



# Cabinet Special Meeting

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday, 2 December 2013</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>4.00 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall</b>

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## AGENDA

### 1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Cabinet 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.

### 2. MINUTES

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

RECOMMENDATION: That the minutes be approved and adopted.

## FINANCE

### 3. CORPORATE PLAN 2014 - 2016 (Pages 1 - 30)

### 4. DRAFT COMMITTEE CALENDAR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014/15 (Pages 31 - 48)

## CENTRAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES

### 5. WIRRAL CORONER SERVICE (Pages 49 - 56)

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

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

**7. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following items contain exempt information.

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

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

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

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CABINET

2 DECEMBER 2013

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CORPORATE PLAN 2014-2016</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>YES</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with a refreshed Corporate Plan for the period 2014-2016 for consideration and referral to the Policy meeting of Full Council on 2 December.
- 1.2 The Corporate Plan for 2013-2016 was agreed by Council on 5 March 2013 following extensive consultation with residents, partners and other stakeholders.
- 1.3 The Corporate Plan provides the organisation with a clear vision, set of priorities and is the basis upon which a performance framework will be developed to monitor progress towards the defined objectives. The report further contains the current financial position of the organisation for the same period.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan is the key policy document of the Council and as such provides a robust approach to the Council's business planning; ensuring that our vision, priorities and spending decisions are based on sound evidence, through analysis and understanding of community needs.
- 2.2 The report clearly articulates the ambition for the organisation and borough, and provides a framework for the achievement of a series of priorities designed to drive further improvement at all levels of the organisation.
- 2.3 The priorities contained within the Corporate Plan will be underpinned and supported towards delivery through the development and implementation of directorate plans.

#### 3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The Corporate Risk Register will be completed in line with the new Corporate Plan to ensure that any risks to delivering the objectives are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.

#### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 As outlined, the Corporate Plan is the organisation's key policy document and drives all other business planning processes and is therefore vital for the Council's development in the coming year. Therefore no other options were considered.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 The content of the Corporate Plan 2013-2016 was subject to extensive consultation with residents, partners, staff and other stakeholders throughout 2012.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

6.1 The Corporate Plan makes reference to working closely with VCF sector organisations for the benefit of Wirral residents and communities and this partnership approach will continue to be a key priority for the Council.

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

7.1 The Corporate Plan is designed to inform the budget setting process for the coming financial year.

#### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Legal implications relating to the actions set out in the Corporate Plan will be addressed by directorates as appropriate.

#### **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Yes.

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

#### **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None arising as a direct result of this report.

#### **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None arising as a direct result of this report

#### **12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

12.1 Cabinet are requested to consider the contents of the Corporate Plan and Financial Position Statement as provided at Appendix 1 of this report and refer to the Policy meeting of Full Council on 2 December 2013.

#### **13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

13.1 The Council is required to produce a Corporate Plan which provides a robust approach to the Council's business planning; ensuring that our vision, priorities and spending decisions are based on sound evidence, through analysis and understanding of community needs.

**REPORT AUTHOR: Fiona Johnstone**  
**Director of Public Health / Head of Policy & Performance**

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan 2014-2016

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# Corporate Plan: 2014-2016

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“ Wirral will be a place where the vulnerable are safe and protected, where employers want to invest and local businesses thrive, and where good health and an excellent quality of life is within the reach of everyone who lives here. ”

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## [ Our place ]

**Wirral is a unique place, home to a growing population of 319,800 people, including 190,000 people of working age and over 8,000 businesses providing employment for 105,800 people.**

The Wirral peninsula extends to 60 square miles, with 25 miles of coastline. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty, packed full of spectacular scenery, with a rich mixture of culture and heritage. Strategically located between the economic centres of Liverpool and Chester, Wirral benefits from an infrastructure that presents significant opportunities for development.

Wirral has mostly excellent housing, schools and a high quality environment; however there are unacceptable levels of inequality which exist within the borough, particularly in relation to life expectancies. There is a strong contrast between the East and West of the borough.

Wirral's neighbourhoods range from some of the most deprived in the country (around St James Church in Bidston) to one of the most affluent, or least deprived, in South West Heswall less than six miles away. 21 areas in Wirral fall into the highest 3% in England in terms of levels of child poverty, with a total of 58 areas in the highest 20%. This results in serious quality of life issues and health inequalities, including a completely unacceptable difference in life expectancy of 9.7 years for females and 14.6 years for males depending on where a person lives in Wirral.





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- PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE
- TRANSFORMING THE COUNCIL



## [ Foreword ]

**This Corporate Plan for 2014-2016 sets out the vision that will drive the Council's work over the coming two years. This is a time of unparalleled challenge, and opportunity, for both the Council and the Borough that we serve.**

I am proud that we are in a better position than ever before to deliver for all Wirral residents and communities. Despite the unprecedented financial and demographic challenges we face this Council has been at the forefront of sector-led improvement, and we will continue our work to ensure that Wirral's journey becomes the national exemplar for public sector improvement. We have made significant progress and have achieved a great deal together over the last twelve months, but there is much work still to be done before we become the outstanding Council our residents deserve.

Our challenge now is to not lose focus. We have made an excellent start in ensuring the Council's finances are built on sound foundations, our budget challenge remains stark, while at the same time demand for our services is rising. The reductions we are facing in Government Grant are likely to be around 50% during this a five year period. We have to change the way we deliver our services - critically evaluating everything we do and finding new, innovative solutions with our partners. Crucially we will seek to empower and inspire local people to build upon the many assets that exist at the heart of all our communities.

This new way of working is particularly vital as we look to the future. In Wirral, levels of inequality exist which are absolutely unacceptable. I am determined that we must never, and will never, lose focus on our absolute commitment to do all we can to tackle the disparities that exist – in particular in terms of economic achievement, child poverty and aspiration and health and well being. Equally, we are in a time of almost



unparalleled economic opportunities that have the potential to significantly raise the aspirations and life chances of all our young people.

Last year, we highlighted the importance of Wirral beginning to punch our weight on a regional and national level. I am pleased that, already, we are seeing major developments on this front through the proposal to establish a Combined Authority for the City Region. This will absolutely put Wirral in a stronger position to access funding and influence policy across the City Region, particularly in relation to economic development, transport and housing.

Our staff do a magnificent job and are our greatest asset. I am proud that Wirral Council pays the 'Living Wage'. I want to extend this to our contractors and eventually I want all of our employers to adopt this standard so that Wirral becomes a 'Living Wage' borough and all of our businesses also avoid employing people on zero-hours contracts.

This Corporate Plan provides the blueprint for the next stage in our improvement journey – towards a Council that is outstanding, serving our residents with openness, honesty and pride.



**Cllr Phil Davies**  
**Leader of Wirral Council**





## [ Our vision ]



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An excellent  
quality of life is  
within the reach  
of everyone who  
lives here

**This refreshed Corporate Plan will ensure a robust approach to the Council’s business planning; ensuring that our vision, priorities and spending decisions are based on sound evidence, through analysis and understanding of community needs.**

Crucially, it will ensure that the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan will be underpinned by a sustainable budget over the next two years and can be delivered within resources available to us.

**“Wirral will be a place where the vulnerable are safe and protected, where employers want to invest and local businesses thrive, and where good health and an excellent quality of life is within the reach of everyone who lives here”**

We pledge to support this vision and serve our residents, by further improving our organisation and becoming the outstanding Council that the people of Wirral deserve.



