



Cabinet

Date:	Thursday, 9 October 2014
Time:	6.15 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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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.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

3. FINANCIAL MONITORING 2014/15 (MONTH 5) - REVENUE (Pages 1 - 22)

4. FINANCIAL MONITORING 2014/15 (MONTH 5) - CAPITAL (Pages 23 - 36)

5. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013/14 (Pages 37 - 46)

6. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2013/14 (Pages 47 - 64)

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

- 7. BETTER CARE FUND (BCF) UPDATE RE: FINAL SUBMISSION (Pages 65 - 74)**

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

- 8. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (Pages 75 - 82)**

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 9. WIRRAL CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2014-19 (Pages 83 - 118)**

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

- 10. STREET LIGHTING STRATEGY (Pages 119 - 142)**

LEISURE, SPORT AND CULTURE

- 11. WIRRAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY 2014 - 2024 (Pages 143 - 180)**

NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT

- 12. AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION - ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME & POLICING ACT 2014 (Pages 181 - 192)**

- 13. REVISION OF CONSTITUTION ARRANGEMENT FOR WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP HOMES TRADING AS MAGENTA LIVING TO ENABLE A PROPOSED GROUP STRUCTURE (Pages 193 - 216)**

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

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

- 15. 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.

ECONOMY

- 16. TACKLING WORKLESSNESS (Pages 217 - 226)**

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

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

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

9 OCTOBER 2014

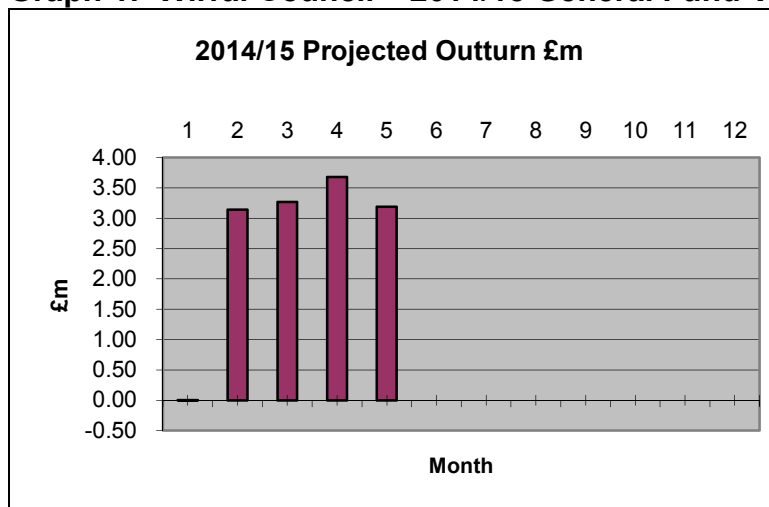
SUBJECT	REVENUE MONITORING 2014/15 MONTH 5 (AUGUST 2014)
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the revenue position for 2014/15, which at Month 5 (August 2014) shows a projected General Fund overspend of £3.19 million (1.3% of the net revenue budget). This shows an improvement compared with a projected overspend reported at month 4 of £3.68 million as shown in graph 1. The report also provides further detail regarding the measures being undertaken to address the General Fund overspend as requested by Cabinet when considering the Month 4 report at the 11 September meeting.

1.2 The projected overspend originates in the main from the Families and Wellbeing Directorate. Adult Social Services are currently projecting a £2.7 million overspend. This is mainly due to slippage or non-delivery of in year savings and demand pressures. The Children’s area of the Directorate is also forecasting an overspend of £543,000. This is mainly due to non-achievement of in year transport savings as well as costs of external residential placements. A series of management actions are taking place within the Families and Wellbeing directorate to help compensate and/or limit any variances.

Graph 1: Wirral Council – 2014/15 General Fund Variance, by month



2 CHANGES TO THE AGREED BUDGET

- 2.1 The 2014/15 Budget was agreed by Council on February 25, 2014 and is detailed in Annex 2; any increase in the Budget has to be agreed by full Council. Any changes to the budget occurring since it was set will be summarised in the table below.

Table 1: 2014/15 Original & Revised Net Budget by Directorate £000's

	Original Net Budget	Approved Budget Changes Prior Mths	Approved Budget Changes Month 5	Revised Net Budget
Chief Executive	10,035	-	-	10,035
FWB - Adult Social Services	74,667	-	-	74,667
FWB – Children & YP, Schools & Safeguarding	82,877	-	-	82,877
FWB - Sport & Recreation	8,502	-	-	8,502
Regeneration & Environment	95,190	-93	-	95,097
Transformation & Resources	20,199	71	-120	20,150
Corporate Growth & Savings	-15,813	22	120	-15,671
Net Cost of Services	275,657	0	0	275,657

3 PROJECTIONS AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The outturn position projected as at the end of period 5, key issues emerging and directorate updates are detailed below.

Projections

Table 2: 2014/15 Projected Budget variations by Directorate £000's

Directorates	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	(Under) Overspend Month 5	RAGBY Classification	Change from prev mnth
Chief Executive	10,035	9,926	-109	G	-74
FWB - Adult Social Services	74,667	77,384	2,717	R	-582
FWB – Children & YP, Schools & Safeguarding	82,877	83,420	543	R	82
FWB - Sport & Recreation	8,502	8,583	81	G	32
Regeneration & Environment	95,097	94,997	-100	G	-57
Transformation & Resources	20,150	20,207	57	G	108
Corporate Growth & Savings	-15,671	-15,671	-	G	-
TOTAL	275,657	278,846	3,189		-491

The main report only comments on large variations (Red and Yellow items). The 'variations' analysis over 28 budget areas, distinguishes between overspends and underspends. The 'risk band' classification is:

- Extreme: Overspends - **Red** (over +£301k), Underspend **Yellow** (over -£301k)
- Acceptable: Amber (+£141k to +£300k), Green (range from +£140k to -£140k); Blue (-£141k to -£300k)

3.2 Directorate Updates

Significant Directorate Variances and Actions to Address

Families and Wellbeing:

- 3.2.1 **Adults:** A potential overspend of £2.7 million is forecast as at Month 5. The potential overspend is mainly within community care which is being addressed through demand management and market transformation schemes. A number of the 2014/15 budget options contain risk of non-delivery of full saving in 2014/15. There are a total of £3.6 million management of actions identified across the department which are limiting the overspend position. Profiles of actions and their impact are being established to monitor progress against agreed savings.

