Wednesday	11	LAA Board
Thursday	12	Planning
Friday	13	
Saturday	14	
Sunday	15	
Monday	16	
Tuesday	17	Pensions; O&S (6)
Wednesday	18	O&S (7); O&S (8)
Thursday	19	O&S (9)
Friday	20	
Saturday	21	
Sunday	22	
Monday	23	O&S (10)
Tuesday	24	Employment & Appointments
Wednesday	25	Audit & Risk Management
Thursday	26	Cabinet
Friday	27	
Saturday	28	
Sunday	29	
Monday	30	

DECEMBER

Tuesday	1	Standards
Wednesday	2	Members' Training
Thursday	3	
Friday	4	
Saturday	5	
Sunday	6	
Monday	7	Group Meetings
Tuesday	8	
Wednesday	9	Cabinet
Thursday	10	Planning
Friday	11	
Saturday	12	
Sunday	13	
Monday	14	COUNCIL
Tuesday	15	
Wednesday	16	
Thursday	17	
Friday	18	
Saturday	19	
Sunday	20	
Monday	21	
Tuesday	22	
Wednesday	23	
Thursday	24	Christmas Eve
Friday	25	Christmas Day
Saturday	26	Boxing Day
Sunday	27	
Monday	28	BANK HOLIDAY
Tuesday	29	
Wednesday	30	
Thursday	31	

JANUARY

2010

Friday	1	New Years Day
Saturday	2	
Sunday	3	
Monday	4	Scrutiny Chairs
Tuesday	5	O&S (1); O&S (2)
Wednesday	6	LAA Board; Area Forum Chairs
Thursday	7	Planning
Friday	8	
Saturday	9	
Sunday	10	
Monday	11	Licensing, Health & Safety and GP
Tuesday	12	O&S (3)
Wednesday	13	Pensions
Thursday	14	Cabinet
Friday	15	
Saturday	16	
Sunday	17	
Monday	18	Audit and Risk Management
Tuesday	19	O&S (4); O&S (5)
Wednesday	20	O&S (6)
Thursday	21	O&S (7)
Friday	22	
Saturday	23	
Sunday	24	
Monday	25	Standards
Tuesday	26	Employment and Appointments; O&S (8)
Wednesday	27	LAA Board
Thursday	28	Planning
Friday	29	
Saturday	30	
Sunday	31	

FEBRUARY

Monday	1	O&S (9);	O&S (10)
Tuesday	2	Area Forums	
Wednesday	3	Area Forums	
Thursday	4	Cabinet	
Friday	5		
Saturday	6		
Sunday	7		
Monday	8	Group Meetings	
Tuesday	9	Members' Training	
Wednesday	10	Area Forums	
Thursday	11	Area Forums	
Friday	12		
Saturday	13		
Sunday	14		
Monday	15	Council	
Tuesday	16		
Wednesday	17	LAA Board	
Thursday	18	Planning	
Friday	19		
Saturday	20		
Sunday	21		
Monday	22	Cabinet (Budget meeting)	
Tuesday	23		
Wednesday	24	Area Forums	
Thursday	25	Area Forums	
Friday	26		
Saturday	27		
Sunday	28		

MARCH

Monday	1	Budget Council
Tuesday	2	Scrutiny Chairs
Wednesday	3	O&S (1)
Thursday	4	O&S (2);
Friday	5	
Saturday	6	
Sunday	7	
Monday	8	O&S (3); O&S (4)
Tuesday	9	O&S (5)
Wednesday	10	Budget Council (Reserve)
Thursday	11	Planning
Friday	12	
Saturday	13	
Sunday	14	
Monday	15	O&S (6); O&S (7)
Tuesday	16	O&S (8)
Wednesday	17	O&S (9)
Thursday	18	Cabinet
Friday	19	
Saturday	20	
Sunday	21	
Monday	22	Licensing, Health & Safety and GP
Tuesday	23	Pensions
Wednesday	24	Audit & Risk Management
Thursday	25	O&S (10)
Friday	26	
Saturday	27	
Sunday	28	
Monday	29	Standards
Tuesday	30	Employment & Appointments
Wednesday	31	LAA Board; Planning

APRIL

Thursday	1	
Friday	2	Good Friday
Saturday	3	
Sunday	4	
Monday	5	Easter Monday
Tuesday	6	
Wednesday	7	
Thursday	8	
Friday	9	
Saturday	10	
Sunday	11	
Monday	12	Group Meetings
Tuesday	13	
Wednesday	14	
Thursday	15	Cabinet
Friday	16	
Saturday	17	
Sunday	18	
Monday	19	COUNCIL
Tuesday	20	
Wednesday	21	
Thursday	22	Planning
Friday	23	
Saturday	24	
Sunday	25	
Monday	26	
Tuesday	27	
Wednesday	28	
Thursday	29	
Friday	30	

MAY

Saturday	1	
Sunday	2	
Monday	3	BANK HOLIDAY
Tuesday	4	
Wednesday	5	
Thursday	6	LOCAL ELECTIONS
Friday	7	
Saturday	8	
Sunday	9	
Monday	10	
Tuesday	11	
Wednesday	12	
Thursday	13	
Friday	14	
Saturday	15	
Sunday	16	
Monday	17	ANNUAL COUNCIL Part 1
Tuesday	18	
Wednesday	19	
Thursday	20	
Friday	21	
Saturday	22	
Sunday	23	
Monday	24	ANNUAL COUNCIL Part 2
Tuesday	25	
Wednesday	26	
Thursday	27	
Friday	28	
Saturday	29	
Sunday	30	
Monday	31	BANK HOLIDAY

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19th March 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting on 9 July 2008, the Cabinet considered a report on proposed constitutional amendments and resolved as follows:

‘That:

(1) the amendments proposed in the report (with the exception of those relating to Rule 16 of Contract Standing Orders) and the additional amendments circulated be recommended to Council;

(2) Cabinet meetings.

Cabinet believes that it is important to continue to make progress in improving Wirral’s CPA rating, and that continuing to improve Wirral’s Democratic Arrangements is an integral part of that progress;

Cabinet notes that the recent Audit Commission Report on Wirral’s Democratic Arrangements recommended that we ‘monitor the impact of the new scheme of delegation in reducing the Cabinet’s workload and explore the opportunity to extend the scheme further’ and that we also ‘assess and review the amount of senior officer time spent on serving current democratic arrangements and whether that currently provides value for money’; and

Cabinet recognises that the current Cabinet workload is high, and that the system of fortnightly Cabinet meetings with lengthy agendas places a considerable demand on the time of Senior Officers both in preparing reports and in briefing members.

Cabinet therefore agrees:

a) To recommend the attached Appendix A. Extended Scheme of Delegation to Council as a means of reducing by around a third the number of items on Cabinet agendas.

b) To move from a fortnightly cycle of Cabinet meetings to a three weekly cycle;

c) Council be recommended that paragraph 1.6 of the Executive Procedure Rules be amended accordingly;

d) To cancel the Cabinet meeting scheduled for August 14th in order to allow the new timetable to take effect.

(3) Revision of Cabinet Portfolios.

Cabinet recognises the high workload attached to the Leadership of the Council and therefore recommends to Council the attached Appendix B. Revision of Portfolios which will enable the Deputy Leader of the Council, in a newly titled Corporate Resources portfolio to share some of the workload and responsibilities currently undertaken by the Leader, with some consequential or other amendments to remaining Portfolios.

(4) Overview and Scrutiny

Cabinet recognises that the current system whereby each Overview and Scrutiny Committee mirrors a Cabinet Portfolio is very time-intensive for senior officers and that this was also pointed out in the Audit Commission's report on Wirral's Democratic Arrangements which asked us to 'review the current scrutiny committee structure'.

Cabinet further recognises that the present structure also mitigates against real cross cutting initiatives where input from Overview and Scrutiny could be most valuable and that the Audit Commission pointed out that 'the opportunity to look strategically at cross cutting issues is not always fully exploited.

In the light of the adoption of the new Corporate Plan, Cabinet is minded therefore to consider recommending to Council a system where five Overview and Scrutiny Committees mirror instead the five agreed Corporate Objectives in order to allow those committees to play a real part in delivering the Council's agreed agenda.

However, Cabinet realises that this is an issue that will need substantial consultation and debate with all those concerned and therefore agrees to review the position with the object of taking new proposals, with detailed terms of reference, to the appropriate Council to take effect from the next Council AGM.

In the meantime, Cabinet requests that the Chairs of the current Overview and Scrutiny Committees take account of the comments of the Audit Commission in planning their meetings and agendas in the current municipal year to ensure these are proportionate to business demands and agreed work programmes.

(5) Area Forums

In the light of:

- a) The report on the current agenda.*
- b) The move to participatory budgeting.*
- c) The need to continue to empower local communities.*
- d) The need to ensure that Forums play their full part in contributing to the Local Strategic Partnership Plan.*

Cabinet recognises that the role and responsibilities of the Area Forums are changing and that this places increasing responsibility on front line councillors.

Cabinet is mindful of this change, and of the fact that new legislation will increase these responsibilities further. Cabinet therefore agrees to review this situation in

tandem with the review of Overview and Scrutiny committees, with a view to implementation of any agreed changes at the next Annual Council.'

1.0 Background

This report proposes a number of constitutional amendments for consideration and consultation in the light of the above resolution and also proposes amendments to the scheme of delegation to portfolio holders.

2.0 Cabinet meetings

2.1 The recommendations relating to meetings of the Cabinet have been implemented and the Cabinet is now meeting on a three-weekly basis.

3.0 Changes to the scheme of delegation to portfolio holders

3.1 The existing scheme of delegation is set out at Appendix 1.

3.2 Since the introduction of this recent scheme of delegation, 44 decisions have been made by portfolio holders (a breakdown is included at Appendix 2). In comparison 138 decisions have been taken by the Cabinet. Whilst it is acknowledged that the scheme of delegation has reduced the size of Cabinet agendas, there is the potential to expand the scheme further.

3.3 Of those 138 decisions taken by Cabinet, 87 were non-key decisions. It is therefore recommended that the scheme of delegation be amended to allow all non-key decisions to be taken by the relevant portfolio holder under their delegated powers. This would allow Cabinet to focus on the key decisions of the Council, whilst still allowing non-key decisions to be scrutinised through the call-in process. The existing protocol would be retained (attached as Appendix 3).

4.0 Overview and Scrutiny Committees

4.1 The Cabinet resolution above suggests moving towards five overview and scrutiny committees based on the Council's Corporate Plan as follows:

- Economy & Regeneration
- Environment
- Health and well-being
- Children and Young People
- Excellent Council

4.2 The draft terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are set out at Appendix 4.

4.3 In addition the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act will give Overview and Scrutiny Committees the power to scrutinise Local Area Agreements and to hold partners to account in this respect. The draft terms of reference include this aspect.

4.4 Members may wish to consider whether the role of the Scrutiny Chairs Group should be given more formal status within the constitution. Members may also wish

to consider the mechanism for dealing with call-ins. Two adaptations of the five scrutiny committee model could address these issues.

4.5 Option one would see the present role of the Scrutiny Chairs' Meeting extended and formalised into an overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the five themed scrutiny bodies (Economy & Regeneration, Environment Health and well-being, Children and Young People and Excellent Council) being constituted as sub-committees. The terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could include dealing with all Call-ins, approving the work programmes of (and allocating work to) the five sub-committees. This would help minimise the likelihood of duplication of activity or of important matters falling between the remits of two of the themed bodies. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could include the chairs of the five themed sub-committees provided the requirements for all scrutiny committees to be proportionate in terms of all three political groups.

4.6 Option two would see , the present role of the Scrutiny Chairs' Meeting extended and incorporated into one of the five themed scrutiny bodies (Economy & Regeneration, Environment Health and well-being, Children and Young People and Excellent Council), probably the Excellent Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The other four Overview and Scrutiny Committees could be constituted as sub-committees. The terms of reference of the Excellent Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee could include dealing with all Call-ins, approving the work programmes of (and allocating work to) the four sub-committees. Again, this would help minimise duplication or gaps in activity between the various bodies.

4.7 Cabinet's views are requested on whether the five Scrutiny Committee model should be refined by adopting either option one or option two above.

4.8 It is proposed that the draft Overview and Scrutiny structure be circulated to the three Group Leaders for their comments and a report be brought back to the next meeting of the Cabinet to enable any changes to the constitution to be referred to Council for decision with the intention that they be brought into effect for the 2009/10 Municipal Year.

5.0 Financial implications

The proposed increase in delegated decision making would decrease the costs associated with produced paper copies of the Cabinet agenda. The reduction in the number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees would reduce the expenditure on Special Responsibility Allowances for Members and would also decrease the expenditure involved with holding meetings at the Town Hall (room bookings, agenda papers, etc).

6.0 Staffing implications

There will be reduced staffing implications for Legal and Member Services.

7.0 Equal opportunities implications

There are no equal opportunity implications.

8.0 Community safety implications

There are no community safety implications.

9.0 Local Agenda 21 implications

There are no Local Agenda 21 implications.

10.0 Planning implications

There are no planning implications.

11.0 Anti-poverty implications

There are no anti-poverty implications.

12.0 Social inclusion implications

There are no social inclusion implications.

13.0 Background Papers

The Council's Constitution was used to prepare this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That

- (1) the scheme of delegation of executive functions to portfolio holders be amended to allow all non-key decisions to be made under delegation in line with paragraph 3.3 above;
- (2) the proposal to move to five overview and scrutiny committees, based on the Council's corporate priorities be forwarded to the three Party Leaders for their comments to be brought back to the Cabinet at its next meeting; and
- (3) Cabinet indicates whether the five Scrutiny Committee model to be referred to the Group Leaders for consultation should be refined by adopting either option one (in paragraph 4.5 above) or option two (in paragraph 4.6 above).

Appendix 1

DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS

All Cabinet Members within their own Portfolio

- (i) Approval of those matters where the recommendation is simply to note the report.
- (ii) Approval of the appointment of consultants up to the value of £50,000.
- (iii) Approval of the Council's formal response to Government consultation documents.
- (iv) Approval of the extension of contracts for a maximum of up to 2 years, where such an extension was an option in the original contract in consultation with the departmental Director and the Director of Finance.
- (v) Acceptance of tenders below £750,000 for capital works, where the tender is the lowest price, the tender complies with all the price, quality, safety, sustainability and any other criteria set out in the tender document; and the tender value is below the figure set out in the relevant budget.
- (vi) Approval of additional or replacement items for the current year's Capital Programme, where the amount of the estimate does not exceed £100,000 and does not increase the overall total of the Departmental Capital Programme.
- (vii) The award of contracts of up to 3 years, where the contract value is less than £750,000, where the tender is the lowest price the tender complies with all the price, quality, safety, sustainability and any other criteria set out in the tender document; and the tender value is below the figure set out in the relevant budget.
- (viii) Approve variations to contract values post-tender where the value of the variation, or series of variations exceeds £20,000.

Finance and Best Value

- (i) Power to write off debts up to £10,000, in consultation with the Director of Finance.

Corporate Resources

- (i) The disposal of surplus land, buildings and other assets up to the value of £250,000 by sale or lease.
- (ii) The purchase or lease of land, buildings and other assets up to a value of £250,000.
- (iii) The removal of restrictive covenants on land, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services, where the increase in land value as a result is less than £250,000.
- (iv) To designate attendances at conferences, training events, meetings and seminars as an approved duty.

Children's Services and Lifelong Learning

- (i) Appointments to serve on the Parental Appeals Panel.
- (ii) Approval of applications to the Prudential Borrowing Financial Support Fund up to a maximum of £20,000.

Streetscene and Transport Services

(1) To approve the recommendation of the Streetscene and Transport Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in connection with all proposed highway and traffic management matters, as set out below, to which objections have been lodged and where he/she agrees with the recommendation:-

(a) All highway and traffic management matters governed by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, whether subject to a Traffic Regulation Order or otherwise, including (but not limited to) the following:-

- i. waiting and parking restrictions;
- ii. speed limits;
- iii. one way traffic orders;
- iv. weight limits;
- v. prohibiting or restricting the use of heavy commercial vehicles;
- vi. signalised and non signalised pedestrian/cycle/horse crossings;
- vii. provision of off street parking and parking on roads ,footpaths, pavements and verges
- viii. traffic signs and traffic signals.
- ix. Bus lanes and taxi ranks
- x. Siting of street furniture

(2) To approve the recommendation of the Streetscene and Transport Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in connection with all proposed highway and traffic management matters, as set out below, to which objections have been lodged and where he/she agrees with the recommendation:-

(a) All highway and traffic management matters governed by the Highways Act 1980 including (but not limited to) the following:-

- i. road humps;
- ii. traffic calming speed reducing measures;
- iii. improvement lines for road widening;
- iv. cycle tracks.

(3) To approve the winter maintenance arrangements.

Regeneration and Planning Strategy

(i) Approval of the recommendations of the Mersey Waterfront Partnership Board up to the value of £250,000.

(ii) Approval of requests for grants from the Wirral Investment Fund up to a value of £50,000.

Community and Customer Engagement

(i) Approval of the recommendations of Area Forums (other than the one which the Cabinet Member is also a member) for spending of CIF and other similar funds.

Where any Cabinet member is unable to make a decision on a matter within their delegation as a result of a prejudicial interest in the matter it can be referred to the Leader of the Council or, in his absence, the Deputy Leader, who will have the same

power to make the decision as the Portfolio holder would have, if they did not have an interest.

Notwithstanding any of the above, Chief Officers may, if they believe it is in the Council's best interests, recommend to their portfolio holder that a report be taken out of delegation and placed on the Cabinet Agenda for approval or debate. Chief Officers should be mindful when doing so of the need to reduce the number of reports going to Cabinet.

Appendix 2

Delegated decisions made by portfolio holders since 8th July 2008

Portfolio	No of delegated decisions made
Children's Services and Lifelong Learning	1
Community and Customer Engagement	1
Corporate Resources	28
Culture, Tourism and Leisure	0
Environment	0
Finance and Best Value	6
Housing and Community Safety	0
Regeneration and Planning Strategy	3
Social Care and Inclusion	0
Streetscene and Transport Services	5

Protocol for delegated decision-making

Chief Officers will ensure that matters for decision are placed before Members following the appropriate consultation with other Officers within the Council.

In addition, the Constitution requires that delegated decisions should only be taken by portfolio holders following the expiry of 3 clear working days from the notification of matters by Chief Officers. The portfolio holder will also notify the Leader of the Council of the decisions he or she intends to make following the elapse of the 3 clear working days. During this period, the portfolio holder or the Leader of the Council may request that the matter be referred to the next meeting of the Cabinet rather than taken under delegated powers, by notifying the Head of Legal and Member Services.

A formal decision record will be produced and published on the Council's Intranet and Internet site. All Members of the Council will be informed by email and the decision will be open for call-in for 5 working days.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

- (i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;
- (ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;
- (iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- (iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive;

within the following terms of reference:

- (1)** matters relating to the economic and urban regeneration of Wirral
- (2)** the economic regeneration strategy for Wirral.
- (3)** all economic regeneration programmes including European programmes, any other Council programmes and residual issues in relation to the Single Regeneration Budget.
- (4)** consultation and liaison with all organisations involved in regeneration in Wirral, including NWDA, English Partnerships, GoNW, Learning and Skills Council, Greater Merseyside Enterprise, Wirral Metropolitan College, trade unions, the private sector, the voluntary sector, etc.
- (5)** all matters in relation to European issues.
- (6)** the promotion of Wirral as a premier location for inward investment through the work of Wirral Direct and other organisations; in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Leisure in the case of tourism initiatives.
- (7)** to ensure that an adequate supply of sites and premises is provided in order to cater for the needs of local businesses and to help attract new businesses.
- (8)** financial support, where appropriate, to businesses, co-operatives and other profit making and non-profit making ventures for the benefit of Wirral.
- (9)** provision of a comprehensive business support service to local companies.
- (10)** the development of community employment and training initiatives and other initiatives designed to strengthen the economy of local communities and combat disadvantage including the development of a comprehensive "pathways to Integration" strategy for Wirral.

- (11) monitoring economic trends in Wirral and identifying examples of good practice elsewhere in the field of urban policy and economic regeneration from which Wirral can benefit.
- (12) Lobbying Government and other agencies nationally, regionally and internationally, to ensure that Wirral achieves its economic regeneration objectives.
- (13) Welfare to Work.
- (14) the Development Plan and related plans and policies.
- (15) national, regional and strategic issues, including green belt policy.
- (16) the designation and preservation of conservation areas and liaison with conservation bodies.
- (17) the application of the Planning Acts in relation to:
 - preservation of general amenity
 - shopping improvement areas
 - derelict sites
 - building regulations
 - mineral planning issues
 - contributions to the Council's urban regeneration initiatives
 - compulsory purchase
- (19) liaison on planning matters with other local authorities and external bodies.
- (20) identification and action in relation to derelict land and building, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for the Environment.
- (21) the development, management, implementation and review of all aspects of the Council's Tourism Strategy.
- (22) the promotion of Wirral as a location for tourism and in consultation with the Cabinet member for Regeneration and Planning Strategy, to encourage tourism initiatives designed to bring new jobs to the Borough.
- (23) housing strategy.
- (24) the assessment of housing need including the needs of vulnerable people.
- (25) enabling vulnerable Clients to remain at home, through the provision of low level housing support services (the Supporting People programme).
- (26) the provision of homelessness and housing advice services, including rough sleepers.
- (27) the provision of services to enable access to accommodation.
- (28) the assessment of housing markets.
- (29) housing market restructuring and renewal.
- (30) Housing matters relating to:
 - Dealing with unfitness and poor condition

- Acquisition and clearance
- Financial policies for home improvement funding
- Regulation and enforcement of statutory provisions relating to private sector housing

(31) Housing matters relating to:

- The promotion and monitoring of partnerships to achieve wider strategic housing objectives
- Monitoring the performance of new Housing Stock Transfer organisations
- The accreditation and licensing of private landlords

(32) monitoring and responding to the needs of gypsies and travellers.

(33) those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this Committee,

(34) to seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas.

(35) to support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women;

(36) to scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

- (i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;
- (ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;
- (iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- (iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive;

within the following terms of reference:

- (1)** highways, streets and footpaths, including street lighting and related enforcement activities.
- (2)** traffic regulations and road safety.
- (3)** the management of Council car parks.
- (4)** liaison with the MPTA and other external organisations.
- (5)** reservoirs, sewerage and land drainage.
- (6)** the provision of civil engineering services to the Council.
- (7)** the provision of architectural, quantity surveying and mechanical, electrical and structural engineering services.
- (8)** coast protection and sea defences.
- (9)** restricted and selective tendering for civil engineering services.
- (10)** Grass cutting in residential areas
- (11)** weed control.
- (12)** Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing
- (13)** Advertisement Control
- (14)** Trading standards and consumer protection.
- (15)** Food safety and hygiene.
- (16)** Home safety.
- (17)** Health education.
- (18)** Control of communicable diseases.
- (19)** Port health.

- (20) Monitoring of waste disposal.
- (21) Recycling
- (22) Public conveniences.
- (23) Preservation and improvement of amenities in residential areas.
- (24) Clean air and pollution control.
- (25) Abatement of nuisance (other than statutory nuisance in private dwellings).
- (26) identification and action in relation to derelict land and buildings.
- (27) Sea Fisheries.
- (28) the development and implementation of strategies for continually improving sustainability and reducing the environmental impact of the Council, its policies, plans, programmes and services.
- (29) the provision of leisure and cultural services including:
- library services
 - museums and galleries, promotion of the Arts
 - civic theatres, entertainment and cultural activities
 - swimming pools, sports halls and indoor recreation
 - parks, recreation grounds, and adventure playgrounds
 - public playing fields, outdoor sports facilities
- (30) community centres and public halls.
- (31) sports activities and development, the promotion of sporting activities and joint use of sporting facilities.
- (32) resort activities, including publicity.
- (33) beaches and the Beach Lifeguard Service
- (34) the provision of country parks and allotment gardens.
- (35) the provision and management of cemeteries and crematoria.
- (36) the heritage of the Borough, including the preservation of buildings of architectural or historic interest in liaison with the Heritage Champion
- (37) Community Safety including:
- Co-ordinating neighbour nuisance policies in the private and public sector.
 - Co-ordinating anti-social behaviour policies.
 - Working with partners, the police & other Cabinet members on youth diversion schemes.
 - Working with the appropriate Cabinet member in liaison with the Drug & Alcohol Team.

- Working with the Licensing Team on issues of under age sales of alcohol and with Trading Standards in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Environment.
- The use of the Council's powers under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Housing Act 1996 and the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The council's duty under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to have regard to the effects on crime and disorder in the exercise of all of its powers and duties;
- Liaison with other agencies such as the police, Primary Care Trusts, the voluntary sector and the Probation Service on community safety issues;
- the development and implementation of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and the Anti-social behaviour Strategy

(38) the operation and development of Community Patrol

(39) those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this portfolio,

(40) To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas;

(41) To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women.

(42) to scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

- (i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;
- (ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;
- (iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- (iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive;

within the following terms of reference:

- (1)** the planning, commissioning and delivery of social care services for all adult client groups and to provide leadership to the wider vision of social care.
- (2)** developing preventative services that will reduce the need for social care intervention.
- (3)** work with a range of partners, including health and the voluntary and independent sector, to provide services which are well planned and integrated, make the most effective use of available resources and met the needs of our diverse community.
- (4)** social inclusion and to promote the role of the local Authority, working with the NHS community on Wirral, to improve Public Health and well being and to address health inequalities.
- (5)** examine the healthcare provision within the area in relation to all residents of the Borough. To participate in all initiatives for improving health and the healthcare provision within the area and to call officers from the NHS Community to account and request them to appear before the Committee when appropriate.
- (6)** .ensure services are of a high quality and delivered by a well-trained workforce or by informal and family carers who are themselves supported.
- (7)** better use of technology to support people.
- (8)** ensure services have an emphasis on preventing problems and that social care and health work on a shared agenda to help maintain the independence of individuals.
- (9)** ensure that people with the highest needs receive the support and protection needed to ensure their own wellbeing and the safety of society.
- (10)** ensure that risks of independence for individuals is openly shared and balanced against benefits with them.

- (11)** To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor and women.
- (12)** matters relating to section 47 of the National Assistance Act 1948 (as amended).
- (13)** those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this portfolio,
- (14)** To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas.
- (15)** to scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

- (i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;
- (ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;
- (iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- (iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive;

within the following terms of reference:

- (1) the powers and duties set out in
 - the Children Act, 1989
 - the Education Act, 1996
 - the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998
 - the Education Act, 2002,
 - the Children Act, 2004
 - the Education Act 2005
 - the Education and Inspection Act 2006 and
 - any other legislation relevant to the functions defined below.
- (2) the promotion of improvement in the outcomes for children and young people in terms of their health, their education and training, their ability to make a positive contribution, and their social and economic well-being.
- (3) ensuring that children and young people in Wirral are safe from harm and neglect, and that their welfare is promoted.
- (4) the provision of services for children and young people including services for children and young people in care to the Council, provision for early years childcare and education, primary and secondary education, adult education, and youth and play activities.
- (5) the promotion of effective partnership working between all the statutory and non-statutory agencies which provide services for children and young people and, where feasible, to promote the integration of services.
- (6) ensure that systems are in place to manage and scrutinise the performance of all the services for children and young people.
- (7) ensure that resources are efficiently and effectively targeted towards the improvement of outcomes.
- (8) liaison with the Strategic Health Authority and health trusts serving Wirral on matters relating to children and young people.
- (9) liaison with the Learning and Skills Council on matters relating to further education and training ensuring, in consultation with the Cabinet member for

Regeneration and Planning Strategy, that the training needs of employers, employees and prospective employees are met.

- (10)** liaison with the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership on matters relating to young people's preparation for working life and specifically to have responsibility for the regulation of the employment of young people.
- (11)** liaison with the Police Authority, the Probation Service and the Youth Offending Service on matters relating to youth crime and disorder.
- (12)** those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this portfolio,
- (13)** to seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through this portfolio.
- (14)** to support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women.
- (15)** to scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

EXCELLENT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

- (i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;
- (ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;
- (iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- (iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive;

within the following terms of reference:

- (1)** development of the Council's approach to Community engagement and to build community capacity.
- (2)** the Council's Area Forum network.
- (3)** initiatives in the wider community that will increase the understanding of the democratic process, and reduce alienation and apathy.
- (4)** the Council's Customer Access Strategy and for ensuring that it takes full account of the needs of hard to reach people.
- (5)** the Council's compliance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.
- (6)** grants and loans to voluntary and community organisations.
- (7)** contributing to the development and operation of Wirral's community Legal Service.
- (8)** the following areas:
 - Mayoralty and civic ceremonial
 - Hospitality
 - Town Twinning
 - Registration of births, marriages and deaths
 - Maintenance of memorials
 - Membership of outside bodies.
- (9)** the Council's Communication Strategy and Public Relations.
- (10)** Equality and Diversity.
- (11)** the following areas:
 - The development, implementation and review of the Council's arrangements for ensuring effective use of resources including meeting the requirements of the Audit Commission's Use of Resources Assessment
 - Financial monitoring, including standing orders and financial regulations

- Financial propriety
 - Procurement compliance and contract compliance within the Authority
 - Restrictive and selective tendering (other than civil engineering)
- (12) Where it is not a specified responsibility of the Employment and Appointments Committee, personnel issues including employee development and training, equal opportunities in employment and service delivery, disciplinary and grievance procedures and recruitment.
- (13) the provision of legal and administrative services to the authority; and for the Coroner's Service.
- (14) the preparation, maintenance and review of an overall strategy for the management, use and disposal of all Council owned land property, (including the preparation of the Asset Management Plan)
- (15) land issues including:
- Acquisition, disposal and appropriation of all land and property
 - Provision and management of administrative and civic offices
 - Commercial development and redevelopment of the Council land and property
 - Matters relating to the Council's freehold interest and shareholding in Birkenhead Market
- (16) the organisation of a corporate planned maintenance policy.
- (17) co-ordinating performance management and performance indicators.
- (18) the Council's contribution to the major partnership initiatives in which it is engaged, e.g. Local Strategic Partnership, Local Area Agreement Partnership Board, Liverpool City Region and Local Government Association.
- (19) The following areas:
- The formulation and submission of proposals relating to strategic policy
 - The overall production of the Corporate Plan
 - Revenue and capital budgets including preparations for the annual budget and Capital Plan
 - Schemes under the Private Finance Initiative
 - Procurement
- (20) information technology
- (21) financial matters including insurance, rating, Council Tax and Housing and Council Tax benefits.
- (22) the performance of the Council as measured through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Comprehensive Area Assessment process.
- (23) initiatives in relation to local democracy and the modernisation of local government
- (24) those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this portfolio
- (25) To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through this portfolio.

