



Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Wednesday, 23 November 2011
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

Contact Officer: Mark Delap
Tel: 0151 691 8500
e-mail: markdelap@wirral.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

AGENDA

1. MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 24)

To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 26th September, 12th and 20th October 2011.

3. DOMESTIC ABUSE (Pages 25 - 38)

4. WIRRAL TRADER SCHEME (Pages 39 - 46)

5. CONSUMER LANDSCAPE REVIEW (Pages 47 - 52)

6. SMOKE FREE PLAY AREAS (Pages 53 - 60)

7. REDUCING THE COUNCIL'S CARBON FOOTPRINT - PROGRESS REPORT 4 (Pages 61 - 78)

8. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FLOOD RISK REGULATIONS 2009 AND THE FLOOD AND WATER ACT 2010 - PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 79 - 88)

9. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN WIRRAL COUNCIL AND UNITED UTILITIES GROUP PLC (Pages 89 - 92)**
10. **WIRRAL HERITAGE STRATEGY (Pages 93 - 166)**
11. **WIRRAL MUSEUMS SERVICE FORWARD PLAN 2011 - 2016 (Pages 167 - 194)**
12. **2011/2012 SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL REVIEW (Pages 195 - 204)**
13. **TENDER ACCEPTED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS - THE HIGHWAY WINTER BUREAU AND FORECASTING SERVICES CONTRACT (Pages 205 - 208)**
14. **DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS (Pages 209 - 212)**
15. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the period November 2011 to February 2012 has now been published on the Council's intranet/website and Members are invited to review the Plan prior to the meeting in order for the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider, having regard to the work programme, whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan and, if so, how it could be done within relevant timescales and resources.

16. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 213 - 216)**
17. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 1)**
18. **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The public may 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.

RECOMMENDED – That in accordance with section 100A (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 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The public interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

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

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 26 September 2011

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	J Hale (Chair)	
	Councillors	D McCubbin R Wilkins P Hackett C Jones J Walsh	S Whittingham A Sykes S Williams J Salter (In place of KJ Williams)
<u>Deputies:</u>	Councillors	J Salter (In place of KJ Williams)	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	KJ Williams	

13 CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Councillor C Jones declared a personal interest in Item No. 5 on the agenda – Highways and Traffic Representation Panel (Minute No. 17 refers) as she lived in a street that had been resurfaced by Colas who would be making a presentation.

Councillors P Hackett, J Salter and J Walsh each declared a personal interest in Item No. 8 on the agenda – Shale Gas Fracking as they were Members of the Planning Committee who had considered the report.

14 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 June 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

15 HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATION PANEL

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel be received.

16 WASTE STRATEGY REVIEW SCRUTINY

A report by the Director of Technical Services provided the Committee with information relating to the Merseyside Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) review and associated complementary Wirral Council District Action Plan (DCAP). It was noted that, subject to Members' approval and ratification by the

Council, the current schedule for the publication of the JMWMS and the Wirral DCAP was December 2011.

The JMWMS and Wirral Council's DCAP would become the Council's strategic documents to support the delivery of the corporate goal "Minimising Waste by Encouraging Waste Reduction and Recycling".

Neil Ferris, Director of Strategy and Developments at the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority provided the Committee with a presentation on the latest position of the JMWMS. Mr Ferris reminded Members of the EU Waste Framework Directive and EU Landfill Directive Targets. He also provided a short list of strategy objectives, a menu of delivery options and informed of the details of his Authority's ten week public consultation exercise, which had ended on 7 September 2011. A review timetable had been prepared along with an action plan for Wirral Council to assist it in delivering the Waste Strategy.

Finally, the Committee was asked to consider whether:

- it remained satisfied with the process that has been undertaken to develop the new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy;
- subject to any comments Members may wish to submit on its content, they are happy to endorse the draft Strategy and associated Council action plan as they currently stand; and
- it agrees that a final version of the draft Strategy and Council action plan, taking into account the Board's comments, be referred to the Cabinet for consideration, prior to their submission to the Council for formal approval.

Following the presentation Members asked a number of questions which were answered as appropriate by Mr Ferris.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Mr Ferris be thanked for his informative presentation;**
- (2) the process that has been undertaken to develop the new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy be endorsed;**
- (3) the draft Strategy and associated District Action Plan as they currently stand be endorsed;**
- (4) the current work being carried out on the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract Review be noted and progress on this work be reported to this Committee in January 2012;**
- (5) a final version of the JMWMS Strategy and draft Wirral DCAP, taking into account the Committee's comments, be referred to the Cabinet for consideration, prior to them being presented to the Council for formal approval;**

- (6) a final Wirral DCAP, outlining the Council's intentions with regards to recycling and waste prevention (and associated future targets) be brought back to this Committee no later than June 2012, once the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract Review regarding the seven year break clause has been concluded;
- (7) following the ratification of the JMWMS a request be made that the Merseyside Waste Levy Payment Mechanism review must be undertaken, as soon as possible, and the progress of this work be monitored by this Committee.

17 **HIGHWAY AND ENGINEERING SERVICES CONTRACT - SECOND ANNUAL REVIEW**

A report by the Director of Technical Services provided an update for the Committee on the Highway and Engineering Services contract at the end of its second year of operation; including performance against the benefits sought and targets set. It also invited Members to provide views on any matter which the Committee considered appropriate for consideration by the contract partnership innovation groups, for further improvement of the works and services provided.

The Committee noted that the maintenance of all aspects of the highway infrastructure; carried out through this contract; were statutory duties imposed on the Council as Highway Authority.

Part of the report related to financial aspects of the contract which were exempt from public disclosure in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and this information was separately contained in Appendix 3 to the report. (Minute No. 28 refers)

Stephen Grimes, Contracts Manager at Colas was in attendance at the meeting along with members of his team who he introduced to the Committee. Mr Grimes made a presentation to the Committee on the Streetscene Partnership Year 2 Review. He provided a brief overview of what Colas was about and a focus on what it did on Wirral. He informed how Colas was organised, about its activities, its management and governance, its successes to date, its culture, business objectives and strategic aims.

Following the presentation Members asked a number of questions which were answered appropriately by Mr Grimes. Members were particularly concerned about the state of Wirral roads and associated risk management issues. Examples of perceived poor quality work were highlighted by Members, using examples from their own wards, some of which still had not been rectified. Mr Grimes informed that steps were being taken to improve the standards of work. A quality audit system was now in place and changes to working arrangements were ongoing. A robust contract management system was now also in operation. The Committee was of the view that Colas needed to carefully supervise road works to increase public satisfaction over repairs.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Mr Grimes and his team be thanked for their attendance at the meeting;**
- (2) Mr Grimes be thanked for his informative presentation;**
- (3) the progress of the Colas contract during the past year be noted; and**
- (4) Colas be requested to take away the complaints highlighted by Members and consider drawing up a complaints investigation protocol, to help bring about improvements to Wirral's roads.**

18 PAVEMENT/VERGE PARKING

A report by the Director of Technical Services advised the Committee of the current situation regarding pavement/verge parking in Wirral and provided an update on the progress of the introduction of the second phase of the pilot scheme restrictions. The report also contained the outcome of discussions with Merseyside Police and Pedestrian Forums on proposals to deal with pavement obstruction caused by inconsiderate parking.

At a meeting of this Committee on 18 November 2009 (Minute No. 31 refers), Members had been advised that the roads approved for the introduction of pilot restrictions had been divided into three manageable phases for legal and administrative purposes. The first phase had been introduced in December 2008 on the following roads:

Kings Lane, Bebington	(Kings Road to Old Chester Road)
Teehey Lane, Bebington	(Higher Bebington Road to Kings Road)
Kings Road, Bebington	(Borough Road to Kings Lane)
Holm Lane, Oxton	(Talbot Road to Oulton Close)
Bayswater Road, Wallasey	(Newport Avenue to Greenleas Road)
Woodchurch Road Prenton	(Holmlands Drive to Osmaston Road)

Feedback from Members and local residents had been positive and the restrictions had generally been accepted as an improvement to the immediate streetscene.

The Committee noted that the second phase of pilot restrictions was proposed for the following locations:

Townfield Lane, Oxton	(Bidston Road to Shavington Avenue)
Storeton Road, Oxton	(Woodchurch Road to Ingestre Road)
Frankby Road, Frankby	(Blackhorse Hill to Newton Park Road)
Greasby Road, Greasby	(Upton By Pass to Frankby Road)
Leasowe Road, Leasowe	(Heyes Drive to Reeds Lane – south side only)
Pensby Road, Pensby	(Gills Lane to Whitfield Lane)

A summary of the outcome of the consultation process and compliance to date in each of the roads where restrictions were introduced was set out in the report.

The Committee noted that there were various prevention measures available to deter pavement/verge parking including the installation of bollards, guard rails, high kerbs

and raised planters. A number of these measures had been used, in exceptional cases, in the Borough; however, installation costs and their visual effect on the Streetscene ruled them out as a general solution.

Following discussions with Merseyside Police, they had confirmed that they would continue to issue Fixed Penalty Notices because it was an offence under Regulation 24 Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 to park a vehicle at night without lights on a road with a speed limit in excess of 30 miles per hour.

In many locations across Wirral even on roads that did not satisfy the criteria for introducing parking restrictions, pavement parking was still causing an obstruction problem for users of the pavement.

In roads where parking a vehicle half on the road and half on the pavement was generally acceptable because of limited off street parking provision there was no intention by Merseyside Police or the Council to restrict this practice. In certain locations where the pavements were of a suitable width and construction to sustain the weight of a vehicle and unobstructed access could be maintained for both pedestrians and road users, this unofficial parking arrangement worked well. However, there were still many vehicle owners/users that chose to park their vehicles fully on the pavement without any consideration for the potential inconvenience they were causing.

In situations such as this, and in response to enquiries and complaints from the public, elected Members, pedestrian forums and walking groups, it had been suggested by members of some of these groups that the owners/users of these vehicles should be made aware of the problems they were causing and be advised accordingly.

To raise their awareness an advisory notice such as the one attached as Appendix A to the report would be placed on the vehicle by staff from the Council's Technical Services Department and officers from Merseyside Police in a similar way to the Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) issued by the Council's Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Contractor. The notices would request the owner/user to park responsibly in the future and with consideration for pavement users. They would also be advised of the implications of their actions if they continued to park irresponsibly.

For vehicle owners that choose to ignore the notice, Merseyside Police would serve a Fixed Penalty Notice for obstruction on the owner of the vehicle and in the case where the practice persisted and a number of owners within the same road continued to park wholly on the pavement, the Council would consider introducing measures to restrict parking to "half on/half off" and then enforce the restrictions through the Council's Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Contractor.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;**
- (2) the proposal to review the initial list of roads approved at the meeting of the Committee on 14 March 2007 and consider new locations based on the proposals set out in the report and subject to future funding, be endorsed;**
- (3) the proposals to deal with pavement obstruction be noted; and**

- (4) **the Committee be updated at a future meeting on both the review of new restriction locations and the outcome of the advisory notice initiative.**

19 **CORPORATE GOAL "HAVE A SAFE AND WELL MAINTAINED HIGHWAY NETWORK FOR ALL USERS" - PROGRESS REPORT**

A report by the Director of Technical Services provided the Committee with a progress update on delivering services and plans which would provide assurance that, as prioritised within the Corporate Plan, all aspects of Wirral's highway network were safe and well maintained and included an update on the performance measures in place for condition of the highway and casualty reduction.

The Committee was informed that maintenance of all aspects of the highway infrastructure was a statutory duty imposed on the Council as Highway Authority. The Highway Authority had a duty to prepare and undertake measures to improve road safety.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made to date in achieving this Corporate Plan goal be noted.

20 **SHALE GAS FRACKING**

Following reports of exploratory works for shale gas in Lancashire, concern had been raised about environmental implications. A report by the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning set out the Local Authority's responsibility role and regulatory role in relation to gas exploration and extraction within the Borough.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

21 **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

A report by the Director of Technical Services described a joint project being delivered between NHS Wirral, Public Health and Wirral Council that was identifying interventions and service changes that would assist in increasing the amount of physical activity undertaken by targeted groups within the 20% most deprived parts of Wirral.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

22 **ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

At the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 June 2011 (Minute No. 17 refers), the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management had informed it of the nature of works proposed to refurbish the Town Link viaduct and that he had accepted a tender for the works under delegated authority.

The Cabinet noted that the lowest tender in the sum of £483,915, submitted by Balvac Ltd, had been accepted by the Director of Law HR and Asset Management under delegated authority, pursuant to Contract Procedure Rule 14.4 and that acceptance would be reported to the next meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the fact that the lowest tender in the sum of £483,915, submitted by Balvac Ltd, had been accepted by the Director of Law HR and Asset Management under delegated authority, pursuant to Contract Procedure Rule 14.4 be noted.

23 DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

A report by the Director of Technical Services informed Members, in accordance with the Approved Scheme of Delegation, of instances where delegated authority had been used by him in respect of the appointment of Contractors, pursuant to Contract Procedure Rule 14.4.

RESOLVED:

That the tenders accepted by the Director of Technical Services since the last meeting of the Committee on 10 March 2011, as detailed in the report, be noted.

24 2011/2012 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

A joint report of the Directors of Technical Services and Law, HR and Asset Management set out performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-14 for April to June 2011, in relation to sustainable communities, and provided the Committee with an overview of performance, resource and risk monitoring.

The Committee noted, in particular, that the Energy Efficiency strategic change project had been assessed as red. The project had been set to deliver £80k of savings during 2011/12. £50k of this saving had been predicted on the installation of PC Powerdown software. This software had not yet been installed. It was, therefore, unlikely that the savings would be achieved now. The Department of Finance would reconsider this matter as part of the new restated ICT Strategy. Members were concerned by this failure to make savings and wanted to know why this software had not been installed.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and**
- (2) a report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee setting out the reasons why the Powerdown software had not been installed.**

25 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee had regard to the Forward Plan for the period September to December 2011 which had been published on the Council's intranet/website.

Members had been invited to review the Plan, prior to the meeting, in order to consider, in the light of the work programme, whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan and, if so, how it could be done within relevant timescales and resources.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

26 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011/2012

The Committee received an update on its work programme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the work programme be noted; and**
- (2) Wirral Trader Scheme be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.**

27 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

28 EXEMPT APPENDIX

The Committee considered an Appendix to the report – Highways and Engineering Services Contract – Second Annual Review – which had already been considered in Part 1 of the meeting (in the presence of the press and public) along with associated risks. It related to the financial aspects of the contract which were exempt from public disclosure, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. (Minute No. 17 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the content of the exempt Appendix be noted.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12 October 2011

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	J Hale (Chair)	
	Councillors	D McCubbin KJ Williams P Hackett C Jones	A Sykes J Walsh S Whittingham S Williams
<u>Cabinet Members In attendance:</u>	Councillors	B Kenny Mrs C Meaden H Smith	Environment Culture, Tourism and Leisure Streetscene and Transport Services

29 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

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

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

Councillor J Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 2 (Sustainable Communities Budget Issues 2012/2013 (see minute 30 post) by virtue of his employment with WIRED.

Councillor S Whittingham also declared a personal interest in agenda item 2 (Sustainable Communities Budget Issues 2012/2013 (see minute 30 post), insofar as it related to the Wirral Tramway.

30 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BUDGET ISSUES 2012/13

The Directors of Technical Services, Law, HR and Asset Management and Finance set out the key budgetary issues and challenges under the remit of the Committee and reported that, as part of the 2012/2013 Budget Consultation process, the Cabinet had asked that Overview and Scrutiny Committees consider the functions within their portfolio and offer suggestions as to how to close the estimated £25m budget gap and limit any Council Tax increase in 2012/2013. The responses would be considered along with those from the other engagement processes to inform the budget setting process and further consultation would be undertaken regarding any specific service changes.

Members expressed a view that it would be more appropriate for the Cabinet to identify savings and for those savings to then be subject to scrutiny. However, Members also suggested that the Committee should respond to the Cabinet in a constructive manner.

It was moved by Councillor R Wilkins and seconded by Councillor D McCubbin –

“(1) That having regard to the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (as set out in the Council’s Constitution), this Overview and Scrutiny Committee is of the view that it will respond to the Cabinet’s proposals at the earliest opportunity.

(2) That this Committee considers that it is the prime responsibility of Cabinet Members to come forward with proposals for investigation, research or detailed study, in sufficient depth, and in the detail required for Members to make informed decisions.

(3) That, in order for this to be thorough and constructive, this Committee requests that proposals should be provided as soon as possible and that information and advice is available to Members.

(4) That this Committee will therefore consider setting a date for a special meeting to consider Cabinet-led suggestions, highlighting potential savings, as soon as they are available.”

(At 6.10pm, the Committee stood adjourned for 5 minutes so as to allow Members to fully consider the Motion moved by Councillor Wilkins.)

Following the meeting being reconvened, the Motion was put and carried (5:0)

Resolved –

- (1) That having regard to the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (as set out in the Council’s Constitution), this Overview and Scrutiny Committee is of the view that it will respond to the Cabinet’s proposals at the earliest opportunity.**
- (2) That this Committee considers that it is the prime responsibility of Cabinet Members to come forward with proposals for investigation, research or detailed study, in sufficient depth, and in the detail required for Members to make informed decisions.**
- (3) That, in order for this to be thorough and constructive, this Committee requests that proposals should be provided as soon as possible and that information and advice is available to Members.**
- (4) That this Committee will therefore consider setting a date for a special meeting to consider Cabinet-led suggestions, highlighting potential savings, as soon as they are available.**

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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20 October 2011

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	J Hale (Chair)	
	Councillors	D McCubbin KJ Williams R Wilkins C Jones	J Walsh A Sykes S Williams
<u>Deputies:</u>	Councillors	R Abbey D Roberts	
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	D Elderton S Foulkes J Green C Meaden	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	P Hackett S Whittingham	

CALL-IN OF CABINET MINUTE 117 (22 SEPTEMBER 2011) – PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES EXERCISE (PACSPE)

31 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed members of the public to the meeting. He outlined the call-in procedure and introduced Councillor J Green, the lead signatory to the call-in notice, and Councillor C Meaden, a Cabinet Member and the relevant Portfolio Holder.

32 REQUEST TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor J Williams requested that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting so that the Committee could discuss recent developments in respect of the Serious Fraud Office being requested to examine one of the Council's contracts and its possible implications. The Chair informed that this was about another matter and the level of information available at the moment was limited. However, Councillor Williams was of the view that there was a clear cross over between that contract and the Parks and Countryside Services Procurement Exercise (PACSPE) which was under consideration by the Committee and the questions he wanted to ask would cover both of these matters.

Consequently, the Committee was asked if it wished to accede to the request and it was

RESOLVED:

That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

33 **CLARIFICATION AND IMPLICATIONS OF ANY SERIOUS FRAUD OFFICE INVESTIGATION**

The Committee asked the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management for guidance and advice in respect of recent events. The Director set out the current situation in respect of this matter and informed that he could see no reason for the Committee not to proceed with the consideration, in public, of the Cabinet decision on the PACSPE which had been called in. If in so doing Members considered it necessary later to seek further legal advice this may be provided, in private, by passing a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting again, if it was considered appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

34 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP**

Councillors R Abbey, C Jones, C Meaden, J Walsh and J Williams each declared a personal interest in respect of the Cabinet's decision which had been called in by virtue of their trade union membership.

35 **EXPLANATION OF CALL - IN BY LEAD SIGNATORY**

Councillor J Green, Leader of the Conservative Group, outlined the reasons for his opposition to the Cabinet's decision not to let the PACSPE contract to an external contractor but to retain these services in house, as set out in the call-in notice. It was noted that as some elements of the grounds for call-in were commercially sensitive, the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management had redacted those specific parts. However, the full text of the call-in was contained within Part 2 of the agenda.

Councillor Green referred particularly to advice provided by the District Auditor who had recently qualified the Value for Money statement in the Council's Annual Governance Report. The District Auditor had stated in respect of the Highways and Engineering Services Procurement Exercise (HESPE) contract, which had been in operation for the last two and a half years that the Council was not able to provide information on activity and performance to determine whether it was receiving better value for the money spent. She had informed that

“there are risks in letting a 10 year contract if there is only very limited information on the costs and activities levels of the existing service and Members should be made aware of this increased risk. This is because there is nothing to monitor against when assessing whether or not letting the contract has delivered better value for money.”

Councillor Green informed that he had attended the Cabinet meeting when the decision on the PACSPE had been made. He had subsequently taken the opportunity to question the District Auditor, asking her if she had considered the Gateway process that had been used during the procurement exercise, or seen the procurement documentation and the business case. She had informed that she had not; and that she had not been suggesting that the Council should not go ahead with the procurement exercise. She had merely wanted to point out the risks associated with letting a contract for PACSPE. Councillor Green believed that no thought had been given to mitigating the risks.

Councillor Green reported that he had serious concerns over the way the Cabinet had made its decision and he believed that it exposed the Council to the risk of a judicial review. The procurement process had been thorough and the Project Board had been very focused on value for money. The decision which the Cabinet had made could suggest that the procurement process which the Council had used may not have been complete.

36 EVIDENCE FROM CALL - IN WITNESSES

Mr Ian Halton, Director, Capita Symonds

Mr Halton talked the Committee through the Business Case process. He informed, through questioning, that during the PACSPE process account had been taken of the objectives and aspirations of the Council (which were very similar to those of other local authorities). It was noted that obtaining value for money had been very important, as was bringing about much needed improvements to the facilities within the Council's Parks and Countryside Service. This would involve identifying funding to improve equipment and to assist staff training and development. A benchmarking exercise had been carried out using both similar and neighbouring authorities. This exercise had considered service delivery, taking on board the views and opinions of internal staff and contractors. Mr Halton reported that an options appraisal had been undertaken. He also detailed the six procurement options that had been considered, the SWOT analysis carried out, along with the estimated costs, quality issues and the flexibility in the contract to make efficiency savings.

Members were told by Mr Halton that he had been led to believe that an in house bid had been ruled out because it had been considered that the Council did not have the staff with the expertise required to develop it; and there would have been a problem with service delivery if staff had concentrated their energies on drawing up a bid. Mr Halton informed that the Project Board had told him that in house staff did not have the appetite to draw up a bid.

Mr David Green, Director of Technical Services

Mr Green reported that he would have been happy to run an in house service but the brief had not included an in house option. However there are significant challenges to overcome and it will probably take two years to provide a broadly comparable service to that which an external provider could provide from shortly after the commencement of the contract. Initial discussions had taken place with the trade unions who recognised that working practices would have had to change significantly. They had set out their ideas of how working practises could change. There had been an informal understanding between the two parties about what would be required. Mr Green reported that he was of the opinion that the Council's staff could deliver a broadly comparable service but, realistically, it required change, investment and time. Mr Green said that the PACSPE had been a big, complicated procurement exercise and that was why a Project Board had been established. The Board was made up of those officers with the appropriate skills from within the Council. A business case had been developed which included three options for service delivery in house; outside; or a combination of both. This had been presented along with a report to the Cabinet. The report had set out the advantages and disadvantages (which had been scored) and the likely efficiencies. Mr Green also reported, when questioned about whether the staff had the ability to draw up an in-house bid to run the Service, that he was of the view that Mr Halton had been referring to the staff's technical abilities. Mr Green considered that there was a lack of in house expertise and staff would not have been able to put together a competitive tender for the work required without the assistance of an expert. This

would have involved additional costs for the external advice required. It was noted that 70% of the evaluation had been on price, whilst 30% had been based on quality.

When questioned on why there had been an in house bid for the HESPE and not the PACSPE, Mr Green informed that in both cases the decision had been made by the Cabinet. In both cases it had been what the Council's Administration, at that time, had wanted to do. Also, it was noted that the Council did not have the staff that could put together a competitive tender within the timescale laid down. The appropriate infrastructure was not in place within Parks and Countryside Service and unit costs were unknown. Mr Green was still unaware of the costs of running individual parks. Systems needed to be put in place so that this information is available in future. The Cabinet was aware of the situation and the lack of financial information available. Initially, Mr Green informed that his instructions from the Cabinet were to do as much as he could and develop an action plan and, depending on the business case, there may be some more investment available.

It was noted that since the Cabinet had made its decision at its meeting on 22 September 2011 on the PACSPE an initial meeting had been held with the trade unions. There had not been any discussions with user groups since the decision had been made. Mr Green confirmed that, subject to the call-in, he would be able to deliver a first class service in house, over a ten year period, but that it would take approximately two years to get the service up to the appropriate standard. The Cabinet had asked him to provide an action plan and he intended also to share its detail with the staff, trade unions and user groups. The aim was to provide the best in house service possible, within the resources available.

Professor Robert Lee, Friends Forum Steering Group

Firstly, Professor Lee distributed a paper to all Members of the Committee from Martin Harrison, Secretary to Wirral Parks Friends Forum. Professor Lee presented the paper informing that the community-based Parks Steering Group had been involved in the PACSPE process from the beginning. It had identified the following key problems with Wirral's parks and open spaces:

- Poor gardening standards
- Areas of parks abandoned and uncared for
- Varying standards across Wirral
- Lack of firm supervision and direction
- Broken and obsolete equipment
- Lack of training and apprenticeship
- Low staff morale
- Low staff productivity
- Deteriorating buildings and infrastructure
- Budget cut on top of budget cut on this supposedly unimportant service
- Areas of natural interest and wildlife uncared for
- Statutory standards for designated nature areas not being met
- Wirral gems such as Hilbre Island are being neglected

Professor Lee informed that the Wirral Parks Friends' Forum had come to the conclusion that contracting the work out was the best and only way to achieve much needed change, save money and improve quality. The Friends and had been involved in the process, feeding in a series of position statements. This was because the Friends' Forum believed that there was a lack of skills and equipment; and there was weak management. Professor Lee referred to 'The Corporate Governance Report' written by Anna Klonowski Associates Ltd which summarised organisational weakness and had found that the Council could not manage performance or spot

failings. In the light of this, he could not see how quality improvements required could be brought about in-house.

Professor Lee considered the PACSPE process to have been robust. All the contractors involved had impressed the Friends' Forum with their innovative ideas and because they were passionate about parks. He informed that the Friends' Forum was concerned about the process behind the Cabinet's decision, as there had been no consultation or formal notification of that decision.

In summary, Professor Lee informed that Wirral's parks and open spaces required investment. Standards had to be raised as green flag awards were needed to maximise what parks had to offer. There was huge potential but was on balance his preference remained for outsourcing parks and open spaces. This was because the Council did not have a structure in place to move them forward in a meaningful way.

Mr Chris Rance, Atkins

Members questioned Mr Rance on his experience of similar procurement exercises. They were informed that he had undertaken work for a number of other local authorities, including Birmingham City Council and that he was a green flag judge. He told the Committee that he had a strong grounding and expert knowledge in this particular area. Mr Rance was also questioned on the risk of the contract not delivering value for money. He informed that the contract had been developed through a very thorough process and would, in his opinion, deliver excellent value for money. He added that the whole focus had been on achieving results.

Mr Malcolm Burns, Atkins

Members questioned Mr Burns on the number of similar procurements he had been consulted on previously. They were informed that he had been consulted on one that had been very similar to the PACSPE and a lot that were similar to a lesser degree. He also informed that he had been involved with similar procurement projects: e.g. rail and waterway projects. He informed, through questioning, that all of the work that had gone into developing the contract, had been targeting improving value for money. This had been built into the process and the documentation used. The prices provided via the tender process in comparison to in house costs, demonstrated savings.

Mr Burns told the Committee that, in his opinion, the contract was as robust as a contract could be; and he did not believe that there were any serious abnormalities in it. It provided for variations and this meant that the Council could alter the tasks to be performed by the contractor in line with the funding available. It was also output based and would deliver a given standard in a particular area. Finally, and there was provision in the contract for price adjustments.

Jim Lester, Head of Cultural Services

Mr Lester was questioned on cost accounting. He informed that he was aware of the lack of financial information available and knew this was something that his Service would have to improve upon. Costs were not broken down on a park by park basis. However, information was available on the costs of delivering specific services e.g. The Ranger Service.

Mr Lester informed that he was confident that the Parks and Countryside Service could be retained successfully in-house. This would require resources and it would take time, as there was a lot of work to do. He told the Committee that he would

commence discussions with staff and trade unions on how costs on a park by park basis could be achieved.

Jenny Spick, Chief Accountant

From questioning by Members Ms Spick informed that Project Board meetings had been held approximately every four to six weeks. Her view on value for money was that it was demonstrated in what came from the contract process. This means looking at cost price and specification and comparing what was delivered at the moment and what was specified in respect of future delivery.

Ms Spick was asked for her views on the value for money judgement made by the District Auditor but informed that she was unaware of the detail around it. Members asked Ms Spick if she had been surprised by the District Auditor's comments and her response was that the question was hard to answer.

Members noted that in order to move to unit costing it would be necessary to look at where staff worked and how much time they spent on different tasks etc. A method for apportioning costs across parks would have to be introduced and the work of Finance Teams would have to be broken down on a park for park basis.

Ray Williams, Corporate Procurement Manager

Mr Williams was asked about his professional experience and informed that he had worked for all of the Councils on Merseyside conducting tender processes, complying with regulations etc. Members asked whether, in Mr Williams' opinion, the PACSPE procurement had been a safe and robust exercise. His response was that it had been; and that lessons had been learnt from the HESPE process which had been carried into the PACSPE process.

Mr Williams was also asked about the risk of a legal challenge to the Council and responded that as the Council had withdrawn from the PACSPE process, contractors who had tendered for the work were very disappointed; but the question of whether there may be a legal challenge to the Cabinet's decision should be addressed by a legal officer.

Mark Gandy, Group Auditor

Mr Gandy informed that he was happy that the PACSPE procurement process had been robust and there had been no problems encountered. His focus had been to ensure that all of the tenderers had been treated fairly when he had drawn up the tender documents.

Mark Smith, Deputy Director of Technical Services

Mr Smith informed that his primary role in the PACSPE procurement process had been to lead it since the Cabinet made its decision in 2010, to agree a single strategic contract. On being questioned on the robustness of the process Mr Smith informed that although there was some criticism about the Council at the moment, there were some things it was good at. Officers had built up experience on this type of work, lessons had been learnt from the HESPE process, and an action plan had been drawn up and used along with an OGC Gateway process to deliver the objective set by the Cabinet at that time.

Mr Smith explained the Gateway process which had become well established over the last ten years and was recommended by Central Government for contracts of this nature. There were recognised common features for every procurement project of

this nature. The project was split up into gates and checks and balances were put in place. Mr Smith told the Committee that his staff had a good and strong reputation for using this process effectively.

The Committee asked Mr Smith if, in his opinion, the PACSPE delivered value for money. Mr Smith responded by pointing out that the tenders, submitted at the end of the process, proved this and that efficiencies could be made if the work had been outsourced. He informed that a detailed scoping exercise (involving 15 – 16 scoping papers) had been carried out following the District Auditor's advice.

Councillor David Elderton, Chair 2010/11 - PACSPE Members Steering Group

Councillor Elderton informed that he had been the Cabinet Member with the Portfolio for Culture, Tourism and Leisure during the 2010/11 Municipal Year. As such he had been heavily involved in the process to externalise the Parks and Countryside Service. The Labour Group had started the process some years ago but, for reasons unknown to him, had decided in September 2009, not to pursue it. The Conservative Group had picked it up after receiving expressions of concern over the way the Parks and Countryside Service was being delivered.

Councillor Elderton reported that a detailed specification had been included in the tender process. All tenderers had been given the details and had returned their tenders on that basis. The aim had been to provide the best possible service for the Council Tax Payers of Wirral and he had been unable to understand how the workforce could submit a tender. The contract was to have been based on outcomes and if the successful tenderer failed to perform, the Council would have been able to impose sanctions. The workforce could not be invited to submit a bid on that basis. The options had been to provide the service in-house or go out to contract. There had been no middle course of action.

Councillor Elderton told the Committee that he had spent thirty years of his working life engaged in similar processes to PACSPE and as the Cabinet Member with responsibilities for the PACSPE, had spent a lot of time pondering over the details. He had seen all of the tender documents, had been delighted in the way everyone had responded; and had made every effort to make sure it would work. Externalisation of the Service would have provided best value. Plant and equipment would have needed to be replaced and the workforce trained and looked after when it transferred over to the contractor.

The Committee had been informed by a previous witness that the Golf Groups had been unhappy. However, Councillor Elderton informed that he had attended a very successful meeting with them and that there were certain issues on golf courses which would need to be addressed.

Councillor Chris Meaden, Cabinet Member – Culture, Tourism and Leisure (proposer of the Cabinet Motion)

Councillor Meaden, through questioning, informed that Parks and Countryside staff had been told that the Service would be retained in house at the Cabinet meeting held on 22 September 2011. The last Steering Group meeting had been cancelled as the PACSPE was to be considered at the Cabinet meeting, and at the time it had been cancelled Councillor Meaden had been unaware of the Labour Group's proposal to keep the Service in-house. The Cabinet had still to decide what resources would be made available to replace plant and equipment.

Councillor Steve Foulkes, Leader of the Council

Councillor Foulkes drew attention to the District Auditor's criticism over the HESPE contract that the Council was not able to provide information on activity and performance to determine whether it was receiving better value for the money spent and informed that this was reason enough for her not to let the PACSPE contract. He informed that he did not want the District Auditor issuing a qualified opinion that drew attention to weaknesses identified in the arrangements for securing value for money in respect of a PACSPE contract. Councillor Foulkes considered that to let such a contract would have been an unwise decision, especially as there was less information available in respect of unit costs for the PACSPE than there had been for the HESPE.

Bill Norman, Director of Law, HR and Asset Management

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management was asked whether, in his view, the decision taken not to award the PACSPE contract but to continue to run the service in house was reasonable or unreasonable. He stated that it was reasonable and that the comments of the District Auditor needed to be considered in the light of Anna Klonowski's supplementary report on the Council's Governance Arrangements: Refresh and Renew following her independent review of the Council's response to claims made by the whistleblower, Mr Martin Morton (and others). The Corporate Governance Report had identified a number of serious happenings over recent years, namely:

- (A) A Public Interest Report,
- (B) Two reports under the Public Interest Disclosure Act,
- (C) A "red flag" raised by the Audit Commission in relation to Adult Social Services Data,
- (D) A Care Quality Commission (CQC) Report relating to issues raised by the "red flag",
- (E) Concerns raised by the Council's external auditors, and
- (F) A number of issues raised by the Director of Finance in the Council's own corporate governance statements.

The Director told the Committee that the District Auditor's specific qualification around value for money in relation to the HESPE contract was comparable to the issues listed above. It was a very rare occurrence for a specific qualification to be issued on a major procurement exercise. The inference he had taken from this was that there had been insufficient base information available to satisfy the District Auditor that the HESPE contract was providing value for the money the Council was spending. The Director said that it was reasonable for the Cabinet to consider whether a PACSPE contract could result in a similar outcome of a qualifying statement from the District Auditor. In the absence of quality information and unit costs the Council was unable to demonstrate that it could deliver a better Parks and Countryside Services by letting the PACSPE contract.

Ian Coleman, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance reported that he had not been involved in the HESPE process and had only known that the District Auditor would issue a qualifying statement in respect of it since September 2011. He was of the view that if the PACSPE contract had been let it would have resulted in the District Auditor issuing another qualifying statement.

The Committee noted an assessment of the impact of inflation over the ten years the PACSPE contract was to have run would have eliminated any possible savings made through externalisation.

Geoff Bradfield, Wirral Unison

Mr Bradfield made reference to the length of time the PACSPE process had been running. He informed that Unison had a Plan to retain the Parks and Countryside Service within the Council and deliver a first class service which would provide value for money. Unison wanted to work in partnership with the Council to obtain this end result. There were a number of elements to the Plan:

- 50 staff had left the Council through Early Voluntary Redundancy
- It would be necessary to increase the use of seasonal workers
- A policy of flexible staff working – working longer hours in summer, shorter hours in winter
- The provision of some new plant and equipment (either lease or buy)

Mr Bradfield informed that meetings had taken place with the staff concerned and there had been agreement, in principle, for a flexible working scheme. This proposal would be discussed with the management.

38 SUMMING UP BY MOVER OF THE CALL - IN

Councillor J Green referred to the evidence the Committee had been presented with from various sources. The consultants used in the PACSPE process had explained the qualitative and quantitative assessments that had been carried out. Members had heard from Members of the Project Team and the Friends Forum, had been informed of the Gateway Reviews undertaken and had questioned the Accountant and the Auditor.

The Cabinet had taken its decision not to let the PACSPE contract but instead run the Parks and Countryside Service in house without any consultation with stakeholders or park users, who had made a huge contribution to the PACSPE process. The point had been made in respect of inflation that it only applied to the preferred bidder not the Council. Councillor Green informed that, of course, it applied to both sides.

Councillor Green referred to the points made by the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Foulkes and accepted that he was genuine in what he had said. There was a problem in asking tenderers to tender for a contract by adhering to a set of rules and then asking them to change them. He considered that it was this that left the Council open to a series of risks. Councillor Green referred, again, to the criticism levelled by the District Auditor that the Council was unable to demonstrate value for money in respect of the HESPE contract and the Cabinet's fear of this happening again if the PACSPE contract had been let. He reminded Members that he had spoken to the District Auditor in this regard; and that she had not seen all of the associated documentation. She had not suggested that the Council should not go ahead with this procurement exercise, in the light of it. She had only wanted to point out the risks of doing so. With some thought, Councillor Green believed that it would be possible to mitigate risks and it was up to the Council to do this. In the light of the points made and the information provided by the expert witnesses at this meeting, Councillor Green believed that he and his fellow Councillors had been right to call the Cabinet's decision in.

There had been much talk of the HESPE contract during this meeting and Councillor Green was well aware of the lessons learnt from that process. He was disappointed that the decision had been taken to cancel the Member Steering Group on the run up to this meeting. The aim had been to provide Members with important information. Councillor Green was also concerned about the Council not having essential data and the need identified for a management information system which would require additional investment and about the budgetary issues set out in the report. He was still of the view that the Cabinet's decision to refuse to award the PACSPE contract was not evidenced based and was unsafe and that no one appeared to have looked at how the contract had been put together or that the District Auditor's views about value for money had not been tested.

Councillor Green urged the Committee to inform the Cabinet that it had made the wrong decision over the PACSPE contract and request that it be reviewed, with a view to retrieving the situation, by make the right decision to let the contract to an external contractor.

39 **SUMMING UP BY CABINET MEMBER**

Councillor C Meaden summed up by informing that when she had become the Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Leisure in May 2011 she had met with the Director of Technical Services and had decided to visit all of the Council's Parks and meet the staff and volunteers which she had done. She spoke highly of the Contracts Manager who would now be asked to restructure the whole Service.

Councillor Meaden reported that she had spent a lot of time considering the PACSPE contract. However, at the Cabinet meeting on 22 September 2011 she had been aware that the staff had been eager to know about their jobs and what would happen in the future. Therefore, to avoid any more unnecessary suspense, she had moved the recommendations without any preamble. Councillor Meaden informed that she was very happy for the Parks and Countryside Service to remain in house.

40 **VOTE OF THANKS**

Councillor J Hale, in his capacity of Chair, thanked everyone who had spoken at the meeting for their contributions.

41 **COMMITTEE DECISION**

It was moved by Councillor Hale and seconded by Councillor McCubbin: That

This Committee notes the following:

- the Cabinet appeared to ignore, and did not even mention, the findings of the Office of Government Commerce Gateway Reviews that the Parks & Countryside Services Procurement Exercise (PACSPE) had been subjected to;
- no attempt was made to publically question officers from the Finance Department, the Legal Department and the Procurement Unit who were members of the PACSPE Project Board as to whether the 'risk' identified by District Audit, and made so much play of in the Cabinet resolution could or had been satisfactorily mitigated;
- no discussion was had by Cabinet Members of the risks of not awarding the contract.

- no mention or discussion took place regarding stakeholder management or the views of key stakeholders about the benefits of clear quality improvements that were built into the procurement exercise. In fact, other than the views of the Council Trades Unions, the results of consultation and the views of park users and user groups were not even mentioned by a single Cabinet Member at the meeting;
- no reference was made to the new post of Community Engagement Manager to work with Friends, stakeholders, user groups and local Area Forums or the new key performance indicators developed through PACSPE to reflect the change to a more customer and community focused service;
- insufficient account appeared to be taken of the reduction from costs of £8.1 million per year to £7.4 million per year already achieved by the PACSPE process with the potential to reduce costs by a further very large sum. Indeed, it is hard to understand how the Leader of the Council characterised the potential savings as marginal;
- no effort appeared to be made by Cabinet Members to discuss or evaluate the additional costs to Council Tax payers of purchasing what has been accepted as worn out equipment requiring immediate replacement at a very significant cost or the TUPE costs of bringing current contractor staff into the Council workforce and pension scheme, per annum, or over the 10 year period;
- no mention was made of the training and development programme for staff and volunteers or the three to six new apprentices to be created as part of PACSPE;
- no explanation was given at Cabinet regarding the opposition to a 10 year contract that would reduce annual costs by a significant amount]and improve the quality of our parks and countryside, other than the expressed need contained in the resolution to reduce spending by £85 million over three years;
- therefore we believe that the decision to refuse to award the PACSPE contract would see the ever decreasing quality of a service starved of investment by this administration which is already characterised by going for the quick fix instead of making the difficult but necessary strategic decisions in the interests of Wirral residents; and
- this Committee therefore, recommends that the PACSPE contract should be let to the designated preferred bidder.

It was moved as an Amendment by Councillor J Williams and seconded by Councillor J Walsh that the resolution of the Cabinet at its meeting on 22 September 2011 be agreed. (Cabinet Minute No. 117 refers.)