Update and Actions:

- 3.2.2 Day Services are likely to only achieve in year £370,000 of the £750,000 2014/15 saving, due to part year impact of implementation, with the balance slipping into 2015/16. This shortfall is reflected within the directorate forecast and will continue to be reviewed throughout the year. Whilst progressing, and further actions to accelerate progress are being made, at this stage there is potential slippage of £0.4 million to 2015/16.
- 3.2.3 Targeting support through NHS contracts and targeting Council resources are large 2014/15 savings options. The funding for new cases is now more clearly defined but the review of current cases remains challenging. An additional external post was recruited to enable the resolution of issues with Health, although the post-holder subsequently left. The latest assessment is that £2 million can be achieved through the planned actions with around £1 million being outstanding.
- 3.2.4 Demand for Adult Social Care continues to increase and the mix of services provided to individuals continues to vary as a consequence. With changes to assessed requirements as well as the impact of the case reviews the forecasted spend in specific care areas is subject to change. At this stage there is a £0.3 million projected overspend attributable to demand pressures.
- 3.2.5 The review of Continuing Health Care Appeals requires liaison with health colleagues and it is a lengthy process comprising 10 stages of engagement, each presenting their own challenges. Whilst a number of hurdles have now been cleared this is taking longer than initially envisaged delaying the achievement of the £0.5 million saving.
- 3.2.6 A number of the savings are linked to increased income the main item being the income from the domiciliary care block contracts. The £0.25 million is anticipated to be achieved although with the changes to be implemented at this time slippage of £0.25 million is being forecast.

3.2.7 Management actions include:-

- The assessment and review of cases is key and a Business Case is being prepared about the potential recruitment of additional temporary support in order to progress the reviews.
- For the high cost placements an additional review is being undertaken by the Head of Service and Director.
- A Transformation Group supported by colleagues from other Directorates is monitoring progress has given greater focus to ensure that scarce resources are targeted towards achieving the savings.
- Review of other departmental budgets to ascertain if any efficiencies can be identified to mitigate against the projected overspend being forecast. This includes the use of the monies set-aside as a result of the early delivery of savings achieved in 2013/14.

3.2.8 **Childrens:** A potential overspend of £543,000 is currently forecast. This is due in the main to non-achievement of savings regarding transport contracts and the transport depot where projected savings have reduced following the Cabinet report dated 7 July 2014 due to various contractors not accepting all contracted routes. Figures are still being finalised but currently there is a £54,000 part year saving against the £556,000 target. There is also £104,000 of resources carried forward from last year helping to offset the target this year which leaves a potential shortfall of £400,000. The Depot saving of £100,000 is also currently showing as not being achieved. In addition, are also issues within specialist services in respect of higher residential placement numbers and costs of agency staff.

3.2.9 A number of management actions are being taken with regards to controlling the overspend these are -

- Restructures across the department are being implemented and are closely managed to minimise the impact on services and staff, whilst keeping slippage on savings targets as low as possible.
- There is a rolling programme of recruitment to Social Work positions. Agency costs and placements are reviewed on a monthly basis.
- Residential Care placements are agreed by a multi agency panel, progress and packages of care are closely monitored by the Head of Service in monthly traffic light meetings to ensure that decisions are implemented and overall costs for children entering and leaving care are clearly understood.
- Budget progress is reported and reviewed monthly at DMT with opportunities to maximise grant and external funding are constantly reviewed.

3.2.10 **Sport & Recreation:** An adverse variance of £81,000 is currently forecast. It is envisaged that this can be managed in year to bring in line within current available resources.

3.3 Other Directorate Variances

- 3.3.1 **Chief Executive's:** A potential underspend of £109,000 is currently forecast as a result of staffing vacancies and non-utilisation of improvement fund for 2014/2015.
- 3.3.2 **Regeneration and Environment:** This area has a forecast underspend of £100,000. This underspend is due to vacancies within the Waste and Environment Area and an underspend within the replacement wheelie bin budget.
- 3.3.3 **Transformation & Resources:** An overspend of £57,000 is currently forecast for the directorate. This is mostly due to a predicted underachievement of projected summons costs income.
- 3.3.4 For libraries and One Stop Shops a saving of £0.5 million was based upon revised opening hours and whilst achieved in the current year through the temporary management of vacancies the original decision to reduce hours has not been implemented and forms part of a current consultation exercise.
- 3.3.5 In respect of the £0.3 million Business Rates Discretionary Relief saving a paper on the options is being presented to a future meeting of Cabinet and will detail the options and how this particular saving can be achieved.
- 3.3.6 **Corporate Wide Budgets:** A number of high value corporate-wide savings options, because of their size and complexity, are currently classed as red or amber. These include savings from Corporate Commissioning where substantial mitigation has already been identified as outlined in previous monitoring reports. Given their strategic importance these projects are being very closely monitored and will be further reported upon during the year. The Future Council saving for 2014/15 is currently rated amber. Work is progressing in realising the £9.4m approved in February 2014 for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The £4.9m relating to 2014/15 is part of the current work in progress including immediate voluntary redundancies and the restructure work being consulted upon during September.