## [ How we are changing ]

**The Council is on a pathway of improvement requiring it to change virtually every aspect of its operation; from corporate governance arrangements and service delivery models to organisational design.**

We have made a strong start in delivering this agenda through achieving financial stability and agreeing a number of transformation projects, implementing major governance improvements and developing a culture change programme.

The framework set out in this report is designed to drive the improvements needed for us to become one of the best local authorities in the country and communicate our ambitions for the Wirral peninsula.

To support the delivery of this ambition, the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive are consulting with Members, staff and partners on the following three principles which will underpin and focus the activity of the Council:

### **Local Solutions, Local Decisions:**

Our members are leaders within their communities, using devolved powers and responsibilities to make the best use of resources in their area. They will inspire communities to come together to find the right solutions to address local need and improve residents' lives.

### **Promoting Independence:**

We will strive to ensure that all residents, especially the most vulnerable, are recognised for the talents and assets they have. We will work to equip them with the tools and knowledge to enable them to make the choices that are right for them and their families.

**Driving Growth and Aspiration:**

We will work with residents, encouraging them to hold the same level of ambition for their communities as we have for Wirral; driving growth in our economy and with it aspiration, achievement and employment, particularly among younger people. This will help to reduce poverty and secure a healthier economic future for our communities.

Using our role as the leader of public services in the borough, the Council will work with our partners and residents to ensure that these principles support and drive a change in relationship between the Council and residents. Rising demand for many of our services including social care, housing and debt advice combined with the scale of reductions to our budget, is forcing us all to re-evaluate the way we do business.

We must be recognised as a receptive Council that listens, responds and engages as locally as possible with strong civic and community leadership through a strengthened role for local members. We will build on the assets already in our communities and ensure local residents are empowered to take a leading role in tackling issues in their communities.

Innovative approaches to services that are delivered in partnership with citizens are essential. We must significantly reconfigure our business and organisational arrangements over the next two years in order to continue to provide services that are good value for money. The financial challenges we face mean that our responses must be more ambitious, strategic and targeted than simply reducing services.

Changing the way we work will ensure that even in times of unprecedented financial challenges we are able to prioritise the safety of the most vulnerable residents, through seeking new and innovative ways of providing services, and through capitalising on the huge opportunities for economic development which are within our grasp. In this way we will ensure that where you live is never a barrier to having and achieving high ambitions and enjoying an excellent quality of life.



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Driving growth in our economy and with it aspiration, achievement and employment



## [ Working together ]

**Wirral Council is emerging from one of the most difficult periods in its history; a period in which we have critically evaluated everything we do, and invited others to do the same.**

Our past failures have made this work necessary. We have invited challenge, and made ourselves open to criticism. Historically, a number of independent external reports have raised concerns and made specific recommendations about how we needed to change our processes and our constitution. We have listened, and we have changed, but there is more work to do.

Our next challenge is to embed these improvements throughout the organisation, to ensure that we do not lose focus in our determination to deliver the outstanding Council that our residents deserve. We continue this journey in the context of unprecedented financial challenges; huge reductions in funding, increasing demand for our services and changing demographics mean we have to continually innovate, challenge ourselves and seek new solutions to make sure our residents can access the services they need.

We recognise that at a time of diminishing resources from central government that we must prioritise our efforts and make tough choices to ensure a sound financial base. While doing this we will never compromise our ambitions for Wirral and everyone who lives here - regardless of how strong their voices are.

We will do nothing alone that we could not deliver more efficiently and effectively with others and we will integrate our services wherever if it will improve standards for residents. Most importantly we will capitalise on Wirral's strong physical, economic and community assets ensuring a lasting legacy and a better future for this generation and the next.



We have listened,  
and we have  
changed



We have recently established a new way of implementing Neighbourhood Working in the borough, and will drive forward this approach, empowering our Members, as community leaders, to use devolved powers and responsibilities to maximise public resources in their areas.

We are devolving decision making to local elected members wherever it makes sense to do so. This will enable them to capitalise on the assets present in all our communities while designing robust solutions to address local need and improve residents' lives.

We will be an inclusive Council, valuing the principles of equality and diversity in all we do.

A Wirral Public Service Board is well established to drive this work forward. The Board brings together senior representatives from Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue, Wirral Metropolitan College, Job Centre Plus, Health organisations and Magenta Homes. The Board will focus on bringing the public sector together to make efficiencies and integrate services to provide better results for residents and make the best use of resources. This important work will help to mitigate the stark health inequalities that exist within Wirral.

Our approach aims to inspire local people to come together and find the right solutions to the issues and challenges in their local communities. This approach will not just deliver more cost effective services; it will deliver better outcomes for local residents.



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## [ What we will deliver over the next two years ]

**A coherent set of performance measures and targets are being developed to ensure priorities are achieved over the two year period covered by this plan. A delivery plan will be in place that will include measures and targets subject to regular and rigorous review. This will form the basis of robust performance management and monitoring arrangements for the two year period.**

The delivery of the Corporate Plan will be supported by key strategic policy documents including the Wirral Investment Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan and Child Poverty Strategy. Our activity will be driven by the Council's Future Financial Position (available in Appendix One) and the emerging Commissioning Plan. The Council's three Strategic Directors will develop two year plans that underpin the Corporate Plan and set out in more detail how the activities identified within the plan will be delivered together with the agreed resources required.

This Corporate Plan will continuously be reviewed and refreshed throughout the two years based upon research, policy, economic development and the feedback and engagement of our communities.



## INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE [ Regeneration and Environment ]

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We have had,  
and are working  
towards, huge  
successes

**Wirral's local environment and the economy are arguably the two biggest factors in driving the quality of life, health and levels of achievement for our residents. Every year, the Council invests huge resources in both maintaining and improving the local environment, and in stimulating the local economy – through helping our local businesses to succeed and expand, and encouraging businesses to start up or relocate in Wirral.**

We have had, and are working towards, huge successes. Projects such as the New Brighton development, the revitalisation of Birkenhead Park, the International Trade Centre, and International Golf Resort and, particularly, Wirral Waters are significant on a national and global scale.

Wirral's economy today has a total value of around £3.4 billion per year and is home to many international businesses. Our tourism economy is worth £310 million with visitor numbers continually rising and outperforming the regional trend. We are at the forefront of developing a globally-significant International Golf Resort in the borough – driving jobs, further investment and hugely increased visitors.

There is a strong track record for securing opportunities for investment in key growth sectors such as the offshore wind energy industry, low carbon economy, advanced engineering, technology and manufacturing services and in particular the automotive supply chain. We remain a strong supporter and key player in the sustainable energy sector – demonstrated by our successful bid for £5 million from the Regional Growth Fund to further develop our offshore wind capacity.

We are leading across the City Region in tackling youth unemployment, through the Youth Unemployment Task Force, and since 2009 have worked with over 300 businesses to employ over 400 young people as Apprentices.

The number of Jobseekers Allowance claimants in Wirral has fallen steadily since March 2013, with 8 consecutive months of falling numbers, outperforming both the regional and national averages; however focus is required on those who are most hard to reach.

We are determined that Wirral will be a place where businesses flourish and people have access to good jobs, and quality, affordable homes in a pleasant, safe and clean environment. Our regeneration projects are underway and will transform our economy, and our physical landscape and location are the envy of the country – proven by the numbers of visitors to Wirral rising at a faster rate than anywhere in the North West.