The Amendment was put to the vote and lost (5:5) on the Chair's casting vote.

The original Motion was then put to the vote and carried (5:5) on the Chair's casting vote.

RESOLVED:

That this Committee notes the following:

- **the Cabinet appeared to ignore, and did not even mention, the findings of the Office of Government Commerce Gateway Reviews that the Parks & Countryside Services Procurement Exercise (PACSPE) had been subjected to;**
- **no attempt was made to publically question officers from the Finance Department, the Legal Department and the Procurement Unit who were members of the PACSPE Project Board as to whether the 'risk' identified by District Audit, and made so much play of in the Cabinet resolution could or had been satisfactorily mitigated;**
- **no discussion was had by Cabinet Members of the risks of not awarding the contract.**
- **no mention or discussion took place regarding stakeholder management or the views of key stakeholders about the benefits of clear quality improvements that were built into the procurement exercise. In fact, other than the views of the Council Trades Unions, the results of consultation and the views of park users and user groups were not even mentioned by a single Cabinet Member at the meeting;**
- **no reference was made to the new post of Community Engagement Manager to work with Friends, stakeholders, user groups and local Area Forums or the new key performance indicators developed through PACSPE to reflect the change to a more customer and community focused service;**
- **insufficient account appeared to be taken of the reduction from costs of £8.1 million per year to £7.4 million per year already achieved by the PACSPE process with the potential to reduce costs by a further very large sum. Indeed, it is hard to understand how the Leader of the Council characterised the potential savings as marginal;**
- **no effort appeared to be made by Cabinet Members to discuss or evaluate the additional costs to Council Tax payers of purchasing what has been accepted as worn out equipment requiring immediate replacement at a very significant cost or the TUPE costs of bringing current contractor staff into the Council workforce and pension scheme, per annum, or over the 10 year period;**
- **no mention was made of the training and development programme for staff and volunteers or the three to six new apprentices to be created as part of PACSPE;**
- **no explanation was given at Cabinet regarding the opposition to a 10 year contract that would reduce annual costs by a significant amount]and improve the quality of our parks and countryside, other than the expressed need contained in the resolution to reduce spending by £85 million over three years;**

- **therefore we believe that the decision to refuse to award the PACSPE contract would see the ever decreasing quality of a service starved of investment by this administration which is already characterised by going for the quick fix instead of making the difficult but necessary strategic decisions in the interests of Wirral residents; and**
- **this Committee therefore, recommends that the PACSPE contract should be let to the designated preferred bidder.**

42 **REASONS FOR CALL-IN - FULL VERSION**

The Committee had regard to the full version of the reasons for the call-in which contained exempt information, as some elements of the grounds for the call-in were commercially sensitive.

43 **EXEMPT APPENDICES TO PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES PROCUREMENT EXERCISE (PACSPE) REPORT**

The Committee noted the exempt appendices in respect of the Parks and Countryside Services Procurement Exercise which contained some commercially sensitive information.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	<i>DOMESTIC ABUSE ON WIRRAL</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>BILL NORMAN</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Councils Corporate Plan 2011 – 2014 includes a goal to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve community safety. That goal is focused upon providing advocacy and support to protect survivors of domestic abuse. It builds on the effective partnership working that has led to reductions in repeat incidences of abuse in the highest risk cases.
- 1.2 The Report shows that the reported cases of domestic abuse in Wirral are increasing (300 extra cases in 12mths August 2010 – August 2011) and that 80% of cases involve child protection issues. The purpose of this report is to provide information to Members on the scale of reported domestic abuse on Wirral and the action being taken to reduce the problem.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 Members consider the contents of the report.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 This Report is part of the agreed work programme of the Scrutiny Committee in its role as the scrutiny body for the activities of the Crime and Disorder Partnership.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The definition of domestic abuse on which this report is based is:-

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.”

(Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.)

4.2 The national scale of domestic abuse

4.2.1 Data from Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) shows that during 2010 – 2011:-

- Throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 224 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) operated.
- The average rate of domestic abuse cases returning to MARAC within a 12 month period was 22%.
- 70% of the victims of abuse had dependent children.

4.2.2 In January 2011 the Department of Health published its Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on guidance for commissioners of Health Services to reduce violence against women and girls. They reported that:-

- On average, two women in England and Wales are killed every week by a current or former male partner.
- Domestic abuse accounts for 16% of all violent crime, rising to 24% in certain local authority areas.

4.3 The scale of reported domestic abuse on Wirral

4.3.1 It is acknowledged that not all domestic abuse is reported to statutory or voluntary sector organisations. However, the reported levels of domestic abuse on Wirral illustrate a rising trend.

4.3.2 Merseyside Police records shows that Wirral had the second highest number of domestic abuse incidents recorded on Merseyside, (5,717 in 2010/11).

4.3.3 This figure represents an increase of 640 incidents, or 11% on 2009/10 levels when 5077 incidents were reported.

4.3.4 During the 12 months ending August 2011:-

- There have been 1054 Domestic Abuse incidents in the Wirral reported to the Wirral Family Safety Unit (FSU). An increase of 300 incidents, or 42% on the previous year.
- During the period April – August 2011 a total of 480 referrals have been made to the FSU. Compared to the same period in 2010 this represents an increase of 48%.
- Of the 1054 incidents 368 have been assessed as involving a high risk of further abuse to the victim, which represents an increase of 14% on the previous year.
- Birkenhead and Tranmere ward has for the last 5 years recorded the highest levels of domestic abuse referred to the Family Safety Unit. From a peak of 46% of all referrals on Wirral in 2005, the ward still retains the highest number of referrals and represents 25% of the total number of referrals made to the Family Safety Unit.

4.3.5 During the 12 months ending August 2011 analysis of cases referred to the Family Safety Unit shows that:-

Victim

- The most common victim age group is 22-25.
- The most common victim ethnicity is UK White.
- 80% of victims are either pregnant or already have children, a percentage that remains unchanged from last year.
- Most WFSU clients have suffered serious and extensive abuse. 10% of the victims admitted suffering from domestic abuse for 6 years or longer.

4.3.6 For perpetrators the profile is as follows:-

Perpetrator

- The perpetrator range has remained unchanged from the previous year with the majority of perpetrators contained within the 26-40 age range.
- 27% have problems with alcohol, which represents a small reduction on the previous year's total.
- 22% have drug related issues.

4.3.7 In 2010/11 Merseyside Police data shows that 16% of all reported Rape offences were domestic related or involved a family member.

4.3.8 A methodology (Ref:1) that can be used to estimate the costs associated with domestic abuse was published for the Home Office in November 2009. The methodology was part of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, and was designed to assist commissioners of services associated with domestic abuse. It uses British Crime Survey estimates for the previous 12 months.

4.3.9 Use of this tool shows suggests that on Wirral the true level of domestic abuse may be higher than is being reported and that victims of domestic abuse were concentrated within the younger age groups.

Age of Victim	BCS estimated number of incidents 2008
16 – 19	915
20 – 24	571
25 – 34	537

4.3.10 The Family Safety Unit play a key role in safeguarding children affected by domestic abuse. A Children's Safeguarding Officer is a full time member of the Family Safety Unit team; necessary because 80% of all cases of domestic abused managed by the Family Safety Unit involve children.

4.3.11 Analysis also reveals that during 2010 – 2011 the Children's Safeguarding Officer within the FSU finalised a total of 591 cases of domestic abuse where children were involved in the relationship.

- 32% of these cases were already open to CYPD at the time of referral to FSU.
- 434, or 73%, of the cases involving children were signposted to additional support services.

- 46 children required a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting to be convened

4.4 Repeat victimisation

4.4.1 One of the means by which the Family Safety Unit monitor their performance is by measuring the number of cases supported at MARAC meetings who then are referred, following a further incident of abuse, to MARAC for a second time within a period of 12 months.

4.4.2 Effective safety planning managed by the Wirral Family Safety Unit seeks to prevent this from occurring. The table below illustrates performance in this area. One can see, by comparing the results of the first quarter of 2011/12 MARAC performance across Merseyside, the effectiveness of this work on Wirral. Wirral have the highest number of high risk cases of domestic abuse being presented to MARAC, and deliver the lowest rate of repeat victimisation.

Area	Number of MARAC cases	Number of Repeat cases
Knowsley	45	20%
Liverpool	249	19%
Sefton	139	24%
St Helens	52	12%
Wirral	301	7%

4.4.3 Analysis of victims of domestic abuse accounting for this repeat victimisation rate of 7%, and appearing more than once during a 12 month period at MARAC, indicates a rising number of couples who appear locked in a cycle of alcohol and violence, and who generally do not engage with services.

4.4.4 The second quarter of 2011 shows that, compared to the second quarter in 2010, the number of cases in which alcohol abuse was playing a significant part in the abusive behaviour doubled, and has risen to represent 34% of all repeat cases being referred to MARAC.

5.0 RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

5.1 The Council are involved in two primary responses to domestic abuse on Wirral.

- The fortnightly MARAC meeting.
- The Family Safety Unit team within the Joint Community Safety Team.

5.2 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

- 5.2.1 For the last five years Wirral Family Safety Unit have administered the domestic abuse MARAC, a multi agency meeting which has the safety of high risk victims of domestic abuse at its focus. It involves the participation of all the key statutory and voluntary agencies on Wirral who may be involved in supporting a person experiencing domestic abuse.
- 5.2.2 In Wirral support is most frequently provided by the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) based within the Family Safety Unit. The IDVA is a specialist advisor who has received accredited training to work with high risk victims of domestic abuse from the point of crisis, and whose focus is reducing risk and increasing the safety of victims.
- 5.2.3 The MARAC will facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing between multi-agency partners, to enable appropriate interventions to be made to safeguard “high risk” victims of domestic abuse, and their immediate family members.
- 5.2.4 In order for the MARAC to work effectively there is a common risk assessment tool for all MARAC members. Wirral have adopted the CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist.
- 5.2.5 CAADA (Co-ordinated Action against Domestic Abuse) is the Home Office lead agency for the MARAC. In partnership with several other agencies, including Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS), they have developed the DASH Risk Identification Checklist (RIC) to assist in identifying high risk cases of Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH).
- 5.2.6 The use of this risk assessment tool by MARAC agencies will:
- Assist front line practitioners to identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and honour based violence.
 - Identify which cases should be referred to MARAC.
 - Enable agencies to make defensible decisions based on the evidence from extensive research of cases, including domestic homicides and “near misses,” which underpin most recognised models of risk assessment.
- 5.2.7 Both the client and the perpetrator must be aged 18 years or over before they can be referred to MARAC. Whilst the consent of the client is always sought before a referral to the FSU/MARAC is made, this approach is not always safe or possible. In such circumstances there is legislation in place to allow information sharing without the clients consent.
- 5.2.8 In July 2011 CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Violence) (Ref:2) completed an inspection and reported upon the effectiveness of all MARACS operating in England and Wales. The three key findings of this report are;

1. Existing research indicates that MARACs (and IDVAs) have the potential to improve victim safety and reduce re-victimisation and therefore may be a highly cost-effective measure. However, as the available evidence on MARAC outcomes is relatively weak, a more robust evaluation would be required to strengthen these findings.
2. The three areas which interviewees perceived as core to a MARACs' effectiveness are enhanced information sharing; appropriate agency representation; and the role of the IDVA in representing and engaging the victim in the process.
3. Factors which were seen as supporting effective practice included having: strong partnership links (including a commitment from agencies to tackle domestic violence in general); strong leadership (through the MARAC chair); good co-ordination (through a MARAC co-ordinator); and the availability of training and induction.

5.2.9 Merseyside Police Public Protection Unit have analysed each of the individual MARAC inspection reports produced between November 2010 and February 2011 and conclude that Wirral have the best performing MARAC on Merseyside.

5.3 The Family Safety Unit (FSU)

5.3.1 The foundations of the FSU are built on multi agency working. Pivotal to the cohesion of this work is the co-location of key agencies, Police, Children's Safeguarding and Substance Misuse workers, who work together with a team of independent domestic violence advocates (IDVA's) all based within the FSU team.

5.3.2 The main purpose of the IDVA is to address the safety of victims at high risk from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members, to secure their safety and the safety of their children. Serving as a victim's primary point of contact, IDVA's work with their clients from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans.

5.3.3 They are pro-active in implementing the safety plans, which address a victim's immediate safety needs, including practical steps to protect themselves and their children, as well as longer term solutions. These plans will include actions from the MARAC as well as sanctions and remedies available through the criminal and civil courts, housing options and services available through other organisations. IDVA's support and work over the short to medium term to put clients on the path to long term safety.

5.3.4 All IDVAs on Wirral have received specialist accredited training and hold nationally recognised qualifications.

5.3.5 Whilst all agencies complete the Risk Identification Checklist prior to making the referral to the FSU, immediately upon receipt of a new referral within the FSU further checks are made, using two critical information sources, prior to a further assessment of risk being made. The two further assessments are made of the Children's Safeguarding database and Police domestic incident reporting systems.

- 5.3.6 The safety of children is one of the main priorities of the FSU Team. In support of this, a Senior Social Worker, supported by an Administration Assistant, is located in the FSU team to provide immediate advice, support and guidance to the team and MARAC partners. The post holder also sits within the Wirral Staying Safe strategy group providing expertise and knowledge on matters of Safeguarding children within a domestic abuse context.
- 5.3.7 A police officer performs the role of the Wirral Domestic Abuse Liaison Officer. This post allows all referrals to the FSU to be checked against police databases, to ensure all appropriate information and intelligence is shared with all agencies signed to the Information Sharing Protocols as part of the assessment of risk. The role also provides IDVA's with additional support when meeting clients who may pose a risk to professionals.
- 5.3.8 The Joint Community Safety Team have developed a secure internet based information sharing programme (Inter Agency Monitoring Form – IAMF). The system allows for the immediate sharing of information on all FSU cases to the agencies who have signed the Wirral Domestic Abuse MARAC Information Sharing Protocol and Operating Procedure.
- 5.3.9 There are over 30 separate organisations and agencies who have signed up to the MARAC operating procedure and information sharing protocol, all of whom will refer cases into the FSU and work with the IDVA to deliver the safety package for the victim.
- 5.3.10 In 2011 the ratio of referrals from agencies on Wirral into the FSU has been as follows:-
- Police referrals 71%
 - non-Police referrals 29%
- (Non-Police referrals came from the following agencies; DASS, Arch, CYPD, self referral, PCT, Probation, Safeguarding services, Children centres, FIP, Homeless section, NHS, Wirral Partnership Homes, the Refuge and the Zero Centre.)
- 5.3.11 The IDVA ensures delivery of target hardening support to victim's homes when circumstances require it. Co-ordinated by the JCST during the period 2009 – 2011, 680 homes have been target hardened. Funding for target hardening work is provided by the Community Safety Partnership using money obtained from the Area Based Grant, BCU Fund and, this year, the Community Fund.
- 5.3.12 The result is that only 0.8% of those victims' homes were forcibly entered following target hardening. In the case of a repeat victim who suffered a further incident after the target hardening had been completed, 7% of those homes were forcibly entered by the perpetrator.

5.3.13 The IDVA also support victims, where appropriate, to obtain Civil Orders as a form of additional protection from further abuse. In 2010 – 2011, with the support of IDVA's, over 400 non molestation orders were obtained by domestic abuse victims on Wirral.

5.3.14 Many of the Orders contained additional Police powers, including arrest, and are utilised where criminal justice processes fail or where the client does not wish to give evidence at a criminal trial.

5.4 THE FAMILY SAFETY UNIT AND CHILD PROTECTION

5.4.1 The Family Safety Unit play a key role in safeguarding children affected by domestic abuse. A Children's Safeguarding Officer is a full time member of the Family Safety Unit team; necessary because 80% of all cases of domestic abused managed by the Family Safety Unit involve children.

5.4.2 Analysis also reveals that during 2010 – 2011 the Children's Safeguarding Officer within the FSU finalised a total of 591 cases of domestic abuse where children were involved in the relationship.

- 32% of these cases were already open to CYPD at the time of referral to FSU.
- 434, or 73%, of the cases involving children were signposted to additional support services.
- 46 children required a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting to be convened

5.5 DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEWS

5.5.1 In April 2011 Government placed a new statutory requirement upon Community Safety Partnerships in the form of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR).

5.5.2 A DHR is required when the following criteria are met:-

The death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:-

- (a) A person to whom he/she was related or with whom he/she was, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship; **or**
- (b) A member of the same household as himself/herself.

5.5.3 The purpose of a DHR is to:

- (a) Establish what lessons are to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually, and together, to safeguard victims.

- (b) Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted upon, and what is expected to change as a result.
- (c) Apply these lessons to service responses, including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate.
- (d) Prevent domestic violence homicide, and improve service responses for all domestic violence victims and their children through improved intra and inter-agency work.

5.5.4 Wirral is currently undertaking a DHR following a death in August 2011. The previous death which met the DHR criteria was in September 2008.

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

6.1 The following risks were identified within the key areas for concern element of the interim report on domestic abuse by the Panel of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who reported on this issue at their meeting of 22 March 2011:-

- Funding for services
- Access to legal aid
- Services for male victims of domestic abuse
- Provision for young women aged 16 – 18 years

6.2 Whilst the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Panel is continuing in 2011 – 2012 the following risks still remain:-

6.3 Each year the Joint Community Safety Team must secure £316,992 in order to maintain the current level of service within the Family Safety Unit. Funding is in place up to 31 March 2012 only. Failure to secure replacement funding will result in there being no co-ordinated service provision, or support for victims of domestic abuse and their families on Wirral, and the loss of trained staff. All IDVA's have undergone a nationally recognised training programme at a cost of £2,000 per IDVA.

6.4 A loss of service will result in costs being incurred elsewhere within the Authority, since it is possible to anticipate increase in levels of the following, since other support services, for example refuge places, continue to be very limited and the IDVA service is confined to the FSU;

- Violence
- Homelessness
- Safeguarding risks to children
- Safeguarding risks to adults
- Domestic Homicides

6.5 Changes to Government policy on the question of reform within the legal aid system have yet to be resolved. However, if proposed changes are implemented there would be a significant impact upon the FSU and victim's

ability to obtain orders, such as a non molestation order, a very effective tool in protecting the victims from the perpetrator of abuse.

- 6.6 Wirral is the only domestic abuse service within the region which employs a male IDVA, and offers equitable support for male victims of domestic abuse.
- 6.7 The Children and Young Peoples Department have recently commissioned, via the Early Intervention Grant, the charity Bernardos' to provide support for victims of domestic abuse aged 16 and 17 years.
- 6.8 Other risks which have been identified include Authority vulnerability during external inspection. This will be increased in the absence of a Family Safety Unit by an inability to demonstrate co-ordination of services, management of risk, robust communications and cost effectiveness of service.
- 6.9 Vulnerability may also be identified during the conduct of a Domestic Homicide Review, the purpose of which is to review the effectiveness of partnership working to prevent domestic homicides.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Currently the Family Safety Unit support victims of domestic abuse who have been assessed as being at medium risk of further abuse. It is the only IDVA service on Merseyside that does so, the remainder being confined to supporting high risk victims of abuse only.
- 7.2 Faced with increasing demand for services, 48% increase in referrals April – August 2011 compared to same period last year for services on occasions, due to the level of demand caused by the numbers of high risk victims, the support available to victims assessed as medium risk has had to be withdrawn for new cases only. In such circumstances the safety planning is the responsibility of the agency to which the abuse is disclosed.

8.0 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Services of the Family Safety Unit are provided within the planning framework of the Community Safety Partnership and the consultation that is part of this partnership supported work.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 9.1 Voluntary organisations are linked into the network providing support to victims of domestic abuse.
- 9.2 VCAW is a member of the Community Safety Partnership and the Domestic Homicide Review Panel.

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

- 10.1 In 2009 the Home Office ready reckoner estimated cost to services of domestic and sexual violence on Wirral to be £63,230,269.

- 10.2 By continuing to monitor and measure its performance against a former national indicator NI 32, the Family Safety Unit, in addition to increased safety to the victims and their family, are able to demonstrate through the effectiveness of their safety planning work that they are saving agencies money.
- 10.3 It is estimated that the cost to agencies of every case taken to MARAC is £20,000. (Ref 3) Analysis of the last three years performance shows that, by delivering high quality safety packages for the victims of abuse, the Family Safety Unit have maintained the low numbers of victims returning to MARAC following further abuse.
- 10.4 The following table illustrates that, by preventing further abuse to victims who have been supported by MARAC, the Family Safety Unit have saved Wirral agencies a total of almost £22 million over the last 3 years.

Year	Cases at MARAC	Cases returning to MARAC	Cost of each case at MARAC £	Total saving through effective safety planning £.
2008/09	395	37	20000	7,160,000
2009/10	342	51	20000	5,820,000
2010/11	475	36	20000	8,780,000
			Total saving	21,760,000

- 10.5 For the financial year 2011-2012, with the exception of the Police Officer, who is part of the FSU Team, all other posts currently rely upon the support of external funding from the Community Fund £316,992 or the Wirral Drugs and Alcohol Action (DAAT) Team, £36,000. The Community Fund grant provides for 11 permanent contract posts within the FSU, the contracts for which are held by Wirral Council. The DAAT funding secures the contract for one post which is held by Wirral PCT.
- 10.6 The Zero Centre, the voluntary organisation working with the victims of domestic abuse, is working at maximum capacity. They do not perform IDVA role and are subject to funding cuts. They have long waiting lists for appointments, which would increase with a loss of FSU service
- 10.7 For the last 3 years a total of £100,000 per year has been spent on target hardening the homes of victims of domestic abuse. The source of this funding has been Area based Grant, Basic Command Unit fund and, in the current financial year, the Community Fund.

11.0 RISK CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 The absence of victim support services provided by the FSU would see an increased demand on Police resources as more frequent calls to domestic abuse incidents are made, and an increased burden upon Criminal Justice Agencies to provide support for victims engaged in the criminal justice system. This will arise from a lack of:-

- One to one support and safety plan provided to the victim by the IDVA.
- No target hardening of the victims home in order to exclude the perpetrator, protect the victim from further abuse and enable the victim to remain in their home, thus preventing homelessness.
- Reduction in obtaining civil orders which prevent/exclude the perpetrator from the victim's home.

11.2 Victims and their children would be placed at risk through reluctance to report and the lack of support.

11.3 It is reasonable to anticipate an increase in the number of cases which require the involvement of Children and Young People safeguarding service, and an increase in numbers requiring a higher level of intervention

11.4 There will be an increased burden upon Housing resources as more frequent cases of homelessness from domestic abuse occur and the victim cannot remain safely in their home.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 details the duty of a Local Authority to consider crime and disorder implications. The Act states that without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority, to which this section applies, to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

12.2 Statutory Guidance supporting section 9(3) of the Domestic abuse, Crime and Victims Act 2004 states:-

“The Secretary of State may in a particular case direct a specified person or body within subsection (4) to establish, or to participate in, a domestic homicide review”.

12.3 The persons and bodies within subsection 4 include Local Authorities.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
 (a) Is an EIA required? Yes
 (b) If 'yes', has one been completed? Yes

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None directly arising from this report.

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no Planning implications directly arising from this report.

15.2 Reducing domestic abuse by providing safety planning and support for the victims of abuse is an integral part of the work of Wirral's Joint Community Safety Team. Statistics throughout this report illustrate to Members the scale of reported domestic abuse on Wirral and the levels of resource which are applied to reduce the incidence of domestic abuse.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Steve McGilvray**
Head of Service Community Safety
telephone: (0151) 606 5485
email: stevemcgilvray@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

- (1) The Cost of Domestic Violence, Professor Sylvia Walby, Women and Equality Unit
- (2) Supporting high risk victims of domestic violence: a review of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), CAADA, 2011
- (3) Safety in Numbers CAADA 2009.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Interim Report on Domestic abuse by Panel of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	22 March 2011

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	<i>WIRRAL TRADER SCHEME</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>ROBERT BERESFORD</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>COUNCILLOR BRIAN KENNY</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is provided to give an update on the progress of the Wirral Trader Scheme (WTS). The scheme is a non-statutory function of Trading Standards and acts as a preventative measure to tackle consumer detriment, support vulnerable people and educate and support businesses in fair trading. It is proving a success with over 84 approved members and Wirral consumers carrying out 11,675 trader searches in the last 12 months.
- 1.2 The Wirral Trader Scheme assists in delivering key priorities of the Council, including promoting sustainable, economic, social, neighbourhood and environmental regeneration, improving the health and well being of Wirral residents and providing opportunities for community and business development.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
- (a) Note the success of the scheme and high levels of consumer demand;
 - (b) Note improvements currently being made to the Wirral Trader Scheme;
 - (c) Recognise the importance of the Wirral Trader Scheme in supporting Wirral residents and businesses, specifically vulnerable people.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 Promotion of the scheme to local communities and traders is vital to future development. The scheme needs to gain brand recognition for delivering best practice, so that it both attracts members wanting to enhance the reputation of their business and the sector; and gains customer recognition.
- 3.2 There is substantial consumer demand for the service. Wirral residents have carried out 11,675 searches in the last 12 months. This has grown from 3,675

in the previous year. This evidences the need for continuous improvement and investment.

- 3.3 The scheme produces many positive outcomes. To date, all complaints involving member businesses (seven with 3 justified) have been resolved without the need for enforcement or court intervention.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Wirral Trader Scheme was launched in 2003 as a preventative measure to protect Wirral residents from being targeted by rogue and bogus traders. It aims to give consumers a reliable way of finding trustworthy, reputable local businesses, offers a source of help and advice if things go wrong and enables local businesses to demonstrate that they have signed up to national standards.
- 4.2 Benefits to businesses include: partnership with Trading Standards and a dedicated relationship manager, enhanced service for advice on customer disputes, access and notification of Wirral council grants, promotion of business to Wirral residents, a company page on the scheme website; star rating feedback customer review, use of Trader Scheme approved logo; free legal advice regarding fair trading, consumer and business law.
- 4.3 Benefits to consumers include: protection for the most vulnerable members of the community, allows consumers to buy with confidence, offers choice of a reliable trader who they can trust with high standards of customer service, committed traders who comply with all necessary legislation and less risk of detriment.
- 4.4 The scheme has 84 active members with 13 new applications in process. Businesses pay a one off administration fee of £115 and £205 per year for membership. In 2010, annual fees were increased for the first time from £178 to £205. Based on 100 members, budget generated through subscriptions is £20,500 per annum.
- 4.5 The primary target market for the scheme is the Home Improvement sector. However, businesses from other sectors that have expressed an interest in the scheme have been granted membership. In Wirral, there are a total of 8,570 VAT/PAYE businesses with 905 businesses within the home improvement sector.
- 4.6 Consumers have made 11,675 trader searches on the scheme website www.traderscheme.org.uk in the last 12 months. This compares to 2,039 searches in the previous year. This is extremely positive and consumer demand for the scheme is evident.
- 4.7 Complaint levels and community feedback emphasises the level of consumer detriment across Wirral at the hands of rogue and bogus traders within the home improvement sector. A partnership approach is in place with Age Concern, Council One Stop Shops, Community Safety, Social Services, Building Control, Technical Services, the Home Improvement Team, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Home Improvement Agency.

- 4.8 Trading Standards are currently setting up 'No Cold Calling Zones' and residents are being provided with the Scheme's website address and a directory of vetted traders to support this initiative.

5.0 MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

- 5.1 The scheme has been successful in attracting new members. However, in some cases the scheme has not been able to retain those members. To tackle the retention issue the following improvements to the scheme are planned:

- Consultation with previous members regarding reasons for leaving;
- Incentives for previous members to re-join the scheme;
- Courtesy call to existing members to foster good relations;
- New scheme benefits identified;
- Introduction of monthly electronic payments through the Council pay system;
- Improved level of customer service;
- Regular member e-newsletter;
- Promotion of other Council initiatives; and
- Application to Trustmark on behalf of members.

Members have commented that the scheme is having a positive impact on their business and sales have increased.

6.0 ATTRACTING NEW MEMBERS

- 6.1 The scheme has a market share of 8.8% in the home improvement sector. In order to create a fair, competitive market offering wide choice to the consumer, membership levels need to increase. This will cause a market shift and change consumer behaviour long-term. Large scale membership of a registered scheme sends a strong message to the sector and consumers alike and would represent the future means of contracting for the home improvement sector. To attract new members, the following actions are proposed:

- Advertising feature in Wirral News;
- High profile PR plan to be implemented across local and regional press, trade journals and radio stations;
- Direct marketing campaign to potential businesses;
- Poster campaigns in places of interest for Managing Directors ;
- Advertising and promotion through Invest Wirral, Landlord Accreditation and Enterprise teams;
- Presentations to Wirral Chamber of Commerce, FSB and other business associations;
- Discussions to start with Construction Line regarding partner opportunities; and
- Simplifying and speeding up the application process without devaluing the 'status' attached to scheme membership.

- 6.2 The potential to introduce a mobile application to enable customers to access information from the Trader Register from their smart phones is being explored. If this can be achieved it would make the scheme more easily accessible to many potential customers.
- 6.3 It is intended that as the scheme membership grows and income generation increases, further budget can be allocated to marketing and publicising of the scheme.

7.0 TACKLING CUSTOMER DETRIMENT

7.1 A key objective of the scheme is to tackle consumer detriment. In order to achieve this, it is crucial that Wirral residents are made aware of the scheme so that they do not fall victim to rogue traders. The following initiatives are being planned;

- Production of an annual directory promoting members and offering advice regarding selecting traders will be distributed to all Wirral households (circa 145,000). This will be financed through advertising income and subsidised by funds allocated to the scheme from HMR. There is an opportunity for the directory to promote other Council and partner initiatives eg. NHS No Smoking/Healthy Eating.
- Joint working opportunities with the planning department exist, whereby information and advice can be sent to all households applying for planning permission. This serves a purpose of informing, communicating and promoting the existence of the Wirral Trader Scheme and its members. In addition, this is a highly effective, preventative measure.
- A public relations plan is to be developed via the corporate marketing team;
- Attendance at community events;
- Identification and communication with resident groups; and
- Continuous communications with agencies such as Age Concern, CAB and One stop shops.

8.0 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 8.2 Partnership Working is crucial to the success of the scheme. Strong relationships are in place with a wide range of stakeholders. Although, further efforts will be required to ensure relationships are maintained and new partners identified.
- 8.3 The Wirral Trader Scheme is supporting other Council initiatives such as the Empty Property Grant and Energy Efficiency. This means that any business carrying out a Council contract for Wirral residents must be an approved scheme member. This has achieved continuous improvement and increased customer satisfaction. However, more contractors are required in specific trade sectors to satisfy the required specifications.

Paul Jackson of the Empty Property Team said: “The Wirral Trader Scheme is an integral component in the delivery of our new financial assistance products, the Empty Property Grant and Healthy Homes Home Repair

Assistance Loan. The Wirral Trader Scheme provides a robust method of ascertaining whether private contractors are competent and reputable, this in turn gives occupied and vacant property owners greater confidence in appointing their chosen contractor; whilst also providing access via Trading Standards to recourse for any sub-standard workmanship experienced. We have a number of Empty Property Grants and Healthy Homes Home Repair Assistance Loans to deliver this financial year and hope to be in a position whereby we can deliver additional grants in subsequent financial years working in partnership with the Wirral Trader Scheme's whose continued support is imperative to scheme delivery."

- 8.4 Discussions have taken place with Invest Wirral and Landlord Accreditation, whereby opportunities have been identified and a joint working approach will be implemented.
- 8.5 Age Concern, Citizens Advice Bureaux and One Stop shops will only recommend the Wirral Traders list to members of the public seeking a trader.

9.0 TRADER REGISTER

- 9.1 The Trader Register is the scheme website. The annual cost of the Trader Register management service which incorporates the cost of the Trader Register platform is £5000 per annum for a minimum of 100 members plus an additional £50 per new member. This cost is met by income generated by the scheme.
- 9.2 The Trader Register was originally set up to provide a regional solution to the Trader Scheme. It has many useful features such as member log on areas, feedback ratings and reports. But as the scheme progresses, additional functionality will be required (such as a secure online application process) and changes to the look and feel will be needed. Consideration therefore, is being given to the need for a new software platform as the scheme expands.

10.0 MEASURING IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS

- 10.1 The effectiveness of the Wirral Trader Scheme can be demonstrated through the number of businesses that are members of the scheme, the level of complaints dealt with through the scheme and the customer feedback that consumers have left on the website. In the last 12 months, 1,338 consumers have left positive feedback regarding members.
- 10.2 Improvements to existing systems and recording of information will ensure that the wider impact and value of the Wirral Trader Scheme can be captured and monitored. Areas under current development are:
- The impact of membership to businesses (specifically the creation of jobs and increase in business turnover);
 - Level of customer complaints concerning non-member businesses compared to customer complaints concerning members;
 - Outcomes of complaints (resolved vs court intervention) compared to national averages; and

- Trader searches on www.traderscheme.org.uk;

10.3 The scheme is proving to be a success and is fulfilling the purpose for which it was designed. Member feedback is positive and complaints from consumers regarding members are limited and any complaint received has been resolved without the need for court intervention.

11.0 Future Developments

11.1 Overall, the scheme is working well within its current structure. The scheme has plenty of potential to develop and become a flagship scheme of Wirral Council.

11.2 As part of the planning process, consumer, member and partner consultation will be important to the development of the scheme. Focus groups are to be used to discuss and agree key priorities.

11.3 Market Research and a competitor analysis should be undertaken to understand the market. The Wirral Trader Scheme has a unique selling point, that is, use of the Trading Standards approved brand.

11.4 In addition to the Home Improvement sector, the scheme has the ability and structure to enable it to be rolled out into new service sectors such as Car Dealerships & Car Servicing, where there is evidence of consumer detriment. The addition of this sector is an area would clearly benefit consumers and its inclusion is currently being considered.

11.5 The scheme supports the corporate objectives of partner organisations and this may afford the opportunity to work more closely with such organisations as the scheme develops.

12.0 RELEVANT RISKS

12.1 There are no risks attached to this report.

13.0 CONSULTATION

13.1 The proposals from BIS were the subject of a wide consultation.

14.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

14.1 Communications with voluntary, community and faith organisations will take place through promotion of the scheme.

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

15.1 Staffing

15.2 A Project Manager has been appointed to develop, manage and lead the scheme effectively. An important function of the role is to ensure that the scheme meets the needs of the paying customer and improves membership retention. In addition, the Project Manager will have particular responsibility

for raising awareness, development and co-ordination of stakeholders and partnerships, dispute resolution and membership recruitment.

15.2 Financial Implications

15.2.1 The cost of the Scheme's web-based platform is being met through income generated by subscriptions.

15.2.2 Promotional materials and stationary has been met through income generated by subscriptions.

16.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

16.1 There are no legal implications resulting from this report.

17.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

17.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- (a) Is an EIA required? No
- (b) If 'yes', has one been completed? No

18.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

18.1 There are no specific carbon reduction implications resulting from this report.

19.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

19.1 The Wirral Trader Scheme assists Wirral citizens to access service providers with confidence which helps prevent them becoming the victim of rogue traders.

19.2 There are no planning implications arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: *Nicola Smith*
Project Manager
telephone: (0151) 691 8369
email: nicolajsmith@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

www.traderscheme.org.uk

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Not applicable	

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23RD NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	CONSUMER LANDSCAPE REVIEW
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	THE DIRECTOR OF LAW HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT:- REGULATION
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR BRIAN KENNY
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks to inform members of the proposed changes, for the Trading Standards Service, following a major review of consumer protection by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS).
- 1.2 BIS proposes radical changes to the provision of consumer information, advice, education, advocacy and enforcement. The new proposals aim to simplify the confusing and overlapping provision of consumer protection, strengthening the effectiveness of consumer enforcement, with more cost-efficient delivery that is closer to the consumer front line.
- 1.3 The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) issued its consultation paper on 'Empowering and Protecting Consumers' on 21 June 2011. Wirral's Trading Standards Service participated in Trading Standards North West (TSNW) regional response to the BIS consultation which closed on the 21st September 2011.
- 1.4 The consultation sets out a number of key proposals and options for stakeholders to consider, these being: Information, advice and education, consumer codes approvals, consumer advocacy and enforcement of consumer protection legislation.
- 1.5 This report reports on the Trading Standards North West response to the reforms and focuses on the changes in enforcement and responsibilities within the proposals.
- 1.6 Corporate Priorities
Your Family:
 - Ensure vulnerable people in Wirral are safe and protected
 - Ensure that vulnerable people and those in later life can get the care and support they need at an early stage to prevent problems getting worse

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION/S**

2.1 Members note the proposed changes for the Trading Standards Service following the consultation: Empowering and Protection Consumers.

3.0 **REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

3.1 The consultation closed on the 21st September 2011 and as yet no decision has been made as to the preferred option for reform. A further report of the proposals will be brought to members following the Government's decisions following the consultation.

4.0 **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The recent National Audit Office report concluded that 4.8 billion (73 per cent) of consumer detriment from unfair and rogue practices arises as a result of threats that span more than one local authority area but trading standards are overwhelmingly funded by local authorities. The government proposes to deploy national funding to facilitate a more integrated approach to national and cross-boundary threats. This activity would be more effectively coordinated at national level by Chief Trading Standards Officers to ensure that enforcement gaps do not arise and that activity overall is better targeted.

4.2 The government's intentions can be summarised from the report as:

4.2.1 **CONSUMER INFORMATION, ADVICE AND EDUCATION**

Citizens Advice (CA) should in future have responsibility for publicly-funded national advice and education of consumers, working with other organisations as needed. If you need information or advice, go to Citizens Advice. Consumer advice currently delivered by the OFT under the banner 'Consumer Direct' would be transferred to Citizens Advice from April 2012. Consumer Direct currently provide a national telephone helpline and on-line self help facility to members of the public to assist with any consumer problems. The telephone helpline has been adopted by the overwhelming majority of local authority trading standards services in the UK as their first point of contact. They will continue to refer civil and criminal intervention, enforcement and support to Local Authority Trading Standards Services (LATSS).

4.2.2 **CONSUMER ADVOCACY**

Citizens Advice should be the lead national, publicly-funded consumer advocate, building on its very well known brand and high levels of public trust. Accordingly, the Government proposes that Consumer Focus should be abolished.

4.2.3 **ENFORCEMENT**

The government proposes to strengthen consumer enforcement by improving the national leadership and coordination capability of local authority trading standards services and by clarifying their responsibility to tackle cross-boundary threats. It also seeks to ensure that there is more effective partnership working and prioritisation of activity between trading standards

services and a new Competition and Markets Authority (See 4.2.6 below). The government's preferred approach to enforcement is as follows:

- 4.2.4 A new Trading Standards Policy Board (TSPB) would be created, made up of Chief Trading Standards Officers to provide leadership and coordination of Trading Standards in identifying and tackling regional and national threats. A proportion of the current OFT enforcement budget and BIS funding for national enforcement programmes would be combined and made available to LATSS through the TSPB.
- 4.2.5 National and cross-boundary issues concerning unfair, unsafe or rogue trading practices, other than those arising from structural market problems, would be tackled by expanded regional trading standards teams or by designated lead authorities with particular areas or sectors of expertise.
- 4.2.5 In order to reduce the disincentive for individual authorities to take on more complex or risky cases, some provision for an indemnity fund or other mechanism for underwriting risk would be provided. The TSPB would be accountable to BIS for the way it spends national government money but there would also need to be appropriate political accountability through the Local Government Group.
- 4.2.6 A new Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) would have responsibility for investigating and tackling enforcement in markets in which there are structural market problems. This would include the retention of consumer law enforcement powers as an option in these cases. The CMA would have significant discretion to determine when such structural problems exist. Trading Standards' professional body, the Trading Standards Institute (TSI), would take on responsibility for consumer enforcement guidance, training, international liaison and policy functions, reporting to TSPB and thereby to BIS. LATSS will bid to TSPB for funds to tackle market-wide problems and pursue nationally significant enforcement cases. It is proposed that what remains of the OFT function will form part of the new CMA.
- 4.3 THE VIEWS OF TRADING STANDARDS NORTH WEST
(Professional body representing local authority trading standards services in the northwest.)
 - 4.3.1 TSNW believes that Trading Standards departments have the skills, experience and willingness to deliver the outcomes the Government wants to see. However, TSNW feel very strongly that local funding has to accompany the proposals, including funding for regional co-ordination.
 - 4.3.2 TSNW has consulted CA and has met with directors of BIS and CA. They have been very transparent in emphasising that the transfer of CD to CA will be done with savings and therefore will be operated with a reduced budget. There will be no additional capacity and it is expected that LATSS, who deliver local advice, education and support to consumers, will continue to do so, in partnership with CABx.

- 4.3.3 TSNW agree with the Government principles for the operation of the new TSPB and would want to see the Board comprised of Heads of Trading Standards from every region, able to take a strategic view and agree on the best national solution for each area of work.
- 4.3.4 While TSNW accept that decisions made by the TSPB are final and binding, TSNW would assume that does not preclude or affect an individual LA's ability to opt in or out of a piece of work i.e. all may not want to participate and this is not necessary to ensure delivery. TSNW also recommend that a key strand of the TSPB must be to commission a strategic assessment in order to decide where the priorities lie for tackling cross border detriment. This was in the past provided by the OFT. In addition, TSNW strongly feel that an indemnity fund which recognises the risk to local authorities of taking of large cases is necessary rather than just desirable.
- 4.3.5 TSNW believes there must be effective communication and a good working relationship between the TSPB and CMA to ensure that intelligence can be shared and assurance received that cases can be dealt with appropriately. Consideration of intelligence from CMA and Citizens Advice on consumer detriment will be a vital element of the TSPB's future work on setting enforcement priorities and this should feed in to the Strategic Assessment and Control Strategy to be discussed at each TSPB meeting. However, TSNW do not believe that there should be a duty on the TSPB to automatically take on cases referred to them by the CMA.
- 4.3.6 It is anticipated that the CMA will be formed by April 2013 and that the proposed changes following the consultation will be implemented by this deadline.

