



Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 7 June 2012

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

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 - 8)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2012.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Committee is invited to appoint a Vice-Chair for the ensuing municipal year.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION - MEMBER OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE - PRESENTATION (Pages 9 - 12)

6. ROLE OF SCRUTINY - PRESENTATION

7. GREEN GROWTH IN WIRRAL (Pages 13 - 32)

8. WIRRAL TRADE CENTRE (Pages 33 - 34)

9. AFFORDABILITY AND MORTGAGES INCLUDING FIRST-TIME BUYERS (Pages 35 - 36)

10. BUSINESS SUPPORT (Pages 37 - 38)

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (Pages 39 - 48)

At its meeting held on 28 February 2012 (minute 33 refers), the Scrutiny Programme Board considered a report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, which provided a summary of the Centre for Public Scrutiny Policy Briefing 'Equality Impact Assessments'. The report was referred to all five Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consideration and is attached hereto.

12. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan for the period June to September 2012 has now been published on the Council's intranet/website. Members are invited to review the Plan prior to the meeting in order for the Economy and Regeneration 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.

13. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2012/2013 (Pages 49 - 58)

The Committee is requested to consider what issues should form the basis of its work programme for the ensuing municipal year.

14. REGENERATION TOUR

15. REGENERATION UPDATE (PART 1)

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

17. 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.

18. REGENERATION UPDATE (PART 2)

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

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 8 March 2012

Present: Councillor M Johnston (Chair)

Councillors A Cox S Kelly
G Ellis S Niblock
P Hackett D Realey
A Hodson S Whittingham
P Kearney

45 NEW DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING

The Chair informed the meeting that Kevin Adderley, had, that afternoon, been appointed to the post of Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning, and the Committee offered its warmest congratulations to Kevin on his appointment.

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

Members were asked to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any item on the agenda and, if so, to declare it and to state the nature of such interest.

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 the item to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

Councillor Whittingham declared a personal interest in the item, 'Responding to Under Occupation in Wirral' by virtue of his membership of the Wirral Partnership Homes Board (see minute 49 post).

Councillor Niblock declared a prejudicial interest in the item, 'Minutes' as he was aware that a Committee member would be asking a question in respect of minute 40, 'Outcome of Wirral's Housing Market Renewal Transitional Funding Bid Including Proposed Exit Plan and Suggested Amended Housing Investment Programme for 2011/12' by virtue of him living in one of the affected areas (see minute 47 post).

47 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 January, 2012.

(Councillor Niblock, having declared a prejudicial interest, left the meeting when a Committee member asked a question in respect of minute 40).

In respect of minute 40, 'Outcome of Wirral's Housing Market Renewal Transitional Funding Bid Including Proposed Exit Plan and Suggested Amended Housing Investment Programme for 2011/12', a Member referred to press reports on possible legal challenges to HMRI transitional bid funding being used for demolition.

In response, the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning stated that the Council had been quite clear in its bid proposal as to what the transitional funding would be used for and there had been no indication from central Government that the Council needed to stop doing anything with regard to its clearance commitments in the former HMRI area.

Resolved - That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

48 **CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Chief Executive submitted a progress report on the work that had been undertaken to develop a Wirral child poverty strategy and action plan in partnership with local organisations and agencies, including the voluntary, community and faith sector. As set out in the previous report to the Committee, the local authority established a local advisory group to review the evidence and make recommendations to the Council and its partners about local action to tackle child poverty. Representation on this group (the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group) was drawn from the voluntary, community and faith, housing, health, and education, employment and skills sectors. It was chaired by a representative from the voluntary, community and faith sector and had Elected Member representatives from all parties.

The final version of the strategy and action plan would be discussed by the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group at its next meeting on 21 March, 2012 and would subsequently be referred to Cabinet for further consideration. The Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group had agreed to continue meeting to oversee the implementation of the strategy and action plan once this was finalised; and a revised terms of reference was being produced to reflect this ongoing role.

The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning, reported that Council had agreed £400,000 in its budget for 2012/13 which would enable officers to accelerate the actions required to help achieve the goal of eliminating child poverty in the borough.

Resolved – That this Committee notes the progress made to date.

49 **RESPONDING TO UNDER OCCUPATION IN WIRRAL**

The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning submitted a report which updated the Committee on the potential impact of Welfare Reform across both the social and private sector and highlighted the current position in Wirral with regards to under occupation in the social rented sector.

For the private sector the focus was to prevent financial hardship and potential homelessness arising from Welfare Reform through early intervention, payment of Discretionary Housing Payments and working with tenants to find affordable and sustainable accommodation.

The report also highlighted work being undertaken by the Council in responding to under occupation across both sectors, focusing in particular on the work being undertaken in the social sector to develop a pilot scheme which would aim to tackle and reduce under occupation in Wirral. The scheme developed would target those residents registered on the Wirralhomes housing register and awarded an Urgent Need Status for under occupation, which under the current allocations policy meant that they had two or more spare bedrooms. By targeting these residents, it was anticipated this would free up some larger social properties for families in need and who might be overcrowded, and also reduce the threat of financial hardship when the Welfare Reforms were introduced.

Addressing under occupation would promote the Council's Corporate Priorities in terms of support for vulnerable people to maintain their independence in the community, prevent and alleviate homelessness and to make best use of existing housing stock across all sectors.

Responding to comments from Members, the Director, Lisa Newman, Housing Strategy Manager and Catherine Green, Rehousing Services Manager, elaborated on some of the detail of the impact in Wirral and explained the system for prioritising those in most need. Individual circumstances would be different and until the Welfare Reform Bill was finalised it was difficult to take account of its implications. Out of 15,434 units of the social housing stock (which the Council had been provided information about to date), 5% would be affected by the Welfare Reform reduction in benefit of up to 25% due to occupying a property that had two or more spare bedrooms, and 15% would be affected in benefit of up to 14% due to occupying a property that had one spare bedroom. They explained the use of Discretionary Housing Payment and the development of a pilot scheme to assist those households that wanted to move into smaller accommodation which met their needs.

The Chair commented that the myth that the elderly would be affected could be put to rest as the legislation only applied to those of working age. He suggested that a summary of the report / crib sheet should be circulated to all members to assist them with their casework and that it would be an ideal piece of work for a scrutiny review in the forthcoming municipal year.

It was then moved as an addition to the recommendation in the report by Councillor Whittingham and seconded by Councillor Hackett –

“That Committee notes the report and welcomes the work being done to assist tenants affected by the ‘bedroom tax’.

However, Committee shared the National Housing Federation's concern about the impact the ‘bedroom tax’ will have on tenants and vulnerable people deemed to be under occupying, some of whom may already be struggling to make ends meet.

Committee also shares the National Housing Federation's concern about the impact of the ‘bedroom tax’ on the tax payer, because if a tenant moves to a smaller property it may be that the rent for the smaller property is more expensive, which, if that's the case could well place additional pressure on the Housing Benefit Bill.