Graph 2: 2014/15 Directorate Variance, by month

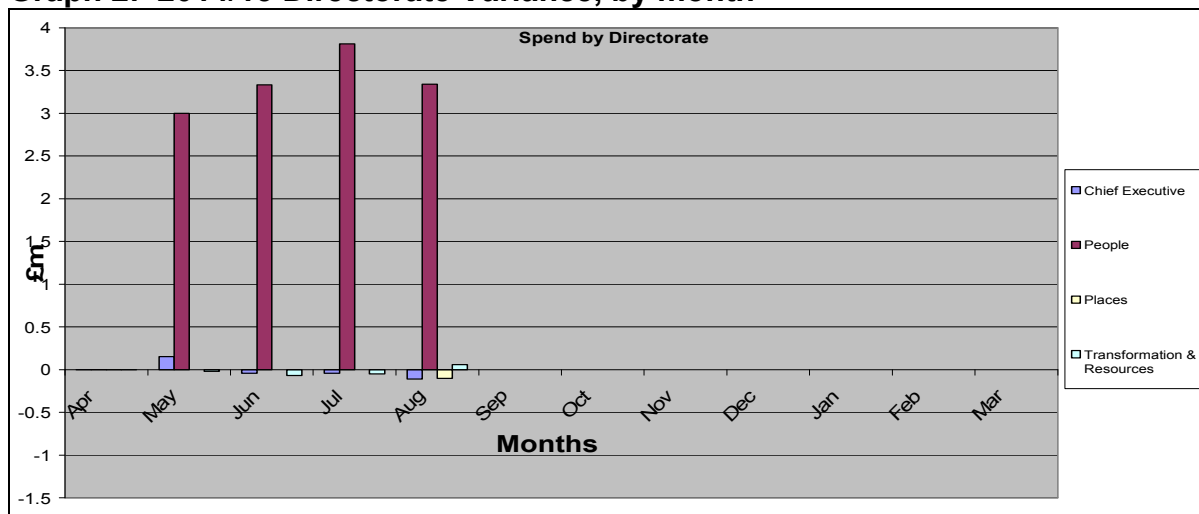


Table 3: Directorate Business Area Projected Budget variations

	Chief Exec	FWB	Rege & Environ	Trans & Res	Total
Red Overspend	0	3	0	1	4
Yellow Underspend	0	2	0	1	3

The full Table is set out at [Annex 3](#)

- 3.4 Directorate budgets are further sub-divided into a number of business areas. Four business areas are currently flagged as red rated.
 - 3.4.1 Delivery within Families and Wellbeing (Adult Social Services) – This relates mainly to the delivery of some 2014/15 savings for which further management actions are being identified as outlined earlier in the report.
 - 3.4.2 Integrated Transport Unit within Families and Wellbeing (Childrens) - Projected savings within this area have reduced following the Cabinet report dated 7th July 2014 as detailed earlier in this report. The over spend is also attributable to the Depot saving of £100,000 which is currently showing as not being achieved.
 - 3.4.3 Specialist Services within Families and Wellbeing (Children’s) - The main reasons for the projected overspend continue to be in relation to the cost of agency staff exceeding the established employee budget and the forecast for Residential placements exceeding the current budget. There are currently 49 residential placements and 31 semi-independent placements compared to 45 and 34 at the year end. Within Fostering there are 34 in agency and 471 local authority placements compared to 34 and 477 at year end.

3.4.4 Business Processes within Transformation & Resources – This overspend is due to increased costs as a result of delayed savings. Based on the 2013-14 outturn position there is a potential shortfall on Summons Costs income. A better indication of this will be after the half year stage in September when further summons costs in respect of 2014/15 bills will have been raised.

Three business areas are currently flagged as yellow rated.

3.4.5 Targeted Services within Families and Wellbeing (Childrens) – There are a number of vacant posts which are being held. In addition there is a contribution from reserves in relation to Children's Centres. This area also reflects budget pressures within Youth and Play which is included as part of the Service Review.

3.4.6 Universal Services within Families and Wellbeing (Childrens) - Vacant posts contribute towards the underspend together with a projected £150,000 underspend in the school premature retirement budget.

3.4.7 Resources within Transformation & Resources - Underspend on Employees mainly due to Financial Services although there are other smaller employee underspends within other areas. An additional £60,000 within Treasury has been generated following a review to ensure full cost recovery of services provided to Merseyside Pension Fund.

4 IMPLEMENTATION OF SAVINGS

4.1 The delivery of the agreed savings is key to the Council's financial health and is tracked at both Council and Directorate level. The assumption is that, where there is slippage, the Strategic Director will implement replacement savings.

Table 4: Budget Implementation Plan 2014/15 whole Council (£000's)

BRAG	Number of Options	Jul 2014	Change from prev mnth	Approved Budget Reduction	Amount Delivered at August	To be Delivered
B - delivered	44	43	1	9,448	9,448	0
G – on track	27	29	-2	6,103	1,701	4,402
A - concerns	25	23	2	13,054	1,810	11,244
R - high risk/ not achieved	8	9	-1	7,654	1,359	6,295
P – replacements for Red	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total at M5 August 14	104			36,259	14,318	21,941
<i>Total at M4 July 14</i>	<i>104</i>			<i>36,259</i>	<i>12,001</i>	<i>24,258</i>

Note: For 2014/15 the red rating definition has been amended from that used in 2013/14. Red is now classed as high risk or not achieved (in 2013/14 it was defined as failed)

4.2 A number of savings options are currently red rated. The 2014/15 red rating definition has been broadened from that used in 2013/14 to now include high risk rather than only failed options.