We are also transforming the way we deliver services at the most fundamental level – giving every Wirral community, every resident and every group the opportunity to almost design their own Council, in their own street. Our approach to Neighbourhood Working has already received national attention, and will mean residents being able to direct Council funding and resources in their own community towards the areas that matter most to them.

We will help to drive continued economic growth in Wirral's economy, prioritising job creation and skills by capitalising on our unique strengths, particularly in green technologies. We will inspire our young people to grasp these opportunities, helping to reduce poverty and securing a healthier economic future for all.

This year, we will:

- Continue to deliver our Investment Strategy
- Provide a clear leadership role within the City Region and Combined Authority
- Continue to develop, support and encourage the creation and accessibility to jobs through providing a supportive and enabling environment
- Maintain and develop further the focus on ensuring Wirral is a place where businesses flourish, supporting the growth of Wirral's economy
- Continue to address the need for quality, affordable and safe homes through the development of partnership working
- Continue to maintain and develop systems to support Wirral's ambitions for economic growth
- Improve our regulation and inspection services
- Continue to explore and maximise appropriate funding opportunities and investment activities to support regeneration and infrastructure priorities to maximise Wirral's economy



We will help to drive continued economic growth in Wirral's economy



## PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE

# [ Families and Wellbeing ]

**The challenges we are facing, both in a financial and demographic sense, mean that we must change, we must adapt, and we must innovate to ensure that we continue to deliver services which are relevant to those who need them.**

We have an ageing population, and more vulnerable adults needing our help. We have more and more children needing our care, and we have growing levels of child poverty. At the same time, the aspirations of the people we work with are, quite rightly, rising – as are their expectations of us. However, we have less money than ever to support them. Our challenges are clear – they are significant, but not insurmountable.

We will continue to fulfil our duties to safeguard those who are most vulnerable whilst targeting the resources we have to ensure we achieve maximum value for the Wirral pound. We will continually adapt and find innovative solutions to make certain the financial restraints being placed on the Council do not impact on our residents' ability to live full lives and achieve their aspirations.

To do this we must adopt a new way of thinking – working with and supporting individuals and communities to become more resilient, thereby reducing dependency and encouraging greater independence. This will require residents, people using our services and also our workforce to think and work differently.



We have an agreed approach in place to totally transform our services for children and adults over the next two years. This transformation will implement a change in culture – moving away from social security to social productivity. We will also shift our focus – away from professions and organisations and onto residents and communities. This means we will involve people who use our services in the design, delivery, commissioning and evaluation of the services they use.

We will put more emphasis on early intervention in order to reduce spending on crisis situations. We will work with our partners in the NHS to integrate health and social care in a way which looks at the ‘whole person’ as opposed to individual elements of an individual’s care needs.

It will also mean we will work much more closely with partners looking at how we can deliver services better together. We will also be looking at whether other organisations can deliver services on our behalf.

Every penny we spend will be scrutinised – this will include who is funded for what as well as how that funding is provided. We will commit public resources only where it will have most impact – and ensure that impact is targeted, evaluated and substantial.

We recognise that none of these changes can happen overnight. We have a lot of work to do to ‘get the basics right’ and to bring our finances into line. We have already made a good start – and we will continue to work hard to make sure we get there.

We will strive to ensure all residents, especially the most vulnerable, are given the tools to enable them to make the choices that are right for them and their families. We believe this will help to deliver healthier and happier outcomes for those who need our help the most.

This year, we will:

- Deliver the improvement programme for children’s and adults services including:
  - Remodel the early intervention and prevention services
  - Develop the All Age Disability service for children, young people and adults
- Develop a strategic approach for commissioning Council services
- Deliver the transformation programme for leisure services
- Maximise the impact of our public health leadership role
- Create a social enterprise delivery vehicle for disability services
- Expand and enhance the traded services offer to schools; ensuring school resources are used effectively to close the attainment gap, and that the quality of learning and teaching increases.
- Develop and deliver the integrated transformation plan with health partners
- Re-model early intervention and prevention services to ensure we manage demand efficiently and community based care effectively e.g. developing services, early help services
- Ensure that safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable children and adults continue to strengthen, informed by national learning
- Develop the All Age Disability service for children, young people and adults



We will commit public resources only where it will have most impact



## TRANSFORMING THE COUNCIL [ Transformation and Resources ]

**Wirral Council is already almost unrecognisable from the organisation it was a year ago – the pace of our change, innovation and development has been unprecedented. Our improvements, and the pace at which they have been delivered, have been nationally praised.**

Wirral's Improvement Board was established in February 2012 and has fully recognised the significant transformation and improvement that has taken place at the Council over a relatively short period of time. A review of this work has now been concluded which outlines the progress the Council has made so that it can move forward in confidence.

We are committed to learning from past mistakes and the work of the Improvement Board has been essential to provide external challenge and support to the Council as we have taken robust action to put things right. We cannot promise that nothing will go wrong at Wirral Council ever again. However, what we do promise is that all issues we are told about or discover ourselves will be dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively so that they cannot be repeated in the future.

Much of our revenue comes from Government Grant, this has been significantly reduced over recent years. We continue to face bigger and deeper savings targets and we have no choice but to continue to adapt and look for ways of saving money while retaining the quality, the efficiency and the accountability we have committed to.

Last year, we knew we had to save £109 million over the next three years. In 2014/2015 our budget gap is £27.5 million. We have found efficiencies savings and identified assumptions which add up to around £10 million, which do not impact on services.

We are committed to ensuring that the savings we implement are first focussed on the back-office administration of the Council and, as far as possible, protect the front line services residents rely on every day. We are making rapid progress on a whole series of measures to get the most out of every penny of public money we spend.

Most of our back office services are in the process of being merged with a neighbouring Council – bringing huge savings through a groundbreaking shared services agreement. These back office services are ones which you, as a Wirral resident, rarely see but which are essential to the running of the organisation – things such as finance, IT, human resources and procurement. We will make these functions as efficient as possible, and ensure that they provide residents with the best value for money.

We are continuing to make sure Council management is stripped down and streamlined – last year we saved £5 million from reducing management, and this year we will go even further – making sure as much of our resources as possible are committed to the front line.

We have made significant progress to review our governance arrangements, including strengthening the internal audit functions. We intend to reconfigure the Council’s Audit and Risk Management Committee by ensuring that a majority of members are independent. This will provide a valuable element of challenge going forward.

We have also taken robust action to improve the way we respond to freedom of information requests ensuring that this Council is open and transparent. This progress has been recognised by the Information Commissioner’s Office who has acknowledged that we are meeting our targets and, based on this good performance, the ICO has concluded its specific monitoring of the Council.

We will focus on the culture and accountability of our workforce. We will work hard to make sure that even with vastly reduced resources, our workforce remains as committed to public service as ever and our focus on delivering the very highest level of performance never wavers.

We will always seek to deliver new and innovative ways of delivery, ensuring our residents have access to the services, advice and guidance that help to improve their quality of life. We will harness new technologies in the most cost effective way. Wirral will, even at a time of unprecedented financial pressures, prioritise the safety of the most vulnerable residents.

We will develop a culture of responsibility, accountability and pride across the whole of the Council. We will be a confident organisation that is risk aware rather than risk averse. We will reduce demand for services and increase community resilience by focussing on building upon the great assets that exist at the heart of all our communities.