Committee also agrees with the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Simon Hughes MP, on tenants who are deemed to be under occupying that 'it is not practical to insist that they move when there is nowhere smaller to move to'."

The addition to the recommendation was put and lost (4:6).

Resolved –

(1) That Committee notes the current situation with regards to the potential impact of Welfare Reforms and under occupation in the social sector and the work being undertaken to mitigate this.

(2) That a summary of the report / crib sheet should be circulated to all members to assist them with their casework and that it be added to the work programme as a scrutiny review in the forthcoming municipal year.

50 **AFFORDABILITY AND MORTGAGES INCLUDING FIRST TIME BUYERS**

The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning submitted a report which updated the Committee on the current situation regarding housing market support, the availability of mortgages and which gave an analysis of how these issues were affecting Wirral. It also set out an overview of Government programmes and the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which were available to support and enable sustainable home ownership.

Responding to comments from Members, the Director and Lisa Newman, Housing Strategy Manager, gave further details on how the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme would work. 22 local authorities had launched the scheme so far and there had been no defaults. There was a risk as with all such schemes but some members expressed the view that the risk would only be if house prices went down and the risk was minimal although the benefits could be high.

Resolved –

(1) That Committee notes the contribution of the range of programmes / packages to assist home buyers, including first time buyers and the Affordable Homes Programme Framework, to support home ownership in Wirral.

(2) That Committee notes the issues relating to the housing and mortgage markets and the potential value and risks identified with operating a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.

(3) That Committee asks Cabinet to consider the establishment of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to assist first time buyers in Wirral.

51 **BUSINESS SUPPORT**

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

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

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

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

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

Resolved –

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

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

52 GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW

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

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

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

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

Resolved –

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

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

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

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

53 **PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER THREE**

The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning reported upon the performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-2014 for July to September 2011 in relation to economy and regeneration. He provided an overview of performance, resource and risk monitoring and highlighted what was working well, future challenges and risks.

In respect of the key project, 'Implement proposals to reduce under occupation in social housing by August 2012', he reported that this was now on track and was no longer 'amber' status but 'green'.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

54 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received an update report on its work programme.

The Chair suggested that a regular slot could be added to the agenda for a 10 minute presentation from a key member of the business community and that in June, the Committee could have a tour of key sites within the borough.

Resolved – That the work programme and above additions be noted.

55 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee had been invited to review the Forward Plan prior to the meeting in order for it to consider, having regard to the Committee's 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.

56 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Resolved – 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves 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.

57 **REGENERATION UPDATE**

The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning provided an update on major development schemes within the Borough.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

58 **THANKS**

As this was the last meeting of the municipal year, the Chair thanked all the officers for the work with the Committee in the past year.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Council has appointed Overview and Scrutiny Committees to discharge the functions conferred by section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations under section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Each overview and scrutiny committee will:

- (i). Review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;
- (ii). Make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;
- (iii). Consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- (iv). Exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive; and within the following terms of the Cabinet portfolio(s) indicated:

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Regeneration and Planning Strategy

- (1) Matters relating to the economic and urban regeneration of Wirral.
- (2) The economic regeneration strategy for Wirral.
- (3) All economic regeneration programmes including European programmes, any other Council programmes and residual issues in relation to the Single Regeneration Budget.
- (4) Consultation and liaison with all organisations involved in regeneration in Wirral, including NWDA, English Partnerships, GoNW, Learning and Skills Council, Greater Merseyside Enterprise, Wirral Metropolitan College, trade unions, the private sector, the voluntary sector, etc.
- (5) All matters in relation to European issues.
- (6) The promotion of Wirral as a premier location for inward investment through the work of Wirral Direct and other organisations; in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Leisure in the case of tourism initiatives.
- (7) To ensure that an adequate supply of sites and premises is provided in order to cater for the needs of local businesses and to help attract new businesses.
- (8) Financial support, where appropriate, to businesses, co-operatives and other profit making and non-profit making ventures for the benefit of Wirral.
- (9) Provision of a comprehensive business support service to local companies.

- (10) The development of community employment and training initiatives and other initiatives designed to strengthen the economy of local communities and combat disadvantage including the development of a comprehensive “pathways to Integration” strategy for Wirral.
- (11) Monitoring economic trends in Wirral and identifying examples of good practice elsewhere in the field of urban policy and economic regeneration from which Wirral can benefit.
- (12) Lobbying Government and other agencies nationally, regionally and internationally, to ensure that Wirral achieves its economic regeneration objectives.
- (13) Welfare to Work.
- (14) The Development Plan and related plans and policies.
- (15) National, Regional and Strategic issues, including Green Belt Policy.
- (16) The designation and preservation of conservation areas and liaison with conservation bodies.
- (17) The application of the Planning Acts in relation to:
 - preservation of general amenity
 - shopping improvement areas
 - derelict sites
 - building regulations
 - mineral planning issues
 - contributions to the Council’s urban regeneration initiatives
 - compulsory purchase
- (18) Liaison on planning matters with other local authorities and external bodies.
- (19) Identification and action in relation to derelict land and building, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for the Environment.

Culture, Tourism and Leisure

- (20) The development, management, implementation and review of all aspects of the Council’s Tourism Strategy. The promotion of Wirral as a location for tourism and in consultation with the Cabinet member for Regeneration and Planning Strategy, to encourage tourism initiatives designed to bring new jobs to the Borough.

Housing and Community Safety

- (21) Housing Strategy.
- (22) The assessment of housing need including the needs of vulnerable people.

- (23) Enabling vulnerable Clients to remain at home, through the provision of low level housing support services (the Supporting People programme).
- (24) The provision of homelessness and housing advice services, including rough sleepers.
- (25) The provision of services to enable access to accommodation.
- (26) The assessment of housing markets.
- (27) Housing market restructuring and renewal.
- (28) Housing matters relating to:
- Dealing with unfitness and poor condition
 - Acquisition and clearance
 - Financial policies for home improvement funding
 - Regulation and enforcement of statutory provisions relating to private sector housing
- (29) Housing matters relating to:
- The promotion and monitoring of partnerships to achieve wider strategic housing objectives
 - Monitoring the performance of new Housing Stock Transfer organisations
 - The accreditation and licensing of private landlords
- (30) Monitoring and responding to the needs of gypsies and travellers.

