



Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 12 March 2013
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

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 - 20)

To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 24 and 29 January and 14 February, 2013.

3. DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY CULTURE AND LEISURE FACILITIES (Pages 21 - 28)

4. PROVIDE AND MAINTAIN HIGH QUALITY PARKS AND OPEN SPACES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES - UPDATE (Pages 29 - 38)

- 5. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS (Pages 39 - 42)**
- 6. WIRRAL APPROVED TRADER SCHEME (Pages 43 - 54)**
- 7. FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the period March to June 2013 has now been published on the Council's intranet/website and Members are invited to review the Plan prior to the meeting in order for the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider, having regard to the work programme, whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan and, if so, how it could be done within relevant timescales and resources.

- 8. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**
- 9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR**

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 24 January 2013

Present: Councillor S Williams (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors L Fraser J Stapleton
D Mitchell M Sullivan
C Muspratt KJ Williams
T Norbury

Deputies: Councillors L Rowlands (In place of D Elderton)
D Roberts (In place of J Crabtree)

Cabinet Member Councillor H Smith

45 **COUNCILLOR D ELDERTON**

The Chair gave Councillor Elderton's apologies and the Committee expressed their best wishes to Councillor Elderton who was currently unwell in hospital.

46 **MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

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

No such declarations were made.

47 **BUDGET 2013/16 - INITIAL PROPOSALS**

The Committee were invited to consider the following savings options agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 20 December, 2012 (minute 144 refers) and which fell under the remit of this Committee.

Budget Option	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	Total £000	Requires formal staff consultation
Senior Management Re-structure					
- Re-structure - Technical Services	250	0	0	250	Yes
Deletion of vacant posts					
- Pest Control	30	0	0	30	No

Mr R Beresford, Head of Regulation, informed the Committee that the item 'Restructure - Technical Services' shouldn't have appeared as a separate item in the list as the saving was part of the global savings for management restructuring. Responding to a question he advised the Committee that he understood that the table of savings in the Cabinet minute had been prepared by the Finance Department. The Cabinet Report containing the table had been referred to all five themed Overview and Scrutiny Committees as the savings covered a number of different areas.

Councillor Fraser expressed her great concern at the absence of the Interim Director of Technical Services or the Head of Service, Waste and Regulation and a Finance Department representative to explain the savings to this special meeting.

Mr Beresford explained the saving to be made in respect of the deletion of the vacant pest control post. A number of operational changes had been introduced to reduce the costs of the service. He informed the Committee of the successes of the service, including for the treatment of rats and, in line with the majority of Local Authorities, there was no intention to introduce charges for the treatment of rats because of the public health risk. After some considerable discussion on this issue Members expressed the view that the service provided for the treatment of rat infestations should remain free.

Councillor Mitchell stated that he could not completely agree with the comments of the Leader of the Council in the preamble to the minute.

Resolved – That the Cabinet minute 144 be noted.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 29 January 2013

Present: Councillor S Williams (Vice Chair in the Chair)

Councillors J Crabtree T Norbury
L Fraser J Stapleton
D Mitchell M Sullivan
C Muspratt KJ Williams

Deputies: Councillors J Hale (In place of D Elderton)

Cabinet Members: Councillors C Meaden H Smith

48 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

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

Councillor C Muspratt declared a personal interest in agenda item 14 – Tackling Doorstep Crime and the Development of Joint No Cold Calling / Neighbourhood Watch Zones (see minute 61 post), by virtue of her being a Betterware distributor.

Councillor S Williams declared a personal interest in agenda items 4 and 5 – Minimise Waste by Encouraging Waste Reduction and Recycling – Progress Update (see minute 51 post) and Corporate Goal Progress Report – ‘Have High Standards of Environmental Quality Across Wirral’ (see minute 52 post) by virtue of him being a member of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority.

49 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 21 November and 4 December, 2012 be approved.

STREETSCENE ENVIRONMENT SERVICES CONTRACT - 6TH ANNUAL REVIEW

The Interim Director of Technical Services presented the 2012/13 review of performance of the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract with Biffa. The report updated the Committee on the status of a number of work streams that were endorsed by Committee on 30 January 2012 (minute 63 refers). It also highlighted the progress made since on realising the savings generated from the 'Biffa Break Clause' buy out offer accepted by the Council at Cabinet on July 19, 2012 (minute 59 refers). A refreshed "Benefits Realisation Plan" has been produced to reflect the new working arrangements and priorities of the Wirral Council/Biffa partnering arrangement to March 2017.

As a number of budget saving proposals were currently being consulted on, which might result in significant changes to agreed contractual standards, as well as introducing new pressures and risks that would need to be accounted for, a new Qualitative Benefits Plan for 2013-2017 and accompanying KPI suit would be produced in response to any agreed changes and implemented no later than August 2013. A report on this would be brought to a future meeting.

Gary Robinson, Wirral Business Manager for Biffa, gave a detailed presentation to the Committee on the operation of the contract, which included information on

- Winter working
- Health and safety issues
- Customer service
- Collection performance
- The Wirral fleet
- Street cleansing
- Improved recycling
- Dog fouling

Mr Robinson then responded to comments from Members, all spillages from bins when being collected should be picked up and he would be happy to investigate further with regard to instances where bins were not always returned to where they should be for those with disabilities. He explained the process that drivers of waste collection vehicles followed if damage was caused to a car and that all incidents were passed on to Biffa's insurance department. Full approval for the purchase of snow tyres for four vehicles had been given and this had improved the collection performance during the recent cold weather. An extra 700 tonnes of garden waste had been collected which excluded the annual leaf fall. He stated that he would look into the issue of particular areas where detritus might be collecting along main carriageways in the borough.

A Member referred to a key council initiative in respect of tackling pavement parking and Councillor Hale suggested that a distinction needed to be made between parking and driving on pavements as there were some areas where pavement parking was a necessity due to the narrowness of roads.