Our staff structures and organisational systems will be stable and designed to ensure that Wirral becomes an organisation that is focussed on identifying innovative solutions, with a workforce that operates flexibly, has the right skills and delivers what residents need.

Our back office costs and processes will be both affordable and examples of national best practice. Wirral Council will be one organisation working in collaboration with our partners wherever we can.



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We will only  
deliver our  
vision through  
a programme  
of radical and  
sustained change

At all times we will be focussed on outcomes for residents and not on organisational distinctions.

This year, we will:

- Remodel the Council to ensure that our workforce arrangements reflect organisational changes
- Establish a Leadership Academy to develop capacity and drive change throughout the organisation
- Progress the work to transfer our corporate support services to a newly established company fully owned and operated by Wirral Council and partner authorities
- Review our policies and procedures to support staff to work differently
- Implement the culture change programme
- Implement a new asset management strategy to maximise both efficiency and savings
- Complete a review of our procurement processes to ensure that our contracts deliver value for money and are fit for purpose
- Maximise the benefits of new technologies through new IT Strategy and investments
- Deliver 2014/15 savings through a clearly defined programme
- Develop a three-year medium-term financial plan to put in place a robust approach for dealing with our financial challenges in 2015-17
- Transform our business support functions to deliver savings and maximise efficiency
- Develop and improve our use of technology so residents are enabled to use the most appropriate, cost effective and efficient method to access services
- Review our approach for the ways in which our residents are able to access services
- Continue to improve governance and decision making, building on the revised constitution and scheme of delegation
- Continue our programme of Member Development
- Continue our programme of visits to other local authorities to identify examples of good practice.



## **Corporate Plan: The Future Financial Position**

### **1.0 Summary**

The Corporate Plan provides an overview of Wirral's vision and priorities. The financial context is an essential component. It is imperative that the Council aligns resources available to the highest priority areas in the plan. It is also essential to demonstrate good financial management, understanding of the cost drivers and to adopt a risk based approach to financial planning. This document provides an overview of the Council's financial position and the decisions that are required to ensure that the Council through its Corporate Plan makes the most of the financial resources available.

### **2.0 Introduction**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides an overview of the Council's financial position and the strategy required to operate within the finance available. It provides the financial context to the Corporate Plan.

The Council sets a detailed budget for the forthcoming financial year but the annual process fits within financial plans for a longer timeframe to ensure decisions taken have due regard to future sustainability and are part of a more strategic approach to the future challenges. The Corporate Plan will operate within the financial environment relating to the period 2014/17. Forecast net funding available over the 3 year period is £780m against a current net spend forecast of £863m. This is further broken down in Section 5.

The Council has already started to respond to a changing and challenging local government financial environment. This needs to continue. It will impact on the shape and direction the Council takes, including the services it provides. This is recognised in the Corporate Plan. The MTFS provides the financial foundations to the Corporate Plan and highlights the resource constraints.

### **3.0 Background**

The Council faces a difficult financial outlook. Reductions in central government funding (the main source of the Council's income) are expected to continue until at least 2017/18. There are also increasing financial demands to be met in the same timeframe. The Council will need to deal with an increasing budget deficit over the coming years if it does not take action to reduce expenditure or generate alternative sources of income. The 2013/14 budget shows an overall net budget of just over £300m. This is forecast to reduce in the three year period to £275m. These figures will be reforecast as decisions are taken and are designed to indicate the current projection to assist decision making.

This update to the MTFS sets out how the Council will respond to the difficulties it faces whilst needing to prioritise resources to deliver the Corporate Plan.

### 4.0 2014/17 Financial Influences

The Council's MTFS covers the three year period 2013/16 as agreed in March 2013. It sets out anticipated levels of funding and financial pressures known at that time. This updated forecasts to the MTFS take into account changes that have been identified since March 2013 when the Council set its budget for 2013/14 and forecast for the 2014/15 to 2016/17 financial years.

Forecasts of the Council's financial position over three years are kept under constant review as external circumstances change and decisions are taken. These are based on assumptions about inflation, financial pressures and levels of income such as grant.

The biggest influence on the Council's budget is the expected continuation of reductions in government grant funding. Between 2010 and 2015 Government funding to local government will have been cut by 33 per cent in real terms. The reduction for Wirral is likely to be over 50% over a five year period. A further real terms cut of 10 per cent has been confirmed in the Spending Review announced in June 2013. At an individual Council level it is estimated that English Councils on average will suffer a 12.5% reduction in funding. For Wirral the loss may be more than 15 %.

Provisional funding levels for 2014/15 and the announcement of the Spending Review demonstrate that further reductions in the Council's grant funding are going to take place. A cut of 10% for 2015/16 is planned and if the 10% is repeated in 2016/17 then the financial position of the Council would become even more challenging. In terms of income the Council has limited ability to raise further income. The reduction in grants may be offset by the Council's share of any growth in real terms in business rate income and any growth in its Council Tax base. However, it is important that unachievable income projections are not used to close real budget gaps.

The Council has and continues to restrain its costs as far as possible. This authority has been through a 3 year savings programme. In 2013/14 over £48 million of savings are anticipated to be delivered, in 2014/15 over £17 million and 2016/17 a further £14 million. This amounts to £80 million for the three year period. These savings are already in progress and were approved in the 2013/14 budget setting process.

Although costs have been contained the Council continues to face cost increases and unavoidable financial demands. The assumption is that inflation is absorbed within budgets and only specific contracts receive budgeted inflationary increases.

The inflationary challenges are one element of the financial pressures faced. The ongoing rise in demand-led pressures for example of an ageing population exacerbates the Council's financial position. There are also other unavoidable increases such as levy changes and

## APPENDIX ONE

pension increases. The Council has little influence, in some of these areas, over the costs that it has to incur.

In March 2013 the approved MTFs for 2013/16 reflected the financial projections for the Council based on the Spending Review 2010, indicative figures for 2014/15 and the forecast impact of changes to local government finance that commenced in April 2013. This forecast that the Council would have an overall deficit of £109 million for the period 2013/16. The revised position now being updated highlights a gap of £83 million for the period 2014/17. The previous forecast gap has been updated for information released in the summer and the Council's agreed budget saving options. Further revisions have come from the announcement of the Spending Review 2013 for 2015/16 and the addition of the anticipated budget gap for 2016/17 to give a financial forecast for 2014/17. A summary of the movement in the forecast gap is given in Section 5.0

### 5.0 Overall Financial Projections

#### 5.1 Funding Challenge – Updated Position

	£m
<b>Funding Gap 2013/16 as at March 2013</b>	<b>109</b>
Less:	
<b>Savings Budget Options 2013/14</b>	48
<b>Savings Budget Options 2014/15</b>	17
<b>Savings Budget Options 2015/16</b>	14
Add:	
<b>Forecast Funding Gap 2016/17</b>	25
Add:	
<b>Revision to forecast for 2015/16</b>	18
<b>Revision to forecast for 2014/15</b>	10
<b>Funding Gap 2014/17 as at December 2013</b>	<b>83</b>

The analysis of all financial influences on the Council shows that the Council is facing a growing financial deficit from 2014/15 that is expected to reach £83 million by 2016/17. The following sets out how the Council's projected deficit is built up.