All portfolios

- (31) Those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this Committee,
- (32) To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas.
- (33) To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women;
- (34) To scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

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Cabinet 12 April 2012

384 GREEN GROWTH IN WIRRAL

A report by the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning followed the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral, produced by The Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which acknowledged the importance, vibrancy and potential of the 'Green Economy' to create enterprise, jobs and help Wirral to become environmentally sustainable. The report set out proposals to develop the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review in order to respond to the needs of Wirral businesses and therefore, to stimulate economic growth and create new jobs for the residents of Wirral

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

The report complemented Wirral's Investment Strategy, which set future priorities for the economy in the borough. The Strategy proposed an increased emphasis on developing a number of key growth sectors that would build on existing local specialisms and would offer the most growth potential. Two of the proposed growth sectors were Offshore Energy and the Low Carbon sectors.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Cabinet agrees that Officers should develop and implement a co-ordinated and robust business support service for businesses in Wirral's green economy in order to enable job creation, enterprise development and investment in the borough, as set out in the report;**
- (2) Cabinet agrees to the formation of a Green Economy Officer Working Group to support the development of Wirral's Green Economy and to the implementation of the reports recommendations;**
- (3) update reports be provided to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) on the potential of Enterprise Zone to provide development opportunities in green sectors;**
- (4) an Invest Wirral Business Forum be developed to allow for the creation of a standalone green (environmental) cluster group, which will provide members from all sectors with a number of online services, including a directory of green product and service providers, provide a sense of identity for the sector and provide clear information and improved signposting to support services for businesses that engage in 'green' business activities;**
- (5) during the forthcoming Municipal Year (2012/13), the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) be encouraged to invite a minimum of two leading Wirral companies in the green sector to meet the Committee to further explore the problems and opportunities currently faced by those companies;**

- (6) an awareness raising event take place in September 2012 aimed at raising awareness of the products and services provided by the local green economy; (The event is an opportunity for Wirral Council to publicly display its commitment to supporting this sector);**
- (7) Corporate Procurement be requested to ensure that all potential suppliers are made aware of environmental and sustainable procurement policies;**
- (8) the Creation of Wirral Green Skills Growth Fund to unlock barriers to workforce skills in the green sector until 31 March 2013 be agreed;**
- (9) a minimum of 24 apprenticeship opportunities be ring-fenced for green growth businesses within the next round of the Wirral Apprentice Programme;**
- (10) the Green Growth Officer Working Group is to undertake further detailed research, into existing training services and explore the feasibility of a Council operated database of green skills;**
- (11) the Green Growth Officer Working Group be requested to undertakes further detailed research, exploring the feasibility of a Council backed green accreditation scheme; and**
- (12) the Green Growth Officer Working Group be tasked to compile a report for the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) that explores the rationale for creating a green growth cluster of businesses either in a geographical location (a Green Business Park) or by association in various locations across Wirral.**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

12TH APRIL 2012

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

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report follows the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral, produced by The Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which acknowledge the importance, vibrancy and potential of the 'Green Economy' to create enterprise, jobs and help Wirral to become environmentally sustainable. This report sets out proposals to develop the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review in order to respond to the needs of Wirral businesses and therefore to stimulate economic growth and create new jobs for the residents of Wirral
- 1.2 This report seeks Members' approval for a range of policy options designed to enable businesses in Wirral's 'green economy' to set up, grow and maintain competitiveness.
- 1.3 This report complements Wirral's Investment Strategy, which sets future priorities for the economy in the borough. The Strategy proposes an increased emphasis on developing a number of key growth sectors that will build on existing local specialisms and will offer the most growth potential. Two of the proposed growth sectors are Offshore Energy and the Low Carbon sectors.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The low carbon and environmental goods and services sector (LCEGS or 'Green Economy') is defined as "a community of businesses that provide technologies, goods and services that will enable the UK's transition to the low carbon economy"¹.
- 2.2 The low carbon economy has been identified by Wirral and the wider city region economy as one of the transformational areas on which to focus in order to create jobs and narrow the productivity gap with the rest of the UK. K-Matrix data from 2009/2010, which is used by The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Developing the Green Economy

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

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

Formation of a Green Economy Officer Working Group

- 2.15 The overall strategic aim of supporting the Green Economy is to build on the current assets that exist in Wirral. The Council will play an enabling role, where possible, to support this investment and growth. Officers from a number of service areas have a part to play in that process. In order to support the development of the relevant growth sectors (namely, Offshore Energy and the Low carbon sector) a Green Economy Working Group should be formed to support that process.
- 2.16 The purpose of the Working Group is to ensure that the recommendations and existing initiatives are given the time, attention and resources required to bring about sustainable development.
- 2.17 The Officer Working Group will oversee the implementation of this Report's recommendations and the development of a long-term strategy for green growth in Wirral. Work will include monitoring and evaluating the implications of national policy changes, such as the Green Investment Bank and the Green Deal.
- 2.18 The working group will include officers from relevant departments, including Invest Wirral, Strategic Planning, Housing, Procurement, Marketing and Sustainability, as well as a small number of Members. The group will provide regular updates to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee). The first quarterly meeting of the Working Group will be arranged for May 2012.

Enterprise Zone

- 2.19 The Investment Strategy envisages that opportunities will develop naturally and Wirral should be able to use the Enterprise Zone and, in the longer term, the Wirral Waters development, to enhance the opportunities for the green sector. The announcement of the Enterprise Zone will enable financial incentives, in the form of business rate reductions and potential capital allowances, to be available to potential investors. It is clearly important that the Enterprise Zone is used to maximise the opportunities for inward investment. As a growing sector, green business should be able to benefit. It is therefore, recommended that further work is done to identify ways in which the Enterprise Zone might specifically benefit the green sector. In addition, JESSICA funding (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) is available to Merseyside and provides the region with a unique advantage. This scheme allows money to be made available on a repayable basis through loans.
- 2.20 An update on the potential of the Enterprise Zone to provide opportunities for the growth of Wirral's green economy should be produced for the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee). The Officer Working Group will coordinate this activity and ensure completion by September 2012.

Relationship with Peel Holdings

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

Relationship with City Region Partners

- 2.22 Wirral has some key opportunities to develop its green sector and the Investment Strategy provides the tools to enable this, being supported where appropriate by national policy. The prospects for green growth in Wirral are clearly linked to those of Merseyside and, therefore, synergies with Wirral's regional neighbours should continue to be exploited.
- 2.23 The Mersey Partnership report 'Low Carbon Economy Action Plan – Delivering Economic Growth 2011-2015' examines, in detail, the opportunities for the low carbon economy. The report concludes that there is the potential for the creation of 12,000 jobs in the low carbon economy over those five years. Although the economic conditions continue to be difficult, opportunities do exist in sub sectors as varied as offshore wind, micro-generation, biomass and energy from waste, smart grid technology, retro-fitting of energy efficiency and low emission vehicles.
- 2.24 Therefore, The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning will hold discussions with officers working on inward investment at a City Region level to explore opportunities for attracting businesses that specialise in green products and services to Wirral. This activity should feed in to the activities of the Officer Working Group and an update will be provided to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee by October 2012.