Councillor Mitchell stated that he was content to note but he could not agree with part two of the recommendation to 'endorse the work streams....' as negotiations were still taking place.

Resolved – That this Committee (subject to Councillor Mitchell's non-endorsement of part (2)):

- (1) Notes the Key Performance Indicator information in Section 2.3 and Appendix 1 of the report and the continued high levels of service to which they relate.**
- (2) Notes and endorses the work streams highlighted for attention in 2013/14 as described in Section 3 of the report, along with any other areas identified by the Committee, to further improve service reliability, customer satisfaction and enhance the environmental quality of Wirral.**
- (3) Endorses the revised Benefits Realisation Plan produced (Appendix 2 to the report) to ensure the financial and service quality ambitions for the remaining contract period are achieved.**

51 **MINIMISE WASTE BY ENCOURAGING WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING - PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Interim Director of Technical Services presented the annual report updating the Committee on the Technical Services (TS1) Delivery Plan 2012/13 (Appendix A to the report) which supported the corporate goal: "Minimise waste by encouraging waste reduction and recycling".

The Committee's attention was drawn to the school waste collection service, in October 2012, the Council had introduced a waste collection charge to schools which had led to a reduction in the amount of residual containers requested by schools from 549 to 450. An income of £235k per annum was currently projected, adequately offsetting the contractual charges levied by Biffa for the schools service. Prior to the change, schools recycled 25% of waste, significantly less than household recycling rates. The recycling tonnages of schools were currently being monitored and officers would report back on the improvements in performance by the summer of 2013 once enough representative data had been collected.

Schools that achieved Green Flag Eco School's status received a 10% discount on their total charge ensuring that schools had an environmental and

financial incentive to increase recycling and there were currently 27 such schools.

The Interim Director reported that Wirral had taken a lead role in the City Region role for waste and much focused work was being undertaken in respect of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority levy. Also a Merseyside campaign was planned for the spring to discourage junk mail being delivered through letterboxes.

Resolved – That this Committee:

- (1) Notes the progress detailed in the report against the TS1 Delivery Plan.**
- (2) Endorses the future action plan updates regarding waste reduction and recycling progress to be reported to the relevant Cabinet Member.**
- (3) Endorses the future work streams suggested in section 2.8 of the report.**
- (4) Requests that any future changes to the Household Waste Enforcement Policy be brought before this Committee.**
- (5) Requests that the Director of the MRWA be invited to the March Committee to update Members on the outcome of the Refuse Recovery Contract procurement and progress made to increase the range of materials collected at kerbside.**

52 CORPORATE GOAL PROGRESS REPORT - 'HAVE HIGH STANDARDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACROSS WIRRAL'

The Interim Director of Technical Services submitted an update on the current position of the Technical Services Delivery Plan (TS2) that supported the 2012/13 corporate goal, “To have high standards of environmental quality across Wirral”. The Plan aimed to achieve a number of objectives in order to support the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Plan. Future projects in the 2013/14 Delivery Plan included:

- School related litter reduction programme
- Reducing fly-tipping in entries
- Street Litter Control Notices

The school related litter reduction programme would demand a substantial amount of resources to develop and deliver the programme. As such it was envisaged that Wirral’s Eco Schools’ officer would devote a significant percentage of their time to the project. Ensuring the success of the proposed

project, 'Reducing fly-tipping in entries', would necessitate many hours spent on site monitoring waste levels and engagement from residents. The assistant recycling project officers would be tasked with much of this frontline work. Councillor J Williams suggested and it was agreed that an additional sentence be added to the 'Resource implications' part of the report to read, 'All work will be achieved within existing budgets.'

Responding to Members' comments, the Interim Director stated that no evidence had yet been obtained of persons caught dumping asbestos.

Resolved – That this Committee notes and endorses:

- (1) the progress made in delivering TS2 - 'Have high standards of environmental quality across Wirral' Plan for 2012/13;**
- (2) the projects highlighted in Section 3 of the report as part of Technical Services on-going work to protect environmental quality standards on the Wirral.**

53 TACKLING DOG FOULING

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management provided an update to Members in respect of the work of the Dog Fouling Enforcement team; part of the Wirral Community Safety Team. The work of the team contributed towards a number of the council's priorities by protecting people, the environment, and maintaining the high quality of Wirral's parks and open spaces by dealing with anti-social dog walkers. The report had been requested as part of the Committee's work programme.

Responding to Members' comments Mike Collins, Operations Manager, stated that the local press were informed when people were prosecuted and another six cases were currently pending because offenders hadn't paid the fixed penalty. No decision had yet been made on 'dog free' zones. A Member suggested the need to carry out monitoring at times when most dog fouling occurred, between the hours of 6.00am and 8.00am and 8.30pm to 10.00pm.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

54 STREETSCENE ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGNS UPDATE

The Interim Director of Technical Services reported upon progress and outcomes from a number of Streetscene Enforcement Campaigns undertaken in 2012. These included, litter campaigns, CCTV Fly tipping investigations, waste duty of care visits, skip checks, street trading checks, domestic waste checks and premises cigarette litter.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

55 **MANAGEMENT OF HIGHWAY STRUCTURES**

The Interim Director of Technical Services reported upon the various activities carried out as part of the management of the Council's highway structures, placing them within the broader context of the Council's obligations to the public in terms of safety, accessibility, sustainability and value for money.

This report detailed the methodology used to manage Wirral's highway structures. The relevance of the structures within the overall highway network and the importance of having in place a robust asset management system were explained. The Council had a statutory duty to maintain the highway under the Highways Act 1980, and the important role which management of highway structures played in fulfilling that obligation was explained in detail.

Responding to comments from Members, the Interim Director stated that the Council had responsibility for bridges carrying roads over railways but that Network Rail was responsible for those bridges which carried railway lines over roads.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

56 **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION BY WIRRAL OF THE FLOOD RISK REGULATIONS 2009 AND THE FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010**

The Interim Director of Technical Services reported upon the progress of the implementation of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 which had established Wirral Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). LLFA's were required to lead the strategic management of local flood risk (arising from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses).