5.0 IMPACT OF CHANGES FOR WIRRAL

- 5.1 The impact of changes for Wirral will be dependant upon the Government's adoption of the proposals set out in this report. The proposals do not seek to usurp the current level of trading standards work which is funded through Areas Based Grant and aimed at delivering local needs and priorities. It does however seek to consolidate funding which currently goes to bodies like the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) or is administered through grants by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to be used to collectively enforce consumer law against national and regional threats.
- 5.2 These Government proposals will build on the regional and national teams such as the Illegal Money Lending Team, Scambusters Teams , Illicit Tobacco teams dealing with particular rogue trader activity. The proposals will adopt these principals and further ringed fenced funding is being identified to create other national specialisms, such as: internet enforcement, e crime, international scams, estate agency regulation amongst others. These activities will build on existing functions and will require closer partnerships. They will not replace locally funded activities. The consultation specifically draws attention to the risk of local authorities abrogating their funding responsibilities in light of these developments.

5.3 Wirral Council's trading standards service already works closely to deliver regional coordination with Trading Standards North West (TSNW) on funded projects, such as tobacco test purchasing work, national rogue trader days, fertiliser and animal feed, food standards work, etc. Also, in sharing regional intelligence. This work will continue but in addition, bids for specific projects may be made to the TSPB to fund identified work streams.

5.4 Close links have been developed and maintained with the local CABx and it is anticipated that greater partnership working and trading standards support will be provided to this service, whilst maintaining the complex cases and support given to vulnerable consumers.

6.0 **RELEVANT RISKS**

6.1 There are no risks associated with this report

7.0 **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

7.1 No other options for consideration

8.0 **CONSULTATION**

8.1 This report reflects Wirral Trading Standards partnership work and consultation with the 23 Trading Standards Authorities forming TSNW

9.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

9.1 No implication at this time

10.0 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

10.1 No resource implications at this time

11.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None

12.0 **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 No equality implications at this time

12.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required at this time

13.0 **CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 No implications from this report.

14.0 **PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 None arising from this report

REPORT AUTHOR:

Derek Payet
Trading Standards Strategic Manager
telephone: (0151 691 -8643)
email: derekpayet@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/Consultations/empowering-and-protecting-consumers>

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Department for Business Innovation and Skills, (BIS), "Empowering and Protecting Consumers": Impact Assessment, June 2011

BIS "Empowering and Protecting Consumers": Consultation on institutional changes for provision of consumer information, advice, education, advocacy and enforcement
TSNW response to the consultation, June 2011

Protecting consumers - the system for enforcing consumer law, National Audit Office, June 2011.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
No History	

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	SMOKE FREE PLAY AREAS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR CHRIS MEADEN COUNCILLOR BRIAN KENNY
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report reports to Committee proposals to introduce a voluntary code to make public children's play areas in Wirral Smoke Free.
- 1.2 The report provides members with an opportunity to consider the proposed policy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee consider the report on a proposal for a voluntary code to make Children's play areas in Wirral Smoke Free.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 This report sets out a proposal to implement a voluntary code to make children's play areas in Wirral smoke free. The initiative aims to de-normalise smoking amongst young children and reduce the likelihood of them becoming smokers in the future and therefore improving the health of the next generation in Wirral.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 This Report has been prepared as the result of the motion agreed by council at the meeting held on October 2011 and in particular in response to point 4 (see below) of the resolution.
- 4.2 This Council:
- "A. Notes that other local authorities within the UK, such as Inverclyde and Pendle, have or are in the process of implementing smoking bans in children's play areas and that many other areas are considering it.

- B. Notes that Cheshire and Merseyside Tobacco Control Alliance, in partnership with Heart of Mersey are campaigning to implement a voluntary smoke-free code within playground areas on council owned land across the North West sub-region.
- C. Notes that research suggests public support for smoke-free play areas is high: A YouGov survey undertaken by ASH in March 2010 found that 73% of the general population backed a smoking ban in children's play areas.
- D. Believes that, in the long term, smoke-free play areas will assist in decreasing the number of young people who start smoking and will also help to reduce levels of unsightly cigarette litter such as cigarette butts, matches, empty packets and wrappers in children's play areas.

4.3 Therefore, Council:

- (1) States support for the principle of a voluntary smoking ban in children's play areas within Wirral.
- (2) Welcomes preparatory work undertaken to date to gauge local support for smoking bans in play areas and in parks and urges consultation with playground users to assess support for this initiative.
- (3) Requests the Leader to instruct officers to continue work, in partnership with the Cheshire and Merseyside Tobacco Control Alliance, to bring forward implementation plans for a voluntary smoke-free code for play areas in Wirral, with a view to introduction from early 2012 (subject to the outcome of consultations). Plans to include a smoke-free policy statement, training and enforcement programme, public awareness raising and a timetable for evaluation of the effectiveness of the smoke-free code.
- (4) Instructs the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to prepare a report for the Health and Wellbeing, Children and Young People and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees as to how powers contained in the Localism Bill may facilitate the introduction of legally enforceable bans."

4.4 Over 20 diseases are caused or aggravated by smoking including cancers (significantly lung cancer), respiratory and circulatory diseases and coronary heart disease. It is estimated that in Wirral the number of smokers is above 60,000 of the population. However, overall percentages and figures hide wide local differences.

4.5 In the east of Wirral, particularly within the Seacombe, Birkenhead, Bidston and Tranmere areas, considerably more people are likely to smoke. It is estimated that in these most deprived neighbourhoods in Wirral, approx 35% of the population smoke, compared to an average of 18% across the whole of Wirral. As a result a high proportion of children in these areas also live in a household where at least one parent/guardian smokes. This places a

significant burden on the health of the most deprived population and is the leading cause of health inequalities and life expectancy in Wirral. Of 15 to 16 year olds in Wirral 23% of 15 to 16 year olds smoke and this is consistent with the North West average (22%). The results show that young females in the Wirral are more likely to smoke than males. Furthermore, smoking appears to be more prevalent amongst regular binge drinkers (2007).

- 4.6 Young people continue to take up smoking. Nationally it is estimated that 6% of 11-15 year olds are current smokers. In the North West 22% of 14-17 year olds are smokers. The vast majority of individuals start smoking before they are 19 with two thirds starting to smoke before 18 – the legal age of sale. Smokers who start before the age of 18 years are least likely to be able to give up the habit in later years.
- 4.7 Reducing the rates of illness and death caused by smoking is one of Wirral's key public health objectives. To achieve this objective there is a need to reduce the number of people who smoke. This includes initiatives that help prevent Wirral's children from becoming the next generation of smokers.

5.0 SMOKEFREE PLAYGROUNDS SURVEY

- 5.1 A survey conducted by Wirral Council during September/October 2011 of 168 park users at parks across the borough revealed that there was strong public support for a voluntary smoke free code for Children's play areas. 81.1% of respondents both smokers and non-smokers either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement; "It's important not to smoke in front of young Children".
- 5.2 Of respondents 80.6 % (both smokers and non-smokers) also "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement "I would be in favour of a voluntary code of not smoking within the immediate playground area," Whilst a greater proportion of non smokers were in favour of these policies (90.2% and 87.4% respectively), support amongst smokers themselves was also high with over two thirds in agreement (67.1% and 69.9% respectively). However less than half of the participants (41.6%) agreed with the extension of the voluntary smoke free code to include a 10 meter perimeter of the play area and support was notably lower amongst smokers (13.7%)
- 5.3 These results illustrate high public support for the implementation of a voluntary smoke free code within the play areas of Local Authority parks in Wirral
- 5.4 In the UK Inverclyde council in Scotland made all of their play areas smoke free with 90% of residents supporting the initiative. Pendle council in Lancashire prohibited smoking in their 57 outdoor play areas and skate parks in 2010.
- 5.5 Internationally, smoking in public play areas and parks is already prohibited in Spain, Hong Kong, Latvia, and Singapore and in cities in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA, including New York and San Francisco.

6.0 WIRRAL SMOKE FREE PLAY AREAS INITIATIVE

- 6.1 The Wirral Smoke Free Play areas initiative is being undertaken as a partnership between Wirral Council, Halton BC, Halton and St Helens PCT, The Heart of Cheshire and the Cheshire & Merseyside Tobacco Alliance (CMTA). Liverpool, Sefton and Knowsley Council's are currently consulting the community with a view to implementing a similar scheme in their area.
- 6.2 Children from Oakfield primary school in Widnes have designed signs and slogans that will be used for the smoke free play areas in Wirral. It is intended that the design for these signs will eventually be used across Merseyside by authorities who adopt the scheme.(example see Appendix 1)
- 6.3 It is anticipated that as with the smoke free laws covering enclosed public spaces – the scheme will require minimal policing. There is no intention to actively enforce no-smoking in playgrounds as there is no legal basis to do so. However Park Staff will be trained to issue advice and guidance to the public to encourage them to support the scheme.
- 6.4 The smoke free voluntary code will cover all children's playgrounds and multi use games areas (e.g. football / basket ball courts and Skate board and BMX parks) There are 73 Children's playground areas and 31 Multi use games areas and kick about areas on Wirral.
- 6.5 The public will be free to smoke in the park and open space areas outside the play areas. A recent survey conducted by Wirral Council of 187 park users and revealed there was limited support for a voluntary smoke free code for the entire parks – 18% of smokers/non smokers agreed with the proposal whilst 57.3 % of smokers/non smokers were against a smoke free code covering entire parks.
- 6.6 Wirral's Communications and Marketing department will be requested to design a publicity campaign to promote the scheme in partnership with the PCT and Heart of Mersey.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Smoke free Wirral is a voluntary code and is not enforceable by law. There is a possible risk of confrontation should a member of the public challenge someone who fails to abide by the voluntary code. It is anticipated this will be controlled through the training given to park staff to help them intervene in disputes and communicate the purpose of the scheme to park users.

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 None

9.0 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The proposal has been underpinned by the survey undertaken and described in section 6.0 above.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

10.1 None.

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

11.1 The scheme is being part funded by Environmental Health smoke free budget (£1,500) and match funded by the Cheshire and Merseyside Tobacco Alliance (£1,500). Although the scheme will require the ongoing support of Park Staff to advise the public the authority is not required to fully finance the scheme. In total the scheme will cost approximately £3000 to launch – this represents the cost of producing signage 50% of the cost will be met by the Heart of Mersey.

11.2 The Heart of Mersey and The Cheshire and Merseyside Tobacco Alliance will also fund the graphic design for the signs, production of publicity material and training for Park Staff.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Although there has been a legal ban on smoking in all enclosed public places introduced by the Health Act 2006 in the UK since July 2007, there is no legal basis to formally ban smoking in open public areas. However the Government's Tobacco Control Plan for England published in March 2011 states "local communities and organisation may also wish to go further than the requirements of smoke free laws in creating environments free from second hand smoke" for example in children's playgrounds, outdoor parts of shopping centres and venues associated with sport and leisure activities, Initiatives such as these can also help to shape positive social norms and discourage the use of tobacco.

12.2 It is not intended that the smoke free playground initiative is perceived as a "smoking ban". The scheme will be promoted as a polite request for adults to voluntarily refrain from smoking in play areas, supported by child friendly signage

12.3 It is anticipated that as with smoke free laws covering enclosed public spaces there will be a high level of compliance. There is no intention to actively enforce no smoking in playgrounds as there is no legal basis to do so. However Park Staff will be trained to issue advice and guidance to the public to encourage them to support the scheme.

12.4 Children become aware of cigarettes at an early age and 3 out of 4 children are aware of cigarettes before they reach the age of 5 irrespective of whether or not their parents smoke. Research suggests that if young people see smoking as part of normal everyday life they are more likely to become smokers themselves. Young people are exposed to a mix of personal, social and environmental influences that serve to normalise the habit and encourage the onset of smoking.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There is not considered to be any equality or diversity issues associated with his voluntary code

13.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
(a) Is an EIA required? No

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None arising from this report

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Children and Young People in Wirral

The scheme aims to de-normalise smoking amongst children and young people and make them less likely to become smokers in the future.

15.2 A Healthy Wirral

The scheme contributes to the key public health priority of preventing ill health and early deaths caused by smoking. Smoke free play areas will complement local and national initiatives that aim to create an environment that makes it less likely that children will grow up to become smokers.

REPORT AUTHOR: *(Debra Duncan)*
(Division Environmental Officer)
telephone: (0151 691 8163)
email: debraduncan@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

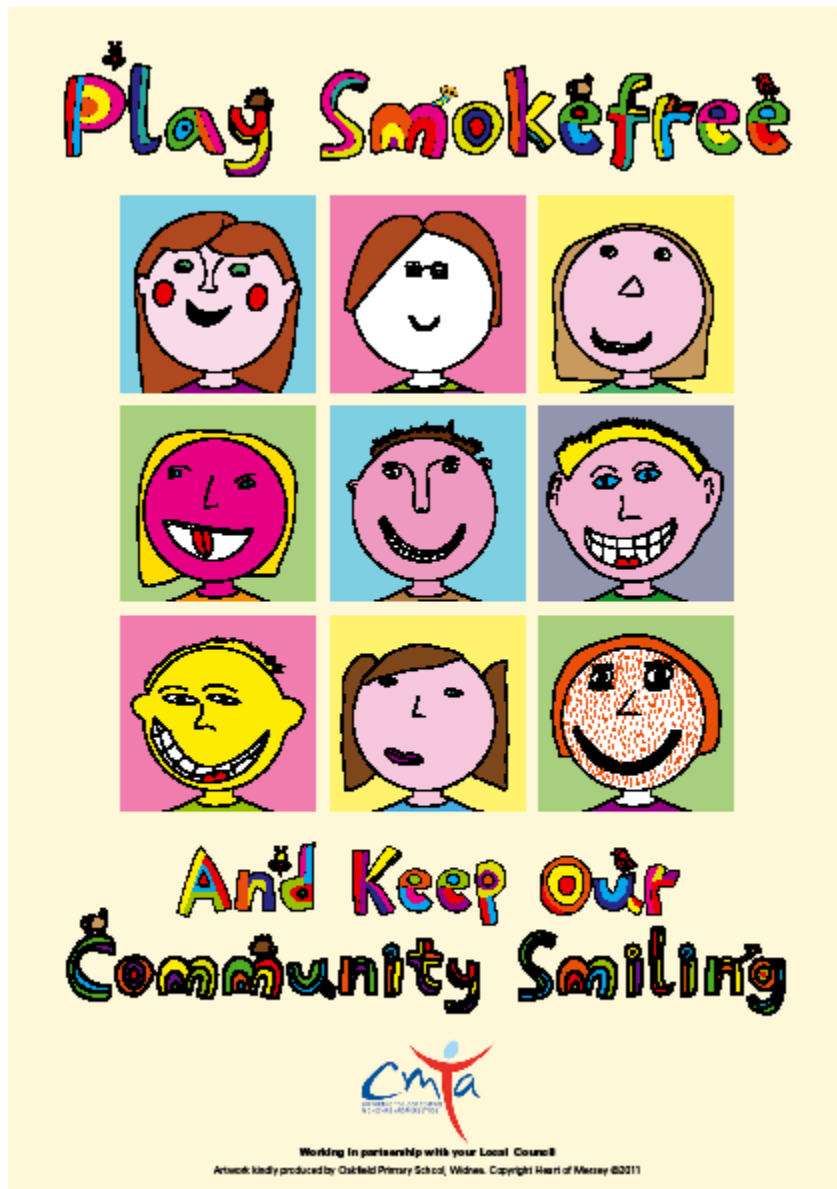
Appendix 1 Proposed Signage
Wirral Smoke Free Heart of Mersey survey

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Wirral Council Survey Results

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date



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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES O & S COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	'REDUCING THE COUNCIL'S CARBON FOOTPRINT' PROGRESS REPORT NO. 4
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	LAW, H R & ASSET MANAGEMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR KENNY
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this fourth progress report is to update Members on the various projects currently being undertaken across the Council to '*Reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint*', which promotes the Council's Corporate Priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. The Council is committed to delivering a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025.
- 1.2 The Council is expected to spend around £10 million on its energy costs in 2012/13. There are significant financial savings to be made through the implementation of an appropriate and timely programme of carbon emission reduction and energy efficiency projects and initiatives.
- 1.3 Members are asked to note the progress being made to date on the ongoing carbon reduction and energy saving projects as contained in the Wirral Carbon Reduction Programme: Wirral Council Activities, attached at Appendix 1, and to endorse the proposed further initiatives contained within the report.
- 1.4 This report does not include exempt information.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are requested to note the performance and progress of the various Council 'Carbon Footprint Reduction' and energy efficiency projects undertaken to date across Council Departments and endorse the further initiatives proposed in the report.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Reducing the Council's carbon footprint is a Key Priority and a Corporate Aim. The Council is committed to delivering a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025. The Council is expected to spend around £10 million next year on energy. Reducing its overall energy use and improving efficiency of use will reduce the Council's carbon footprint and save money. By noting and endorsing the carbon emission and energy efficiency saving initiatives

contained within this report, Members are reaffirming this commitment and assisting officers in meeting the Councils corporate goals, and, measuring the progress being made, supporting and monitoring future initiatives to deliver carbon, energy and financial savings through the Council's Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency Programmes in conjunction with the Cabinet Portfolio holder for the Environment.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Department of H R, Law and Asset Management is now responsible for supporting the attainment of our Corporate Goals of reducing Wirral's carbon footprint and will be putting in place carbon and energy saving measures to deliver on our 60% carbon reduction target by 2025. Improving energy efficiency across the Council estate also supports the Corporate Goal of reducing the running costs of the Council by improving the efficiency and value for money of Council operations and services.
- 4.2 The Cabinet decision on 14th April 2011 (Minute 383 refers) requires the preparation of an annual carbon budget to assist in driving down energy costs and reducing the Councils carbon footprint. Each department has now been provided with a CO₂ allowance in which to operate and deliver their services thus enabling service managers to plan for CO₂ reductions at a departmental and operational level to achieve annual savings in energy use and costs.
- 4.3 To assist in the delivery of the carbon reduction targets set out in the Carbon Budget the Sustainability Unit will continue to progress the energy efficiency schemes contained within the latest version of the Wirral Carbon Reduction Programme project plan (attached at **Appendix 1**). Reducing the Councils overall energy use means energy costs are reduced and carbon reductions and financial savings are also secured. The project plan, containing details of the Council's current carbon reduction and energy efficiency projects is updated by the Sustainability Unit every six months enabling the Council to plan, manage and monitor progress in achieving these reductions.
- 4.4 To further support these aims, two Strategic Change Programme energy efficiency projects under the 'Business as Usual' heading have been implemented in 2010/2011. Proposals will be submitted to the Strategic Change Programme Board for similar energy efficiency and carbon emission saving schemes including a Carbon Management System.
- 4.5 **Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme [CRCEES]:** The CRCEES is the mandatory emissions reporting scheme administered by the Environment Agency (EA). The ultimate aim of the Scheme is to provide an incentive for organisations to reduce their energy use. There is a charge associated with the scheme as organisations that participate must monitor their energy use and purchase allowances for each tonne of CO₂ they emit. The more CO₂ an organisation emits, the more allowances it must purchase.
- 4.6 The overall cost of the Scheme to the Council can be lessened by securing significant reductions in our carbon emissions through the implementation of demonstrable energy efficiency projects and initiatives. A separate report detailing the Council's performance against the CRCEES will be presented to Cabinet in December 2011.

4.7 **Carbon Budget 2011- 2012:** A Carbon Budget has been prepared for 2011/2012 with carbon reduction targets for each department presented at Budget Cabinet and Council alongside the Council's financial budget in February 2011. Work is progressing to bring forward a number of practical energy efficiency measures that each Department should implement to help reduce their carbon emissions and energy costs. A separate progress report will be presented to Cabinet in February 2012 detailing the performance of each department against their carbon target for 2010/2011.

4.8 **Former National Indicator 186:** Former National Indicator 186 measured CO₂ emissions across the Local Authority area and was one of the Council's LAA targets which also required the Sustainability Unit to coordinate work on reducing carbon emissions with our partners in the LSP. This work continues under the auspices of the Wirral Climate Change Group and a progress report on the work of the Group will be presented to Committee in January 2012.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 The greatest risk is from failure to plan, implement, manage and monitor appropriate carbon reduction and energy efficiency initiatives meaning that the Council does not meet the required aims and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan on delivering a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025, reducing its overall energy requirements and securing financial savings.

5.2 There is a risk that failure to implement an appropriate and timely programme of carbon reduction and energy efficiency projects will have a negative impact on the delivery of carbon, energy and financial savings. Alternative means of securing those financial savings would then have to be found.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 The other option would be to do nothing to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and not make carbon reductions and financial savings, which is not a reasonable alternative.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation has been undertaken across the Council departments contributing to the content of the report and to the relevant Departments where there are implications arising from the report.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no opportunities to involve voluntary, community and faith organisations. However, developing and implementing cohesive energy efficiency and carbon footprint projects across the Council and the community will have a positive effect on social inclusion and will assist in reducing the negative impacts of poverty. The report details specific carbon reduction and energy efficiency activities that will allow the Council to deliver its services more effectively and efficiently.

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

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report however the implementation of the initiatives described in the report are intended to reduce the Council's energy costs and improve its financial and business planning. Any cost implications associated with the initiatives and projects described in Section 4 will be reported separately to Cabinet.
- 9.2 There are no IT implications arising from this report. A number of appropriate, realistic and achievable measures are being implemented through the Awareness Raising Team of the Sustainability Unit to help staff and members be energy aware and vigilant and to flag up related energy related issues in the workplace with their Energy Champion or manager as part of the drive to cut energy use and make carbon and financial savings.
- 9.3 The report details initiatives and projects that will directly influence the Council's rationalisation programme through the efficient and effective use of energy within its estate. Improving energy efficiency through improved controls and the installation of more efficient technologies enhances the Council's assets.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- (a) Is an EIA required? No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In accordance with the adopted recommendations from the Living in Wirral Task Force we will continue to work to reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint by: improving our energy efficiency; reducing our energy needs; introducing renewable technologies; and, improving our overall environmental performance which will have a positive effect on energy use, reduce carbon emissions and secure financial savings.
- 12.2 We will also continue to work with and encourage our partners and the community to reduce CO₂ emissions across all sectors in the borough through the Wirral Wide Strategic Climate Change Action Plan and Wirral CRed whilst seeking to develop and bring forward the Task Force recommendations on how the public's priorities for greater pace in this area of Council policy can be achieved through the Wirral Climate Change Group.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are no planning or community safety implications.

REPORT AUTHOR: Hazel Edwards
Climate Change Officer, Sustainability Unit

Telephone: 0151606 2423
Email: hazeledwards@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Wirral Carbon Reduction Programme: Wirral Council Activities

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Cabinet 9th December 2010 Minute 242 – Wirral’s future: Be part of it Task Force Options & Recommendations, Item 8
Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee 21st June 2010 Minute 59 - ‘Reducing the Council’s carbon Footprint’ Progress Report No. 3

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	20 September 2007
Cabinet	4 September 2008
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	7 April 2009
Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee	21 September 2009
Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee	7 June 2010
Cabinet (Interim Carbon Budget)	21 February 2011
Cabinet (Final Carbon Budget)	14 April 2011

APPENDIX 1
Wirral Carbon Reduction Programme
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	Activity	Planned Outcome	Activity Owner & Partners	Detailed Action	Review Date\ Milestones	Progress To Date	Next Steps	On Target R-A-G
EN1	Carbon Footprint Performance Monitoring	Improve the overall method of monitoring performance & assist in annual reporting for Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme[CRCEES]	L, H R & AM	Monitor emissions from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy use in Buildings • Transport Fleet • Business Mileage 	Review Energy Database Progress Monthly	Begin the process of automatic data collection (refer to section EN4)	Continue to improve the overall method of data collection & monitor performance	G
EN2	Investment Energy Efficiency Programme [IEEP] PHASE 1	Reduce the Council's carbon emissions by 60% by 2025; seek to achieve carbon neutrality for the borough by 2050	L, H R & AM	Phase 1 of the IEEP is complete; Boiler Replacement Programme will continue as & when funding is available	Ongoing	New schemes to be brought forward when funding is available	Plan, monitor & manage the future Boiler Replacement Programme; ensure all future Building Energy Management Systems [BEMS] are compatible with the Corporate system	G
EN3	Investment Energy Efficiency Programme PHASE 2 – Strategic Change Programme Business as Usual	Reduce the Council's carbon emissions by 60% by 2025; seek to achieve carbon neutrality for the borough by 2050	L, H R & AM	Phase 2 of the IEEP included: Corporate PC Power Down System (PCP); Voltage Optimisation (VO); Variable Speed Drives (VSD). Staff & Member Energy Efficiency Awareness Raising Programme	Oct 11 Monthly	Schemes developed through SCP. PCP: Closed; VO: Completion anticipated early 2012; VSD: Completed Full programme of events developed and on schedule	OBC submitted to SCP Board for further similar schemes for 2012 to include CHP; VO & Carbon Management System to assist with delivery of Carbon Reduction Targets Continue to develop the programme & review progress; Member Training on Carbon Budget - Dec 11 & Jan 12	G G
EN4	Investment Energy Efficiency Programme	Reduce the Council's carbon emissions by 60% by 2025.	LHR & AM; Technical Services	• Automatic Meter Reading Project	Dec 11	Contractor appointed; contract	Operate contract to install & manage AMR	G

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Page 67	PHASE 3	seek to achieve carbon neutrality for the borough by 2050; assist in the annual reporting for CRCEES		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Lighting Energy Efficiency Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Switch off traffic signs (where illumination is no longer required as a result of a relaxation of legal requirements) ▪ Convert illuminated signs & bollards to night -time operation only; ▪ Illuminated bollards to be solar powered on new schemes; ▪ Dimming of some streetlights for part of night; ▪ Replacement of old equipment with more energy efficient items; ▪ Install & operate the Central Management System to control suitable street lighting columns 	Oct 11	<p>details being finalised.</p> <p>Continue to implement the programme</p> <p>Undertake trial on CMS to explore possibility of installing dimming equipment in columns on selected routes;</p> <p>The proposed trial installation of a CMS will initially control the operation of approximately 350 streetlights;</p> <p>103 solar powered bollards now installed as standard option, new versions containing the battery in the base to avoid vehicular damage are being trialled in Leasowe Road</p>	<p>system</p> <p>Trial of CMS complete & rollout of CMS imminent;</p> <p>Existing bollards will continue to be replaced with solar powered where feasible as part of maintenance works</p>	G
	EN5	Related Energy Projects	Reduce the Council's carbon emissions by 60% by 2025;	LHR & AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation & replacement of Discounted Energy Purchase 	Nov 11	Approval being sought for Strategic	Awaiting confirmation from SCP Board Nov

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Page 68		seek to achieve carbon neutrality for the borough by 2050		Combined Heat & Power [CHP] Scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon Reduction Commitment 	Ongoing	Change Programme Outline Business Case for installation of Discounted Energy Purchase CHP scheme at suitable locations 1st yr Footprint & Annual Report submitted to EA Sep 11; Internal Audit Report complete - 3* rating secured & amendments completed	11 CRCEES payment due Apr 11 @ £12/tonne; report to Cabinet Dec 8 2011; next report due to be reported to Cabinet in Jul 2012	G
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display Energy Certificates 	Oct 11	All municipal sites requiring certification have been provided with new Display Energy Certificates	Review site performance & provide next years certificates; liaise with Awareness Raising Team & Energy Champions for use in delivery of Carbon Reduction Targets; incorporate with proposed Carbon Management System	G
EN6	Council Leak Detection Programme	To secure a reduction in the incidence of water leaks across the Council's estate;	LHR & AM; All Departments	A study is underway to determine the permeable floor area of all Council buildings to identify potential leaks &	Ongoing	Study is underway; site visits being planned &	Review the impact of the programme on the Council's energy	

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		secure financial savings from improved operation of water services & utility billing information		ensure water charges following leak identification are accurate		undertaken across the Council's estate	costs; continue to monitor water supplies in all Council buildings to secure & maintain improved performance	
EN7	Renewables	Reduce the Council's carbon emissions by 60% by 2025; seek to achieve carbon neutrality for the borough by 2050	LHR & AM; Technical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photovoltaic Scheme at Cheshire Line Building Develop a bio-mass fuel contract for Floral Pavilion 	Annually Nov 14	Install system and monitoring unit; monitor performance 4yr contract completed	Annual Solar Panel Performance: the amount of electricity metered through the approved meter between 01/09/10 to 31/08/ totalled 3891 Kwh & produced 6% more electricity than projected by the installer Monitor; renegotiate contract in Nov 2014 Complete tender & place on CHEST Electronic Portal	G G
		Solar Photovoltaic PV Project	LHR & AM	The project involves the installation of solar pv arrays on the roofs of some 30 council-owned buildings to generate renewable energy; project is self financing due to annual savings on energy costs & from revenue generated through the FIT scheme	Tender Oct 11 - Jan 12; complete by Apr 2013	Site & panel location assessment underway; planning/building control approval being sought		A
EN8	Wirral CRed Scheme	Help to achieve 60% carbon reduction in the borough by 2025. Assist in the operation of the LAA	LHR & AM	Develop & promote the CRed scheme together with our partners the Wirral PCT/Cheshire & Wirral Hospital Trust	Oct 11	20011 programme of promotion activity includes; 'Climate Week' conferences,	A rolling programme of un-staffed prize promotions will continue in 2011/12 to	G

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Page 70						'Swap Days' & 'Community days' held in Birkenhead, Wallasey & New Brighton; 'Green Village', 'Rubbish Fun Day' & 'Carbon Detective' events held in Royden Park, Bebington & Birkenhead Park; Captain Carbon pilot in 6 schools secured 271 new sign-ups; New Twitter account has secured 98 'followers' since Apr '11; 381 new recruits & 302 tonnes of CO ₂ pledges secured	maintain the profile & secure the Corporate target of 500 sign-ups & 200 tonnes of carbon savings/year; the website, e-newsletter & a new annual newsletter will continue to serve CRed recruits & maintain pledges; beneficiaries of other Council energy saving initiatives to be encouraged to sign-up; Peer-to-peer & face-to-face resources & events to be developed to encourage existing CRed members to recruit others	
EN9	Staff & Member Awareness Raising Programme	To secure reductions in energy consumption/costs & CO ₂ emissions through the implementation of a programme of no-to low-cost initiatives based around staff vigil lance, good housekeeping & energy awareness	LHR & AM; Energy Champions across all Council Departments	The campaign consists of 5 key elements: Design Phase; Launch Events; Focus Phase Year 1; Momentum Phase Years 2 & 3; Continuous Improvement Phase from Year 3 onwards. The campaign is in its 3 rd year & momentum has increased in response to the setting of a Carbon Budget; harsh budgetary cuts & the need to look at all areas of Council spending are driving the need to try & reduce the amount spent on energy bills & operational costs	Oct 11	Climate Week 'Mini-Challenge' held Mar '11; Rubbish Fun Day & Heswall School Environment Week all successful in promoting Eco-Schools; 74 Energy Champions [EC's] recruited as aid to delivery of Departmental carbon targets; Awareness Raising Team & EC's to	Events & activities being organised for Energy Saving Week Oct 11 including Council Staff Energy Survey; Switch-Off Fortnight for schools Nov 11; Member Training Dec 11; ongoing work with EC's for delivery of Carbon target with demonstrable measures being developed &	G

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Page 71						liaise to use DEC certificates to improve buildings energy performance; 32 schools visited; Governor Training to support energy awareness message through schools; annual refresher training attended by 32 facility/building managers; 107 schools now included in the Energy Management Services; increased number of schools participating in Switch-Off Fortnight this year	introduced over next three months to encourage all staff to participate & contribute; assess outcomes of school activities & prepare audit for follow-up; continue to liaise with schools to provide EM Services; plan, monitor & manage Awareness Raising Programme for 2011/12	
DC1	Adoption of Council "Green Specification"	Design more energy & resource efficient buildings, roads & services using materials & technologies that minimise damage to local people & the environment; to generate policies & strategies to ensure Low Carbon technologies are used within the Borough	Design Consultancy Project Team: LHR &AM all Depts.; Individual Project; Officers encouraged to seek access following adoption	Analyse national guidance, prepare activity programme, consider methodology for communication (staff awareness), collect material profiles, produce generic design details/guidelines, roll-out	Nov 11	Completed	Publicise & monitor use of Green Spec in all Council building & refurbishment projects	G
DC2	BSF One School Pathfinder Woodchurch High School £26M BSF Funding	To create more energy & resource efficient buildings. Has achieved BREEAM 'Very Good'; 60% carbon reduction on 2002 Building Regulations;	Design Consultancy Project Team: LHR &AM CYPD Kier NW and BDP	High efficiency M&E design & Biomass Boiler; High levels of insulation & thermal mass; Rainwater harvesting for WC's	Ongoing	Completed	Monitor environmental performance	G

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		Water saving measures to reduce use; Benchmarked lower running costs	Woodchurch High School					
DC3	Primary Capital Programme Park Primary and Pensby Primary £11M DCSF Funding	To create more energy & resource efficient buildings. Has achieved BREEAM 'Very Good' as a minimum with aim for 'Excellent'; Water saving measures to reduce use Min 10% recycled content; Benchmarked lower running costs	Design Consultancy Project Team: LHR &AM CYPD Park & Pensby Primary Schools	Passive solar design & high efficiency M&E design; High levels of insulation & thermal mass; Rainwater harvesting for WC's; High recycled content materials	Ongoing	Park Completed; Pensby On Site Sep 11	Monitor environmental performance/build	G
	Refurbish Cathcart St Primary School; includes replacement of old mobile classroom; provision of re-located satellite Children's Centre & After-School Club accommodation replacement	To create more energy & resource efficient buildings. The proposed scheme will remove the old mobile where the CATs afterschool club is based and moving it into the existing building; improve & upgrade the building & facilities at Cathcart St with improved provision for existing & additional pupils with re-provision of the Satellite Children's Centre which is currently located in the former St Laurence's Primary School building	Design Consultancy Project Team: LHR &AM CYPD	New extension & upgraded & insulated roof covering; double glazed windows & improvements to the heating system & ventilation; energy efficient lighting; flooring; construction of new W.C. pods; provision of improved & covered play facilities	Jan 12	Ongoing	CATS club moving in Oct 11; hand-over due Jan 12; completion anticipated May 12; monitor environmental performance	G
DC5	Phase 1 - Overchurch Primary School demolition of old horsa huts and re-provision of kitchen in single-storey extension, dining & after-school club	To create more energy & resource efficient buildings. The proposed scheme will provide a new extension with re-provision of kitchen facilities with improved dining area & new before/after-school clubs	Design Consultancy Project Team: LHR &AM CYPD	New extension; kitchen heat exchange system to be installed to recycle heat; energy efficient & fully automatic lighting; re-roof for internal corridor with improved roof & wall insulation; 'A' rated rubber flooring & new fire alarm system	Jan 12	Scheme & estimate approved Jul 11	Commence works Jan 12	G

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DC6	Demolition of outbuildings and new single-storey extension at Woodlands Primary School	To create more energy & resource efficient buildings. The proposed scheme will see the demolition of outbuildings & provision of new single-storey extension to the existing building to increase available floorspace	Design Consultancy Project Team: LHR &AM CYPD	New extension; energy efficient & fully automatic lighting; improved roof & wall insulation; 'A' rated rubber flooring	Jan 12	Planning approval granted	Commence works Jan 12	G
DC7	Remodelling of 6th Form facilities at Pensby Girls School	To create more energy & resource efficient buildings. The proposed scheme will integrate boys & girls 6 th Form through remodelling of facility	Design Consultancy Project Team: LHR &AM CYPD	Installation of accessible lift & W.C.; refurbishment of existing W.C. facilities; energy efficient lighting	Jan 12	Scheme & estimate approved Sep 11	Commence works Jan 12	G
DC8	Double classroom extension and demolition of mobile classrooms at St Georges Upper School	To create more energy & resource efficient buildings. The proposed scheme will see the demolition of old mobile classrooms & provision of new double classroom extension	Design Consultancy Project Team: LHR &AM CYPD	Demolish existing mobile classrooms & provide new double extension; new W.C. facilities & accessible ramp	Jan 12	Scheme & estimate approved Sep 11	Commence works Jan 12	G
DC9	Re-provision of Liscard Community Hall through Community Asset Transfer [CAT] grant funding of Grosvenor Ballroom	To create more energy & resource efficient buildings. The proposed scheme will see the re-provision of Liscard Hall community facilities at the Grosvenor Ballroom with day nursery & social facility	Design Consultancy Project Team: LHR &AM CYPD	Installation of new double-glazing; aluminium external doors; comprehensive interior refurbishment to enable better use of building; energy efficient heating	Jan 12	Scheme & estimate approved Sep 11	Commence works Jan 12	G
WR1	Implement a improved Council-wide waste & recycling system including plastic bag usage	To enable all Council buildings to have mini grey bins for use by staff & have 1100 litre bulk bins outside for emptying by Biffa; supported by an internal communications campaign	Technical Services	All Council buildings now have new & improved waste recycling infrastructure in place for use by staff & public (where applicable); information on new system to be distributed to all facility managers & staff	Oct 11	Good baseline data collected through questionnaire to inform implementation of new recycling system; roll out of	Waste & Environment to sample monitor recycling performance bi-annually; internal improvement target of 40%	G

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						recycling service to all Council buildings currently serviced for refuse collection under the Biffa contract @ approx 26 locations; existing locations already serviced will receive improved service		
BM3 Page 74	Offer interest free loans to staff for purchase of lower cc/greener vehicles & bicycles	Increase number of staff using greener vehicles to travel to work	Technical Services; LHR&AM, Finance	Promotion of scheme to all staff; approve vehicle loans	Jun 12	Supplementary Road safety/fuel efficient driving guidance to be provided	Scheme publicised; monitoring take up levels	G
BM4	Emergency ride home policy to allow car share scheme to ensure staff are always guaranteed a lift home should their car share arrangements breakdown	Increase take up of car share scheme	Technical Services, LHR & AM	Promote £200 Emergency Ride Home fund available for staff as part of Car Share Scheme	Mar 11	£200 fund in place	Continue to promote Emergency Ride Home fund as part of the car share scheme & monitor take up levels	G
BM5	Teleworking	Increased numbers of homeworkers & mobile workers	All departments, LHR & AM	Development of teleworking to aid Council's Rationalisation Programme; reduce need for staff to travel to office bases	Mar 12	Trial commenced at Bebington Town	Continue to monitor & review options for roll-out across other appropriate sites & staff	A
BM6	Flexible Flexi Time- All departments to have introduced extended office hours, relaxed core hours and a maximum of 2 days flexi per month	Increased number of staff who can take advantage of flexible working	All departments	Departments to implement as appropriate whilst ensuring that the needs of the service can still be met	Oct 12	All Departments implementing where appropriate	Continue to monitor & review	G

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BM7	Improve facilities for staff to travel by motorcycle	Increased numbers of staff who can travel to work using PTW	Technical Services	Motorcycle facilities installed at 4 locations; Building Site audits for Councils sites to be undertaken and identify needs for further ground anchors	Mar 11	Ground anchors have been purchased & installed	Monitor & review for installation at other locations	G
BM8	Facilities Fund – offer an annual £3k for buildings to bid for improvements to encourage/assist staff to travel sustainably	Increased number of staff travelling by sustainable modes	Technical Services; LHR&AM	Works for a shower room in the Treasury Building ongoing and cycle lockers installed at 2 locations	Mar 12	Ongoing	Works completed; seek to provide new cycle lockers at further council sites	G
BM9	Attend annual Green Transport /Corporate Health Day to promote the health and financial benefits of travelling by sustainable modes	Increased number of staff travelling by sustainable modes	Technical Services	Provide information to staff such as journey planners, travel and cycle training (if required) as well as promoting other incentives to aid modal shift	Dec 11	Event held in June for Bike Week with PCT; Corporate Health Day replaced with John Parry Memorial & Fit For Wirral with events held throughout late summer/autumn	Follow-up & review events to inform feasibility for future events	G
BM10	Production of How to Get to Guides for Birkenhead Buildings and Wallasey Town Hall	Increase number of staff travelling by sustainable modes	Technical Services/Merseyside TravelWise	Leaflets produced setting out public transport, walking and cycling information for main Council buildings & distributed to staff	Ongoing	Provide all new members of staff with leaflets through the corporate induction	Monitor take up and arrange re-prints as appropriate	G
BM11	Production of promotional materials to raise the awareness of the Travel Plan	Increase number of staff travelling by sustainable modes	Technical Services	Produce promotional materials containing consistent messages for staff regarding sustainable travel	Ongoing	'Benefits of...' guide updated regularly to ensure consistency of information	Staff Travel Plan Updated	G
BM12	Production of a dedicated "Getting Started Cycling" leaflet	Increase number of staff are able or who choose to, cycle to work	Technical Services; Corporate Services; all departments	Production of leaflet & distribution to all staff & via staff inductions	Ongoing	Leaflet has been produced	Distribute leaflet to staff; monitor usage and identify need for	G

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	to promote cycling to staff						re-print as appropriate	
BM13	Promotion of car share database to reduce number of single occupancy vehicles by encouraging staff to car share	Increase number of staff registered on the car share database	Technical Services; All departments	Promotion of database through email, poster & intranet as well as staff induction events	Sep '11	Liftshare database in operation; further event planned to address low take-up	Promotion of scheme in Autumn '11 at sites with high numbers of SOV through coffee mornings; continue to monitor take up	G
BM14	Promotion of Travel Plan to all new staff through presentation and distribution of information at regular Corporate Induction Events	Increased number of staff travelling by sustainable modes	Technical Services	All new starters are provided with a Travel Plan pack promoting public transport, walking & cycling as well as incentives such as staff green vehicle loans, cycle training & personalised journey planning	Mar 11	Attendance/Presentation at all inductions to date-positive feedback received from attendees	Continue attendance	G
BM15	All new starters with the Council to be issued with a personalised journey plan for public transport prior to commencement of their employment to raise awareness of alternatives to the private car prior to their first day with the Council	Increase number of staff travelling by sustainable modes	Technical Services/Merseytravel/ LHR&AM	HR issue details of new starters to Merseytravel who send new starter information on how to undertake the journey using public	Ongoing	Plans issued to all new starters	Monitor new starters to ascertain effectiveness/take-up & recognition of journey plans	G
BM16	Raise awareness of the existence of pool bikes and encourage staff to use them for appropriate journeys	Increase number of staff using pool bikes for short inter-building visits or site visits when appropriate	Technical Services; All departments	Pool bikes available at 3 locations	Mar 11	Bikes now available for use	Continue to monitor and review take up levels	G

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BM17	Snapshot Staff Travel Survey - Annual snapshot of modal share of staff travel	Obtain information on breakdown of modal share of staff travel	Technical Services	Snapshot Travel survey completed Jul '11		Following the survey in 2008, 601 members of staff took part on modes of transport used to get to work: 12% use the train –up by 4%; 6.3% use the bus – down 2%; 6.5% walk – up 3%; and, 3.2% cycle – up by 2%. The number of staff using their cars and travelling on their own has dropped from 63% to 48% and 22% now Car Share to work up from 13%; Car Share event held Sep '11 to promote Car Share database & financial savings on fuel	Continue to promote alternative & sustainable modes of transport to achieve Travel Plan objectives; undertake further Travel Survey in Jul 12	G
TR1	Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving Scheme Introduced	The SAFED assessor course provides high quality driver development training with proven, significant fuel saving benefits	Technical Services Transport Section	Introduce a programme of sessions initially for those driving high mileages (social services and education); follow-up with remainder of fleet drivers	Mar '11	Social Services access bus drivers have undergone SAFED training	Training completed; monitor & review performance	G

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION BY WIRRAL OF THE FLOOD RISK REGULATIONS 2009 & THE FLOOD AND WATER ACT 2010
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR HARRY SMITH STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 established Wirral Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). LLFA's are required to lead the strategic management of local flood risk (arising from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses).
- 1.2 Wirral is at risk of local flooding, with a substantial number of domestic properties identified as at risk from potential future flooding. The responsibilities attached to the LLFA role, place substantial new burdens on Wirral Council in managing these flood risks and will be directed through the Flood & Water Management Partnership, the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee and finally to Cabinet for approval.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the report be noted.
- 2.2 That the report be accepted by the Committee as meeting its responsibilities under the flood legislation to produce an annual report on Flood Risk Management progress.