## 5.2 Overall Financial Context for Three Year Period

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Forecast Expenditure (including demographic changes)</b>	300.3	288.1	275.1	863.5
<b>Forecast Income (including reduced grants)</b>	272.8	257.4	250.0	780.2
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>83.3</b>

## 6.0 2014/15 Financial Strategy

The Council Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013/16 outlined savings that led to a closing of the gap, moving closer to a balanced budget. The updated financial position builds on these efficiencies and savings in order to achieve the budget reductions required to balance the Council's budget in 2014/15. This will lead the Council into a more radical refocusing of resources for the period 2015/16 to 2016/17.

Budget and budget savings for 2013/14 focused on how and by whom services are delivered. This priority approach assessed savings options under the following classification of savings:

*Savings affecting residents less:*

Organisation	Arrange People Better
Lean	Better Processes
Procurement	Buy at a Lower Price
Shared Services	Share Costs with Others
Capital	Reduce Revenue Costs
Terms & Conditions	Terms and Conditions of Employees
Sweat the assets	Improve Income
Change Assumptions	Revisions to Future Predictions

*Savings that affect residents directly*

Change Standards	Usually reduce Service Standards
Stop Doing Things	Cease Services

The budget approach for 2014/15 redefined the principles. The budget consultation has used a priority approach to assessed savings options under the following classification of savings:

- Being more efficient – Making sure that we deliver our services in the most cost effective way possible – streamlining processes,

## APPENDIX ONE

joining up our back office functions and never wasting money on administration that could be invested in services.

- Working together – working more in partnership with others in the public, community, voluntary and faith sectors, reducing duplication and delivering better outcomes for residents.
- Promoting Independence –moving away from the Council doing everything and instead encouraging self-help and community empowerment and resilience.
- Targeting resources – we have to target our resources on those who need our help the most – this will mean cuts in some services – which we are trying to deliver in a way that is both fair and equitable.

They reflect both the priorities of the Corporate Plan and the way we need to deliver services in the future.

### **7.0 2015/16 – 2016/17 Financial Strategy**

The total financial resource of the authority and wider partners needs to be maximised, prioritised and channelled to the right areas and activities. All financial planning activity will be targeted towards ensuring that resources are matched to the priorities identified in the corporate plan, ensuring that statutory functions continue to be delivered and that enabling functions provide best value for money. Already the Council has examined and challenged the way services are delivered, looking for improvements in the effectiveness of services to produce savings. It has also challenged the methods of delivery, who is delivering services and the most cost effective services.

The increasing deficit coupled with the ability of the Council to continue to get “the same for less” becomes increasingly difficult and the emphasis for future years will be on challenging services the Council continues to fund, integrating with partner organisation to get focus on the overall “public purse” and ensuring that efficient ways of working is at the heart of the organisation. Efficiencies alone will not resolve the funding gap. Difficult decisions on the range of services provided will need to be made and the Corporate Plan sets out the vision and framework for those decisions.

## **8.0 Conclusion and Next Steps**

- 8.1 The financial challenge for the public sector is considerable. For Wirral this means a funding gap of £83m over the next 3 years against an overall net expenditure of less than £300m per annum.
- 8.2 The Council's resources will focus on protecting the vulnerable, tackling health inequalities and driving growth in the economy.
- 8.3 A step change in expectations on public funding is required to manage demand for services for a reducing level of finance and an increasingly older population with more complex needs.
- 8.4.1 The success of the Corporate Plan in this challenging financial context will depend on:
- A local approach to decisions and delivery; a more active community involvement; a return to communities finding their own solutions
  - A focus on early help and prevention to support independence and reduce demand on the public purse in the longer term
  - A focused and energetic approach to driving economic growth as the key to growing funding levels, improving well being and bringing individual and organisational financial stability and resilience.
- 8.5 The budget setting process for 2014/15 is the beginning of this ambitious realignment of resources and the financial strategy over the next two to three years will drive the prioritisation in order to achieve balanced budgets to best serve Wirral Council residents, communities and businesses.



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## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CABINET – 2 DECEMBER 2013

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>DRAFT COMMITTEE CALENDAR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014/15</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All Wards</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report recommends draft dates for Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings for the municipal year 2014/2015. The proposed draft calendar is set out in Appendix A. The report also describes various issues that have been taken into account in compiling it.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The attention of all Members of the Council is being drawn to this report. They will be asked to let me have any comments that they might have, particularly if they believe there are strong reasons for making any changes to the calendar.

2.2 With regard to requests to change dates of meetings during the course of the municipal year, Members will be aware that they can cause difficulties. Under the scheme of delegation, I have authority to approve amendments to the calendar after consultation with the Leader of the Council. In practice, changes are usually left to the relevant committee officer in consultation with the spokespersons, and he/she can be put in an invidious position in trying to explain why a change is being requested by a single member. Every Committee has up to eight deputies, and should also have appointed a Vice-Chair.

#### 3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Council has previously decided that the Cabinet, Regulatory Committees, Policy and Performance Committees and Constituency Committees meet a certain number of times in the year to discharge the Council's functions. It is proposed that the Cabinet has at least seven ordinary meetings and two budget meetings (see paragraph 3.2 below) during the year.

3.2 If the Budget Consultation process were to be replicated in 2014/15, an additional Budget Cabinet would be required and a series of Policy and Performance Budget Consultation meetings. Dates for these have been included in the draft calendar and are marked 'Budget Options' or 'Budget Consultation'. If required, any additional dates for Policy and Performance

Budget Consultation meetings will be added to the calendar once the dates for the budget consultation process are finalised.

#### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 No other options were considered beyond those outlined in the report.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 The Leader of the Council has been consulted and agreed the Cabinet dates. The draft calendar has been circulated to Chief Officers and all Members' attention will be drawn to this report in advance of the Cabinet and Council meetings. The Constituency Managers have been consulted on the dates for Constituency Committees.

#### **6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS**

6.1 There are no outstanding previous actions.

#### **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

7.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

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

8.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

#### **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

#### **10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

No – an EIA is not required.

10.2 The scheduling of meetings may have implications for carers and families, depending upon individual circumstances (and for that reason a childcare and dependants' carers' allowance has been included in the Members' Allowances Scheme), but none specifically for older people, people with disabilities and those from ethnic minorities.

#### **11.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

#### **12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

#### **13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

13.1 That the draft calendar of meetings, attached as Appendix A, be approved and unless amended prior to 11 March, 2014, be confirmed as the calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2014/15.

#### **14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

14.1 The draft calendar has been prepared on the basis that in 2014/2015 there will be the same number of Regulatory Committees and Policy and Performance Committees and at least four meetings of each Constituency Committee. A date has also been set aside for the Youth Parliament / Council meeting (11 November). The dates for Cabinet meetings have already been agreed with the Leader.

13.2 In addition to the Council, Cabinet and Standing Committees, dates have been set aside for pre-Council group meetings.

13.3 Dates have not, as yet, been included in the calendar for Member training, however, a programme of dates will be drawn up by the Member Training Steering Group in consultation with Organisational Development.

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#### **APPENDICES**

Draft Calendar of meetings

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Previous reports on the draft Committee Calendar and previous calendars of meetings.