Wirral was at risk of local flooding, with a substantial number of domestic properties identified as at risk from potential future flooding. The responsibilities attached to the LLFA role, placed substantial new burdens on Wirral Council in managing these flood risks and would be directed through the Flood & Water Management Partnership, the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee and finally to Cabinet for approval. Additionally, the production of an annual report by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee responsible for flood risk management on progress in implementing the duties and an action plan for the next 12 months was required.

Responding to comments from Members, Mark Camborne, Health, Safety and Resilience Operations Manager, reported that the Environment Agency had maps covering all of the UK and insurance companies had their own maps

which might differ and a debate was currently ongoing between the government and insurance companies over this data. The Council did provide information on its website for residents who might be at risk from flooding.

Members expressed thanks to the officers for the work being undertaken in Wirral on flood management and coastal defences.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That the report be accepted by the Committee as meeting its responsibilities under the flood legislation to produce an annual report on Flood Risk Management progress.**

57 LIBRARIES AS CENTRES OF THEIR COMMUNITIES

The Interim Director of Finance updated the Committee on the actions taken in response to the Council decision of 15 October 2012 asking for an action plan to bring forward recommendations, as to how libraries could have their place as centres of their communities built upon.

With the support of the Community Engagement Team each Neighbourhood Forum was being asked, at its next cycle of meetings in February 2013, to work with and advise the library service. Library managers would be attending meetings to explain the work of the service. They would ask the Forum to highlight ideas they had, and those of their community, that they would want to include in their own area plan, to enhance the role of the library in their community. Library managers would then be discussing with the Neighbourhood Forum if and how best that might be achieved.

Responding to comments from Members, Malcolm Flanagan, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services, informed the meeting that those volunteers working in libraries were CRB checked if they came into contact with children and library staff ensured that volunteers did not deal with children on their own if this was not the case. The maximum standard would be to have all volunteers checked and Councillor Muspratt suggested that she would prefer this to be the case.

Malcolm Flanagan emphasised the need to make sure libraries were valued and maximising all library buildings' use would help in this.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

58 **LEASOWE LIBRARY HEALTH AND WELL BEING DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Interim Director of Finance updated the Committee on the work being undertaken with The Reader Organisation in piloting a Reading and Well Being Library at Leasowe. The work was being undertaken with the support of Public Health.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

59 **WIRRAL HERITAGE STRATEGY**

The Interim Director of Technical Services presented an updated Wirral Heritage Strategy and informed the Committee of the progress which had been made in the implementation of the Action Plan.

One of the main successes of the Strategy had been to bring local people and groups together to debate heritage issues; and the views of local people were central to the development of the Strategy document. Not every action in the Strategy's Action Plan had been achieved; indeed given the current financial climate, some would not be achievable in the foreseeable future. However, in a climate of identifying different ways of delivering services and forging new and stronger partnerships, they should not be forgotten, but remain aspirations to be taken forward when practical.

Resolved - That the updated Heritage Strategy be approved and the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Action Plan, be noted.

60 **THE FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management updated the Committee on the Introduction of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme within Wirral.

In June last year Wirral had introduced the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). The scheme, which was for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, was a Food Standards Agency (FSA) / Local Authority, partnership initiative. This national scheme provided consumers with information about hygiene standards in food business establishments at the time they were inspected to check compliance with legal requirements on food hygiene. The food hygiene rating given reflected the inspection findings.

The purpose of the FHRS was to allow consumers to make informed choices about the places where they ate out or shopped for food and, through these choices, encourage businesses to improve their hygiene standards. The

overarching aim was to reduce the incidence of food-borne illness and the associated costs to the economy.

The report gave details of the six different food hygiene ratings ('0' up to '5') - the top rating representing a 'very good' level of compliance with legal requirements. All businesses, irrespective of the nature or size of their operation, should be able to achieve the highest score. Since the scheme was introduced, 1622 premises had been included on the data base and the report gave a breakdown according to rating.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

61 **TACKLING DOORSTEP CRIME AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT NO COLD CALLING / NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ZONES**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report which gave details of an area of work of the Trading Standards Team in relation to preventing and detecting traders who preyed on the vulnerable and provided an update following the last report to this committee on the 17 November 2010 (minute 93 refers).

Trading Standards was committed to tackling doorstep crime and as part of a wider strategy, empowering Wirral residents to choose whether to conduct business with cold calling traders. Partly in response to public demand, 'No Cold Calling Zones' were being set up by the Trading Standards Team in conjunction with the Community Safety Team and the Wirral Watch Scheme. Joint Neighbourhood Watch / No Cold Calling signage had been developed and was being used to demark the streets. In addition, joint processes had been developed that brought these two initiatives together.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

62 **REDUCING THE COUNCIL'S CARBON FOOTPRINT PROGRESS REPORT NO. 6**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management updated the Committee on the various projects and activities currently being undertaken across the Council to 'Reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint', which promoted the Council's Corporate Priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2012/13.

The Council was committed to delivering a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025. To date, the Council had reduced emissions of CO₂ by 9,315 tonnes from a 2008/09 baseline of 45,481 tonnes, a reduction of 20.48%. Overall performance to March 2012 had exceeded the year's emissions target by 11.89%. A saving of 2,605 tonnes of CO₂ was still needed to be made by the end of 2012.

Resolved – That both the performance and progress of the various Council ‘Carbon Footprint Reduction’ and energy efficiency projects undertaken to date across Council Departments and the energy efficiency projects proposed in the report, be noted.

63 WIRRAL CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP ANNUAL REPORT

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management provided an update on the work of the Wirral Climate Change Group from 2012 including progress with the creation of a replacement climate change strategy for Wirral.

Wirral Council had a long held commitment to action on climate change. It supported the Wirral Climate Change Group as a partnership forum to co-ordinate action in this area. Last year the Group’s planned work to develop a replacement climate change strategy was endorsed by this Committee (minute 67 refers). The Group had since implemented much of the planned consultation programme to support and inform the development of this strategy and a draft strategy was expected to be available by summer 2013.