- 4.3 The savings tracker contains an assessment of the 2014/15 savings programme. This shows £7.7m of savings assessed as red (defined as high risk or not achieved) with a further £13.1m of options rated at amber (concerns). It should be emphasised that a red rating does not mean that no savings will be delivered, but that there is a risk to full delivery in the year. Savings of £3.2 million have been delivered so far in year relating to options currently rated red or amber. There are also mitigating actions identified against a number of options as outlined below.
- 4.4 The ratings are a result of robust assessment of progress to date against the original proposed budget options and identification of in year slippage against targets. Red rated options include a number relating to Adult Social Services options, transport options, savings on the library budget not yet implemented; corporate commissioning and procurement savings still to be identified; however mitigation is in place and being developed as set out below
- 4.5 A number of identified mitigating actions are in place to assist the Corporate savings delivery and reduce the risks to the budget. These include continuation of the spending freeze, vacancy management, the voluntary redundancy offer, reviewing growth allocations and identification and control of other underspending directorate budgets.
- 4.6 The impact of the above measures combined with the projections for the overall budget position reduces the forecast yearly overspend to £3.19 million. Projections will be updated monthly and further mitigating measures are being identified to cover any potential overspend.
- 4.7 The spending freeze for non-essential spending has been extended until further notice. The purpose being to reduce any projected overspend, which by Section 28 of the Local Government Act 2003, is the duty of the Council.
- 4.8 The 2014/15 Budget includes a number of budget saving options profiled to produce benefits towards the end of the financial year. Details will continue to be provided throughout the year within the report regarding any slippage in savings achievement and actions taken to bring savings back on schedule, or to provide temporary compensatory funding where appropriate.

5 GROWTH

- 5.1 An allowance for the impact of demographic changes, inflation and other risks - that is outcomes that could be worse than assumed - was built into the budget 2014/15 as detailed at [Annex 4](#). The assumptions which totalled £9.2 million have been subject to review resulting in a reduction of £0.877 million as reported in period 2.

6 INCOME AND DEBT

6.1 Revenue and Income falls into the four broad areas for reporting purposes:

Table 5: Amount to be collected in 2014/15

	2014-15	2014-15	
	<i>Collectable</i>	<i>Collected</i>	%
	£000	£000	
Council Tax	137,233	63,002	45.9%
Business Rates	72,363	32,883	45.4%
Fees and charges – Adults	21,518	19,902	92.5%
Fees and charges – all other services	22,531	18,964	84.2%

*A proportion of Fees income collected in 2014/15 will apply to debts raised pre April 2014, ie to debts in addition to those newly collectable in 2014/15.

COUNCIL TAX

6.2 The Council Tax collection after five months of the year is comparable with the equivalent 2013/14 collection rate. No significant changes to Council Tax apart from the amendment to the Pensioner Discount scheme were implemented for 2014/15. This is now the second year of Local Council Tax Support scheme.

6.3 Recovery from non-Council Tax Support recipient debtors is continuing as normal. Action taken to recover from those of Working Age that previously received Council Tax Benefit is on-going. Repayment plans offering weekly/fortnightly instalments were offered to those contacting the Council. Where possible attempts to collect by Attachment of Earnings and Benefits will be prioritised however inevitably in some cases this will not be possible and alternative methods including Bailiffs will need to be utilised.

BUSINESS RATES

6.4 Following changes implemented recently by central government, businesses can now have the option to pay Business Rates over 12 monthly instalments. Previously payment options had been over 10 instalments. Income collection to the end of August was 45.4%. This was lower than the 50.5%% collected at the equivalent period in 2013/14. The most significant factors affecting collection are £2 million pounds from schools previously paid by August last year but still outstanding. As the Discretionary Rate Relief policy is still to be agreed, this has inflated the opening debit balance by £600,000 due to the non-awarding of this discount. As mentioned in earlier monitors the increased take up of 12 monthly payment instalment option (rather than over 10 months) means that the collection rate will not catch up until March 2015.

DEBTORS

6.5 On-going work has continued to improve collection and resolve outstanding debts and currently leaves a balance outstanding of £22,517,069 compared to last year which at the end of August 2013 was £25,540,280.

7 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The possible failure to deliver the Revenue Budget is being mitigated by:

- Tracking system of savings options to ensure delivery;
- Budget Tracker Officer Group meets regularly to review savings progress;
- Future Council Project Governance arrangements including the regular review of in year and future savings by Chief Officers;
- Monthly review by Chief Officers and Cabinet, together with an improved Scrutiny regime and greater transparency;
- Individual monthly review by Cabinet Portfolio holder at portfolio meeting.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 Any option to improve the monitoring and budget accuracy will be considered.

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report.

10 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

10.1 There is an on going requirement to identify during the financial year necessary actions to mitigate any forecast overspend.

11 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

11.1 As yet there are no implications for voluntary, community or faith groups.

12 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

12.1 Cabinet 12 February 2014 agreed a 2014/15 General Fund balance risk calculation of a minimum of £17.3 million. The level of risk is forecast to reduce in future years with the General Fund balance requirement for 2015/16 calculated at £15.4 million. This will be reviewed during the year to reflect changing circumstances and any in year developments.

Table 6: Summary of the projected General Fund balances

Details	£m	£m
Balance 31 March 2015 when setting the Budget 2014/15		+17.3
Less: Potential overspend, at M5		-3.2
Add: Additional New Homes Bonus		+0.2
Projected balance 31 March 2015		+14.3

12.2 Earmarked Reserves excluding school balances total £66.1 million. These include reserves relating to the cost of Council remodelling, mitigation and specific project support and ongoing financial risks. Earmarked reserves will be reviewed during the year.