#### **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Council (minute 10)	13 May 2013
Cabinet (minute 172)	24 January 2013
Cabinet (minute 425)	12 April 2012
Cabinet (minute 351)	17 March 2011
Cabinet (minute 360)	18 March 2010

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# MAY

# DRAFT 2014/15 CTTEE CALENDAR

Thursday	1	
Friday	2	
Saturday	3	
Sunday	4	
Monday	5	Bank Holiday
Tuesday	6	
Wednesday	7	
Thursday	8	
Friday	9	
Saturday	10	
Sunday	11	
Monday	12	
Tuesday	13	
Wednesday	14	
Thursday	15	
Friday	16	
Saturday	17	
Sunday	18	
Monday	19	
Tuesday	20	
Wednesday	21	
Thursday	22	Local and European Elections
Friday	23	
Saturday	24	
Sunday	25	
Monday	26	Bank Holiday
Tuesday	27	
Wednesday	28	
Thursday	29	
Friday	30	
Saturday	31	

# JUNE

2014

Sunday	1	
Monday	2	ANNUAL COUNCIL (PART 1)
Tuesday	3	
Wednesday	4	
Thursday	5	
Friday	6	
Saturday	7	
Sunday	8	
Monday	9	ANNUAL COUNCIL (PART 2)
Tuesday	10	
Wednesday	11	
Thursday	12	
Friday	13	
Saturday	14	
Sunday	15	
Monday	16	
Tuesday	17	Planning
Wednesday	18	Licensing Act 2003; Licensing, Health & Safety and GP
Thursday	19	Cabinet
Friday	20	
Saturday	21	
Sunday	22	
Monday	23	Audit and Risk Management
Tuesday	24	
Wednesday	25	Wirral South Constituency Committee
Thursday	26	Wallasey Constituency Committee
Friday	27	
Saturday	28	
Sunday	29	
Monday	30	

# JULY

2014

Tuesday	1	Pensions
Wednesday	2	Policy and Performance - Coordinating Committee
Thursday	3	Standards and Constitutional Oversight
Friday	4	
Saturday	5	
Sunday	6	
Monday	7	Group Meetings
Tuesday	8	Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing
Wednesday	9	
Thursday	10	Cabinet
Friday	11	
Saturday	12	
Sunday	13	
Monday	14	COUNCIL
Tuesday	15	Policy and Performance - Transformation and Resources
Wednesday	16	
Thursday	17	Wirral West Constituency Committee
Friday	18	
Saturday	19	
Sunday	20	
Monday	21	
Tuesday	22	Policy and Performance - Regeneration and Environment
Wednesday	23	Planning
Thursday	24	Birkenhead Constituency Committee
Friday	25	
Saturday	26	
Sunday	27	
Monday	28	
Tuesday	29	
Wednesday	30	
Thursday	31	

**AUGUST**

**2014**

Friday	1	
Saturday	2	
Sunday	3	
Monday	4	
Tuesday	5	
Wednesday	6	
Thursday	7	
Friday	8	
Saturday	9	
Sunday	10	
Monday	11	
Tuesday	12	
Wednesday	13	
Thursday	14	
Friday	15	
Saturday	16	
Sunday	17	
Monday	18	
Tuesday	19	
Wednesday	20	
Thursday	21	Planning
Friday	22	
Saturday	23	
Sunday	24	
Monday	25	Bank Holiday
Tuesday	26	
Wednesday	27	
Thursday	28	
Friday	29	
Saturday	30	
Sunday	31	



**SEPTEMBER****2014**

Monday	1	
Tuesday	2	
Wednesday	3	Policy and Performance - Coordinating Committee
Thursday	4	
Friday	5	
Saturday	6	
Sunday	7	
Monday	8	
Tuesday	9	Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing
Wednesday	10	
Thursday	11	Cabinet
Friday	12	
Saturday	13	
Sunday	14	
Monday	15	Pensions
Tuesday	16	Policy and Performance - Transformation and Resources
Wednesday	17	Audit and Risk Management
Thursday	18	
Friday	19	
Saturday	20	
Sunday	21	
Monday	22	Policy and Performance - Regeneration and Environment
Tuesday	23	
Wednesday	24	Licensing, Health & Safety and GP
Thursday	25	Planning
Friday	26	
Saturday	27	
Sunday	28	
Monday	29	
Tuesday	30	Standards and Constitutional Oversight

**OCTOBER****2014**

Wednesday	1	
Thursday	2	
Friday	3	
Saturday	4	
Sunday	5	
Monday	6	Group Meetings
Tuesday	7	
Wednesday	8	Wirral South Constituency Committee
Thursday	9	Cabinet
Friday	10	
Saturday	11	
Sunday	12	
Monday	13	COUNCIL
Tuesday	14	
Wednesday	15	
Thursday	16	Wirral West Constituency Committee
Friday	17	
Saturday	18	
Sunday	19	
Monday	20	
Tuesday	21	
Wednesday	22	Planning
Thursday	23	Wallasey Constituency Committee
Friday	24	
Saturday	25	
Sunday	26	
Monday	27	
Tuesday	28	
Wednesday	29	
Thursday	30	Birkenhead Constituency Committee
Friday	31	

# NOVEMBER

2014

Saturday	1	
Sunday	2	
Monday	3	Policy and Perf. - Families and Wellbeing Budget Consultation
Tuesday	4	Policy and Perf. - Regen. and Env. Budget Consultation
Wednesday	5	Policy and Perf. - Trans. and Resources Budget Consultation
Thursday	6	Cabinet
Friday	7	
Saturday	8	
Sunday	9	
Monday	10	
Tuesday	11	COUNCIL (Youth Parliament)
Wednesday	12	
Thursday	13	
Friday	14	
Saturday	15	
Sunday	16	
Monday	17	Pensions
Tuesday	18	
Wednesday	19	Licensing Act 2003; Licensing, Health & Safety and GP
Thursday	20	Planning
Friday	21	
Saturday	22	
Sunday	23	
Monday	24	Standards and Constitutional Oversight
Tuesday	25	Audit and Risk Management
Wednesday	26	
Thursday	27	
Friday	28	
Saturday	29	
Sunday	30	

**DECEMBER****2014**

Monday	1	COUNCIL (Policy)
Tuesday	2	Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing
Wednesday	3	Policy and Performance - Regeneration and Environment
Thursday	4	Policy and Performance - Transformation and Resources
Friday	5	
Saturday	6	
Sunday	7	
Monday	8	Group Meetings
Tuesday	9	Cabinet (Budget Options)
Wednesday	10	
Thursday	11	
Friday	12	
Saturday	13	
Sunday	14	
Monday	15	COUNCIL (Budget Options)
Tuesday	16	
Wednesday	17	
Thursday	18	Planning
Friday	19	
Saturday	20	
Sunday	21	
Monday	22	
Tuesday	23	
Wednesday	24	Christmas Eve
Thursday	25	Christmas Day
Friday	26	Boxing Day
Saturday	27	
Sunday	28	
Monday	29	
Tuesday	30	
Wednesday	31	

# JANUARY

2015

Thursday	1	New Years Day
Friday	2	
Saturday	3	
Sunday	4	
Monday	5	
Tuesday	6	
Wednesday	7	
Thursday	8	
Friday	9	
Saturday	10	
Sunday	11	
Monday	12	
Tuesday	13	
Wednesday	14	Policy and Performance - Coordinating Committee
Thursday	15	Cabinet
Friday	16	
Saturday	17	
Sunday	18	
Monday	19	Pensions
Tuesday	20	Planning
Wednesday	21	Wirral South Constituency Committee
Thursday	22	Wallasey Constituency Committee
Friday	23	
Saturday	24	
Sunday	25	
Monday	26	
Tuesday	27	Audit and Risk Management
Wednesday	28	Licensing, Health & Safety and GP
Thursday	29	Birkenhead Constituency Committee
Friday	30	
Saturday	31	