Resolved –

- (1) That the activity of the Wirral Climate Change Group from 2012 including progress with the programme to develop a replacement climate change strategy, be noted.**
- (2) That this Committee endorses the Council’s participation in the Local Government Association’s, ‘Climate Local’ initiative and the Leader of the Council be asked to sign a Climate Local Commitment on behalf of the authority.**

64 DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

The Interim Director of Technical Services reported, in accordance with the Approved Scheme of Delegation, of one instance where he had used his delegated authority in respect of the appointment of contractors. This was for the appointment of Martin Wright Associates for the Aids to Navigation Inspection and Reporting contract.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

65 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.

66 **REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received an update in relation to its work programme.

Resolved – That the work programme be noted.

67 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR - HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATION PANEL MINUTES**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management presented the minutes of the meeting of the Highways and Representation Panel held on 21 January, 2013.

The Panel had considered –

- Request for blind spot mirror Ferndale Avenue, Hillbark Road, Frankby.
- Objection to Local Area Forum Scheme: proposed pedestrian refuge, Kings Road, Bebington

Resolved - That the Committee recommend to the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services that –

- (a). **No further action is taken to pursue the erection of a highway blind spot mirror at Ferndale Avenue, Hillbark Road, Frankby.**
- (b). **The proposed scheme consisting of a pedestrian refuge island at Kings Road, Bebington, with associated tactile crossing points as shown on Drawing No. 3576, attached to the report of the Interim Director of Technical Services, be approved and implemented.**

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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 February 2013

Present: Councillor S Williams (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors J Crabtree J Stapleton
L Fraser M Sullivan
D Mitchell KJ Williams
T Norbury

Deputies: Councillors L Rowlands (In place of D Elderton)
D Realey (In place of C Muspratt)

68 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedures 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.

Councillors Fraser, Mitchell and Sullivan declared personal interests by virtue of them being friends of libraries.

Councillor S Williams declared a personal interest by virtue of him being a Board Member of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority.

Councillor Stapleton declared a personal interest by virtue of her being a member of the Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee.

Councillor Mitchell declared a personal interest by virtue of him being a School Governor of two Wirral schools.

69 CONSULTATION FINDINGS: WHAT REALLY MATTERS STAGE 2

Further to minutes 29 (6 November 2012), 40 (5 December 2012) and 44 (16 January 2013), the Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive upon the outcome of the What Really Matters Stage 2 Consultation, which

had been considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 7 February 2013 (minute 184 refers).

The comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement had been undertaken to inform the development of the Council's Corporate and Financial Plan for 2013-2016 and further to inform the decision making process surrounding significant budget savings. The Cabinet had noted the consultation process and implementation described within the report, and thanked Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders for their input. Cabinet had also noted the detailed consultation findings in relation to each budget option as contained within Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

The Council's Senior Policy Manager gave a brief presentation on the consultation findings and provided information in relation to targeted engagement and the methodology for the geographic and demographic analysis that had been undertaken. Key messages were that the Council should protect the vulnerable, retain responsibility for quality and look to raise income and eliminate waste. The Chief Executive had responded personally to all direct communication from members of staff and a team was in place to ensure Equality Impact Assessments, continued engagement and consultation and to show due regard to concerns raised.

Individual views were expressed by Members in relation to the general analysis of consultation responses received. This included queries were raised regarding the 2.7% response rate. Members were assured that this had been the furthest reaching consultation that Wirral Council had ever conducted.

A Member sought details regarding clarification on the costs involved with the consultation and also requested a breakdown of responses for each ward. The Committee were assured that this information would be circulated to each Committee Member following the meeting.

A Member queried equality issues and was referred to section 3.0 of the report whereby it was suggested that Black and Minority Ethnic groups were well represented within the sample.

Officers were thanked and commended by the members of the Committee for all work conducted on the What Really Matters consultation.

The Committee was requested to give consideration to the consultation feedback in relation to the following specific items, which fell within its remit and the Chair proposed that individual views expressed by Members could form the basis of feedback to Budget Cabinet –

1. Libraries

There were a number of options within this area, including further merging of libraries and One Stop Shops, the reduction of opening hours, particularly around Christmas and New Year, and the increased number of volunteers in the running of facilities.

Members expressed their support for the use of volunteers but queried the training facilities available for such staff on computer equipment. The Committee was assured that training would be provided to those concerned

2. Car Parking

The Committee considered the proposal to standardise car parking charges across the borough and reduce the 'all day' charge to a competitive rate of £2.50, and bring in annual and seasonal permit rates in outer Birkenhead car parks

The Committee expressed mixed reviews regarding standardised charging and some concerns were raised over the impact on towns and villages with local businesses. Comments were also raised regarding the accessibility and affordability of public transport in certain areas.

Councillor Norbury suggested that a more scientific study be conducted to involve Merseytravel and to review suitable transport plans for each particular area. The Chair suggested that this be considered at a future meeting

Councillor J Williams called for a Scrutiny Review Party to discuss issues regarding car parking. This was endorsed by the Chair.

3. Garden Waste Collection

Options considered were the introduction of a kerbside collection charge for garden waste, the proposal was that this would be an annual charge of £35.

Rob Beresford, Head of Regulation informed Members that if this option were to be agreed then the Council would contract this service out

The Committee noted that 51% of respondents stated this option to be completely unacceptable. Members took this on board and queried the viability of the proposal in terms of enforceability.

4. Household Waste Collection

Members in general supported the proposal to increase the charge of the 'ERIC' service from £20 to £26.50.

5. Kennels Service

Members expressed their concern over the proposed option to provide a joint kennel service with partners across Merseyside. This would mean residents having to travel to Halewood to collect their dogs. The Committee were largely

opposed to this option and comments were raised regarding the importance of protecting vulnerable animals across the Borough.