Improving existing support to businesses in the Green Economy

Cross-Departmental Working:

- 2.25 All businesses, including those in the green sector, access a range of services provided by the Council, including those provided by Invest Wirral, Inward Investment, Marketing and Planning Departments.
- 2.26 In order to ensure that Wirral is best placed to handle and take advantage of inward investment opportunities that arise from the enterprise zone and international trade centre developments, it is required that close working relationships are further developed between officers in business facing departments including Invest Wirral, Inward Investment, Marketing and Planning Departments. This activity will be overseen by The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and implemented by the Officer Working Group.
- 2.27 The Officer Working Group will ensure that a cross-departmental approach is taken to all business planning applications, with Invest Wirral and other relevant teams being informed of planned developments in order to support growth opportunities.
- 2.28 One of the Council's key corporate commitments is to make Wirral one of the most business friendly and supportive councils in the country; to build a place where local

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

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

Invest Wirral Business Forum

- 2.30 Invest Wirral, through the Invest Wirral Business Forum and sectoral cluster groups, engage with businesses on a daily basis, listening and responding to their needs as appropriate.
- 2.31 The Invest Wirral Business Forum – www.businesswirral.com – provides Wirral-based businesses with public sector tender alerts, online networking and member-to-member inter-trading opportunities, a company profile page, regular email updates on business support developments, access to local business news, events and business support resources.
- 2.32 Membership is growing month by month with a targeted figure by the end of March 2012 of 2,500 members achieved. The Invest Wirral Business Forum should be developed to allow for the creation of a standalone green (environmental) cluster group, which will provide members from all sectors with a number of online services including a directory of green product and service providers, provide a sense of identity for the sector and provide clear information and improved signposting to support services for businesses that engage in 'green' business activities.
- 2.33 To be completed by Invest Wirral within a 3 month timescale, with delegated powers afforded to the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning to oversee website development.
- 2.34 This online support will be supplemented by an Invest Wirral officer that will be dedicated exclusively to supporting and developing the Green Economy in Wirral. This activity will involve face-to-face business engagement, development of workshops and events, encouraging inter-trading and collaborations and acting as a conduit to other council services and departments. The officer will sit on the Officer Working Group and will have responsibility for coordinating its activities.

Funding Implications: £3,541

Engagement with Green Businesses at Overview and Scrutiny Meetings

- 2.35 The Panel Members met with a number of business leaders during the Scrutiny review. The views expressed during those meetings provided a good insight into the issues faced by those businesses currently operating in a relatively immature business sector. Enabling other members of the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to debate current issues with representatives of the business community could only enhance the understanding of Members and therefore strengthen the role of the Committee in supporting the development of Wirral's green economy in the future.
- 2.36 Therefore, during the forthcoming municipal year (2012/13), the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) is encouraged to invite a minimum of two leading Wirral companies in the green sector to meet the Committee to further explore the problems and opportunities currently faced by those companies. Suitable companies will be identified by Invest Wirral during the course of its day-to-day engagement with companies in the Green Economy.

Marketing and Awareness

Public Awareness Event

- 2.37 Lack of awareness and negative perceptions were reported to the scrutiny committee as barriers to the growth of Wirral's green economy. Wirral Council is keen to support the local green economy. Therefore, the Council will hold a large 'marketplace' style event in September 2012 aimed at raising awareness of the products and services provided by the local green economy. The event is an opportunity for Wirral Council to publicly display its commitment to supporting this sector.
- 2.38 The event will feature a marketplace of local green sector product and service providers with free exhibition space provided to Wirral based companies that provide 'green' goods and services. The event would be open to potential customers, including public sector procurement officials, businesses and members of the public. Invest Wirral will identify potential exhibitors through its existing networks and through targeted marketing in partnership with Corporate Marketing colleagues.
- 2.39 The event will have a number of distinct themes drawn from the findings and recommendations of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review:
- Skills and employment: working in partnership with JobCentre Plus, schools, colleges, universities and private training providers.
 - Business-to-business exhibition: for local product and service providers
 - Business-to-consumer showcase: for local product and service providers
 - Supporting green growth: Showcase of business support service providers, including Invest Wirral and its partner organisations
- 2.40 This valuable insight event will feature a programme of insight seminars, 1-2-1 - meet the buyer sessions, networking opportunities with developers, suppliers, innovators and procurers of renewable energy solutions, offshore wind, biomass & waste technologies, nuclear energy, automotive and green transport solutions, eco-building technology, and green construction products.

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

Funding implication: £20,000

Marketing 'hits' for the Green Sector

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

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

Creating a Green Market

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

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

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

Developing relationship with landlords

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

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

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

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

Procurement Training

- 2.50 In partnership with Invest Wirral, Corporate Procurement have held supplier workshops on 'How to do Business with Wirral Council', with over 300 companies having received training to date. A guide, 'How to do Business with Wirral Council' is also published on the Council's website.
- 2.51 There is evidence that procurement procedures can appear too complicated, especially for small companies. The Green Growth Scrutiny Review acknowledged that this is of particular relevance to companies in the Green Economy, which is regarded as a 'fledgling sector with younger businesses being more prominent'. Therefore, Corporate Procurement and Invest Wirral will continue its programme of procurement training events, with targeted marketing to companies in 'green' business activities. Further, and where relevant, Invest Wirral will utilise the support services of SME Business Support Managers to deliver enhanced public sector procurement support services.

Promotion of the Council's Environmental Policies to potential suppliers

- 2.52 With regard to the environmental credentials of suppliers, all contractors, suppliers and service providers that bid for major or strategic contracts are required to detail their Environmental Management System and to specify what impact their business has on the environment. All are required to provide any information about failure to comply with any legislation or where they have been subject to fines for transgressing those regulations and failure to do so would mean withdrawal of any contract offer.
- 2.53 The Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral suggests that greater awareness of the Council's environmental policies among suppliers might help to positively influence the environmental considerations and activities of those suppliers.
- 2.54 The Scrutiny Report highlights the need to raise the profile of green issues and to outline the Council's commitment to supporting the Green Economy and meeting its carbon reductions commitments. To address this, Corporate Procurement will ensure that all potential suppliers are made aware of environmental and sustainable procurement policies. Corporate Procurement will update the Officer Working Group on timescales for implementing this.

Education and Training

Lobbying for changes to the Funding Regime for Training

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

- 2.56 As part of the newly designed national skills system an 'innovation code' will be introduced. This 'code' will enable colleges and providers to draw down funding for programmes that meet a particular employer skills need whilst they are simultaneously developed for the Qualifications & Credit Framework (the framework of approved programmes of learning that qualify for government funding).
- 2.57 One of the Liverpool City Region 'asks' of government therefore is to free up providers from the ridged funding constraints, such as those highlighted in the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth, by piloting of these new 'innovation codes' for identified growth areas where barriers in the skills system can be evidenced. This will enable providers to react much quicker to businesses while awaiting the formal qualification approval processes.
- 2.58 Alongside these localised negotiations with Government, the Department of Business Innovation and Skills will launch a national consultation this year to seek views on how businesses can be more engaged in qualification design, development and assessment. The Officer Working Group will therefore ensure that key messages on the required changes to the funding regime for training to support local green sector growth are fed into the Liverpool City Region negotiations and the national consultation.