3.0 PROGRESS REPORT

3.1 THE FLOOD RISK REGULATIONS 2009 – PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (PFRA)

- 3.1.1 The requirements of the EU Floods Directive (Directive 2007/60/EC, the assessment and management of flood risks across EU Member States) in England and Wales was transposed into domestic law through the Flood Regulations 2009 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, placing new flood risk management duties on the Environment Agency (EA) and Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and a duty on other relevant organisations to cooperate and share data.

- 3.1.2 The Directive requires Member States to prepare a PFRA showing the impact of historic flooding and the potential impact of a repeat event by 22 December 2011.
- 3.1.3 For the Council, as the LLFA for the Wirral area, the PFRA process involved an assessment of local flood risk, the preparation of a Preliminary Assessment Report and the identification of Flood Risk Areas (where the risk of flooding is significant). The deadline for completion was 22nd June 2011. The Wirral PFRA was submitted prior to this deadline and will be reviewed in 6 years (2017). A copy is stored in the Members Library for information.

3.2 THE FLOOD & WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010 – IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.2.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 has and will continue to place additional duties and responsibilities on each LLFA. These new duties and responsibilities are detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2.2 The additional duties and responsibilities are, in general, being funded through financial grants, initially through DEFRA, with an allocation of £20,000.00, which was received in October 2010 to begin the work on the PFRA. In addition to this initial grant, Defra have made available nationally some £36million to fund the significant new burdens that have been placed on LLFAs. Wirral Council has additionally received £122,800 in 2011/12 and will receive subsequent funding of £167,900 annually in years 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15. (Cabinet minutes 84 and 354 refers).
- 3.2.3 These costs have been calculated based on a model of the significance of the risk to the LLFA and the level of resource required to address that risk.
- 3.2.4 The first parts of the Flood & Water Management Act commenced on 1 October 2010. These included new definitions of flooding, the requirement to develop national and local flood risk management strategies within a reasonable timeframe, to co-operate and share information, establish Scrutiny Committee and amendments to Building Regulations in relation to flood resilience.
- 3.2.5 A report to Cabinet in March 2011 identified how Wirral Council would meet its initial responsibilities as an LLFA which included the earlier appointment of a drainage specialist to head up the Drainage Function within Technical Services, the restructuring of the existing Wirral Flood Group to create the Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership together with its Operational Sub Group with the aim of improving the existing working relationships with all its flood risk management partners; and finally the programme for the production of its PFRA.
- 3.2.6 As part of the restructuring of Technical Services following the EVR/VR process the opportunity to review the level of resource needed to meet the additional responsibilities and duties as an LLFA has been taken. This is considered an appropriate time, firstly following the additional funding provision, secondly, the need to build up the drainage expertise for the future and finally, the timely and successful completion of the academic qualifications stage by a career graded trainee technician, who has been temporarily assigned to the Drainage Team. The creation of an additional permanent post within the Drainage Team will substantially increase its ability to meet the new responsibilities and duties brought about by the new legislation and enable the drainage knowledge and

expertise that sits with the existing team members to be shared. Additionally, this new member of the Drainage Team has been enrolled on an externally funded 2 year part-time Flood & Coastal Risk Management Foundation Degree which will help fast track the skills and knowledge base within the Team.

- 3.2.7 In April 2011, further parts of the Act commenced, these included a duty for the LLFA to investigate flooding incidents in its area and identify responsibilities, a duty to maintain a register of structures or features which may have an effect on flood risk and a responsibility to contribute towards sustainable development when exercising its duties. It has also been suggested by the EA that LLFAs must be able to show that progress is being made on the local strategy for flood risk management.
- 3.2.8 The development of the local flood risk management strategy must be consistent with the National Strategy, guidance on which has recently been published. However, the Merseyside Authorities have held a number of workshops to agree the general contents of the local strategy together with an implementation programme. Additionally, it was agreed that a working group would be set up within each Authority, with members from those disciplines that had a flood risk interest. It has been agreed that in the Wirral, this will be based around the Operational Flood Group with other co-opted participants as deemed necessary. An annual report will be presented to Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Flood Management progress in general with other reports related to specific items as deemed necessary, eg, the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Plan.
- 3.2.9 The responsibility to investigate flooding incidents is considered to be a significant task as evidenced following a recent significant extreme storm event when even with an additional resource, it was not possible to investigate all reported flooding without prioritising incidents by the location and degree of flooding. A policy to process and prioritise flooding incidents is therefore being developed for approval by Members.
- 3.2.10 The duty to establish and maintain a register of assets that may have an effect on flood risk is prescriptive, as is the need to record information about each feature including ownership and state of repair; and for the register to be available for inspection at all reasonable times. This includes inspection by the public but does not include the recorded information. However, what assets the LLFAs specifically record is not, the Act specifically states that the assets recorded are those that in the opinion of the LLFA, are likely to have a significant effect on flood risk in its area. Neither DEFRA or the EA have to date offered guidance on what nationally maybe considered significant, this is considered a response to the need for the locality of the flood risk to take precedent. However, they have developed examples of templates for what a register of assets might look like but again their use is not prescriptive.
- 3.2.11 The expectation is that LLFAs will have their registers and records in place, and will have started populating them by December 2011. It was intended to link the Wirral register with the Highway Asset Management Plan but as this has not progressed as originally planned due to funding issues, it is now proposed to utilise the example templates as a guide and produce a database based around the Microsoft Office Software Suite of programmes which should be compatible

with any future asset management programme. The development of the register is progressing and records population will commence as assets are identified.

- 3.2.12 LLFAs will be required to approve and adopt Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). This will require the establishment of a SUDS Approving Body (SAB). Defra had planned to launch a consultation on the proposed processes and mechanisms for implementation of the policy on Sustainable Drainage Systems on 15 July 2011. The launch of this consultation was delayed while some final questions are considered and resolved internally. This means that any consultation will not be launched until the Autumn 2011. The knock on effect is that the preferred implementation date of April 2012 is unlikely.
- 3.2.13 A small working group of officers from Drainage and Planning supported by Legal Services has met to discuss the requirements in connection with SUDS and SAB and will be making recommendations once the Consultation process has been completed and detailed guidance is available. In addition the group have discussed the future additional role for LLFAs to consent work on ordinary watercourses which was previously a role undertaken by the EA and will also be making recommendations concerning its implementation.
- 3.2.14 In order for the Drainage Team to be able to continue to support the Development Control function, the SAB/SUDs process and the additional responsibilities to identify flood risk and possible solution, it will be required to check the hydraulic capacity of the existing drainage systems and any proposed developments/improvements.

3.3 WIRRAL FLOOD & WATER MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

- 3.3.1 The main purpose of the partnership is to achieve through joint agency working an effective response to flooding and coastal erosion incidents on Wirral; to take such collective measures in order to minimise the potential impact of such incidents; and to seek the implementation of more permanent and sustainable solutions to the mitigation or alleviation of flooding and coastal erosion.
- 3.3.2 This partnership has been developed to provide the Wirral response to the Flood and Water Management Act, the Flood Risk Regulations and ensure that the strategy development for flood and coastal erosion risk management on Wirral is coordinated and integrated. It is chaired and administered by Wirral MBC as the LLFA. Meetings are held twice a year in April and October to best fit with reporting and budget cycles and seasonal issues (Spring and Winter).
- 3.3.3 A copy of the updated Partnership Action Plan is attached as **Appendix 2**. This Action Plan captures the key flood risk activities that will be undertaken by or on behalf of the Partnership over the coming 12 months.

3.4 WIRRAL OPERATIONAL FLOOD GROUP

- 3.4.1 The Operational Flood Group has met on a monthly basis since July 2011 to enable Wirral to progress its local flood risk strategy. Progress has also been made on a number of operational issues between United Utilities and Wirral Council and the Environment Agency have commenced improvements to the Bidston Trash Screen on the River Birket. The group meetings are an opportunity

to share information and knowledge and to discuss issues in an open and constructive environment.

- 3.4.2 The recent significant extreme rainfall at the end of August has led to some lively discussions and identified a number of flood risk locations not previously identified; and in accordance with the requirements of the legislation and under the proposed policy for the investigation of flooding incidents it will be necessary to produce a report detailing the incident and which flood risk management partner has responsibility.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 has placed additional burdens on Wirral as an LLFA and it will need to progress its local strategy for flood risk management and establish policies and protocols in dealing with these new responsibilities and duties which will be directed through the Flood & Water Management Partnership, the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee and finally to Cabinet for approval.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 Wirral faces a significant risk of flooding with a substantial number of domestic properties identified as at risk from potential future flooding. Past national floods have demonstrated what a devastating psychological impact flooding can have on affected communities. Wirral continues to proactively manage the risk of flooding and the members of the Flood & Water Management Partnership will continue to work together to reduce the risk of property flooding here on Wirral. The recent unpredicted significant extreme storm event that led to the flooding of a large number of properties shows that these risks need to be identified and tackled.
- 5.2 The reduction of identified flood risk also partly mitigates one of the Council's Corporate risks – "Not having plans in place could compromise delivery of essential services in the event of a major public emergency".

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Not relevant.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There is no consultation required at this time as a result of this work.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 Flooding affects all voluntary, community and faith groups whether it be directly with their properties being flooded, or in a responder or recovery capacity.

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

- 9.1 There are no additional financial implications as the Council has received £122,800 in 2011/12 and will receive £167,900 annually in years 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no legal implications other than the duties imposed under the new legislation.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no Equality implications.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific carbon reduction implications although there are significant links with carbon reduction and sea level rises, increases in extreme weather patterns, etc. As a result the Councils Climate Change Officer is a member of the Wirral Flood and Water Management Partnership.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There will be significant planning implications in relation to this new legislation. As a result of which relevant officers from the Forward Planning and the Development Control sections are members of the Flood and Water Management Partnership and will be co-opted on to the Wirral Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Working Group.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Mark Camborne**

Health, Safety & Resilience Operations Manager & Chair of the Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership
telephone: (0151) 606 2071
email: markcamborne@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Floods and Water Management Act 2010 – Summary of Local Authority Responsibilities
- Appendix 2 Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership action plan

REFERENCE MATERIAL

- The Flood & Water Management Act 2010
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/pdfs/ukpga_20100029_en.pdf
- The Flood & Water Management Act explanatory notes
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/notes/contents>
- The Flood Risk Regulations 2009
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/3042/contents/made>
- What does the Flood & Water Management Act mean for Local Authorities, Defra.
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/documents/policy/fwmb/fwma-lafactsheet.pdf>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Sustainable Communities O & S Committee	17 November 2010
Cabinet	17 March 2011
Cabinet	21 July 2011

SUMMARY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY ISSUES THAT WILL REQUIRE RESOURCE IN FLOODS AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010

ENACTED SECTIONS 2010

1. **Local Strategy (9)** Lead Local flood Authority (LLFA) develop maintain, apply and monitor a local strategy for Flood Risk Management (FRM). This must be consistent with the National Strategy.
2. **Co-operate and share information (13)** An authority must co-operate with other authorities in exercising FCERM, this includes sharing data.
3. **LLFA to establish Scrutiny Committee (31) (Schedule 2 Para 54)** Power to LLFA to allow for scrutiny committees in exercising FCERM.
4. **Building regulations: flood resilience (40)** Provides that building regulations can be made for any type of work in relation to flood resilience and resistance.

DUTIES AND POWERS ENACTED APRIL 2011

1. **Duty to Investigate (19)** The LLFA must investigate flooding incidents in its area in order to identify what authority has the flood risk management function and to establish if that authority has or intends to respond. The LLFA must publish results of investigations.
2. **Duty to Maintain a Register (21)** A LLFA must establish and maintain a register of structures or features, which may have an effect on flood risk in its area. Records must include information on ownership and condition.
3. **Duty to Contribute to Sustainable Development (27)** LLFA must aim to contribute towards sustainable development whilst exercising FCERM.
4. **Designation of Features (30) (Schedule 1)** Power enabling LLFA to designate a feature that affects flood or coastal erosion risk, this is to prevent future alterations that may increase flood risk.
5. **Amendment of Other Acts (30) (Schedule 2)**
 - a. Para 29; gives the LLFA powers to carry out works on Ordinary Watercourses in line with the local FRM strategy
 - b. Para 31; gives LLFA power to enforce obligations to maintain or repair watercourse or bridge
 - c. Para 32; names the LLFA as the consenting authority for works to Ordinary Watercourses
 - d. Para 33; gives power to LLFA to require works for maintaining flow of watercourse
6. **Sustainable Drainage (32) (schedule 3)** The LLFA will be the Approving Body with the duty to approve rainwater drainage systems before construction and then adopt and maintain the drainage system upon completion. This section of the Act is not likely to be enacted in 2011. The Government intends to consult on issues late 2011. Schedule 3 also removes the right to connect to public sewer in certain cases.
7. **Incidental Flooding or Coastal Erosion (39)** Allows LLFA to carry out works that may increase flooding or coastal erosion if justified.

DUTIES AND POWERS TO BE ENACTED OCTOBER 2011 AND APRIL 2012

1. **Designation of Features (30) (Schedule 1)** Power enabling LLFA to designate a feature that affects flood or coastal erosion risk, this is to prevent future alterations that may increase flood risk.
2. **Amendments to other Acts (31) (Schedule 2)**
 1. Para 29; gives the LLFA powers to carry out works on Ordinary Watercourses in line with the local FRM strategy

2. Para 31; gives LLFA power to enforce obligations to maintain or repair watercourse or bridge
3. Para 32; names the LLFA as the consenting authority for works to Ordinary Watercourses
4. Para 33; gives powers to LLFA to require works for maintaining flow of watercourse

3. Sustainable Drainage (32) (Schedule 3) The LLFA will be the Approving Body with the duty to approve rainwater drainage systems before construction and then adopt and maintain the drainage system upon completion. This section of the Act is not likely to be enacted during 2011 as the Government intends to consult on issues later this year. Schedule 3 also removes the right to connect to a public sewer in certain cases.

4. Incidental Flooding or Coastal Erosion (39) Allows LLFA to carry out works that may increase flooding or coastal erosion if justified.

FLOODS & WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010
 DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN AS AT October 2011

Ref No	Action	Target Date	Comments
01	Establish Wirral Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Working Group	July 2011	Established
02	Inaugural meeting of Wirral Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Working Group	July 2011	Ongoing regular meetings
03	Review progress in development of Flood Risk Assets Register	Nov 2011	Committee report Nov 2011, EA review on progress December 2011
04	Develop the Wirral Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	Nov 2011	Committee report on progress Nov 11, EA review on progress December 2011, ongoing development during 2012.
05	Develop process for consenting Ordinary Watercourse works.	Sept 2011	Enactment October 2011, committee report Nov 2011
06	Development of Flood Incident Prioritisation Policy and investigation protocols	Nov 2011	Committee Report Nov 2011
07	Review Flood Incident Prioritisation Policy and investigation protocols by Partnership	Nov 2011	Committee Report Nov 2011
08	Reply to government consultation on SUDS and SAB	2011/12	Consultation expected late 2011
09	Establish a SUDS Approval Board, including agreeing guidance and protocols for the design and construction of SUDS and appropriate mechanisms to provide guidance and approval to all stakeholders	Late 2012	Ongoing development during 2012
10	Respond to new duties and responsibilities as enacted.	On-going	
11	Continue to review Defra guidance as it is published and implement it as appropriate	On-going	

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

COMMITTEE – 23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL AND UNITED UTILITIES GROUP PLC
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR HARRY SMITH, STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the progress in formalising the working arrangements between the Council and United Utilities for the identification and correction of defective manhole covers and frames in Wirral.
- 1.2 A draft Service Level Agreement is being prepared by the Council based on a generic agreement United Utilities have with other Authorities, but with specific conditions in relation to their apparatus in Wirral and their obligations under the New Road and Street Works Act 1991.
- 1.3 It is anticipated that the Service Level Agreement will be finalised early in the New Year subject to continuing negotiations with United Utilities with the new working arrangements commencing in April 2012.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report and the proposal to enter into a Service Level Agreement with United Utilities.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 The Council is responsible for the maintenance of 1185 kilometres (741 miles) of roads across the Borough. This road length comprises of the classified network of A, B and C roads which amounts to 219 kilometres (137 miles) and the unclassified network of 966 kilometres (604 miles).
- 3.2 Within this network United Utilities Waste Water Division has many thousands of kilometres of foul sewers, surface water sewers and combined sewers with manholes located at regular intervals for access and inspection purposes.
- 3.3 Section 81 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 states that as an undertaker United Utilities has a duty to maintain its apparatus to the reasonable satisfaction of the street authority i.e. Wirral Borough Council. For this purpose maintenance includes the carrying out of works, and renewal where appropriate, to keep the apparatus in efficient working order.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The existing process the Council uses for notifying United Utilities of defective apparatus is by e-mailing a spreadsheet detailing the deficiencies identified. The information recorded is compiled from defects identified by highway inspection staff, Council Members and the general public.

Between 1st April 2009 and 31st March 2010, 185 defective covers and frames were reported to United Utilities of which approximately 106 were repaired.

During the same period in 2010/11, 179 were reported and approximately 115 were repaired.

The repair figures for both years are estimated and based on highway inspections as there was at that time no facility for United Utilities to report completed work figures to the Council.

- 4.2 In order to improve the Council's reporting procedures, and to enable United Utilities to provide accurate repair figures, the spreadsheet and reporting process have been amended following consultation with United Utilities. Additional information is required on the spreadsheet and United Utilities are required to populate certain fields and return the form to the Council.

This will provide details of repairs and the date the statutory street works notice is applied for which in turn will inform the Council of the actual dates for the scheduled works.

The amended spreadsheet has provision for identifying apparatus by referring to United Utilities unique asset number; the Council now holds a complete listing of asset identification data. This will eliminate the problems of identifying a particular defective apparatus at road junctions where there are many existing manholes. This will reduce abortive visits by United Utilities staff to incorrect locations and subsequent delays in completing repairs.

Prioritisation will also be improved as highway inspection staff will apply the agreed process for categorising the apparatus as dangerous or non-dangerous. This will ensure that dangerous defective apparatus receives an immediate response (i.e. within 2 hours).

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to maintain the highway and this is achieved in part through consultation with statutory undertakers.
- 5.2 The correction of defective statutory undertakers apparatus and effective reinstatement procedures reduces the Council's exposure to potential public liability, highway related insurance claims.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Possible enforcement action, United Utilities has a statutory duty to maintain its apparatus in the highway. The Council must ensure that this duty is discharged, the new reporting process will assist both United Utilities in undertaking their statutory duty and the Council in ensuring compliance.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Meetings have been held and are continuing between staff from the Technical Services department and United Utilities to formalise the working arrangements into a Service Level Agreement between Wirral Borough Council and United Utilities Group PLC.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 This report has no impact on such groups.

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

9.1 All repairs and renewals to defective apparatus are undertaken by and financed by United Utilities.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Council as Highway Authority has a legal responsibility to maintain the road network in a safe condition.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no such implications within this report.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Identification of defective apparatus using United Utilities unique asset number will reduce abortive visits by United Utilities staff and repeat inspection visits by Council highway inspection staff.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no planning implications arising directly from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Shaun Brady

Highway Asset Manager, Highway Management

telephone: (0151) 606 2098

email: shaunbrady@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Notice of Motion	April 2010

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	<i>WIRRAL HERITAGE STRATEGY</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>DAVID GREEN</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>COUNCILLOR CHRIS MEADEN</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Members are asked to approve the Wirral Heritage Strategy 2011-14 following a period of consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 That the committee approves the Wirral Heritage Strategy 2011-14 and action plan.

2.2 That a working group of officers is established to monitor the implementation of the Wirral Heritage Strategy.

2.3 That the post of Heritage Officer be made permanent.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 To enable the implementation of the Wirral Heritage Strategy.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The committee received a draft Heritage Strategy at its meeting of 10 March 2011 and agreed to its circulation for consultation and comment amongst interested groups. That consultation has now been completed (see section 7.0) and the final version and action plan is presented for approval by the committee.

4.2 This is Wirral's first Heritage Strategy and its purpose is to set out a comprehensive and integrated Heritage framework which will form the basis for heritage activities in the short and medium term and establish principles to be followed in the longer term.

Its overall vision is:

“To ensure that Wirral’s heritage is protected, managed, enhanced and used to meet the educational, recreational and sustainable needs of local people, visitors and potential investors to the borough.”

The strategy objectives are:

- To promote, celebrate and communicate the value of the heritage of Wirral as a source of national significance and local civic and community pride;
- To identify, recognise and give an understanding of Wirral’s heritage, which will inform future management and development;
- To actively promote the role and opportunities presented by heritage in terms of the wider regeneration, economic and tourism development of the borough and to provide a framework for investment;
- To ensure the highest standards of stewardship, management and protection of heritage assets, including buildings, conservation areas, natural or man-made landscapes and art and historical collections;
- To promote community participation in heritage and to maximise the contribution heritage makes to education, lifelong learning and social development;
- To ensure that Wirral’s heritage is widely accessible can be enjoyed and understood by the widest possible audience, including those who have traditionally been excluded from heritage activity.

4.3 The strategy identifies key issues and proposed actions for five thematic areas.

- **Stewardship and Protection** – conserving Wirral’s heritage for future generations;
- **Regeneration** – using heritage as a driver for economic development, inward investment and supporting sustainable communities;
- **Learning** – maximising the role of heritage in supporting education, training and life-long learning;
- **Participation** – ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access, enjoy and participate in heritage;
- **Celebration** – recognising and utilising the part heritage can play in promoting local identity, social cohesion and civic and community pride.

4.4 The heritage resource is by its nature is fragmented and involves a wide ranging and diverse group of organisations, agencies, individuals and volunteer

groups. The strategy proposes the promotion and development of collaborative working with external agencies and across council departments. Heritage projects would be assessed against agreed criteria and the Heritage Strategy and its action plan would be monitored and updated by a Heritage Steering Group composed of council officers and key external partners.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 Without a Heritage Strategy, Wirral could fail in properly protecting its heritage assets and lose out on the opportunity to secure available funding for heritage restoration and preservation.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 None at this stage.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 A priority in developing this Strategy has been to engage local people throughout the process. The consultation draft was sent to over 200 local organisations and copies were available in museums and libraries. In July a community consultation day was held in Birkenhead Town Hall and separate consultation exercises were undertaken with young people.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 One of the Strategy objectives is to promote community participation and voluntary, community and faith organisations will all have a key role to play in its development and implementation.

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

- 9.1 There is a budget of £135,000 for heritage projects which is used to support a wide range of initiatives.
- 9.2 The heritage outreach officer has been in post since 1 March 2010 and has worked closely with voluntary organisations, external bodies and council officers to develop the Heritage Strategy and events such as the Heritage Open Days. The post is part-time and is due to cease in February 2012. It is proposed that the post be made full time and permanent, funded from existing budgets and incorporated into the structure of the Museum Service.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- (a) Is an EIA required? No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising from this report.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are none arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Jim Lester**
Head of Cultural Services
telephone: (0151) 606 2308
email: jimlester@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Wirral's Heritage Strategy 2011-2014.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

No additional material.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Sustainable Communities	10 March 2011

MAKING OUR HERITAGE MATTER



WIRRAL'S HERITAGE STRATEGY 2011-2014



November 2011

MAKING OUR HERITAGE MATTER

WIRRAL'S HERITAGE STRATEGY 2011- 2014

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Why Have a Heritage Strategy for Wirral?
- 1.2 Who is the Heritage Strategy for?
- 1.3 How the Heritage Strategy has been Developed
- 1.4 Definition and Scope
- 1.5 Vision, Aims and Objectives

2.0 Heritage in Wirral

- 2.1 Historic Overview: the Story of Wirral
- 2.2 Heritage Assets and Resources
- 2.3 Heritage Involves Us All
- 2.4 Heritage Activity in Wirral
- 2.5 The Value of Wirral's Heritage

3.0 Heritage and the Wider Context

- 3.1 The National and Regional Context
- 3.2 The Local Context

4.0 Making Our Heritage Matter: Key Issues and Proposed Actions

- 4.1 Stewardship and Protection - conserving Wirral's heritage for future generations
- 4.2 Regeneration – using heritage as a driver for economic development, inward investment and supporting sustainable communities

- 4.3 Learning – maximising the role of heritage in supporting education, training and life-long learning
- 4.4 Participation – ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access, enjoy and participate in heritage
- 4.5 Celebration – recognising and utilising the part heritage can play in promoting local identity, social cohesion and civic and community pride

5.0 Implementing the Strategy

- 5.1 Working in Partnership
- 5.2 Community Engagement
- 5.3 Establishing Priorities
- 5.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review
- 5.5 Celebrating and Promoting Achievement

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Executive Summary

This is the first heritage strategy for Wirral Council and its partners. Its purpose is to set out a comprehensive and integrated heritage framework for Wirral borough, which will form the basis for heritage activities in the short and medium terms and establish principles to be followed in the longer term. It has been developed with the help of national and regional strategic organisations and many local groups and stakeholders and seeks to encompass their concerns, views and aspirations. Its success will depend on working in partnership, brokering new relationships and actively working across sectors to meet heritage objectives.

The strategy is in two parts. The main body of the document explores the strategic context for heritage in Wirral. Section 1 defines what we mean by 'heritage' and sets a series of objectives to support the overall vision

'To ensure that Wirral's heritage is protected, managed, enhanced and used to meet the educational, recreational and sustainable needs of local people, visitors and potential investors to the borough'.

Section 2 provides a historic overview of the borough and identifies the tremendous wealth of heritage assets and resources which have survived from that long history and which now contribute to the physical and social identity of Wirral. It looks at the wide range of heritage activities already taking place throughout the borough and identifies those organisations from all sectors who are currently delivering them. It assesses the value of heritage and how it contributes to economic regeneration and tourism.

Section 3 explores the wider context, and demonstrates how the strategy will respond to, interact with, and support those priorities and themes which currently drive heritage at national, regional at local levels.

Section 4 identifies key issues and proposed actions for five thematic areas:

- **Stewardship and Protection** – conserving Wirral's heritage for future generations;
- **Regeneration** – using heritage as a driver for economic development, inward investment and supporting sustainable communities;
- **Learning** – maximising the role of heritage in supporting education, training and life-long learning;
- **Participation** – ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access, enjoy and participate in heritage;
- **Celebration** – recognising and utilising the part heritage can play in promoting local identity, social cohesion and civic and community pride.

The final section deals with how the strategy will be implemented through more 'joined-up' cross-departmental working within the Council, by building on existing external partnerships and forging new ones. It looks at criteria for determining priorities, which will assist the Council in prioritising its own projects and inform decisions on which external projects should be taken forward. Finally, it proposes a process of monitoring, evaluation and review which includes and engages local people.

The second part of the document is the **Action Plan** which expands on the actions identified in the main strategy, with short, medium and longer term targets. It is envisaged that the Action Plan will be an evolving and 'living' document, regularly updated as targets are achieved and new initiatives are fed into it.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why have a Heritage Strategy for Wirral?

Wirral's heritage is distinctive, diverse and in some cases, world class. Ranging from unique historic and natural landscapes, through outstanding model villages, to the vast complex of 19th century dockland structures, heritage provides the context for our everyday lives. It underpins the borough's national, regional and local identity and makes a significant contribution to our quality of life. It provides recreation and employment, contributes to the local and regional economy and can be a force in regeneration, tourism and sustainable development. Heritage is not just about the past. It impacts on all who live in, work in or visit Wirral today.

Most of all heritage is about people. It is about people learning from and enjoying this special place. It is about people caring for and looking after those things of value which we have inherited from previous generations and ensuring that they are safeguarded for the future.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out a comprehensive and integrated heritage framework for Wirral borough, which will form the basis for heritage activities in the short and medium terms and establish principles to be followed in the longer term.

The strategy reflects the great interest local people have in their heritage, as demonstrated by the large numbers of groups, societies and individuals who actively engage with Wirral's heritage. It has been developed in consultation with many of these organisations and seeks to reflect their views. The aim has been to produce a strategy which is agreed and accepted by the whole community and will be used by everyone as a 'living' document to guide heritage activity throughout the borough.

An important element of the strategy will be to provide an overview of Wirral's heritage by identifying those key heritage assets and resources which have value at local, national and even international levels. Within this context of understanding the significance of the borough's heritage, the strategy will be better placed to provide a clear direction for the management, promotion and celebration of that heritage.

However, a heritage strategy should not be and cannot be prescriptive. As public sector funding pressures bite further, the importance of widening participation in heritage will rise. Encouraging greater community participation and ownership of initiatives will be key and it may not be that all actions can be predetermined, but that innovation and community driven initiatives can be stimulated and allowed to flourish. The challenge will be to create the conditions that support such initiatives and enable them to happen.

The geographical area covered by this strategy is that of Wirral borough and does not include south Wirral which is administered by Cheshire West and Chester Council. However, it does recognise that heritage cannot be confined within local authority boundaries and that the historic and cultural identity of Wirral borough is inextricably linked to the history of the whole Wirral peninsula.

1.2 Who is the Strategy for?

Heritage in its widest sense touches all our lives, in ways which are both obvious and tangible, but also in ways which we often fail to recognise or appreciate. A person may never have any desire to visit a museum or engage in heritage activity, but will agree that a well maintained and attractive historic environment has a positive impact on their quality of life. Young people consulted on the development of this strategy initially expressed no interest in heritage, it was 'boring' and not for them. Yet their interest in and knowledge of the history of local football clubs was both passionate and impressive; they had just never thought of this as 'heritage'.

This strategy is not just a document for Wirral Council, but for the whole community. It has been developed with the help of very many local organisations and individuals and seeks to encompass their views, concerns and aspirations. Its success will depend on working in partnership, brokering new relationships and actively working across sectors to meet heritage objectives.

At times when financial resources are increasingly limited, it is more than ever important that the Council and its many partners have a clear vision and understanding of how heritage activity is to be delivered within the borough, establish priorities for action and define how these are to be achieved. This clarity should assist in targeting funding and funding applications towards those actions which have been identified as having greatest need.

1.3 How the Strategy has been developed

A priority in developing this strategy has been to engage local people throughout the process. In the spring of 2011 an initial consultation draft was sent to over 200 local organisations, including local history societies, community groups, healthcare providers, multi-cultural and disability groups, as well as national and regional strategic partners. Copies were available in museums, libraries and a whole range of community venues and the document was promoted through the Wirral History and Heritage Association. In July 2011 a community consultation day, held in Birkenhead Town Hall, attracted representatives from some 50 societies, who took part in a series of lively workshop sessions and discussions on every aspect of the strategy. They also helped to develop and test criteria for prioritising heritage projects

and initiatives. A second highly creative consultation exercise for young people took place in the same month and provided new and an imaginative perspectives on the meaning of heritage and how they would like to be engaged. Wherever possible, the strategy has tried to embrace the views of partners and local people and it is intended that this process of local engagement will continue through the monitoring, evaluation and implementation process.

1.4 Definition and scope

The definition of heritage is very broad and can mean different things to different people and organisations. Wirral's heritage assets include historic buildings, museum and archives collections and natural and man-made landscapes; but also less tangible aspects like our traditions, legends and memories. In fact it could be said that heritage consists of all those things we value that have been inherited from previous generations and which we wish to protect to hand over to our children or share with others.

This strategy will focus on heritage in its widest context, for it is the sum total of all these elements which has forged the special character of Wirral and all who live here.

While the value of some heritage is recognised and protected by government designation, much of our heritage does not enjoy statutory protection. Whilst the Council has a duty to safeguard heritage assets such as Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, museum collections and archives, there is increasing recognition of the importance of 'local' heritage to our communities, and an increasing pressure for local people to take a more pro-active role in the protection and enhancement of that heritage. This strategy will define statutory responsibilities, but will also explore the ways in which residents and communities can be empowered to enhance the understanding and management of heritage at a local level.

1.5 Vision, aims and objectives

Wirral's heritage is a tremendous asset, but the contribution heritage makes to our quality of life, the regeneration of our communities and the local economy can sometimes be overlooked. Too often, Wirral's heritage is overshadowed by the great maritime city of Liverpool to the east and the Roman city of Chester to the south. Yet Wirral has an outstandingly diverse heritage stretching back over 8,000 years of human occupation. The borough abounds with sites, buildings and landscapes reflecting almost every period of history, most of which are accessible to the public for leisure, learning and enjoyment.

However, the picture is not all rosy. Throughout the borough there are buildings and sites of historic interest which are at risk through neglect, changing patterns of use or threat of redevelopment. Similarly, the character of many areas of high heritage value is in danger of being eroded through unsympathetic and inappropriate development, proliferation of unsympathetic building materials and intrusive signs. The challenge over the next few years will be to understand the scale of the problem and to work with partner organisations to find new and innovative solutions to safeguard this important heritage.

The vision underpinning this strategy is to protect, enhance and use Wirral's heritage for the long term benefit of local people and the local economy. It aims to emphasise the value of heritage in both social and economic terms. Our heritage can be a tremendous source of community pride and life-long learning. Equally, heritage has a significant and growing role as an economic driver in regeneration projects and our tourism offer.

Central to the achievement of this vision will be the way we all work together to achieve our objectives. The Council, strategic partners, private sector and local people all need to work together, pooling experience, knowledge and skills. With a shared vision, increased understanding and appreciation of heritage issues and a clearly defined framework for action, Wirral will be well placed to maximise its heritage assets for the good of the social and economic life of the whole community.

The aim of the Wirral heritage strategy is:

'To ensure that Wirral's heritage is protected, managed, enhanced and used to meet the educational, recreational and sustainable needs of local people, visitors and potential investors to the borough.'

The strategy objectives are:

- To promote, celebrate and communicate the value of the heritage of Wirral as a source of national significance and local civic and community pride;
- To identify, recognise and give an understanding of Wirral's heritage, which will inform future management and development;
- To actively promote the role and opportunities presented by heritage in terms of the wider regeneration, economic and tourism development of the borough and to provide a framework for investment;

- To ensure the highest standards of stewardship, management and protection of heritage assets, including buildings, conservation areas, natural or man-made landscapes and art and historical collections;
- To promote community participation in heritage and to maximise the contribution heritage makes to education, lifelong learning and social development;
- To ensure that Wirral's heritage is widely accessible can be enjoyed and understood by the widest possible audience, including those who have traditionally been excluded from heritage activity.

2.0 HERITAGE IN WIRRAL

2.1 Historic overview : the story of Wirral

The Metropolitan Borough of Wirral occupies the northern half of the Wirral peninsula, bounded to the west by the Dee, to the east by the Mersey and to the north by the waters of Liverpool Bay. Throughout most of its history its character has been shaped by its coast and countryside, the inhabitants gaining their livelihood mainly from the land or the sea.

The earliest evidence of human activity comes from Greasby and Thurstaston, where archaeological finds include concentrations of small worked stones or microliths, evidence of hunter-gatherers of the mesolithic or Middle Stone Age period.

Settled farming began in the neolithic or New Stone Age period when the environmental record shows woodland was being cleared to make way for agriculture. This process of clearance and enclosure continued through the Bronze and Iron Ages; traces of agricultural settlements from these times have been excavated at Irby.

The one exception to this pattern is Meols, where over 4000 artefacts and nearly 1000 coins and tokens have been recovered from the eroding shore. The finds, mainly made in the 19th century, date from the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post medieval periods and are an indication that in the past Meols was a major coastal trading site with links to places as far away as mainland Europe and the Mediterranean.

At the time of the Roman conquest, in AD 43, Wirral lay within the territory of the Cornovii, a British tribe, probably friendly towards the Romans. The harbour at Meols would appear to have been used for both military and trading purposes even before the establishment of the legionary fortress at

Chester in the later 70s. A road leading north from Chester, sections of which have been identified, runs in the direction of Meols.

As well as roads, there is evidence of settlement in the Roman period. At Irby a Romano British farmstead has been excavated while a skeleton found during 19th century work on the Leasowe embankment, has been shown to be Roman in date, the only one of its kind from Merseyside.

Little is known of Wirral in the early post Roman years. At Landican a possible early Christian site is suggested by the place name 'Llan-tegan', the church of St Decan, while the circular churchyard at Overchurch is probably the source of a decorated runic stone, dating from c 800. The presence of Saxons in Wirral, from the late 7th century onwards, is evidenced by place names. The elements '*ham*' meaning 'homestead' and '*tun*' a 'farmstead' are indications of their settlement.

In about 902, groups of Norsemen, expelled from Ireland, arrived in north Wirral. Again place names are evidence of where they lived. Villages like Irby, Frankby and West Kirby, have endings derived from the Old Norse word '*byr*', meaning 'farmstead' or 'settlement'. '*Thingwall*' comes from the Old Norse '*þing-vollr*' or 'meeting place' whilst the name Meols derives from '*melr*', the Norse word for sand-hills.

Many academics believe that the Battle of Brunanburh, fought in 937 between the Saxon king, Athelstan and the allied forces of the Scots and Norsemen, took place near Bromborough. Athelstan's victory consolidated the boundary between England and Scotland and confirmed England as a unified kingdom.

By the 10th and 11th centuries life seems to have become more settled. Several places, including Bromborough, West Kirby and Woodchurch have remnants of sculptured crosses dating from this period, while from West Kirby and Bidston come carved hogback grave markers.

Domesday Book records over twenty manors in north Wirral, with one large manor, Eastham, embracing most of the Mersey shore. In 1093 the moated manor house at Irby was granted to the monks of Chester abbey which also acquired the moated court house at Bromborough Pool.

In the mid-12th century, a Norman baron, Hamo de Massey, founded a small Benedictine priory dedicated to St Mary and St James on the isolated headland that now forms Birkenhead. In the 14th century the priory was granted the right to operate a ferry across the Mersey. The present day priory remains are the oldest standing structures on Merseyside. Other medieval buildings in Wirral include a number of parish churches, Storeton Hall and the tower house at Brimstage.

Farming continued as the principle occupation of the population though maritime activities, including fishing and seafaring were important along the coast. As early as the 14th century, silting in the Dee caused the increased use of small anchorages along the Wirral shore. That at the 'Redbank' or Dawpool was used to unload cargoes such as Spanish wine and iron. Of more significance was the Hoyle or Hyle Lake, a deep water channel, sheltered by sandbanks, off what is now Hoylake. In 1690 this 'lake' was the main point of embarkation for King William III's expedition to Ireland. It was also used by ships waiting to sail into Liverpool.