**FEBRUARY****2015**

Sunday	1	
Monday	2	Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing
Tuesday	3	Policy and Performance - Regeneration and Environment
Wednesday	4	Policy and Performance - Transformation and Resources
Thursday	5	Wirral West Constituency Committee
Friday	6	
Saturday	7	
Sunday	8	
Monday	9	Standards and Constitutional Oversight
Tuesday	10	Cabinet (Budget)
Wednesday	11	
Thursday	12	
Friday	13	
Saturday	14	
Sunday	15	
G	16	Group Meetings
Tuesday	17	
Wednesday	18	
Thursday	19	Planning
Friday	20	
Saturday	21	
Sunday	22	
Monday	23	
Tuesday	24	COUNCIL (Budget)
Wednesday	25	
Thursday	26	
Friday	27	
Saturday	28	

# MARCH

2015

Sunday	1	
Monday	2	
Tuesday	3	COUNCIL (Budget Reserve)
Wednesday	4	
Thursday	5	
Friday	6	
Saturday	7	
Sunday	8	
Monday	9	Group Meetings
Tuesday	10	
Wednesday	11	
Thursday	12	Cabinet
Friday	13	
Saturday	14	
Sunday	15	
Monday	16	COUNCIL
Tuesday	17	
Wednesday	18	Audit and Risk Management
Thursday	19	Planning
Friday	20	
Saturday	21	
Sunday	22	
Monday	23	
Tuesday	24	Pensions
Wednesday	25	Licensing, Health & Safety and GP
Thursday	26	
Friday	27	
Saturday	28	
Sunday	29	
Monday	30	
Tuesday	31	

# APRIL

2015

Wednesday	1	
Thursday	2	
Friday	3	Good Friday
Saturday	4	
Sunday	5	Easter Sunday
Monday	6	Easter Monday
Tuesday	7	
Wednesday	8	Policy and Performance - Coordinating Committee
Thursday	9	Birkenhead Constituency Committee
Friday	10	
Saturday	11	
Sunday	12	
Monday	13	Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing
Tuesday	14	
Wednesday	15	Wirral South Constituency Committee
Thursday	16	Wallasey Constituency Committee
Friday	17	
Saturday	18	
Sunday	19	
Monday	20	Policy and Performance - Regeneration and Environment
Tuesday	21	Policy and Performance - Transformation and Resources
Wednesday	22	Planning
Thursday	23	Wirral West Constituency Committee
Friday	24	
Saturday	25	
Sunday	26	
Monday	27	
Tuesday	28	
Wednesday	29	
Thursday	30	



**MAY****2015**

Friday	1	
Saturday	2	
Sunday	3	
Monday	4	Bank Holiday
Tuesday	5	
Wednesday	6	
Thursday	7	Local Elections
Friday	8	
Saturday	9	
Sunday	10	
Monday	11	
Tuesday	12	
Wednesday	13	
Thursday	14	
Friday	15	
Saturday	16	
Sunday	17	
Monday	18	
Tuesday	19	
Wednesday	20	
Thursday	21	
Friday	22	
Saturday	23	
Sunday	24	
Monday	25	Bank Holiday
Tuesday	26	
Wednesday	27	
Thursday	28	
Friday	29	
Saturday	30	
Sunday	31	

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## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CABINET

2 DECEMBER 2013

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>WIRRAL CORONER SERVICE</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Cllr Adrian Jones</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>No</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details of proposed interim changes to the Wirral Coroner Service arising from the retirement of HM Coroner for Wirral, Mr Christopher Johnson, on 31 December 2013.
- 1.2 The Council in conjunction with the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor/Ministry of Justice, have a legal obligation to ensure that the Wirral Coroner Area has in place effective coroner service arrangements that are adequately resourced.
- 1.3 Mr Johnson has a legal obligation to ensure that the role, responsibilities and duties of HM Coroner for Wirral are undertaken and discharged fully. This includes providing appropriate interim arrangements during any period of absence or annual leave.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Mr Christopher Johnson was appointed HM Coroner for the Wirral Area (Senior Coroner) on 20 December 1988 following the retirement of Mr Rex Taylor on 29 September 1988.
- 2.2 Mr Johnson was the acting HM Coroner for Wirral between 30 September and his permanent appointment on 20 December 1988.
- 2.3 Mr Johnson retires as HM Coroner for Wirral on 31 December 2013, after serving 25 years in the post. After taking account of Mr Johnson's remaining annual leave entitlement, his last working day will be 29 November 2013.
- 2.4 The Wirral Coroner Service currently operates from the Ground Floor, South Annexe, Wallasey Complex. However, the service uses both Wallasey and Birkenhead Town Halls as required, particularly for holding inquests.
- 2.5 Mr Johnson is required to ensure that there are appropriate and adequate contingency arrangements in place during his tenure as HM Coroner for Wirral

(Senior Coroner), and to that end appointed Mr Christopher Sumner as his Deputy/Assistant Coroner, on 26 July 2002. Mr Sumner is also HM Coroner for Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens (Senior Coroner).

- 2.6 Mr Johnson has, as requested by the Council, arranged for Mr Sumner to provide appropriate cover during his period of annual leave, namely between 30 November and 31 December 2013. Mr Sumner has confirmed and provided assurances that he will undertake and discharge the role, responsibilities and duties of HM Coroner for Wirral to ensure an effective coroner service is provided in Wirral for the period of Mr Johnson's annual leave. Mr Sumner will be supported by his own Assistant Coroner, who will undertake duties and responsibilities on behalf of Mr Sumner in Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens thereby enabling Mr Sumner to provide appropriate cover for Mr Johnson.
- 2.7 Mr Johnson is currently supported by one Coroner's Clerk who will continue to provide administrative support to Mr Sumner. The Coroner's Clerk is directly employed by HM Coroner for Wirral; however the costs are met by the Council under its legal obligation to ensure that the Coroner Service in Wirral is adequately resourced. All necessary administrative arrangements required to ensure an effective coroner service is maintained are in hand and will be in place by 29 November 2013. The arrangements will not however include any administrative support being provided by Sefton, Knowsley or St Helens Councils.
- 2.8 HM Coroner for Wirral is also supported by Coroners' Officers employed by Merseyside Police and situated at Bromborough Police Station. This support remains unchanged.

#### POSITION POST 31 DECEMBER 2013

- 2.9 With regards to the position following Mr Johnson's retirement (post 31 December 2013), normally a recruitment exercise would be undertaken by the Council for a Senior Coroner for the Wirral Area to be appointed. However, under the Coroner and Justice Act 2009, the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor's Department/Ministry of Justice now require the Council to first consider whether the Wirral Area should be amalgamated with another Coroner Area before a permanent Senior Coroner appointment is made.
- 2.10 The Coroner and Justice Act 2009 changed the name of "coroner's district" to "coroner area"; the HM Coroner for a coroner area is now the "Senior Coroner" and a "Deputy Coroner" is now an "Assistant Coroner".
- 2.11 Importantly, the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 requires the approval/consent of by both the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor to first be obtained before any appointment of a Senior Coroner can take effect. Following discussions with the Lord Chancellors Department/Ministry of Justice, the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor are unlikely to give their consent until the issue of amalgamation of coroner areas is fully considered.
- 2.12 By way of background, the issue of amalgamation arose following the Luce Review 2003 (which reported on 4 July 2003). The terms of reference of the

Review was wide and considered arrangements for the identification of the deceased, ascertaining causes of death, the need for further public investigation, the qualifications of those investigating death, the support and other services needed, including post-mortem examinations, and the possibility of introducing a so-called "medical examiner" system.