Creation of a fund to encourage access to existing training opportunities

- 2.59 In order to unlock real barriers to workforce skills in the green sector, it is proposed that £200,000 is set aside as a Wirral Green Skills Growth Fund.
- 2.60 The scrutiny review of green growth in Wirral identified the cost of green industry specific courses as a prohibitive factor in the take-up of green skills training. As an example, the advertised cost of short 4-5 day courses offered by the new National Skills Academy for Environmental Technology Centre ranges from £475 to £575 per person. The scrutiny review identified a need to stimulate the green skills training market to support up-skilling of the workforce to meet the growth potential of this sector and also the opening up of opportunities to the unemployed. Taking average costs as per examples highlighted in Section 2.60 this fund would support 250+ positions to access relevant training, also recognising that within this parameter specialist training may also be identified. As two distinct target groups, it is proposed that this new fund is administered via separate mechanisms until 31st March 2013, as follows:
- **Business Grant:** to support up-skilling of the existing workforce to meet the potential for business growth in the green sector.
- 2.61 Invest Wirral has established clear processes and procedures for the delivery of business grants through their investment support services framework which follow the Councils standards for due diligence procedure and include robust health checks and viable project plans prior to allocation. It is therefore proposed that a Green Skills Business Grant for workforce training is offered through Invest Wirral as part of its investment grants package. This could include a company choosing to locate in Wirral for the first time, or an established business in Wirral with workforce skills requirements that will unlock potential for growth in green sector activities.

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

Fund Allocation: £175,000

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

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

Fund Allocation: £25,000

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

Wirral Apprentice Scheme

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

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

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

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

Total Budget Allocation: £235,000

Database of Green Skills Training Providers

- 2.67 The scrutiny review of green growth in Wirral highlighted a lack of clarity regarding the availability of relevant training providers and courses in the region; this was particularly expressed in feedback and discussions with local businesses. In order to address this, the development of a database of all green skills training providers available through Invest Wirral, Council websites, colleges and schools is recommended in the scrutiny report. Business and learner access to searchable training databases is currently publicly available via the Business Link and Next Step websites, however initial research has highlighted some limitations to its application.
- 2.68 It is therefore proposed that the Green Growth Officer Working Group undertake further detailed research, into existing services and exploring the feasibility of a Council operated database which builds in clear, locally relevant signposting course information but makes best use of existing services. Development and implementation will be directed by the Officer Working Group and progress returned to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Green Accreditation Scheme for Wirral

- 2.69 The Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral recommended that in order to further build customer confidence in the green sector, traders who have the appropriate skill levels should be eligible to join a green accreditation scheme, similar to The Wirral Trader, operated by Wirral Trading Standards.
- 2.70 Delivery of a Green Accreditation Scheme would require staff to establish, administer and monitor the programme with proactive day-to-day engagement with 'green businesses' to promote the initiative. Benchmarking with The Wirral Trader, the closest current equivalent, shows that three officers would be required to deliver this programme with significant ongoing revenue costs.
- 2.71 Further, the imminent introduction of the 'Green Deal Quality Mark', a national, government initiated accreditation scheme for product and service providers that wish to participate in the Green Deal may negate the need for a local accreditation scheme. The Green Deal Quality Mark will ensure the right measures for each property are installed to the highest standards and consumer protection is given prime importance. The 'Green Deal Quality Mark' will help consumers identify reputable businesses even if the work is not being paid for by Green Deal finance. Invest Wirral will ensure that product and service providers in the Green Economy are aware of, and able to access, the Green Deal Quality Mark and other relevant accreditation schemes.
- 2.72 It is therefore proposed that the Green Growth Officer Working Group undertake further detailed research, exploring the feasibility of a Council backed green accreditation scheme. Development and implementation will be directed by the

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

Planning, Land Availability and Council Properties

Opportunities for Section 106 Agreements (or Community Infrastructure Levies)

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

Creating a green growth cluster in Wirral

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

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

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

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

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

5.0 CONSULTATION

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

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

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

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

Funding implication: £41,459 including on cost

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

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None as a direct result of this report

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(a) Yes and impact review is attached –

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

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

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

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None as a direct result of this report

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

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

- The formation of a Green Economy Officer Working Group to support the development of Wirral's Green Economy and the implementation of this reports recommendations.
- That updates are provided to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) on the potential of Enterprise Zone to provide development opportunities in green sectors.
- That the Invest Wirral Business Forum is developed to allow for the creation of a standalone green (environmental) cluster group, which will provide members from all sectors with a number of online services including a directory of green product and service providers, provide a sense of identity for the sector and provide clear information and improved signposting to support services for businesses that engage in 'green' business activities.

- That during the forthcoming municipal year (2012/13), the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) is encouraged to invite a minimum of two leading Wirral companies in the green sector to meet the Committee to further explore the problems and opportunities currently faced by those companies.
- That an awareness raising event takes place in September 2012 aimed at raising awareness of the products and services provided by the local green economy. The event is an opportunity for Wirral Council to publicly display its commitment to supporting this sector.
- That Corporate Procurement ensures that all potential suppliers are made aware of environmental and sustainable procurement policies.
- The Creation of Wirral Green Skills Growth Fund to unlock barriers to workforce skills in the green sector until 31st March 2013.
- Ensure that a minimum of 24 apprenticeship opportunities are ring-fenced for green growth businesses within the next round of the Wirral Apprentice Programme.
- That the Green Growth Officer Working Group undertake further detailed research, into existing training services and explores the feasibility of a Council operated database of green skills.
- That the Green Growth Officer Working Group undertakes further detailed research, exploring the feasibility of a Council backed green accreditation scheme.
- That the Green Growth Officer Working Group be tasked to compile a report to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) that explores the rationale for creating a green growth cluster of businesses either in a geographical location (a Green Business Park) or by association in various locations across Wirral.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

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

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APPENDICES

Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral – Council website

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Wirral Investment Strategy 2011-2016 – Council website

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

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

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

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Council 16 April 2012

154 MOTION: GETTING WIRRAL TRADE CENTRE READY

Proposed by Councillor Mark Johnston

Seconded by Councillor Pat Williams

1. Council recognises that all political parties have consistently worked in true political partnership to support the Wirral Waters project. This unified approach has assisted Peel in the development of this project and helped to attract significant and further potential Chinese and other investors.
2. Council also recognises the outstanding input from key Officers to ensure that Wirral is presenting itself as a highly attractive investment partner and destination.
3. Council is encouraged to see that Peel have secured and match funded £1.3 million of Government funds to start preparing the ITC site, with land remediation works already underway, and that recent visits by delegations from China were highly successful in presenting the Trade Centre site as an attractive location for potential tenants, with a further delegation expected in April.
4. Council now calls for work to “prepare the ground” for Wirral to be Trade Centre Ready, so that Wirral and its residents and businesses are in the best possible position to embrace all the potential business opportunities that will come and that we can offer the best possible support to businesses and investors that come here, to ensure the ITC is a long term success.
5. Work needs to be undertaken to ensure Wirral is ready, particularly in the following areas:
 - (i). Trade, export, marketing and inward investment
 - (ii). Employment and skills
 - (iii). Education, including languages and training
 - (iv). Culture and development of longer terms links with China, Korea, India and other countries likely to develop significant future business links with Wirral.
6. Council therefore calls on the three Parties to agree membership for a 1:1:1 Member Working Party, reporting to the Economy and Regeneration OSC. This Working Party will scope a project leading to recommendations to ensure this Council and its partners are Trade Centre Ready and able to embrace all opportunities for development through its growing links with China and other countries and that potential barriers to businesses and investors are identified and recommendations made as to how these can be overcome.