As the volume of shipping increased there was a need for lights and beacons. In 1763 pairs of lighthouses were built at Hoylake and Leasowe. In 1771 the lower light at Leasowe was threatened by the sea and replaced by a light on Bidston Hill. At Perch Rock, the lighthouse, begun in 1827, replaced a wooden pole or perch, used to warn shipping of rocks at the Mersey's mouth, while at West Kirby the Column, erected in 1840, acted as a landmark to shipping, replacing a windmill, blown down in the great storm of the previous year.

On Bidston Hill a series of flagpoles were used to inform Liverpool ship-owners of the imminent arrival of their ships while semaphore stations on Bidston Hill and Hilbre formed part of a communications system linking Liverpool with Holyhead. In 1866 the Liverpool Observatory moved to Bidston Hill and was later joined by the Tidal Institute which predicted the tides for the D-Day landings.

Lifeboats also provided a service. A lifeboat station was established at Hoylake in 1803, with two further stations opened in subsequent years, one on Hilbre and one at New Brighton. The Hilbre station closed in 1939 but the other two are still active today.

Sea bathing had become popular in late Georgian times and in 1792 the Royal Hotel opened at Hoylake, while in 1830 James Atherton purchased a large area of sand hills, founding the seaside resort of New Brighton establishing a pattern of catering for visitors that still persists today.

The main catalysts for change were improvements in transport. A regular steam ferry service from Liverpool was instigated to Eastham in 1816 and to Tranmere in 1817. The road from Chester to Birkenhead was turnpiked in the 1830s and in 1840 a railway line opened between Birkenhead, Chester, Crewe and London.

With improved transport links, Wirral underwent major economic, social and demographic changes. Industry began to develop on the west bank of the Mersey while the area's fresh air, open countryside and wide sea views made

it an attractive place for Liverpool merchants and business men to make their homes.

In 1824 the Scotsman, William Laird, born in Greenock, established a boiler works on Wallasey Pool. In partnership with his son John, he soon diversified, founding what was to become one of the greatest shipbuilding enterprises in the world. In the 1850s the Laird shipyards transferred to the Mersey shore and in 1903 they amalgamated with Cammell, the Sheffield steel producer. Over the years the company would produce some of the navy's greatest ships, as well as the *Ma Robert*, the first steel hulled ship ever built, the Confederate raider '*Alabama*' and liners like the *Mauretania*.

The first few streets of Birkenhead were laid out by the lord of the manor, Francis Richard Price. Then in 1825, at the behest of William Laird, the great Scottish architect, James Gillespie Graham, produced a plan for a modern new town, with a gridiron pattern of streets, a range of fine late Georgian buildings and the imposing Hamilton Square. The town grew, with a market, theatres and music halls, the first tramway in Europe and the world's first publicly funded park – Birkenhead Park – which played a key role in the development of the parks movement and became a model for parks design including Central Park, New York.

The first of Birkenhead's docks, the Morpeth and Egerton Docks, opened in 1847. The Birkenhead Emigrant Depot, an important base for migrants bound for Australia, followed in 1852 as did Brassey & Co.'s Canada Works, which built much of the equipment, including locomotives and bridges, for the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada.

In 1857 an Act of Parliament brought the Birkenhead and Liverpool docks under the single ownership of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company and it was under the company that the dock system developed. Until the 1960s the docks were in constant operation, with dozens of quays and warehouses, criss-crossed with freight lines. Many passenger and freight lines worked out of Birkenhead including Alfred Holt and the Ellerman, Clan and City Lines.

Although only a fraction of the dock system is now involved in traditional port activity, the legacy of buildings and dock structures is still impressive. Among these are the hydraulic tower, designed by Jesse Hartley and based on the Palazzo della Signoria in Florence and the Grain Warehouses, on the Dock Road, built in the 1860s to receive wheat, maize and barley from all over the world.

Though Wallasey Pool was the initial focus of development, industry soon spread along the Mersey shore. Price's Patent Candle Company, owned by the Wilson family, was already flourishing when in 1853 it purchased land for a new works on the tidal inlet of Bromborough Pool. The village the Wilsons

built for their workers, many of whom had moved up from London, is an early example of a model industrial village, predating Port Sunlight by over three decades.(The Candleworks went on to become Price's Chemicals, then Unichema.)

Port Sunlight Village, itself, was the vision of the Victorian entrepreneur and philanthropist, William Hesketh Lever. Laid out to provide accommodation for the workers in his soap factory, the model village, with its architect designed housing, gardens and green spaces was a pioneer in the Garden City Movement and is now of international standing. Within the village the renowned Lady Lever Art Gallery provides a permanent home of Lord Lever's outstanding art collection.

In contrast to the industrial settlements of the Mersey shore, New Brighton, served by both the ferry and the railway, developed as one of the most popular seaside resorts in the north. Its attractions included its Pier and Promenade, the New Brighton Tower (once the tallest in Britain), the Tower Ballroom and the now demolished open air bathing pool, one of the biggest in the world. Sadly, as with many former resort towns, competition from package holidays, lack of investment and social change, meant that by the 1980s New Brighton had lost much of what made it special and thus its attractions waned.

The recent history of Wirral has been one of mixed fortunes, which has exacerbated the social and economic contrasts between the two sides of the peninsula. 'Deeside Wirral' has retained its affluence, with well-to-do communities such as Heswall, West Kirby and Hoylake interspersed with open rural areas and pretty villages. To the east the dense urban and industrial belt fronting the Mersey has not fared so well. Decline began in the 1950s, resulting in physical deterioration, lack of investment, rising unemployment and a whole range of deprivation problems. It is against this background that Wirral Council is targeting its regeneration efforts, focussing inward investment on areas like Birkenhead Park, New Brighton and the Docks. The opening of Birkenhead Park Visitors Centre and New Brighton's rebuilt Floral Pavilion, with its theatre and conference centre, are examples of regeneration at work.

2.2 Heritage assets and resources

Heritage assets are all those things that survive from Wirral's history and which now contribute to the physical and social identity of the borough.

2.2.1 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Wirral contains over 1,900 Listed Buildings and 25 Conservation Areas, including Port Sunlight and Hamilton Square, both of which are of national importance. A number of old village centres like Bidston, Bromborough and

West Kirby are also designated as well as high quality suburbs, such as those within Oxton, Prenton and Hoylake. Within the borough, there are many other buildings and structures which although not designated, make a significant contribution to the character of the built environment. As well as individual buildings, the borough has two early model villages of outstanding quality and survival, important complexes of industrial buildings and one of the largest collection of 19th century dockland structures in the country.

2.2.2 Public realm

Street furniture, historic street surfaces, public art, statues and war memorials all have impact on the quality of the local environment. Even small architectural details like railings, shop canopies and historic boundary walls add interest and identity to our towns and villages. Small open spaces, both urban and rural, may not contain structures but they can be crucial to local distinctiveness and sense of place. Whilst many of these are not protected by statute, they are frequently 'local landmarks', held with great affection by the local community.

War memorials have a special significance to local people and the historic importance of Wirral's war memorials has been recognised by the granting of listed status to three sites. The monuments at Eastham and New Brighton are now listed Grade II, while Hoylake and West Kirby's memorial at Grange Hill is listed Grade II*.

2.2.3 Archaeological sites

Above and below ground archaeological remains are a significant part of Wirral's heritage. There are nine Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) of national importance within the borough. These are: Birkenhead Priory; Bromborough Court House moated site; Grange Beacon; Irby Hall moated site; New Hall; the former churchyard at Overchurch; St. Barnabas Cross, Bromborough; the standing cross at Holy Church, Woodchurch and Storeton Hall.

2.2.4 Historic parks and cemeteries

Wirral is fortunate that all our towns have public parks and green spaces, many of which are over a hundred years old. These areas are historic public assets that have developed into community spaces, greatly valued by local people and visitors alike. The borough is particularly noted for its Victorian parks and cemeteries, including the recently restored Birkenhead Park, the only public park to be listed Grade I on English Heritage's National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Also included are Thornton Manor, Port Sunlight and also Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, a cemetery of European significance.

2.2.5 Natural landscapes, shorelines and wildlife, including special habitats and species

The Wirral peninsula is a place of exceptional natural beauty; residents and visitors alike benefit from our outstanding coast and countryside resource.

Wirral has a great variety of species, habitats, landscapes and geological features and this is reflected in the substantial numbers and types of sites that are designated for their wildlife value.

Wirral's coast has attracted a total of six international designations for nature conservation focussed on the Dee Estuary, the Mersey Estuary and the North Wirral Foreshore. These areas are internationally renowned for the large numbers of wildfowl and wading birds they support, and it is important to work within legislative requirements to avoid potential negative impacts of human activities.

There are 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest including Dibbinsdale, Heswall Dales and Thurstaston Common. These national designations carry with them a statutory responsibility for management. There are a further 70 local wildlife sites (Sites of Biological Importance).

We have five Local Nature Reserves and three Country Parks: Arrowe Park, Eastham Country Park and Wirral Country Park (including the Wirral Way).

Alongside designations for nature conservation there are 3 geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Thurstaston Common, The Dungeon and the Dee Cliffs. There are also 15 local geology sites.

Hilbre Island is the subject of a current consultation and is soon to be designated as a Marine Conservation Zone - to protect blue mussel beds and marine peat and clay exposures which provide shelter for a diverse range of marine flora and fauna.

The Council's Parks and Countryside Service manages many of these special places. There is often a careful balance to be struck between the benefit of wildlife and social and economic uses. It is crucial that these resources are passed on to future generations with their interest and beauty intact.

Despite being densely populated Wirral is home to numerous rare and protected species. Some have the highest level of legal protection such as bats, water voles and great-crested newts. Others may not be nationally rare, but need protection because they are declining or uncommon in our area – for example common lizards and common toads.

2.2.6 Museums, galleries and heritage venues

Wirral Council is currently responsible for two accredited museum venues, Birkenhead Priory and the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum. These

contain a significant collection of objects dating from prehistoric times to the present day. Birkenhead Priory, founded in c.1150 is the oldest standing building on Merseyside. The entire site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument which includes structures listed as Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II. The chapter house is consecrated as an Anglican place of worship and above, the former scriptorium is now a chapel dedicated to the training ship HMS *Conway*. Adjacent to the Priory, St Mary's clock tower is all that remains of Birkenhead's first parish church. Within the tower a series of named plaques commemorate those who died in the loss of the ill-fated submarine, *Thetis*. A small museum tells the history of the site and its buildings.

The Grade II listed Williamson Art Gallery and Museum opened in 1928 and houses the vast majority of the borough's collection of art and history. Like the Priory it is accredited under the Museums, Libraries and Archive Council (MLA) Museum Accreditation Scheme and has a VAQAS (Visitor Attractions Quality Assurance Scheme) Award. The collections, some of which are of national importance, include a large collection of ship models, focusing on Cammell Laird built vessels and important collections of ceramics from Birkenhead's Della Robbia Pottery (1894 – 1906).

Both the Priory and the Williamson are currently benefitting from major capital investment. The Council is investing around £730,000 in improvements to the Priory, which is on English Heritage's Heritage at Risk Register. A further £1.3 million will go to the development and refurbishment of the Williamson, including enhancements to visitor facilities and the creation of more flexible spaces for performance, education and family learning.

In 2009, the Council made the decision to dispose of a number of buildings, which included museums sites. A tender process is being undertaken to find a new operator for Wirral Transport Museum and the Heritage Tramway. The lease on Shore Road Pumping Station, housing the 'Giant Grasshopper' pump, has been returned to Network Rail and the building is no longer open to the public. Wirral Museum in Birkenhead Town Hall has closed and the Council's Asset Management Team is developing alternative uses within Council ownership for this iconic building. The Town Hall is open for special functions.

Wirral is also home to the renowned Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight, run by National Museums Liverpool and the Port Sunlight Museum, managed through the Port Sunlight Heritage Trust. Fort Perch Rock in New Brighton is a privately owned early 19th century gun emplacement with fascinating and diverse museum displays.

The community sector has played a significant role in opening up heritage buildings to the public. The restored Hilbre Telegraph Station Lookout is run

by the Friends of Hilbre, as an interpretation centre for the islands. The Friends of Leaseowe Lighthouse have been instrumental in developing the oldest brick built lighthouse in the country as visitor and educational facility, with guided tours, special events and displays about the lighthouse and the Wirral coastline. The Charles Dawson Brown Museum, attached to St Bridget's Church in West Kirby, has displays of Anglo-Scandinavian and other carved stones and items connected with the history of West Kirby.

Three other independent heritage attractions have recently opened thanks to the drive and enthusiasm of local people. The Hoylake Lifeboat Museum, housed in the town's former Victorian lifeboat station, celebrates local maritime history and the activities of the lifeboat services in the North West. The centrepiece of the exhibition is the restored *Chapman*, the oldest Liverpool-style lifeboat in the country, which has been brought back to Hoylake after seventy-two years. There are plans to extend the collections and enhance the facilities, to create a viable and sustainable museum of regional significance.

The Wilfred Owen Story and Gallery in Birkenhead, is the first permanent centre in the North West to commemorate the life and works of the First World War poet Wilfred Owen, who lived on Wirral during his formative years. As well as the exhibitions, the gallery runs art shows, poetry and music performances and a range of community activities.

The New Brighton Heritage and Information Centre, has been created by the New Brighton Community Partnership, to provide the local community and visitors with information about the area's history and information about local events, attractions and activities. The Centre also hosts events, exhibitions and presentations, highlighting New Brighton's past, present and future, to encourage local people to learn about and participate in heritage.

The Mersey Ferries are the most popular paid-for visitor attraction in Merseyside and play a key role in the life of Liverpool, Wirral and the River Mersey. Mersey Ferries also operate two visitor attractions on Wirral; the U-Boat Story at Woodside Ferry Terminal and Spaceport at Seacombe Ferry Terminal. The U-Boat Story has U-534 which is the only WW2 German U-Boat in the UK and one of only four that survive in preservation anywhere else in the world. Merseytravel has a catalogued collection of historical artefacts relating to the U-Boat and also a collection relating to the Mersey Tunnels, Mersey Ferries and other public transport (buses, trams, trains etc.). A replica of the *Resurgam*, the world's first mechanically powered submarine, is also displayed outside Woodside Ferry Terminal.

2.2.7 Archives and local collections

Wirral's archives collection, housed in the Cheshire Lines Building in Birkenhead, covers almost five miles of shelving and contains thousands of historic records relating to the history of the borough. Some date back as far as the 15th century, but the majority are of the 18th and 19th centuries and include the extensive collections of Cammell Laird Shipbuilders. The borough's local history collections are held by Wirral Archives and three libraries; Birkenhead, Bebington and Wallasey.

Other historic collections within the borough, include the Port Sunlight archive collections relating to the development and history of Port Sunlight village, which are held in the Port Sunlight Museum Collections Study Centre. The Unilever Archives, also located in Port Sunlight, form one of the most important collections of business records in the world and are designated of national importance.

2.2.8 Sporting History

There is a long history of sport in the borough, which is particularly noted for sailing and golf. The internationally famous Royal Liverpool golf course in Hoylake has an extraordinary claim on golfing heritage. The Liverpool Golf Club was formed in 1869, granted the title 'Royal' in 1871 and was at the forefront of the development of amateur golf, hosting the first ever Amateur Championships in 1885 and the first English Amateur Championship in 1926. It has hosted the Open Championships on 11 occasions, most recently in 2006 and will do so again in 2014. Wallasey Golf Club has been an Open Championship qualifier golf course on a number of occasions and is world renowned as being the home of the Stableford scoring system.

Tranmere Rovers Football Club was founded in 1884 and its most famous player William Ralph 'Dixie' Dean scored 60 league goals in the 1927 – 1928 season. Birkenhead Park Cricket Club was formed in 1846 and its club house is reputed to be the oldest surviving cricket pavilion in the country.

In more recent times, Wirral played host to the British film industry. In 1981, scenes from the film *Chariots of Fire* were filmed in Wirral, with the Oval Sports Centre in Bebington representing the Stade Olympique de Colombes in Paris, whilst Woodside Ferry Terminal was used for embarkation scenes set in Dover.

2.2.9 People

Wirral's history is marked by a remarkable range of individuals, including William and John Laird; Thomas Brassey, the great railway engineer and William Hesketh Lever.

Sporting greats include the versatile sportswoman Lottie Dodd, five times Wimbledon tennis champion, a golfer and hockey player and silver medallist in archery at the Olympics. Others include the great footballer, Dixie Dean, who began his career with Tramere Rovers, the cricketer Sir Ian Botham and the Olympic cyclist, Chris Boardman. Birkenhead was the birthplace of the mountaineer George Leigh Mallory, who when asked why he wanted to climb Everest gave the immortal reply “because it is there”. He disappeared on Everest in June 1924 with his Birkenhead born colleague Andrew “Sandy” Irvine.

Wilfred Owen the First World War poet spent his formative years in Birkenhead and attended the Birkenhead Institute. Sir Patrick Abercrombie the pioneering town planner was a former resident of Oxton. The artist Philip Wilson Steer was born in Birkenhead as was the artist and cartoonist, Norman Thelwell.

Wirral is well represented in the world of stage film and television, with many well-known names coming from the area, Patricia Routledge, Glenda Jackson, the James Bond actor Daniel Craig, Paul O’Grady and John Peel.

2.2.10 International links

With its long maritime history and proximity to the Port of Liverpool, Wirral has strong connections with countries throughout the world. The Peninsula’s Viking heritage has resulted in particularly close links being developed with Scandinavia. Indeed, recent research has suggested a strong Scandinavian influence in the DNA of some old Wirral families, demonstrating that the Vikings left a genetic legacy which survives and continues today.

During the American Civil War, Wirral had significant links with both the northern and southern states. In consequence it is only the second place outside the USA to have been accorded the status of an American Civil War Heritage Site by the Civil War Preservation Trust. The Argyle Rooms in Birkenhead were an important meeting place for the anti-slavery lobby. The notorious Confederate ship, the CSS *Alabama* and the blockade runner, *Denbigh* were built at the Laird’s yard in the 1860s. The American Civil War Society (UK), in conjunction with the Trust, has produced the Wirral Civil War Heritage Trail, celebrating all the known Civil War sites on Wirral.

2.2.11 Innovation

Given its size and location, Wirral can boast a remarkable number of historical ‘firsts’, many of which put the peninsula and its people at the cutting edge of technological, industrial, sporting and cultural innovation. These include:

- 1847 – Birkenhead Park opened as the first publicly funded park in the world.
- 1856 – Birkenhead became the first unincorporated borough to adopt the Public Libraries Act and open a public lending library.
- 1859 – The *Ma Robert*, the world's first ever steel hulled steam paddle ship, built by Lairds for Dr Livingstone's expedition up the Zambesi.
- 1860 – An American, George Francis Train, inaugurated the first street railway, with horse drawn trams running between Woodside and Birkenhead Park.
- 1862 – The first British tramcar factory opened in Cleveland Street, Birkenhead.
- 1879 – The *Resurgam*, built in Birkenhead was the world's first steam powered working submarine.
- 1885 – The 1st Amateur Golf Championship was held at the Royal Golf Club in Hoylake.
- 1886 – The Mersey Railway Tunnel opened. It was the first underwater rail tunnel in the world.
- 1894 - The Della Robbia Pottery was founded in Birkenhead and became an important part of the Art Nouveau movement in Britain..
- 1900 – New Brighton Tower was completed. Standing at 621 feet it was the country's highest tower, beating Blackpool Tower by over 100 feet.
- 1908 – The Boy Scout movement was inaugurated by Sir Robert Baden-Powell in the YMCA building in Grange Road, Birkenhead.
- 1920 – The first all-welded ship in the world, the *Fulgar*, was built at Cammell Laird.
- 1929 – The Boy Scouts held their 'Coming of Age' Jamboree at Arrowe Park to celebrate 21 years since the movement's foundation.
- 1934 – The Queensway Tunnel was opened and held the record as the world's underwater tunnel for 24 years.
- 1931 – The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association was founded in Wallasey.
- 1962 – The world's first scheduled passenger hovercraft service was inaugurated between Wallasey and Rhyl in North Wales.

2.3 Heritage involves us all

The conservation, protection, interpretation and promotion of heritage is not just the responsibility of national and local government; throughout Wirral a whole range of different organisations and individuals are actively engaged in heritage and in delivering heritage activity at many levels.

2.3.1 The Council

Wirral Council currently has the responsibility of delivering a range of statutory and non-statutory heritage and heritage related services. Increasingly this is achieved through partnership with national, regional and local bodies. The Council provides strategic lead for initiatives which impact on heritage and have appointed a Heritage Champion as an advocate for heritage issues. Elected members have and will increasingly have an important part to play in local heritage. They 'know their patch' and are ideally placed to identify and promote issues which their local communities regard as important.

The Council services whose work currently has a heritage focus include:

- The Museums Service two museum venues: Birkenhead Priory and the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum. It delivers a wide range of learning, outreach and cultural activities to many different audiences.
- Wirral Archive Service acquires and maintains records with any material link to Wirral and its collections can be used to research all aspects of local history, including social, economic, industrial, administrative and family history. The two main aims of the service are access – making the records accessible to all – and outreach – informing everyone about the collections.
- Birkenhead, Bebington and Wallasey libraries have local history collections and give access to a wealth of on-line resources for family and local history. Libraries are well used as bases for talks, workshops and short courses on topics of local heritage interest. The Service has worked with a range of partners to deliver creative research, reminiscence and community projects.
- The Children Young People's Department, through its Youth Education and Humanities Team has delivered a wide range of heritage activities in partnership with a many of external partners and other Council Departments.
- The Conservation and Design Team is responsible for Listed Buildings within Wirral as well as the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and other historic spaces. Urban Design is an integral

part of the planning process and the team works with developers, architects and stakeholders to ensure that new developments enrich the existing environment and create buildings and spaces that are attractive, stimulating and sustainable.

- Wirral has no dedicated Archaeological Service. Until April 2011, advice was provided through the Merseyside Archaeological Advisory Service which was jointly funded by all five Merseyside authorities. Following withdrawal of this funding, archaeological advice in the planning process is now being provided through the relevant planning departments. The authorities continue to have access to the Merseyside Environment Record (HER), the central body of information on the historic urban and rural environment of Merseyside.
- Wirral Parks and Countryside Service manages a wide range of land including coast, local parks, country parks, cemeteries, playing fields, golf courses and green spaces throughout the borough including outstanding landscapes and natural habitats. The Service delivers a wide range of educational and interpretative activities including walks, trails and other activities relating to heritage and the natural environment.
- Wirral's Forward Planning team is responsible for developing planning policy for Wirral, which has a significant impact on heritage. The emerging Local Development Framework includes a Biodiversity Audit, a Landscape Assessment and a Green Infrastructure Strategy as part of its evidence base.
- The Highways Service is responsible for maintenance of the public realm - excluding parks and open spaces - and has an important role in managing street scenes within conservation areas.
- Although not having direct responsibility for heritage conservation, maintenance or presentation, the Regeneration and Destination Marketing Services have a key role to play in attracting inward investment for projects which enhance and interpret the historic environment, promote the borough's heritage and attract visitors. By providing advice and support on external funding applications, particularly the National Lottery, the Council has assisted many local organisations in developing and delivering a wide range of heritage-based projects.

2.3.2 National and regional heritage organisations

The National Trust does not have any historic properties on Wirral, but does own Heswall Fields, part of Caldy Hill and part of Thurstaston Common and small areas of woodland at Harrock Hill, Irby and Irby Common. There are no English Heritage sites within the borough, but as the government's statutory

advisor on the historic environment, English Heritage provides advice on the most significant listed buildings and on monuments and gives general advice on maintaining the historic built environment. English Heritage's current strategic priority is to tackle Heritage at Risk (HAR) and provides funding for buildings, sites and monuments on the Heritage at Risk register.

Until 2011 English Heritage also co-ordinated and promoted national Heritage Open Days (HODs), but from 2012 this role will be undertaken by the National Trust, Civic Voice and the Heritage Alliance. The active organisation of the Wirral open days programme will continue to be delivered by local volunteers through Wirral History and Heritage Association, with support from the Council.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) uses money from the National Lottery to grant- assist a wide range of projects involving local, regional and national heritage. With the notable exception of the £7.4 million grant towards the £11.4 million refurbishment of Birkenhead Park, the Heritage Lottery Fund recognises that Wirral, despite some successes, has fared less well than other authorities in attracting HLF funding, particularly under the Your Heritage and Young Roots (aimed at young people ages 13 to 25) programmes. Council officers and the Wirral History and Heritage Association are now actively promoting these HLF strands and encouraging local organisations to apply for appropriate funding.

2.3.3 Community groups, organisations and societies

The great interest local people have in their heritage is reflected in the number and variety of organisations engaging in heritage and delivering heritage activities. These include civic and local history societies, family history groups, friends groups, conservation area partnerships and special interest groups – from transport history to the American Civil War. Their work is diverse and wide-ranging and includes commenting on planning applications and the development process; organising events, and activities; research and publications; campaigning and undertaking voluntary work.

The Wirral History and Heritage Association (WHHA) has been supported by the Council to represent over 70 local societies and act as an umbrella group for networking, dissemination of information and engaging local groups in common issues. Its mission is “to work with Wirral Council to establish and implement a heritage, history and cultural strategy for Wirral, to make the past part of our future – and to create a cycle of understanding, valuing, caring and enjoyment for all residents of Wirral”.

The WHHA hosts a web-site promoting local heritage activities and disseminating information. It also organises special events, including Wirral's Heritage Open Days and the popular annual Local History Fair. Additionally,

the association is working with the Council to support a range of heritage initiatives, including Buildings at Risk and the development of a Local List.

2.3.4 Friends groups

Many of Wirral's parks, cemeteries and countryside areas have Friends Groups, comprised mainly of local residents who are keen to get involved or simply have their say in the management of their local park of green space. The Parks and Countryside Service is currently supported by 44 voluntary Friends Groups, who are closely involved in the protection of parks and green spaces, as well as organising events, activities and practical voluntary work.

Both the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and Wirral Archives Service also have active friends groups to support their work.

2.3.5 Individuals

There are a number of local people with a strong interest in and knowledge of the borough. These people contribute to the widening appreciation of local heritage through research, giving lectures and talks, collecting evidence and producing publications.

2.3.6 Partnership working

Partnership working is fundamental to the heritage sector and important partnerships have been forged to co-ordinate and deliver a range of initiatives, including partnerships with neighbouring local authorities.

The Museums Service has strong links with National Museums Liverpool (NML) and there have been successful collaborations with both the Lady Lever and the Walker Art Galleries. The Service also works closely with the Cheshire Museums Forum, the strategic body for the provision of museums services in the region and has used Renaissance funding to support the delivery of literacy projects for secondary schools.

The Conservation and Design Team is supported by the Conservation Area Forum and emerging Conservation Area Partnerships in its efforts to protect and enhance the character of Conservation Areas. The Parks and Countryside Service has especially strong links with the Friends Groups. It also works closely with partners and other land-owners through the Biodiversity and Local Sites Partnership such as the RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts and the National Trust, to ensure that our land is managed in the most appropriate way for the purpose of conserving habitats and species.

The Wirral Attractions Partnership represents and promotes tourism and heritage attractions throughout Wirral. The Wirral Coastal Partnership brings

together all sectors to champion and support a range of initiatives to the benefit of Wirral's coastline.

2.4 Heritage activity in Wirral

Throughout Wirral there are many opportunities for people to engage with and participate in heritage activities. Whilst some services are provided by the Council, much of the heritage activity in the borough is organised and delivered by local voluntary groups and organisations.

2.4.1 Formal and informal learning

Through its Arts and Museums Services, the Council has established strong links with many local schools and colleges. The Williamson Art Gallery and Birkenhead Priory provide opportunities for curriculum based learning for school groups, including sessions based on literacy and numeracy as well as historical events. Both museums offer informal learning activities, including family learning, special activities, talks and workshops. However, given the current physical restriction of each venue and staffing limitations, it has not yet been possible to fully exploit the educational or learning potential of either site.

The Youth Education and Cultural Services Humanities Team have a long track record of working with Humanities Subject Leaders in schools, to ensure that local heritage makes a significant contribution to the school curriculum. A range of learning packs has been produced for every area of the borough, to support the local dimension of the school curriculum. This has also involved work with the Birkenhead Park Education Officers and support for the development of learning materials on the Park and engagement with local schools. From September 2011, Wirral no longer maintains a specialist Humanities Team and new approaches will need to be adopted to ensure that heritage education continues to be delivered in local schools.

The Parks and Countryside service, often in partnership with Friends Groups, is another major provider of learning services, including school visits and voluntary activity projects.

Local library staff and staff from the Wirral Archives service provide taster sessions on researching local and family history using original books, maps and documents as well as ICT resources. The Archives Service holds Saturday morning workshops on family and local history topics, aims to work with two schools each month and hosts group visits or workshops for local history societies, adult education groups and other informal groups interested in historical topics.

2.4.2 Community outreach

The appointment of a Heritage Outreach Officer in March 2010 has provided new opportunities to extend heritage activities into local communities and engage new audiences in local history and heritage. Working with local organisations, mainly through the Wirral History and Heritage Association, the post is intended to grow capacity, offer advice on funding and project development and devise new and creative means for people to engage in Wirral's heritage. However, the post is part-time and time limited until February 2011.

2.4.3 Heritage Open Days

Since first participating in Heritage Open Days (HODs) in 2007, Wirral's programme has grown from strength to strength. Now organised locally by Wirral History and Heritage Association, there were ten events in 2009, growing to forty three in 2010 and to sixty in 2011. Feedback has shown that Heritage Open Days provide an excellent opportunity to build on the enthusiasm and knowledge of local groups and bring heritage to the attention of a wider audience.

2.4.4 Festivals, fairs and re-enactments

Wirral has a number of large-scale festivals including the Food and Drink Festival, Wirral Festival of Transport in Birkenhead Park, the Bus and Tram Festival based around Pacific Road and Heritage Open Days. Individual communities also organise a range of celebratory events, such as the Scarecrow Festival now held at Eastham and the popular Secret Gardens of Oxtan. The Wirral History and Heritage Association hold a very successful annual Local History Fair, which brings together local history groups and enthusiasts from throughout the borough. Viking and Norse re-enactments are popular and the living history group Wirhalh Skip Felag (Wirral Vikings) are particularly active around the borough. A recent innovation is the annual St Olave Wirral Viking Walk, from Neston to Chester, commemorating St Olave the 'Viking Saint' and celebrating Wirral's links with the Vikings.

2.4.5 Community drama and performance

There are numerous examples of Council services, community organisations and professional artists using drama to interpret Wirral's history, although this is usually dependant upon obtaining external funding. For instance, the Youth Education Team, the Museum Service and other partners have successfully delivered a range of Heritage Lottery funded drama projects such as Flaybrick – their Past Our Future' and 'Tranmere Rovers Remembered', both of which were showcased regionally. The Parks and Countryside Service have used community performance to tell the stories of various sites, including Flaybrick

Memorial Gardens and Bidston Hill. As part of the Bidston Windmill Project, young people created a historically based musical trail around Bidston Hill and also puppet safaris exploring the site. 'Their Past Our Future' was a young people's project exploring the lives of local World War II veterans and creating a musical drama, which was performed in Birkenhead Library in 2011. The Wirral Youth Theatre has a strong track record of developing creative heritage-based performance and Active Drama is an educational resource team, delivering community drama projects across the borough. One recent initiative is the History Busters, a group of young people who explore sites around Wirral, creating pieces of theatre to celebrate their history and heritage.

2.4.6 Walks, talks and tours

Most Wirral parks and countryside spaces offer a regular programme of walks and related activities, and these are supplemented by walks led by volunteers from Friends Groups and local societies. For example Wirral's Parks and Countryside Service offer a joint annual events programme with the Dee Estuary Voluntary Wardens and RSPB to deliver a regular and long-standing programme of bird watching events.

Nearly all history and heritage groups have a talk or lecture programme during the winter months, and organise site visits and special interest tours for their members. Individually these activities are relatively small scale, but together they give many thousands of local people the opportunity to participate in heritage and are probably the most popular form of heritage engagement for local people.

2.4.7 Community archaeology

Community archaeology enables local people to work alongside professional archaeologists and discover more about archaeological sites through investigation, fieldwork and recording. A number of successful projects have been conducted within the borough, for instance the 2007 community excavation at Leasowe Lighthouse and Meols, led by the Field Archaeology Unit of National Museums Liverpool. Local community groups, like Wirral Archaeology, offer a wealth of practical and local knowledge, and support professional units around the country on research, geophysical surveys and public engagement projects.

2.4.8 Interpretative trails (on-site and self guiding)

In recent years a number of interpretative trails have been created, exploring different aspects of Wirral's history and heritage. The Wirral Maritime Trail from Eastham to New Brighton has helped to highlight Wirral's coastal history in this area through a series of plaques telling the stories of places of interest

and the people who lived there. A proposal to develop Hoylake Promenade with a series of interpretative artworks is being developed, although this will now be subject to the need to stabilize the sea defence wall and roadway, hopefully in time for the 2014 Open Golf Championships to be held at the Royal Liverpool.

There are also aspirations to link the existing Wirral Maritime Trail with the proposed Hoylake Promenade improvements, through the creation of a series of interpretative artworks along the four mile length of the North Wirral Coastal Park. This would bring together community groups from Meols, Leasowe and Wallasey in celebration of the rich and diverse maritime heritage of North Wirral.

The Wirral Circular Trail is a 35 mile sign-posted route taking in the coastline, the history, the heritage and the countryside of the Wirral peninsula. Funding from the European Regional Development Fund and the Local Cycle Plan was secured through the Rights of Way Development Plan, to create a walking and cycle trail, linking the public rights of way network with other routes around Wirral. The trail is supported by a free high-quality interpretative guide, which is also available on-line. The Council has also produced The Wirral Nature Guide to the coastline.

Many local societies and friends groups have produced trails, leaflets and publications, many of which are also available on-line.

2.5 The value of Wirral's heritage

Heritage can provide a key driving force in both economic regeneration and tourism. Historic buildings, places, events and activities and a high quality environment are all prerequisite to maximising economic development potential, projecting a positive image and attracting jobs, investment and tourism. Heritage makes a vital contribution to tourism, the environment, jobs, skills and the economy. It motivates people to travel in order to quench their thirst for knowledge, to reinforce their place in history and contextualise a place geographically and socially. In doing so, they spend considerable amounts of money to the benefit of the place and, hopefully, heritage. Heritage is not a luxury or a pleasant recreational pastime, but an integral part of our future.

Heritage and particularly heritage tourism have never been more important to the national and local economy. According to the Heritage Lottery Fund's 2010 document *Investing in Success: Heritage and the Tourism Economy*, the size of the heritage-tourism sector is in excess of £12.4 billion a year and supports an estimated 195,000 full-time jobs – this makes the sector bigger than the advertising, car or film industries. As people increasingly choose to stay in the UK rather than holiday abroad, heritage attractions have helped to

increase visitor numbers as a crucial part of the national tourism offer. The latest statistics reveal that Wirral's visitor economy is worth over £250 million, an increase of 11% over the last five years and employs the equivalent of approximately 4,000 jobs. The borough benefits mainly from repeat visits and heritage adds value to the wider tourist offer.

On Wirral, new visitor attractions like Spaceport at Seacombe and the U-Boat Story at Woodside are attracting many thousands of new visitors each year. Merseytravel currently contributes more than £34 million each year to the region's tourism economy through Mersey Ferries and its associated attractions, supporting the equivalent of 742 full time jobs. It is forecast that the Mersey Ferries attractions in Wirral and Liverpool have the potential to grow by more than 25% over the next decade bringing in an additional 300,000 visitors to the region.

Just as heritage-based tourism is vital to the national economy, heritage has even wider benefits. Each year English Heritage's *Heritage Counts* report assesses the state of the country's historic environment and provides evidence of the social and economic impact. The 2010 report found that every £1 of investment in the historic environment generates £1.6 of additional economic activity over a 10 year period. One in four businesses agrees that the historic environment is an important factor in deciding where to locate – the same as for good road access.

The importance of conserving our natural heritage and biological diversity is becoming increasingly recognised. The natural world is an integral part of our cultural heritage and identity. It is important in defining local character and distinctiveness. It affects the quality of life of the people of Wirral, contributing to our health and wellbeing. A good quality natural environment has a positive impact on house prices and makes high density housing more liveable. Our green infrastructure as a whole also provides 'ecosystem services' such as carbon sequestration, flood prevention, maintenance of water quality, micro-climate control and even pollination for our crops.

In Wirral, the importance of heritage as a driver for regeneration was demonstrated in the Single Regeneration Budget initiatives of the 1990s. Citylands, Lairdside, New Wallasey, Wirral Waterfront and, particularly, the Hamilton Quarter – all had significant heritage, conservation, cultural and tourism elements within their schemes. Current regeneration programmes – Wirral Waters, Woodside and the regeneration of Hoylake, West Kirby and Deeside Wirral - have the potential to bring significant investment into the borough and have a strong heritage focus. The key challenge will be to maintain the local distinctiveness of these areas through a co-ordinated approach to heritage management and regeneration.

3.0 HERITAGE AND THE WIDER CONTEXT

The heritage strategy for Wirral must respond to, interact with and support the priorities and themes which currently drive heritage at national, regional and local levels. However, at a time when government and regional policies and agendas are in transition, the strategy will need to adopt a flexible approach, which can adapt and evolve to accommodate new approaches to heritage delivery.

3.1 The national and regional context

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has overall responsibility for heritage policy in England. While priorities and policies for culture and heritage are currently being reviewed, the government recognises that culture and heritage support a range of policy priorities including, but not limited to, economic growth, health and well-being and building stronger and safer communities. The government is pressing local authorities to develop different approaches to providing local cultural and heritage services by linking more efficiently with other key service priorities such as adult social care, health, children and young people and economic development.

However, there have been substantial cuts in DCMS budgets and, as a consequence, cuts in funding to local authorities and cuts in the amount of grant-aid available from organisations like Natural England and English Heritage. Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), which were significant investors in heritage, have been abolished. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) are no longer stand-alone bodies.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is the main governmental department with responsibility for the natural environment. Under their umbrella lie several agencies including the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. To achieve DEFRA's vision for a more integrated large scale 'landscape' approach to nature conservation, Wirral will need to work with these agencies through Regional and Local Biodiversity Partnerships for Cheshire and North Merseyside, and through emerging Local Nature Partnerships.

The government's Big Society initiative, which aims to increase peoples' active engagement in society, will encourage greater local participation in heritage issues. Its objectives include:

- Social action – encouraging and enabling people to play a more active part in society;

- Community empowerment – giving local councils and neighbourhoods more power to take decisions and shape their local area;
- Opening up public services – opening up opportunities for the voluntary sectors and local groups to deliver public services and manage community and public assets.

A number of very significant changes are proposed to the planning system. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5 – *Planning and the Historic Environment* was issued in early 2010, but is intended to be replaced by a National Policy Framework (NPPF) during by April 2012. This, together with the Localism Bill (expected to receive Royal Assent in November 2011) and other policy innovations, are intended to devolve planning decisions to a more local level, giving local communities greater ability to shape development in their areas. This new decentralised approach to planning and other decision making will inevitably have significant implications for Wirral’s historic built environment.

3.1.1 English Heritage

The English Heritage Corporate Plan and strategic priorities are under review. However, the interim National Protection Plan 2010, sets out a framework for more effective protection of the historic environment. It is underpinned by four main themes: understanding heritage; valuing heritage; caring for heritage and enjoying heritage. A key element of the Plan is local empowerment; enabling owners, local groups, communities and individuals to take a more active role in protecting their heritage, by providing them with access to expert advice, technical support and, in some circumstances, financial assistance.

3.1.2 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)

The Heritage Lottery Fund has clear priorities for those applying to its grants programmes. HLF’s Strategy for 2013 – 2019 is currently under review and consultation, but currently applicants must demonstrate that:

- Projects help people to learn about their own and other peoples’ heritage.
- Additionally projects must meet one or both of the following criteria:
- Conserve the UK’s diverse heritage for future generations to experience and enjoy.
- Help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in making decisions about heritage.

Heritage Lottery funded projects need to demonstrate clear social and educational benefits. Capital projects have to include a clearly defined time limited programme of public engagement activities which go beyond core and on-going activities for the project.

3.1.3 Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)

Some of MLA's functions have been transferred to Arts Council England and the strategic direction for the sector is uncertain. However, MLA will continue working to ensure that museums, libraries and archives are widely used as a key resource for creativity, life-long learning and skills development and that they make an increasing contribution to local economies and communities.

3.1.4 The Heritage Alliance (THA)

The Heritage Alliance represents the independent heritage sector. Its membership includes national and regional organisations like the National Trust, Council for British Archaeology, Campaign to Protect Rural England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, as well as many smaller and more specialised heritage groups.

3.1.5 Civic Voice

Civic Voice is the national charity for the civic movement in England, which aims to make places more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive and to promote civic pride. Civic Voice, together with the National Trust and the Heritage Alliance will be the national co-ordinators for Heritage Open Days from 2012.

3.2 The Local Context

3.2.1 Wirral Corporate Plan 2011 – 2014.

Heritage in its widest context, can support and contribute to Wirral Council's Corporate Plan objectives in many ways. Engagement with heritage can contribute to the quality of life and health and well-being agendas; promote educational attainment and raise the aspirations of young people; and support the development of those living in areas of multiple-deprivation. It makes a significant contribution to the cultural and leisure offer of the borough, for both residents and visitors. It also contributes to the Destination Marketing of Wirral as a business and visitor location. Finally, Wirral's heritage can be used to raise the profile of the borough in a positive way, promoting a sense of identity, a sense of community and a sense of civic pride.