- (26)** To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women.
- (27)** to scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

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METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

CARBON REDUCTION COMMITMENT – UPDATE REPORT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report updates Members on changes to the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) made by the Government, since the previous report to this Committee on the 15 January 2008. The main changes include the inclusion of all State Schools, a change to the reporting period from the calendar year to the financial year, the rescheduling of a number of dates and a significant increase (of 50%) in the fixed cost of allowances in the first three years to £12\tonne. The report also suggests a way forward for the Council as current calculations now put the likely first year outlay to the Council at £510,000 in April 2011. At least 90% of the outlay will be recycled to the Council in October 2011 dependant on our position in the CRC league table.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Government have recently introduced the CRC Programme, a new statutory climate change and energy saving scheme.

2.2 The CRC is due to begin in April 2010 but important actions are required in advance of the start date, refer to Appendix A – CRC Timeline. The CRC is a carbon trading scheme covering large business and public sector organisations with an annual half-hourly metered electricity consumption above 6000 Mega Watt hours. Organisations above this threshold must include emissions from all energy consumed from non-transport use i.e. Electricity (including Street Lighting), Gas and Heating Oil from buildings.

2.3 Schools are now included in the scheme and their emissions will be included under the Local Authority's "carbon footprint". The Local Authority will be the organisation legally required to calculate emissions, purchase allowances, monitor and report annual consumption and keep an evidence pack for audit purposes.

2.4 CO₂ allowances have to be purchased according to the organisation's emissions and initially the price will be set by the Government at £12\tonne for the first 3 years.

2.5 All revenues the Government collects nationally will be recycled using a league table to determine the value of return. A bonus\penalty will be applied to the base element according to our league table position (+\ - 10% in year 1, +\ - 20% in year 2 and so on to +\ -50%).

2.6 Wirral Council has been invited to, and taken part in the Defra CRC workshops and consultation process over the last two years.

3.0 IMPORTANT POLICY AMENDMENTS ANNOUNCED

- 3.1 Significant amendments to the forthcoming CRC were put forward by the newly formed Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) in December 2008. The DECC, which is now responsible for all UK energy supply policy and climate change, has proposed two major changes to the CRC.
- 3.2 The third consultation on the CRC, which had initially been planned for Autumn 2008, is now set to take place in February 2009. This consultation will focus on establishing 'comprehensive and accurate' regulations for the legally binding scheme, which will affect approximately 5,000 public and private sector organisations across the UK. In light of the re-scheduled regulations consultation, two further dates in the scheme have also been revised, please refer to Appendix A – CRC Timeline.
- 3.3 The registration period, which had been due to commence early in 2009, will now run concurrently with the first six months of the scheme, from 1st April 2010 to 30th September 2010. Registration packs will now be issued to all organisations affected by the CRC in July 2009. As such, the first year of the scheme (1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011) will be considered a preliminary period, or 'Footprint Year'. Throughout this period, organisations will need to monitor consumption information from all energy sources. Collected data will then be used to prepare a comprehensive 'Footprint Report', which will need to be submitted by July 2011.
- 3.4 At present, qualification criteria for the Carbon Reduction Commitment scheme remains unchanged: The CRC will apply to all organisations using half hourly meters, whose total electricity consumption is greater than 6,000 MWh between 1st January and 31st December 2008. As a general rule, the CRC will only affect organisations (including any parent company or subsidiaries) which consume in excess of £500,000 worth of electricity a year in the UK via half-hourly meters.

4.0 OUTLINE DETAILS

4.1 Emissions Trading Principles

- One CO₂ allowance corresponds to one tonne CO₂ emitted.
- Emissions are reported annually and participants buy and surrender allowances equal to their emissions.
- Allowances are issued and surrendered through the regulator.

4.2 Features of the Scheme

- It starts in April 2010 and it is estimated that there will be approximately 5000 participants. It is anticipated that the CRC will effect the majority of Local Authorities in England and Wales.
- Participants must buy all the allowances they require.
- All revenues government gets from selling allowances will be recycled according to a league table.
- Allowances will be fixed at £12\tonne CO₂ for the first 3 years.

- From 2013 prices will be determined by demand and allowances will be traded on the open market similar to stocks and shares.

4.3 Who is Covered

- Organisations will be responsible not individual sites.
- State schools will be included as the responsibility of the Local Authority.
- Organisations with half hourly electricity consumption > 6,000 MWh per year.
- All consumption for non transport will be included i.e. electricity, gas and heating oil.

4.4 Annual Reporting

- Reporting will now be based on financial years; the first will be April 2010 to March 2011, the footprint year.
- Each year all energy consumption must be reported by July after the year end.
- Submissions and evidence packs may be audited.

4.5 Allowance Trading

- Allowances will not be sold in the first year; participants will buy allowances in April 2011 to cover 2010- 2011 years' emissions.
- The price of allowances will be fixed at £12\tonne CO₂ for the first three years (increased from the £8\tonne of CO₂ which was initially proposed in 2007).
- In year four, 2013, allowances will be traded on the open market.
- The government will recycle all revenue back to participants according to a league table. There will be three weighted factors that will affect the ranking of participants:
- Percentage emissions reduction (60%)
- Percentage reduction in emissions versus revenue, which takes into account business growth (20%)
- Early action prior to April 2011 (20%)
- A bonus\penalty will be applied to the base element according to league table position (+\ - 10% in year 1, +\ - 20% in year 2 and so on to +\ -50%).
- Performance will be assessed against a 5 year rolling average.
- For ease of calculation the first years performance league table will only be based on "early action" metrics (refer to section 5.7).

4.6 League Table

The carbon reduction commitment league tables will rank participants in the scheme in terms of performance on the following:

- Absolute Emissions - percentage reduction in carbon emissions compared to the previous year.

- Growth - percentage reduction in other carbon emissions per unit of turnover
- Early Action Metric – early action initiatives made by the organisation to reduce their carbon emissions prior to April 2013, including being assessed for coverage of the carbon trust standard and automatic meter readings. The first league table will be based solely on the early action metric.

5.0 THE WAY FORWARD FOR WIRRAL COUNCIL

5.1 Wirral Council is well above the qualifying threshold of consumption. Therefore it is essential that the financial implications of this scheme are taken into account in the future financial planning for the Council.

5.2 To do well in the CRC, participants will need to:

- Implement automatic meter reading systems before March 2011.
- Sign up to the Carbon Trust Standard.
- Establish comprehensive monitoring and targeting mechanisms.
- Collect and record procedures.
- Assign responsibilities and ownership for energy reduction tasks.
- Carry out regular reviews of data collection.
- Reduce emissions within the scheme.
- Proactively develop a strategy to identify and implement future energy savings.

5.3 The Carbon Reduction Commitment programme includes the performance of schools. The quantity of emissions from schools accounts for approximately 40% of this Council's total emissions. At current emission levels it is estimated that the average outlay to a Primary School will be £1,000 per year and £5,800 for a Secondary School. Based on these figures, the maximum actual cost to a Primary School would be £100 and £580 for a Secondary School. The remaining outlay, £900 and £5220 respectively, would be recycled back to the school. Therefore improving energy efficiency in schools is paramount to the success of the scheme in Wirral. This can be achieved in part through the Schools Energy Support Service provided by the Energy Section but it will also require capital investment by Schools, this not only has a direct beneficial effect on their running costs and carbon emissions it also affects the Council's overall position within the CRC league table together with any resulting bonuses or penalties incurred.

5.4 Continue to implement the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan which was appended to 'Reducing The Council's Carbon Footprint' – Progress Report presented to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 24 September 2008. As well as reduced CRC payments, one of the direct benefits from improving our CRC performance is lower energy bills now.

5.5 Over the last two years the Council has invested in a number of energy efficiency initiatives. The Energy Section has, amongst other things, implemented the BEMS system, the installation of Burner Management

Units, Heat Recovery Systems in Leisure Centres, kick started the Boiler Replacement Programme and most recently successfully introduced Energy Awareness Raising Officers to the Council. These, together with other projects within the Investment in Energy Efficiency Programme, will ensure that we gain an early financial advantage through continued emission reductions.

- 5.6 Had the Council not taken these pro-active steps, to date, based on our 2003-04 CO₂ emission figures, we could have expected to incur an additional CRC outlay of £142,000. Although investing in early actions now, with their current and future benefits, will make it more difficult to provide significant continual year on year improvements throughout the life of the CRC.
- 5.7 To gain a further financial advantage, the early action league table weighting mentioned previously will be implemented. The approved actions are the installation of Automatic Meter Reading Systems (included within the IEEP, phase 3) and gaining accreditation to The Carbon Trusts - Carbon Management Standard (as detailed in the Councils Energy and Water Conservation Policy).
- 5.8 The implementation of the Council's Strategic Asset Review will further assist in reducing Wirral's CRC burden by removing aging and energy inefficient buildings.
- 5.9 It is vital to the effectiveness of the CRC scheme that the value of bonus or penalties should be apportioned across all of the authorities buildings including Schools to encourage all sites to actively participate.
- 5.10 The mechanism for this should be to use the energy consumption data recorded on the Energy Conservation Sections energy management database to allow the Department of Finance to apportion the value of these allowances to individual cost codes. The same method should be used to apply any bonus or penalties.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 There are no Equal Opportunities implications arising from this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Background papers used in the preparation of this report include the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report : 15 January 2008 – "Report On The Introduction Of The Government's Carbon Reduction Commitment".

8.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no local Member implications arising from this report

9.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no local Human Rights implications arising from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Emissions saving from the purchase of certified green electricity as currently bought by the Council are not taken into consideration by the CRC, because of the significant financial implication of taking part in the CRC programme, serious financial considerations will have to be given to the future purchase of green electricity from 2010 onwards.
- 10.2 Technically, we are unable to claim the CO₂ savings gained from the purchase of green electricity as the Electricity Generators are obliged to make and claim the saving as part of their licensing agreement. However, if the Council did not purchase the green electricity, we would be responsible for indirectly producing significant quantities of CO₂.
- 10.3 It is the aim of the CRC to encourage organisations to reduce emissions through the efficient use of energy. It is therefore expected that the Council will continue to make reductions in CO₂ emissions although not on the same scale as those made by the purchase of green electricity.

11.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no planning implications in this report.

12.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no anti-poverty implications in this report.

13.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are no social inclusion implications in this report.

14.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no crime and disorder strategy implications in this report.

15.0 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 At present there are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.
- 15.2 Based on our CO₂ emissions in 2007 it is estimated that Wirral Council would have to purchase £510,000 of allowances for the first year of operation. This outlay includes Schools and Street Lighting. Although for a period of six months we would be required to outlay double that amount for the proposed "Double Sale" in April 2011, which will cover the 2010-11 emissions and the forecast 2011-12 emissions an outlay of £1.2 million with the 2010-11 recycling payment being made in October 2011.
- 15.3 Based on the above example the maximum the Council would pay in CRC costs in the first year would be £51,000. On a £510,000 outlay and based on the penalty or bonus scheme we could receive a minimum of £459,000 in recycled payments although this payment could also be as high as £561,000 dependent on our position in the CRC league table.

15.4 The aim of the bonus and penalty scheme is to act as an incentive for organisations to reduce their emissions. Therefore, if organisations perform well, the money they get back should exceed the cost of buying allowances. The bonus\penalty system will be applied to the base element according to the league table position (+\ 10% in year 1, +\ 20% in year 2 and so on to +\50%). Performance will be assessed against a 5 year rolling average. For ease of calculation the first year's performance league table will only be based on "early action" metrics (refer to section 5.6).

16.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That

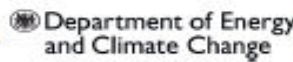
- (1) as a financial incentive the value of any bonus or penalty incurred collectively should be apportioned across all sites to encourage each site to actively participate.
- (2) to ensure that these costs are not absorbed into utility budgets, and due to its complexity, the CRC scheme be identified as a separate expenditure item.
- (3) the details and financial implications of the CRC scheme be included in the future financial planning for the Council.
- (4) the proposals detailed in sections 5.3, 5.4, 5.7, 5.9 and 5.10 be implemented; and
- (5) further reports be presented to Cabinet and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee as more detailed information on the question of the CRC scheme becomes available.

**DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES**

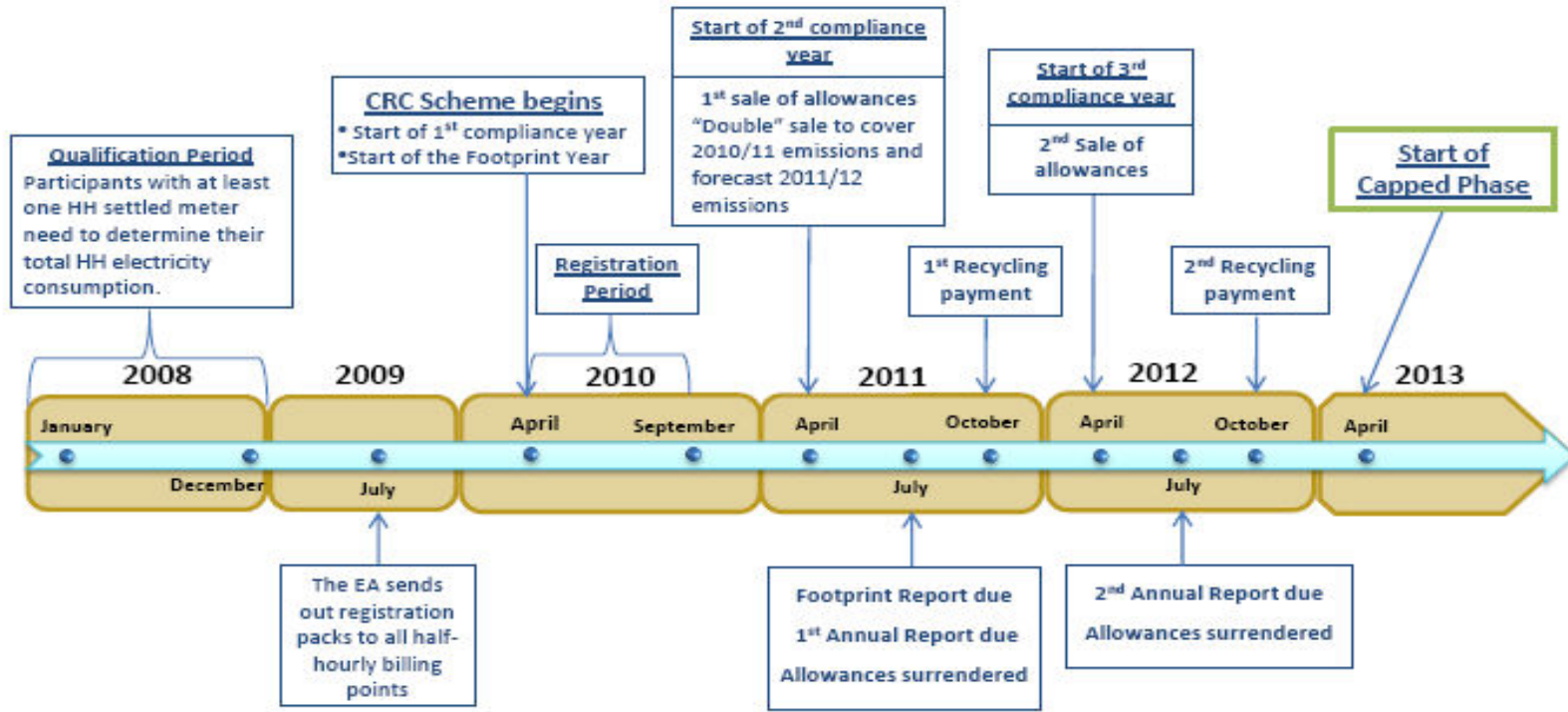
This report was compiled by **Tony Dodd**, Energy Manager, who can be contacted on 606 2354

Appendix A – CRC Timeline for the Introductory Phase

CRC Timeline – Introductory Phase



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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

GRAFFITI PREVENTION AND REMOVAL – SERVICE UPDATE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This update notes the outcomes achieved through the re-launch of the Graffiti Prevention and Removal Services. Members chose graffiti as a Policy Option for 2008/9, in order to expand the scope of graffiti removal across Wirral. This report details how the additional £30K has been used in order to reduce occurrence of graffiti in the provision of an efficient and sustainable service. Members are requested to approve the procurement of a 3 year Graffiti Prevention and Removal Contract to commence April 1st 2010, in order to secure a longer-term sustainable arrangement for this service.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall the previous report to Cabinet on 25 September 2008 by the Director of Regeneration setting out a proposed policy and strategy for graffiti (minute 203 refers). This report detailed the plans for a new graffiti prevention and removal service that began in April 2008. The successful contractor for the graffiti removal service was “Together Neighbourhood Management”, who works in partnership with the Green Apprentices. Initially, the team only carried out graffiti “blitzes”. Biffa, the incumbent contractor, were still sent offensive graffiti removal requests until reliable communication systems could be set up between the Council and “Together”.
- 2.2 Over the past 10 months, the service has focussed primarily on the removal of historic instances of graffiti, tackling areas that had suffered from a build of graffiti over an extended period of time. Following this successful initial strategy it has now been possible for more proactive work to be carried out.

3.0 PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1 Graffiti Removal

- 3.1.1 Between April and December 2008, Streetscene have received 446 graffiti removal requests. 109 of these have been urgent referrals (24%). All urgent referrals received by Streetscene and referred to “Together” have been cleared within the 24hr target period. The response time for clearance of non-urgent referrals is an average of 9 days including weekends, against a service level agreement of 28

days.

- 3.1.2 There have been an additional 370 removals from graffiti audits carried out by Neighbourhood Wardens, Technical Services Officers and voluntary groups.
- 3.1.3 The surface area of graffiti removed has been measured since July 2008. From July to December 2008, 3559 square metres of graffiti have been removed or painted out.
- 3.1.4 Targeted and programmed graffiti removal “blitzes” have appeared to contribute positively to the National Indicator scores for NI 195 (Environmental Quality). Table 1 compares the 08/09 survey results against NI targets.

Table 1: NI195 (Graffiti) Percentage of streets below an acceptable standard for graffiti

Year	Tranche 1	Tranche 2	Tranche 3	Average
08/09	4%	6%	in process	5%*
Target 08/09	6%	6%	6%	Exceeding target

* Incomplete survey data

3.2 Education and Awareness

- 3.2.1 The Criminal Damage Reduction Officer seconded to Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team from Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has developed a bespoke programme for preventative work in secondary schools focusing upon criminal damage, graffiti, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Since July 2008 interventions have been delivered to eleven of the twenty-two mainstream secondary schools reaching approximately 12,000 pupils. This work has also led to the identification of a number of young people involved in low-level anti-social behaviour and criminal damage. Several prolific taggers have also been identified through this activity and a number of prolific borough-wide tags have not been sighted since removal in mid-November 2008.
- 3.2.2 The officer is also a key part of Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team’s Respect Programme for primary schools (Years 5-6), which culminates in a mock courtroom trial involving the children and representatives from HM Courts Service. This Programme was short listed for a Local Government Chronicle award in 2007 and featured as good practice on the national Teachers’ TV the same year.
- 3.2.3 Responsive work has regularly been undertaken following the identification of location specific issues related to graffiti and criminal damage. The Criminal Damage Reduction Officer has also developed

a suite of bespoke presentations on topics including graffiti and criminal damage, which have been delivered on request by schools as part of the PHSE curriculum.

- 3.2.4 Key messages are delivered regularly to young people around graffiti and criminal damage through the work of the Anti-Social Behaviour Team's Youth Respect Team, which is working in hot-spot locations of anti-social behaviour across the borough at peak times.

3.3 Community Engagement

- 3.3.1 An on-going pilot scheme has been developed with residents in the Egremont area. This involved an initial audit of the local area, carried out by residents, followed by the removal of all identified graffiti. This gives the neighbourhood in question graffiti free start point. From this point on residents are trained on safe graffiti removal techniques and are given low COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health) graffiti removal kits. This allows them to have a direct impact on their surroundings. Residents are consulted regularly to steer enforcement action, should any be needed. They are also encouraged to report any graffiti incidents needing a more industrial removal approach. This pilot scheme will be assessed and improved with an aim of reproducing the initiative throughout other Wirral neighbourhoods

3.4 National Recognition

- 3.4.1 The partnership to tackle graffiti has recently been short listed in this year's ENCAMS Cleaner, Safer, Greener network awards. This annual event recognises outstanding work undertaken by Councils and other organisations to improve local environmental quality and reduce related anti-social behaviour. The winners will be announced 16th March at The National EnCams Conference in Brighton. Winners from the awards will become Network Ambassadors and showcase their projects as best practice for other organisations.

3.5 Income Generation

- 3.5.1 The Graffiti Steering Group that oversees the implementation of the graffiti removal services and policy have secured a 12-month deal with Scottish Power Manweb for the removal and coating of Wirral Substations. This has meant that the group have achieved 66% of its 2009/10 income generation target. The group is also in talks with several major Registered Social Landlords to set up similar arrangements, and is confident of securing SLA's with other utility companies in partnership with other Merseyside Districts. Securing additional income means that the new graffiti removal service can continue to the same service level in 2009/10, despite no longer having the 30K policy option. The "Together" graffiti removal team will work 80% of its time removing graffiti on behalf of the Council and 20% of its time removing graffiti for Manweb. In 2009/10, any other private work

secured by the Steering group will be done outside normal working hours. Any visible graffiti on private property, including that of other Statutory Undertakers must be counted during the NI195 surveys, hence it is in the Council's best interest to encourage partnerships with other property and landowners to manage graffiti incidents.

4.0 FUTURE CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Publicising the Service

4.1.1 Following Cabinet approval, the launch of the new pilot scheme in September 2008, was relatively low key. Whilst the 'It's Your Call' number was advertised, there was a deliberate attempt not to oversell the service whilst the new process for graffiti removal was being embedded and areas of longstanding graffiti were targeted for removal blitzes. Following the successful operation of the pilot scheme to-date, a public launch is anticipated to take place in May 2009. The service is now ready for its full public launch. From April 2009, a fully branded vehicle will be on call to tackle all incidents of graffiti across Wirral on both public and private property. The launch will engage the residents of Wirral and heighten their awareness of graffiti as anti-social behaviour. It is anticipated that this extra exposure will generate an increased number of referrals and thus increase the service's impact on graffiti across Wirral.

4.2 Customer Relation Management

4.2.1 Difficulties with the Council's CRM system mean that graffiti service requests are still being logged in general enquiries, as opposed to specific service requests. This limits the accuracy of information and the quality of reports we are able to generate from the system. Further delays are anticipated due to conflicting priorities, such as the new HESPE contract mobilisation. The Waste and Environment Team are now managing this issue internally, but this initially led to a handful of service requests going "astray". Additional clerical resource is also needed to carry out what would normally be automated tasks. Further work has been undertaken on the proposed multi-agency web base for the recording of data and intelligence related to graffiti. This project is delayed until final amendments to be scheduled by Wirral IT Services.

4.3 Procurement for Graffiti Services

4.3.1 The Council have enjoyed a successful working relationship with "Together". The organisation is innovative, enthusiastic and has provided high quality value for money services to the Council and residents of Wirral throughout 2008/9. Members are asked to agree the extension of the pilot with "Together" on the same terms for a further 12 months until March 31st 2010. This will enable the Council to tender for a longer-term contract, in order to secure a good quality contractor who can provide value for money. The new contract will

commence from 1 April 2010 for a period of 3 years. This has previously been agreed with colleagues within Corporate Procurement.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Members approved a one year £30K Policy Option for 2008/9, in order to pump prime the first year of the new graffiti removal service. Many of the items were one-off costs incurred through setting up the new service though the cost for the graffiti removal crew and jet wash machine are covered through the Council's mainstream 08/09 graffiti removal budget of £40K.

5.2 In 2009/10, all costs for the graffiti prevention and removal service will be covered through a combination of income generation (>£20K) and mainstream budget provision (£41K).

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

7.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

8.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

9.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

10.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Optimising the number of vehicles and length of collection rounds operated by the contractor can help to reduce the overall carbon footprint and environmental impact of the Environmental Streetscene Services contract. The services included in this report will result in increased landfill diversion and greater recycling performance.

11.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

12.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

13.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

13.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

14.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The Environmental Streetscene Services contract has implications for all Wards across the Borough.

15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) the progress made by the Graffiti Steering Group and the success of the new graffiti removal service be noted;
- (2) the extension of the “Together” pilot for a further 12 months to the end of March 2010 be approved;
- (3) the procurement exercise for a 3-year graffiti removal and prevention contract be approved.

DAVID GREEN
DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL SERVICES

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

MARKETING SUPPORT FOR WIRRAL'S TOURISM BUSINESSES DURING THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DOWNTURN (1 APRIL 2009 TO 31 MARCH 2010)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members will be aware of the current national economic downturn and the more strategic approach needed to support Wirral's tourism businesses in the immediate future. This approach is to market Wirral Peninsula's tourism offer more effectively and help local businesses increase trade through partnership. With this in mind, the Destination Marketing Office (DMO) has been working closely with The Mersey Partnership (TMP) for the past year, as well as the other district councils, to develop a joint three year "Partners for Tourism Growth" project for European funds. The bid, for funds from the Northwest Development Agency's (NWDA) operational programme, will directly help local tourism businesses market their services more effectively and efficiently.

This report highlights the delay to release funds from the NWDA's programme, at a time of greatest need for Wirral's tourism businesses, and the immediate interim measure recommended to support them through the economic crisis.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Wirral element of the three year "Partners for Tourism Growth" project (April 2009 to March 2012) builds on the tourism sector development work that has already taken place. It supports the objectives of both TMP's Destination Management Plan and Wirral's own Destination Marketing annual Implementation Plan. The project also builds on the work delivered as a result of the previous successful bid for Merseyside Objective 1 ERDF funding (ie Marketing Wirral for Tourism - 2006 to 2008).
- 1.2 The Marketing Wirral for Tourism grant helped achieve a number of successes including the delivery of a detailed Visitor Research study with Ipsos MORI; the development of the Wirral Peninsula brand and delivery of a related marketing campaign for Wirral's tourism businesses, and the establishment of the nationally acclaimed and now annual Wirral Food and Drink Festival (ie attracting over 28,000 visitors in 2008).
- 1.3 The Visitor Research, informs the delivery of the DMO Implementation Plan, and highlights Coast, Countryside and Quality Food as Wirral's key attractions to potential visitors. The recent award of a Michelin Star to Fraiche in Oxtun, and the Taste of England's Northwest award to Roses Tea Rooms, reinforces this Plan, with ideas for a Wirral Year of Food in 2010 currently being discussed.
- 1.4 Wirral has also benefited, over the past 12 months, from the opening of the Mere Brook House five star bed and breakfast in Thornton Hough, Herons Well five star self-catering cottage in West Kirby, the Leverhulme Hotel and Spa in Port Sunlight, and agreed plans to expand Kings Gap Court Hotel in Hoylake.

2. Rational

- 2.1 VisitBritain (British Tourist Authority) conducted an Economic Downturn and Domestic Tourism research study (December 2008), to evaluate the effects on the behaviour and attitudes of the public, to day trips and short breaks.
- 2.2 The study highlighted that, although nine out of ten of the population claim to be cutting down spend, holidays are seen as a high priority (ie a necessity rather than a luxury). People will spend more time planning a break to get the best experience for their money.
- 2.3 As the downturn develops, consumers will research their short breaks and day trips more, and look for offers and promotions in particular. Almost a third of potential visitors also prefer advertising as their source of tourism information and over 25% research relevant websites.

3. Wirral element of the Partners for Tourism Growth bid

- 3.1 As mentioned already, the DMO are currently working with TMP on the joint “Partners for Tourism Growth” bid, for Northwest Operational Programme funds, from the NWDA. The first and second stages, (ie Expression of Interest and Concept Form respectively), have already been submitted, and both have been approved by the NWDA, with encouragement to submit a full bid.
- 3.2 Unfortunately, the process has been delayed by the NWDA due to the recent procurement of an appraiser. A Merseyside-wide meeting has been arranged to meet with them on the 20 March 2009, to urgently progress matters, however Members will appreciate a fully bid approval is unlikely before the summer. With this in mind, Cabinet is requested to approve an allocation of £60,000, from the Council’s Match Funding Budget and Reserve, to deliver a spring marketing campaign to support Wirral’s tourism businesses during the current national economic downturn. This is on the understanding that the funds will be reimbursed, from the Wirral element of the three year “Partners for Tourism Growth” ERDF bid, if approved. Members must be aware that there is a risk that the funds would not be reimbursed if the bid were, for any reason, not to be approved.
- 3.3 The Wirral element of a successful ERDF project application would support a Northwest-wide marketing campaign to “play, eat and stay in Wirral”. This will highlight Wirral’s quality coast, countryside, restaurants, tea rooms and accommodation as already mentioned (see 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4), and drive potential visitors to a high end competition on the newly designed www.visitwirral.com. The campaign will include advertising in quality northwest publications and newspapers, supported by a select number of outdoor northwest rail and tube station poster sites, to take advantage of the high commuter passenger footfall.
- 3.4 In addition, a web-based Visitor Research study to monitor and evaluate the campaign will be conducted to inform future marketing activities.

4. Financial implications

The Wirral element of the “Partners for Tourism Growth” bid for ERDF is for £100,000 per year for three years. Of this, £60,000 per year will be used for specific marketing campaign activity and related visitor research, to support Wirral’s tourism stakeholders. The remaining funds will support a number of Destination Marketing Strategy themes (eg Wirral Year of Food in 2010).

5. Staffing implications

There are no additional staffing implications arising out of this report. Staff support for the initiative will be provided from the existing Destination Marketing Office within the Tourism and Marketing Division.

6. Equal Opportunities implications

There are no equal opportunities implications arising out of this report.

7. Community Safety implications

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

8. Local Agenda 21 implications

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

9. Planning implications

There are no planning implications arising out of this report.

10. Anti-poverty implications

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

11. Human Rights implications

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

12. Social Inclusion implications

There are no social inclusion implications arising out of this report.

13. Local Member Support implications

This report will have a positive impact on the Borough, through the promotion of the Wirral Peninsula and its tourism assets, and seeks the support of all Ward Councillors.