7. Council requests that the Working Party completes this work in time to enable any recommendations to be implemented before the ITC is built and opens for business and so that recommendations have enough time to be considered for the setting of 2013/14 budget, as appropriate.
8. Council also requests that the first meeting of the Working Party receive a report updating on progress in relation to paragraph 3 of the previous Notice of Motion on this topic (*Minute 53, 17 October 2012 Council refers*).

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

Resolved (65:0) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

Cabinet 12 April 2012

413 COMMITTEE REFERRAL – AFFORDABILITY AND MORTGAGES INCLUDING FIRST TIME BUYERS

The Cabinet considered Minute No. 50 – Affordability and Mortgages Including First Time Buyers (and the corresponding report) - which was referred to it by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee following its meeting held on 8 March 2012 as follows:

The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning submitted a report which updated the Committee on the current situation regarding housing market support, the availability of mortgages and which gave an analysis of how these issues were affecting Wirral. It also set out an overview of Government programmes and the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which were available to support and enable sustainable home ownership.

Responding to comments from Members, the Director and Lisa Newman, Housing Strategy Manager, gave further details on how the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme would work. 22 local authorities had launched the scheme so far and there had been no defaults. There was a risk as with all such schemes but some members expressed the view that the risk would only be if house prices went down and the risk was minimal although the benefits could be high.

Resolved –

- (1) That Committee notes the contribution of the range of programmes/packages to assist home buyers, including first time buyers and the Affordable Homes Programme Framework, to support home ownership in Wirral.
- (2) That Committee notes the issues relating to the housing and mortgage markets and the potential value and risks identified with operating a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.
- (3) That Committee asks Cabinet to consider the establishment of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to assist first time buyers in Wirral.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet thanks the Economy and Regeneration Committee for this referral and instructs the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning to undertake further work on the establishment of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to assist first time buyers in Wirral, reporting back to a future meeting of the Cabinet. This further work should take on board lessons learned from pilot areas operating Local Authority Mortgage Schemes and include the development of options outlining how this and other schemes could be implemented in Wirral, identifying the funds that would need to be made available, both for investment and as a reasonable provision to mitigate against the risks of repossession.

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Cabinet 12 April 2012

386 COMMITTEE REFERRAL – BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Cabinet considered Minute No. 51 – Business Support (and the corresponding report) which was referred to it by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee following its meeting held on 8 March 2012 as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

Resolved –

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

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

The Interim Head of Strategic Development and Regeneration highlighted the issues raised and comments received concerning the range of support. A review had been carried out to make sure there was support available for those who wanted to start a business. It was noted that there was a quality service available to anyone who needed it.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of Minute and report be noted; and**
- (2) the Interim Head of Strategic Development and Regeneration be thanked for presenting this item of business and for work he is going to do to ensure quality business support is available for those who require it.**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD

28 FEBRUARY 2012

SUBJECT:	EQUALITY AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	<i>DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This summary report (Appendix 1) is at the request of members at the last Scrutiny Programme Board held on 4 January 2012. The report summarises the CfPS Policy Briefing 'Equality Impact Assessments.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are requested to note the report.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

3.1 As part of the Equality Duty 2010 and further The Public Sector Equality Duty which came into full force in April 2011, the Council has a legal requirement to give due regard to the impact of its policies and decisions on people who share protected characteristics (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion / belief, gender re-assignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity).

3.2 As part of the Independent Corporate Governance Review report, AKA highlighted 'shortfalls in the way the Council evaluated the impact of its policies both prior to execution and in response to evidence about the impact'. Subsequently the report identified 'Equalities' as an area for improvement.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 As outlined in 3.2 above.

4.2 The Council failing to meet legal requirements.

4.3 The Council open to reputational risk.

4.4 The Council open to legal challenge.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 None

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

8.1 None

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 By not formally adopting Equality Impact Assessments as the Council's process for giving due regard to the impact of its policies and decisions, the Council is open to legal challenge.

9.2 The Council constitution will need reviewing to take account of the new legislation.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As part of the Equality Duty 2010, which came into full force in April 2011, the Council has a legal requirement to give due regard to the impact of its policies and decisions on people who share protected characteristics (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion / belief, gender re-assignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity).

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Equality Impact Assessments can and should inform planning and community safety policies and decisions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Summary report on CfPS Policy Briefing 'Equality Impact Assessment'

APPENDIX 2

Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

APPENDIX 1

**SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD
28 FEBRUARY 2012**

EQUALITY AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

SUMMARY

At the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Board held on 4 January 2012, a CfPS Policy Briefing entitled 'Equality Impact Assessments' was provided to members. Members made a request that the Policy Briefing be summarised for this meeting of the Scrutiny Board.

BACKGROUND: PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Equalities Act 2010 ("The Act") has two main purposes:

- to harmonise discrimination law, and
- to strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

The Public Sector Equality Duty ("PSED") (section 149 of The Act) came into force on 5 April 2011.

The PSED applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all and which meet different people's needs.

The PSED is supported by specific duties, as set out in the Statutory Code of Practice, which came into force on 10 September 2011. The specific duties require public bodies:

- to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the PSED; and
- to set themselves specific and measurable equality objectives.

Section 31 and 32 of the Equality Act gives the Equalities and Human Rights Commission ("EHRC") the power to issue "a compliance notice" if these duties are not being carried out. Individuals disadvantaged by public sector decisions can still bring an action under the Human Rights Act 1998.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)

All council officers, from recycling officers to transport planners to social workers to librarians, have a duty to consider access to the services they provide and the implications of the policies they develop for all groups in the local community: it is not only the responsibility of the equalities officer or diversity champion. Likewise, consideration of equalities issues is important to scrutiny committees, whether they are carrying out a

review of the council's recycling policy, monitoring children's social services or challenging the development of the library plan.