6. Environmental Health

The Committee noted that Cheshire West and Chester Council were currently intending to proceed with the proposal to form a mutual service.

Members noted the consultation response.

7. Trading Standards

The proposal involved the reduction of service leading to the reduction of staff. Members raised concerns over door to door traders and loan sharks and the impact that a reduction in staff would have on the protection of the public.

Rob Beresford, Head of Regulation informed Members that the Government were conducting an extensive review upon Trading Standards and regional groups had been set up through which all loan sharks information is being channelled.

Members noted the consultation response.

8. Pest Control

Members considered the option to reduce the service, which will lead to a reduction in staff.

Rob Beresford, Head of Regulation responded to questions from Members with regards to redundancies and informed the Committee that it is anticipated that one redundancy would be made. The service currently has seven members of staff. Members noted the consultation response.

9. Highway Maintenance

There were a number of options in this area including the reduction of proactive maintenance of roads, footways, signage and street furniture, and which would mean the Council would focus most resources on maintenance where there was a direct safety issue.

Members highlighted the importance of protecting roads and commented that some of the quality of the work needed addressing. Members noted the consultation response.

10. Street lighting

Members considered that this option would reduce the service and mean focusing the activity on targeted inspections at problem sites.

Members noted the consultation response.

11. Highways Drainage

Members noted that the option would reduce the services and mean focusing the activity on targeted inspections and problem sites.

Members expressed their concerns with the reduction in service as regards to highways which are prone to flooding.

12. Street Cleaning

Rob Beresford, head of Regulation informed members that this option sought to encourage the community to improve levels of street cleanliness and if successful this reduction would be rolled out across other areas.

Members noted the proposal and expressed their support.

13. School Crossing Patrols

This option would involve inviting schools to pay for the crossing patrol service and removing the cost to the Council.

Councillor Mitchell declared a personal interest by virtue of him being a School Governor of two Wirral schools.

Members expressed strong concerns regarding the implementation of this option with particular focus on the protection of children from harm.

14. Removal of the Maintenance of Parks

The Committee noted that nearly 60%, of those who responded to the survey found the option to stop maintenance on a number of parks, green spaces, beaches and grass verges completely unacceptable.

Members commented that this was a highly valued service and expressed the importance of public opinion on this matter. They also acknowledged the value and support of friends of parks across Wirral and noted that not every park in Wirral received this

15. Reduction in the Maintenance of Parks

Members considered this option in line with the above option.

16. Community Patrol and Dog Fouling

Members of the Committee noted that the consultation response was fairly balanced and made no comments in relation to this issue.

17. Modernisation of Leisure

This option involved making a number of changes to pool operating charges to pool opening times, including closing Europa Leisure Pool and Guinea Gap Pool during less busy times, and reducing the staff requirements for the sauna operation at Guinea Gap Leisure Centre among others.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and comments were made regarding the importance of swimming for residents in the Borough. It was also stated that there was a high sickness rate amongst leisure centre workers and suggested that this issue needs to be looked into in more depth.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12 MARCH 2013

SUBJECT:	<i>DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY, CULTURE AND LEISURE FACILITIES</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>KEVIN ADDERLEY, INTERIM STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT</i>
KEY DECISION? <i>(Defined in paragraph 13.3 of Article 13 'Decision Making' in the Council's Constitution.)</i>	<i>NO (delete as applicable)</i>

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides a summary of progress in the provision of Leisure and Cultural Services which include the Floral Pavilion, The Museums Service and Leisure Centres. Libraries and Parks and Countryside have been dealt with in separate reports. Members are asked to note the report.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 This report has been requested as part of the work programme for the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Corporate Plan for 2012/13 includes the goal to 'Provide high quality, value for money Leisure and Cultural facilities for Wirral residents' with a specific focus on promoting the Council's leisure facilities to encourage greater take-up of services and a target to increase the number of Wirral residents participating in sport and physical activity by 1%.

2.2 During 2012/13 the Museums Service has been undertaking extensive refurbishment work to the Williamson Art Gallery and the Priory. The works at the Williamson are nearing completion and as well as providing general improvements to the galleries there is also a shop, café (run by a social enterprise) and improved facilities for schools. The works will be complete in June this year and the gallery will be fully open to the public. During 2012/13 the Museums Service has developed a Heritage Strategy for Wirral which has been reported separately to this scrutiny committee.

2.3 The number of Wirral residents participating in sport and physical activity is measured by Sport England's Active People Survey which asks adults if they have undertaken at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport every week. Wirral's participation levels have increased each year since the survey commenced in 2005 when it was measured at 32.6% of the population. It is 41.8% for 2011/12 which was the date of the last survey. This makes Wirral the highest performing authority in Merseyside and amongst the 10% top performing authorities in the country.

- 2.4 Wirral Leisure centres have seen a rise in usage with the number of members of the Invigor8 membership scheme increasing from 5355 in 2011 to 6336 in 2012 and around 1736,000 visits to Leisure Centres every year. In recent years there has been increased marketing and promotion by the Council's corporate marketing team as well as the availability of on-line booking. Wirral continues to offer free swimming in school holidays for juniors and all the year round for over 60s.
- 2.5 The Floral Pavilion has continued its success since opening four years ago. The average booking level for events is 71% against a market which has seen a fall this year of 13% in audiences for subsidised theatre outside London. There has been an average of 575 events per year. These are currently 102,893 subscribed patrons on the database and in 2011-12 there were 143,822 customers. The catering and bar operations have also performed well.

Work is continuing to develop the conference and meetings market and a new programme of events has been developed for the conference space promoted as the 'Blue Lounge' which is proving very popular.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 Leisure and Cultural venues are subject to reductions in income caused by economic conditions, competition and lack of investment in new facilities and marketing. A programme of investment is being undertaken in Leisure Centres and the Floral Pavilion linked to promotion and marketing campaigns.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 No other options have been considered as part of this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Wirral residents were consulted on the future for Culture and Leisure Facilities as part of the 'What Really Matters' budget consultation.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 Volunteers are involved in many aspects of Leisure and Cultural provision from running sports clubs to providing front of house and customer care support at the Floral Pavilion.