2.13 The Review resulted in a number of recommendations being made, which included:

- the 136 coroners' districts in England and Wales (in 2003) should be replaced by about 60 coroner areas broadly linked with police authorities;
- rebasing the system on predominantly full-time coroners;
- the appointment of a statutory medical assessor (medically qualified) for each coroner's district (now area), to support the coroner, but also to audit and support death certification by doctors;
- new more flexible procedures for inquests;
- fuller conclusions from inquests, with a stronger bias towards narrative and preventive findings; and
- a new, statutory recognition of the role of coroners' officers, including training and specialisation.

2.14 The Coroners and Justice Act 2009 seeks to give effect to some of the recommendations of the Luce Review. In particular, the intention behind Schedule 2 of the Act is to move towards fewer (but larger) coroner areas which are supported by a full-time Senior Coroner. This approach may lead to greater economies of scale, through sharing of staff and resources and will enable full-time Senior Coroners to focus entirely on their coronial duties, thus develop their skills and experiences more fully.

2.15 The Council must therefore explore and evaluate the merits of the Wirral Area being merged with another Coroner Area before it can consider whether to appoint a permanent Senior Coroner for the Wirral Area. This assessment will require a business case to be developed which explores and evaluates the possible options available. These options are likely to include the possible amalgamation of the Wirral Coroner Area with (i) Liverpool Coroner Area; (ii) Sefton, Knowsley and St. Helens Coroner Area; and (iii) Cheshire, Warrington and Halton Coroner Area. The Council will be required to consider whether amalgamation is appropriate and justify whatever decision it reaches. If amalgamation is favoured, the Ministry of Justice will undertake formal consultation with Wirral residents and other stakeholders, before a final decision on the issue of amalgamation is taken by the Chief Coroner/Lord Chancellors Department/Ministry of Justice. If amalgamation is not favoured, the Council will be required to set out its rationale to the Chief Coroner/Lord Chancellors Department/Ministry of Justice, who may or may not accept the Council's position.

2.16 It is anticipated that the issue of amalgamation is likely to take at least six months to conclude.

- 2.17 Until the issue of amalgamation is addressed, the Council is required to put in place appropriate interim arrangements to ensure that an effective coroner service is maintained after Mr Johnson retires. If no interim arrangements are put in place, Mr Sumner would become the 'acting' Coroner for the Wirral Coroner Area. However, whilst Mr Sumner has kindly confirmed that he would be happy to support the Council after 31 December 2013 as the 'Acting' Coroner for Wirral, the Council must be satisfied that such an arrangement is sufficiently robust given the period of time that the arrangement would remain in place (namely, at least six months).
- 2.18 Mr Sumner, has two Assistant Coroners (one of whom is Mr Johnson, the Wirral Coroner). Unfortunately, Mr Sumner's other Assistant Coroner is also retiring and he is currently recruiting to that position. There is no reason to doubt that Mr Sumner would provide anything other than a professional service to Wirral as 'Acting' Coroner. However, the issue of whether such an arrangement would provide sufficient resilience, given the period of time it is required, is an important consideration. It is acknowledged that Mr Sumner will be providing interim support/cover between 30 November and 31 December 2013; however the issue of resilience and risk are considered manageable/acceptable over this period. It is not possible to give the same level of assurance should the arrangement continue for a longer period.
- 2.19 In considering the interim options available to the Council, discussions have also taken place with Liverpool City Council and their Senior Coroner, Mr Andre Rebello. Mr Rebello is highly regarded and also operates a very effective Coroner Service. Mr Rebello and Liverpool Council have confirmed that they would be willing to provide interim support to the Council in relation to Wirral's Coroner Service until such time that a permanent Senior Coroner appointment is made. Mr Rebello is supported by five assistant coroners and Liverpool Council has confirmed that it would be able to provide some administrative assistance to support the Coroner's Clerk. The Wirral Coroner Service would continue to hold inquests within the Borough; however some administrative work (for reasons of efficiency and convenience) may be undertaken at the offices of Liverpool City Council. The identity of the Wirral Coroner Service and its operation/presence within the Borough would continue. This interim arrangement is considered to be more robust and resilient. Appropriate arrangements would need to be put in place (including necessary agreements) to ensure an effective Wirral coroner service is delivered.
- 2.20 If the interim arrangements involving Mr Rebello are agreed, the Council will need to appoint Mr Rebello as the Council's interim/acting Coroner, along with his five assistant coroners, from 1 January 2014 until such time that the Council addresses the issue of amalgamation and appoints a permanent Senior Coroner. The consent of the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor would be required before the appointment can take effect. Initial discussions with the Lord Chancellors Department/Ministry of Justice concerning this arrangement have been positively received.
- 2.21 The costs of the interim arrangements involving both Mr Sumner and Mr Rebello (and administrative support) will be met from existing approved budgets.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

3.1 The Council has an obligation to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place with regards to the Wirral Coroner Service. The Council must ensure any interim arrangements are sufficiently robust and resilient to mitigate sufficiently identified risks.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 It has not been possible to consider other options given the limited time available.

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 HM Coroner for Wirral has been consulted and engaged throughout and discussions have taken place with the Lord Chancellors Department/Ministry of Justice.

5.2 No formal consultation is required in relation to the interim arrangements.

### **6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS**

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 The costs of the interim arrangements will be met from existing approved budgets. The Coroner's clerk will continue to provide administrative support following 31 December 2013 and therefore will transfer to the Council under TUPE. The costs of the Coroner's Clerk are already being met by the Council under its obligation to ensure the Coroner Service is adequately resourced.

### **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 As set out in the report.

### **10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

No because there are such issues arising.

### **11.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None

## **12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 None

## **13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That Council be recommended to:

- (a)** Appoint Mr Andre Rebello (subject to the consent of the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor being given) as the Interim/Acting Coroner for the Wirral Area, from 1 January 2014 until such time that the Council addresses the issues of amalgamation of the Wirral Coroner Area and a permanent Senior Coroner is appointed to cover Wirral;
- (b)** Appoint (subject to the consent of the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor being given) Nicholas Reinberg (Senior Coroner for Cheshire, Warrington and Halton), Alan Wilson (Barrister/Senior Coroner for Blackpool), Simon Holder (Barrister), Anita Bhardwarj (Solicitor), Martin Fleming (Solicitor), David Lewis (Solicitor), as Assistant Coroners to Mr Rebello as the Interim/Acting Coroner to cover the Wirral Area from 1 January 2014 until such time that the Council addresses the issues of amalgamation of the Wirral Coroner Area and a permanent Senior Coroner is appointed to cover the Wirral;
- (c)** Authorise the Strategic Director for Transformation and Resources (or his nominee) to put in place all necessary arrangements and enter in such agreements required to ensure effective interim arrangements for the Coroner Service as outlined in this report.
- (d)** Authorise the Strategic Director for Transformation and Resources (or his nominee) to undertake all necessary steps required to address the issue of amalgamation of the Wirral Coroner Area with another Coroner Area as required and in accordance with the directions of the Chief Coroner, Lord Chancellor/Ministry of Justice as outlined in this report.

## **13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

13.1 To ensure that an effective Coroner Service for Wirral is maintained.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL**

**Key Acts**

Coroner and Justice Act 2009

Luce Review 2003

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
none	

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