14. Background Papers

The Destination Marketing Office, within the Corporate Services Department, holds background papers in relation to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That an allocation of £60,000, from the Council's Match Funding Budget and Reserve be approved, to deliver a 2009 spring marketing campaign to support Wirral's tourism businesses during the current national economic downturn. This is on the understanding that the funds will be re-imbursed, from the Wirral element of the three year "Partners for Tourism Growth" ERDF bid, if approved.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

MUSEUMS ACCREDITATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Museums Accreditation has replaced Museums Registration and is the national standard for museums in Britain, administered by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Wirral Museums Service needs to submit applications for the Accreditation of the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and Birkenhead Priory before the end of March 2009. Both sites were Registered under the previous national scheme. Part of the application process requires Cabinet approval for the application for Accreditation, the Forward Plan and the Acquisitions and Disposal Policy.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Museum Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed standards for UK museums. To qualify museums must meet clear basic requirements on how they care for and document their collections, how they are governed and managed, and on the information and services they offer to users.

2.2 Accreditation benefits museum visitors and users of the Museums Service. It supports museum managers and governing bodies in planning and developing services, and it provides a benchmark for grant-making organisations, sponsors and donors.

2.3 The Aims of Museum Accreditation:

- to encourage all museums and galleries to achieve minimum standards in museum management, user services, visitor facilities and collections management.
- to foster confidence in museums as bodies which (a) hold collections in trust for society and (b) manage public resources appropriately.
- to reinforce a shared ethical basis for all bodies which meet the definition of 'museum'.

2.4 Accreditation is important to the Museums Service because restrictions are placed on the dissemination of Government money through MLA and Accreditation is the minimum standard required to access that money. This applies to grant-aid for purchases, access to specialist advice and services, training and information. Access to funding from agencies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund would also be adversely affected.

2.5 A copy of the draft Wirral Museums Service Forward Plan is attached in Appendix 1 and the draft Acquisitions and Disposals Policy in Appendix 2.

3.0 ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS POLICY

3.1 This policy (Appendix 2) sets out the principles that will provide the governing bodies and staff of museums with a framework for the scrupulous and ethical acquisition and

disposal of collections using clear procedures and decision-making processes common to UK museums in the Accreditation Scheme.

3.2 Implementing the policy will enable Wirral Museums Service to demonstrate the public benefit in their actions relating to the acquisition and disposal of collections. It provides a basis for open and transparent decision-making and an informed dialogue between governing bodies, donors, funding bodies and other stakeholders.

3.3 The policy is based on that of the Phase 2 Registration Guidelines, as accepted for the previous Wirral Museums Management Plan (approved by Council in 2001) and the present edition of the Accreditation Standard. It has been brought up to date, and reflects recent legal changes. The wording in the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy is prescribed by MLA to achieve minimum standards and approval needs to be given for the policy as it is written for Accreditation to be achieved.

4.0 FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Achieving Accreditation gives access to funding opportunities that would otherwise be denied.

4.2 There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Cultural Services facilities are provided to all Wirral residents however some are targeted to those with special requirements.

6.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The targeted provision of Cultural Services facilities has been demonstrated to lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and petty crime.

7.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Cultural Services provision contributes to many of the aims of Local Agenda 21.

8.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Cultural Services can make a significant contribution to the health and well being of Wirral residents.

10.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Cultural Services can make a significant contribution to the health and well being of Wirral residents.

11.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The report covers all of Wirral.

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 There are no Background Papers associated with this report.

13.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 That the Cabinet approve the applications for Accreditation for Williamson Art Gallery and Museum and Birkenhead Priory.

13.2 That the Cabinet approve the Forward Plan for the Museums Service.

13.3 That the Cabinet approve the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy for the Museums Service.

Alan Stennard
Director of Regeneration

This report was prepared by Colin Simpson who can be contacted on 652 4177.

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Wirral Museums Service Forward Plan - Draft

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Museums Service is part of the Regeneration Department of Wirral Council. For many years the Wirral Museums Service operated only two venues: Birkenhead Priory and the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum.
- 1.2 An analysis of the service provision in 1979 led to the creation of a professionally-based staff structure and radical improvements to collection records, storage and conservation. During the 1980s and 1990s there was some capital investment in both Birkenhead Priory and the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and there was an expansion of museums sites, although these were not Registered. These included Shore Road Pumping Station, Wirral Museum in Birkenhead Town Hall and Wirral Transport Museum, also incorporating Birkenhead Tramways and Wirral Archives Service.
- 1.3 Now Wirral's Museums Service is being restructured, centred on the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and Birkenhead Priory, both of which are Registered Museums under MLA's Museum Registration Scheme. Wirral Archives Service was transferred to the Finance Department in 2007.
- 1.4 The restructure was confirmed as part of a report to Council on 9 February 2009 which confirmed the decision of Cabinet, the relevant sections of which are listed below:

That the Wirral Museum be closed but that a new sustainable use which will secure the future of this iconic building be sought and expressions of interest invited.

That the Wirral Transport Museum be transferred to a Community Development Trust, given suitable terms and conditions, or, if interest is expressed by an operator in the whole Pacific Road/Tramshed site, that the specialist role of the Transport Museum be protected as far as possible.

- 1.5 At this stage no decision has been made about the disposal or future of Egerton Bridge although it is no longer a visitor attraction and is currently boarded up. It is assumed that Shore Bridge and Egerton Bridge will form part of the offer with Wirral Transport Museum when the transfer of ownership is finalised.
- 1.6 The two remaining sites are:
- 1.6.1 Williamson Art Gallery and Museum
The purpose-built gallery was opened in 1928 to house the collections of Birkenhead Borough Council, previously displayed in a former library building. In 1974 Wirral Borough Council was created from five local authorities and the collections expanded slightly to absorb those held by the former councils. The Gallery has permanent collection displays and a changing exhibition programme. Some rooms are available for hire for meetings and performances. The Gallery has an active 'Friends' society, which also has interests in the whole Museums Service,

has close links with Wirral Art School, whose annual Degree Show is held at the gallery, schools and local art societies.

1.6.2 Birkenhead Priory

Birkenhead Priory includes the oldest standing building on Merseyside dating from 1150. There are a number of attractions on the site including the Cloister, the Chapter House, the Undercroft and the Refectory and the Tower. There are exhibitions relating to the history of the site and its surroundings and to the history of the Priory. From the top of the Tower there are panoramic views of Liverpool and the river. The Refectory can be hired for functions and events. The Priory Parish uses the Chapter House as a chapel and the Scriptorium is dedicated to HMS Conway as a chapel and displays memorabilia associated with the training ship.

2.0 Statement of Purpose

2.1 To make the exploration of Wirral’s life and history an interesting and entertaining experience, accessible to all sections of society.

2.2 The Council’s corporate objectives are:

- To create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral.
- To create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment.
- To improve health and well being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society.
- To raise the aspirations of young people.
- To create an excellent Council.

2.3 Although it is true that the Museums Service has the potential to contribute all the corporate objectives the Regeneration Department works predominantly ‘towards improving well being for all’.

3.0 Current Situation

3.1 Audience

3.1.1 Visitor figures:

Venue	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Williamson AG&M	40070	34608	33348	35139	33897
Birkenhead Priory	13578	16115	17280	13329	13666
Wirral Museum	45725	40323	48610	75339*	37466
Transport Museum	13259	11561	11183	13432	9430
Shore Road Pump	2963	2728	2154	864	541

* collection of data provided unreliable figure

3.1.2 School visits:

2003-04	5521
2004-05	6225
2005-06	4903
2006-07	5276
2007-08	4195

The variations are partly attributed to the fluctuations in class sizes and the willingness of teachers to take children out of school in light of risk assessments and transport costs.

3.1.3 Customer satisfaction

In the first quarter of 2006 Wirral Council's Citizen's Panel responding to a series of questions, some of which related directly to museums. Below is an extract of the report analysing the responses:

Wirral has a great wealth of local heritage, respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the heritage attractions in the area and how often they visited them. Respondents were given the opportunity to give their personal opinions of their experiences at the attractions. Respondents were also asked where would be most convenient to find information on local attractions and what other attractions, other than what is already offered that should be provided in Wirral.

Just over one in ten (10.7% of) respondents stated they visited the Lady Lever Art Gallery regularly, four in ten (40.6% of) respondents said they visited the Williamson Art Galley occasionally. Four in ten (40.9%) respondents had never heard of Wirral Archives and also well over four in ten (45.6%) had never heard of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens.

Over nine tenths (91.6%) of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the Lady Lever Art Gallery and nearly nine tenths (88.4%) of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum. Approximately one in six (16.3% of) respondents were very or fairly disappointed with Flaybrick Memorial Gardens and over one in ten (11.7%) respondents were very or fairly disappointed with Fort Perch Rock.

Respondents were asked where they look for information about the heritage attractions in Wirral the majority of respondents (93.7%) stated they would look in the Wirral Globe for information on local heritage services and attractions, almost nine in ten (89.9%) of respondents would look in the Wirral News and just over three quarters (76.8%) of respondents stated they would look at websites.

When asked what other heritage attractions/facilities respondents would like to see, just over one in eleven (8.9%) respondents would like to see improved promotion of attractions listed and relevant information

needed, over one in twenty (6.2%) of respondents would like to see a new home for historic warships in Wirral.

- 3.1.4 Wirral has the highest satisfaction rates for sports and recreation, which includes Museums, within the Merseyside boroughs.
- 3.1.5 The satisfaction levels demonstrate the commitment and professionalism of the staff in their ability to deliver a high quality service within limited resources.
- 3.1.6 The National Indicator NI10 (visit to museums and galleries) puts Wirral with the highest participation rates of any unitary authority and the highest participation of any council outside London.
- 3.1.7 This would indicate that there is the potential to significantly increase visitor numbers to Wirral Council's Museums with appropriate levels of investment.

3.2 Collection

- 3.2.1 At present historically and educationally significant collections are on show to varying degrees in each building. Further details are given in Appendix 1.
- 3.2.2 **Wirral Museum** opened in 2001 to show local history and civic collections, permanent displays of civic silver, Cammell Laird history and a model of the Woodside area of Birkenhead in 1934. The impending closure of Wirral Museum will necessitate the withdrawal of these collections.
- 3.2.3 Similarly, **Wirral Transport Museum** was created to act as the new depot for the operational heritage tramway (begun 1995), which has also developed into a transport museum which traces the development of public road transport in Wirral, from the first tramway in 1860, to bus deregulation in 1986. Particularly significant are the historic trams from the former Birkenhead, Wallasey, and Liverpool tramways, restored by the Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society, but included are cars, motorbikes and models, several on long-term loan. Vehicles are maintained in working order and some are operated to facilitate visits by local schools. Transfer of the operation of the Transport Museum will require renegotiation and transferral of loans to another body, and arrangement to loan those vehicles belonging to Wirral Museums Service, as no alternative garaging facilities are readily available.
- 3.2.4 At **Birkenhead Priory** the archaeological finds from the site are on display in the Undercroft. There is also display space in the Refectory for views of the buildings at various times in the past. The HMS Conway collections in the Scriptorium belong to the Friends of HMS Conway and are not formally loaned to Wirral Museums Service.
- 3.2.5 The **Williamson Art Gallery** collection largely comprises:
 - Fine and decorative art, particularly 18th and 19th century watercolour paintings and drawings, and a representative collection of local artists;
 - Ceramics – most noteworthy are the local collections: Della Robbia Pottery, which was made in Birkenhead, Liverpool Porcelain and Seacombe Pottery;

- Maritime models, particularly the Mersey Ferries, and vessels linked with the Cammell Laird shipyard;
- Social history artefacts, together with some military, archaeological and geological items – particularly useful as educational tools.

3.3 SWOT Analysis

3.3.1 The Management Team undertook a SWOT analysis in light of the Strategic Asset Review.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose built gallery • Broad collection with important works • Loyal core audience • Large Friends group • Good relationships with Primary schools • Repeat visits by Primary schools • Parking at sites • Subsidised bus service 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for capital investment in buildings • Majority of collection unavailable for display • Shortage of professional staff • Lack of financial resources • No café or catering facilities • Poor retail offer • Poor family offer • Developmentally passive Friend's group
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with NML • Development of local history resource via the Council's Heritage Fund • Development of relationships with Secondary schools • Changing Primary curriculum • External funding for capital developments 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future of subsidised bus service following transfer to community ownership • No increase in revenue funding • Decrease in revenue funding • No increase in staff team

4.0 **Key Aims**

- To collect items of local, regional, national and international importance to reflect Wirral's life and history, and to place that in a meaningful context
- To encourage and enable access to museums collections by all sections of society
- To ensure the on-going development of the learning opportunities within the Museums Service
- To continue to develop the sites and venues of the Museums Service through an on-going capital investment programme and to secure external investment.
- To attract visitors and tourists to the Borough through the promotion of the Museum Service.

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Service

- Active involvement with Initial Teacher Training courses locally.
- Development of partnerships/relationships with local secondary schools to develop relevant curriculum materials.
- Explore the potential to develop and promote handling and loan collections.
- Apply for VAQAS accreditation for both sites.
- Develop Marketing Strategy & review effectiveness of signage.
- Produce new leaflets for Service

5.2 Williamson Art Gallery

- Explore the possibility of commissioning a feasibility study for the development of the internal quadrangles, effective roof repairs and reappraise heating system.
- Seek external funding to catalogue and make accessible the A H Lee and Sons' company archive.

5.3 Birkenhead Priory

- Commission a Conservation Management Plan.
- Remedial work to the fabric of the building to make the Great Hall walls safe and halt the damage being caused by movement in the roof.
- Delivery of a completed Conservation Management Plan.
- Seek external funding to develop audio interpretation of the site and improve the signage.

5.4 Exhibitions

- 2009 - British Surrealists
- 2010 - Steer and Sickert: 150th anniversary of their births
- 2010 - Della Robbia: exploring the links with Carlo Manzoni and marking the centenary of his death
- 2011 - Albert Lipczinski in partnership with Gdansk
- 2012 - Liverpool Pre-Raphaelites working with NML

6.0 The Action Plan

Area	Objective	Action	Completion	Lead	Budget	Potential funding sources
Service	Active involvement with Initial Teacher Training courses locally	Attend meetings	On-going	Jo McGuire		Existing resources
	Development of partnerships/relationships with local secondary schools to develop relevant curriculum materials	Initiate meetings and plan projects	On-going	Jo McGuire	Up to £25,000	HLF – Young Roots
	Explore the potential to develop and promote handling and loan collections	Review of collections	September 2009	Colin Simpson		Existing resources
	VAQAS application	Complete forms	January 2009	Jo McGuire	£675	Existing resources
	Develop Marketing Strategy & review effectiveness of signage.	Agree with Corporate Services	July 2009	Alistair Armit		Existing resources
	Produce new leaflets for Service	Liaise with Audience Development Team and Graphics Team	July 2009	Alistair Armit		Existing resources
Williamson Art Gallery	Explore the possibility of commissioning a feasibility study for the development of the internal quadrangles, effective roof repairs and reappraise the heating system	Discussions with Technical Services Dept.	June 2009	Jo McGuire		Existing resources
	Seek external funding to catalogue and make accessible the A H Lee and Sons' company archive	Developing grant applications	September 2010	Jo McGuire	To be determined	HLF, Esmée Fairbairn
Birkenhead Priory	Commission a Conservation Management Plan	Write tender document & commission consultants	March 2009	Jo McGuire	£40,000	Existing resources
	Remedial work to the fabric of the building to make the Great Hall walls safe and halt the damage being caused by movement in the Refectory roof	To be determined	----	Alan Buckley	To be determined	PPM

APPENDIX 1

	Delivery of a completed Management Plan	Consultants	July 2009	Colin Simpson		
	Seek funding to develop audio interpretation of the site and improve the signage	Identify suppliers and funding streams	March 2010	Jo McGuire	To be determined	Grant giving bodies
Exhibitions	British Surrealists	Develop and stage exhibition	November 2009	Colin Simpson	To be determined	Existing resources
	Steer and Sickert: 150 th anniversary of their births	Develop and stage exhibition	September 2010	Colin Simpson	To be determined	Existing resources
	Della Robbia: exploring the links with Carlo Manzoni and marking the centenary of his death	Develop and stage exhibition	Spring 2010	Colin Simpson	To be determined	Existing resources
	Albert Lipczinski in partnership with Gdansk	Develop and stage exhibition	Spring 2011	Colin Simpson	To be determined	Existing resources
	Liverpool Pre-Raphaelites working with National Museums Liverpool	Develop and stage exhibition	Spring 2012	Colin Simpson	To be determined	Existing resources

Wirral Museums Service Forward Plan – Appendix i Collection Management Policy - Overview

WILLIAMSON ART GALLERY & WIRRAL MUSEUMS SERVICE.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The first comprehensive document establishing a collection policy for the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum was prepared in 1989. This is a revised version of that document and it applies also to other venues within the authority that come within the Wirral Museums Service.
- 1.2 Birkenhead's Art Gallery and Museum was founded in 1913 and originally housed within the town's old library. The opening of the Williamson Art Gallery in 1928 expanded the possibilities offered by the service. With a purpose-built museum and art gallery the range and size of collections continued to expand. The reorganisation of local government in 1974 broadened the role of the gallery, now providing a museums service for the whole of the Wirral Metropolitan Area. The Wirral Museums Service in 2009 operates a range of venues sometimes known as the 'Birkenhead Heritage Trail', including Wirral Museum at Birkenhead Town Hall, Birkenhead Priory & St Mary's Tower, Shore Road Pumping Station, Wirral Transport Museum & Birkenhead Tramways. Up until 2007 it also incorporated the Wirral Archives Service, now operated by the Finance Department from Cheshire Lines Building.
- 1.3 This policy provides an overview of the Wirral Museums Service collections, explains their use and care, and is to be used alongside the Acquisition & Disposals Policy, and any other more detailed documents that may deal with specific areas but will fall within the policies defined herein. This document is intended for the use of the public and the authority.
- 1.4 Nearly thirty years ago a comprehensive cataloguing programme was been almost completed at the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum. This is under review and new documentation guidelines are being drawn up which will guide the future development of those procedures.
- 1.5 A checklist of watercolours and drawings was published in 1980 followed by one for oil paintings in 1986. An illustrated 'highlights' catalogue from the watercolour collection was published in 2004 at the time of a major loan exhibition to Italy and an illustrated catalogue of the Wilson Steer collection was published in 1998. The Knowles Boney catalogue of Liverpool porcelain was published some 40 years ago. There is herein a stated intention to supplement printed catalogues with web-based information to ensure wide dissemination.

2.0 EXISTING COLLECTIONS

2.1 FINE ART

2.1.1 BRITISH WATERCOLOURS

By means of a series of bequests and prudent purchases, notably in the period 1920-1935, the gallery has a significant collection of 18th and 19th century watercolour paintings and drawings by British artists. It is unrivalled in the area,

representing most major figures in this medium. Since the publication of the watercolour collection checklist in 1980 it has generated substantial professional interest which was further promoted by the 2004 exhibition and catalogue.

Given the natural restriction created by the high prices now realised by many paintings in this category, it is not considered necessary to acquire work by artists already represented in the collections - unless offered on favourable terms e.g. bequest, gift or modest price. There are however certain areas where the collections are weak - notably important 20th century artists. Additions in this category will be a priority. Pre-Raphaelite artists are poorly represented, but other Merseyside collections do feature them strongly.

2.1.2 THE LIVERPOOL SCHOOL

Merseyside produced a large number of significant artists in the period 1810 - 1910. This "Liverpool School" is well represented in the Williamson collections and has been for over 25 years enhanced by a private loan collection, mostly on permanent gallery display. There are examples in oils and watercolours and additions to this collection will be sought, particularly where artistic merit is combined with local interest (e.g. topography and/or maritime history).

2.1.3 PHILIP WILSON STEER

Philip Wilson Steer was born in Birkenhead in 1860. He left the town as a child and has become especially important in the artistic heritage of the Wirral. Consequently, the Williamson has built a collection of his work that is of national importance, including donations from the National Art-Collections Fund (the Art Fund) and a major bequest from the artist's nephew. A catalogue of the collection was published in 1998. Further examples of his work will be sought where they contribute to the interpretation of his artistic development and broaden the significance of this collection.

2.1.4 LOCAL PAINTINGS

The Williamson Art Gallery & Museum is the virtually the only institution on Merseyside actively researching and supporting local historic and contemporary painters. This important role has produced, through extensive research, much material evidence on the Royal Cambrian Academy, the Wirral Society of Arts etc. Such artists are represented in the collections and such links will be pursued in the future.

Work by leading local artists will continue to be purchased from the Wirral Spring Exhibition of Art & Photography and other gallery exhibitions. A programme of commissions established with the assistance of substantial sponsorship will be encouraged, involving the support of local arts organisations including the Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery & Wirral Museums.

Paintings of the topography of Wirral provide an invaluable interpretative resource for local history. Examples will be acquired which provide adequate information, regardless of artistic merit, but subject to suitable price and available finance.

2.1.5 HISTORIC BRITISH PAINTINGS

Apart from the categories above, the remaining British paintings in this collection are mixed. The earliest dates from c1670, some are by major artists, some are

extremely trivial. Additions by purchase will not be considered unless within one of the above specified classes.

2.1.6 CONTEMPORARY BRITISH PAINTINGS

The collection of contemporary British work will be increased to include artists, styles or themes that aid the interpretation of modern painting. The support of the Contemporary Art Society (CAS) and the Art Fund has added some important examples to the Williamson. The gallery has successfully renewed its membership for the CAS distribution scheme and will work with them on future collection development in this area.

2.1.7 FOREIGN PAINTINGS

Works by foreign paintings have been acquired in a random way and do not form any coherent group. There is no intention to seek additional items.

2.1.8 PRINTS

Based upon several large and important collections (John Finnie, Seymour Haden, Watson bequest and the Symes Bromoils), the prints provide an interesting and important representative collection. Its main strength represents British printmaking of the first half of the 20th century. Over the last forty years a collection of contemporary prints has been accumulated by purchase and commission - this policy will continue.

2.1.9 PHOTOGRAPHS

The gallery has actively encouraged the recent promotion of better photography on the Wirral, with local and national exhibitions. Photographic prints will not be usually purchased unless,

- a) They coincide with one or more of the above categories e.g. local history
- b) They form part of a special commission highlighting a particular aspect of local/social history
- c) They are/were produced by major local photographic printmakers
- d) They are designated for addition to archive resources rather than fine art collections.

2.1.10 SCULPTURE

Original plans for the Williamson provided for a sculpture/entrance hall. It has long ceased to serve that function. Sculpture once displayed at the exterior of the buildings has long since been removed in the 1930s due to vandalism. The larger items in the existing collection provide problems for storage and movement.

Additions will not be considered unless the work fits into an established area of interest (e.g. a local sculptor or subject) and the gallery staff feel confident that the item can be adequately cared for within the conservation/storage policies and resources.

2.2 DECORATIVE ARTS

2.2.1 LIVERPOOL PORCELAIN

Several factories were producing porcelain of various types and quality in Liverpool between c.1750 and c.1800. The Knowles Boney collection of some 300 pieces at

the Williamson is very comprehensive and was presented some 50 years ago. It has remained on almost continuous display as a condition of the gift.

Whilst it is noted that some 10% of the total is not of Liverpool origin, it remains as one of the most important study collections of English 18th century porcelain. The retention of the Knowles Boney display intact is an essential part of their use and interest. Additions will only be sought for particularly important pieces and kept separate from the Knowles Boney collection.

2.2.2 DELLA ROBBIA POTTERY

The collection of Della Robbia Pottery at the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum forms an unrivalled addition to the history of Merseyside ceramics. Produced in Birkenhead 1894–1906 it is natural that the Williamson should add to its growing Della Robbia collection (presently some 260 items). Items purchased in the 1920s from the founder Harold Rathbone form the basis of this comprehensive collection. There is a significant number of important pieces of high quality while others document individual workers or styles, some of which are in poor condition.

The Gallery has made public its interest and consequently the collection has grown significantly in the period since the publication of an "Interim Report" on the history of the Della Robbia Pottery to coincide with a major exhibition in 1981, 75 years after the closing down sale. The book has since been reprinted together with a facsimile of the Pottery's 1896 catalogue.

It is intended to add selected new items where they are of very high quality or are unique examples by individual potters and interesting research items (evidence of documentation, unusual artists, techniques, designs etc). Poor condition would be acceptable in the latter category. Major exhibitable pieces should be selected carefully, as the glazes flake easily - whilst low quality or items in poor condition will be added to the reference collection at low cost.

2.2.3 OTHER MERSEYSIDE CERAMICS

The Williamson Art Gallery & Museum has a significant collection of Seacombe Pottery, the little known factory purpose-built in 1852 to produce wares mainly for export. Examples are rare and would be pursued unless they already exist in the collection. Liverpool tin and lead glazed creamwares are poorly represented in the permanent collections. Additions will be acceptable at low prices or by donation only.

Herculaneum pottery was the only major factory to continue manufacturing in Liverpool in the first half of the 19th century. The Williamson houses some half dozen items attributed to Herculaneum (some unmarked) and small number on loan. Additional items, although not a priority will be sympathetically considered.

2.2.4 BRITISH CERAMICS

A good collection of 18th and 19th century British ceramics exists albeit with some important omissions. Additions will fill these gaps or act as background reference to the major collections (eg. Merseyside ceramic history, Della Robbia).

The history of the 20th century industrial ceramics is poorly represented in the collections. Some purchases have added to acquisitions in the 1920s and the intention is to acquire a range of items illustrating ceramic design the last century.

2.2.5 CRAFTS

The Williamson has a commitment to exhibit contemporary crafts on a regular basis. This extends to collection policy and items have been acquired through the CAS and by purchase through the region's foremost exhibitions.

Acquisitions will reflect the diversity of craft materials and techniques. Suitable items will be selected from appropriate exhibitions and early 20th century examples will be sought to extend interpretive displays.

2.2.6 ORIENTAL

Since the early Williamson bequest (1916) there has been a small oriental collection, mainly ceramics, but including, lacquer, jade, cloisonné, bronze, woodblocks, prints and paintings. Whilst there is a small number of superb exhibits the majority of the collection, though decorative, is not significant. The addition of a good quality cohesive group would add substance but piecemeal acquisitions should not be considered.

2.2.7 CONTINENTAL

There is a small number of continental items in the collections, mostly ceramics (Meissen and Sevres). It is not an area considered for expansion in the future except where individual items refer to other British collections e.g. Cantagalli/Della Robbia; Oriental/Liverpool porcelain.

2.2.8 LEE TAPESTRIES

When A.H. Lee and Sons Tapestry Works closed in Birkenhead's North End in 1970 the Williamson acquired a small amount of machinery, a quantity of sample materials and extensive archival material, representing an unrivalled picture of the company and its products. The Victoria and Albert Museum acquired some early material at that time and examples to fill gaps in the company history will be sought

Priority will be given to supplementing existing records and collections with fabrics, photographs and related social history. This will strengthen archival history of the workforce and the factory and highlight the local and national significance of Lee's.

2.2.9 TEXTILES & COSTUME

No cohesive or representative collections have been formed at the gallery. Such acquisitions would be actively sought only for use as part of the education service or as material for use as part of period displays, in a Victorian room, for instance. There is no intention to create a large collection of costume but rather interesting items which reflect social history and specific uses eg. uniforms, mechanics' overalls, military, ladies' and gent's accessories.

A small reference collection of textiles is included in the Lee Tapestry archives (2.2.8 above). This includes oriental braids, 18th century crewelwork, Berlin wool work, samplers and other embroidery. This is not a new group and other acquisitions will not be considered unless of specific interest to other areas of the collection.

2.2.10 GLASS

Existing collections include 17th century Venetian glass, a strong group of 18th century drinking glasses, Irish glass and 19th century decorative glass. Additions will not be sought except for English drinking glasses not presently represented in the collections and 20th century examples which will coincide with contemporary craft policy (see 2:2.5).

2.2.11 METALWORK

Civic Silver forms the major part of metalwork included in gallery collections. This includes Mayoral regalia from Wirral and those Boroughs that existed before local government reorganisation in 1974. There are other utilitarian objects with little artistic merit together with a small pewter collection.

Apart from pieces of local interest or by local craftsmen and women it is not anticipated that new acquisitions will be sought.

2.2.12 JEWELLERY

The jewellery collection is very small and ancillary to costume. Items have also been acquired as part of the craft acquisition policy (2.2.5). Jewellery with local significance is of interest either through contemporary craft manufacture or local historical value.

2.2.13 FURNITURE

The acquisition of furniture has been and is restricted because of limitations in space and adequate environmental control. Existing collections are of local interest - Arrowe Park furniture and work by local craftworkers. Other items are useful for the display of decorative arts such as oriental ceramics in an oriental cabinet. It is not envisaged that this collection will expand except for work within the contemporary crafts. The policy of commissioning from contemporary makers for items combining specific function and innovative design with construction should continue to be explored where possible.

Apart from locally significant items there is no plan to expand the existing clock collection

2.3 MARITIME

2.3.1 MODELS

The Williamson displays a large number of maritime models: ferries, tug boats, cargo and passenger vessels and associated items such as engines and half-block

builder's models. Most concentrate on Birkenhead's link with Cammell Laird, the River Mersey and Birkenhead's dockland history.

A natural restriction on new acquisitions has been space. Priority will be placed on the acquisition of models that interpret Wirral's shipbuilding industry and the peninsula's industrial and pre-industrial maritime history.

2:3.2 PICTURES

An archive collection of paintings, prints and photographs related to locally-built vessels is housed at the gallery. This will be expanded to include as many Wirral-built ships as is possible.

2:3.3 ARTEFACTS

These items are used to interpret life at sea, the economic and social impact of shipping on Wirral's history, techniques of navigation and construction etc. New acquisitions will relate to these areas - particularly items of local significance.

2:4 SOCIAL HISTORY

These are items that, while shedding light on other items of the collection do not fit readily into that category. These include toys, domestic equipment, office equipment etc. Particular emphasis is placed on the educational use of sometimes relatively humble material and will be acquired with the schools service in mind.

2:4.1 DOMESTIC

The value of such items may not be immediately evident but provided the practicalities of space and conservation allow, these items should be considered of great importance. This is particularly evident of items with local significance since such items normally originate from local sources.

2:4.2 COMMERCIAL

With the decline of heavy industry on the Wirral many business premises are being vacated and/or demolished. This includes the basic patterns of housing and shopping and the development of modern shopping centres and housing estates etc.

Many small businesses still retain their original fittings and equipment that are disposed of or destroyed when they move or cease to trade. Such items provide an opportunity to preserve much of the heritage of Wirral life, particularly of the period between the two World Wars.