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

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

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

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 This report is provided for Member's information.

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

APPENDICES

None.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

(Include background information referred to or relied upon when drafting this report, together with details of where the information can be found. There is no need to refer to publicly available material: e.g. Acts of Parliament or Government guidance.)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details Jim Lester

EIA lead Officer: Mark Smith

Email address: marksmith@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: Mark Smith

Chief Officer: Kevin Adderley

Department: Technical Services

Date: 26 February 2013

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Delivering value for money, culture and leisure facilities

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

No If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

Sustainable Communities – 12 March 2013...

Please add hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website (see your **Departmental Equality Group Chair for appropriate hyperlink**)

.....

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

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: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance 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.

- No** (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:

Could the 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 potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential 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 proposal?

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 and by when?

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary 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 appropriate departmental hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published (section 2b)**
- b) **Include any potential 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?**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12 MARCH 2013

SUBJECT:	<i>PROVIDE AND MAINTAIN HIGH QUALITY PARKS AND OPEN SPACES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES - UPDATE</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>KEVIN ADDERLEY, INTERIM STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT</i>
KEY DECISION? <i>(Defined in paragraph 13.3 of Article 13 'Decision Making' in the Council's Constitution.)</i>	<i>NO (delete as applicable)</i>

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides a summary of progress in the provision of the Parks and Countryside Service to provide and maintain high quality parks and open spaces in partnership with the local communities. Members are asked to note the report.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 This report has been requested as part of the work programme for the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Corporate Plan for 2012/13 includes the goal to 'Provide and maintain high quality parks and open spaces in partnership with the local communities with a specific focus on improving the Council's Parks and Countryside Service with the targets to increase the number of parks attaining an agreed quality standard from 12 to 13 by 2012/13 and to deliver the Parks and Countryside Modernisation Programme 2012/13.

2.2 A report was taken to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21st November 2012 detailing the progress of the Parks and Countryside Modernisation Programme. In summary the staff have worked hard and well over the summer to maintain and improve the performance of the new service and ensure it is value for money. They have achieved the best quality standards ever achieved in the Wirral as can be seen by the Service's Green Flag and other quality awards. This year has been the most successful year yet with 16 of the borough's open spaces having received a national quality award and 14 the Green Flag Award, exceeding the Corporate Plan Goal. The awards are a sign to visitors that the park is well-maintained, well-managed and has appropriate facilities for the local community. Uniquely Wirral has a national first - Wirral's Hilbre Island is the only island in the country to hold a Green Flag.

2.3 These Green Flag awards could not have been achieved without the partnership working with friends groups, volunteers and other community organisations assisting and supporting their local parks teams to achieve the required standards. The Parks and Countryside Service actively support all friends and voluntary groups who play a key and active role and are also a vital link with the local community. They make an invaluable contribution to park life through local events and activities, task days, and with their contributions to management plans and other long term projects for their local parks. This year there have been 3 new Friends groups making a total of 46 Friends of Parks Groups on the Wirral. They are making an outstanding contribution to the decision making processes and the standards of parks and open spaces throughout the service.

This year Wirral's Green Flag Parks are:

1. Ashton Park
2. Wirral Country Park
3. Thornton Hough Village Green
4. Birkenhead Park
5. Coronation Gardens
6. Brotherton Park and Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve
7. Eastham Country Park
8. Royden Park
9. Hilbre Island Local Nature Reserve
10. Vale Park
11. The Arno
12. Bidston Hill
13. North Wirral Coastal Park
14. Meols Park

Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm has earned a Green Flag Community Award, which recognises high quality green spaces that are managed by voluntary and community groups.

Birkenhead Park has retained its Green Heritage status in addition to its Green Flag Award.

2.4 Key projects still to be completed in the Parks and Countryside Modernisation Programme Asset Management Work stream are the purchase of the necessary plant and equipment and vehicles, the implementation of the depot strategy, the ICT strategy and the tree management programme. These were awaiting the capital programme decision and will be planned for implementation in 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16.

2.5 There have been regular meetings with Trade Union representatives to discuss working practices and the implementation of the Parks and Countryside improvement programme. A range of new working practices and hours have been introduced. Following discussions with the Trade Union representatives agreement has been reached, and a 12 month pilot started in May 2012 with a change in working practices for all gardeners, supervisor gardeners and Deputy Area Managers (except the staff who work in the cemeteries as their work is evenly distributed throughout the year).

The key advantages are:

- the introduction of annualised hours with the lengthening of the hours worked at the service's busiest time of the year has ensured that the standard of the parks and countryside has increased;

- reduction in time taken for lunch breaks to half an hour;
- Friday afternoon working to prepare parks and other areas for increase in use over Weekends;
- flexible working across areas;
- agreement to work in rain/wet conditions to minimise any loss of productivity due to weather which has been especially useful this last year.

There have been staff consultation meetings on the new working patterns and staff ideas have been sought on for income generation and savings. At present there are key projects on Income Generation and Marketing, Re-Allocation of Land-use, Events, Volunteers and Education. These are key staff led projects that will ensure the engagement, sustainability and value for money of the service going forward.

- 2.6 The draft plan for the 10 year Strategic Plan and Policy Framework for Parks and Countryside has been drafted to the new agreed timeframe with the final plan to be agreed in December 2013.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The progress and timescale for the completion of the Parks and Countryside Modernisation Programme is dependent on the Council's financial situation.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 No other options have been considered as part of this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Wirral residents were consulted on the future for the Parks and Countryside Service as part of the 'What Really Matters' budget consultation.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 Volunteers are involved in many aspects of the Parks and Countryside Service including the many Friends Groups detailed in the report.

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

- 7.1 The progress and timescale for the completion of the Parks and Countryside Modernisation Programme is dependent on the Council's financial situation with the Asset Management Workstream dependent on the capital programme.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 This report is provided for Member’s information.