13 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The entire report concerns the duty of the Council to avoid a budget shortfall. The Chief Finance Officer has a personal duty under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 section 114A to make a report to the executive if it appears to them that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure.

14 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 This report is essentially a monitoring report which reports on financial performance. Any budgetary decisions, of which there are none in this report, would need to be assessed for any equality implications.

15 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

16 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

17 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 17.1 Cabinet is asked to note that at Month 5 (August 2014), the full year forecast projects a gross General Fund overspend of £3,189,000.
- 17.2 Cabinet is asked to note the risks relating to non delivery of savings as detailed within the report and the continued requirement for mitigation and actions to be identified.

18 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 18.1 The Council, having set a Budget at the start of the financial year, needs to ensure that the delivery of this Budget is achieved. This has to be within the allocated and available resources to ensure the ongoing financial stability of the Council. Consequently there is a requirement to regularly monitor progress so that corrective action can be taken when required which is enhanced with the monthly reporting of the financial position.

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ANNEXES

- Annex 1 Revenue Monitoring and Reporting Timetable 2014/15.
- Annex 2 General Fund Revenue Budget for 2014/15 agreed by Council.
- Annex 3 RAGBY Full Details
- Annex 4 Growth and Risk
- Annex 5 Income and Debt

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

There are no background papers/reference materials relating to this report.

BRIEFING NOTES HISTORY

Briefing Note	Date
N/A	N/A

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Since September 2012, a monthly Revenue monitoring report has been submitted to Cabinet. Budget Council	25 February 2014

**Annex 1 REVENUE MONITORING AND REPORTING TIMETABLE
2014/15**

Period Number	Month	General Ledger Updated and Reports Available To Be Produced	Reports Available For The Executive Strategy Group	Reports Available For Cabinet
			Monthly	Monthly
1	April	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	May	Jun 6	Jun 17	Jul 7
3	June	July 7	Aug 26	Sep 11
4	July	Aug 7	Aug 26	Sep 11
5	August	Sep 5	Sep 22	Oct 9
6	September	Oct 7	Oct 20	Nov 6
7	October	Nov 7	Dec 15	Jan 15
8	November	Dec 5	Jan 19	Feb 10
9	December	Jan 8	Jan 19	Feb 10
10	January	Feb 6	Feb 23	Mar 12
11	February	Mar 6	TBC	TBC
12	Outturn (Provisional)	TBC	TBC	TBC

AGREED BY COUNCIL ON 25 FEBRUARY 2014

Directorate/Service Area	Original Budget	Variances	Revised Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure			
Chief Executives	10,035	-	10,035
Families and Wellbeing		-	
Children and Young People, Schools and Safeguarding	82,877	-	82,877
- Adult Social Services	74,667	-	74,667
- Sports and Recreation	8,502	-	8,502
Regeneration and Environment	95,190	-	95,190
Transformation and Resources	20,199	-	20,199
Net Cost of Services	291,470	-	291,470
Corporate Growth	1,016	-	1,016
Corporate Savings	-16,829	-	-16,829
Budget Requirement	275,657	-	275,657
Income			
Local Services Support Grant			
New Homes Bonus	1,768	-	1,768
Revenue Support Grant	87,492	-	87,492
Business Rates Baseline	32,036	-	32,036
Top Up	40,513	-	40,513
Council Tax Requirement	112,214	-	112,214
Council Tax Freeze Grant	1,334	-	1,334
Contribution from G Fund Balances	300	-	300
Total Income	275,657	-	275,657
Statement of Balances			
As at 1 April 2014	17,300	-	17,300
Contributions from Balances	(300)	-	(300)
Forecast Balances 31 March 2015	17,000	-	17,000

Note: This table will be updated for agreed variances during the year

Annex 3 - MONITORING FULL DETAILS

RAGBY REPORTING AND OTHER ISSUES

The Red and Yellow RAGBY issues that are the subject of corporate focus are detailed in the following sections by Business Areas within Directorates.

Department	Number of Budget Areas	Red	Amber	Green	Blue	Yellow
Chief Executive's	5	0	0	4	1	0
Adult Social Services	2	1	0	1	0	0
Children & Young People, & Schools	5	2	0	1	0	2
Safeguarding	1	0	0	1	0	0
Sports & Rec	1	0	0	1	0	0
Regeneration & Environment	5	0	0	5	0	0
Transformation & Resources	7	1	0	5	0	1
Corporate Growth & Savings	2	0	0	2	0	0
Total	28	4	0	20	1	3

Business Area Reds

	Chief Exec	People	Places	Trans & Res	Total
Red Overspend	0	3	0	1	4
Value £000s		4,293		438	4,731

Business Area Yellows

	Chief Exec	People	Places	Trans & Res	Total
Yellow underspend	0	2	0	1	0
Value £000s		989		310	1,299

Annex 4 GROWTH AND RISK

DIRECTORATE	OPTION TITLE	2014/15 £000
FAMILIES		4,626
Demographic Growth	Childrens - Special Guardianship and Adoption numbers	240
	Adults - Demand (Young Adults with Learning Disabilities)	926
	Adults - Increased demand Older People	1,139
	Adults - Ordinary Residence	500
Other Growth	Assets - Leasowe Millennium Centre	76
	Childrens - Youth and Play Services - refocus provision	50
Inflation	Childrens - Increasing Fostering & Adoption Allowances	200
	Childrens - PFI Affordability Gap	190
	Childrens - Teacher Retirement Costs	80
	Childrens - Transport Contracts	80
	Childrens - Energy and CRC Allowances price increases	310
	Adults - Contract inflation	835
REGENERATION		1,784
Demographic Growth	Temporary Accommodation Budget	50
Other Growth	Housing /Homeless Prevention (presently from Community Fund)	0
	Car Parking Operations Income	350
	Increase to green waste processing gate fee	65
	Economic Strategy Unit	200
	New System for administering Resident Parking Schemes	40
	Parking Income shortfall due to end of income agreement	68
	Biffa Property Uplift	13
	Selective Licensing of Landlords	356
	Homelessness Prevention Grant	221
Inflation	Highway Services Contract	48
	Contract for Parking Enforcement Services	10
	Urban Traffic Control Systems	20
	Biffa Contract Inflation	343