Many non-profit making organisations exist to harness such items at risk. Gallery staff should ensure that wherever possible heritage artefacts should be acquired by the authority (where space, conservation and storage facilities permit) or taken into the custody of a responsible organisation. This should be done to preserve the rights of the public for the display and safety of such artefacts. In this way large or damaged examples can be acquired, subsequently cared for, restored and made available to areas where museum services are limited.

2.5 NATURAL SCIENCES

The gallery collections contain no significant natural history specimens. Items of special interest were transferred to Rawtenstall Museum as early as 1916. What remains have been re-catalogued but are in poor condition, have little or no associated source information or have deteriorated through poor storage or display. It is not anticipated that the collection will be added to. What remains is currently used as source material for schools and colleges.

2.6 ARCHAEOLOGY

2.6.1 LOCAL

Items of local archaeological sources are of natural interest to the gallery. Staff have liaised with specialists at the National Museums Liverpool whose skills permit the responsible monitoring of Wirral finds and excavations. This co-operation will continue along with such acquisitions that avoid conflict of interests.

Staff cannot ignore the activity of metal detectors, whatever may be felt about the dangers and irresponsible damage to sites caused by the worst offenders. Wherever possible it is the policy of the gallery staff to encourage members of the public to make their finds known to curatorial staff without actively furthering damage to existing sites. Attention is drawn to the conditions imposed upon acquisition where damage has been caused to ancient monuments (Acquisitions & Disposals Policy).

Acquisition by donation will be encouraged with emphasis upon the preservation of Wirral finds for the public benefit.

2.6.2 NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

A number of smaller collections include items from various periods, eg. prehistoric, Cypriot, Roman and Pre-Columbian etc. There is no intention of seeking further additions but rather to consolidate and research existing items in the gallery.

2.7 ETHNOGRAPHY

The collections documented during the re-cataloguing programme have revealed a modest collection sufficient for present resource purposes. There is no intention of adding new items.

2.8 GEOLOGY

The Geology collection comprises a single large range of samples amassed by Charles Chambres. This represents an interesting and cohesive group and, being well catalogued is used in conjunction with specialists for the education authority. There are no plans to expand this collection.

2.9 MILITARY

There is a small collection relating to the local regiments in particular the Cheshire Rifles. This includes banners, swords, uniforms, guns, badges and archives. There

are also a few weapons from the first and second world wars as well as the Boer war.

New acquisitions will give priority to:

1. Items that trace the history of local regiments.
2. Items that highlight the daily routine of the common soldier and civilians in the two world wars. This is intended to accompany the fine art collections that include the work of war artists in particular those of Thomas Burke and Albert Richards whose archive collection was purchased some years ago.
3. Wilfred Owen was educated in Birkenhead and items that relate to the First World War are being collected towards the foundation of a permanent tribute to the war poets. These items as 2 above will reflect the daily life and routine of the common foot soldier.

2.10 TRANSPORT

Wirral Borough Council formerly expressed a long term commitment towards the development of a heritage trail embracing a transport museum with particular emphasis on the Wirral's heritage. The Museums Service worked to collect vehicles and associated information, memorabilia and museum items with particular emphasis as follows.

- 2.10.1 In 1860 Birkenhead was the first town in Europe to develop a street tramway. The Museums Service has an interest in items that relate to the history of the Wirral tramways including related material (tickets, uniforms, posters etc). In addition, Wirral Museums Service now operates Birkenhead Tramways, which were initially sub-contracted to Blackpool Council. The trams belonging to Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society (MTPS) are operated alongside those of Birkenhead Tramways. A long-term loan of a tram from NML was taken on in 2007 for MTPS to undertake restoration & conservation work.
- 2.10.2 The Baxter collection (former Lark Lane Motor Museum) was on display at the Williamson Art Gallery from 1988 to 2003. It then mostly moved to Wirral Transport Museum in Taylor Street. The authority had negotiated a long-term loan of the collection and purchased selected motor vehicles and motorcycles from the collection.
- 2.10.3 Wirral's association with Mersey Ferries has existed since the granting of the original rights of passage in 1330. The Museums Service will continue to collect models and associated items tracing the history and use of the Mersey Ferries.
- 2.10.4 Shore Road Pumping Station is still used today for the evacuation of water from the Mersey Railway tunnel. A small museum was developed around the restored steam engine which formerly supplied part of the power. The Museums Service aimed to collect material to interpret the history and use of the Mersey underground railway system.
- 2.10.5 In the light of the decision quoted at 1.4 above, an appropriate future for both Wirral Museums Service collections and loaned material will be sought. There is insufficient secure storage and maintenance capability for transport items in the

Museums Service without the space and expertise provided by staff and volunteers at Wirral Transport Museum.

2.11 ARCHIVES

Wirral Museums Service no longer incorporates Wirral Archives Service, but continues to hold some documentary material related to shipbuilding, arts organisations and the Lee's Tapestry Works. The management and use of these collections will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom, and material will be addressed for suitability to transfer to Wirral Archives and, similarly, transfer of museum material may be requested in return.

3.0 SUMMARY OF PROJECTED COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Fine Art

British watercolours

Additions where weak – 20th century, Pre-Raphaelite

Liverpool School

Additions, especially if artistic merit combined with local interest

Philip Wilson Steer

Additions sought if contribute to demonstration of development

Work by local artists

Continue regular purchase of contemporary work, including commissions, & historic Wirral topography; also acquisition of work in depth and appropriate archive material related to significant artists

Historic British paintings

Not to be purchased unless also fitted into another category

Contemporary British paintings

Continue collection to contextualise local purchasing

Foreign paintings

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Prints

Continue to trace development of print as an artistic medium

Photographs

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Sculpture

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category and within the resources of the Museums Service to store & conserve as appropriate

Decorative Arts

Liverpool Porcelain

Additions only sought for exceptional pieces

Della Robbia Pottery

Additions to complete areas of collection, including for purposes of reference or comparison and exceptional pieces

Other Merseyside ceramics

Seacombe Pottery to be actively pursued, others to be considered a low priority

British ceramics

Additions in 20th century industrial ceramics or to contextualise existing collections only

Contemporary crafts

Acquisitions by local craftspeople and to reflect diversity of materials & techniques

Oriental

Not considered a priority

Continental

Not considered a priority unless to contextualise existing collections

Lee Tapestries

Additions to complete areas of collection, including for purposes of reference or comparison and exceptional pieces

Textiles & costume

Not considered a priority unless to contextualise existing collections

Glass

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Metalwork

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Jewellery

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Furniture & clocks

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Maritime

Models

Additions only to complete areas of collection, including for purposes of reference or comparison and exceptional pieces

Pictures

Additions sought for locally significant items

Artefacts

Additions sought for locally significant items

Social History

Additions sought for locally significant items, especially with educational/handling potential

Domestic

Additions sought for locally significant items, especially with educational/handling potential

Commercial

Additions sought for locally significant items, especially with educational/handling potential

Natural Sciences

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Archaeology

Local

Donations sought where no conflict with other local collections

National & international

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Ethnography

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Geology

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Military

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Transport

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

4.0 CONSERVATION & STORAGE

- 4.1 The authority will maintain its access to professional conservation advice through its liaison with the National Museums Liverpool and freelance conservators.
- 4.2 Staff will maintain a programme of environmental monitoring and control in display as well as storage areas. The authority will seek to improve the heating and humidifier equipment as recommended by curatorial staff and conservation advice.
- 4.3 Staff will maintain a programme of lighting monitoring and control consistent with the preservation and maintenance of the collections.
- 4.4 A programme will continue to replace perishable and dangerous materials used in the presentation and storage of the collections. Staff will continue to ensure that alternative materials will be consistent with good conservation practice.
- 4.5 Staff will maintain a record of all conservation work undertaken used in conjunction with museum documentation procedures in use at the time.

5.0 EXHIBITION & PUBLIC SERVICES

- 5.1 A temporary and permanent exhibition policy will include periodic display of all items in the collection where condition, and time to research, permit. Exhibitions in non-gallery venues will be encouraged, provided suitable conditions are available (to be determined by qualified staff), originated internally and from suitable agencies such as other Accredited museums, Arts and Crafts Councils.
- 5.2 Adequate interpretative facilities will be ensured for permanent and temporary displays.
- 5.3 Subject to adequate notice and staff supervision any member of the public will be given controlled access to any stored item and related information.
- 5.4 Photography will be permitted only after prior consultation with staff. Fees may be requested for publication etc.
- 5.5 It will be the policy of gallery staff to publish information from research programmes and permit public access to such information wherever is reasonably possible.
- 5.6 Loan applications will be sympathetically considered. The advice of conservation and curatorial staff will determine the feasibility of such applications. Staff will ensure that items loaned will be fully documented, insured and that agencies are fully equipped to provide transport, security and display conditions.

6.0 INSURANCE

6.1 Adequate insurance provision will be maintained and a valuation list will be reviewed at regular intervals. Items will be classified according to valuation i.e.

	£
Group J – items	up to 50
Group H – items	51 – 250
Group G - items	251 – 1,000
Group F – items	1,001 – 5,000
Group E - items	5,001 – 10,000
Group D – items	10,001 – 20,000
Group C - items	20,001 – 50,000
Group B - items	50,001 – 100,000
Group A - items above	100,000

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 All staff will be expected to carry out the above recommendations to the best of their ability. Wirral Borough Council will ensure the provision of adequate resources for the care, storage and display of collections.

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Acquisition and Disposal Policy - Draft

Name of museum	Wirral Museums Service
Name of governing body	Metropolitan Borough of Wirral
Date on which this policy was approved by governing body2009
Date at which this policy is due for review2012

1 Museum's statement of purpose

WIRRAL MUSEUMS' MISSION STATEMENT

To make the exploration of Wirral's Life and History an interesting and entertaining experience, accessible to all sections of society.

KEY AIMS

- To collect items of local, regional, national and international importance to reflect Wirral's life and history, and to place that in a meaningful context
- To encourage and enable access to museums collections by all sections of society
- To ensure the on-going development of the learning opportunities within the Museums Service
- To continue to develop the sites and venues of the Museums Service through an on-going capital investment programme and to secure external investment
- To attract visitors and tourists to Wirral through the promotion of the Museums Service

2 Existing collections, including the subjects or themes and the periods of time and /or geographic areas to which the collections relate

THE COLLECTIONS IN BRIEF

Wirral Museums Service is responsible for several historically and educationally significant collections. These are housed at the Williamson Art Gallery, Wirral Museum, Birkenhead Priory and Wirral Transport Museum. At the time of writing, while the future of buildings currently operated by Wirral Museums Service is under review, collections will be transferred as appropriate within the Service.

The **Williamson Art Gallery** collection largely comprises;

- Fine and decorative art, particularly 18th and 19th century watercolour paintings and drawings;
- Lee's Tapestry Works, an archive collection of drawings, photographs and fabric samples illustrating the work of Arthur H Lee & Sons up to closure in 1970
- Ceramics – most noteworthy is the Della Robbia pottery collection which was made in Birkenhead;
- Maritime models, particularly the Mersey ferries, and vessels linked with the Cammell Laird shipyard;
- Social history artefacts, together with some military, archaeological and geological items – particularly useful as educational tools but fully displayable collections.

Wirral Museum was developed as the main centre for displaying and interpreting Wirral's social history. This includes:

- the Council's civic silverware and regalia collection
- a display relating to the history of Cammell Laird's shipyard
- a scale model of the Woodside area as it was on the day in July 1934, when the first Mersey Road Tunnel was opened by King George VI
- a changing programme of special interest and topical displays.

Birkenhead Priory is a museum object in itself, as Scheduled Ancient Monument and with a variety of Grade I, II* and II listed buildings on site. On display are archaeological items from the site itself with a selection of contextual items and a changing exhibition of other works drawn from the Williamson's collection or from contemporary artists.

Wirral Transport Museum has developed collections, some on loan, to trace the development of public road transport in Wirral, from the first tramway in 1860, to bus deregulation in 1986. Particularly significant are the historic trams from the former Birkenhead, Wallasey, and Liverpool tramways, restored by the Merseyside

Tramway Preservation Society. Of increasing interest is the historic bus collection covering the period from 1943 to the late 1970s, some of which are still undergoing restoration in an effort to retain vehicles in working order. A small collection of cars, motorbikes, models, etc has been developed, some on loan, especially where they are of local significance.

3 Criteria governing future acquisition policy including the subjects or themes, periods of time and/or geographic areas and any collections which will not be subject to further acquisition.

Wirral Museums Service is appreciative of increasing pressure on storage space and the cost of appropriate conservation work, both preventative and restorative.

The expansion of collections is achieved by donation, bequest and purchase using both the Museums Service's own small purchase fund and grant-aid from the Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery & Wirral Museums, The Art Fund and the MLA Purchase Funds administered by the Victoria & Albert Museum and Science Museum.

The collection breaks down into the following areas, with notes on collection development:

Fine Art *British watercolours*

Additions primarily where weak – 20th century, Pre-Raphaelite artists

Liverpool School

Additions sought, especially to fill gaps in collection

Philip Wilson Steer

Additions sought if contribute to demonstration of artistic development

Work by local artists

Continue regular purchase of contemporary work, including commissions, & historic Wirral topography; also acquisition of work in depth and appropriate archive material related to significant artists

Historic British paintings

Not to be purchased unless also fitted into another category

Contemporary British paintings

Continue collection to contextualise local purchasing

Foreign paintings

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Prints

Continue to trace development of print as an artistic medium

Photographs

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Sculpture

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category and within the resources of the Museums Service to store & conserve as appropriate

Decorative Arts

Liverpool Porcelain

Additions only sought for exceptional pieces

Della Robbia Pottery

Additions to complete areas of collection, including for purposes of reference or comparison and exceptional pieces

Other Merseyside ceramics

Seacombe Pottery to be actively pursued, others to be considered a low priority

British ceramics

Additions in 20th century industrial ceramics or to contextualise existing collections only

Contemporary crafts

Acquisitions by local craftspeople and to reflect diversity of materials & techniques

Oriental

Not considered a priority

Continental

Not considered a priority unless to contextualise existing collections

Lee Tapestries

Additions to complete areas of collection, including for purposes of reference or comparison and exceptional pieces

Textiles & costume

Not considered a priority unless to contextualise existing collections

Glass

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Metalwork

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Jewellery

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Furniture & clocks

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Maritime

Models

Additions only to complete areas of collection, including for purposes of reference or comparison and exceptional pieces

Pictures

Additions sought for locally significant items

Artefacts

Additions sought for locally significant items

Social History

Additions sought for locally significant items, especially with educational/handling potential

Domestic

Additions sought for locally significant items, especially with educational/handling potential

Commercial

Additions sought for locally significant items, especially with educational/handling potential

Natural Sciences

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Archaeology*Local*

Donations sought where no conflict with other local collections

National & international

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Ethnography

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Geology

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Military

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

Transport

Not to be sought unless also fitted into another category

4 Limitations on collecting

The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

5 Collecting policies of other museums

The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museum(s):

National Museums Liverpool

Victoria Gallery & Museum, University of Liverpool

Grosvenor Museum, Chester

6 Policy review procedure

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

The MLA will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

7 Acquisitions not covered by the policy

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

8 Acquisition procedures

- a. The museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- b. In particular, the museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.
- d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- e. The museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

(In England, Northern Ireland and Wales the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.)

- f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, 8c, or 8e will only be because the museum is either:

acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or

acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or

acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or

in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

- g. The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

9 Spoliation

The museum will use the statement of principles ‘Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period’, issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

10 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

The museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the museum’s professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 12a-12d, 12g and 12s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

11 Management of archives

As the museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

12 Disposal procedures

- a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum’s collection.
- c. The museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

- d. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 12g-12s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons
- g. The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- h. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.
- i. Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from MLA.
- j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.
- k. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- m. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of

interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

- n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 12a-12d and 12g-12h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 12p-12s.
- p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.
- s. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

2009/10 LOCAL TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME - ROAD SAFETY

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Further to my report on the Local Transport Capital Programme, which was considered and approved by Cabinet on 15th January 2009, this report sets out project details relating to proposed schemes within the Road Safety Block.

1.2 This has been identified as a Key Decision in the Forward Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 On 15th January 2009, my report on the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Programme advised Members that it was not possible to provide a breakdown of all elements of the programme due to the necessary level of analysis required for some budget heads. This report now brings to Members' attention those budget heads within the 'block allocation' for Road Safety and sets out the respective detailed projects for approval.

2.2 In 2008/9 Wirral's LAA Programme Board approved two Priority Areas for Improvement relating to road safety (Total, and Child Killed/Seriously Injured) for inclusion within Wirral's LAA that will facilitate continuation of the work undertaken by the Merseyside partners in previous years as part of the LTP.

2.3 These priorities are the over-arching theme in the determination of suitable schemes and projects within the proposed 2009/10 programme of schemes and the budget allocation for the 'shared priority' of Road Safety outlined in this report.

3.0 ROAD SAFETY BLOCK – SUMMARY OF ALLOCATION

3.1 This report sets out the projects proposed within a number of individual programmes that contribute to the overall Road Safety Shared Priority and includes the more traditional types of scheme to reduce road accident casualties.

<u>Block</u>	<u>Allocation</u>
Local Safety Schemes (LSS)	£ 500,000
M53 Junction 3 – Major Safety Scheme	£ 250,000
North Wallasey Approach Road – Major Safety Scheme	£ 50,000
Safer Routes To School (SRTS)	£ 150,000
Total ROAD SAFETY Block Allocation	£950,000

4.0 LOCAL SAFETY SCHEMES (LSS) (£500,000)

4.1 **Appendix A (Table 1)** identifies a scheme from the 2008/2009 LSS programme that requires funding. This scheme was not completed due to unforeseen difficulties but still has an accident/casualty record that will accord

a significant rate of return and complement the overall LSS programme (£33,000).

4.2 **Appendix A (Table 2)** identifies those new schemes for inclusion within the 2009/2010 programme. This list of new schemes is based upon the results of preliminary investigations by my Accident Investigation Unit into the accident records for each location, together with an overall initial assessment of the suitability for suggested remedial measures that can be economically justified based on the expected accident cost savings (programme £467,000).

4.3 **Appendix A (Table 3)** identifies a reserve list of schemes for inclusion, should any of the schemes identified in Tables 1 or 2 be found to be not viable upon further detailed investigation; or completed for less than the indicative cost.

5.0 M53 JUNCTION 3 MAJOR SAFETY SCHEME (£250,000)

5.1 £250,000 of the £950,000 Road Safety Block allocation has been identified for the M53 Junction 3 improvement scheme previously reported to and endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 15th January 2009 (minute no.336 refers). The allocation for 2009/10 is to meet approximately one half of the overall cost of the scheme with a similar allocation identified from the Road Safety Block in 2010/11.

5.2 The project is an improvement scheme to a key junction on the Borough's strategic highway network, which provides access to the national road network.

5.3 The M53 junction 3 has a total of 60 recorded personal injury collisions occurring during a 3-year period (1/9/2004 to 31/8/2007) involving 93 casualties of which 5 sustained serious injuries.

5.4 The scheme would be expected to achieve a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents and in the slight casualty rate at this location.

5.5 The scheme will contribute towards achieving the road safety aims and objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan; Wirral Local Area Agreement; Technical Services Road Safety Plan; Local Transport Plan 2, National Targets and Indicators.

5.6 The provision of traffic signals, together with improvements to the carriageway surface, destination markings, street lighting and signing would also strongly support the Council's Corporate Objective by improving traffic movements and accessibility, capacity at the junction, reducing delays, and regulating traffic patterns, to and from the adjacent highway network.

5.7 The first phase of works (design) would be expected to commence mid 2009 with construction works commencing early 2010 and completion during 2010/11.

6.0 NORTH WALLASEY APPROACH ROAD (£50,000)

6.1 £50,000 of the £950,000 Road Safety Block allocation has been identified for a scheme to introduce safety barrier previously reported to and endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 15th January 2009 (minute no.336 refers).

7.0 TRAFFIC CALMING IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

- 7.1 Members will note that a specific budget heading for Traffic Calming is not included within the proposed Road Safety block for 2009/10.
- 7.2 An allocation of £200,000 has been included in the report on the Environment/Air Quality Block also on this evening's agenda. This allocation is the subject of consultation with Area Forums to determine whether or not each Area Forum wishes to receive a one eleventh share amounting to approximately £18,200 to allow for the Forums to decide on what traffic/highway schemes this money should be spent on.
- 7.3 A report on the outcomes of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet. Should some of the allocation remain at the centre then it may be possible to promote traffic calming comprising of speed reduction features.
- 7.4 Sites that have a personal injury accident record that could be improved by the introduction of traffic calming measures will continue to be considered for Traffic Calming and assessed against the adopted Traffic Calming Criteria.

The adopted Traffic Calming Criteria is:-

- Sites will not be considered for physical measures such as vertical or horizontal deflections on emergency services priority routes – unless specific approval can be gained.
 - Only sites capable conforming to the Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1996 and current Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions advice on design and placement of measures will be considered.
 - Traffic calming measures may also be considered in support of specific initiatives, such as home zones; cycling and safer routes to schools where such schemes may not be justified on their existing personal injury accident record.
- 7.5 Despite not having a specific block allocation, Committee will note the traffic calming scheme proposed in the LSS programme for Pulford Road that achieves its priority on personal injury accident savings.
- 7.6 Petitions for traffic calming that have been received and given consideration since I last reported to Committee are listed in **Appendix A (Table 4)**. They do not offer any personal injury accident saving and have not been prioritised for action. Committee is requested to note their receipt and that they are not prioritised for action at the present time.

8.0 SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS) (£150,000)

- 8.1 A number of schools that have been working on School Travel Plans during 2007/08 and 2008/09 have either submitted completed drafts or are to do so during the current year. The listing is not sufficiently refined at the present time so as to be able to advise Committee of probable locations for action in 2009/10.
- 8.2 A Contribution to 'Sustrans' for the Wirral-wide 'Bike It' project, is included within this allocation to assist in linking National 'Sustrans' initiatives to local initiatives to promote and encourage cycling to schools, for a number of schools who while developing their School Travel Plans have shown additional commitment to cycling.

8.3 As in previous years, the School Travel Plan Co-ordinators will continue to develop initiatives that encourage parents and children to engage in such schemes and choose more sustainable methods of travel to school.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Schemes will be financed from the approved block allocation for Road Safety of £950,000 for 2009/10 (£300,000 having previously been approved - see Sections 5.0 and 6.0).

10.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Existing staff resources will be used for the detailed investigation, design and supervision of these schemes supported by external consultants on the Council's approved consultants Framework agreement where necessary. Future maintenance costs will be met from the Highway Maintenance Revenue Budget.

11.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific ethnic minority, elderly persons or equal opportunities implications arising directly out of this report. Some schemes will be of particular benefit to children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and pedestrians.

11.2 All schemes are captured under the umbrella of the Equality Impact Standards.

12.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Schemes proposed in this report have a positive community safety benefit.

13.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific Local Agenda 21 implications arising from this report.

14.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no specific planning implications arising from this report.

15.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no specific Anti-Poverty implications arising from this report.

16.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

16.1 There are no specific Social Inclusion implications arising from this report.

17.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

17.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

18.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

18.1 The report identifies programmes that have Borough-wide implications.

19.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

19.1 None.

20.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) the Road Safety programme for 2009/10 be approved as set out in this report;
- (2) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to select a suitable alternative from the reserve list of schemes in consultation with party spokespersons, in the event that it proves impractical to proceed with an approved scheme or unallocated finance becomes available;
- (3) the receipt of petitions for traffic calming as identified in Section 7 be noted and the decision by Overview and Scrutiny Committee that as no benefit to the personal injury accident record can be achieved by actioning these requests, they are not prioritised for action at the present time.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES

Table 1**Appendix A****Capital Programme 2009/2010 – Local Safety Schemes****(Undertakings carried forward from 2008/09)**

No.	Location	£
1	M53 Junction 5, Hooton (Signs & Road Markings) Eastham Ward	£33,000
TOTAL		£33,000

Capital Programme 2009/2010 – Local Safety Schemes

No.	Location (and potential measures under consideration)	No. of accidents	No. of susceptible accidents	% First Year Rate of Return	Estimated Cost
1	A41 New Chester Road / Allport Lane, Bromborough: <i>Traffic Signal junction approaches</i> (Road surface treatment / reconstruction) Eastham Ward	5	4	312 %	£40,000
2	Barnston Road, Barnston: <i>Storeton Lane to Whitehouse Lane</i> (‘Cats-eyes’ road studs) Pensby & Thingwall and Heswall Wards	4	2	892 %	£7,000
3	Brimstage Rd, Brimstage: <i>Clatterbridge R’bt to Heswall railway bridge</i> (Signs, Road Markings/Rainline & Cats-eyes) Clatterbridge Ward	14	8	384 %	£65,000
4	Chester Road, Heswall <i>Gayton Roundabout to Borough Boundary</i> (Signing & Road Markings) Heswall Ward	6	4	892 %	£14,000
5	Fender Lane, Bidston: <i>Tesco Roundabout to Reeds Lane</i> (Reduced Speed Limit) Bidston & St James and Leasowe & Moreton East Wards	3	2	173 %	£36,000
6	Heron Rd, Meols: <i>Three Lanes End to Acres Road</i> (Signs & Road Markings) Hoylake & Meols Ward	5	5	446 %	£35,000
7	Milner Rd / Whitfield Lane, Heswall: <i>Junction</i> (Signs & Road Markings) Heswall Ward	3	3	375 %	£25,000

Capital Programme 2008/2009 – Local Safety Schemes (continued)

Table 2 (Continued)**Appendix A**

9	Mount Rd, Bebington: <i>Clatterbridge Roundabout to Broadway</i> (Signs, Road Markings, extension to Street Lighting) Bebington Ward	11	8	416 %	£60,000
10	Pulford Rd - Higher Bebington Rd, Bebington: <i>Heath Road to Teehey Lane</i> (Traffic Calming) Bebington and Rock Ferry Wards	3	3	156 %	£60,000
11	Raby Hall Rd – Raby Mere Rd, Raby: <i>Blakeley Road to Raby Village</i> (30mph, Signs & Road Markings) Clatterbridge Ward	3	3	268 %	£35,000
12	Thornton Common Rd - Neston Rd, Thornton Hough: <i>Poulton Hall Rd to Borough Boundary</i> (Signs & Road Markings) Clatterbridge Ward	12	6	535 %	£35,000
13	Willaston Rd – Birkenhead Rd <i>Clatterbridge R't to Borough Boundary</i> (Signs & Road markings) Clatterbridge Wards	10	7	397 %	£55,000
TOTAL					£467,000

Capital Programme 2008/2009 – Local Safety Schemes**Reserve List**

No.	Location	Estimated Cost.
14	'Rain-line' Specialist Carriageway Markings and 'Cats-eye' / 'Studs' – Various sites	£700 per 100 l/m
15	Surface Treatment - Various (Zebras, Pelicans and Bends	£7,500 per site
16	High Visibility Guard Rail – Various sites	£1,000 to £4,000 per site

Appendix A: Table 4 Petitions Received for Speed Reduction Schemes

No	Location	Total Number Of PIA's¹	Number Of Susceptible PIA's²	Remarks
1	Upland Road / Heath Drive / South Drive / Oakland Drive / Church Road, Upton. (Upton Ward)	1	1	Uneconomic First Year Rate of Return achievable (approx. 26%)
2	Surrey Street Poulton (and surrounding area) / Clayton Lane / Morley Road / Rankin Street / Limeliln Lane, (Seacombe Ward)	2	0	No accident saving to be achieved
3	Thurstaston Road and Village Road, Thurstaston (West Kirby & Thurstaston Ward)	0	0	No accident saving to be achieved

¹ PIA – Personal Injury Accident recorded by Merseyside Police during 3 year study period.

² Accidents which could be saved by the introduction of *Speed Reduction Measures*

³ Emergency Services Priority Response Route

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

2009/10 LOCAL TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME - ENVIRONMENT / AIR QUALITY

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Further to my report on the Local Transport Capital Programme, which was considered and approved by Cabinet on 15th January 2009, this report sets out project details relating to proposed schemes within the Environment / Air Quality Block and asks Cabinet to approve this programme.
- 1.2 This has been identified as a Key Decision in the Forward Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 15th January 2009, my report on the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Programme advised Members that it was not possible to provide a breakdown of all elements of the programme due to the necessary level of analysis required for some budget heads. This report now brings to Members' attention those budget heads within the 'block allocation' for Environment / Air Quality and sets out the respective detailed projects for approval.

3.0 ENVIRONMENT / AIR QUALITY BLOCK – ALLOCATION SUMMARY

- 3.1 This block allocation generally contains schemes designed to improve quality of life, the environment and promote healthier communities. This report sets out the projects proposed within a number of individual programmes that contribute to the overall Environment / Air Quality Priority.

Block

Allocation:

Telegraph Rd/Station Rd Roundabout - Major Scheme	£500,000
Local Environmental Improvements (Area Forums)	£200,000
Walking Strategy	£225,000
Cycling Strategy	£225,000

ENVIRONMENTAL / AIR QUALITY Block Allocation **£1,150,000**

4.0 TELEGRAPH RD/STATION RD (£500,000)

- 4.1 £500,000 of the £700,000 Local Environmental Improvements allocation has been identified for the Telegraph Road / Station Road junction improvement scheme previously reported to and endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 15th January 2009 (minute no.336 refers).
- 4.2 At its meeting of 10 July 2007 Cabinet considered a report on this scheme. It was proposed that the scheme be funded from the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme and the report sought Cabinet's

endorsement that the scheme will be given priority in the allocation of future years' LTP Capital funding.

- 4.3 Cabinet resolved (minute 116) that support for the scheme be reaffirmed and the scheme be given priority when deciding and approving the LTP Capital Programmes for 2008/9 and 2009/10 having due regard to the other priorities which may arise during that time period.
- 4.4 The current position on the scheme is that funding previously agreed in the LTP for Phase 1 has been used to purchase the land required for the scheme, construct the accommodation works as agreed with the landowners and have the public utility companies carry out their pipe and cable diversions. The current £500,000 allocation will allow completion of the final 'Phase 2' works which will include further accommodation works, statutory undertakers costs, land acquisition fees and the construction of the roundabout itself.

5.0 AREA FORUM ALLOCATION (£200,000)

- 5.1 The remaining allocation of £200,000 under the Local Environmental Improvements heading is available for the 11 Area Forums. Apportioned equally across the eleven Area Forums this would equate to around £18,200 per Area Forum.
- 5.2 A report was submitted to each Area Forum during February 2009 inviting comment as to whether or not each Forum wishes to receive de-centralised funding in 2009/10 of a proportion of the Local Transport Plan Capital Budget - Integrated Transport Block.
- 5.3 The alternative to not decentralising the funding is for the remaining budget to be administered centrally as now and for schemes to be put forward on a Borough-wide basis based on a priority assessment under the Local Environmental Improvements and Walking Strategy headings of the Environment / Air Quality sub-block (traffic calming schemes have been implemented from this budget in the past).
- 5.4 A report detailing the outcome of the Area Forum consultations and proposed way forward is included on the agenda for this meeting.