An intrinsic part of the PSED is the preparation of EIAs. EIAs have been operational in WMBC since 2008 and are published on the Council's website. EIAs should be produced whenever a WMBC policy is being developed. An EIA will enable the Council to make an informed judgement as to whether a policy will have unintended, negative consequences for certain people.

According to the EHRC, an EIA can have one of four outcomes:

- No major change
- Adjust the policy
- Continue the policy
- Stop and remove the policy

A robust methodology in the completion of EIAs will allow the Council to affirm that it has made a policy decision in a logical way, and that no assumptions have been made about the impact of a certain section of the community.

As it is important to consider the broad policy impacts of decisions, the effective production of EIAs relies on the principles of equality being "mainstreamed" within the wider decision making process. It is difficult to think of any policy change that the Council could implement that would have no impact whatsoever on local people.

The North West Employers Organisation Equality network has asked WMBC to be a case study in EIAs. WMBC were one of the first in the region to redesign its toolkit following the introduction of The Act in 2010.

It is essential that the Council's EIA process becomes more robust in terms of completion, quality assurance, scrutiny and transparency.

As part of the Independent Corporate Governance Review report, AKA highlighted "shortfalls" in the way the Council evaluates the impact of its policies both prior to execution and in response to evidence about the impact". Subsequently, the AKA report identified "Equalities" as an area for improvement.

Failure to carry out EIAs will leave the Council:

- failing to meet legal requirements.
- open to reputational risk.
- open to legal challenge.

It was agreed at Cabinet 12 January 2012 that the authority formally adopts EIAs as the Council's process for giving due regard to the impact of its policies and decisions.

SCRUTINY AND EIAs

At national level there have been a number of decisions overturned due to EIAs having been carried out ineffectively, or not considering the full issues.

Using EIAs to analyse proposed service changes (as part of a “pre-scrutiny” process) immediately focuses on the results of that change, rather than the process used to reach it.

An approach taken in Gloucestershire whereby EIAs (renamed “community impact assessments”) are now sent to O&S committees before being signed off by the relevant cabinet member, the intention being that this provides a way of building “pre-scrutiny” into the process and to provide additional political leadership. This suggests a new and more focused approach to “pre-scrutiny” more generally, where a discussion of methodology is mixed with a broader, substantive discussion on the policy

THE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In 2009 WMBC adopted this framework as a benchmarking toolkit. The toolkit involves an assessment and categorisation in one of three levels:

- Development;
- Achieving; and
- Excellent.

WMBC is currently “Achieving” and is looking to become “Excellent”.

This framework strongly promotes the use of scrutiny in establishing a culturally different approach to equality. Councillor engagement is particularly encouraged as part of this process.

SCRUTINY REVIEWS

Scrutiny reviews should involve a consideration of the way in which recommendations will impact upon different local residents. An awareness of equalities issues in the planning, delivering and monitoring of scrutiny reviews will enhance their robustness and ensure that recommendations have a greater chance of being implemented.

Using scrutiny reviews to examine equalities issues also brings wider benefits to the council. Involving a range of councillors in equalities work draws on their community experience and knowledge, raising issues that may not immediately occur to officers who may be less connected to local communities. The process of challenge and review can also provide an opportunity for officers to step back from day-to-day service delivery and reflect on its impact on the whole community.

Focusing on broader issues of concern to the community, rather than simply looking at internal council policies and services, can be a useful way for scrutiny to set and own its own agenda and helps avoid the temptation to politicise the scrutiny process. All members of a scrutiny panel, whether from the administration or opposition groups, can share, for example, a common desire to improve local health inequalities for or ensure better access to transport services.

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Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

Section 1: Your details

Council officer:

Email address:

Head of Service:

Chief Officer:

Department:

Date:

Section 2: What Council function / proposal is being assessed?**Section 2b: Is this EIA being submitted to Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?**

Yes / No

If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

.....

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

.....

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

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state)

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

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

Section 4: Within the Equality Duty 2010, there are 3 legal requirements. Will the Council function / proposal support the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

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

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

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

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

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

Protected characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications

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

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

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

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

Yes / No – (please delete as appropriate)

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

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

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

Section 8: How will consultation take place?

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

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

Section 9: Have you remembered to:

- a) Add a hyperlink to your published EIA on the Council website? (section 2b)
- b) Include any positive impacts as well as negative impacts? (section 5)
- c) Send this EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer?
- d) Review section 5 once consultation has taken place and sent your completed EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?

UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAMME : ECONOMY & REGENERATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011/12

Reports to assist in monitoring the Committee's work programme

It was agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs Group in September 2008 to use the following reports to monitor the work programme for each Scrutiny Committee. The last item on each Scrutiny Committee agenda should be 'Review of the Committee Work Programme'.

Report 1 - Monitoring Report for Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

This report will list all items that have been selected by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme for the current year.

It will also include items, such as previous Panel Reviews, where recommendations have been made to Cabinet. It is important that the implementation of these recommendations is monitored. Otherwise there is no measure of the success of scrutiny.

For each item on the work programme, the report will give a description, an indication of how the item will be dealt with, a relative timescale for the work and brief comments on progress.

Report 2 - Suggestions for Additions to Work Programme

The Work Programme for the Committee should be reviewed at each meeting. This will enable members to ask for new Items to be added to the programme. This report will list any newly suggested items. Committee will then have the opportunity to agree (or not) for them to be added to the programme.

Report 3 - Proposed Outline Meeting Schedule for the Municipal Year

The report will, for each scheduled Committee meeting, list those items which are likely to be on the meeting agenda. This will give the opportunity for Committee members to take a greater lead in organising their work programme.

Report 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

This report will give a very brief update on progress / timescales for in-depth panel reviews which are in the 'ownership' of the Committee.

REPORT 1
MONITORING REPORT FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
ECONOMY & REGENERATION : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011 / 2012

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
06/06/11	The implementation of affordable housing policies	Report to Committee on 05/09/11		During the discussion on the 'End of Year Performance Report' on 06/06/11, members requested a report on this item. Report on Affordable Housing presented to Committee on 05/09/11. A further report on Mortgages / Affordability was provided on 08/03/12. Cabinet was requested to consider the creation of a LA Mortgage Scheme.	
06/06/11	Wirral Apprenticeship scheme	Report to Committee		During the discussion on the 'Apprenticeship Programme' item at the meeting on 06/06/11, members requested a further update specifically on level 3 up-take and on the preparedness of the education sector for the challenge of the new requirement for functional skills. Further report on 'The Wirral Apprentice' provided to Committee on 05/09/11.	Complete
06/06/11	Green Growth – Motion agreed at Council in April requesting this Scrutiny Committee to “investigate and draw up a report for Cabinet on the best ways to create and support a ‘cluster’ of companies to lead the way in driving a Green economy on Wirral and across the country”.	In-depth Scrutiny Review by Working Group of Members	December 2011	This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11. Scope document for the Review agreed by Committee on 05/09/11. The final report for the review was presented to Committee on 08/03/12. Further reports regarding the impact of the recommendations will be provided in the future.	Complete