DIRECTORATE	OPTION TITLE	2014/15
		£000
TRANSFORMATION		2,773
Other Growth	Graduate Trainee Programme	88
	Savings Profiling including Business Rates	900
	Council Tax Summonses	1,300
	Council Tax Support Scheme: Uprating in line with Housing Benefit	265
	IT Support	120
	Benefit Advice Services	100

By Directorate	2014/15	By Type Of Growth	2014/15
	£000		£000
Families & Wellbeing	4,626	Demographic	2,855
Regeneration	1,784	Other Growth	4,212
Transformation	2,773	Inflation	2,116
Total	9,183	Total Growth	9,183

Since the budget was set a review of growth and assumptions has been undertaken which was reported in the month 2 monitor.

Annex 5

INCOME AND DEBT

The following shows the collection progress for Council Tax, Business Rates, Accounts Receivable and Benefits

COUNCIL TAX

The following statement compares the amount collected for **Council Tax** in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014 with the amount collected in the same period in 2012/13:

	Actual 2014/15 £000s	Actual 2013/14 £000s
Cash to Collect	137,233	135,495
Cash Collected	63,002	62,534
% Collected	45.9%	45.9%

Council Tax benefits have been abolished and replaced by Council Tax support £27.81 million is in payment and the numbers and awards as at 31 August 2014 are as follows:

Number of Council Tax Support recipients	37,362
Number of pensioners	15,783
Number of vulnerable (working age)	8,209
Number of working age	13,370
Council Tax Discretionary Policy as at 31 August	

29 awards granted totalling £5,040,
227 refused reason, requesting payment of 22% after maximum Council Tax Support.
8 cases reason, moved to 100% CTS from 78%,
7 cases reason, others/misc.
20 cases outstanding.

BUSINESS RATES

The following statement compares the amount collected for **National Non-Domestic Rates** in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014 with the amount collected in the same period in 2013/14:

	Actual 2014/15 £000	Actual 2013/14 £000
Cash to Collect	72,363	70,314
Cash Collected	32,883	35,505
% Collected	45.4%*	50.5%

* 12 instalments introduced, adopted by at least 25% of accounts showing comparison.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

The table below shows the directorates and amount of debt at each recovery stage:

Directorate Description	Less than 10 days	1st reminder	2nd reminder	3rd reminder	Total at 31.08.14
Chief Executive	£66,222	£6,273	£5,072	£632,328	£709,895
Neighbourhood	£4,871	£0	£940	£14,283	£20,094
Transformation & Resources	£1,028,300	£7,515,702	£22,432	£763,952	£9,330,386
Families & Wellbeing	£4,785,001	£1,163,713	£464,420	£9,465,079	£15,878,213
Regeneration & Environment	£416,576	£423,988	£94,955	£612,358	£1,547,877
Policy & Performance	£192,090	£0	£161,004	£0	£353,094
Totals	£6,493,060	£9,109,676	£748,823	£11,488,000	£27,839,559

The above figures are for invoices in respect of the period up to the end of August 2014. Payments as well as amendments such as write-offs and debt cancellations continue to be made after this date on all these accounts. There is a further deduction of £322,490 to be made for unallocated payments leaving a balance of **£27,517,069**

BENEFITS

The following statement details the number of claimants in respect of benefit and the expenditure for Private Tenants and those in receipt of Council Tax Support up to 31 August 2014:

	2014/15	2013/14
Number of Private Tenant recipients	32,390	31,690
Total rent allowance expenditure	£64,455,454	
Number under the Local Housing Allowance Scheme (<i>included in the above</i>)	12,464	12,119
	£26,390,838	
Number of Council Tax Support recipients	37,362	38,300
Total Council Tax Support expenditure	£27,749,174	
Total expenditure on benefit to date	£92,204,628	

The following statement provides information concerning the breakdown according to client type as at 31 August 2014 and gives the early year numbers to show the shift in sector by benefit claimants during the year.

	31.8.14	30.4.14
Claimants in the Private Rented Sector	14,733	14,531
Claimants in the Social Rented Sector	17,657	16,906
Owner Occupiers	9,934	10,118
Total claimants by age group		
- under 25 years old	2,473	2,504
- 25 – 60 years old	22,516	21,548
- over 60 years old	17,335	17,361

There are 42,324 benefit recipients in Wirral as at 31 August 2014.

Under Occupancy regulations

From 1 April 2013 property size criteria was introduced to working age tenants of social landlords (Registered Providers). Where a claimant is deemed to be occupying accommodation larger than they reasonably require Housing Benefit is restricted:-

- By 14% in 2,756 cases
- By 25% in 664 cases

The number of claims affected does fluctuate. The numbers above are a snapshot at 31 August 2014.

Housing Benefit Fraud and Enquiries – 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014

New Cases referred to Fraud team in period	534
Successful Prosecution/Administration penalty/caution	31
Tenancy Fraud	1

Discretionary Housing Payments

The table below profiles the position of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) administration and associated spend. DHP is not a payment of Housing Benefit and is funded separately from the main scheme. Since the introduction of Welfare Reform and associated impacts, additional funding has been made available.