6.0 WALKING STRATEGY (£225,000)

- 6.1 The following programmes comprising of pedestrian signal controlled crossings, dropped kerb crossings, pedestrian refuges and public rights of way, are proposed to encourage walking through better environments where it safe and attractive to do so. The programmes have been determined against agreed Council criteria and take account of ideas for schemes from Local Area Forums and through receipt of petitions.
- 6.2 The Walking Strategy deals with the following specific programmes and recommends works/allocations for each of the following headings:

Sub-block: **Allocation:**

Pedestrian Signals (Puffin Crossings)	£ 150,000
Pedestrian Improvements	£60,000
Public Rights Of Way Improvements Plan	£ 15,000
TOTAL	£ 225,000

6.3 Pedestrian Signals (Puffin Crossings) - £150,000

- 6.3.1 In formulating the programme for 2008/09, a site inspection has been carried out at potential Pedestrian Crossing sites including all those for which requests have been received. A number of sites are not considered suitable for the provision of a puffin crossing because of physical constraints. These locations have not been assessed against the approved weighting system.
- 6.3.2 All previous requests have been re-assessed using the most recent surveys and accident records. A list of the 12 highest scoring sites from previous years together with all new potential sites is shown in **Appendix A** (Table 1), together with the weighted PV² figures where appropriate. ('P' being the number of pedestrians crossing and 'V' being the vehicle flow 'squared').
- 6.3.3 In addition, this allocation is used to improve or provide formal signalised pedestrian crossing facilities at existing signalised junctions with sites prioritised based upon potential accident savings in line with LTP priority targets.
- 6.3.4 Merseytravel are working on significant infrastructure initiatives to provide safer public transport access facilities and to this end, the opportunity also exists to have facilities such as pedestrian crossings funded or part-funded by Merseytravel at certain sites. It is suggested that such sites should be considered separately from the LTP Pedestrian Signals programme. Party Spokespersons and Ward Members will be informed of any proposals for additional pedestrian crossing facilities proposed as part of these initiatives.
- 6.3.5 The proposed schemes to be funded from the 2009/10 Pedestrian Signals allocation are as follows:-
- 6.3.6 **Priority 1** - Woodchurch Road / Osmaston Road, Prenton (Oxton and Prenton Wards) Proposed Puffin Crossing
- Woodchurch Road is a classified major distributor (A552) and one of the main routes linking the Birkenhead town centre with the M53 Motorway.
 - It is proposed that a Puffin crossing is installed on Woodchurch Road near to its junction with Osmaston Road, Prenton as shown on **Plan No. B.Eng/17/09/A (Appendix B)** for an estimated cost of £85,000. The exact location would be determined at the detailed design stage.
- 6.3.7 **Priority 2** – Old Chester Road/Town Lane, Bebington (Bebington Ward) Proposed Toucan Crossing
- Old Chester Road is a classified local distributor road serving the township of Bebington.
 - It is proposed that a Toucan crossing is installed to replace the existing Zebra Crossing on Old Chester Road near to its junction with Town Lane, as shown on **Plan No. B.Eng/17/09/B (Appendix B)** for an estimated cost of £65,000. The exact location would be determined at the detailed design stage.
- 6.3.8 It should also be noted that the no.3 ranked location for a Puffin crossing is Hoylake Road/Chapelhill Road, Moreton however site

constraints preclude the possibility of introducing such a measure. It is therefore proposed that the existing traffic island at this location be rebuilt to assist pedestrians and that this will be funded from the Pedestrian Central Refuges sub-block.

6.3.9 A summary of the programme is as follows:-

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Allocation</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1	Woodchurch Rd / Osmaston Rd, Prenton	£ 85,000	100% funding from this programme
2	Old Chester Road / Town Lane, Bebington	£ 65,000	100% funding from this programme
Total		£150,000	

6.4 **Pedestrian Improvements (Pedestrian Dropped Crossings and Pedestrian Central Refuge Islands) - £60,000**

6.4.1 The dropped kerb-crossing programme has been developed and undertaken in consultation with Wirral Information Resource for Equality and Disability (WIRED). Locations identified for treatment are those with high pedestrian movements, links between residential areas and services such as shopping centres, health centres, libraries etc. The opportunity is also taken within the footway reconstruction programme and planning application process to introduce dropped kerbs.

6.4.2 **Appendix C** lists the requests for the provision of dropped crossings that it is recommended are prioritised for action in consultation with WIRED. Any specific locations raised directly by WIRED during consideration will also be assessed during these consultations. The provision of a single dropped crossing facility costs in the region of £750 and it will not be possible to address all requests.

6.4.3 Although Pedestrian Refuge schemes are relatively modest, they do have significant benefits for pedestrians. Through this programme it has in the past also been possible to provide pedestrian refuges at a number of sites where formal signalised crossings were not justified. My proposals are based upon investigations into the benefits for pedestrians, personal injury accidents and consideration of site constraints.

6.4.4 **Appendix D** lists my proposals for the provision of pedestrian refuges as well as requests for works carried forward from previous years together with new requests received since I last reported on this programme. These have been assessed and prioritised for action where appropriate.

6.5 **Public Rights Of Way Improvement Plan - £15,000**

6.5.1 A programme of improvements will continue to be identified, prioritised and implemented to compliment the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

7.0 **CYCLING STRATEGY (£225,000)**

7.1 Members will recall that £225,000 was approved by Cabinet for cycling in 2009/10 as part of the overall LTP programme.

- 7.2 During 2009/10 it is intended to continue the development of the district cycle action plan in Wallasey. Members may recall that a small amount was approved for 2008/09 to initiate this programme of works to develop a network of cycle routes within the Wallasey area that would support other initiatives, e.g. safer routes to school. Last year approximately 14 schemes were identified to initially progress the network, with 6 new, signed routes being implemented.
- 7.3 Therefore, subject to ongoing development work and stakeholder participation & feedback, I propose to utilise all of the £225,000 of the 2009/10 cycling budget to progress implementation of appropriate schemes for the Network. This will be supported by appropriate promotion and monitoring of the routes to gauge the impact of the network on increasing cycling levels in the area.
- 7.4 Opportunities to draw on external funding, to complement the LTP programme, are also being applied for, including new applications to the Sustrans Links to Schools Fund.
- 7.5 The proposed Cycling Strategy programme can be summarised as follows:

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Est.</u>
Mount Pleasant Road / Mount Road, Wallasey	£75,000
Wallasey Earlston Gardens to Route 56 Via Penkett Road Holland Rd	£75,000
Wallasey Network – Central Park	£40,000
Wallasey Network – Liscard Centre link	£15,000
Wallasey Network – Conningsby Drive & Merton Road	£5,000
Promotional Maps / Activities	£15,000

TOTAL **£225,000**

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The schemes will be financed from the approved allocation of £1,150,000 for the 2009/10 Environmental / Air Quality Block.

9.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Existing staff resources will be used for the detailed investigation, design and supervision of these schemes supported by external consultants on the Council's approved consultants Framework agreement where necessary. Future maintenance costs will be met from the Highway Maintenance Revenue Budget.

10.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no specific ethnic minority, elderly persons or equal opportunities implications arising directly out of this report. Some schemes will be of particular benefit to children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and pedestrians.

11.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Schemes introduced under the Environment/Air Quality Block have a positive community and road safety benefit.

12.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

12.1 New and /or improved pedestrian and cycle improvements support the overall aims of LA21 through the provision of facilities that can encourage sustainable travel choices.

13.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific planning implications arising from this report.

14.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no specific Anti-Poverty implications arising from this report.

15.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no specific Social Inclusion implications arising from this report.

16.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

16.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

17.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

17.1 The report identifies programmes that have Borough-wide implications.

18.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 None.

19.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That

(1) the Environmental / Air Quality programme for 2009/10 be approved as set out in this report;

(2) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to select a suitable alternative from the reserve list of schemes in consultation with party spokespersons, in the event that it proves impractical to proceed with an approved scheme or unallocated finance becomes available.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES

Appendix A: Table 1

**AIR QUALITY / ENVIRONMENT – WALKING STRATEGY
PRIORITY LIST OF REQUESTS FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS**

No.	Location	Ward	Weighted PV2 Figure (X 10 ⁸)	Remarks
1	Woodchurch Road / Osmaston Road, Prenton	Oxton and Prenton Wards	2.17	Prioritised within Pedestrian Signals sub-block for implementation during 2009/10.
2	Old Chester Road / Town Lane, Bebington	Bebington and Rock Ferry Wards	2.15	Prioritised within Pedestrian Signals sub-block for implementation during 2009/10.
3	Upton Road / Lingdale Road, Claughton	Claughton Ward	1.59	Site constraints (shop servicing/parking arrangements) preclude the provision of a Puffin Crossing
4	Hoylake Road / Chapellhill Road, Moreton	Moreton West & Saughall Massie Ward	1.56	Proposed Pedestrian Refuge to replace existing traffic island (site constraints preclude the provision of a Puffin Crossing)
5	Meols Drive adj. Residential School, West Kirby	West Kirby & Thurstaston Ward	1.32	Planning Application pending - Potential Section 106 Agreement
6	New Chester Road / Corniche Road, New Ferry	Bromborough Ward	0.914	Existing Zebra Crossing
7	Gorse Lane / Norwood Road, Wallasey	Seacombe Ward	0.912	Planning Application pending - Potential Section 106 Agreement
8	Telegraph Road / Quarry Road East, Heswall	Heswall Ward	0.910	** Petition received **
9	Torrington Road / Eric Road, Wallasey	Liscard Ward	0.806	
10	Kings Road / Bentfield Gardens, Bebington	Bebington Ward	0.759	
11	Liscard Road / Eaton Avenue, Liscard	Liscard and Seacombe Wards	0.714	
12	Belvidere Road / Broadway Avenue, Wallasey	Wallasey Ward	0.689	
31	<i>Telegraph Rd (Mill Lane - Lightfoot Lane - The Ridgeway)</i>	<i>Heswall Ward</i>	<i>0.41*</i>	** Petition received ** (* highest ranking based on max value of 3 locations surveyed)

Appendix C:**AIR QUALITY / ENVIRONMENT – WALKING STRATEGY****PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS – DROPPED CROSSINGS****NEW REQUESTS:**

Location	Ward	No of Crossings
Old Chester Road / Jackson Close	Bebington	2
Old Chester Road / Woodhey Road	Bebington	2
Sunningdale/Brookhurst Ave	Bromborough	2
Welton Road off Caldbeck Road	Bromborough	1
Wentworth Drive/Brookhurst Avenue.	Bromborough	2
o/s 4 Bromborough Road (Fernbank)	Clatterbridge	1
Bidston Road @ Vyner Road South	Claughton	2
St Peters Way @ Norris Close	Claughton	2
St Peters Way @ Newark Close	Claughton	2
St Peters Way @ Norfolk Close	Claughton	2
St Peters Way (vehicle access to St Peters Church)	Claughton	2
Greasby Road @ Hambledon Drive	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Greasby Road (Outside number 185) Highfield Drive	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Greasby Road @ Hambledon Drive	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Thorns Drive @ Sycamore Rise	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Thorns Drive @ Elmdene Court	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Thorns Drive @ Chesnut Close	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Thorns Drive @ Oakdale Drive	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Mill Lane @ Thorns Drive	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Mill Hill Road @ Heathbank Avenue	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Pump Lane @ Kinloss Road	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Pensby Road @ Radnor Avenue	Heswall	2
Pensby Road @ Poll Hill Road	Heswall	2
Pensby Road @ Florence Avenue	Heswall	2
Old Wood Road, Pensby	Heswall & Pensby	1
Melrose Avenue	Hoylelake & Meols	1
Cameron Road @ service road (rear of Oyster Catcher Public House)	Leasowe & Moreton East	2
Cameron Road @ Mackenzie Road	Leasowe & Moreton East	2
Greenwood Lane, Meols	Meols	1
Bramwell Avenue – Entrance to school (opp. No. 67)	Prenton	1
Garrick Road @ Prenton Dell Road	Prenton	2
Garrick Road @ Boswell Road	Prenton	2
Grange Road / Gerard Road , West Kirby	WK & Thurstaston	2
Grange Road / Homestead Mews, West Kirby	WK & Thurstaston	2
Village Road / Abbey Road, West Kirby	WK & Thurstaston	2

Village Road / The Kirkland's, West Kirby	WK & Thurstaston	2
Village Road / The Oatlands, West Kirby	WK & Thurstaston	2
Village Road / St Bridget's Lane, West Kirby	WK & Thurstaston	2
Vehicle Access o/s 3 Village Road, West Kirby	WK & Thurstaston	2
Vehicle Access r/o Moby Dick Public House, Village Road, West Kirby	WK & Thurstaston	2
Fleet Croft Road at its junction with Archers Way	Upton	1
Fleet Croft Road at its junction with Goodakers Meadow	Upton	1
Fleet Croft Road at its junction with Troutbeck Close	Upton	1
Fleet Croft Road at its junction with Crewe Garden	Upton	1
Fleet Croft Road at its junction with Eltham Green	Upton	1
Fleet Croft Road at its junction with Childwall Green	Upton	1
Home Farm Close (o/s No. 1)	Upton	1
Salacre Lane @ Slingsby Drive	Upton	2

PREVIOUS REQUESTS:

Location	Ward	No of Crossings
Village Road @ Acorn Close (Corner Closest to Acorn PH)	Bebington	1
Broadway @ Kingsway	Bebington	2
Mount Road (Access outside 47a)	Bebington	2
Mount Road (Access outside 49)	Bebington	2
Mount Road @ Mount Avenue	Bebington	2
Mount Road @ Mount Drive	Bebington	2
Mount Road @ Mill Road	Bebington	2
Millfield Close, Bebington (Junction School Lane)	Bebington	2
Bidston Moss (Either side of entrance into MFI car park)	Bidston & St James	2
Delamere Close @ Forth Avenue	Bidston & St James	2
Gamlin Street (O/S No 1 & 29)	Birkenhead	4
Market Street (Between Argyle Street & Adelphi Street)	Birkenhead & Tranmere	20
Shore Road	Birkenhead & Tranmere	9
Duncan Street	Birkenhead & Tranmere	4
Duncan Street @ Gertrude Street	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2
Duncan Street @ Albion Street	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2
Chester Street (refuge near Market Street)	Birkenhead & Tranmere	3
St Mary's Gate @ Chester Street	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2
Waterloo Place	Birkenhead & Tranmere	4
Thomas Street @ non-public entrance to M53 Ford	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2
Grange Road East @ Argyle Street	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2
Cleveland Street (Locations to be confirmed)	Birkenhead & Tranmere	nk
Derby Road at its junction with Mill Street	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2
Derby Road at its junction with Whitfield Street	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2
Derby Road at its junction with Liversidge Road	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2
Derby Road (Access adjacent to 53)	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2
Whitfield Street (Access adjacent to 17)	Birkenhead & Tranmere	2

Brookhurst Avenue, Bromborough	Bromborough	nk
King Georges Drive (Opp Lady Lever o/s former girls club)	Bromborough	2
King Georges Drive	Bromborough	nk
S/O no. 2 Marquis Street, New Ferry	Bromborough	2
Queen Mary's Drive	Bromborough	nk
Church Road, Bebington (@ vehicle entrance to St Andrews Vicarage)	Clatterbridge	2
Bromborough Road @ entrance to Raffa Social Club	Clatterbridge	2
Adaston Avenue / Glenburn Avenue, Eastham	Eastham	2
Greasby Road @ Norwood Road	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Greasby Road o/s 249 near shops	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	4
Greasby Road @ Broadway	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Greasby Road @ Wood Lane	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	4
Wood Lane	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	40 +
Irby Road @ Woodlands Road, Irby	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Thingwall Road at Coombe Road	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	2
Car Park adjacent to Silverdale Medical (Mount Avenue)	Heswall	1
Fairview Way, Pensby	Heswall	2
Mount Avenue @ Access to Council Car Park (Silverdale Medical)	Heswall	2
Telegraph Road, Heswall (s/o Heswall Methodist Church) Opp. Police Station.	Heswall	2
Station Road, Heswall (junction Rectory Close)	Heswall	4
Telegraph Road, Heswall (@Entrance to Greek Taverna no. 108)	Heswall	2
Telegraph Road, Heswall (@ Service Road o/s no. 100)	Heswall	2
Telegraph Road , Heswall @ Beacon Lane	Heswall	2
Telegraph Road / Downham Road South	Heswall	2
Barton Road – Penrhos Road to Service Road r/o Kings Gap	Hoylake	12
Chapel Road, Hoylake	Hoylake & Meols	8
Graham Road (Adjacent to Applegarth)	Hoylake & Meols	1
Market Street, Hoylake (Hoyle Road to Shaw Street)	Hoylake & Meols	22
North Parade / Meols Parade, Meols	Hoylake & Meols	nk
Rycroft Road @ Birkenhead Road, Meols	Hoylake & Meols	2
St John's Close, Meols	Hoylake & Meols	2
Leasowe Road (at slip road to north Wallasey approach)	Leasowe	8
Leasowe Road, Leasowe (Pasture Road to Twickenham Drive)	Leasowe and Moreton East	10
Twickenham Drive, Leasowe (Drake Road to Twickenham Drive side road)	Leasowe and Moreton East	4
Eaton Street @ Grosvenor Street, Liscard	Liscard	2
Liscard Crescent at entrance to Shopmobility Centre	Liscard	2
Martins Lane o/s The Primrose	Liscard	2
Martins lane / Greenwood Lane	Liscard	2
Rullerton Road and Neville Road	Liscard	2
Rullerton Road and Colville Road	Liscard	2
Ruskin Avenue, Wallasey	Liscard	nk
Seaview Road - Access between Kwik Fit & Stanley Public House	Liscard	2
St Albans Road, Liscard	Liscard	16

Torrington Road and Rullerton Road	Liscard	2
Water Street, Egremont	Liscard	2
Withens Lane, Wallasey (o/s Saddlers Pub & British Legion)	Liscard	2
Berrylands Road o/s no. 2. Ramp required for elderly residents	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	1
Borrowdale Road (Burrell Drive to Hoylake Road)	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	
Douglas Drive at Neva Avenue	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	2
Douglas Drive at Doreen Avenue	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	2
Douglas Drive At Francis Avenue	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	2
Coastal Drive, New Brighton	New Brighton	nk
Nursery Close	Oxton	1
Shrewsbury Road, Oxton (Palm Hill to Alton Road)	Oxton	8
Spurstow Close, Oxton (junction Calveley Close)	Oxton	2
Talbot Road, Oxton (Townfield Lane to Holm Lane)	Oxton	6
Village Road/Claughton Firs, Oxton	Oxton	4
Woodchurch Road @ Woodchurch Court (Opp Oakdene Rd)	Oxton	2
Kentmere Drive (@ Derwent, Rusland, Gleneagles & s/o 60)	Pensby & Thingwall	6
Kentmere Drive (@ Langdale, Rosemead and Ashlea	Pensby & Thingwall	6
Kentmere Drive (Entrance to Pensby Infants School)	Pensby & Thingwall	2
Kylemore Drive (Outside Day Centre)	Pensby & Thingwall	1
Oldwood Road @ Nicholls Drive	Pensby & Thingwall	2
Old Wood Road, Pensby (o/s no.55)	Pensby & Thingwall	1
Pensby Road @ Wimbourne Avenue	Pensby & Thingwall	2
Ryland Park, Pensby (o/s Emmanuel Church)	Pensby & Thingwall	1
Bedford Road @ Corinthian Street	Rock Ferry	2
Corinthian Street @ Howson Street	Rock Ferry	2
Gothic Street (Access adjacent to no. 36)	Rock Ferry	2
Gothic Street (Access adjacent to no. 47)	Rock Ferry	2
Grenville Way / Grenville Road, Rock Ferry	Rock Ferry	3
King Street at its junction with Sefton Road	Rock Ferry	2
King Street at its junction with Acton Road	Rock Ferry	2
King Street at its junction with Wilton Road	Rock Ferry	2
King Street at its junction with Queens Road.	Rock Ferry	2
Lees Avenue (Access adjacent to no. 60)	Rock Ferry	2
Lees Avenue at its junction with Gothic Street	Rock Ferry	2
Lees Avenue @ Ionic Street	Rock Ferry	2
Nelson Road (Access adjacent to Derby Arms Public House)	Rock Ferry	2
Nelson Road at entrance to Nelson Court	Rock Ferry	2
New Chester Road at its junction with Nelson Road	Rock Ferry	2
New Chester Road at its junction with King Street	Rock Ferry	2
Southdale Road (2 entries o/s 2 and 42)	Rock Ferry	4
St Paul's Road @ Thorsway	Rock Ferry	2

Thorsway @ Rock Close	Rock Ferry	2
Woodward Road (Outside 126)	Rock Ferry	1
Matthew Street, Wallasey	Seacombe	6
Arrowe Park Road, Upton between 17 & 19	Upton	2
Ferny Brow Road @ Carr Bridge Road	Upton	2
Leeswood Road, Woodchurch (junction with Arrowe Park Road)	Upton	2
Orrets Meadow @ Carr Bridge Road	Upton	2
Slingsby Drive at entrance to St Mary's Court	Upton	2
Wallingford Road @ Old Greasby Road	Upton	2
Kingsway (between 27 & 29 access to Tennis Courts), Wallasey	Wallasey	2
Marshlands Road, Wallasey	Wallasey	4
Claremount Road and Harrow Road	Wallasey	2
Claremount Road and Church Hill	Wallasey	2
Grove Road @ Parkway, The Leas, The Willows, Conniston Ave and Sandcliffe Road, Wallasey Village	Wallasey	10
Wallasey Village at its junction with Sandiways Road	Wallasey	2
Wallasey Village. Entrance adjacent to The Farmers Arms PH	Wallasey	2
Wallasey Village. Entrances fronting Classic Cars of Wirral	Wallasey	4
Bridge Road / Meols Drive (West Kirby)	West Kirby	2
Black Horse Hill @ entrance to cemetery	West Kirby & Thurstaston	2
South Parade, West Kirby (Disabled bays opp. Salisbury Ave)	West Kirby & Thurstaston	3
South Parade, West Kirby (@ Coronation Gardens)	West Kirby & Thurstaston	2
Sandy Lane / Village Road (2 Entrances into Moby Dick)	West Kirby & Thurstaston	4

Appendix D

AIR QUALITY / ENVIRONMENT – WALKING STRATEGY

PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS - REFUGES, FOOTWAYS & RADII IMPROVEMENTS

PROPOSED

<u>Location:</u>	<u>Ward:</u>	<u>Scheme</u>	
Hoylake Road / Chapelhill Road, Moreton	(Leasowe & Moreton East Ward)	Refuge	£15,000
Slatey Road/Park Road South, Birkenhead	(Claughton Ward)	Refuge	£15,000
TOTAL			£30,000

RESERVE LIST

<u>Location:</u>	<u>Ward:</u>	<u>Scheme</u>	Est: £
Hoylake Road/Doreen Avenue, (Moreton)	(Moreton West & Saughall Massie)	Radii Imp'	£10,000

REFUGE ISLANDS - Previous (and new) requests - Investigation Pending

<u>Location:</u>	<u>Ward:</u>
Bromborough Rd (between Ellens Ln-Church Rd)	(Bebington Ward)
Bromborough Rd (between Ellens Ln-Church Rd)	(Bebington Ward)
Kings Lane, Bebington (nr Bebington Road)	(Bebington Ward)
Kings Road, Bebington	(Bebington Ward)
Teehey Lane (between Kennet–Brackenwood Rd)	(Bebington Ward)
Cross Lane (o/s Co-op)	(Bebington Ward)
Conway St/Vittoria St, B'head	(Birkenhead & Tranmere Ward)
Grange Road West/Oxton Road, Birkenhead	(Birkenhead & Tranmere Ward)
Hilbre View, West Kirby	(Birkenhead & Tranmere Ward)
Whetstone Lane/Exmouth Street, Birkenhead	(Birkenhead & Tranmere Ward)
Tollemache Rd – Near Mercer Rd, Bidston	(Bidston & St James Ward)
Bidston Rd (between Howbeck & Ashburton)	(Claughton Ward)
Park Road South, Birkenhead	(Claughton Ward)
Park Road West, Birkenhead	(Claughton Ward)
Slatey Road, Birkenhead	(Claughton/Oxton Wards)
Arrowe Road/St Nicholas Church, Greasby	(Greasby, Frankby & Irby Ward)
Frankby Road, Greasby	(Greasby, Frankby & Irby Ward)
Mill Lane/Greasby Rd, Greasby	(Greasby, Frankby & Irby Ward)
Birkett Ave/Reeds Lane, Leasowe	(Leasowe & Moreton East Ward)
Queen Street, Liscard	(Liscard Ward)
Maryland Lane, Moreton	(Moreton West & Saughall Massie)
Marsden Court/Rake Lane, New Brighton	(New Brighton Ward)

Rake Lane/Sandfield Road, New Brighton	(New Brighton Ward)
Borough Road/Irvine Road, Tranmere	(Prenton Ward)
Prenton Road West, Prenton	(Prenton Ward)
Storeton Road, Prenton	(Prenton Ward)
Bidston Road/Talbot Road, Oxton	(Oxton Ward)
Gerald Road/Wellington road, Oxton	(Oxton Ward)
Shrewsbury Rd (nr Alton Road)	(Oxton Ward)
Storeton Road, Oxton	(Oxton Ward)
Talbot Road, Oxton	(Oxton Ward)
Woodchurch Rd – Nr Dovedale Close, Oxton	(Oxton Ward)
Woodchurch Road, Prenton	(Oxton/Prenton Wards)
Bebington Road (nr Egerton Park)	(Rock Ferry Ward)
Borough Road, Seacombe	(Seacombe Ward)
Bayswater Road, New Brighton	(Wallasey Ward)
Black Horse Hill/Column Rd, West Kirby	(West Kirby & Thurstaston Ward)
Column Road, West Kirby	(West Kirby & Thurstaston Ward)
Grange Road/Ashburton Rd, Heatherdene Rd	(West Kirby & Thurstaston Ward)
Seaview Road, Wallasey	(Wallasey/Liscard/New Brighton)

NEW FOOTWAY - Previous (and new) requests - Investigation Pending

Location:

Ward:

Clatterbridge Rd, C'bridge & Thornton Hough	(Clatterbridge Ward)
Neston Road, Thornton Hough	(Clatterbridge Ward)
Poulton Road/Crompton Road, Spital	(Clatterbridge Ward)
Raby Hall Road, Bromborough	(Clatterbridge Ward)
Brimstage Rd, - Nr Brimstage Hall, Brimstage	(partially... Clatterbridge Ward)
Kingsmead Road South, Oxton	Claughton/Oxton Wards)
Hill Bark Road, Frankby	(Greasby, Frankby & Irby Ward)
Mill Hill Road, Irby	(Greasby, Frankby & Irby Ward)
West Kirby Rd/Saughall Massie Rd, Moreton	(Hoyle & Meols/Moreton West & Saughall Massie Wards)
Birkett Ave/Bidston Bypass, Bidston	(Leasowe & Moreton East Ward)
Sandcliffe Road, Wallasey	(Wallasey Ward)

RADII IMPROVEMENT - Previous (and new) requests - Investigation Pending

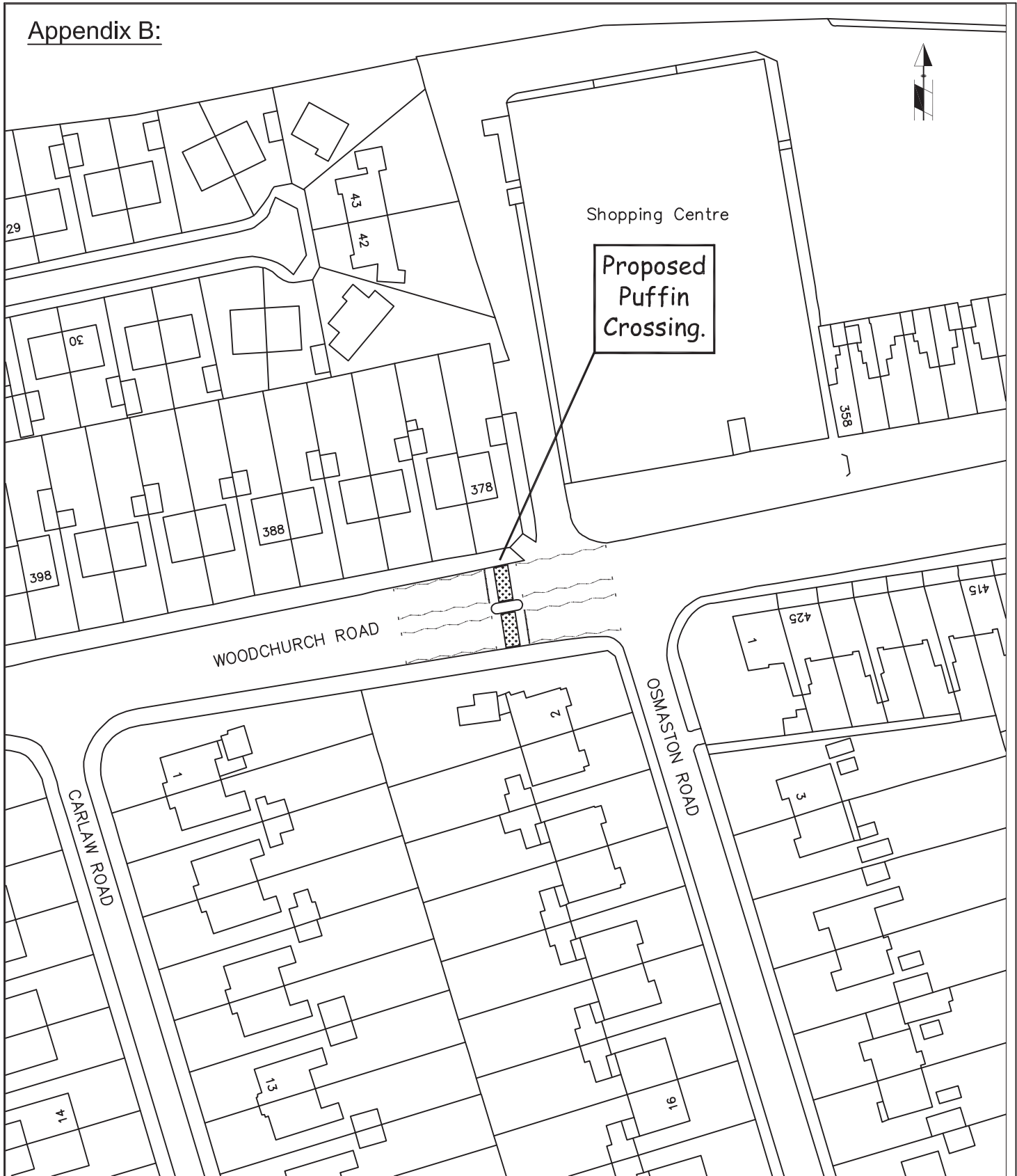
Location:

Ward:

Gayton Ave/Thornton Rd, Higher Bebington	(Bebington Ward)
Heath Road/Pulford Road, Bebington	(Bebington Ward)
Heswall Ave/Thornton Rd, Higher Bebington	(Bebington Ward)
Thornton Road, Higher Bebington	(Bebington/Rock Ferry Wards)
Boundary Road, Bidston	(Bidston & St James Ward)
West Kirby (various)	(Hoyle & Meols/West Kirby & Thurstaston Wards)
Town Meadow Lane/Millhouse Lane, Moreton	(Moreton West & Saughall Massie Ward)
Upton Road, Moreton	(Moreton West & Saughall Massie /Leasowe & Saughall Massie)
Heywood Boulevard, Thingwall	(Prenton Ward)
Gerard Road, West Kirby	(West Kirby & Thurstaston Ward)
Grange Cross Lane/Column Rd, Newton	(West Kirby & Thurstaston Ward)

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Appendix B:



WIRRAL

Technical Services Department

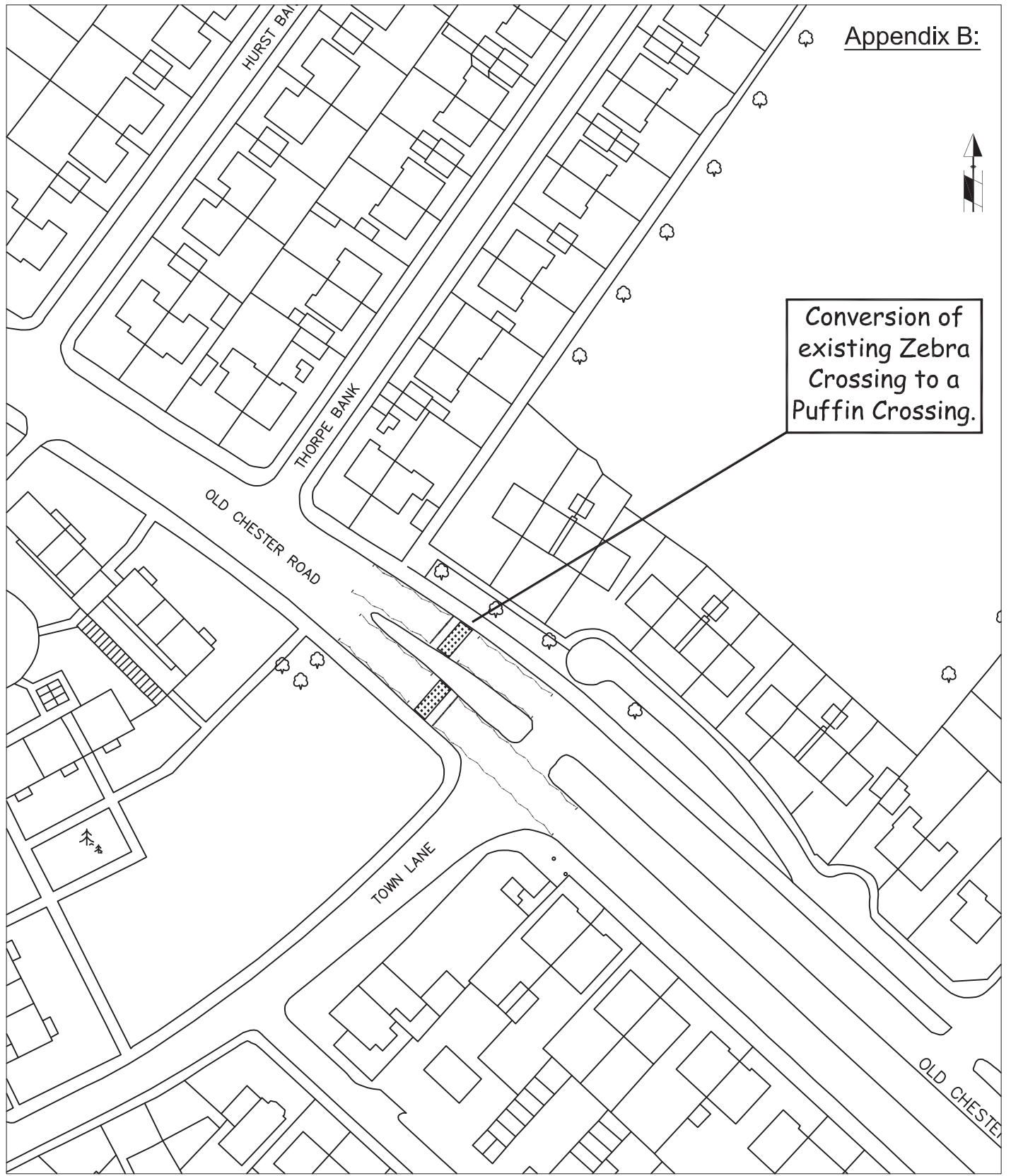
David Green
Director

Woodchurch Road / Osmaston Road
(Oxton and Prenton Wards)
Proposed Puffin Crossing

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Conversion of existing Zebra Crossing to a Puffin Crossing.



WIRRAL

Technical Services Department

David Green
Director

Old Chester Road / Town Lane
(Bebington and Rock Ferry Wards)
Proposed Puffin Crossing

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK - AREA FORUM CONSULTATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report brings to Cabinet's attention the results of Area Forum Consultation on the drawing up of the 2009/10 list of highway schemes under the LTP Integrated Transport Block.
- 1.2 It summarises the decision of each Area Forum on the possible reallocation of this transport block from the centre to each Area Forum.
- 1.3 The report concludes and seeks Cabinet approval to the Block Allocation becoming wholly decentralised and each Area Forum receiving an allocation of £18,200.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At the Cabinet meeting held on 12 June 2008, a report was considered on the de-centralisation of Integrated Transport funding to Area Forums (Minute 61 refers) Cabinet subsequently agreed to continue the allocation of funding to the two Forums Heswall/Pensby/Thingwall and Bromborough/Eastham for the current year 2008/09.
- 2.2 The success of this initiative piloted in 2007/08 in these two Area Forums was also reported upon with the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services welcoming the positive feedback.
- 2.3 Cabinet resolved (inter alia):
 - the positive consultation feedback from the two pilot Forums and strong support for the continued de-centralisation of funding in future years be noted; and
 - officers be requested to consult the remaining nine Forums in the next cycle of meetings to determine if they wish to receive de-centralised funding for 2009/10 based on the success of this pilot initiative.

3.0 REPORT

- 3.1 As instructed by Cabinet, officers engaged with the Area Forums in their January/February 2009 cycle of meetings and officers drew their attention to the following key points listed below.
- 3.2 Two of the eleven Area Forums have previously decided that they would prefer to benefit locally by having part of the LTP Integrated Transport Block decentralised and put at their disposal for consideration of local schemes. This arrangement was reached based on a similar consultation exercise to this held in 2006.
- 3.3 The sum of money is in the region of £18,200 per Area Forum and can typically be used to provide lowered kerb crossings, modest local signposting and road lining schemes. In some instances depending upon physical constraints it may be possible to provide for a central road island to help people cross the road and/or introduce pedestrian safety barriers.

- 3.4 The alternative to not decentralising the funding is for it to be administered centrally as now and for larger, more expensive schemes to be put in on a Borough-wide basis based on a priority assessment so some areas will benefit but others may not.
- 3.5 Those two Area Forums currently holding their own budget receive officer input to guide them in their decision making process and this would be made available if the initiative was expanded to cover all Area Forums.
- 3.6 Should Area Forums decide to have their own de-centralised share of Integrated Transport funding, there is no restriction of neighbouring Area Forums combining funding or providing match funding from “You Decide” or other sources.
- 3.7 The following table identifies the Area Forums, the date of meeting and the result of the consultation exercise:

Date 2009	Forum	Allocate on Individual Basis	Leave at Centre
Tuesday – 7pm 3 February	Oxton/Prenton	✓	
Tuesday – 7pm 3 February	Bebington/Clatterbridge		✓
Thursday – 7pm 12 February	Bidston & Cloughton		✓
Thursday – 7pm 12 February	Heswall/Pensby & Thingwall	✓	
Monday – 7pm 16 February	New Brighton/Wallasey	✓	
Monday – 7pm 16 February	West Wirral	✓	
Tuesday – 7pm 17 February	Bromborough/Eastham	✓	
Tuesday – 7pm 17 February	Greasby, Frankby, Irby, Upton & Woodchurch	✓	
Wednesday – 7pm 25 February	Liscard/Seacombe	✓	
Wednesday – 6pm 25 February	Birkenhead & Tranmere/ Rock Ferry		✓
Wednesday – 7pm 25 February	Leasowe, Moreton & Saughall Massie	✓	

4.0 ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK AND PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

- 4.1 The result of the consultations is that eight of the eleven Area Forums wish to receive their one-eleventh share of the Integrated Transport Block funding, equating to approximately £18,200 each.
- 4.2 Three Area Forums, Bebington/Clatterbridge, Bidston/Cloughton and Birkenhead & Tranmere/Rock Ferry have a preference for the funding remaining at the centre.
- 4.3 Based on the strong majority in favour of de-centralisation and the previously reported success of the two pilot Forums, it is proposed that the Integrated Transport Block allocation is wholly de-centralised and a one eleventh share given to each Area Forum.
- 4.4 Even though this approach does not correspond to the wishes of three of the Area Forums, the view of my officers is that unfortunately it would not be possible to operate a centrally managed prioritised programme based on such a small number of areas and associated funding (£54,600).

5.0 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The funding referred to in this report is the £200,000 allocation within the Environment/ Air Quality Block of the Council's Transportation Capital Programme. The overall Transportation Capital Programme was approved by Cabinet on 15th January 2009 (Minute 336 refers) and the detailed Environment/ Air Quality Block report is also to be considered at this meeting.
- 5.2 It is proposed that £18,200 is given to each Area Forum for the year 2009/10 and it is important to note that this Capital funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) must be spent within the financial year on capital schemes or initiatives that meet their criteria for Integrated Transport Block spending.
- 5.3 It should be stressed that if all this funding is to be successfully spent by the eleven Forums within the financial year, timely decision making by Area Forums on how they wish their funding to be spent will be vital.
- 5.4 To facilitate this timely decision making, close support and guidance will need to be provided by officers from Technical Services. At this stage, it is anticipated that the de-centralised approach proposed in this report will be more resource intensive in terms of staffing however it is anticipated this can be covered from within existing staff resources.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no implications under this heading.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Schemes which can arise out of the determination on the spending profile of the block allocation can help improve safety.

8.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no implications under this heading.

9.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no planning implications.

10.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no implications under this heading.

11.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no implications under this heading.

12.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 All Wards have been part of the consultation process.

13.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

- 13.1 None.

14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 That

- (1) the report be noted and that officers be thanked for their engagement with the Area Forums over this matter.
- (2) the Integrated Transport Block Allocation be decentralised with each Area Forum receiving a one-eleventh share amounting to approximately £18,200 in 2009/10 to carry out scheme(s) of a traffic management/road safety nature in the local area.
- (3) the Director of Technical Services provide assistance in each Forum area for this expenditure to aid decision making in drawing up future works programmes under the Integrated Transport Block Allocation.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19TH MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

COMMUNITY SPEED INITIATIVE (ACCIDENTS 2zer0)

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs Cabinet of the results of further consultation with Community Forums and Members over requests for the next round of areas within the Community Speed Initiative (Bring Accidents Down 2zer0) programme.
- 1.2 The report seeks approval from Cabinet to move the initial trial areas scheme to a further seven areas identified within the report.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members may recall my update of the successful Community Speed Initiative which I reported to Cabinet on 16th October 2008. The scheme aims to encourage a greater awareness of vehicle speeds amongst drivers through innovative signing in a number of discrete areas.
- 2.2 The initial seven pilot areas were as follows:-
 1. Acre Lane, Bromborough
 2. New Ferry Road, New Ferry
 3. Oxton Village, Oxton
 4. Rigby Drive, Greasby
 5. Westbourne Road, West Kirby
 6. Cleveley Road, Meols
 7. Withens Lane, Liscard/New Brighton
- 2.2 As part of my initial evaluation, I had reported the results of both residents and driver surveys which indicated overall that the views were positive towards this type of scheme. This type of scheme raises awareness of both residents and drivers to the risks that inappropriate speed can have as contributory factors in road accidents.
- 2.3 At its meeting of 16th October 2008 Cabinet (Minute 239) resolved that:
 - (1) the report be noted and it be acknowledged that overall the initiative had received positive support from both motorists and residents;
 - (2) the continuation of the initiative by moving the scheme from the seven pilot areas to another seven areas throughout the Borough be endorsed;

(3) Officers to engage with communities via Area Forums over the possibility of moving the initiative on into other local areas, mindful of the broad criteria associated with this initiative; and

(4) elected Members be encouraged to offer assistance in identifying community groups which could be contacted in their Wards to assist in the Community Speed Watch initiative.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 I have consulted with each of the 11 Area Forums, together with all elected Members seeking proposals from each, new areas within which to develop this Community Speed Initiative. In addition to the views of Members and those expressed via Community Forums, I have also included suggestions that have been received from individual members of the public who have seen the original pilot scheme.

3.2 Whilst I have had a wide range of suggestions for new areas, I do not consider that all these would be suitable or practical (based on type of road; no sensible area to be found). The criteria for this type of scheme has previously been agreed and is based on the following:-

- Residential areas which are self-contained and consist of traffic flows/speeds which are likely to be influenced by this type of initiative and lead to success;
- Road safety records – together with road safety enquiries, petitions etc received by the Dept and the overall history of road safety concerns;
- Presence of schools and School Travel Plan (Safer Routes to School initiatives);
- Presence of local community groups to take ownership and help drive and promote the initiative;

3.3 Over 240 roads or areas have now been suggested as part of my ongoing consultations. Each of these has been plotted, to better enable the identification of potential new locations. Appendix A lists these roads and a plan is on display in the Members Room identifying the next 14 generic areas which it is proposed to roll out the scheme in two phases as indicated in paragraph 4.2.

3.4 It is proposed that seven of these areas will be identified through the Member briefing process and will be reported to Cabinet on the night. These seven will be rolled out during April/May 2009 and be on site until October 2009 after which the remaining sites will be treated.

4.0 PROPOSED NEW AREAS

4.1 Based on the consultation together with requests and officer input, a further 14 discrete areas have been identified. These areas are as follows:

1. Orrysdale Road/Lang Lane, West Kirby
2. Bertram Drive, Meols
3. Bermuda Road, Moreton

4. Borrowdale Road, Moreton
5. Pasture Avenue, Moreton
6. Sandbrook Lane, Moreton
7. Holmlands Drive, Prenton
8. Waterpark Road, Prenton
9. Station Road, Liscard
10. Limekilm Lane, Bidston
11. Deveraux Drive, Liscard
12. Devonshire Road, Liscard
13. Townfield Lane, Bebington
14. Mill Park Drive, Eastham

- 4.2 I consider it important that complacency and familiarity does not set in and it is both the officers' view, supported by the public that the signs should be moved around as part of a rolling programme.
- 4.3 Subject to agreement by Cabinet it is proposed that seven of the fourteen listed sites are subject to this initiative from May to October 2009 and the remaining seven from November 2009 to April 2010.
- 4.4 From April 2010 onwards, it is proposed that the rolling programme continue by returning to the initial seven pilot areas and thereafter the programme of twenty one sites would continue on a six month rotation basis.
- 4.5 Further areas could be added to this rolling programme however this would require either more investment in new signs or the frequency of this initiative at the twenty one sites would have to decrease.

5.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Existing staff resources will be utilised in the delivery of this initiative.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The estimated cost of moving signs, together with necessary publicity of £10,000 p.a. will be met from the Technical Services Revenue Budget.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no implications under this heading.

8.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no specific planning implications arising directly from this report.

9.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct Community Safety implications however this initiative is likely to increase public awareness of road safety issues.

10.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific human rights implications arising directly from this report.

11.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no implications under this heading.

12.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct Social Inclusion implications

13.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report.

14.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

14.1 No background papers have been used.

15.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 This report has Borough-wide implications, and therefore has implications for all ward members.

16.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) the content of the report in respect of the consultation which has taken place so far be noted;
- (2) the Director of Technical Services investigate suitable additional areas as necessary adding to the programme as necessary;
- (3) a programme of rotation of areas for the Bring Accidents Down 2zer0 scheme as indicated in the report be endorsed.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES

Requests for consideration of Bring Accidents Down 2zer0

APPENDIX A

Road	Area	Originator
Lang Lane Area	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Jubilee Drive	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Broughton Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Greenhow Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Hillview Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Marine Park	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Birkett Road	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Grainger Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Boulton Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Broxton Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Raeburn Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Gresford Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Redhouse Lane	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Belmont Road	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Claremount Road	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Leigh Road	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Darmonds Green	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Bridge Road	Hoylake & Meols	Cllr Jeff Green
Queens Drive Area	Hoylake & Meols	Individual Member of Public
Bertram Drive	Hoylake & Meols	Individual Member of Public
Queens Drive	Hoylake & Meols	Individual Member of Public
Banks Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Individual Member of Public
Bertam Drive North	Hoylake & Meols	Individual Member of Public
Leighton Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Individual Member of Public
Mannington Close	Hoylake & Meols	Individual Member of Public
Kings Avenue	Hoylake & Meols	Individual Member of Public
Bermuda Road	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Millhouse Lane	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Town Meadow Lane	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Kestrel Road	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Edgehill Road	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley

Wastdale Drive	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Borrowdale Road	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Overchurch Road	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Meadowbrook Road	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Cobham Road	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Rosslyn Drive	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Seaforth Drive	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Cartmel Drive	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Beech Avenue	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Elm Avenue	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Kingfisher Way	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Acton Lane	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
Overchurch Road	Greasley, Irby, Frankyby, Upton & Woodchurch	Community Rep Jean Robinson
Birch Avenue	Moreton	Cllr Chris Blakeley
ivy lane	Leasowe & Moreton	Councillor Ian Lewis
kingsmead road	Leasowe & Moreton	Councillor Ian Lewis
daneswell drive	Leasowe & Moreton & Saughall Massie	Councillor Abbey - Leasowe
pasture avenue	Leasowe & Moreton	Councillor Ian Lewis
Danger lane	Leasowe & Moreton & Saughall Massie	Councillor Abbey - Leasowe
ivy lane	Leasowe & Moreton & Saughall Massie	Councillor Abbey - Leasowe
west way	Leasowe & Moreton & Saughall Massie	Councillor Abbey - Leasowe
Sandbrook lane	Leasowe & Moreton	Councillor Ian Lewis
Chapelhill road	Leasowe & Moreton	Councillor Ian Lewis
stavordale road	Leasowe & Moreton	Councillor Ian Lewis
croft drive	Leasowe & Moreton	Councillor Ian Lewis
Chapelhill road	Leasowe & Moreton & Saughall Massie	Councillor Abbey - Leasowe
Pinetree Grove	Leasowe & Moreton & Saughall Massie	Councillor Abbey
Cherry Tree Road	Leasowe & Moreton & Saughall Massie	Councillor Abbey
Holmlands Drive	Prenton	Cllr Stuart Kelly
Holmlands Drive	Prenton	Cllr Stuart Kelly
Prestbury Avenue	Prenton	Cllr Stuart Kelly
Banbury Way	Prenton	Cllr Stuart Kelly

Aylesbury Avenue	Prenton	Cllr Stuart Kelly
Waterpark Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Waterpark Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Cecil Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Elm Road North	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Curzon Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Cambridge Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Brynaston Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Osmaston Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Carlaw Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Gresford Avenue	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Pulford Avenue	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Malpas Avenue	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Broxton Avenue	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Northwood Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Swan Court	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Grainger Avenue	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Holm Hey Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Prenton Village Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Dickens Avenue	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Goldsmith Way	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Edinburgh Drive	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Bramwell Avenue	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Cornwall Drive	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Queens Drive	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Glenavon Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Reservoir Road North	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
St Stephens Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Elm Road	Prenton	Cllr Simon Holbrook
Cliff Road	Leasowe & Moreton	Licasrd Councillors / Area Forum Community Representative
Station Road	Leasowe & Moreton	Licasrd Councillors / Area Forum Community Representative
Deveraux Drive	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee

Erskine Road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
Clifford Road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
Kingsley Road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
Broughton Road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Ben Nevis Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Snowdon Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Irvine Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Everest Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Ingleborough Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Malvern Grove	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Mallory Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Stuart Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
South Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Hawthorne Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Clarence Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Heathbank Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Rockybank Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Willowbank Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Greenbank Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Westbank Road	Tranmere	Tranmere Hall & Devonshire Park Estate with support from Members
Barlow Avenue	Bebington	Cllr Jerry Williams
Beresford Avenue	Bebington	Cllr Jerry Williams
Stonehill Avenue	Bebington	Cllr Jerry Williams
Oaklands Drive	Bebington	Cllr Jerry Williams
Townfield Lane	Bebington	Cllr Jerry Williams
Wellington Road	Bebington	Cllr Jerry Williams
Thornleigh Avenue	Bromborough & Eastham	Councillor Dave Mitchell
Kelsall Avenue	Bromborough & Eastham	Councillor Dave Mitchell
Norley Avenue	Bromborough & Eastham	Councillor Dave Mitchell
Kingsley Avenue	Bromborough & Eastham	Councillor Dave Mitchell
Lowfields	Bromborough & Eastham	Councillor Dave Mitchell

grosvenor street	Leasowe & Moreton	Licasrd Councillors / Area Forum Community Representative
belgrave street	Leasowe & Moreton	Licasrd Councillors / Area Forum Community Representative
marlowe road	Leasowe & Moreton	Licasrd Councillors / Area Forum Community Representative
seabank road	Leasowe & Moreton	Licasrd Councillors / Area Forum Community Representative
shakleton road	Leasowe & Moreton & Saughall Massie	Local Area Forum & Joe Lee Representative
rice lane	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
lea road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
charlotte road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
king street	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
trafalgar road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
percy road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
hatherley street	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
oakdale road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
Norwood road	Liscard & Seacombe	Representative Joe Lee
Church street	Bromborough & Eastham	Councillor John Salter
adaston avenue	Bromborough & Eastham	Clr Phil Gilchrist
grampian way	Bromborough & Eastham	Clr Phil Gilchrist
glenburn avenue	Bromborough & Eastham	Clr Phil Gilchrist
lyndale avenue	Bromborough & Eastham	Clr Phil Gilchrist
heygarth road	Bromborough & Eastham	Clr Phil Gilchrist
bridle road	Bromborough & Eastham	Clr Phil Gilchrist
plmyard avenue	Bromborough & Eastham	Clr Phil Gilchrist
eastham rake	Bromborough & Eastham	Clr Phil Gilchrist
Royden road	Greasby, Irby, Frankby, Upton & Woodchurch	Community Rep Jean Robinson
Manor Road	Greasby, Irby, Frankby, Upton & Woodchurch	Community Rep Jean Robinson
Abingdon road	Greasby, Irby, Frankby, Upton & Woodchurch	
hillview road	Greasby, Irby, Frankby, Upton & Woodchurch	
Ford Road	Greasby, Irby, Frankby, Upton & Woodchurch	
norman street	Claughton	Community Rep Jean Robinson
upper brassey street	Claughton	Councillor Steve Foulkes and Denise Roberts
elfet street	Claughton	Councillor Steve Foulkes and Denise Roberts
colwyn street	Claughton	Councillor Steve Foulkes and Denise Roberts
Clifford street	Claughton	Councillor Steve Foulkes and Denise Roberts
Kingsley street	Claughton	Councillor Steve Foulkes and Denise Roberts

Portland street
Malaby Street
Elm park road
Stoneby drive
mount pleasant road
Kings Road
Teehey Lane
Heath Road
Dacre Hill
Coombe Road
Heathbank Avenue

Claughton
Claughton
New Brighton & Wallasey
New Brighton & Wallasey
New Brighton & Wallasey
Bebington & Clatterbridge
Bebington & Clatterbridge
Bebington & Clatterbridge
Bebington & Clatterbridge
Greasby, Irby, Frankby
Greasby, Irby, Frankby

Councillor Steve Foulkes and Denise Roberts
Councillor Steve Foulkes and Denise Roberts
Representative Martin Revans
Representative Martin Revans
Representative Martin Revans
Councillor Sheila Clarke
Councillor Sheila Clarke
Councillor Sheila Clarke
Councillor Sheila Clarke
Councillors Jean Quinn and Gill Gardiner
Councillors Jean Quinn and Gill Gardiner

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19TH MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

HIGHWAY AND ENGINEERING SERVICES PROCUREMENT EXERCISE – CONTRACT MOBILISATION UPDATE AND READINESS FOR SERVICE REVIEW

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Further to the decision by Cabinet on 16th October 2008 to award the new Highway and Engineering Services contract to Colas Limited, this report provides an update on the contract mobilisation process on the run-up to the 1st April 2009 contract commencement and seeks Cabinet endorsement for the commencement of the new contract following the recent Gateway 4 Readiness for Service Review.
- 1.2 This report also seeks Cabinet approval for exemption from Contracts Procedure Rule 19 'Procurement valued at less than £50,000.00', to facilitate the use of the Engineering Workshop, by other Council Departments, as set out in paragraphs 3.4.5 and 3.4.6.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall my previous report to Cabinet on 20th September 2007 which noted the conclusions reached by consultants Capita Symonds that a "single service with single provider" contract arrangement be introduced and achieved using a Restricted Procedure procurement route.
- 2.2 The "single service single provider" arrangement consists of bringing together all the separate service contracts into one single contract with a single provider with the Council retaining full client control. Potential efficiency savings in the Capita Outline Business Case were estimated at £3.6M over eight years and it was highlighted that such an approach would generate significant efficiencies particularly in terms of improved quality and increased output of work for the capital works allocations available and on the client side less staff will be required to manage a single strategic contract resulting in direct staff savings. Further detailed information relating to financial and staffing issues was subsequently presented to Cabinet on 1st November 2007.
- 2.3 In the report to Cabinet on 16th October 2008, the outcome of the tender evaluation process was presented with the recommendation that the new contract be awarded to Colas Limited (Minute 246 refers).
- 2.4 In relation to the quantitative value for money assessment, the Financial Evaluation Model based on a typical basket of works

indicated that Colas Limited were considerably cheaper than the second placed provider, Balfour Beatty. In addition, Colas Limited were cheaper than Wirral Council Operational Services Division by a similar margin even when taking into account the anticipated cost to the Council of closing down the in-house arrangements.

- 2.5 In terms of efficiency savings, a comparison of the anticipated cost of carrying out works during the current year 2008/9 using existing contract arrangements with the cost of carrying out the same work under the new contract was undertaken. This indicated that the same volume of work could be procured from the new Colas Limited rates for £550,000 less than under the existing contracts, resulting in a projected efficiency saving of £4.4M over the eight year contract period and confirmation that the efficiency savings proposed in the initial Outline Business Case will be realised.
- 2.6 In relation to the qualitative value for money assessment, Colas Limited also achieved the highest quality score with a submission highlighting their expertise in delivering similar Local Authority and Highways Agency maintenance contracts as well as a number of surfacing, street lighting and framework contracts for other Local Authorities with a total value of in the region of £145M per annum.
- 2.7 In advance of the report to Cabinet on 16th October recommending the award of the contract, an external Gateway 3 Investment Decision Review was undertaken by the 4Ps organisation. The purpose of the Review was primarily to validate the Council's approach to the procurement exercise including the evaluation of tenders, selection of preferred provider and confirmation of business case before the Investment Decision was made.
- 2.8 The conclusion of the Review was that "the Review Team finds that a successful procurement has been delivered, in a well managed manner. The project continues to meet Council objectives and will deliver value-for-money. The omens for success are good." Recommendations from the Review have subsequently been considered and taken into account as part of the Contract Mobilisation process undertaken jointly by Technical Services and Colas Limited to prepare for the start of the new contract and this is discussed in more detail in this report.
- 2.9 Most recently, a Gateway 4 Readiness for Service Review has been carried out by 4Ps on 16th to 18th February 2009 and this report draws Members' attention to the Recommendations from the report and corresponding action to be taken. Further detail in relation to the Review is set out in this report and based on the successful outcome it is proposed that Cabinet endorse the commencement of the new contract.

3.0 CONTRACT MOBILISATION UPDATE

3.1 Project Management Arrangements

3.1.1 Following the award of the contract last October, robust project management arrangements were introduced jointly with Colas Limited to ensure the successful execution of the Contract Mobilisation phase. This has included:

- The establishment of a detailed Project Plan consisting of nine workstreams with a lead officer for each. (The workstreams are People & Communications, Partnering/ Change Management, Depot & Offices, Plant/ Vehicles & Equipment, ICT, Supply Chain, Operations & Work Programme, Management Systems and Stakeholder Liaison).
- Regular meetings at Director level from both organisations on a fortnightly basis to track and monitor contract mobilisation progress.
- Regular meetings on a weekly basis between Head of Service and key officers.
- A robust approach to actively managing risks associated with the mobilisation phase and also once the contract has commenced (see next section).
- A value engineering exercise to review and improve key client processes.

3.2 Risk Management

3.2.1 The previous Gateway 3 Investment Decision Review highlighted the need to carry out a fundamental review of the project risk register once the contract had been awarded. On this basis, the Risk Sub-group consisting of representatives from various Council Departments and with the assistance of an external consultant carried out this fundamental review of risk from a Council perspective and this has subsequently been combined with the Colas Risk Register to achieve a joint approach, not only for risks associated with mobilisation but also once the contract has commenced.

3.3 Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

3.3.1 The previous Gateway 3 Review highlighted the importance of developing an enhanced Communications Plan covering all aspects of the mobilisation and implementation of the contract. This enhanced Plan has been developed and implemented and has included thorough engagement with all Council employees affected by the new contract and plans for communication and engagement to formally launch the new contract.