REPORT AUTHOR: *Mary Bagley*
Parks and Countryside Service Manager
telephone: (0151) 666 3226
email: marybagley@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

(Include background information referred to or relied upon when drafting this report, together with details of where the information can be found. There is no need to refer to publicly available material: e.g. Acts of Parliament or Government guidance.)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Bill Cooper

Email address: williamcooper@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: Mary Bagley

Chief Officer: Kevin Adderley

Department: Parks and Countryside

Date: 28/02/12

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Provide and maintain high quality parks and open spaces in partnership with the local communities (update).

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes

If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 12 March 2013

Please add hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website (see your **Departmental Equality Group Chair for appropriate hyperlink**)

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- √ **Services**
- √ **The workforce**
- √ **Communities**
- √ **Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

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: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance 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.

No (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:

Could the 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 potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
All nine protected groups	<p>Positive potential impact - on physical and mental health due to opportunities for exercise, access to nature and relaxation.</p> <p>Every person kept physically active for their life saves on average £40,000 to £50,000 in health service costs.</p>	N/A	M Bagley	2013-2015	Reduction in Council budgets will increase the need for partnership working. Officer resources are required for developing partnership management of sites. This would be subject to partners having

					sufficient capacity and funding.
Socio-economically disadvantaged people	Positive potential impact - accessibility of local green and open spaces to provide affordable and accessible days out, places to exercise and relax and places to enjoy a 'staycation' for those unable to afford to go away on holiday particularly impacts on people on lower incomes.	N/A	M Bagley	2013-2014	As above

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

In reports summarising parks user surveys – addressing both feedback from and response to the surveys.

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

N/A

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

Natural England – Green Space Access Research Summary
Natural England – Health and Wellbeing Position Statement
Wirral Council Parks and Countryside User Survey 2012

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

Yes

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 and by when?

The draft 10 Year Wirral Green and Open Space Strategy will be subject to public consultation in Summer 2013, details of which are to be finalised.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary 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 appropriate departmental hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published** (section 2b)
- b) **Include any potential 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?**

DRAFT

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 MARCH 2013

SUBJECT:	DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	VARIOUS
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, in accordance with the Approved Scheme of Delegation, of any instances where delegated authority has been used by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management with respect to the appointment of Contractors pursuant to Contract Procedure Rule 14.1.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The following tenders have been accepted since the meeting of this Committee on 21 November 2012.

Project Title: Wallasey Town Hall
 Passenger Lift Refurbishment
 Contract Sum: £55,743.00
 Contractor: Knowsley Lift Services Ltd
 Funded from: Law, HR & Asset Management PPM 2012/13

Project Title: Birkenhead Town Hall
 Fire Alarm Installation
 Contract Sum: £55,268.00
 Contractor: Atlas Fire & Security Ltd
 Funded from: Law, HR & Asset Management PPM 2012/13

Project Title: Rock Ferry One Stop Shop / Library
 Alterations
 Contract Sum: £499,630.00
 Contractor: Thomas Barnes & Sons plc
 Funded from: Law, HR & Asset Management - Capital Programme

Project Title: Schedule of Rates Contract 2013-2016 for
 Asbestos Removal, Encapsulation and Associated Works
 Contract Sum: 0% Increase/Reduction of the Base Rates
 Contractor: Asbestos Control & Treatment Ltd
 Funded from: Law, HR & AM Repairs & Maintenance Revenue

Project Title: Cheshire Lines Building
Facilities Management
Contract Sum: £2,395.45 per week - 14 month contract
Contractor: 1 Call Business Solutions Ltd
Funded from: Law, HR & AM Repairs & Maintenance Revenue

2.2 The above listed tenders were the lowest/most economically advantageous received.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 There are no risks in relation to this report.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 There are no other options to be considered in relation to this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 There are no consultation issues in relation to this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are no implications directly arising from this report.

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

7.1 Funding for these projects is as detailed above. There are no other resource implications as a result of this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal implications 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?

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

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no carbon reduction implications as a direct result of this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no implications as a result of this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That the report be noted.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To advise members in accordance with the Approved Scheme of Delegation.

REPORT AUTHOR: Robin Stratton
Assistant Projects Manager
telephone: (0151) 606 2340
email: robinstratton@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

COMMITTEE

12 MARCH 2013

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

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is provided to give an update on the progress of the Wirral Trader Scheme (WTS). The scheme is a non-statutory function of Trading Standards Service but has a valuable role in preventing consumer detriment. It provides support and reassurance to vulnerable people and encourages and assists businesses to trade fairly and provide excellent goods and services. It is proving a success with over 103 approved members and Wirral consumers carrying out approximately 13,000 trader searches in the last 12 months.
- 1.2 The Wirral Trader Scheme assists in delivering key priorities of the Council, including promoting sustainable, economic, social, neighbourhood and environmental regeneration, improving the health and well being of Wirral residents and providing opportunities for community and business development.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
- (a) Note improvements in and progress of the 'Wirral Trader Scheme' and the change of brand to 'Trading Standards Business Approval';
 - (b) Recognise the importance of the Trading Standards Business Approval Scheme in supporting Wirral residents and businesses, specifically vulnerable people.
 - (c) Consider the options for the future development and sustainability of the Trading Standards Business Approval Scheme