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
06/06/11	Business Start Programme The Programme has performed well but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we supporting businesses for the future? • What size of business is supported? • How long have supported businesses remained in business? Were businesses satisfied with the support?	Report to Committee		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11. Report presented to Committee on 07/11/11. Agreed that a further report on the future options for a business start-up programme be brought to a future meeting. Progress report presented to Committee on 08/03/12.	
06/06/11	European Social Fund and the Work Programme to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress report on the contract with the Reach-Out consortia What are the comparisons with arrangements / results at other Local Authorities?	Report to Committee in November		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11. Report presented to Committee on 07/11/11.	Complete
06/06/11	Inward Investment	Report to Committee		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11. Report presented to Committee on 05/09/11. Agreed that a further report will be provided once the Inward Investment Manager is in post. Suggested that a further report be presented to Committee in the future.	
06/06/11	Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) What are the options now that HMRI has ended?	Report to Committee		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11. Report presented to Committee on 16/01/12.	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
06/06/11	Visit to regeneration and housing sites, for example, housing schemes, Wirral International Business Park, Wirral Waters	Members visit to be arranged by Kevin Adderley		This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 06/06/11. Visit took place Friday 21/10/11.	Complete
05/09/11	Budget Issues for Economy & Housing in 2012/13	Officer report		Initial report presented to Committee on 05/09/11 following a request by the Council Leader for Scrutiny Committees to be consulted on budget issues for 2012/13. On 05/09/11, Committee agreed that Cabinet-led suggestions highlighting potential savings be requested. A special Committee meeting will be arranged to discuss those options / suggestions.	Complete
05/09/11	Fair Trade	Mark Johnston		The Chair provided a verbal report to Committee on 05/09/11 regarding the work undertaken by him as Fair Trade Champion. In future, this work will be organised by the Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee (rather than by Champions). A further report will be provided to a Committee meeting in the future (possibly November 2012).	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
07/11/11	Child Poverty Strategy	Officer Reports (Jane Morgan)		A progress report on the Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan was presented to the Committee on 07/11/11. Agreed that regular updates will be brought to Committee in the future. Progress report provided to Committee on 08/03/12.	
07/11/11	Presentation by Lindsay Ashworth, Peel Holdings	Presentation to Committee		A presentation will be made by Lindsay Ashworth to the Committee meeting on 16/01/12. Presentation by Richard Mawdsley (Peel Holdings) made to Committee on 16/01/12.	Complete

REPORT 2
SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME
ECONOMY & REGENERATION : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011 / 2012

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Completion Date
The impact of Welfare Reform on both private and social housing sectors, and particularly on under occupation in the social sector.	Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 8 th March 2012		
Green Growth Scrutiny Review – Develop a process to oversee the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Green Growth Scrutiny Review, including the appointment of members to the Green Growth Working Group	Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 8 th March 2012		
Develop a regular agenda item for a presentation / discussion with key members of the business community.	Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 8 th March 2012		
Tour of key sites in the borough for members of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee	Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 8 th March 2012	Proposed tour for members in June	
Getting Wirral Trade Centre Ready – Referral from Council	Notice of Motion agreed at Council, 16 th April 2012		

REPORT 3
PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR
ECONOMY & REGENERATION : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011 / 2012

Meeting Date	Topic Description
06/05/11	<p>Terms of Reference for the Committee End of Year Performance report 2010-11 Apprenticeship Programme Scrutiny Work Programme Forward Plan Regeneration Update</p>
05/09/11	<p>Implementation of affordable housing policies (to include options for localised definition of affordable housing) (Ian Platt) Inward Investment (Kevin Adderley) Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 (Kevin Adderley) Budget Issues for Economy & Housing in 2012/13 (Kevin Adderley) Green Growth Scrutiny review: Update (Report of Working Group – Cllr Mark Johnston, Chair) Referral from Council meeting on 18th July 2011 – Motion regarding Shale Gas Fracking The Wirral Apprentice – Update report Fair Trade – Progress report (Cllr Mark Johnston) Scrutiny Work Programme Forward Plan Regeneration Update</p>
07/11/11	<p>Invest Wirral – Presentation (Paula Basnett) Future plans for the Business Start Programme (Kevin Adderley) European Social Fund and the Work Programme (Kevin Adderley) Department for Work & Pensions Work programme (David Ball) Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 (Kevin Adderley) Child Poverty Strategy – Update (Jane Morgan) Scrutiny Work Programme Forward Plan Regeneration Update (Exempt Item)</p>

Meeting Date	Topic Description
16/01/12	Presentation by Lindsay Ashworth (Peel Holdings) Progress Report on Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) and transition funding (Ian Platt) Draft Corporate Plan 2012/13 (Kevin Adderley) Scrutiny Work Programme Forward Plan Regeneration Update
To be arranged	Special Meeting – Budget Issues for Economy & Housing in 2012/13
08/03/12	Green Growth Scrutiny Review – Final report Child Poverty Strategy – Update (Jane Morgan) Reducing the under-occupation of the social housing stock (Ian Platt) Affordable Homes - Referral from Council (Kevin Adderley) Business Start-up Programme (Kevin Adderley) Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 (Kevin Adderley) Scrutiny Work Programme Forward Plan Regeneration Update

REPORT 4
PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS
ECONOMY & REGENERATION : END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011 / 2012

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report to Committee
Green Growth Scrutiny Review	Cllr Mark Johnston (Chair) Cllr Peter Kearney Cllr Steve Niblock Cllr Stuart Whittingham	<p><u>As at 28/07/11:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two meetings of the working group have been held to discuss the general approach to the review • A draft Scope for the review has been agreed • Further meetings will be held in September with Council officers and members of the business community to commence evidence-gathering for the review <p><u>As at 12/10/11:</u></p> <p>Meetings have been held with officers representing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest Wirral. • Forward Planning (Wirral Council). • Strategic Policy, Economic & European Unit (Wirral Council). • Marketing Department (Wirral Council). • Asset Management (Wirral Council). • Three Wirral businesses operating in the green sector. <p>Further meetings with officers and businesses are being planned. A questionnaire for green sector businesses in Wirral is also being developed.</p> <p><u>As at 19/12/11:</u></p> <p>The evidence-gathering stage of the review is now complete. Members have started to produce their conclusions / recommendations from the review. It is expected that the final report for the review will be presented to Committee in March 2012.</p>	March 2012

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report to Committee
Green Growth Scrutiny Review (Continued)		<p><u>As at 26/04/12</u> The Final report of the Review was presented to the Economy and regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 08/03/12. Committee supported the findings of the working group and referred the report to Cabinet. Subsequently, the report was approved by Cabinet on 12/04/12 along with an officer report which set out the process for implementing the recommendations produced in the Scrutiny Report.</p>	