3.3.2 A new partnership logo has also been agreed with Colas that will be used on vehicle livery, signage and operatives' workwear.

3.4 Transfer of Operational Services Division Employees

- 3.4.1 The previous Gateway 3 Review stressed the importance of having a properly planned and resourced approach for the employee transfer project.
- 3.4.2 Since appointment, Colas have adopted a rigorous approach to what is arguably the most crucial aspect of the mobilisation process. This commenced with a joint presentation by Colas and Technical Services to all Operational Services employees on 3rd December last year at Birkenhead Town Hall and was followed by meetings on an individual basis with every employee before Christmas. Since the New Year, the staff transfer in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations 2006 has progressed with further regular meetings with employees on an individual basis and Trade Union representatives.
- 3.4.3 It is important to note that in previous reports to Cabinet it was suggested that there were a number of “at risk” employees working in the Engineering Workshop to which TUPE Regulations would not apply as this related to work not carried out under the existing highways contract.
- 3.4.4 Council officers from Legal Services, Corporate Procurement and Technical Services have worked closely with Colas to review and develop the business case for the Engineering Workshop. It has now been identified that there is further work carried out by Technical Services that can be carried out under the new contract and as a result I can confirm that Colas have recognised that TUPE Regulations do apply to these employees and agree to take on the Engineering Workshop as a viable business unit.
- 3.4.5 A side of the Technical Services workload that is now recognised to correspond to approximately 55% of the Workshop’s income, the remaining income is achieved by carrying out work for the remaining Departments of the Council. There is an expectation for the other Council Departments to continue business as in the past and to use the new contract arrangements subject to client Departments being satisfied they are getting value for money and formal approval by Cabinet.
- 3.4.6 In order to protect the Council’s interests and to comply with Contracts Procedure Rules, approval is sought from the Cabinet for an exemption from Rule 19 ‘Procurement valued at less than £50,000’, and to set an upper limit of £30,000 on works orders, with works orders above this value being subject to open competition. This would allow market testing to continue and help to ensure value for money will be achieved.

3.4.7 In relation to the other “at risk” employees identified in the Transport Section, I am also pleased to advise that Colas will lease a number of specialist vehicles from the Council and have them maintained and serviced by the Transport Section. Even though only a small number of vehicles, due to their specialist nature they require a greater degree of maintenance/ servicing and this equates to approximately two thirds of the income that the Section would have received from the existing highways service. Overall, this agreement with Colas safeguards the Transport Section business for a further twelve months to enable the wider review of transport across all Council Departments to be progressed.

3.5 Establishment of Intelligent Client

3.5.1 A number of recommendations from the Gateway 3 Review focused on the development of the new Client team required to deliver the new contract, in particular the need to move from an approach where individual service areas (highway maintenance, street lighting, traffic management etc) issue work and liaise with the contractor separately towards a single “intelligent client” approach with the Council’s Highways Contract Manager and team of managers/inspectors acting as the focal point and conduit for the day-to-day activity within the contract. The Review also stressed the importance of a rigorous approach to skills gap analysis/ training provision and the role of ICT in achieving effective asset management and contract supervision.

3.5.2 In conjunction with Finance ICT colleagues, new client processes have been developed and recently a value engineering exercise facilitated by an external consultant has been undertaken to ensure key objectives relating to establishing an efficient client adopting a single point of contact are being achieved.

3.5.3 Corporate skills assessment/ analysis software has been used to ensure Client staff have the necessary capabilities/ competencies and training needs are identified, and a number of workshops during March are planned with both client and contractor staff to ensure new processes and methods of working are understood and adopted as well as dealing with the broader culture change issues associated with moving to a more modern partnering contract.

3.6 Termination of Existing In-house Arrangements including Depot Proposals

3.6.1 The stock in the ownership of the Council both in terms of stores and materials on site at Dock Road depot have been assessed by the Director of Finance’s Corporate Procurement Unit and they are currently carrying out the negotiation with Colas and other contractors/suppliers to dispose of these assets where possible and achieve the best possible deal for the Council.

- 3.6.2 Due to the current economic climate, it is proving difficult to find interested parties to purchase these stores and materials. Whilst every effort is being made to find suitable purchasers, there may be a situation at year end that will require some of these assets to be scrapped or written off.
- 3.6.3 In terms of service continuity, the level of planned work is now reducing on the run-up to the end of March to ensure that all Operational Services Division work commitments are completed, however reactive teams will still be in place until the day of transfer to deal with urgent repairs/ defects, any emergency incidents and to provide a full winter maintenance service if required.
- 3.6.4 Even though Colas will commence the new contract by occupying Dock Road depot in the same manner as Operational Services Division, the new lease agreement with Colas is strictly on a twelve month basis to the end of March 2010. After this time, Colas have undertaken to move to an alternative depot site in close proximity to Dock Road for the remainder of the contract.
- 3.6.5 This short term lease and commitment by Colas to leave Dock Road provides the Council with the opportunity to review its strategy for the disposal or re-use of the Dock Road site and this will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management in due course.

4.0 SUMMARY OF GATEWAY 4 READINESS FOR SERVICE REVIEW

- 4.1 The Gateway 4 Readiness for Service Review was undertaken by 4Ps on 16th to 18th February 2009 and their final report is appended to this report.
- 4.2 The overall outcome of the Gateway Review process is now captured by a Delivery Confidence Assessment which for this Review was as follows:

Delivery Confidence Assessment: Amber/ Green

The Review Team finds that much good work has been achieved in the context of a robust procurement. There are some singular factors to be managed at this critical stage including:

- The significant pensions issues
- Opposition party involvement
- Outstanding clarifications
- Further development of risk management approach

The Review has resulted in nine Report Recommendations as follows:

Ref. No.	Recommendation	Critical/ Essential/ Recommended
1.	That a senior briefing of the entire opposition group of Councillors is undertaken to reduce the future risk profile of the contract	Essential Within 2 weeks
2.	That the Council should develop a strategy to effectively involve the opposition group on the development of the project in future. This could include the formation of a cross party working group to receive reports on highways maintenance issues and benefit realisation/outputs from the contract	Recommended
3.	That the contingency plan be completed for continuity of the service if a solution to the outstanding item is not agreed by the Council's target date (ideally, say, before the end of February 2009)	Essential Within 1 week
4.	That a reserve depot site be retained to enable competitive bidding to take place at the future re-procurement stage; and to benefit service continuity	Recommended
5.	That contingency planning be undertaken for the scenario of the new Colas depot being available later than planned	Recommended
6.	It is recommended that the financial values of the risks are established, vetted by the Project Board and appropriately reflected in the Council's accounts	Essential/ Recommended By April 2009
7.	That the Council should aim to resolve all of the outstanding clarification issues before contract signature encourages Colas to finalise and promulgate its long term management structure	Essential by April 2009
8.	That post contract completion the risks and benefits in contract form migration from NEC 3B to NEC 3E are formally evaluated and considered by the Project Board in an options appraisal process	Recommended
9.	That a formal options appraisal process takes place on the new asset management system. This should be done on a cross functional basis with robust project governance. Explicit links should be made to the project for evolution towards NEC 3E operation. Should commencement be approved then formal resource planning should be used	Recommended

5.0 PROPOSED ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO GATEWAY 4 REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Urgent Actions

- 5.1.1 In relation to Recommendation 1, a briefing of Opposition Group Councillors is being arranged as suggested.

- 5.1.2 In relation to Recommendation 3 this refers to a complex issue concerning Colas' proposed admission to the Merseyside Pension Fund and in particular the degree of financial risk associated with the current economic climate and future investment performance of the fund.

The matter is currently receiving attention by all parties and a resolution satisfactory to all is being sought.

Obviously the matter is time critical and at this stage I am hopeful of a timely resolution. Mobilisation continues and all parties remain committed to delivering the contract.

5.2 Actions before Contract Commencement

- 5.2.1 In relation to Recommendation 6, the procurement exercise has involved the use of a comprehensive risk register. The contract start of 1 April 2009 means that it is important to determine the costs of those risks still on the register and the potential liability to the Council. By valuing these risks and the costs of any actions that could be taken to reduce or remove these liabilities the Council will be able to determine the most appropriate course of action when it comes to dealing with the outstanding items on the register.

- 5.2.2 Concerning Recommendation 7, the contract documentation used for the tendering process has been amended with changes required as a result of the Points of Clarification raised during the tender period. These amended documents have been forwarded to Colas for comment

5.3 Actions after Contract Commencement

- 5.3.1 In relation to Recommendation 2, a robust approach to partnership management is proposed, consisting of a hierarchy of regular monthly Liaison meetings between Council and Colas representatives supported by weekly Contract meetings and feeding into a formal Partnering Board which meets on a quarterly basis and is attended at Director-level by both organisations.

- 5.3.2 In a similar manner to the Streetscene Environment Services contract with Biffa, it is proposed that this approach to partnership management feeds into the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a formal review at least every twelve months throughout the life of the contract.

- 5.3.3 In addition to this, the elected Member Steering Group for the new highways contract have suggested that they would like to continue to meet and receive progress reports to closely monitor the new contract particularly during the first twelve months (subject to review).

- 5.3.4 In relation to Recommendation 4, the reviewers identified a possible requirement that the Council may find advantageous in that a suitable depot could be offered to tenderers when this contract becomes due for re-tendering in five to eight years time. It is likely that Colas will move to their own depot from the Dock Road depot in the early part of the contract. Should Dock Road be subsequently sold the Council will not have an available depot to offer any new incoming contractors and this could be deemed to be offering Colas an advantage over any other tenderers in that they would already have their own premises.
- 5.3.5 A review of suitable Council locations will take place after April 2009, however at this stage it is anticipated that the Technical Services transport depot at Cleveland Street could be retained for this purpose.
- 5.3.6 Concerning Recommendation 5, in the event that Dock Road depot is subject to disposal, it will be necessary to ensure contingency plans are in place should Colas be unable to move to their new premises before the Dock Road premises are required by its purchaser. Discussions will be held with the Council's Asset Manager after April 2009 in order to develop a plan.

6.0 SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In terms of current spending, the Council is spending £7.985 million on works during 2008/9 as follows:
- Highway Maintenance Revenue Programme = £4.602M
 - LTP and Highways Capital Programme = £3.383M
(consists of £2.614M LTP plus £769k Highways Capital)
- 6.2 In addition, the revenue staff costs associated with administering these works for 2008/9 are £1,655k.
- 6.3 Anticipated cashable efficiency savings are summarised in the table below:

Spend Area	Expenditure	Saving 2009/10
Revenue Works Programme	£3,102k	£220k
Client Staffing	£1,655k	£100k

- 6.4 The detailed financial implications can be summarised as follows:
- £220k per annum true revenue saving against Revenue Works expenditure (£1.76M over the eight year contract term)
 - £100k true revenue saving associated with Client staffing for 2009/10 rising to £180k per annum in 2010/11 (£1.36M over the eight year contract term)

- £330K per annum efficiency saving against Capital Works expenditure (£2.64M over the eight year contract term)
- Anticipated 1.5% Gershon Efficiency Saving (non cashable) included in tendered rates equating to approximately £1million over the eight year contract term (dependent on actual rates of inflation)
- Approximately £30k income from stock and £50k income from sale of vehicles that will be used to offset any one-off in-house contractor closedown costs
- Reduction in Central Establishment Charges and Business Support contributions as a result of in-house contractor termination equating to £79,200 per annum loss of income which has been absorbed by Technical Services

6.5 The detailed staffing implications can be summarised as follows:

- Highway Maintenance Division (Client) staff – gradual down-sizing involving a 3 FTE reduction in establishment in 2009/10 and a further 3 FTE reduction in 2010/11 with minimal requirement for redeployment/ redundancy
- Operational Services Division – 76 employees under main contract to TUPE transfer to the new provider
- Engineering Workshop – 12 employees formerly “at risk” and subject to potential redeployment/ redundancy will now TUPE transfer to the new provider.

6.6 Even though the work of the Transport Section is outside the scope of this procurement exercise, Operational Services Division are the second biggest user of the Council’s transport fleet and account for approximately 40% of the Section’s workload.

6.7 The viability of this business unit consisting of 14 employees has now been safeguarded for a further twelve months as a result of the new provider agreeing to use specialist Council owned vehicles serviced and maintained by the Section.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Equal opportunities issues have been considered as part of the procurement process.

8.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

9.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The provision of an effective highway maintenance regime particularly the street lighting network provides a positive contribution to community safety.

10.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

11.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Sustainability issues have been considered as part of the procurement process.

12.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

13.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

14.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

14.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

15.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The contract involves work locations throughout the borough.

16.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

16.1 Cabinet is requested to:

- (1) Note the progress made in relation to contract mobilisation and the positive outcome of the recent Gateway 4 Readiness for Service Review and on this basis endorse the commencement of the new contract;
- (2) Approve the use of the Engineering Workshop by other Council Departments, as proposed in paragraphs 3.4.5 and 3.4.6, and approve the exemption from Contracts Procedure Rule 19 'Procurement valued at less than £50,000' for this process up to a value of £30,000 and subject to client Departments being satisfied that value for money is being achieved.

DAVID GREEN
DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL SERVICES

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4ps Gateway Review 4: Readiness for service

Programme Title: Procurement of Highway Maintenance & Engineering Works

4ps Gateway Number: 4ps361G400

4ps Gateway Review 4 – Readiness for service

Version number: Final

Date of issue to PO: 18th February 2009

PO: David Green

Authority: Metropolitan Borough of Wirral

4ps Gateway Review dates: 16th to 18th February 2009

4ps Gateway Review Team Leader:

Vincent Hunt

4ps Gateway Review Team Members:

Paul Fenwick

David South



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4ps Gateway Review 4: Readiness for service

Programme Title: Procurement of Highway Maintenance & Engineering Works

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4ps Gateway Delivery Confidence Assessment

<u>Delivery Confidence Assessment</u>	Amber/ Green
<p>The Review Team finds that much good work has been achieved in the context of a robust procurement. There are some singular factors to be managed at this critical stage including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The significant pensions issues● Opposition party involvement● Outstanding clarifications● Further development of risk management approach	

The Delivery Confidence assessment RAG status should use the definitions below.

<u>RAG</u>	<u>Criteria Description</u>
Green	Successful delivery of the project/programme to time, cost and quality appears highly likely and there are no major outstanding issues that at this stage appear to threaten delivery significantly
Amber/Green	Successful delivery appears probable however constant attention will be needed to ensure risks do not materialise into major issues threatening delivery
Amber	Successful delivery appears feasible but significant issues already exist requiring management attention. These appear resolvable at this stage and if addressed promptly, should not present a cost/schedule overrun
Amber/Red	Successful delivery of the project/programme is in doubt with major risks or issues apparent in a number of key areas. Urgent action is needed to ensure these are addressed, and whether resolution is feasible
Red	Successful delivery of the project/programme appears to be unachievable. There are major issues on project/programme definition, schedule, budget required quality or benefits delivery, which at this stage does not appear to be manageable or resolvable. The Project/Programme may need re-baselining and/or overall viability re-assessed

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Summary of Report Recommendations

The Review Team makes the following recommendations which are prioritized using the definitions below.

Ref. No.	Recommendation	Critical/ Essential/ Recommended
1.	That a senior briefing of the entire opposition group of Councillors is undertaken to reduce the future risk profile of the contract	Essential Within 2 weeks
2.	That the Council should develop a strategy to effectively involve the opposition group on the development of the project in future. This could include the formation of a cross party working group to receive reports on highways maintenance issues and benefit realisation/outputs from the contract.	Recommended
3.	That the contingency plan be completed for continuity of the service if a solution to the outstanding item is not agreed by the Council's target date (ideally, say, before the end of February 2009)	Essential Within 1 week
4.	That a reserve depot site be retained to enable competitive bidding to take place at the future re-procurement stage; and to benefit service continuity	Recommended
5.	That contingency planning be undertaken for the scenario of the new Colas depot being available later than planned	Recommended
6.	It is recommended that the financial values of the risks are established, vetted by the Project Board and appropriately reflected in the Council's accounts	Essential/ Recommended By April 2009
7.	That the Council should aim to resolve all of the outstanding clarification issues before contract signature encourages Colas to finalise and promulgate its long term management structure	Essential by April 2009
8.	That post contract completion the risks and benefits in contract form migration from NEC 3B to NEC 3E are formally evaluated and considered by the Project Board in an options appraisal process	Recommended
9.	That a formal options appraisal process takes place on the new asset management system. This should be done on a cross functional basis with robust project governance. Explicit links should be made to the project for evolution towards NEC 3E operation. Should commencement be approved then formal resource planning should be used	Recommended

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Critical (Do Now) – To increase the likelihood of a successful outcome it is of the greatest importance that the programme/project should take action immediately

Essential (Do By) – To increase the likelihood of a successful outcome the programme/project should take action in the near future. [Note to review teams – whenever possible Essential recommendations should be linked to project milestones e.g. before contract signature and/or a specified timeframe e.g. within the next three months.]

Recommended – The programme/project should benefit from the uptake of this recommendation. [Note to review teams – if possible Recommended recommendations should be linked to project milestones e.g. before contract signature and/or a specified timeframe e.g. within the next three months.]

Background

The aims of the programme:

These included:-

- 🌐 The market testing of the key highway and coastal defence maintenance services (excluding traffic signals)
- 🌐 Integration of 6 term contracts which expire on the 31/3/09
- 🌐 The delivery of cash savings to the Authority
- 🌐 Better value in delivering the services with good levels of quality
- 🌐 A partnership approach with the future provider

A relevant quotation from the Council's OBC is:-

“The Authority expects to achieve the following primary objectives from any new service contracts in the future:

- 🌐 Sustained delivery of efficiency savings, contributing to the Authority's existing and future Efficiency Plans;
- 🌐 An enhanced front-line service, whose strengths lie in an ability to be responsive, to co-operate proactively with officers and members and to improve customer satisfaction and perception within the Wirral community; and
- 🌐 Ability for the client to retain an appropriate level of management and control.”

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The driving force for the project:

The Council required an efficient and effective highway and coastal maintenance contract; which could be shown to offer good value for money.

The procurement/delivery status:

The Council is in the mobilisation phase for the new contract and contract signature is imminent.

Current position regarding 4ps Gateway Reviews:

This is the third Gateway Review of the project; and there has also been a health check.

The recommendations of the previous review have been implemented

A summary of recommendations, progress and status from the previous 4ps Gateway Review can be found in Appendix C.

Good practice noted

The Review Team noted the following examples of good practice:-

- Constructive relationship built with incoming provider
- Partnering Board –first meeting held
- Good contractor engagement with future workforce
- Workforce conditioned to be very positive re change
 - e.g. Colas newsletter and “meet and greet” campaign
- Supporting IT project at an advanced stage of development
- Draft contract appears to be at an advanced stage before operational commencement
- Mobilisation meetings every fortnight exemplifying a will from both sides to make things happen
- Functional Analysis project planned using external consultants (client value engineering)
- Integration of blacksmith function into contract structure
 - Business growth opportunity for Colas
 - Security for blacksmith workforce

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- Cooperation on specialist vehicles
 - Colas to lease Council specialised vehicles
- Council keen to move from NEC 3B to 3E- to mutual benefit with explicit risk partition
- Commitment to begin formal procurement of an asset management system
- Independent review of contract documents to detect areas of weakness
- Key Union supportive of the process

Purposes and conduct of the 4ps Gateway Review

Purposes of the 4ps Gateway Review

The primary purposes of a 4ps Gateway Review 4 are to confirm that contractual arrangements are up to date, that necessary testing has been done to the client's satisfaction and that the client is ready to approve implementation.

Appendix A gives the full purposes statement for a 4ps Gateway Review 4.

Conduct of the 4ps Gateway Review

This 4ps Gateway Review 3 was carried out from 16th to 18th February 2009 at the Cheshire Lines Building, Canning Street, Birkenhead. The team members are listed on the front cover.

The people interviewed are listed in Appendix B.

The Review Team would also like to thank David Green, Mark Smith, Mike Wilkinson and Geof Kaufman for their enthusiasm and openness; and for the efficient arrangements. Further mention should be made of Sheila Jones, Lyn Ebbrell, Caroline Kirchen, Jenny Williams, Christine Davies and Barbara Parker for their considerable efforts in supporting the team. All interviewees are to be commended for their open and frank engagement with the process.

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Findings and recommendations

1: Business case and stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement/communication has generally been well managed and developed. The Conservative group (opposition) has not been engaged about the project for circa 12 months. Staff that are to transfer to the contractor have been consulted throughout the procurement process and their union representatives are working effectively with Colas to prepare for the change. Initial concerns have largely melted away and positive attitudes are now coming through. Client side staff – those not subject to transfer – have been kept informed and training has been initiated to prepare them for the new environment from commencement of the contract. A plan exists to extend the communication to wider stakeholders and is scheduled to take place in March 2009. The one notable exception is the lack engagement with the opposition group on the Council. As a significant stakeholder group this should be rectified.

Recommendation: - That a senior briefing of the entire opposition group of Councillors is undertaken to reduce the future risk profile of the contract

Recommendation: - That the Council should develop a strategy to effectively involve the opposition group on the development of the project in future. This could include the formation of a cross party working group to receive reports on highways maintenance issues and benefit realisation/outputs from the contract.

2: Review of current phase

The Council has made significant and measured progress in its aims of outsourcing its highway maintenance functions and integrating its previous network of contracts into one. A thorough procurement exercise with significant bidder interest and some innovation in evaluation techniques has yielded a very competitively priced contract that meets the required quality standards.

Communications and consultation work has been well done and have yielded a positive outlook towards the new contract from the workforce. Most stakeholders are supportive with the exception of the opposition group who have been excluded from the process (see above).

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The Council has accepted that the bid, submitted by Colas, be taken forward and this bid eminently fits the Business Case parameters. Since then there have been a number of developments but none are anticipated to detrimentally affect the realisation of the business objectives of the project.

The Blacksmith Section (existing Council specialised fabrication facility) has now been transferred to the contractor. No figures were brought before the team but the impact is expected to be insignificant on the business model. However, this does bring significant benefits for the staff involved as it secures the future of a number of jobs that otherwise would be at risk. Colas have welcomed the move as it provides a new area of work for them to develop and potentially improve their financial performance on the Wirral contract. It appears that there is significant potential for expansion of turnover of the Blacksmith shop.

The contractor has recently introduced 3 items for negotiation [in the pensions area]. 2 of these have been agreed with no detriment to the overall business case. 1 remains outstanding which has the potential to invoke a significant reappraisal of the procurement process to date. This matter requires urgent resolution and evidence has been given that the Council is actively engaged to achieve a speedy closure of this matter. The risk that this is not achieved exists and a contingency plan needs to be developed urgently if the risk should materialise. The Review Team notes that officers are already working on a contingency plan.

Recommendation:- That the contingency plan be prepared and implemented for continuity of the service if a solution to the outstanding item is not agreed by the Council's target date (ideally, say, before the end of February 2009)

The Client Side welcomes the change that the contract will bring to the delivery of the highway maintenance function in the Wirral. There is the potential to develop a more targeted/efficient use of the resources available to identify works and transmit this information to the contractor: further there is an appetite now on both sides to move towards a more output specification based contract. This would transfer more risk to the contractor and should result in leaner use of client resource, once the change had been made.

Should the Council decide to proceed it should develop a plan for the move to NEC 3 E form of contract on a project-managed basis and possibly set up a joint working group to oversee this once the 3 B form of contract is operational and working satisfactorily.

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The TUPE project is going well and is properly resourced. The Review Team notes that Colas is planning some necessary harmonisation activity post contract signature. This activity is likely to be welcomed by the workforce as it will remove inconvenient differences between members of the same team on e.g. working hours, lunch breaks, commencement times etc. These changes are supported by the key union.

There are some significant work packages to complete including the winding down of the old DSO's accounts, the sale of surplus stock and transfer or sale of vehicles no longer required. There are also some contract clarifications which need to be resolved (see above).

The Council's aim of achieving contract sign off by 1st April 2009. before operational commencement is ambitious but the omens of this being achieved are good, subject to the resolution of the key issue above.

Although the Council has committed to the sale of the original depot it has another potential depot site which it intends to retain; and this should be advantageous to the re-procurement process in circa 5 years. It also provides a useful platform for service continuity, if required.

Recommendation: - That a reserve depot site be retained to enable competitive bidding to take place at the future re-procurement stage; and to benefit service continuity

The Review Team would also recommend that contingency planning should be undertaken for the scenario of Colas' new depot development falling behind schedule and a future new owner requiring vacation of the Council's current highways depot.

Recommendation: - That contingency planning be undertaken for the scenario of the new Colas depot being available later than planned

Stakeholders are confident that significant progress has been made on the IT front and the Council is at the user acceptance trial stage with its modification of the Oracle CRM system to send instructions to the contractor; and with the integration of the gulley and street lighting systems into one approach for ordering work and receiving confirmation of completion and billing information.

The modified system furnishes all the relevant information to the Council electronically and is therefore efficient in administration terms.

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3: Risk management

The officers have undertaken much sterling on risk management, including the use of an external consultant.

In reviewing the risk management aspects of the project it is clear that extensive time has been invested in developing a robust risk management system.

The risk register has identified owners and the Project Board considers risk reports on a regular basis. Priority risks are given specific attention.

The Review Team would comment that, once again, the risk register will require a fundamental review as the procurement project comes to an end. Indeed officers may already be planning such a revision.

It was evidenced during the interviewing of council officers and representatives that work continues 'at a pace' to close out and / or minimise identified risks wherever possible, with an objective of being complete before 01 April 2009.

Work is being cross checked and challenges to Colas' pricing being undertaken

It was identified from interviews that there remains four main risks within the Risk Register that are continuously being monitored and targeted to mitigate / minimise / close out their potential impact on the project. The four items advised to the team were:-:

- required completeness of the asset management inventory,
- HAMS procurement software system reliability
- establishment of a procurement system link to business management system and
- establishment of a robust management system that ensures delivery to output specification.

A fifth risk that has been identified as one that stands out this stage, as 'escalating', is economic uncertainty. It relates to the current effects and impact of the 'credit crunch' and the concern that the effects it may have on the Council's ability to achieve best value.

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As part of the risk register template it was noted that there is a section included that states 'risk quantification' and has specific headings that amongst others includes 'financial impact minimum £k', 'financial impact most likely £k' and 'financial impact maximum £k'. It was identified that no financial configuration had been included at this stage but is intended to be established and concluded.

Additionally, it was inquired as to once the min/ most likely / max impact figures are established what will be / what is the policy / procedure for reflecting such risk monies within the financial reporting structure of the project and the Council's accounts.

Recommendation: - It is recommended that the financial values of the risks are established, vetted by the Project Board and appropriately reflected in the Council's accounts

In the context of some key clarifications being outstanding it is clear that there are areas remaining that need to be / are being addressed to 'de-risk' the potential for misunderstandings post contract. One example of the items discussed related to clarity of applicable traffic management charges for reactive work at weekends.

There is also some uncertainty on the identification of key long term Colas management personnel.

Recommendation: - That the Council should aim to resolve all of the outstanding clarification issues before contract signature encourage Colas to finalise and promulgate its long term management structure

It has been advised by both Council officers and Colas that there is a desire from both parties to move, post contract, progressively towards a more collaborative working arrangement (Moving from NEC 3B to NEC 3E) to enable in certain areas of activities innovative technical solutions to be evolved that would mutually benefit both parties. It is recommended that if this desire is moved forward towards instigation that a risk assessment and evaluation is undertaken with regard to the Council's benefits and risks, before engaging with any possible change.

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Recommendation: - That post contract completion the risks and benefits in contract form migration from NEC 3B to NEC 3E are formally evaluated and considered by the Project Board in an options appraisal process

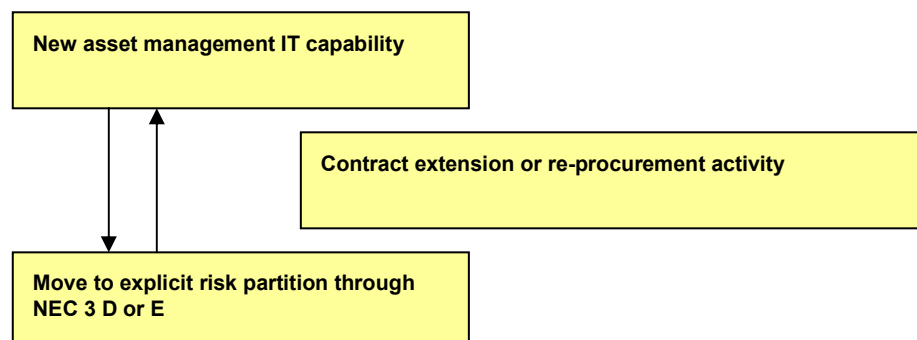
There is still a large workload to be undertaken in checking out the Colas pricing regime and closing out of potential risks before 01 April 2009. It is recognised from interview evidence that a great deal of effort and hard work is being expended and focused in achieving this objective, with prioritisation being made for clearing key items; The recommendation here is that the more that can be resolved with Colas before closing out equals less opportunity for disagreement / dispute post contract.

4: Readiness for next phase – benefits evaluation

The Council has begun a process of logging pre-commencement performance levels to allow benefits realisation to take place. Although ideally benefits realisation work should have begun at the start of the procurement the Review Team notes that, as part of the Council's development of a new approach, these activities are being undertaken earlier in procurement projects' life cycles.

The Project Team has decided to capitalise on the success of its IT development to begin the process of acquiring a new and comprehensive asset management capability.

The Review Team views this new IT project and the move towards NEC 3D or NEC 3E contracts as interrelated projects in a programme and this is illustrated below:-



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



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The current IT project has a strong focus on delivering client needs through senior user and senior supplier roles. The Review Team believes that the opportunity should be taken to exploit this positive environment for the next stage of IT development.

Related to this is a desire to move towards an integrated and singular asset/ordering system to replace the multiple systems that will operate initially. Such a move is essential to compliment the move towards output specification working but will require resources and careful planning. This is perhaps best achieved as a separate project.

An options appraisal process on the new IT system should take place and the following groups should be represented on the cross-functional team:-

-  Client engineer
-  IT section
-  Procurement section
-  Colas

This would allow the Council to weight the strength and weaknesses of the various options, scope and specify the system requirements and begin procurement and/ or development.

Recommendations:

That a formal options appraisal process takes place on the new asset management system. This should be done on a cross functional basis with robust project governance. Explicit links should be made to the project for evolution towards NEC 3E operation. Should commencement be approved then formal resource planning should be used

The Review Team would comment that the post award Colas management structure appears in outline/ generic form only; without most key individuals being identified. At the moment Colas is utilising senior but interim managers to oversee their side of the mobilisation.