3.2.2 Local strategies.

The heritage strategy will relate to the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) in respect of the borough's natural environment and heritage assets, local distinctiveness and design within the historic environment. It will also support the strategic priorities of tourism and destination marketing in respect of promoting the heritage aspects of Wirral's tourism and visitor offer. The strategy actively supports the aims and objectives of the Strategic Framework for Wirral's Museums Service 2011 –

16, the Wirral Archives Service Plan and the emerging Parks and Countryside Service Plan.

4.0 MAKING OUR HERITAGE MATTER: KEY ISSUES AND PROPOSED ACTIONS

4.1 Stewardship and protection – conserving Wirral’s heritage for future generations

The fragile nature of our heritage should not be underplayed. Once a historic building is demolished or buildings in a Conservation Area are unsympathetically altered they are unlikely to be restored or replaced. Similarly, historic artefacts and collections need to be carefully managed if they are to be preserved for the future. The effective preservation of historic structures, conservation areas, landscapes, archives and collections and their stewardship is therefore fundamental to this strategy. However, this does not prohibit change. It does not mean that a Listed Building cannot be altered or added to – rather that its significance is fully understood with the most important elements given the most protection. Above all is the need to find a sustainable future for our heritage, maintaining the key parts of the past for future generations.

4.1.1 Built environment

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure the proper protection of all Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas in the borough. However, with over 1,900 listed structures and 25 Conservation Areas, maintaining these buildings and places is increasingly difficult, particularly in the current economic climate. Many buildings which are deemed important today, such as our stock of Victorian industrial buildings, were not necessarily built to last and their progressive deterioration, coupled with the difficulty in finding appropriate new uses, poses a significant challenge.

Most Conservation Areas now have an adopted Management Plan and Conservation Area Partnerships made up of local residents are being formed. The success of Conservation Areas depends on the joint commitment of the Council and local people, working together to preserve and enhance the character of each area. Conservation Areas are periodically reviewed to ensure that these places of special interest are being protected, and the Council consults with local people about the revision of existing Conservation Area boundaries and the designation of new areas. Conservation Area designation is currently being proposed for Lower Bebington, Storeton, Noctorum, Raby, Landican and Brimstage.

ACTION: Ensure that all the Conservation Areas within the borough have a formally adopted Management Plan and a cycle of appraisals as part of the process.

ACTION: Continue to review all existing Conservation Areas and to designate new Conservation Areas as appropriate.

A particular issue of concern is the incremental erosion of the character of Conservation Areas, through the small scale alterations to dwelling houses which are normally possible through the exercise of 'permitted development rights', granted to householders by the Government, under the General Development Planning Order. Article 4 Directions are a potentially useful means of protecting the original character of groups of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas, as they trigger the necessity for planning permission for relatively minor alterations to the external appearance of buildings. However, they tend to work best where property owners 'buy into' the concept, where character properties prove to be a sound financial investment and where local groups can assist in making a case for application. Article 4 Directions are resource intensive, take a long time to establish and their success is heavily dependent upon policing and enforcement. However, the Council will work with local residents to monitor changes in residential areas within Conservation Areas and would consider the application of Article 4 Directions, if the character of those streets appears threatened by uncontrolled change.

ACTION: Recognise the importance of retaining the character of Conservation Areas and take appropriate measures, including the application of Article 4 Directions to limit the impact of small-scale changes.

As well as those buildings protected by statute, Wirral has very many other buildings which are of historic significance and are very important to local people. Wirral's buildings were last surveyed for listing in 1992 and there are notable omissions, particularly dockland structures which have been poorly recorded. A number of good unlisted buildings outside Conservation Areas have been demolished. Whilst the whole issue of listing is currently under review nationally, there is still scope to increase the number of submissions for 'spot-listing', either by the Council or by local people, to ensure that the quality of vulnerable buildings and structures is recognised and they are preserved.

ACTION: Ensure that as many as possible of the borough's historic buildings, sites and structures are statutorily protected through the listing process.

Both central government and English Heritage are advocating that local authorities compile and maintain a non-statutory 'Local List' of buildings of merit, with buildings submitted according to agreed criteria, in full consultation with the public and formally adopted. English Heritage has now issued guidance on non-statutory lists and Wirral History and Heritage Association is compiling its own list of 'Buildings of Merit at Risk'. Whether a formal list adopted by the Council, or a list compiled by local people, the issue is certain to raise interest in those sites and buildings of local value and increase pressures to ensure that they are not put at risk through demolition, massive alterations or redevelopment.

ACTION: Explore the practicalities of compiling a non-statutory 'Local List' and support the work of local organisations and individuals in identifying buildings of local interest or merit.

Statues, monuments, art-works and memorials all make a significant contribution to the character of the local environment and need to be maintained in good condition. The War Memorial in Port Sunlight, the second largest in the country in terms of bronze statuary, has recently been conserved to a very high standard by the Port Sunlight Heritage Trust. The Council has successfully applied for 'spot-listing' for a number of war memorials and has an ongoing programme of cleaning, repair and re-inscription in preparation for the 75th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II and the centenary of the outbreak of World War I in 2014.

ACTION: Continue to take a pro-active approach to the conservation and maintenance to the borough's war memorials.

It should not be forgotten that most of the historic building stock in the borough is owned by private individuals or private companies, using their own resources to keep a building in good shape and in use. It is incumbent on building owners to be aware of the threat of incipient decay and act promptly to head off problems. The value of maintenance cannot be overstated; once decay becomes obvious, major repairs will be required and these equate to major costs, disruption and the avoidable loss of historic fabric. The Council pro-actively encourages owners of buildings and historic sites to undertake repairs and works with local communities to raise awareness of building maintenance issues. Whilst education undoubtedly has a part to play, eventually in the small minority of cases where private owners are unable or unwilling to act, the Planning Authority may have no alternative but to use its statutory powers.

ACTION: Work pro-actively with private owners to encourage regular repairs and maintenance and, where appropriate take enforcement action to safeguard neglected buildings.

4.1.2 Heritage at Risk

English Heritage's *Heritage at Risk Register* lists the most vulnerable historic sites in the country. As well as buildings, it now includes Conservation Areas, archaeological sites and historic parks, gardens and cemeteries, churches and places of worship. There are currently nine such sites in Wirral, mostly in private ownership.

- Storeton Hall, Bebington: Grade II Listed: condition - very bad (private ownership);
- Fort Perch Rock, New Brighton: Grade II* Listed: condition - poor (private ownership (private ownership);
- Birkenhead Priory: Scheduled Ancient Monument: condition - deteriorating, but currently subject to a major scheme of repair;
- Bromborough Court House Moated Site and Fishponds: Scheduled Ancient Monument; condition – significant localised problems (private ownership);
- Site of Church and Churchyard, Overchurch: Scheduled Ancient Monument; condition – major localised problems;
- Thornton Manor, Bebington: Registered Park and Garden Grade II; condition – major localised problems (private ownership);
- Flaybrick Memorial Gardens (Flaybrick Cemetery), Bidston: Registered Park and Garden Grade II – very bad;
- Hamilton Square, Birkenhead: Conservation Area; condition – very bad (private ownership with the exception of Birkenhead Town Hall and central gardens);
- Rock Park, Rock Ferry: Conservation Area; condition – poor (private ownership).

The government's Planning Policy Statement 5 '*Planning for the Historic Environment*', for the first time requires local authorities to seriously consider how the condition of sites at risk within their areas will be addressed. This is seen as a priority by Wirral Council, which has recently invested heavily in the restoration and improvement of Birkenhead Priory. Clifton Park in Tranmere has removed from the HAR thanks to concerted enforcement action, while

discussions with English Heritage over the future for Flaybrick Cemetery are ongoing.

ACTION: Continue to work with English Heritage and property/site owners to seek creative solutions and funding packages for buildings and sites on the 'Heritage at Risk Register' to ensure their long-term sustainability.

4.1.3 Churches and Places of Worship

Wirral has a wealth of churches and other places of worship, many of which are listed or in Conservation Areas. They make a tremendous contribution to the historic environment and many are local landmarks. While some remain solely active in religious life, others have also acquired new social uses that benefit the widest cross section of society. Responsibility for their care falls almost entirely on the shoulders of volunteers and for many congregations the burden of maintenance can be heavy. When religious buildings are no longer used, the problems of finding new uses can be difficult, leaving empty buildings vulnerable to deterioration and vandalism. The challenge is to work with congregations, church and other religious authorities, to help them to adapt to the evolving needs of worshippers and the wider community, to ensure that their historic fabric and features are preserved.

A good example of such a project is Oxton Congregational Church. This imposing Victorian Gothic Grade II Listed church is an important landmark at the 'gateway' to Oxton village. Having been derelict for many years, it has now been restored by the Wirral Christian Centre, which has plans for significant community engagement and involvement.

ACTION: Support churches, congregations and other religious authorities to help them adapt religious buildings to meet the needs of both worshippers and the wider community, whilst ensuring that their historic features and fabric are preserved.

4.1.4 Archaeology

Archaeological remains are finite by their very nature and any intervention or excavation is not repeatable or reversible. Therefore it is important that all archaeological projects of whatever size or complexity, are supervised by professional archaeologists who are active and current members of the Institute for Archaeologists. The Council is not able to support projects where the observance of professional standards is not demonstrably adhered to.

This is not to say that amateur archaeologists should be constrained or excluded. On the contrary, the Council encourages community archaeology

and aims to work in partnership with local groups in order to secure appropriate levels of observance of professional standards. There is plenty of scope for amateurs and volunteers to work alongside professional archaeologists and this remains the basis for undertaking community projects that involve archaeological excavation.

The withdrawal of funding from the Merseyside Archaeological Service, means that Wirral Council, like the other four Merseyside authorities, will have to find new ways of acquiring specialist archaeological advice; including advice on a range of development and planning issues. English Heritage requires that any advice obtained must be of a suitable professional level. Options could include entering into arrangements with another local authority which has a professional archaeological service e.g. West Cheshire & Chester, or buying in professional advice on a case by case basis.

ACTION: Ensure that Wirral Council promotes the highest standards in archaeology and is able to secure the best possible specialist archaeological advice on development and planning issues.

ACTION: Actively encourage professionally led community archaeology projects as a means of furthering our knowledge of the history of the borough.

4.1.5 Recording

The recording and proper identification of our heritage is essential in ensuring that it is properly protected and is vital to help develop knowledge and understanding of the historic environment. Sadly, Wirral's built heritage is not well recorded and there are significant gaps in our understanding of many buildings, and in some cases their true historic significance may not be appreciated. In particular, there has never been a comprehensive survey of the docklands buildings and structures, which make such an important contribution to the historic character of north Wirral.

Wirral's archaeological and historical development is documented in three records of regional strategic significance. The Cheshire Historic Characterisation Study, undertaken by the former Cheshire County Council in 2007, produced a comprehensive view of the sequence of changes that have contributed to the character of the landscape from earliest times to the present day. The study recommends actions to ensure the sustainable management of the historic landscape. The Merseyside Historic Characterisation Project, hosted by National Museums Liverpool, uses digital mapping technology and other methodologies to define and describe how the past landscape has influenced the landscape of today. The Merseyside

Historic Environment Record, also held by NML, contains comprehensive information on historic and archaeological sites, including individual sites and remains above and below ground, under-water sites, artefacts and landscapes. It is primarily used to assist in the conservation and management of the historic environment, as part of the development management process.

ACTION: Take appropriate measures to ensure that Wirral's historic buildings and archaeological sites are adequately recorded and that where appropriate, these records be made publicly accessible.

Good quality information is needed to inform the effective management of wildlife habitats and species. Historically, wildlife recording has depended to a large extent on amateur naturalists, but increasingly information is becoming available from consultants working on development projects. Biological data collection is co-ordinated in our region by Cheshire Wildlife Trust and the Biological Records Centres for Cheshire and Merseyside.

ACTION: Work with Biological Records Centres and Local Biodiversity Partnerships to enable data collection and the voluntary recording of wildlife on Wirral, and ensure the best information is used to inform the management of our natural heritage.

4.1.6 Historic parks, cemeteries and natural heritage

Wirral possesses a range of historic parks, cemeteries and open spaces of national regional and local significance. Some parks and open spaces are strongly historic in character through their buildings and structures and because of their uniqueness: Birkenhead Park because of its role in the parks movement and Flaybrick Cemetery because of its fabric and historical connections with Birkenhead and its people. Others reveal heritage through lay-out, planting schemes and surviving buildings, fixtures and structures. In addition to their intrinsic heritage value, they form high quality open spaces for public enjoyment. All these parks and open spaces also have nature conservation value, whether designated or undesignated, which needs protecting and managing to different degrees.

However, maintenance of these key heritage assets is a major issue, particularly in the cases of historic structures such as chapels, lodges and other buildings which have long fallen out of use and into disrepair. In some cases, such as Royden Park and Rake Lane Cemetery, historic buildings have been successfully put to new uses but the chapels in Flaybrick Memorial Gardens are, for example, completely derelict and the whole cemetery, which is on the Heritage at Risk Register, is in need of major refurbishment.

ACTION: Identify funding for the restoration of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens and new end use for the chapels.

ACTION: Ensure the significance of historic parks and cemeteries and the historic buildings, features and structures within them are recognised and understood and that their importance is reflected in plans and management strategies.

ACTION: Produce a partnership plan with Friends Groups, environmental groups and other stakeholders to ensure that the views of heritage groups are properly represented in the emerging Parks and Countryside Service Plan.

4.1.7 Natural heritage

There are still a number of designated and non-designated sites where Wirral's habitats and species are at risk from factors such as recreation use, invasive species, lack of management or inappropriate management. All of Wirral's parks and open spaces, designated or not hold nature value, whether a grass verge, town park or countryside site.

ACTION: Ensure the importance of natural heritage and Biodiversity is recognised and understood and that this is reflected in all Parks Management Plans.

ACTION: Work with Natural England, the Wirral Biodiversity and Local Sites Partnership and other partners in the public, private the voluntary sectors to manage all Wirral's designated nature sites towards favourable condition.

4.1.8 Community involvement in the historic environment

Local people currently take an active role in shaping, protecting and understanding their local natural, built and historic environments through civic and amenity societies, friends groups and community organisations. The importance of their roles will increase as the aspirations for the Big Society and the implications of Localism come to have a major impact on how the historic environment is managed. The new emphasis on decentralisation and local empowerment will bring opportunities for the voluntary heritage sector but also new challenges. Many community groups simply do not have the organisational capacity or skills to fully engage in the process. The Council will need to offer leadership and vision to support neighbourhood groups, assist with capacity building and funding applications and, most importantly,

manage expectations, so that local communities have a clear understanding about what can and cannot be achieved through Localism.

ACTION: Work in partnership with local communities and neighbourhoods so that that they have the knowledge, skills and capacity to engage effectively in the planning process.

4.1.9 Archives and collections

Within Wirral there are significant museum and archive collections, ranging from major collections of international and national importance, to those which tell the stories of our local heritage. The challenge is to ensure that all collections, including documents, artefacts, art, memorabilia and memories are preserved, conserved and made accessible. Whilst the major collections are those held by Wirral Council, National Galleries Liverpool, Port Sunlight Heritage Trust and the Unilever Archives, there are many smaller collections in private ownership or owned by local societies or trusts.

o Archives

Wirral Archives Service moved to its present office in Cheshire Lines in 2008. The Service aims to attract a wide and diverse group of users, from family historians and school parties to academics and enthusiastic members of the public, who have an interest in archives. The Service and its research facility are used by Wirral residents and enquirers from all over the world.

The Archives Service has a pro-active collections policy, actively seeking out collections to ensure their survival and that the archives reflect the social history of Wirral in the widest possible way. It is also actively addressing the need to respond to the growing challenge of managing digital information so that it is accessible now and remains discoverable in the future. It is also working towards comprehensive on-line access to archives through improved cataloguing and digitisation. A service priority is to identify funding to catalogue the nationally important Cammell Laird collection and make it available on-line.

The immediate challenges confronting the service are to tackle the backlog of uncatalogued collections and increase the amount of resources available on-line, using existing resources. There is also a need to identify adequate funding in order to identify adequate funding in order to digitize collections that have been identified as a priority.

ACTION: Increase access to the borough's important archive collections by a continued programme of

adding catalogues and digital images to the Wirral Archives web-site.

○ **Museum collections**

The Wirral Museums collection is largely housed in The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum. The Fine Art collection is of particular note, with 18th and 19th century watercolour paintings and drawings by regionally and locally important artists and the work of the 19th century Birkenhead artist Philip Wilson Steer. There is an impressive collection of maritime models and pictures, particularly vessels built by Cammell Laird and its predecessor shipyards, and the Mersey Ferries. The ceramics collection includes the nationally important Della Robbia pottery made in Birkenhead, Liverpool porcelain and Seacombe pottery. There are smaller social history and archaeological collections and the Civic Silver.

In addition to its prime responsibility to preserve and exhibit the collections within its care, the Museums Service produces a regular and varied exhibition programme which both uses and complements its own collections. Particular successes in recent years include 'A Textile Dynasty: Arthur H Lee I Sons, Birkenhead', which won the national Museums & Heritage Award in 2010 as the 'Industry's Favourite'; a smaller exhibition, 'Above the Clouds: Mallory and Irvine and the Quest for Everest' was highly commended in the same awards.

Collaborations with National Museums Liverpool (NML), the Cheshire West & Cheshire Museums Service and other regional museums and galleries are regular and frequent. The 'Albert Lipczinski' exhibition, displayed from July to October 2011, was an international collaboration with the Polish National Museum in Gdansk. It was specifically planned to complement the 'Art in Revolution' exhibition held at the Walker Art Gallery, which featured works by Lipczinski alongside those of international artists like van Gough, Matisse and Gauguin, who were all displayed in a groundbreaking exhibition held in Liverpool in 1911. There are plans to work with NML and other partners on a major exhibition on the 19th century Liverpool School of Artists, largely based on the collections in Williamson and the Walker galleries.

ACTION: Continue to develop exhibitions with National Museums Liverpool and other partners, complimenting the Museum Service's own collections with other public and private collections, to create exhibitions of regional and national significance.

The priorities for the Museums Service are set down in the Business Plan for 2011 – 2016. Key objectives are to continue to meet the needs of Accreditation and also to broaden the visitor and user base. The Business Plan proposes a new structure to address these issues, with a stronger

emphasis on formal, informal and family learning. By making better use of the skills and talents within the Service, it is hoped to free up time for the professional museums staff to concentrate on developing the collections and their use in learning and exhibitions programmes. One issue is to tackle the backlog in documentation which has accrued over many years. The Business Plan has a clear timetable to complete documentation by April 2012 with the final stages, including retrospective documentation to be completed by April 2016. There is a longer term aspiration to identify funding to give access to date bases of collections on-line.

ACTION: Implement the Museums Service restructure, to facilitate more effective care and display of collections, documentation and exhibitions.

ACTION: Purchase new documentation software and complete documentation so that the complete collection is recorded.

4.2 REGENERATION – using heritage as a driver for economic development, inward investment and supporting sustainable communities

The historic environment can play a significant role in helping regenerate communities. Investing in heritage can make a real difference to the appearance of local areas, provide opportunities for businesses and give local people new confidence and pride in their surroundings. However, they are complex projects, resource intensive and the benefits may not be apparent for many years. The challenge is to ensure that heritage is firmly embedded into regeneration proposals

Wirral's experience over the past twenty years has demonstrated the importance of heritage as driver for economic and social regeneration. Since 1988, several hundred millions of pounds of inward investment have been attracted to Wirral and heritage has made a notable contribution to this success. Current regeneration proposals have important implications for the conservation, enhancement and interpretation of historic buildings and sites. Wirral Waters, a thirty year, £4.5 billion mixed use development by Peel Holdings at Birkenhead and Wallasey docks, identifies heritage as part of its cultural offer. Beginning with the restoration of the Grade II Listed Hydraulic Tower and its conversion to commercial use, Listed Buildings will be refurbished and brought back to use; and there are exciting opportunities for imaginative interpretation and public art.

ACTION: Ensure that developers and investors are made fully aware of the importance of Wirral's heritage and the social and economic benefits of retaining and enhancing heritage assets within regeneration projects.

The new Mersey Ferries landing stage at Liverpool's Pier Head has the potential to bring significant tourism opportunities across the water. Merseytravel will be actively encouraged to explore the potential for new ferry terminals and ferry services to Wirral.

The Mersey Coastal Park Strategy is promoting a regeneration vision for East Wirral, built upon the principle of opening up access to the coast and harnessing the economic potential of the waterfront. It covers some 6.5km of coastline between Rock Ferry and Eastham Country Park and will include the following 'signature' projects which, once linked, will create a unique visitor and tourist attraction:

- Rock Ferry Waterfront Regeneration Scheme
- Rock Park Esplanade and Conservation Area
- Shorefields Community Park
- Bromborough Dock Landfill Site
- Wirral International Business Park
- Eastham Country Park

Heritage ideals have been firmly embedded into the Mersey Coastal Park Strategy from the outset. The Rock Park Conservation Area is regarded by the Secretary of State as a one of the three most important conservation areas on the Wirral and is also on the English Heritage 'Heritage at Risk' Register.

Other heritage assets along this stretch of coastline which are recognised in the Coastal Park Strategy are Bromborough Dock and its place in the physical, economic and social development of Port Sunlight; Shorefields Community Nature Park which has links to the SS Great Eastern; archaeology at Shodwell (a possible origin of the Bromborough Ferry) and key historical features in Eastham Country Park.

ACTION: Ensure that major long-term developments such as Wirral Waters and the Mersey Coastal Park maximise the opportunities to conserve, enhance and promote key heritage assets and also consider the local character of the area.

Heritage is also central to regeneration proposals for Hoylake, West Kirby and Deeside Wirral. Improvements to the Hoylake and Meols promenade and seafront could include high quality interpretation. This would focus on the history of the lost port of Meols, a site of national archaeological importance, and tell the story of 'Hoyle Lake' which gave the town its name. This large sea water lake offered safe anchorage for many vessels for hundreds of years and was an embarkation point for armies crossing to Ireland.

ACTION: Work with communities to ensure that regeneration proposals at Hoylake, West Kirby and Deeside, reflect and interpret local heritage and the natural environment.

Within Wirral Country Park, the aim is to deliver a new £3 million visitor centre at Thurstaston. As well as reflecting the importance of bird life across the Dee coast, this would give the opportunity to interpret the history of the area. Included would be the story of Dawpool – one of Wirral's old ports – and Dawpool Hall, home of the Ismay family, founders of the White Star Line and owners of the Titanic.

ACTION: Identify a funding package which will deliver the visitor and interpretation centre at Thurstaston.

Maintaining a high quality historic environment where people want to live is vital to the economy of Wirral. Attractive historic suburbs both in the west and east of the borough can contribute to the regeneration process by attracting and retaining families with high spending power whom might otherwise be tempted to live and perhaps, work elsewhere. The need to protect, manage and enhance residential areas of historic value will become increasingly important if major regeneration proposals like Wirral Waters successfully generate large numbers of well paid jobs for people with families.

ACTION: Work with local residents and Conservation Area Partnerships to retain the special character of historic suburbs.

Over the next few years, the borough is uniquely placed to maximise its heritage tourism potential. Wirral, like elsewhere will have opportunities to take advantage of the influx of visitors to Britain arising from forthcoming events like the London Olympics, Queen's Diamond Jubilee, centenary of the sinking of the Titanic in 2012; the centenary commemorations for the outbreak of World War I and the Open Golf Championship in 2014. Within this context there are significant opportunities to capitalise on a wealth of heritage assets which have national and international appeal such stunning landscapes, coast, parks and wildlife sites; our Viking and American Civil War heritage; Cammell Laird and maritime connections; Wilfred Owen links, and a

long and distinguished sporting history. Heritage is vital to the visitor experience and it is important to bring it to life with good interpretation to tell its stories and make it relevant and accessible to everyone. It is crucial that the visitor experience and the opportunities for all kinds of public involvement at heritage sites continue to improve and increase.

ACTION: Maximise opportunities to promote heritage as part of Wirral's wider tourism offer and ensure that that the importance of the borough's historic and natural environments are reflected in destination marketing strategies.

4.3 LEARNING – maximising the role of heritage in supporting education, training and life-long learning

Heritage makes a vital contribution to learning for all ages; our historic buildings, museums, archaeological sites, artefacts and archives can all be used to provide stimulating and imaginative learning opportunities. Maximising educational and training opportunities across the borough is a key Council objective and heritage has the potential to make a significant contribution to corporate goals. The Council's Museums and Archives Services already have programmes of formal and informal education in place and there are opportunities for student placements, volunteering and training. There is recognition that learning about heritage not only offers personal fulfilment and pleasure, but can contribute to a whole range of social agendas such as literacy and numeracy, health and well being, citizenship and skills development.

ACTION: Work across Council departments, particularly those promoting community development and the interests of young and elderly people, to utilise heritage learning programmes to deliver strategic and corporate objectives.

However, there is still much more that can be done. The Museums Service, through its Business Plan, is currently refocusing its work to place greater emphasis on formal, informal and family learning. As the result of a management review, the existing education officer role will be redefined and split into two part-time posts, specialising in primary and secondary education. Their roles will be to develop and deliver cross-curricular and key skills programmes and to respond pro-actively to topic work undertaken in local schools. The existing Engagement Programme will be progressively broadened, with strands encompassing family learning, vulnerable children and young people, elders' engagement and volunteer development.

ACTION: Refocus the museum staffing structure to achieve a stronger emphasis on formal and informal learning and community engagement.

ACTION: Develop and implement an Informal Learning Strategy, identifying potential partners and with an underpinning funding strategy.

Heritage education has been successfully delivered over many years by the Council's Youth Education and Cultural Service Humanities Team, working with Humanities Subject Leaders in local schools. However, from September 2011, Wirral no longer maintains a specialist Humanities Team, although most secondary and primary schools will continue to have access to support networks. Changes in staffing structures will require new and creative approaches to delivering heritage education in schools. There will be a need for more joined up working with other Council departments and external partners, but also opportunities to build on successes of the past.

Strategies need to be devised to tackle some of the key barriers to schools who are unable to access heritage sites and activities. The lack of access to free or cheap transport is of particular concern. There is a need to improve communications so that information about heritage sites and activities is specifically targeted at the right person in each school. More needs to be done to get teachers out of the classroom and to pro-actively demonstrate that cross-curricular heritage-base projects not just deliver key educational targets, but give an added value which far exceeds the extra effort involved.

Recent changes to the National Curriculum have brought new opportunities for schools to utilise heritage in the classroom. The English Baccalaureate, introduced in 2011, recognises qualifications in geography or history within its humanities element. This provides a tremendous opportunity to strengthen heritage work in schools, as the history GCSE now contains a significant British/local history element. The Primary Curriculum is currently under review, but it is likely that there will be a far more flexible curriculum; pupils will still study history but topics may not be so prescriptive giving opportunities to explore heritage themes in more exciting and creative ways.

ACTION: Work across Council departments and with schools and external partners to ensure that heritage, natural history and local history continue to be taught in local schools and are embedded into cross-curricular work.

ACTION: Work towards achieving the ‘Learning Outside the Classroom’ accredited standard for all education offered by the Parks and Countryside Service.

One way to support learning in schools could be make greater use of the community and voluntary sector. Members of local history, archaeology and civic societies have a wealth of local knowledge which could be shared with children and young people. A number are already working with local schools and there is real enthusiasm to do more. However, such activity is usually done on an ad hoc basis. It is not always easy for the community sector to forge links with the education sector, while issues of child protection and insurance can be barriers to voluntary work in schools. In their turn, most teachers are probably unaware of the pool of expertise on their doorsteps and how this could be utilised to help deliver National Curriculum themes. One solution might be for the Council to hold a data-base of those wishing to work in schools, assist with legal issues and act as broker between schools and community volunteers.

ACTION: Work with the community sector to establish links with schools and provide the necessary support for them to work with pupils and students.

The Council provides opportunities for vocational training and placements within the museums and archives sectors. The Museums Service has been developing links with Initial Teacher Training providers, to create learning outside the classroom placements and promote the museum sites as learning destinations for trainee teachers to inform their future practice. However, as yet little has been done to address the national shortage of specialist craft skills across the heritage sector. Traditional building and craft skills, which were historically handed on through the apprenticeship system, will wither and die unless they are pro-actively supported. Other authorities nationally have successfully developed links with colleges and higher education institutions to provide much needed vocational training and there are also national programmes which could be promoted.

ACTION: Recognise the heritage skills deficit and explore the possibilities of bringing together education, training and learning organisations, to consider skills development in the heritage sector, particularly traditional craft and construction skills.

4.4 PARTICIPATION – ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access, enjoy and participate in heritage

Getting people involved in heritage is central to this strategy. Whilst a great many people already enjoy heritage through visits to museums or historic sites, or by attending a lecture or talk organised by a local group, there is a need to create opportunities to engage with a wider and more diverse audience. Access to heritage should be more inclusive, with more community engagement and programmes of activity specifically targeted at people who, for social, cultural or physical reasons, are currently unable or unwilling to participate. Across the borough, the Council and its partners deliver or support a wide range of community outreach activities and are seeking ways to widen opportunities for all. However, more needs to be done to promote understanding of the social benefits of heritage; that heritage is not elitist but can be enjoyed by all ages and sections of society.

The importance of heritage in linking a range of social agendas needs to be recognised and exploited. The Museums Service has developed a Community Engagement Plan, to support the development of projects that target specific groups with different social needs, including Looked After Children, isolated elders and young carers. A wider 'Health and Heritage' programme of activity is being developed with a range of partners and will include reminiscence and inter-generational work in the community.

ACTION: The Museums Service to identify external funding to implement a Community Engagement Plan that will increase the number of community engagement projects by 50% year on year for the next three years.

ACTION: Work with partners to develop a 'Heritage and Health' programme and identify funding options by March 2012.

If widening participation and access is to be meaningful, there needs to be a far more pro-active approach to engaging excluded groups, including black and ethnic minorities, isolated elders and people with disabilities. In doing this, there may be a need to challenge traditional definitions of heritage and recognise that there will be diverse and conflicting and sometimes controversial meanings. Stronger links need to be forged with community groups and the voluntary sector, exploring new and imaginative ways to support activities which are directly relevant to the needs of each group. The work of existing groups such as the Black Environment Network and the Merseyside Access to Heritage Group could be channelled into Wirral.

ACTION: Prioritise targeting heritage and outreach activity towards excluded groups and work with them to devise projects which directly meet their physical, intellectual and cultural needs.

The majority of people who are currently actively involved in heritage are members of local societies. Their contribution to delivering heritage activity throughout the borough is invaluable and fully recognised by the Council. However, there is scope for giving them more support to develop their work and explore new ways of delivering their heritage interests. Membership of most local groups and societies tends to be older people and they should be encouraged to look at ways of attracting younger people, to ensure that activities are sustained. The Council supports the Wirral History and Heritage Association as the 'umbrella' organisation which represents and gives voice to local history and amenity societies. The profile of WHHA needs to be raised, so that there is greater understanding of its aims and objectives and there needs to be greater engagement with local groups so that all feel included in its work.

ACTION: Continue to support the work of the voluntary and community heritage sector by helping with skills development and funding advice, so that they can maximise their work within local communities.

ACTION: Help to develop the profile of Wirral History and Heritage Association as an independent networking organisation, which is recognised and supported by local societies throughout the borough.

Heritage Open Days provide the ideal opportunity for local groups to come together in celebration of Wirral's heritage and attract new audiences. Over the past few years WHHA has massively expanded the HODs programme, which is now a major event in Wirral's cultural calendar. WHHA intends to further develop HODs by extending the length of the programme and adding a range of cultural activities to create a 'festival' of heritage. If successful, this will attract a wider and more diverse cross-section of the community and raise the profile of Wirral as a 'heritage' borough.

ACTION: Support Wirral History and Heritage Association in organising Wirral's Heritage Open Days and encourage the development of a longer and more varied cultural programme.

Understanding is crucial to the enjoyment of heritage and local people are engaged in a wide range of initiatives to interpret their history. A number of Friends Groups manage heritage buildings for interpretative and educational

use, while others provide interpretative programmes through walks, trails and participatory activities. The Charles Dawson Brown Groups have well advanced plans to upgrade and redisplay their museum attached to St Bridget's Church in West Kirby. Other community-led projects include the new Hoylake Lifeboat Museum, the Wilfred Own Story in Birkenhead and the New Brighton Heritage and Information Centre.

ACTION: Actively encourage wider participation in heritage and the interpretation of Wirral's history, through supporting the work of community led initiatives.

ACTION: Continue to work with community groups and partners to provide a varied, high quality events programme through the Parks and Countryside Service.

Wirral has some excellent interpretative trails, which are highly regarded by local people and visitors. There are imaginative proposals for further large-scale interpretative projects with community input, in the redevelopment of Hoylake Parade and in the North Wirral Coastal Park. There is strong community support for the interpretation of Wirral's Viking heritage, World War II history and historic docklands, amongst other themes. The borough's historic parks and cemeteries would greatly benefit from enhanced on-site interpretation. Given the number of famous people with Wirral connections, there is real scope to upgrade and extend the 'Blue Plaque' programme. However, within the borough, there are interpretive panels, commemorative plaques and other signage which are in poor condition due to vandalism or old age. Implementing new interpretative projects will be dependent on funding and there is a need to review existing interpretation, identify new opportunities and establish a framework for future development and investment.

ACTION: Compile an audit of current interpretative provision and develop a heritage interpretation strategy for the borough.

The rapid developments in new technologies, particularly Smartphones and other mobile internet-accessible devices, have created new opportunities for interpretation and engagement, which are already being used in heritage attractions and sites around the country. Their use will be particularly important if new and younger audiences are to be attracted to heritage. Virtual tours and interpretation would be particularly useful at sites like Birkenhead Priory, where the location of traditional interpretation panels is

problematic because the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and all the buildings are listed.

ACTION: Develop a programme to implement the use of new technologies to interpret museums sites and explore the potential for wider applications across the borough.

With so much activity taking place on Wirral, it is vital that there is an integrated and joined up approach to promoting heritage (whether as information, volunteering opportunities, planning, events, tourism etc.). Co-ordination could be improved by an enhanced heritage section on the Council's web-site, with clear links to the Wirral History and Heritage Association's web-site, plus links to other local and regional organisations, including English Heritage, National Museums Liverpool, Merseytravel and other heritage providers. Consideration should also be given to promoting heritage through social networking sites (this was seen as a priority by the young people consulted in the development of this strategy) and will inevitably be an important route for the future.

ACTION: Explore the potential to further promote heritage and heritage activity through the Council's web-site, by and enhance heritage section for heritage, bringing together information about all the authority's heritage based services and providing links to other heritage organisations.

4.5 CELEBRATION – recognising and utilising the part heritage can play in promoting local identity, social cohesion and civic and community pride

The heritage of Wirral gives us much to be proud of and celebrate. Generally local people value their inheritance from the past. They believe that Wirral has a distinctive character and identity which makes it very different from other places. By celebrating our heritage, raising its profile locally and nationally and giving people a more active role, we can strengthen this sense of pride and ownership throughout our communities.

A positive image of Wirral's heritage can be promoted by developing initiatives more widely across the borough. The Heritage Open Days programme has achieved much in showing that Wirral is a place to enjoy and explore heritage, but more can be done to promote our heritage assets to a wider local, regional and national audience. An excellent short-term opportunity will be the designation of 2012 as 'Year of Coast and Countryside', celebrating Wirral's natural environment, engaging local

people in community activities and bringing the borough's attractions to the attention of a wider audience. There will be different themes in future years.

Tidy Britain's prestigious Green Flag award celebrates and promotes heritage in our parks and open spaces. Green Flags have been awarded to 12 of Wirral's parks to date. In addition, Birkenhead Park has gained a Green Flag Heritage Award and Tam O'Shanter Farm has attained a Green Flag Community Award.

The aspiration to achieve UNESCO World Heritage Site status for Port Sunlight should be supported and pursued.

ACTION: Work with partners to promote initiatives which celebrate and raise the profile of Wirral's heritage and promote a positive image of the borough.

ACTION: Increase the number of Wirral's Parks achieving the Green Flag standard.

Pride comes from a sense of ownership. If people feel involved with their local heritage there is more chance that they will respect and care for it. This can be achieved by greater levels of engagement and participation by and with local people. We need to recognise and build on the work already being undertaken within communities and celebrate achievements, both large and small.

For many people, heritage is not just about museums, great historic buildings or heritage sites, but about those things which they value within their local area. This could be a statue or local landmark, a sandstone wall, an ancient tree or hedgerow, an old cinema or pub – or past events which have had helped to shape the identity of their community. By challenging 'traditional' perceptions of heritage and encouraging people to celebrate their own local heritage and cultural identity there are real opportunities to increase community involvement and local pride.

ACTION: Support local communities in celebrating those aspects of their local heritage which are important to them and create opportunities for them to get involved activities which help shape the future of their area.

Much of the past is not documented; the stories and memories of people living in Wirral are a vital part of our heritage, to be valued and celebrated. By capturing these individual and collective memories through reminiscence and recording projects, social and community history can be brought to life, giving new meaning to dry and inanimate structural remains. As well being a vital tool in understanding our recent past, oral history projects can explore

sensitive topics such as prejudice, fear and division, often as a way of challenging stereotypes. Reminiscence work with older people encourages a sense of self-worth and confidence whilst inter-generational work brings younger and older people together, breaking down barriers and encouraging understanding.

ACTION: Ensure that individual and collective memories are captured and celebrated through supporting reminiscence and recording projects.

Many local people are already active in promoting Wirral's heritage and more could be done to capture this enthusiasm and expertise. Other authorities have successfully appointed 'Heritage Ambassadors', volunteers who have been trained to present and interpret local heritage to a wide range of audiences and promote community pride in the history of the borough.

ACTION: Explore the potential for training volunteer 'Heritage Ambassadors' to promote heritage throughout the borough.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is essential to strengthen cross-cultural links between heritage and other sectors – the arts, sports, libraries, theatre, music etc. – as heritage is stronger when seen as part of a wider cultural offer and can make a greater contribution to sense of place, identity and quality of life.

ACTION: Work more closely with other sectors to ensure that heritage is an integral part of Wirral's wider cultural offer.

5.0 IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

5.1 Working in partnership

The heritage resource is by its nature very fragmented and involves a wide ranging and diverse group of organisations, agencies, individuals and volunteer groups. A partnership approach to delivering this strategy will be vital to its success. Through collaborative working, there will be a greater potential for community impact, local empowerment and raising profile. As well as building on existing partnerships, it is important that we identify new public and private sector partnerships, particularly funding partners. In order to benefit from external funding, it is essential to develop a good understanding of existing and future funding opportunities and the criteria and priorities of different funders.

As well as working with external agencies, it is important that heritage is recognised by the Council as a shared, cross-cutting issue that affects the Council as a whole and spans most, if not all, service areas. Heritage needs to be regarded as an issue which affects everyone's life and can be used to help deliver a wide range of council policies.

5.2 Community engagement

The hard work of numerous volunteer groups has played a significant role in Wirral's heritage. The voluntary sector has significant public value by harnessing community energy, giving local people a feeling of ownership and saving money. However, to successfully deliver this strategy, there will need to be even wider community engagement, which may require developing skills, knowledge and a greater understanding of heritage issues. This will be increasingly important if local people are to be empowered to manage, deliver and protect heritage projects. The arts sector already has a strong track record in skills development and capacity building at community level and this model could be used to train local volunteers and heritage groups, so that they can build on and extend the work they already do within the community.

5.3 Establishing priorities

Most heritage projects will require some element of external funding and it is essential to understand the priorities and criteria which heritage funding bids would be expected to meet in order to be successful. Inevitably there will be variations according to the size and nature of the project, but consideration of these criteria should assist those developing heritage projects to understand the basis upon which applications for funding will be assessed. It will also assist the Council in prioritising its own projects and inform decisions on which external projects to support. At a time when resources are increasingly limited, the aim is to assist projects to become more focussed, reduce competition for the same funds and generate more benefit to the people and the economy of Wirral. These criteria will include:

- **Strategic fit** – defined by how well the project links to other relevant national, regional and local strategies and meets the Council's own corporate objectives.
- **Community need** – defined by demonstrating that there is a genuine local demand or need for the project.
- **Heritage objectives** – defined by demonstrating that the project meets one or more of the objectives of this strategy.
- **Funding** – availability of appropriate funding sources and /or match.

- **Skills** – are there skills within the organisation or its partners to manage the project?
- **Timescale** – will the project be delivered within the short, medium or longer term?
- **Sustainability** – is there environmental, economic, organisational capacity?
- **Current Council Priority** – if all relevant criteria are fulfilled is this a project the Council would wish to consider as a priority?

By assessing potential projects against these criteria, using a simple assessment matrix (see below), it is possible to identify those proposals that have most chance of success and to prioritise accordingly.

Project	Description	Lead/ Partners	Strategic Fit	Community Need	Meets Heritage Objectives	Funding	Skills	Timescale	Sustainability	Current Council Priority

5.4 Monitoring, evaluation and review

The heritage strategy and its action plan will be regularly monitored and updated to ensure that targets are achieved and that new initiatives are fed into an evolving and ‘living’ document. It is important that local people are kept informed of progress and feel included in this process.

Within the Council there are many services and people involved in heritage issues. Each has their own perspective where heritage cuts across their core responsibilities. Implementation of this strategy will need a co-ordinated approach to all aspects of heritage, working across different departments and services.