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 Promotion of the scheme to local communities and traders is vital in going forward. The scheme has steadily gained brand recognition in the last 12 months, however we need to continue to promote the scheme to enable it to both attract members wanting to enhance the reputation of their business and the sector; and gain customer recognition.
- 3.2 The scheme produces many positive outcomes. To date, all complaints involving member businesses have been resolved without the need for enforcement or court intervention.
- 3.3 The financial challenges the Council faces means that it is imperative that new and more innovative methods of delivering and providing services are found.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.0.1 The Wirral Trader Scheme was launched in 2003 as a preventative measure to protect Wirral residents from being targeted by rogue and bogus traders. It aims to give consumers a reliable way of finding trustworthy, reputable local businesses, offers a source of help and advice if things go wrong and enables local businesses to demonstrate that they have signed up to national standards.
- 4.0.2 In October 2012, following consultation with consumers and member businesses the Wirral Trader Scheme was re-branded to 'Trading Standards Business Approval.
- 4.0.3 Benefits to businesses include: partnership with Trading Standards Service with a dedicated relationship manager, enhanced service for advice on customer disputes, access and notification of Wirral council grants, promotion of business to Wirral residents, a company page on the scheme website; star rating feedback customer review, use of the Trading Standards Approved logo; free legal advice regarding fair trading, consumer and business law.
- 4.04 Benefits to consumers include: protection for the most vulnerable members of the community, allows consumers to buy with confidence, offers choice of a reliable trader who they can trust and high standards of customer service, committed traders who comply with all necessary legislation and less risk of detriment.
- 4.0.5 The scheme has 103 active members with 5 new applications in process. Businesses pay a one off administration fee of £115 and £205 per year for membership. Based on 100 members, budget generated through subscriptions is £21,115 per annum.

4.0.6 Consumers have made approximately 13,000 trader searches on the scheme website www.traderscheme.org.uk in the last 12 months. This is extremely positive and consumer demand for the scheme is evident.

4.1 MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

4.1.1 The scheme has been successful in retaining its members. In the last 12 months, only one business has voluntarily left the scheme. The following improvements have assisted in stabilising membership retention:

- Excellent relationship management;
- New and improved marketing materials;
- Introduction of monthly electronic payments through the Council pay system;
- Improved level of customer service;
- Regular member e-newsletter;
- Promotion of other Council initiatives; and
- The re-brand to Trading Standards Business Approval.

4.1.2 Feedback from Scheme Members demonstrates that the scheme is having a positive impact on businesses and sales have increased. In some cases, this amounts to £70 - £80K per annum.

4.2 TACKLING CUSTOMER DETRIMENT

4.2.1 A key objective of the scheme is to tackle consumer detriment. In order to achieve this, it is crucial that Wirral residents are made aware of the scheme so that they do not fall victim to rogue traders. This will be achieved through joint working opportunities with other Council departments, a High profile PR plan to be implemented across local press and radio stations; Attendance at community events; Identification and communication with resident groups; and strengthening communications with all partners.

4.3 WEBSITE

4.3.1 www.traderscheme.org.uk is the scheme website. The annual cost of the management service which incorporates the cost of the Trading Standards Business Approval platform is £5000 per annum for a minimum of 100 members plus an additional £50 per new member. This cost is met by income generated by the scheme.

4.3.2 The scheme website has recently been re-developed to include the new brand. The user interface has been simplified to provide easier navigation for end users.

4.4 MEASURING IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS

- 4.4.1 The effectiveness of the Trading Standards Business Approval Scheme can be demonstrated through the number of business that are members of the scheme, the level of complaints dealt with through the scheme and the customer feedback from feedback ratings that consumers leave on the website. In the last 12 months membership has increased from 84 to 103 and approximately 2000 consumers have left positive feedback regarding members.
- 4.4.2 The scheme is proving to be a success and is fulfilling the purpose for which it was designed. Member feedback is positive and there have only been 4 from complaint received in the past 12 months, all have been resolved without the need for intervention.

4.5 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.5.1 In the light of the financial challenges facing the Council it is appropriate to take steps to provide services as cost effectively in the interests of the Wirral, its businesses, and the wider community
- 4.5.2 .The cost of administering the Trader Scheme for 103 businesses including management support is approximately £70,000 (plus on costs) per year. Overall, the scheme is working well within its current structure. However, marketing and promotion is still required in order to grow the membership to make the Scheme self sustaining through income
- 4.5.3 The Trading Standards Service is examining a potential alternative to developing the scheme under management by the Council which involves the transfer of the management of the Trader Scheme to a private company. The Wirral Trader Scheme branding and association with Wirral trading Standards would be maintained as would the support to businesses and the level of protection to the community.
- 4.5.4 Trading Standards Service would need to align business membership agreements and its existing contractual relationships in order for a termination date to be established. Business members could then be given the option for seamless transition to the company.
- 4.5.5 The opportunity for the Trader Scheme to be sustained and developed by a company is seen as an attractive and innovative alternative that could reduce the cost to the Council. The feasibility of this option will be explored further over the coming months.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 There are no risks attached to this report.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The proposals for the changed Trading Standards Approval brand was introduced following consultation with the Trader Scheme members.
- 6.2 Consultation with existing members will now be undertaken regarding the future delivery of the Trader Scheme.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

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

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

8.1 Staffing

- 8.1.1 There are no staffing implications resulting from this report.

8.2 Financial Implications

- 8.2.1 The cost of the Scheme's web-based platform is being met through income generated by subscriptions.
- 8.2.2 Promotional materials and stationary has been met through income generated by subscriptions.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no legal implications resulting from this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

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

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

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

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Trading Standards Business Approval Scheme assists Wirral citizens to access service providers with confidence which helps prevent them becoming the victim of rogue traders.

12.2 There are no planning implications arising from this report.

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APPENDICES

www.traderscheme.org.uk

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee	23 November 2011

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: NIL RETURN

EIA lead Officer: NIL RETURN

Email address:

Head of Section: Derek Payet

Chief Officer: Mark Smith

Department: Regeneration and Environment

Date: 1/03/2013

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Trading Standards Business Approval Scheme

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes / No If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

12th March 2013

Please add hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website (see your Departmental Equality Group Chair for appropriate hyperlink)

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

NIL RETURN

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

Services

- The workforce**

Communities

Other (eg: Business Sector)

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: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance 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.

- No** (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:

Could the 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 potential negative impact.

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Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Disability, Age					
race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and					

civil partnership					

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 proposal?

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 and by when?

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary 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 appropriate departmental hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published (section 2b)**
- b) **Include any potential 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?**