The Government contribution for 2014/15 is £995,795 with an overall limit of £2,489,487 which the Authority must not exceed. The committed spend at 81%, compares to 24% at the end August 2013. 66% of awards made are in respect of social sector tenant/claimants whose housing benefit has been reduced on the basis of accommodation size. Whilst the variant is considerable at this point in 2013/2014, spend did increase to 95% at year end. However, the present rate of spend projects considerable overspend. As such, applications are now subject to increased scrutiny together with necessary limits being

imposed around awards. Managers monitor fund administration /applications closely whilst continuing to ensure that applications are considered in line with Policy.

Month	Claims Considered			DHP Awards in Payment	Current Awards	% spent (committed) of total fund	Annual Total Cont. remaining
	Total considered	Awarded	Refused				
April	259	203	56	248	£93,371	10%	£902,424
May	464	361	103	816	£181,503	35%	£814,292
June	501	358	143	1370	£307,503	57%	£426,171
July	401	235	166	1777	£503,465	74%	£256,841
August	248	124	124	1953	£600,280	81%	£192,869
Totals	1873	1281	592				

Local Welfare Assistance

The Local Welfare Assistance Support Scheme (LWA), supported by a £1,345,925 Government Grant, gives assistance to those in immediate crisis or need through the provision of pre payment cards for food and fuel and direct provision of white goods. The number of applications continue to rise on a week by week basis. The present rate of spend projects 100% grant spend at year end.

LWA details for period from 07 April 2014 to 31 August 2014:

Number of awards granted for food	1,118	value	£52,512
Number of awards granted for fuel	1,478	value	£24,298
Number of awards granted for goods	3,389	value	£365,228

Total number of awards made 5,985 value £884,077

This direct grant will be ended on 31 March 2015 and during 2014/15 the Authority is reviewing options for what, if any, provisions are made for 2015/16 in this area.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

9 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT	CAPITAL MONITORING 2014/15 MONTH 5 (AUGUST 2014)
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

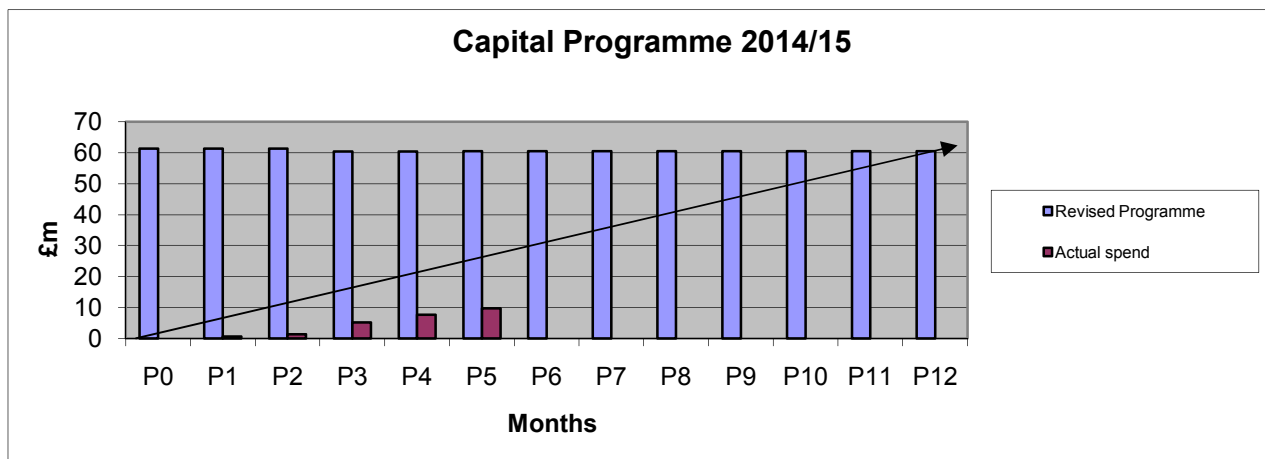
1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the capital position for 2014/15 at Month 5 (August 2014).

2 OVERALL POSITION AT PERIOD 5 (AUGUST 2014)

2.1 At this stage of the year no variances have as yet been identified which impact upon the forecast year end outturn. The report provides information which outlines the 2014/15 capital programme and the sources of financing.

Chart 1: Capital Programme spend below line of best fit



3 ORIGINAL AND PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2014/15

3.1 The Programme for 2014/15 is subject to change. Period 5 reflects the Programme agreed by Cabinet on 12 February together with subsequent amendments. Broadly these reflect the re-profiling from 2013/14 as referred to in the Capital Outturn report and more up to date information regarding external financial support, primarily latest grant notifications and the likely profile of expenditure for a number of schemes.

- 3.2 Given the level of slippage from 2013/14's programme, in total £35 million, the Programme is presently subject to a rigorous review by the Capital Working Group with the intention of determining a deliverable Programme in 2014/15.
- 3.3 To aid the monitoring process, greater use is being made of the Concerto Performance Management System for each scheme. This shows how schemes in the Capital Programme are progressing. Appendix 1 will be enhanced to contain information about which stage in the gateway process schemes have reached. The 5 gates currently in use are: Conception, Approval, Start Up, Delivery and Completion

Table 1: Capital Programme 2014/15 at Period 5 (August) £000's

	Capital Strategy	Changes approved by Cabinet	Changes not yet approved	Revised Capital Programme	Actual Spend Aug 2014
Universal & Infrastructure	5,983	1,113	0	7,096	576
Families & Wellbeing – Children	13,879	499	0	14,378	2,809
Families & Wellbeing – Adults	3,611	1,173	0	4,784	477
Families & Wellbeing – Sport & Recreation	1,000	1,357	0	2,357	18
Regeneration & Env– Environment & Regulation	7,850	3,204	15	11,069	2,613
Regeneration & Env – Housing & Community Safety	5,707	1,498	0	7,205	979
Regeneration & Env – Regeneration	5,744	3,884	0	9,628	520
Public Health	401	-401	0	0	0
Transformation & Resources	4,000	0	0	4,000	1,711
Total expenditure	48,175	12,327	15	60,517	9,703