The most effective achieving this is to convene a Heritage Steering Group, composed of officers and key external partners, to drive the strategy forward. This should meet quarterly to monitor and review progress and compile and disseminate an annual evaluation report. Council officers should be from those services with direct or indirect responsibility for heritage issues (e.g. Museums, Archives, Heritage, Parks and Countryside, Conservation, Education, Libraries, Regeneration and Destination Marketing). External members would represent different areas of expertise and influence, such as the independent museum/attractions sector, civic movement, friends groups, community education, ethnic minority representation and special needs.

As well as championing the heritage strategy and ensuring a co-ordinated approach to delivery, this group could do much to promote heritage in its widest sense and ensure that the Council, partners and community work together towards common objectives.

5.5 Celebrating and promoting achievement

This strategy is not just a document for Wirral Council but for the whole community. Just as its success will depend on working in partnership, it will be equally important for everyone involved in Wirral's heritage to celebrate achievements in delivering projects or meeting key milestones. By promoting best practice, disseminating achievement and keeping local people informed of progress, the strategy will clearly demonstrate the commitment the people of Wirral have towards their heritage and their determination to safeguard it for future generations.

Appendix 1: Action Plan

Page no: refers to page number in the strategy document.

Timescale: S = short (within 1 year); M = medium (2 -3 years); L = long (3 years and over); OG = Ongoing

Strategy Themes:

- A. Stewardship and Protection – conserving Wirral’s heritage for future generations.
- B. Regeneration – using heritage as a driver for economic development, inward investment and supporting sustainable communities.
- C. Learning – maximising the role of heritage in supporting education, training and life-long learning.
- D. Participation – ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access, enjoy and participate in heritage.
- E. Celebration – recognising and utilising the part heritage can play in promoting local identity, social cohesion and civic and community pride.

Priority: L = low; M = medium; H = high

Page No.	Actions	Time-scale	Lead	Support/Partners	Indicative Funding	Key Tasks and Milestones	Priority
	STEWARDSHIP AND PROTECTION						
35	Ensure that all the Conservation Areas within the borough have a formally adopted Management Plan and a cycle of appraisals as part of the process.	M/OG	Conservation & Design Team	Conservation Area Forum/Conservation Partnerships	Within existing resources	All Conservation Areas having an adopted Management Plan by 2013. English Heritage recommend appraisal every 5 years.	H
35	Continue to review all existing Conservation Areas and to designate new Conservation Areas as appropriate.	M	Conservation & Design Team	English Heritage, local residents	Within existing resources	Achieve Conservation Area status for Lower Bebington, Storeton, Noctorum, Raby, Landican and Brimstage.	M
35	Recognise the importance of retaining the character of	OG	Conservation & Design Team/	Conservation Area Forum	Within existing resources, but	Areas at risk to be identified through Conservation Area	H

	Conservation Areas and take appropriate measures, including the application of Article 4 Directions, to limit the impact of small-scale changes.		Planning Enforcement Team		recognising that enforcement will be an additional burden of officer time.	appraisals and only applied after consultation with local residents and landowners.	
35	Ensure that as many as possible of the borough's historic buildings, sites and structures are statutorily protected through the listing process.	OG	Conservation & Design Team Parks and Countryside Service and Asset Management (historic structures within parks and cemeteries) Senior Architectural Assistant (War Memorials)	Conservation Area Forum, WHHA, local amenity societies, Friends Groups, English Heritage, War Memorials Trust.	Within existing resources.	Work with voluntary sector to identify buildings worthy of spot-listing. Continue the on-going programme of spot-listing war memorials.	M
36	Explore the practicalities of compiling a non-statutory 'Local List' for Wirral and support the work of local organisations and individuals in identifying buildings of local interest and merit.	S	Conservation and Design Team/Heritage Outreach Officer	WHHA, local amenity societies	Feasibility within existing resources; implementation will have resource implications.	Explore feasibility and cost implications and if achievable, prepare a programme of work to undertaken in partnership with the voluntary sector.	H
36	Continue to take a pro-active approach to the conservation and maintenance to the borough's war memorials.	2014	Asset Management	Civic societies, English Heritage, War Memorials Trust	Within existing resources	Complete cleaning, repair and re-inscription in time for 2014 WW I and WW II commemorations.	H
37	Work pro-actively with private owners to encourage regular repairs and maintenance and, where appropriate, take	OG	Conservation & Design Team, Enforcement Team		Within existing resources	Ensure that owners of historic assets are aware of their value and their responsibilities in relation to looking after and maintaining	M

	enforcement action to safeguard neglected buildings.					their buildings.	
38	Continue to work with English Heritage and property/site owners to seek creative solutions and funding packages for buildings and sites on the 'Heritage at Risk' Register to ensure their long-term sustainability.	OG	Conservation & Design Team, Regeneration Teams	English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, Architectural Heritage Fund.	Within existing resources; English Heritage funding is available for buildings and sites on the HAR register.	Removal of buildings/sites from Heritage at Risk Register. Explore opportunities for managing buildings/sites through Building Preservation Trusts.	H
38	Support churches, congregations and other religious authorities to help them adapt religious buildings to meet the needs of both worshippers and the wider community, whilst ensuring that their historic features and fabric are preserved.	OG	Conservation & Design Team, Regeneration Teams	Individual churches and places of worship; Wirral Churches Together; English Heritage; Churches Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Ensure churches and other religious congregations are aware of support mechanisms e.g. the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings 'Faith in Maintenance' training programme and English Heritage partnership funding available for 3 year Support Officer posts for churches.	M
39	Ensure Wirral Council promotes the highest standards in archaeology and is able to secure the best possible archaeological advice on development and planning issues.	S	Wirral Council		If external archaeological expertise is to be commissioned there will be financial implications.	Explore options for obtaining specialist archaeological advice, including service level agreements with archaeological units or individual project commissions.	H
39	Actively encourage professionally led community archaeology projects as a means of furthering our knowledge of the history of the borough.	OG	Conservation & Design Team/Heritage Outreach Officer	Universities, NML, archaeological societies, community groups.	Within existing resources; dependent upon attracting external funding.	Identify sites of priority interest and work with partners to facilitate archaeological investigations.	M
40	Take appropriate measures	OG	Conservation &	Wirral Archives,	Within existing	Important recording work has	M

	to ensure that Wirral's historic buildings and archaeological sites are adequately recorded and that, where appropriate, these records are made publicly accessible.		Design Team	NML, archaeological societies, universities, civic and amenity societies.	resources.	already been done by local societies; build on this work and develop an action plan to identify buildings and sites in greatest need of recording.	
40	Work with Biological Records Centres and Local Biodiversity Partnerships to enable data collection and the voluntary recording of wildlife on Wirral, and ensure the best information is used to inform the management of our natural heritage.	OG	Parks and Countryside Service	Biological Records Centres, Wildlife Trusts, Liverpool Museums Service, Local Biodiversity Partnerships	Within existing resources.	Be part of the establishment nature partnerships.	M
41	Identify funding for the restoration of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens and new end use for the chapels.	S/M	Parks and Countryside Service	English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, Friends of Flaybrick	Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage	Continue to work with English Heritage to agree priority actions and submit proposal to HLF for funding package.	H
41	Ensure that the significance of historic parks, gardens, landscapes and cemeteries are recognised and understood and that their importance is reflected in management strategies and action plans.	S/M	Parks and Countryside Service	HLF EH Friends of Parks	Within existing resources	Agreed management strategies/action plans in place.	H
41	Produce a partnership plan with Friends Groups, environmental groups and other stakeholders to ensure that the views of heritage groups are properly represented in the emerging Parks and Countryside Service Plan.	S/M	Parks and Countryside Service	All partners and stakeholders	Within existing resources	Partnership plan created in the Parks and Countryside Service Plan.	H

41	Ensure the importance of natural heritage and biodiversity is recognised and understood and that this is reflected in all Parks Management Plans.	S/M	Parks and Countryside Service	All partners and stakeholders	Within existing resources	Ongoing	H
41	Work with Natural England, the Wirral Biodiversity and Local Sites Partnership and other partners in the public, private the voluntary sectors to manage all Wirral's designated nature sites towards favourable condition.	M/L	Parks and Countryside Service	Natural England, Wildlife Trust, Biodiversity and Local Sites Partnership	Some additional funding will need to be identified	Create a target in the Parks and Countryside Service Plan	H
42	Work in partnership with local communities and neighbourhoods so that they have the knowledge skills and capacity to engage effectively in the planning process.	S/M	Conservation & Design Team; Planning Teams; Engagement Teams	Community groups, amenity societies	Cost implications will need to be assessed within the context of new planning legislation.	Research best practice nationally and utilise support and training offered by Places Matter! and other organisations.	H
42	Increase access to Wirral's archive collections through programmes of digitisation and greater on-line access.		Wirral Archives	North West Digital Preservation Trust.	Within existing resources but external funding sources will be explored.	Improved catalogues and digital images to be added to Wirral Archives website.	H
43	Continue to develop exhibitions with NML and other partners, complementing the Museum Service's own collections with other public and private collections, to create exhibitions of regional and national significance	M	Wirral Museums Service	National Museums Liverpool, Cheshire West and Cheshire Museums Service, regional and national museums services	Within existing resources but external funding sources will be explored.	Work in collaboration with NML and other partners to produce a major exhibition on the 19 th century Liverpool School of Artists.	M

	Implement the Museums Service restructure, to facilitate more effective care and display of collections.	S/M	Museums Service	HR, Senior Management Team	Within existing resources although external funding will be sought to fund additional project staff.	First stage of restructure to be in place by April 2012.	H
44	Purchase new documentation software and complete documentation of the Museum's collections.	S/M	Museums Service	Insurance Team	Within existing resources with a contribution from the Risk Management Fund.	Documentation completed by April 2012; retrospective documentation completed by April 2016.	H
3	REGENERATION						
45	Ensure that developers and investors are made fully aware of the importance of Wirral's heritage and the social and economic benefits of retaining and enhancing heritage within regeneration projects.	OG	Planning Division, Inward Investment team	Civic and amenity societies.	Within existing resources	Heritage embedded into regeneration projects. Priority is Bromborough Pool village and Bromborough landfill site.	H
45	Ensure that major long-term developments such as Wirral Waters and the Mersey Coastal Park Strategy maximise the opportunities to conserve, enhance and promote key heritage assets and also consider the local character of the area.	OG	Strategic Investment	Conservation/ Planning/ Regeneration teams.	Within existing resources.	Heritage embedded into regeneration projects.	H
46	Work with communities to ensure that the Hoylake, West Kirby, Deeside and the Mersey Coast regeneration proposals reflect and	M	Regeneration Teams	Planning and Conservation teams; local community groups including local civic societies	Funding packages to be identified.	Funding packages in place with view to complete projects by 2014.	M

	interpret local heritage.						
46	Identify a funding package which will deliver the visitor interpretation centre at Thurstaston.	M	Regeneration Teams	Parks and Countryside Service Parks Development Friends of Thurstaston	Partial funding in place	Match funding identified	H
46	Work with local residents and Conservation Area Partnerships to retain the special character of historic suburbs.	OG	Conservation and Design Team	Conservation Area Partnerships	Within existing resources	Plans agreed for retention	
	Maximise opportunities to promote heritage as part of Wirral's wider tourism offer and ensure that the importance of the borough's historic and natural environments are reflected in destination marketing strategies.	OG	Tourism/Destination Marketing	Wirral Attractions Partnership, Wirral Coastal Partnership, The Mersey Partnership, Museums Service, Mersey Ferries.	Within existing resources	The role heritage plays in enhancing the visitor experience to be reflected in marketing strategies and publications. Continue to support the work of local and regional partnerships and their contribution to the promotion of heritage issues.	H
5	LEARNING						
47	Work across Council departments, particularly those promoting community development and the interests of young and elderly people, to utilise heritage learning programmes to deliver strategic and corporate objectives.	OG	Museums Service (Engagement Manager); CYPD, Older Peoples' Services	Learning Officers, Schools, Colleges Universities, Housing Associations, Child minders	Within existing resources	Establish inter-departmental meetings, to identify areas where heritage can be used to address social agendas	H
48	Refocus the Museum Service structure to achieve a stronger emphasis on formal and informal learning and community	S	Museums Service	HR, Senior Management Team	Short-term restructure within existing resources; additional	Redefine the Education Officer role with two part-time Learning Officer posts, to develop and deliver cross-curricular activities across the	H

	engagement.				posts dependent upon external funding.	primary and secondary sectors.	
48	Develop and implement an Informal Learning Strategy with an underpinning funding strategy.	S	Museums Service	Wirral Lifelong Learning Team	Initially within existing resources	Strategy completed by December 2012 Funding plan in place by December 2012	H
48	Work across Council Departments and with schools and external partners to ensure that heritage, natural history and local history continue to be taught in local schools and are embedded into cross-curricular work.	M	Museums Service, CYPD	Schools	Within existing resources	Maximise opportunities created by changes to the curriculum at secondary and primary levels to strengthen heritage work in schools.	M
49	Work towards achieving the 'Learning Outside the Classroom' accredited standard for all education offered by the Parks and Countryside Service.	M	Parks and Countryside Service	Schools	Within existing resources	Learning Outside the Classroom accreditation achieved.	L
49	Work with the community sector to establish links with schools and provide the necessary support for them to work with pupils and students.	S	Heritage Outreach Officer, Museums Service	Local societies and voluntary heritage sector	Within existing resources	Compile a database of volunteers from local societies wishing to work in schools, assist with legal issues and act as a broker between schools and community volunteers.	H
50	Recognise the deficit heritage skills and explore the possibilities of bringing together education, training and learning organisations to consider skills development in the heritage sector, particularly	M	Museums Service/Heritage Outreach Officer/ Archivist/Conservation Officer	Colleges and Higher Education establishments	Initially within existing resources – potential for HLF funding	Agreed plan for skills development by 2014.	M

	traditional craft and construction skills.						
5	PARTICIPATION						
51	Implement the Museums Service Community Engagement Programme.	M	Museums Service	Wirral Methodist Housing Association, Barnardos, Cultural Inclusion Officer	Funding Plan in preparation.	Increase the number of community engagement projects by 50% year on year for the next 3 years.	H
51	Work with partners to develop a 'Heritage and Health' programme and identify funding options.	S	Heritage Outreach Officer	PCTs, Age Concern, health practitioners, MENCAP	Resources to be identified as part of the programme development.	Programme developed and funding sources identified by March 2012.	H
51	Prioritise targeting heritage and outreach activity towards excluded groups and work with them to devise projects which directly meet their physical, intellectual and cultural needs.	OG	Museums Service, Heritage Outreach Officer, Archives Service	Local historic societies	Within existing resources, with potential project support from Heritage Lottery Fund.	Work pro-actively with excluded groups to identify barriers to engagement. Explore best practice nationally (e.g. Black Heritage Network, MENCAP Access to Heritage initiative) and build on their experiences in project development.	H
51	Continue to support the work of local history, heritage and amenity groups, through helping with skills development and funding advice, so that they can maximise their work within local communities.	OG	Heritage Outreach Officer, Museums Service (Engagement Manager), Parks and Countryside Service.	WHHA, Friends Groups, civic and amenity societies.	Existing resources/HLF	Organise skills development and funding workshops for the voluntary heritage sector. Work with outside agencies e.g. English Heritage, Civic Voice and Places Matter!) to disseminate best practice.	M
51	Help to develop the profile of the Wirral History and Heritage Association as an independent networking organisation which is recognised and supported by local societies	OG	Wirral History and Heritage Association	Heritage Outreach Officer, Museums Service (Principal Museums Officer), WHHA member organisations.	Within existing resources/ possible HLF bid	WHHA web-site fully operational and maintained by March 2012. Explore opportunities for skills development to ensure sustainability of the	H

	throughout the borough.					organisation.	
51	Support Wirral History and Heritage Association in organising Wirral's Heritage Open Days and encourage the development of a longer and more varied cultural programme.	OG	Wirral History & Heritage Association	Heritage Outreach Officer; building owners, local volunteers	Currently within existing resources, although if HODs continue to grow, additional funding sources may have to be identified.	Increase the number of HODs events by 10% in 2012 and extend the range of activities.	H
52	Actively encourage wider participation in heritage and the interpretation of Wirral's history, through supporting the work of community led initiatives.	M	Heritage Outreach Officer/Engagement Manager	Community Groups, Friends Groups, Hoylake Lifeboat Museum, Wilfred Owen Story, New Brighton Heritage Centre, Charles Dawson Brown Museum.	Within existing resources/HLF	Recognise the importance of the voluntary heritage sector in developing and managing key heritage sites and venues; foster partnership working and maximise the use of these venues as 'hubs' for heritage activity.	H
52	Continue to work with community groups and partners to provide a varied, high quality events programme through the Parks and Countryside Service.	OG	Parks and Countryside Service	Community Groups, Friends Groups, Heritage Groups, Environmental Groups, Wildlife Trust, RSPB, other Partners and Stakeholders	Within existing resources	Update programme on Council internet site to keep list of events up to date	H
52	Compile an audit of current interpretative provision and develop a heritage interpretation strategy for the borough.	M	Heritage Outreach Officer, Museums Service, Parks and Countryside Service, Destination Marketing Team.	Community Groups, Friends Groups	Within existing resources	A comprehensive review of existing interpretation will provide the framework for identifying new opportunities and provide a framework for future development and investment.	M
53	Develop a programme to implement the use of new	L	Museums Service		Within existing resources/HLF	Research the application of new technologies for	M

	technologies to interpret museum sites and explore the potential for wider application across the borough.					interpretation. Secure external funding to implement, with Birkenhead Priory as priority.	
53	Explore the potential to further promote heritage and heritage activity through an enhanced website.	S	Museums Service/Finance Department/Corporate Marketing	All Council services with a responsibility for heritage	Within existing resources	Research best practice by other authorities in order to put forward an informed business case.	H
1	CELEBRATION						
54	Work with partners to promote initiatives which celebrate and raise the profile of Wirral's heritage and promote a positive image of the borough.	OG	Principal Museums Officer/Tourism and Destination Marketing	Engagement Manager/ Audience Development Manager	Within existing resources	Support borough-wide initiatives like Heritage Open Days and 2012 'Year of Coast and Countryside'.	M
54	Increase the number of Wirral's Parks achieving the Green Flag standard.	OG	Parks and Countryside Service	Friends Groups, other partners and stakeholders	Within existing resources	Create a target for increase in the Parks and Countryside Service Plan	H
54	Support local communities in celebrating those aspects of their local heritage which are important to them and create opportunities for them to get involved in activities which help shape the future of their area.		Heritage Outreach Officer/Conservation & Design Team/Museum Service	Local communities	Within existing resources.	Encourage greater community ownership of projects and work to create the conditions which support such initiatives and allow them to happen.	H
55	Ensure that individual and collective memories are captured and celebrated through supporting reminiscence and recording projects.	S/OG	Heritage Outreach Officer/Wirral Archives/Library Service	Community groups, local/family history societies, schools and youth groups.	Within existing resources/HLF	Actively promote reminiscence projects by developing pilot project/s which demonstrate their social benefits as well as heritage value. Aim for initial pilot to be delivered during 2012.	M
55	Explore the potential for training volunteer 'Heritage Ambassadors' to promote	S	Heritage Outreach Officer/Tourism	Museums Service, Archives, community groups.	Within existing resources/HLF	Draft training programme has been drawn up; further development required.	M

	heritage throughout the borough.						
55	Work more closely with other sectors to ensure that heritage is an integral part of Wirral's wider cultural offer.	OG	Wirral Attractions Partnership	Museums Service, Arts Service, Archives, Tourism/Libraries	Within existing resources	Wirral already does much to present an integrated cultural offer; build on existing and create new opportunities to strengthen cultural links.	H

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	WIRRAL MUSEUMS SERVICE FORWARD PLAN 2011-2016
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DAVID GREEN
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR CHRIS MEADEN
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are asked to agree the Wirral Museums Service Forward Plan 2011-2016.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 That Committee adopts the Museums Service Forward Plan for 2011-2016.
- 2.2 That a restructure of the staffing of the Museum Service be carried out as soon as possible to support the implementation of the adopted plan.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 To enable the Museums Service Forward Plan to be implemented therefore building on the current investment of £2m in capital expenditure by the Council.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 At their meeting on 10 March 2011 (minute 133) Committee agreed that a draft business development plan for Wirral Museums Service be taken to interested groups for consultation. This consultation took place in June 2011. Two focus groups were held, one for stakeholders and existing/potential partners and one for representatives from local schools. In addition the plan was circulated to the Museums Service staff team in June and a focus group was held with the staff in October 2011. The outcomes of the consultations have informed the re-writing of the Museums Service Forward Plan.
- 4.2 One goal of Wirral Council's Corporate Plan is to provide high quality, value for money leisure and cultural facilities for Wirral residents and one of the projects is to develop the Museums Service and implement a marketing and promotions plan, with a target of increasing the visitor numbers by 10% this year.
- 4.3 Research undertaken as part of the Active People Survey between 2008 and 2010 clearly shows that Wirral has a population that enjoys visiting galleries

and museums: Wirral had the highest percentage of gallery or museum visitors in Merseyside, though those visits can have taken place anywhere. The 2009 Wirral Place Survey Findings also gave a high level of satisfaction with museums and galleries. Effective marketing and promotion should encourage increased visits to Wirral's own Museums Service.

- 4.4 The Museums Service is also planning for a change in the way it engages with its communities. The Service has always responded positively to working with the community, whether through school visits or hosting group meetings, however, for the most part, this has been reactive. The Forward Plan proposes that community engagement will become more strategic and much more proactive. The Museums Service will actively seek target groups to work with – isolated elders or young carers for example – and build partnerships that will support the continuation of successful projects.
- 4.5 This Forward Plan is predicated on a successful restructure of the staff team. This will enable the Service to maintain or increase opening hours across the sites. It will make better use of the talents and expertise within the staff team and enable them to drive the engagement agenda. At their meeting on 10 March 2011 (minute 133) Committee agreed that a review of the staffing structure of the Museums Service be carried out as soon as possible.
- 4.6 In 2010 the Museums Service was granted approximately £2 million of capital to help safeguard the buildings at Birkenhead Priory and improve the facilities at both the Priory and the Williamson Art Gallery. The resulting work is underway and is due to be completed at the end of 2012.
- 4.7 The Museums Service has recently received national awards for the exhibitions 'A Textile Dynasty: Arthur H Lee & Sons, Birkenhead', which won the National Museums & Heritage Award in 2010 as the 'Industry's Favourite', and 'Above the Clouds: Mallory & Irvine and the Quest for Everest', which was Highly Commended in the 'Project on a Limited Budget' section of the same National Awards. Both the Gallery and the Priory are fully Accredited under the national scheme overseen by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. In 2010 both sites had their approval renewed under the VAQAS (Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme) standard.
- 4.8 Following consultation on the Forward Plan the Mission Statement and the Core Aims have been amended.

Mission Statement: To provide opportunities for all Wirral people and visitors to engage with our collections and temporary exhibitions for inspiration, learning and enjoyment.

Core Aims:

- To continue to be an Accredited museums service.
- To collect, conserve and exhibit 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 activities within the museums by all sections of society.
- To run an active exhibition programme bringing the best of work from other public and private collections for display.
- 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 Museums Service.

These core aims will be achieved by;

- increased levels of engagement over each site
- becoming a key community hub embedded in its local neighbourhood,
- further developing a vibrant cultural resource enjoyed and valued by Wirral residents and visitors to the borough,

4.9 The Forward Plan for Wirral Museums Service has not made reference to Wirral Transport Museum or the Heritage Tramway. The tendering process that will enable transfer of ownership for these heritage assets is ongoing. Therefore, it was deemed inappropriate to plan for their future within the Museums Service.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 Not exploiting all funding opportunities.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None at this stage.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Stakeholders, existing and potential partners, volunteers, local schools and the staff have been consulted.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 The service is seeking to increase the involvement of volunteers, the local community and faith groups.

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

9.1 Further to the decisions made in the SAR process and post-EVR a staffing re-structure has become necessary. The original staff structure covering multiple sites is inappropriate and staff resources require to be effectively deployed across the remaining service to support the development proposals of the Forward Plan.

There is a budget of £691,800 for the Museum Service for 2011/12 (including a heritage budget of £135,000).

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Williamson Art Gallery & Museum is fully accessible to all members of the community, however access issues will be addressed at Birkenhead Priory & St Mary's Tower during the capital works programme.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No (*delete as applicable*)

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The improvements to the Williamson Art Gallery will assist in carbon reductions.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are none arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: *Jim Lester*
Head of Cultural Services
telephone: (0151) 606 2082
email: jimlester@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Wirral Museum Service Forward Plan 2011-2016

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Sustainable Communities OSC	10 March 2011

(Author: Please see overleaf)

Corporate Services Briefing	
Title:	Assessing impact of policy and funding decisions
Date:	17 February 2011
To:	Chief Officers
Author:	Jacqui Cross – Corporate Equality Manager

Context

The Equality Duty 2010 places general and specific duties on public organisations:

1. General Duties (legal requirement)
 - (1.1) To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - (1.2) To advance equality of opportunity
 - (1.3) To foster good relations between different groups of people

2. Specific Duty (legal requirement)
 - (2.1) Publish sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with general duties **by 30 July 2011**, including:
 - (2.1.1) Information on the effect that policy / funding decisions will have / have had on protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership).
 - (2.1.2) Evidence of analysis undertaken.
 - (2.1.3) Evidence of information used in analysis.
 - (2.1.4) Details of any engagement undertaken (internal and external)

Implications for Chief Officers

To ensure compliance with the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Chief Officers must give due consideration to protected groups when making policy and / or funding decisions which will affect services, the workforce or communities. Such consideration must be documented (for example, within minutes, reports, equality impact assessments).

Therefore, please find a template overleaf for Chief Officers to use as a prompt when assessing impact.

Assessing Impact of Policy and Funding Decisions

1. What is being proposed?
2. Is the proposal part of the Corporate Plan? If so, which objective?
3. Has a criteria been drawn up for making a decision? If so, what are the criteria?
4. Have you consulted or taken advice from anyone (internal or external) to inform your decision? If so please state who.
5. What information, data or research have you used to inform your decision?
6. Will the proposal have a favourable or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?
7. What is your decision?
8. Please document the details of this impact assessment in a memo, set of minutes, in a report, or equality impact assessment and send a copy to Kevin Adderley, who will store the information confidentially and organise the relevant details for publishing on the internet in conjunction with the Corporate Equality Manager.

Wirral Museums Service
Forward Plan 2011-2016

**Williamson Art Gallery & Museum
and
Birkenhead Priory & St. Mary's Tower**

Wirral Council, Technical Services Department



CONTENTS

		pg
1.0	INTRODUCTION	
1.1	Mission Statement	
1.2	Context	
2.0	THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE MUSEUMS SERVICE	
2.1	Museums Service core aims	
2.2	Vision for Williamson Art Gallery & Museum	
2.3	Vision for Birkenhead Priory & St. Mary's Tower	
2.4	Links to the Corporate Plan	
2.5	Strategic aims	
3.0	THE BUILDINGS	
3.1	Williamson Art Gallery & Museum	
3.2	Birkenhead Priory & St. Mary's Tower	
4.0	COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS	
4.1	Collections	
4.2	Documentation	
4.3	Exhibitions	
5.0	VISITOR SERVICES	
5.1	Visitors and Users	
5.2	Catering	
5.3	Retail	
6.0	ENGAGEMENT	
6.1	Formal learning	
6.2	Informal learning	
6.3	Links with Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Providers	
6.4	Community Engagement	
Appendices		
1	Accreditation application SWOT analysis	
2	Business planning SWOT analysis	
3	Risk Assessment	
4	Action Plan 2011/12	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mission statement:

To provide opportunities for all Wirral people and visitors to engage with our collections and temporary exhibitions for inspiration, learning and enjoyment.

1.2 Context

Wirral Museums Service is part of the Cultural Services division of the Department of Technical Services.

In 2009 Wirral Council made the decision to dispose of a number of building assets, which included Museums Service sites. The Council resolved:

That 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.

Council Minute 109, 9 February 2009

The disposal process is still ongoing. A tender process is being undertaken to find a new operator for Wirral Transport Museum, the Heritage Tramway and Pacific Road Arts Centre. Until the tender process is complete the Museums Service is responsible for Wirral Transport Museum and the Heritage Tramway, including staff. The lease on Shore Road Pumping Station, housing the Grasshopper pump, has been returned to Network Rail and the building is no longer open to the public. No decision has been made about the disposal or future of Egerton Bridge, although it is no longer a functioning visitor attraction and is currently secured against vandalism. The Council's Asset Management team are developing alternative uses within Council ownership for the former Wirral Museum (Birkenhead Town Hall).

Now Wirral Museums Service is being restructured, centred on the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and Birkenhead Priory, both of which are Accredited Museums under the current Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) Museum Accreditation Scheme.

The service offered by the Museums Service, now and in the future, is governed by the requirements of the Museums Accreditation Scheme. The present scheme is under review, especially following the demise of the MLA nationally, but it is expected that Wirral Museums Service will aspire to retain Accredited Museum status.

Accreditation is important to the Wirral Museums Service because restrictions are placed on the dissemination of Government money through MLA (and in the future through Arts Council England who will be taking over many of MLA's responsibilities) 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. Failure to meet minimum Accreditation standards would reduce public confidence in the service and compromise access to external funding opportunities, like the Heritage Lottery Fund.

2.0 THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE MUSEUMS SERVICE

2.1 Wirral Museums Service core aims:

- To continue to be an Accredited museums service.
- To collect, conserve and exhibit 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 activities within museums by all sections of society.
- To run an active exhibition programme bringing the best of work from other public and private collections to display.
- To ensure the ongoing 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 Museums Service.

2.2 Vision for Williamson Art Gallery & Museum:

By 2020 Williamson Art Gallery & Museum will be of an equal and complementary standing and profile as Lady Lever Art Gallery, the National Museums Liverpool site in Wirral.

2.3 Vision for Birkenhead Priory & St. Mary's Tower:

By 2020 Birkenhead Priory & St. Mary's Tower will no longer be on the Heritage at Risk Register and the fabric of the site will be properly maintained, conserved and interpreted to preserve it for future generations.

2.4 Links to the Corporate Plan and Technical Services Departmental Plan

Within the Corporate Plan for 2011 to 2014 Wirral Museums Service is referred to under the section 'Your NEIGHBOURHOOD'; specifically '... develop our museum service to increase visitors and make sure residents can benefit from the educational and leisure opportunities that can be offered.' This is translated into an action: 'Provide high quality, value for money leisure and cultural facilities for Wirral residents.' The focus for the first year is 'developing the museum service by implementing a marketing and promotions plan' and the target is to 'increase the number of visitors to the Williamson Art Gallery and Priory by 10% in 2011/12'.

Although the Museums Service is identified as contributing to the aims and objectives outlined in 'Your NEIGHBOURHOOD' the activity planned to achieve the target will also contribute to the achievement of other Council priorities:

Your FAMILY

- Improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers
- Improving provision, choice and outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities.
- Providing children and young people with access to a range of appropriate play and developmental opportunities which meet their needs.
- Working with the voluntary, community and faith sector to expand and communicate the support and guidance available to people in Wirral to maintain quality of life and maximum independence.

Your ECONOMY

- Supporting the Destination Marketing of Wirral as business and visitor location.

Your COUNCIL

- Ensuring every pound spent by the Council adds value to services or is returned to residents through its Council Tax requirement.
- Ensuring Council staff are supported at a time of rapid organisation change, well led and provided with the professional and personal development required to deliver outstanding customer service and the Council's agreed priorities.

2.5 Strategic aims:

In the next five years the Museums Service will:

- increase levels of engagement over both sites, measured by activity levels;
- be a key community hub embedded in its local neighbourhood, measured by usage levels;

- be a vibrant cultural resource enjoyed and valued by Wirral residents and visitors to the borough, measured by visitor surveys;

To achieve these aims, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Corporate Objectives, it is desirable to rearrange the way in which the Museums Service conducts its business. The Museums Service will be organised in terms of staffing and activity under three key headings which are linked and the necessity for close collaboration is paramount:

Collections & Exhibitions

– including the care & display of collections, documentation and exhibitions.

Visitor Services

– including building maintenance, the day-to-day operation of the sites, catering and retail.

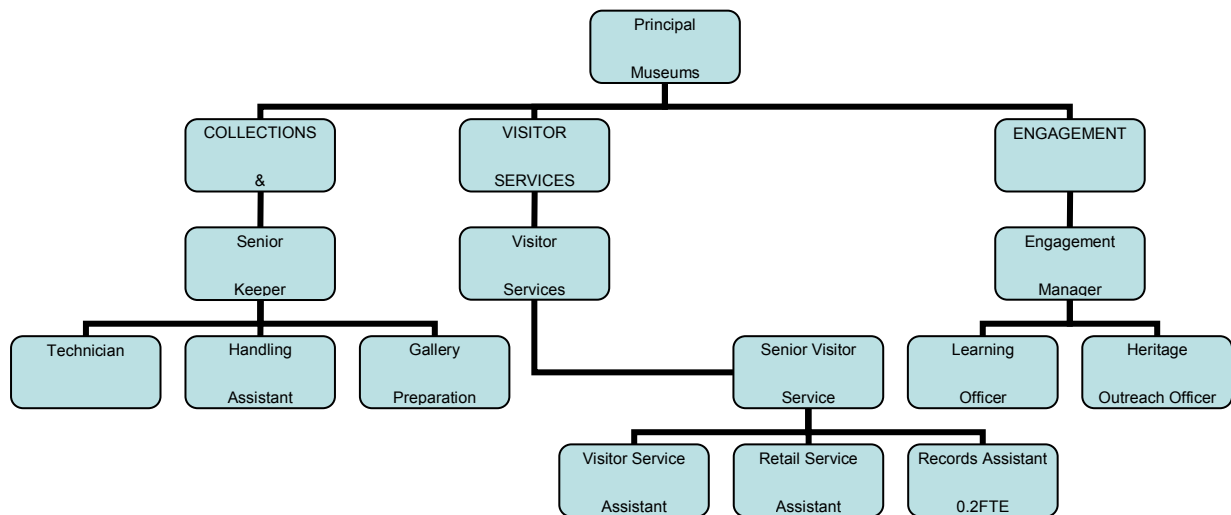
Engagement

– including formal and informal learning, community engagement, and development of funding & other opportunities.

This will require a staff restructure to match the skills and experience of the staff to the current and future needs of the Museums Service. It is unusual for a Museums Service of the size, and with collections of the importance, of Wirral's to operate with such a small staff base. There is now only one specialist museum professional, which limits the capacity to develop the collection, research into collection items, and preparation of exhibitions and displays. Monitoring conditions, documentation and conservation of collections and improving storage facilities are also of great importance as they have not been adequately addressed or budgeted for in recent years. Therefore, it is essential that there is a restructure to enable the most productive and effective use of the existing and future staff team. (The proposed staffing structure can be found on page 6.)

In addition, through the proposed Engagement function the Service will seek to:

- enhance the workforce by utilising internships, apprenticeships etc when they are available.
- seek external funding to enhance the staff team with project specific staff
- develop partnerships that support the achievement of the objectives.
- work with Higher Education Institutions to develop a programme of student placements that support the work of the Museums Service whilst providing valuable, 'real' work experience for the students.
- develop volunteer opportunities where appropriate.



Objective 2.5.1

Develop a Talent Management Plan to enable the best use of existing and future staff and any additional support engaged.

The management team of the Service is exploring ways of utilising new technology for interpretation and engagement. This has two elements:

Off-site

In the 21st Century it is increasingly important to have a substantial internet presence, as more people are deriving their information from this source. Museum collections are of interest to people across the world, as shown by the lending of objects for international exhibitions, but the organisation of loans or travelling is not possible for everyone. Remote access to museum collections and exhibitions gives a profile not achievable by other means and is a very cost effective and efficient way of distributing information and raising awareness.

At present, the Museums Service is seen in a couple of pages of the Wirral Council website and visitwirral.com, which provide basic information about the buildings and access. There is no provision for making this presence dynamic by giving up-to-date event, exhibition or display information, or for giving greater depth to the information provided. There is an aspiration, with the helpful cooperation of the Finance Department, to improve that by giving illustrated pages detailing collections and ultimately giving access to databases of collections. New documentation software will facilitate this type of access for research.

There is a Facebook page in the name of The Friends of the Williamson which has 296 followers and this type of visitor interaction is envisaged as an important route for the future, though its time-consuming nature will need to be balanced with the advantages of being involved.

On-site

The rapid developments in new technology, particularly Smartphones and other mobile internet-accessible devices, have created opportunities for interpretation and engagement, already in use in other galleries and heritage visitor attractions. Developments in technology enable visitors to access text and pictures, audio and video through their own mobile devices or on handsets provided by schools or the Museums Service. In addition for schools, teachers or museums staff can develop interactive tasks on site that can then be uploaded to a website for access when they return to school. The Museums Service can provide additional and supporting information on the website. One such provider already used in some Wirral schools and City Learning Centres is www.wildknowledge.co.uk.

This would potentially enable the Museums Service to provide self-guided tours at the sites, including much more detail than can be provided on a picture label, for example curator talks or video streams of the production process. This could also provide images of artefacts not usually displayed for conservation reasons. The technology would be particularly useful at Birkenhead Priory where the location of interpretation panels is problematic as the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and all the buildings are Listed by English Heritage.

It should be noted that website developments and provision of information for devices such as these are very time-consuming and require substantial knowledge to offer details at the right level.

Objective 2.5.2

Develop and agree a programme of implementation for new technologies for interpretation and engagement across the sites.

Secure external funding to implement the programme.

Finally the management team of the Museums Service will be working with the Corporate Communications Team to develop and implement bespoke marketing campaigns for the two sites:

- develop an active web presence for the Service and all it offers
- make better use of 'free' marketing opportunities presented by specialised and news web listings, social networking sites etc.
- identify and apply for awards every year.
- write and submit articles to the relevant journals and websites to promote the work being developed by the staff.

Objective 2.5.3

Develop and implement a marketing strategy.

3.0 THE BUILDINGS

3.1 Williamson Art Gallery & 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. Now designated a Grade 2 listed building by English Heritage, the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum houses the Council's collection and has permanent collection displays and a varied exhibition programme. Some rooms are available for hire for meetings and performances, a concert standard Steinway grand piano was purchased for the gallery with Arts Council support in the 1970's.

The Williamson is Accredited under MLA Accreditation Scheme and has a VAQAS (Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme) Award. There is a small but active 'Friends' society, the Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery & Wirral Museums (Registered Charity no.514641) which also has interests in the whole Museums Service. The Gallery has close links with schools, local art societies and Wirral Art School, whose annual Degree Show is held at the Williamson.

The potential for built development at the gallery has been under discussion for many years, especially because of the internal quadrangles which allow expansion without affecting the outside appearance of the listed building. Beginning in 2011 the Council is investing in the region of £1.3m in capital development and refurbishment of the gallery. The work includes:

- overhauling the roof and replacement the roof lanterns, now complete
- improving ramped access to the front of the building,
- using the small quadrangle to create more storage space allowing existing galleries to be returned to public use,
- using a portion of the large quadrangle to provide more toilet facilities and additional office accommodation (remaining space allows some future development potential),
- creating a small kitchen and serving area in Gallery 14 to enable a shop and café to operate in the building,
- relocating the reception desk and improving the facilities for the Museums Assistants (Visitor Services Assistants),
- creating a Changing Place, with fully accessible provision,
- installing hidden kitchenettes in Galleries 11 and 12 so that they can be used as a Green Room for performances and an education and family learning or meeting space,
- installing glass doors between some of the galleries to help with environmental control and improve fire safety,
- creating ramped access at the rear of the building to create a loading bay, improve the movement of the collection throughout the building and improve fire safety evacuation.

3.2 Birkenhead Priory & St. Mary's Tower

Birkenhead Priory includes the oldest standing building on Merseyside, dating from about 1150. The entire site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument which includes buildings listed at Grade 1, Grade 2* and Grade 2. There are a number of attractions on the site including the Cloister, the Chapter House, the Undercroft and the Refectory and the Tower of the former St. Mary's Church, Birkenhead's first parish church. 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 Mersey. The Refectory can be hired for functions and events, though facilities are limited. The Priory Parish regularly uses the Chapter House as a place of worship and the Scriptorium is dedicated to HMS Conway as a chapel. Within St. Mary's Tower is a memorial to the lives lost in 1939 when the Royal Navy submarine Thetis, built at Lairds, sank during sea trials. Birkenhead Priory is Accredited under the MLA Accreditation Scheme and has a VAQAS award.

The Priory site is blighted by its location adjacent to run-down small-scale industrial units: the approach to the site is unappealing and unattractive. Access is difficult on foot, requiring negotiating the A41 and the Mersey Tunnel entrance, and signage is unclear. The limited parking area and street parking restrictions are a deterrent for event organisers. The car park at the rear of the area has never been used fully as it does not have ramped access to the site, but Church Street is an enclosed cul-de-sac and is often used by the local scrap merchants for wrecked cars, which worries visitors.

In 2009 the site was placed on the Heritage at Risk Register by English Heritage. Also in this year the Council commissioned, with support from English Heritage, a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the site.

Whilst the CMP was being developed the Council agreed around £730,000 of capital investment for the Priory. The work, based on a Condition Survey that formed part of the CMP, includes:

- refurbishment of St. Mary's Tower,
- resolving the drainage issues in the Cloister,
- improving the egress from the Refectory,
- installing a lift to provide access to the Refectory for those with buggies or ambulatory difficulties,
- refurbishing the toilets,
- repairing or removing all the railings on and around the site,
- clearing the car park,
- installing lift access from the car park to the site.