It is in the Council's interest to remove this uncertainty in the short term.

The next 4ps Gateway Review is expected in October 2009 when the contract has been in operation for 6 months

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APPENDIX A

Purpose of 4ps Gateway Review 4: Investment decision

- Check that the current phase of the contract is properly completed and documentation completed.
- Ensure that the contractual arrangements are up-to-date.
- Check that the business case is still valid and unaffected by internal and external events or changes.
- Check that the original projected business benefit is likely to be achieved.
- Ensure that there are processes and procedures to ensure long-term success of the project.
- Confirm that all necessary testing is done (e.g. commissioning of buildings, business integration and user acceptance testing) to the client's satisfaction and that the client is ready to approve implementation.
- Check that there are feasible and tested contingency and reversion arrangements.
- Ensure that all ongoing risks and issues are being managed effectively and do not threaten implementation.
- Evaluate the risk of proceeding with the implementation where there are any unresolved issues.
- Confirm the business has the necessary resources and that it is ready to implement the services and the business change.
- Confirm that the client and supplier implementation plans are still achievable.
- Confirm that there are management and organisational controls to manage the project through implementation and operation.
- Confirm that all parties have agreed plans for training, communication, roll-out, production release and support as required.

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- Confirm that all parties have agreed plans for managing risk.
- Confirm that there are client-side plans for managing the working relationship, with reporting arrangements at appropriate levels in the organisation, reciprocated on the supplier side.
- Confirm information assurance accreditation/certification.
- Confirm that defects or incomplete works are identified and recorded.
- Check that lessons for future projects are identified and recorded.

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APPENDIX B

Interviewees

NAME	ROLE
Mark Smith	Head of Service, Streetscene & Waste
David Green	Director, Technical Services
Adrian Sheppard	Operations Director, Colas
Paul Bradshaw	Head of Human Resources
Ray Williams	Corporate Procurement Manager
Mark Gandy	Group Auditor
Cameron Neill	Business Manager, Colas
Gavin Shaw	Group Accountant
Cllr Jean Quinn	Cabinet Member, Streetscene & Transport Services
Colin Hughes	Group Solicitor
Ken Crilly	Unison Branch Officer, Technical Services
Mike Wilkinson	Assistant Director, Highway Maintenance
Brian Smith	Contract Manager
Cllr Paul Hayes	Conservative Spokesperson
Emma Degg	Head of Tourism and Marketing
Karen Laird	Project Manager, It
Mark Ennis	Business Information Officer, ICT
Dave Callcott	Senior Assistant Engineer, Health & Safety, Risk Management
Kevin Earle	Consultant
Laura Furlong	Press Officer

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APPENDIX C

Recommendations from previous 4ps Gateway Review

Recommendation	Progress/ Status
Following successful award of the contract a fundamental review of the risk register should take place to ensure that it reflects the evolution of the project.	Risk register is being updated
That the “top ten” risks are reviewed at each Board meeting with the Board assuring itself that robust mitigation measures and actions are in place.	Risk prioritisation is being practised
The existing communication action list needs to be expanded into a communication plan covering all aspects of the mobilisation and implementation of the contract. The Council should also consider the use of a stakeholder matrix to keep communications at an accurate and regular level	Communications plan has been updated
That the Council checks the adequacy of its resourcing for the staff transfer project and asks employees to approve their employment records	Resources appear adequate
That the Council should resource and plan the introduction of the new client organisation and consider the option of having one senior manager responsible for coordinating the dealings with the contractor on a day to day basis	Key contact in place

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<p>The process of implementing the new client side should include the identification of new client officer behaviours and the training of staff to achieve this standard at all levels of seniority. That any change management aspects applying are identified and addressed on a project managed basis.</p>	<p>Training of staff now ongoing</p>
<p>That the Council defines and executes its IT needs in terms of asset management and contract supervision. That these projects be robustly governed and have explicit resource plans, risk controls and identified future business benefits</p>	<p>IT project has delivered sufficient functionality for trials of the system to begin before contract commencement</p>

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

MERSEY GATEWAY BRIDGE PROJECT GROUP REPRESENTATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the proposal to refresh the partnership arrangements relating to the new Mersey crossing – known as the Mersey Gateway.
- 1.2 Cabinet is requested to approve the attendance of one officer and one elected Member to the reformed Mersey Gateway Bridge Project Group.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For many years, Halton Borough Council has been campaigning for a new crossing over the River Mersey to help ease traffic congestion in the area and, in particular, on the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge.
- 2.2 Halton Borough Council forms part of the Greater Merseyside Partnership in transport terms, and the Merseyside Local Transport Plan (LTP) partners have maintained its support for the Gateway project within its LTP, which is closely aligned to the Halton LTP. In addition, updates on the project have been provided to MSTEG (Merseyside Strategic Transport & Engineers Group) and MSTPC (Merseyside Strategic Transport and Planning Committee) as appropriate. Breakfast Briefings were also held for a wider audience at key points in the project.
- 2.3 Significant economic and environmental appraisals have been necessary to justify the new bridge and its actual location. In 2006, the Mersey Gateway gained programme entry to the Government's major scheme funding mechanism, which enabled Halton Council to drive forward the appropriate arrangements for project delivery.

- 2.4 Members wishing additional information on the Mersey Gateway may find it useful to go to the project web site:
<http://www2.halton.gov.uk/merseygateway/>

3.0 MERSEY GATEWAY GROUP

- 3.1 The Mersey Gateway project is now reaching a significant point in its development. In 2009, a major Public Inquiry will take place with the view of progressing to contract procurement by the end of the year. Current time lines envisage a start on site in 2011 with completion in 2014.

- 3.2 In order to continue effective partnership working, Halton BC is keen to ensure key stakeholders are kept fully informed and have the opportunity to engage in the future development of the project. With this in mind, Halton BC is looking to refresh its partnership arrangements via the Mersey Gateway Group.
- 3.3 It is Halton's intention to reform the Mersey Gateway Group, which is anticipated to meet quarterly. Two representatives from each of the Merseyside, Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester local authorities are invited, plus representatives from The Mersey Partnership, Merseytravel, North West Development Agency, 4NW the Regional Leaders Group, Liverpool Chamber and Halton Chamber.
- 3.4 Halton Borough Council now request the various bodies to nominate their representatives. In the case of local authorities, it is anticipated that nominations will include an officer and an elected member. It is proposed that the Wirral representatives be Mark Smith, Head of Streetscene and Waste Services, and Councillor Jean Quinn, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific funding implications arising from this report.

5.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no specific staffing implications arising from this report.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no specific equal opportunity implications arising from this report.

7.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no specific planning implications arising from this report.

8.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

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

9.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no specific social inclusion implications arising from this report.

10.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no specific community safety implications arising from this report.

11.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no specific LA21 implications arising from this report.

12.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Mersey Gateway project will be of interest to all Members.

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 There are no background papers used in the preparation of this report.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Council be recommended that

- (1) the attendance of one officer and one elected Member to the reformed Mersey Gateway Bridge Project Group and the body be included in the schedule of approved bodies within the Constitution; and
- (2) the named representatives be those in section 3.4 of this report.

DAVID GREEN
DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL SERVICES

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METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

CABINET – 19th March 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

RE-ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS FOR WIRRAL HOUSING NEEDS AND MARKET ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC ECONOMIC VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks the approval of Fordham consultants to carry out work in relation to an update of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Borough and to undertake a Strategic Economic Viability Assessment to provide the evidence base for the preparation of the Local Development Framework without the need to obtain written quotes pursuant to Rule 5.2 of the Contract Procedure rules.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In order to respond to the needs of local communities and deliver its strategic housing function, Wirral must have a sound understanding and knowledge of local housing needs, local housing markets and their interaction with the wider sub region. This information is essential to effectively develop Wirral's Housing Strategy Statement, deliver our local strategic priorities and meet our objectives for transforming local housing markets in Wirral through investment programmes such as Housing Market Renewal Initiative. It is also an essential element of the Council's Local Development Framework and response to the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 2.2 The Council has a duty to undertake a local housing needs survey every five years to update and inform its Strategy Statement and strategic priorities. Wirral's Strategic Housing Market Assessment which was completed in September 2007 was reported to Members at Cabinet on 7th February 2008 and approved as a material consideration in negotiating with developers on affordable housing contributions through S106 agreements. The 2007 SHMA assessment has been used by the Council's Housing Strategy Team in determining priorities and in its justification for securing investment to deliver its affordable housing programme.
- 2.3 However, Members will be aware of the current economic climate and its impact upon the need for affordable housing. It has become clear that the onset of the 'credit crunch', has triggered a serious downturn in the housing market. People's inability to raise deposits, a severe reduction in the availability of mortgages, and reducing house prices has both led to an increase in demand for affordable housing and at the same time has impacted on purchaser confidence. This has resulted nationally in private developers being more cautious on developing houses for sale, which has caused concerns around viability and housing developments coming forward, something which is now being reflected locally in Wirral.
- 2.4 In addition, during 2008 there have been two specific cases (Blyth Valley Borough Council and Newcastle City Council) where the appeals to the High Court have set out serious flaws with these Councils Core Strategies in relation to affordable housing targets. In both instances it was upheld that the Councils did not have regard to recent Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Guidance which clearly states affordable housing targets '*should also reflect an assessment of the likely economic viability of land for housing within the area*'. Paragraph 29 of PPS3 places the requirement on local authorities to set a target for affordable housing provision to be delivered through Section 106 policies that take into account the need for development to be viable, once allowance is made for factors such as

the availability of grant funding. These two cases have reinforced the requirement for local authorities having a robust viability assessment so as not to impose a burden of planning gain and affordable housing target so great as to depress any land value.

- 2.5 A growing proportion of affordable housing is delivered via Section 106 agreements. However in light of the recent economic climate and the impact this is having on the housing market and the outcome of the Blyth Valley and Newcastle challenges it is essential that Wirral's housing policy is realistic and credible taking into account current circumstances. An economic viability study sits alongside and is informed by the work of a SHMA and forms the evidence base which informs the affordable housing target for the district. Therefore it is proposed that Wirral re-engages Fordham to update their original SHMA work and undertake in tandem the viability assessment. This will determine through rigorous analysis, what affordable housing targets can be achieved without undermining site viability, preventing sites from coming forward and stifling the development of not only affordable housing but also open market housing.

3.0 THE CONSULTANTS WORK

- 3.1 Fordham consultants will undertake a review of the current SHMA findings and provide a report with a detailed description of the methodology of the approach that would be undertaken to provide the update. It will also contain a range of outputs that would inform the Councils housing and planning policies. In summary the update will include and set out the following elements:-

- a) A review of secondary data to provide the financial capacity of households, market trends and entry level prices to both buy and rent compared to the original findings;
- b) An affordability profile as per Communities and Local Government (CLG) guidance showing the net result of the housing need assessment model compared with the previous estimate and a discussion of the reasons for the change presented;
- c) The results of the affordability profile will be used to recalculate the Balanced Housing Market Model outputs;
- d) The proportion of all new housing that should be affordable and market in the Council area;
- e) The type of households that require market housing in the future and the size and type of the market housing required;
- f) The proportion of new affordable housing which should be social rented, equity based intermediate and rent based intermediate;
- g) The size and type of social rented and intermediate accommodation required;
- h) Whether any of the intermediate housing should be targeted specifically at key workers.

- 3.2 As detailed in Section 2 of this report, in tandem with the SHMA update Fordham's will undertake a Strategic Economic Viability Assessment which will be used as the evidence based for Wirral's Local Development Framework Core Strategy and will clearly inform the required level of contribution towards affordable housing on all residential developments. The reduction in house prices and hence land values for housing, particularly over the last six months will have made previously reasonable targets for affordable housing unviable, however this is a temporary phase. Therefore it is the expectation that this assessment will not hinder development of private market housing in the current climate and that for the future but at the same time ensure Wirral maximises the potential for the provision of affordable housing using section 106 agreements with regards to the guidance detailed in PPS 3.

3.3 In summary the Viability Assessment will:-

- a) Test the viability of different site types in different locations, in order to understand how viability varies with site size, different values of the housing developed and different locations;
- b) Identify the impact of the economic viability of the Council's affordable housing targets and thresholds on a range of residential development sites across the local authority area;
- c) Establish the effect that the proportion of affordable housing sought would have on the value of a potential development site and the point at which the bringing forward of such sites would be discouraged by an increase in affordable housing requirement.
- d) Consider where to pitch the threshold requirement for onsite affordable housing and the relationship to the potential for a commuted sum requirement in some areas of the Borough where it is clearly evidenced that on site provision may not be practical.
- e) Take account of PPS3 requirements for affordable housing targets, however through a dynamic approach allow changes of policy according to levels of viability in line with changing housing markets. This will enable Wirral to respond and maximise use of section 106 agreements to deliver affordable housing with the eventual upturn in the housing market.

3.4 Fordham's undertook the Council's current Strategic Housing Market Assessment and they are the only company that has the detailed knowledge to update this assessment within the timescales required. To engage another consultant to undertake this work would significantly increase the cost of the commission and the time taken to do it. There is also an urgent need to progress with the Strategic Economic Viability Assessment because of recent legal cases and the necessity of having this assessment to inform planning applications regarding affordable housing. As the viability assessment is closely related to the housing market assessment then detailed knowledge of the latter is very important to the production of the former assessment. It is therefore for these reasons that it is in the best interests of the Council to engage Fordham's to undertake this commission.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The cost of the combined SHMA update and Strategic Economic Viability Assessment is £24,000. This work is being funded through the Housing Strategy Research Budget.

5.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The research will detail local housing needs and the findings will continue to be used by both the Council and related partners to inform and shape future strategies and policies, reduce social exclusion and ensure appropriate housing and related services are available and accessible to all citizens in Wirral.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

8.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 Implications arising from this report.

9.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Following the update of the assessment and the Viability Study, the results will be presented in a separate report to Members for approval. This would then become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for new housing development and be used as evidence to inform the Local Development Framework for Wirral.

10.0 ANTI POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The delivery of affordable housing within the borough will ensure that quality housing will be delivered and will be available for local citizens who do not have the financial means to purchase market housing.

11.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The delivery of affordable housing within the borough will have a positive effect on the promotion of social inclusion. Affordable housing includes accommodation for vulnerable people who have the potential to be excluded from society.

12.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The research and any associated findings will have an impact on the whole of the Wirral area, affecting all Wards.

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None

14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the appointment of Fordham consultants to carry out the work identified in the report without the need to obtain written quotes pursuant to Rule 5.2 of the Contract Procedure Rules be approved.

This report was prepared by Lisa Newman who can be contacted on 691-8197

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET: 19 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE TRANSFORMATION OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES – FINANCIAL ISSUES

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to highlight to members a number of proposed actions regarding financial issues affecting the Department of Adult Social Services. These include Fair Access to Care; fees payable to Residential & Nursing homes, Supported Living Providers and Domiciliary Care Providers and the transfer to the Local Authority of NHS – Wirral (Primary Care Trust) Funding for Learning Disability Services.

1 Background

- 1.1 In order to implement the Department of Adult Social Services budget strategy for 2009/10 in line with its transformational programme, a number of key areas of activity require cabinet approval.
- 1.2 The Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) guidance issued in May 2002 provided a national framework for eligibility criteria for adult social care. It is necessary for members to review and confirm, on a periodic basis, the level at which social care services are provided to individuals in Wirral.
- 1.3 Members have previously received reports regarding the level of fees paid to independent care providers. This report highlights the result of a consultation exercise in this area and makes recommendations regarding the way forward.
- 1.4 Guidance from the Department of Health (DH) was received in August 2008 with a further subsequent guidance letter received in November 2008 regarding the proposed funding transfer in respect of people with learning disabilities whose care is currently funded by NHS Wirral. This report sets out the detail of the proposals.
- 1.5 Each of these issues is considered in detail in the attached appendices and the key aspects and recommendations are set out below. Please note this report and Appendix 1 have been published in the public arena; Appendices 2 and 3 and their related Annexes have been classified as exempt items.

2. Fair Access to Services

- 2.1 The Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) guidance issued in May 2002 provided a national framework for eligibility criteria for adult social care. The Department of Health had acknowledged that the use of different local criteria *“leads to considerable variation in access to adult social care, which in turn leads to unfairness”*. The national framework sets out a

system of four bands, critical, substantial, moderate and low, which describe the seriousness of the risk to independence or other consequences if needs are not met.

- 2.2 Appendix 1 outlines the work that has been carried out since the guidance was issued, including Cabinet's previous consideration of this issue. Whilst key recommendations and priorities set out by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in a recent review of the national FACS, 'Cutting the cake-fairly' are incorporated into the Department of Adult Social Services change programme; further guidance on a new national system to replace FACS is yet to be issued. It is concluded that the current policy of providing social care services to individuals in Wirral who have critical and substantial needs should continue.

3. Fees paid to independent care providers

3.1 Supported Living

- 3.1.1 A detailed analysis of the issues surrounding this service is provided at Appendix 2. Following an extensive consultation exercise it is proposed to implement Option 3, that is, to pay £13.18 per hour rate to all providers who have indicated they would accept the proposal and terminate contracts (with 3 months' notice) with providers who have refused. Work will be undertaken to establish if there is a business case to implement a detailed banded model of needs and fees in consultation with providers by tender during 2009/2010 to commence 1 April 2010 and further proposals will be brought to Cabinet as appropriate. Contracts will be terminated with all providers during 2009/2010 to incorporate an appropriate inflation clause and health standards unless this can be achieved through a variation to the contract. This work will be carried out in consultation with providers and if proven further proposals will be brought to Cabinet in order for the model developed to be introduced on 1 April 2010.

3.2 Domiciliary Care

- 3.2.1 A detailed analysis of the issues surrounding this service is provided at Appendix 2. As a result of a consultation exercise Option 3 is preferred which is in line with the North West average payment and maintains existing contract business at £12 per hour pro rata (i.e. 20 pence per minute) with a new contract to be developed during 2009/2010 to commence 1 April 2010 with a standard ceiling rate, appropriate inflation clause and health standards.. No new business will be placed with companies that refuse to accept the proposal and these contracts will be terminated (with 3 months' notice).

3.3 Residential and Nursing Homes

- 3.3.1 A detailed analysis of the issues surrounding this service is provided at Appendix 2. The objective of proposing revised fee levels was to bring Wirral's fees in line with the North West average. As a result of a consultation exercise Option 3 is preferred which states that where home owners have agreed to accept the new rates these are to be implemented from 1 April 2009; where home owners have refused the new rates,

contracts to be terminated (with 3 months' notice) with new placements being made at homes that have accepted the new rates with effect from 1 April 2009. All placements in homes that do not have a valid contract will be reviewed and alternative accommodation options explored on an individual basis. All contracts will need to be terminated during 2009/10 to build in the results of the Quality Premium review and health standards, an appropriate inflation clause and measures required to ensure the principals of "personalisation" are embedded.

3.3.2 This will result in the following fee levels

Star Rating	Residential	Residential EMI	Nursing	Nursing EMI
B	342.61	370.21	385.80	413.39
1	348.14	375.74	391.33	418.92
2	375.86	403.46	419.05	446.64
3	403.79	431.39	446.98	474.57

4. Transfer to the Local Authority of Primary Care Trust Funding for Learning Disability Services

4.1 In line with guidance received from the DH in August 2008 and in November 2008 regarding the proposed funding transfer in respect of people with learning disabilities whose care is currently funded by NHS Wirral, discussions throughout the latter part of 2008 clarified the areas of funding that would be considered for transfer. These are set out in detail in Appendix 3.

4.2 The Appendix also highlights the value of the contracts to be transferred and work that is on going to prepare a partnership agreement and communications strategy. The transfer does not, however, include any property assets and further work is required before any agreement can be made in this area.

5 Financial and Staffing Implications

5.1 The issues considered in this report have a number of financial implications, considering each in turn:

(i) Fair Access to Services

(a) No discrete financial assumptions have been made regarding the application of the Fair Access to Services policy. Experience in 2008/09 has shown that there are demand pressures for services and consistent and firmer application of this policy is required to manage demand.

(ii) Fees paid to independent care providers

- (a) The Department has agreed efficiency target for 2009/10 of which the following have been specifically identified:

Supported Living – Fair Price Model	£650,000
Residential/Nursing Care	£1,500,000
Total	£2,150,000

- (b) Furthermore, if no action is taken the existing contracts contain inflation clauses which will increase costs by £3.116m. Since inflation provision of 2% is contained within the budget the following additional expenditure will be incurred:

Provision type	2009/2010
Supported Living	229,200
Domiciliary Care	307,200
Residential and Nursing Homes	1,343,200
Total deficit	1,879,600

- (c) The financial implications for the recommended options in 2009/2010 in this report are set out below;

Provision type	Efficiency Savings	Reduced inflation pressure
Supported Living	525,000	200,000
Domiciliary Care	500,000	307,000
Residential and Nursing Homes	675,000	1,050,000
Total Saving	1,700,000	1,557,000
Target	2,150,000	1,879,600
Residual budget pressures	450,000	322,600

The adoption of these proposals will require the department to bring forward further proposals to bridge the remaining gap of £772,600. These will be the subject of subsequent reports to Cabinet.

(iii) Transfer to the Local Authority of Primary Care Trust Funding for Learning Disability Services

- (a) Appendix 3 details the proposed transfer of funding that the Council will receive for taking responsibility for the care of a number of people with disabilities currently funded by NHS Wirral. The proposed amount to be transferred in 2009/10 is £6,204,296

- (b) In addition NHS Wirral has recognised the additional requirement for support to deliver these services and will add, on a recurring basis, £150,000 making a total amount to be transferred of £6,354,296. It is

proposed to establish the following posts to support the transfer and to respond to the additional demands made upon the Department

- Finance - 1 Technical Support Officer (Scale 2-4) £24,000
- Access and Assessment – 2 Social Work Posts £92,000
- Contracts – 1 Contract Officer (PO1) £37,000

All costs are at the top of scale, include on costs and in the case of social work posts, an estimation of mileage and travel costs

6 Business Risk

- 6.1 A list of the risks relating to each area has been established under each of the options being considered.
- 6.2 Members' attention is particularly drawn to the significance of the risks identified under each of the preferred options.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment with regard to fee levels is included in Annex 4 of Appendix 2.
- 7.2 Where people are selecting a home their choice may be restricted by the number of homes willing to accept the council's revised fees,

8 Community Safety Implications

None arising from this report

9 Local Agenda 21 Implications

None arising from this report

10 Planning Implications

New applications to develop residential or nursing homes by new entrants to the market may reduce as Wirral Fees appear to be less attractive.

11 Anti Poverty Implications

None arising from this report

12 Social Inclusion Implications

All contracted services in this report offer support to people living in Wirral.

13 Local Member Support Implications

Providers and people who use services affected by these proposals are located in all wards.

14 Background Papers

Residential and Nursing Home Fees - Cabinet 9 July 2008 (Exempt).

Progress toward the transformation of Adult Social Services - Cabinet 10 December 2008

Community Care Annual survey of UK Local Authority baseline Fee Rate
Published July 2008 – Laing and Buisson.

15 Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet agree:

15.1 With regards to Fair Access to Care Services

To endorse the decision to continue to provide social care services to individuals in Wirral who have critical and substantial needs

15.2 With regards to Supported Living

To pay £13.18 per hour rate to all providers who have indicated they would accept the proposal and give 3 months notice to terminate contracts with providers who have refused. Work will be undertaken to establish if there is a business case to implement a detailed banded model of needs and fees during 2009/2010. This work will be carried out in consultation with providers and if proven further proposals will be brought to Cabinet in order for the model developed to be introduced on 1 April 2010.

15.3 With regards to Domiciliary Care

To maintain existing contract business at £12 per hour pro rata (i.e. 20 pence per minute) with a new contract to be developed during 2009/2010 to commence 1 April 2010 with a standard ceiling rate appropriate inflation clause and health standards. No new business will be placed with companies that refuse to accept the proposal and these contracts will be terminated (with 3 months' notice).

15.4 With Regards to Residential and Nursing Homes

Where home owners have agreed to accept the new rates these are to be implemented from 1 April 2009; where home owners have refused the new rates, contracts to be terminated (with 3 months' notice) with new placements being made at homes that have accepted the new rates with effect from 1 April 2009. All placements in homes that do not have a valid contract will be reviewed and alternative accommodation options explored on an individual basis. All contracts will need to be terminated during 2009/10 to build in the results of the Quality Premium review, incorporate a range of health standards, an appropriate inflation clause and measures required to ensure the principals of "personalisation" are embedded..

15.5 With Regards to the Transfer to the Local Authority of Primary Care Trust Funding for Learning Disability Services

(a) To approve the proposed transfer of funding of £6,354,296 that the Council will receive for taking responsibility for the care of a number of people with disabilities currently funded by NHS Wirral.

(b) To recommend that the Employment and Appointments Committee approve the establishment of the following posts to support the transfer and to respond to the additional demands made upon the Department

- Finance - 1 Technical Support Officer (Scale 2-4) £24,000
- Access and Assessment – 2 Social Work Posts £92,000
- Contracts – 1 Contract Officer (PO1) £37,000

JOHN WEBB
Director of Adult Social Services

Fair Access to Care Services (FACS)

1. Background

- 1.1 The FACS guidance issued in May 2002 (for implementation in 2003) provided a national framework for eligibility criteria for adult social care. The Department of Health had acknowledged that the use of different local criteria *“leads to considerable variation in access to adult social care, which in turn leads to unfairness”*. The guidance issued under section 7 (1) of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 was mandatory and designed to be consistent with the policy objectives of the 1990s to focus upon people with the greatest assessed needs.
- 1.2 The national framework sets out a system of four bands, critical, substantial, moderate and low, which describe the seriousness of the risk to independence or other consequences if needs are not met. The FACS framework was based on risks arising from needs associated with various forms of disability, impairment and difficulty in order to *“help councils to promote the independence of those seeking their help”*.

2. Wirral implementation of FACS

- 2.1 On 23rd April and 14th May 2003 the Director of Social Services reported to Social Care and Health Services Select Committee and Cabinet respectively, outlining the national policy guidance (FACS), the department’s proposed eligibility threshold and other actions needed as a consequence. Cabinet resolved that *“individual social care services (be provided) for adults and older people whose assessed needs fall into the critical and substantial risk bands only, with all other people receiving an information, advice and a signposting service from the Central Advice and Duty Team”*. The seriousness of the risk to independence or other consequences if needs are not addressed are as follows:

- (i) **Critical** – when
- life is, or will be, threatened; and/or
 - significant health problems have developed or will develop; and/or
 - there is, or will be, little or no choice and control over vital aspects of the immediate environment; and/or
 - serious abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur; and/or
 - there is, or will be, an inability to carry out vital personal care or domestic routines; and/or
 - vital involvement in work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
 - vital social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
 - vital family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken.
- (ii) **Substantial** - when
- there is, or will be, only partial choice and control over the immediate environment; and/or

- abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur; and/or
 - there is, or will be, an inability to carry out the majority of personal care or domestic routines; and/or
 - involvement in many aspects of work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
 - the majority of social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
 - the majority of family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken
- 2.2 The decision as to where to place Wirral's eligibility threshold was based on an assessment as to the level at which current budgets would enable services to be provided. It was estimated that in 2003/04 Wirral Social Services could provide individualised services to adults whose assessed needs fell into the critical and substantial bands.
- 2.3 In December 2003, as agreed by Cabinet in May 2003, the Social Services Department formally implemented its Policy on Fair Access to Care Services (national eligibility criteria for adult social care; Wirral's risk threshold for services).
- 2.4 The details of the policy had been included, for consultation, as an insert in Wirral's long term care charter "Better Care in Wirral" and are published on Wirral Council's web site.
- 2.5 On 10th December 2003 in a further report, members of Social Care and Health Select Committee were given an update on progress implementing FACS.
- 2.6 On 28th April 2005 the Director of Social services submitted a report to cabinet on the monitoring and review of FACS eligibility criteria. Cabinet resolved that the threshold for Fair Access to Care Services for 2005/06 be set at "substantial" and above.
- 2.7 In October 2005 an eligibility criteria seminar took place for elected members.
- 2.8 On 15th March 2006 the Director of Social Services submitted a report to Social Care and Health Select Committee which concluded that the threshold should remain at critical and substantial for 2005/06. Members noted the report.
- 2.9 Formal FACS training was provided for all care managers in April and May 2007, when 127 staff attended 1 day's training. In August and September 2007, 25 further staff attended a half day FACS Briefing. People who use services were involved in the training and training material was provided. A rolling programme of training is made available for new staff.
- 2.10 The application of the FACS eligibility criteria forms part of routine supervision with care managers. It is the team managers' role, in line with their quality assurance responsibilities, to ensure that eligibility for

services is properly determined and that service provision complies with FACS eligibility criteria.

- 2.11 As of February 2009, 4,226 people who are receiving services were assessed as having substantial and critical needs. Out of this number, 78 were assessed as having critical needs.

3. Commission for Social Care Inspection Review – “Cutting the Cake Fairly”

- 3.1 In October 2008, the Commission for Social Care Inspection produced a government sponsored review of the national FACS criteria following concerns about the quality of life of many people and deemed ineligible for publicly funded social care and inconsistent application of the FACS criteria across Councils. The findings of the review highlighted the following issues:

- Lack of clarity and confidence in understanding of the framework by professionals and people who use services
- Lack of fairness due to variations in professional judgements, a service led as opposed to a needs led approach, over-standardisation of groups of people and a lack of consideration of other important areas such as health
- Not connected to prevention and inclusion agendas and inadequate signposting on first contact
- Emergent tension between FACS standardisation and Personalisation principles based on self-assessment, individual choice in control.

- 3.2 Recommendations from the report covered the following: offering better arrangements for universal support; improving the quality of response at peoples' first contact with the Council; a new system for allocating public funds based on immediate, early and longer-term intervention; a national resource allocation formula; improvements in the quality of decision making.

- 3.3 As part of the Transformation Agenda for the Department of Adult Social Services, the key recommendations and priorities set out in the report are incorporated into the Department of Adult Social Services change programme. Further guidance on a new national system to replace FACS is yet to be issued. Any revisions are likely to be affected by the government's review of funding for care and support, details of which will be outlined in the Green paper due for publication in 'spring '2009

4. Future FACS Criteria

- 4.1 When considering the current eligibility threshold, the view of the Department is that the future budget should be able to continue to accommodate services to adults whose assessed needs fall into the critical and substantial band.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 That Wirral Council set Fair Access to Care Services criteria as at present and continue to provide social care services to individuals in Wirral who have critical and substantial needs.

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