4.0 COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

4.1 The Collections

The Wirral Museums collection housed at the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum largely comprises:

- Fine art, particularly 18th and 19th century watercolour paintings and drawings; work by regionally and locally important artists over three centuries; Philip Wilson Steer (born 1860 in Birkenhead)
- Maritime models and pictures, particularly vessels built at Cammell Laird and its predecessor shipyards, and the Mersey Ferries
- Ceramics – most noteworthy is the nationally important Della Robbia Pottery, made in Birkenhead 1894-1906; Liverpool porcelain and Seacombe Pottery
- Arthur H. Lee & Sons, a fascinating and unusually complete record of the 'Tapestry Works' of A.H. Lee & Sons, operating in Birkenhead 1908-1970, including designs and fabric samples
- Social history artefacts – particularly useful as educational tools and drawing on a wide range of ages and experiences
- Archaeology, a small local collection but also some important Cypriot artefacts, with Greek, Egyptian and Roman items
- Civic Silver, collections drawn from the constituent councils of Wirral pre-1974

This is by no means an exhaustive list of collections, which vary widely in importance. The Fine Art collections are considered probably among the best five in the North West. Very many of the items have been collected by donation or bequest from local people since 1912, when Birkenhead's first museum opened, in an effort to develop a relevant and interesting collection. It is still added to by the same means and by judicious but infrequent purchases. The value of the Fine Art collection is the most volatile of the collections as it is subject to market pressures and the dictates of fashion.

At Birkenhead Priory a selection of 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 or for temporary exhibitions. The HMS Conway collections in the Scriptorium belong to the Friends of HMS Conway and are not formally loaned to Wirral Museums Service.

Objective 4.1

Update valuation of Museum collection, with especial reference to the Fine Art collection.

4.2 Documentation

Owing to a severe shortage of professional staff time there is a backlog of documentation which is in need of addressing. A Documentation Plan was drawn up in 2008 with timetables subsequently revised (see Appendix 5) at the request of the Council's Risk Management division and updates have been reported to the Audit & Risk Management Committee, most recently on 30.06.2010 when it was stated that action needs to be taken to address the issue in a timely manner. A payment from the Risk Management Fund was previously agreed to enable the work to be undertaken.

The requirement is to purchase and license a new specialist software system (the most cost-effective and acknowledged industry standard is MODES) and, using short-term contract staff, produce documentation of artefacts received in recent years and transfer information on older collections to a new system. Most of the work is to be completed by December 2012, the final stages, including retrospective documentation by April 2016.

The expertise required is mostly available with existing staff, and with suitable training, much of the clerical work can be completed by junior staff, possibly as work-experience before beginning post-graduate training or taking up a professional museums post. Some additional specialist knowledge will require consultation with other museums, mostly local i.e. National Museums Liverpool and Grosvenor Museum, Chester.

Collection valuations have been undertaken periodically by the Principal Museums Officer using published and on-line sources, which was chosen as more cost-effective than commissioning professional valuations by an outside body. It is proposed that the resources be retained to enable continuation of this exercise. The historic value of the collections of paintings and other objects held in the Council's Art Galleries, Museums and Archives is considered incalculable due to their unique nature, but an indicative value of Community Assets is calculated for audit and insurance purposes, as approved by the Audit Commission. The current valuation of collections housed within the Wirral Museums Service (including loans in and excluding transport collections) is £11,639,990, but this is due for revision as a result of improved documentation.

Publication of collection details has been completed in various ways. In recent years a colour catalogue of 100 watercolour highlights from the collection was published when this selection of works formed an exhibition in Ravenna, Italy. A small illustrated booklet of work by Philip Wilson Steer and monographs on some local artists have been published. The most recent, in July 2010, is 'Hopps around Wallasey', with 60 paintings reproduced, a collaboration with Wallasey History Society and Bluecoat Press. Staff are currently working with graphic designers within Wirral Council to produce a souvenir booklet linked to A Textile Dynasty, the Tapestry Works exhibition.

In collaboration with the Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF), approximately 1400 oil paintings in Wirral's collection were photographed and they are now available on-line via the 'Your Paintings' section on the BBC website. Some of these are already visible on the website of The National Inventory of Continental European Paintings. In addition these paintings will be fully illustrated in colour and form the largest part of the PCF's first Merseyside volume of Oil Paintings in Public Collections when it is published in the near future.

Objective 4.2

Purchase MODES documentation software, install and train staff to operate, and clear documentation backlog.

Complete retrospective documentation using MODES software.

4.3 Exhibitions

A prime purpose of the Museums Service is to conserve and exhibit the collections in its care. In addition, a regular and varied exhibition programme both uses and complements the collection displays. It is the mixture of unique items in the collection and the changing exhibitions that brings in regular visitors. The exhibition programme embraces work by local artists, one of the most important exhibitions being the annual Wirral Spring Exhibition of Art & Photography, from which the gallery makes purchases for the permanent collection. This open exhibition gives all local people the opportunity to have their work shown, provided it meets certain quality standards, but in addition the Wirral Society of Arts, Oxton Artists and Wirral Art School are regular collaborators, and other organisations like Wallasey Amateur Photographic Society occasional ones. Solo exhibitions by selected artists intersperse the group shows and local history, archaeology and social subjects complete the variety of the programme. Collaborations with National Museums Liverpool (NML), the Museums Service of Cheshire West & Chester and Galleries outside Liverpool are regular and frequent.

Particular successes in recent years include A Textile Dynasty: Arthur H Lee & Sons, Birkenhead, which won the National Museums & Heritage Award in 2010 as the Industry's Favourite, and Above the Clouds: Mallory & Irvine and the Quest for Everest, which was Highly Commended in the Project on a Limited Budget section of the same national awards. For the A.H Lee & Sons exhibition the gallery was in receipt of substantial additional funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

Recently closed (October 2011) is an exhibition involving the Williamson Art Gallery and both the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, and the National Museum in Gdansk, Poland, to show work by Albert Lipczinski who was a prominent artist in early 20th century Merseyside. Further close collaborations, particularly with NML, are planned for the future, most notably a survey exhibition of the 19th century Liverpool School of Artists, as the Williamson and the Walker Art Galleries hold good complimentary collections and would be the principal lenders. Other possibilities include the work of Albert Richards and James Hamilton Hay.

Objective 4.3

Develop exhibitions in collaboration with National Museums Liverpool and other partners.

5.0 VISITOR SERVICES

5.1 Visitors and Users

Visitors to the gallery have not been analysed in detail recently, although visitor figures have previously been reported as performance indicators. A small postcode survey conducted in summer 2010 confirmed the results of the last survey several years ago, showing that 80-85% of visitors came from within 10 miles. However, it is believed that the profile of the Williamson has been enhanced in recent years and a larger sample will reveal that the constituency is now rather larger. The Williamson regularly draws between 30,000 and 35,000 visitors a year; the Priory between 12,000 and 15,000.

In 2006 Wirral Council's Citizen's Panel provided information directly related to museums. Four in ten (40.6%) of respondents said they visited the Williamson Art Gallery occasionally and nearly 9 in 10 (88.4%) of respondents were very or fairly satisfied, a figure supported by the 2009 Wirral Place Survey Findings. When the National Indicator on museums attendance (NI10) was first collected in 2008 Wirral had the highest participation rate of any Unitary Authority and the highest participation rate outside London. This high score was maintained for the following two years for which figures were gathered.

Since the 1970's the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum has operated as an arts centre; the purchase of a Steinway grand piano, with Arts Council support, allowed concert performances to take place in a gallery ambience, which continue to prove popular, especially in the free Sunday Serenades series organised by the Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery & Wirral Museums for past 25 years.

The gallery is currently used regularly by a large range of groups from the Wirral Society of Arts, NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Society) and U3A (University of the Third Age), to Oxtou Floral Art Club and Birkenhead History Society. In addition, space at both the gallery and the Priory are hired out for occasional or private meetings and events.

The gallery works closely with Wirral Metropolitan College and the students from the Fine Art Degree course of Wirral Art School have the unique opportunity to exhibit their Final Degree shows in a public gallery. Each year the gallery also hosts a Fellowship exhibition with work from recent graduates.

Objective 5.1

Develop systems to better understand who the visitors and users are and why they come to the Gallery or Priory sites.

5.2 Catering

There have been discussions for many years about catering provision at the Williamson. Previously, during exceptional exhibitions, drawing more than usual visitors from outside the locality, a temporary café has been set up and for up to 10 years there had been a coin-operated drinks machine, provided by the Friends, which was not particularly successful owing to the poor product.

In early 2011 the Friends bought a better quality drinks machine, to be operated by staff, café-style tables and chairs and display units for pre-packaged cakes and biscuits. This has already proved its worth and the capital investment will enable an expansion of this service. Partners are currently being sought for partners to deliver an enhanced catering offer. There are currently no plans to provide a catering offer at the Priory. Catering for meetings and pre-arranged groups is, however, made available at both sites.

Objective 5.2

Have a partnership agreement in place to deliver an enhanced catering offer at the Gallery when it re-launches after the capital work is completed.

5.3 Retail

Both the Williamson and the Priory currently carry a small stock of for-sale items; although the Priory's range is more limited than the Gallery's, both offer site-branded pocket-money ranges. In addition the gallery offers books, postcards and some higher priced items. The Priory has a short guide to the site available for purchase, but as part of the site improvements it is anticipated a colour souvenir brochure will be designed. Most of the exhibitions at the Williamson have catalogues available to buy and, where appropriate, the gallery sources relevant books to offer for sale. The capital investment at the gallery will enable an improvement of the retail offer at this site.

Objective 5.3

Develop the retail offer at Williamson Art Gallery so that it gains a reputation for selling good quality local arts and crafts.

6.0 ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Formal learning

Following the retirement of the Education Officer in June 2010 there has been an opportunity to reappraise the requirements of education within the Museums Service. The previous post-holder successfully coordinated a series of tours and school visits over 15 years, especially employing services from Wirral Transport Museum which were subsidised to encourage the

participation of local schools. The changes prompted by the Strategic Asset Review mean that some sites and services are no longer available and the service will be refocused on the Williamson Art Gallery and the Priory. School visitor numbers have declined over the last 10 years from approximately 8000 per year to less than 2000, owing to changes in curriculum and school priorities, as well as depletion of the service offered to schools.

As a result of a management review, the Education Officer role has been redefined and split into two part-time posts with complementary emphases. The first of the new Learning Officers will be a secondary education art specialist who will be expected to develop and deliver cross-curricular and key/functional skills programmes. The second, a primary education specialist who will be expected to develop cross-curricular and key/functional skills programmes, and to respond proactively to the topic work undertaken in neighbourhood schools. There will be an initial focus on schools that will not experience transport difficulties in travelling to the Museums Service sites, by being close enough to walk, willing to use public transport or being able to access funding to facilitate bus transport.

Objectives 6.1

Write a formal learning strategy.

Significantly increase the number of school visits and improve the number of return visits.

6.2 Informal learning

Over recent years the Museums Service has begun to develop more informal learning activities. The Principal Museums Officer has regularly been available to give talks both within and outside the museums buildings, including contributing to an occasional Sunday afternoon lecture programme hosted by the Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery & Wirral Museums. A talk & tour programme was arranged during the recent Albert Lipczinski exhibition.

Each year the Gallery participates in The Big Draw, a national drawing initiative in October, with the support of volunteers and coordinated by Oxton Artists. In 2011 additional support has come from the Wirral branch of the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Society and the Wirral Society of Arts.

A free Saturday morning Art Club has been run very successfully for a number of years. However, in recent years this was funded exclusively by the Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery & Wirral Museums since a project grant ceased and it has proved unsustainable. The Club has not operated since summer 2010 and the possibility of reinstatement of this provision will be considered in the review of the informal learning provided within the Gallery and at the Priory.

In addition, a volunteer has begun running a monthly family fun day at the gallery, under the VIDA charitable banner, which began with an exhibition in 2008 dedicated to a young Tranmere artist, Emma Burrows, who died a few years ago. The Service is keen to continue this offer and is supporting the volunteer with other initiatives.

A five-week Summer Holiday children's project has run for the last 10 years, supported by the Friends, and in recent years by the Wirral Methodist Housing Association. This has proved very successful and has each year been followed by an exhibition of work, which has often featured in the WMHA Annual Report. In 2009, for the first time, a small adult's project was added for WMHA residents. In 2011 the programme started with a week of outreach work, supported by Arts Council England.

Funding has been secured from Aiming Higher for Disabled Children to pilot Family Fun Days targeted at families with disabled children. In addition a capital bid to provide height adjustable tables and other more inclusive equipment has been secured. A partnership with a voluntary organisation is being developed to explore ways of continuing this area of work.

There has been a development of young people's activities within the Gallery and the Priory. These include trails and colouring in sheets but it is the intention to continue to expand these resources as appropriate to each site: for example, jigsaws for the Gallery and outdoor building blocks for the Priory. To support this development a focus group of childminders has been initiated to inform the development of other materials and encourage childminders to use the Museums Service sites more regularly.

Staff and artists that are contracted regularly have been given training in disability awareness as the Service attempts to make the universal offer more inclusive. This is being supported by bids to Aiming High for Disabled Children.

Objective 6.2

Develop and implement an Informal Learning Strategy, identifying potential partners, with an underpinning funding plan.

6.3 Links with Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Providers

The Service Development Manager (Participation and Engagement Manager) has been developing links with Initial Teacher Training providers to develop learning outside the classroom placements and promote the Museum sites as learning destinations for the trainee teachers to inform their future practice. At the moment there are links with Chester University BEd programme and Liverpool Hope Performing Arts PGCE.

Objective 6.3

Review the ITT placements that have previously been hosted and agree terms of reference for future placements in terms of focus, number and supervision.

6.4 Community Engagement

Over the years the Museums Service has worked with a diverse range of groups from Looked After Children to under 5s. This has been largely responsive. As part of the new Engagement function it is intended to be much more proactive in this area, developing projects that target specific community groups, for example isolated elders or young carers, to encourage non-traditional users to visit the gallery. As part of this process a Community Engagement plan is under development. Much of this work is reliant on external funding so this is underpinned by a funding plan.

Objective 6.4

Increase the number of community engagement projects by 50% year on year for the next three years.

APPENDIX 1 ACCREDITATION APPLICATION SWOT ANALYSIS

At the time of the Accreditation application, March 2009, a SWOT analysis was undertaken:

<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

In the following 18 months, work has been undertaken to address the identified weaknesses. The educational and family experiences are under development and partnerships with appropriate organisations are being explored to promote this offer. The Council has agreed to invest £2m of capital funding in the sites which will help to address the gallery environment and the catering and retail offer at the Williamson, and both facility and structural difficulties at the Priory. However, other changes are also manifest which are reflected in the renewed SWOT analysis at Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 2 BUSINESS PLANNING SWOT ANALYSIS

Compiled spring/summer 2011

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £2m capital investment across both sites • WAG: purpose-built gallery • Large gallery spaces • Priory: oldest standing building on Merseyside – ‘a gem’ • Loyal core audience • Friends group • Good relationships with local primary schools • Repeat visits by local primary schools • VAQAS accreditation for both sites • MLA accreditation for both sites • Parking on both sites • Important permanent collections • Existing relationships with regional museums services 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of collection in need of conservation • Shortage of professional staff • Lack of revenue • Staff capacity • Developmentally passive Friends group • Reduction in training budget • Accessioning backlog • Poor building maintenance • Poor environmental control
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with NML • Partnerships with sub-regional and regional Higher Educational Institutions • Changing primary curriculum • Changed secondary curriculum • Partnerships with local secondary schools • Improved catering and retail provision at WAG • Job market means that more museum graduates will be looking for work experience/volunteer opportunities • The work of the Heritage Outreach Officer and Arts Development Officer developing new audiences • Working with the Borough’s Childminders to develop new audiences 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in staff making current provision or future development unachievable • Budget reductions • Deterioration of collections owing to inadequate conservation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External funding for engagement/ development • Developing family offer 	
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APPENDIX 3 RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD
On-going destabilisation of the budget	Undermining forward planning ability and implementation	Medium
Loss of necessary skills and experience through EVR/severance	Undermining the ability of the Service to deliver Council objectives	High
Unsustainable staff losses	Significant reduction in opening hours	High
Failure to secure external funding	The loss of opportunity to more widely engage with the public and develop relationships with non-traditional users	Medium
Obstruction in developing an appropriate staff structure	Inability to create a staff team that can take the Museums Service forward	Medium

APPENDIX 4 ACTION PLAN 2011/12

Corporate Objective/ Departmental Target	Functional Lead	Detailed Actions & Outputs	Lead Officer & Partners	Review Date/ Milestones	Progress To Date	On Target R .A .G	Next Steps/ Corrective Actions
Increase the numbers of visitors to the Williamson Art Gallery and Priory by 10% in 2011/12	Management Team	2.5.1 Develop a Talent Management Plan.	Engagement Manager (EM)	April 2012			
	Management Team	2.5.2 Develop and agree a programme of implementation for new technologies for interpretation and engagement across the sites.	EM/ Principal Museums Officer (PMO)	January 2012			
	Management Team	Secure external funding to implement the above programme.	EM	On-going			
	Management Team	5.1 Develop systems to better understand who the visitors and users are and why they come to the Gallery or Priory sites.	EM/ Corporate Marketing				
	Management Team	5.2 Have a partnership agreement in place to deliver an enhanced catering offer and the Gallery when it re-launches after the capital work is completed.	EM/ Visitor Services Manager (VSM)				
	Management Team	2.5.3 Develop and implement a marketing strategy	PMO/ Corporate Marketing Team				
	Curatorial	4.1 Update valuation of Museum collection, with especial reference to the Fine Art collection.	PMO				
	Curatorial	4.2 Purchase MODES documentation software, install and train staff to operate, and clear documentation backlog.	PMO/ Insurance Team	December 2012			

	Curatorial	Complete retrospective documentation using software, so that complete collection is recorded in the same way. At this stage it is the intention to achieve this within existing resources.	Senior Keeper	April 2016			
	Curatorial	4.3 Develop exhibition in collaboration with National Museums Liverpool and other partners of the 19th century Liverpool School of Artists.	PMO/ NML				
	Visitor Services	5.3 Develop the retail offer at Williamson Art Gallery so that it gains a reputation for selling good quality local arts and crafts.	EM/ VSM				
	Engagement	6.1 Write a Formal Learning Strategy	EM				
	Engagement	Significantly increase the number of school visits and improve the number of return visits.	EM/ Learning Officers				
	Engagement	6.2 Develop and implement an Informal Learning Strategy, identifying potential partners, with an underpinning funding plan.	EM/ VSM/ Learning Officers/ Handling Assistant	April 2012			
	Engagement	6.3 Review the ITT placements that have previously been hosted and agree terms of reference for future placements in terms of focus, number and supervision.	EM				
	Engagement	6.4 Increase the number of community engagement projects by 50% year on year for the next three years.	EM				

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -

23RD NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	2011/12 Second Quarter Performance and Financial Review
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	David Green – Director of Technical Services Bill Norman – Director of Law, HR and Asset Management
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr George Davies - Housing & Community Safety Cllr Chris Meaden - Culture, Leisure & Tourism Cllr Brian Kenny - Environment Cllr Harry Smith - Streetscene & Transport
KEY DECISION:	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-14 for July to September 2011, in relation to sustainable communities, and provides members with an overview of performance, resource and risk monitoring.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 That the contents of this report be noted.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 Council approved the Corporate Plan on 18th April 2011. This report provides a quarterly progress on delivering the sustainable communities section of the Council's Corporate Plan, including performance of relevant projects and indicators and associated financial and risk monitoring information.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Performance Summary

The presentation accompanying this report provides an overview of quarter two performance with more detail outlined in this report including corrective action for performance issues.

5.0 YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

5.1 What's working well

- 'Big Beach Clean Up' recognises the contribution and celebrates the achievement of day service volunteers who have been going out to Wirral's popular beauty spots and beaches on a regular basis, picking up litter, and helping Rangers keep the areas spick and span.

- Wirral's parks and open spaces are among the best in the country – 12 of the borough's parks received the Green Flag Award, a sign to visitors that the park is well-maintained and well-managed, with excellent facilities. Birkenhead Park has retained its Green Heritage status in addition to its Green Flag.
- The 'Wiser Walker, Wiser Driver' roadshow events, aimed at improving road safety among older drivers and pedestrians, called at Spital, West Kirby, Heswall and Wallasey, engaging with local people over the age of 50 and getting them thinking about road safety.
- There has been an increase in the proportion of household waste recycled, 5.5% above target.
- There has been a reduction in the number of missed bin collections, (25 below the target of 40 missed bins per 100,000 collections) and in the combined levels of litter and detritus (2.5% below the 8% target).
- The level of CRed pledges has increased by 381, exceeding the target by 52.40%.
- The number of consumer protection visits per high risk premises is over target
- The percentage of High Risk Licensed Premises inspected is also over target
- Alcohol related violence (Youth) is less than target
- Number of serious violent knife crimes and the number of gun crimes are below target

5.2 Performance against Corporate Plan project(s)

The following projects have been assessed as **amber**:

Portfolio	Key project	Status Q1	Status Q2	Corrective Action
Streetscene & Transport Services	By 2020, reduce the total number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) road traffic casualties by 50%, compared with the average for 2004-8; (Target for 2011 : reduce to 106; Target for 2012 : reduce to 104; Target for 2013 : reduce to 102)	Green	Amber	Greater than normal incidents involving motorcycles and in-car casualties. Develop a short term action plan to include :- (i) Further and more focussed research into "additional" road user groups, including broader data collection and analysis to improve trend identification. (ii) Additional enforcement activity proposed with Police. (iii) Identify and develop best practice networks. Improvements in the action plan are expected later in 2011/12. Analytical resource to assist with research, on a project basis, would help improve action plan delivery.
	Implement a speed restriction programme during 2011/12	Green	Amber	Letter sent to DfT asking for timescale on revised speed limit guidance.

Portfolio	Key project	Status Q1	Status Q2	Corrective Action
Environment	Effectively implement the Community Energy Efficiency Fund by March 2012	Green	Amber	Decision being sought on improving Grant criteria and transfer of ownership of the scheme from Asset Management to Sustainability Unit.

Portfolio	Key project	Status Q1	Status Q2	Corrective Action
Culture Tourism & Leisure	Roll out Wi Fi across Libraries by July 2011	Green	Amber	Target changed to November 2011. WiFi currently available in 2 libraries. ITS indicate on target to meet November 2011 completion date.
	Install information Screens in every Library by July 2011	Green	Amber	Target changed to November 2011 due to procurement exercise. Quotes obtained and on target to install by November 2011
	Install E books in every Library by September 2011	Green	Amber	Target changed to November 2011 due to procurement process. Contract entered into with Over Drive. Expected start date October 2011. On target to meet November deadline.
Culture Tourism & Leisure	Successfully deliver the Parks and Countryside Services Procurement Exercise to enable proposed contract benefits to be achieved by January/ February 2012.	Green	Amber	This is also a Strategic Change Project, please see PACSPE project overleaf for corrective action.

5.3 Performance against Strategic Change project(s)


The following strategic change projects have been assessed as **amber**:

Status Q1	Status Q2	Project	Corrective Action
Green	Amber	Street Lighting	The key activities were behind schedule and it is not known if this has impacted on the ability to deliver the full year savings. An update position will be provided to Strategic Change Programme Board before the next quarter outturn.

Status Q1	Status Q2	Project	Corrective Action
Green	Amber	PACSPE	Cabinet have decided to retain this service in house, however following call in, Overview & Scrutiny Committee has referred this back to Cabinet and this item is referred to elsewhere on the agenda.

5.4 Performance against indicator(s):

The following indicator has missed its quarter one target and is therefore assessed as **red**:

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012			On target	Direction of travel
			Q1 Status	Q2 Target	Q2 Actual		
Housing & Community Safety	NI 32	Repeat incidents of domestic violence	Green	7.53	8.37 (A)	Red	
Corrective Action:	The increase in referrals has been in part due to the success in engaging agencies in the MARAC process and improved police reporting systems. The unprecedented number of repeat cases in September (13) is largely due to a high percentage of victims with alcohol misuse issues for whom it is more difficult to reduce risk. This has already been addressed by the substance and alcohol misuse worker applying more focussed interventions and an in-depth analysis of domestic violence to identify any other underlying trends.						
Performance Analysis:	Referrals have increased by 11.16% compared to 2010/11 and 10.28% compared to quarter one. This indicator is currently expected to meet the year end target.						

The following indicator is awaiting data:

Portfolio	PI no	Title	Reason for reporting delay
Environment	7050	Install solar panels at up to 30 sites by 2013	On 1 st September 2011 Cabinet approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the implementation of the Solar PV Project capital scheme ▪ the commencement of the construction phase of the project commencing in April 2012 ▪ that regular performance reports to be provided for the Cabinet's consideration following the implementation of the scheme.
Recommendation:		That this indicator removed from 2011/12 reporting schedule and re-introduced in 2012/13 reporting schedule.	

5.5 Resource implications

The main area of concern remains the achievement of income targets including car parking and cultural services. The delayed sale of the Pacific Road complex may also have a budgetary impact.

A number of policy options being progressed include the 'free after three' parking initiative, the deep clean street cleansing initiative, support for the Anti-Social Behaviour team and library equipment and engagement schemes. The community asset transfer programme is also continuing.

Capital schemes include renovations to the Williamson Art Gallery which commenced in the spring and the Landican Crematorium Mercury Abatement scheme which commenced in September. Discussions are currently taking place with the Diocese of Chester regarding the Birkenhead Priory Scheme which is part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

5.6 Future challenges and risks

It is important to deliver services to meet the needs and wants of our citizens and businesses. To help achieve this a significant consultation process is currently under way to develop Neighbourhood Plans for each Area Forum Area, whilst a Budget Consultation using a 'You Choose' on-line budget simulator is also currently in progress.

Weather events may also impact upon Council services. A review of winter maintenance arrangements has been undertaken to help mitigate possible negative impacts.

5.7 Customer Feedback

There were a total of 1,331 customer feedback contacts recorded across all Departments in quarter 2 (Q2), which represented a 21% decrease from the 1,688 contacts reported in previous quarter 1 (Q1) and is significantly below the quarterly average of 1,656 contacts for 2010/11.

By channel of communication, internet and email was used for 64% of all contacts (57% in Q1).

Compared to Q1, there was a 14% increase in corporate complaints offset by the following comparative reductions:

- 14% less Councillor/MP contacts
- 29% less statutory complaints
- 32% less Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) contacts.

There was a cross-Council increase in the average response rate for complaints, from 11 working days in Q1 to 15.5 working days in this quarter.

Law, HR and Asset Management (LHR&AM) reported taking an average of 18 working days to respond to their corporate complaints whilst Technical Services took an average of 10 working days in responding to theirs. Nearly 80% of complaints received by LHR&AM during Q2 were responded to within the corporate target of 15 working days, Technical Services responded to 89% of their corporate complaints within the target of 15 working days.

Across all departments, responses to Councillor/MP enquiries took an average 6 working days in Q2 compared to 6.5 working days in Q1.

Technical Services received and responded to 671 Councillor/MP enquiries during Q2 and took an average of 6 working days to provide responses. 95% of all Councillor/MP enquiries received by Technical Services during Q2 were responded to within the target of 10 working days.

LGO contacts took slightly longer to respond to in Q2 with an average of 15 calendar days taken compared to 14 days in Q1. The Law, HR and Asset Management and Corporate Services averages of 31 and 43 days respectively (slide 4 of presentation) both related to a single contact each for these departments.

The focus for complaints and wider customer feedback is '*putting things right and learning from it*' and Technical Services reported 14% of their complaints resulted in some positive organisational learning for future service delivery. Law, HR and Asset Management reported no changes implemented.

Examples of organisational learning reported in Q2:

- Improved communication protocols to ensure letting agents have confirmed with landlord acting on behalf of that agrees to accreditation scheme inspection
- Tighter controls on COLAS works undertaken to ensure expected standards adhered to
- Re-emphasised guidance provided for COLAS to ensure sufficient notice given to local residents for planned works
- New properties and customer feedback relating to required brown garden waste bins are being added to a list for future service review of the green waste collections
- Increased publicity regarding the Council's bin replacement policy
- Improved disabled access provided at leisure centre
- Customer questionnaire arranged in response to customer comments to review fitness suite opening hours
- Transfer of fitness class to larger venue in response to customer suggestions

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 6.1 The successful implementation of actions to deal with issues arising from the recent report into Corporate Governance issues will be a key priority. There will therefore also be a key risk in ensuring issues arising are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.
- 6.2 Enhancements to corporate risk management arrangements and procedures were drawn up during the period for inclusion within the Risk Management Strategy approved by Cabinet on 13th October 2011. The strategy over the medium term will provide a framework and processes which are in accordance with the latest British Standard for Risk Management.
- 6.3 The Corporate Risk Register has been updated during the quarter. Significant changes have been included within the relevant sections above.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Not applicable

8.0 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation in relation to the draft Corporate Plan engaged individuals and organisations from across Wirral's diverse communities and this is reflected in the Corporate Plan.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 9.1 The Corporate Plan sets out commitments and clear actions in relation to working with voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to improve outcomes for local people.

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

- 10.1 The Council Budget 2011/12, Schools Budget 2011/12 and Capital Programme 2011/13 have been agreed and support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Resource implications relating to the delivery of actions in the Corporate Plan have been set out in individual departmental plans. Further details are contained in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 which are placed within the Library.

- 10.2 The projected general fund balance at 31 March 2012 is £7.3 million as shown below

Details	£million	£million
Projected General Fund balance at 31 March 2012 when setting the budget for 2011/12		6.9
Cabinet decisions		
17 March – Fernleigh retained		-0.5
2 June – New Homes Bonus/ Local Services Grant		+0.5
23 June - Financial out-turn 2010/11 showed a net increase in the balance of £1 million after meeting a net revenue overspend of £0.3 million		+1.0
23 June - Integrated Transport Unit additional funding		-0.3
23 June - EVR/VS scheme funded as part of 2010/11 thereby releasing the requirement to fund in 2011/12		+4.4
21 July – Social Services Reprovision		-3.5
21 July – National Insurance changes		-1.0
21 July – Support for School Pay		-0.2
Projected variances / potential overspends		
None declared although pressures identified at the end of September 2011 within:		-
- Adult Social Services	£7.1 million	
- Children and Young People	£2.0 million	
- Corporate Services	£0.5 million	
General Fund balance at 31 March 2012 based upon the latest projections		7.3

10.3 The Adult Social Services Children and Young People and Corporate Service Departments have highlighted pressures on their departmental budgets. Any subsequent overspend would impact upon the general fund balances.

10.4 The capital programme is summarised overleaf:

Spend	Original Approval £000	Forecast Jun £000	Forecast Sep £000
Adult Social Services	1,154	2,943	2,943
Children & Young People	25,889	39,195	24,444
Corporate Services	5,181	10,788	13,488
Finance	1,000	3,671	3,671
Law, HR and Asset Mgt	8,163	8,779	8,779
Technical Services	7,872	11,564	11,564
Total Programme	49,259	76,940	64,889

Resources	Original Approval £000	Forecast Jun £000	Forecast Sep £000
Borrowing	15,905	28,553	22,819
Capital Receipts	3,000	3,000	3,000
Revenue, reserves, contributions	300	4,194	1,434
Grants - Education	23,441	26,283	21,536
Grants - Integrated Transport	1,155	1,155	1,155
Grants - Local Transport Plan	3,095	3,095	3,095
Grants - Other	2,363	10,660	11,850
Total resources	49,259	76,940	64,889

10.5 The outturn forecast for the 2011/12 capital programme has reduced by £12 million since quarter 1. This is in the main a result of the re-profiling of a number of CYP capital schemes with expenditure to take place in later years. The Corporate Services forecast has increased due to further grant funding relating to housing improvement schemes being carried forward from 2010/11.

10.6 Progress continues to be made on a number of schemes including those at Pensby and Cathcart Primaries and numerous other school capital projects funded from the capital maintenance and basic need grant. Work has begun on the Landican Crematorium Mercury Abatement building works programme and the Town Link Viaduct in Birkenhead.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Legal implications relating to the actions set out in the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate.

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Corporate Plan has a clear focus on supporting those who are disadvantaged, including the delivery of specific services and through ensuring that all of Wirral's diverse communities are equally able to access services.

12.2 Equalities implications relating to the actions set out in the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate, and details set out in individual departmental plans. This work is also monitored by the Corporate Equalities and Cohesion Group and the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

13.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Carbon reduction is a specific goal in the Corporate Plan, with associated actions and measures as set out in the agreed Interim Carbon Budget 2011-12. Any carbon reduction implications have been identified in Section 4 of this report.

14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Planning and Community Safety is a specific goal in the Corporate Plan, with associated actions and measures. Any planning and community safety implications have been identified in Section 4 of this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Carol Sharratt / Margaret Sandalls / Clive Ashton**
Performance Management Officers
Telephone: (0151 691 8069 / 0151 606 2089/ 0151 691 8334)
Email: carolsharratt@wirral.gov.uk / margaretsandalls@wirral.gov.uk
cliveashton@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

To be placed in the web library:

Appendix 1 – Financial Monitoring Summary

Appendix 2 – Capital Monitoring Summary

Appendix 3 – Corporate Risk Monitoring Summary

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Previous Council and Cabinet reports as detailed in the subject history below

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
CABINET – 2011/12 Q1 Performance and Financial Review	21 July 2011
CABINET - Delivering the Corporate Plan	17 April 2011
COUNCIL - Adoption of Corporate Plan 2011-14	14 April 2011
CABINET - Draft Corporate Plan for 2011-14	17 March 2011

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS – TENDER ACCEPTANCE FOR THE HIGHWAYS WINTER BUREAU AND FORECASTING SERVICES CONTRACT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR HARRY SMITH, STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, in accordance with the Approved Scheme of Delegation, of any instances where delegated authority has been used by the Director of Technical Services with respect to the appointment of contractors. In this case, the tender procurement process for the provision of Winter Service Bureau and Forecasting Services for the Merseyside Districts, including Wirral.
- 1.2 The procurement exercise was undertaken by Sefton Council on behalf of all five Merseyside authorities.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 To advise Members in accordance with the Approved Scheme of Delegation.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 All of the Merseyside Districts (being Sefton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens and Wirral Councils) provide a winter service which is aided by the provision of weather forecasting and bureau services. The bureau services include the weather stations and computer software on which to view and interpret both the forecast and actual real time weather conditions data. Both are supported by a 24 hour consultancy service throughout the winter period.
- 4.2 The bureau and forecasting service has traditionally been procured collectively across the Merseyside region to ensure value for money and minimise costs to each individual authority. There is also the added benefit of being able to share

access to each others' forecast and site data which can be valuable in considering prevailing conditions.

4.3 Under the Approved Scheme of Delegation, the Director of Technical Services has used delegated authority to approve the appointment of the contractor as follows:

4.4 Project Title: Winter Service Bureau and Forecasting Services.
Contractor: Vaisala (Bureau) supported by MeteoGroup (Forecast).
Contract Term: 3 Years until 2014, with the possibility of two, single year, extensions.
Contract Sum: Cost to Wirral Council is £51,116.07 (£17,038.69 per annum).

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to maintain the highway network.

5.2 Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 imposes an additional duty to ensure that where reasonably practicable safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow and ice.

5.3 The effectiveness of Wirral's annual Winter Service Operational Plan is dependant on the provision of weather forecasting and bureau services

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 Procurement solely by Wirral Council was rejected as collective procurement of this service ensures value for money and minimise costs to each individual authority. There is also the added benefit of being able to share access to each others' forecast and site data which can be valuable in considering prevailing conditions.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation with the five Merseyside Districts was undertaken as part of this procurement exercise.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

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

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

9.1 The total value of the contract for three years is £279,979.49 (£93,326.49 per annum) for the whole of Merseyside. Wirral's share of the contract over three years is £51,116.07 (£17,038.69 per annum) which is only a slight variation from the current cost and will be funded from the existing Winter Maintenance budget. There is no inflationary uplift provision within the contract.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none identified in the Report

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Accurate and effective weather forecasting minimises the risk of unnecessary use of rocksalt which is a non - renewable resource.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Shaun Brady
0151 606 2098
email: shaunbrady@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

(Include background information referred to or relied upon when drafting this report, together with details of where the information can be found. There is no need to refer to publicly available material: e.g. Acts of Parliament or Government guidance.)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	VARIOUS
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR ADRIAN JONES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, in accordance with the Approved Scheme of Delegation, of any instances where delegated authority has been used by the Director of HR, Law and Asset Management with respect to the appointment of Contractors pursuant to Contract Procedure Rule 14.4.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 That the report be noted.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 The below listed tenders were the lowest/most economically advantageous received.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The following tenders have been accepted since the meeting of this Committee on 10 March 2011.

Project Title:	Girtrell Court / Sylvandale Boiler Renewals
Contract Sum:	£125,790.00
Contractor:	Sure Group Ltd

Project Title:	Prenton Day Centre / Meadowcroft Boiler Renewals
Contract Sum:	£102,560.00
Contractor:	Sure Group Ltd

Project Title:	Wallasey Central Library Window Frame Renewal
Contract Sum:	£95,381.00
Contractor:	JPF Systems Ltd
Project Title:	Birkenhead Central Library Window Frame Renewal
Contract Sum:	£96,024.00
Contractor:	JPF Systems Ltd
Project Title:	Guinea Gap Baths Changing Room Refurbishment
Contract Sum:	£88,160.00
Contractor:	North West Construction (UK) Ltd
Project Title:	Wallasey Central Library Heating Replacement
Contract Sum:	£101,355.00
Contractor:	Sure Group Ltd
Project Title:	Water Hygiene Risk Assessment & Monitoring (1 year)
Contract Sum:	35% Reduction to Schedule Base Rates
Contractor:	Hertel (UK) Ltd
Project Title:	Water Hygiene Remedial Works (3 years)
Contract Sum:	30% Reduction to Schedule Base Rates
Contractor:	Hertel (UK) Ltd

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 There are no risks as a result of this report.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 There are no other options in relation to this report.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 There has been no consultation in relation to this report.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no implications for any voluntary, community and faith groups as a result of this report.

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

9.1 There are no resource implications as a result of this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no equalities implications as a result of this report.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no carbon reduction implications as a result of this report.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no planning and community safety implications as a result of this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Robin Stratton**
Assistant Projects Manager
telephone: (0151) 606 2340
email: robinstratton@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

Title:	Department:	Comments/ Justification:
7th June 2011:		
Review of Winter Working Resilience Arrangements	Technical Services	Progress report and formal presentation – item requested by Cabinet and O&S Committee (COMPLETE)
Library Service Introduction of E-books	Finance	One off report (COMPLETE)
2010/11 Quarter 4 Performance Report	Technical Services Law, HR & Asset Management Corporate Services	Regular report covering performance and financial issues (COMPLETE)
26th September 2011:		
Review of Pavement/ Verge Parking Enforcement Initiative	Technical Services	Progress report requested by O&S Committee
Highway & Engineering Services – Second Annual Review	Technical Services	Progress report and formal presentation on the strategic contract with Colas Ltd that commenced in April 2009
'Have a safe and well-maintained highway network for all users' – Progress Update	Technical Services	Corporate 'goal' annual progress report
Wirral Trader Scheme	Law, HR & Asset Management	Report on the development and progress of the scheme
2011/12 Quarter 1 Performance Report	Technical Services Law, HR & Asset Management Corporate Services	Regular report covering performance and financial issues

<p>23rd November 2011:</p> <p>'Reduce Wirral's Carbon Footprint' – Progress Update</p> <p>Wirral Flood & Water Management Partnership – Progress Update</p> <p>Consumer Landscape Review</p> <p>Tackling Domestic Violence in Wirral</p> <p>2011/12 Quarter 2 Performance Report</p>	<p>Law, HR & Asset Management</p> <p>Technical Services</p> <p>Law, HR & Asset Management</p> <p>Law, HR & Asset Management</p> <p>Technical Services Law, HR & Asset Management Corporate Services</p>	<p>Corporate 'goal' annual progress report</p> <p>Regular progress report on the work of the Partnership as requested by O&S Committee</p> <p>To consider the outcome and implications of a major review of consumer protection by the Office of Fair Trading</p> <p>To fulfil the OSC scrutiny role in respect of the OSC and report on activity to support the Corporate Goal to provide advocacy and support for survivors of domestic violence</p> <p>Regular report covering performance and financial issues</p>
<p>30th January 2012:</p> <p>Streetscene Environment Services Contract – Fifth Annual Review</p> <p>'Minimise waste by encouraging waste reduction and recycling' – Progress Update</p> <p>'Have high standards of environmental quality across Wirral' – Progress Update</p>	<p>Technical Services</p> <p>Technical Services</p> <p>Technical Services</p>	<p>Progress report and formal presentation on the strategic contract with Biffa that commenced in August 2006</p> <p>Corporate 'goal' annual progress report</p> <p>Corporate 'goal' annual progress report</p>

Review of Underage Sales Prevention and Enforcement	Law, HR & Asset Management	To report activity that supports the Corporate Goal to protect children and young people from harm
2011/12 Quarter 3 Performance Report	Technical Services Law, HR & Asset Management Corporate Services	Regular report covering performance and financial issues
28th March 2012:		
'Provide and maintain high quality parks and open spaces in partnership with local communities' – Progress Update	Technical Services	Corporate 'goal' annual progress report
'Provide high quality, value for money leisure and cultural facilities for Wirral residents' – Progress Update	Technical Services	Corporate 'goal' annual progress report
Wirral Climate Change Group Annual Report	Law, HR & Asset Management	Annual report on work of Wirral Climate Change Group

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