Universal and Infrastructure Services

- 3.4 The roofing scheme at West Kirby Concourse is 100% complete, cost £255,000.
- 3.5 Phase 1 & 2 of Electrical Infrastructure and refurbishments works at Cheshire Lines are complete. Phases 3 is complete and 4 will be completed by March 2015 at an estimated cost of £0.250 million. This will enable Birkenhead Municipal Building to be demolished and staff relocated to Cheshire Lines.
- 3.6 Works to Birkenhead Town Hall are complete and Acre Lane staff have started to relocate with all staff relocated by September.

- 3.7 Tender preparation work is underway for full refurbishment of Wallasey Town Hall North Annexe.
- 3.8 Cleveland Street Transport Depot, enabling works are underway refurbishing existing buildings to allow a phased move from various Parks Depots that will reduce revenue implications and/or produce a Capital receipt.
- 3.9 Demolition work has commenced in preparation for construction of a New Salt Barn facility at the Cleveland Street site.
- 3.10 Stanley School demolition on site with an estimated contract duration of 10 weeks (tender price £171,000).
- 3.11 Planning permission has been granted for the demolition of Rock Ferry High School but awaiting Secretary of State approval before proceeding to tender.
- 3.12 Moreton Adult Unit demolition work is progressing, work commenced 25 August and should complete mid November. (Contract Sum £95,000).
- 3.13 Fernleigh, demolition works due to commence 29 September completion expected December (Contract Sum £65,000).
- 3.14 Cabinet 13 March agreed that the Council enters into a Deed of Surrender of land included in the present agricultural tenancy at New Hall Farm, Hoylake, which is required for the proposed Hoylake Golf Resort. Compensation to the current lessee was agreed from the Capital Programme with a capital receipt being generated from the future disposal of this land.

Children and Young People

- 3.15 Good progress is being made by the in-house Asset Management and Design Teams on major projects included in the Programme. There are 2 large contracts (over £500k) on site in addition to a range of smaller value projects and 15 large projects where detailed design work is taking place; these are at various stages of the design/conception phases.
- 3.16 Universal Infants Free School Meals. Following announcements in late 2013 to introduce a new entitlement for all pupils in years 1 and 2 details were received by Local Authorities in January giving more information of the initiative which is funded by a Government Grant. In Wirral this will result in an expected pupil meal increase of 7,000 meals per day. Whilst there are a number of kitchens requiring extensive building work to enable capacity increase, many kitchens require new heavy equipment which need adequate ventilation systems, electrical supplies etc. Works continued over the summer holiday to ensure kitchen production was ready for September. Due to the rolling-programme of investment in kitchens over the past few years Wirral was in a stronger position than many local authorities to meet the new initiative. However, continuation of capital investment will be required to meet the increased meal numbers, to ensure that safety legislation is met and to replace old kitchen equipment.

3.17 Priority School Building Programme (PSBP). Wirral was successful in its application to re-build 3 new schools under PSBP (1), the first scheme to rebuild Foxfield Special School is on-site and construction is progressing quickly. The anticipated date for completion is December 2014 when the new school will move from its current site in Moreton to Woodchurch in January 2015. Ridgeway High School and Bedford Drive School are also included in PSBP (1) but will follow a Private Finance Initiative route, the projects are progressing and we have been informed that the appointment of a preferred contractor has been announced and is Morgan Sindall Contractors (North West Region).

PSBP (2) has been announced by the DfE and it is intended that further bids will be submitted for inclusion in this next round of this significant construction programme. The final submission date for bids was 21 July 2014 and all schools were assessed against the criteria set by the Education Funding Agency and Condition data held by Asset Management. Wirral submitted three bids as follows; Pensby High for Girls, Pensby High for Boys - refurbishment & re-design and Riverside primary bid to re-build new school. The announcement for successful bids may take 6 months.

3.18 School Basic Need and Sufficiency Requirements

Fender Primary School has been identified for use of the Basic Need allocation to meet the increase in pupils in the Woodchurch area. However, The Council Capital contributions of £750,000 in 2014/15 and the indicative allocations for Basic Need in 2015/16 and 2016/17 which are in the region of £3 million have not been allocated. Further discussions are required with curriculum leaders, pupil admissions, schools forum etc to agree the programme for increasing pupil numbers in selected schools. Further reports to Cabinet will follow.

3.19 Phase 1 of the Somerville Mobile Replacement scheme has been completed (approx £0.7 million in total). Phase 2 has been completed (estimated £0.2 million) with the final phase programmed to start in September (£0.85 million).

3.20 A new charitable organisation is being created to manage the construction of the Youth Zone. Once formally established Wirral's contribution to the £6 million scheme will be paid over.

Adults

3.21 The Integrated I.T. scheme (Liquidlogic) is progressing well with the scheme due for completion and going-live during late September 2014.

3.22 The Learning Disabilities Extra Care Housing Scheme procurement was completed in early 2014 and a delivery plan agreed. Discussions are currently taking place with Magenta Living regarding the Council's payment schedule and how the extra care provision could support those with dementia.

3.23 Transformation of Day Services is ongoing with work expected to be completed by the year end.

Sport and Recreation

- 3.24 The work for the three sports centres is reaching the final design stage with a tendering process commencing first week in August with Guinea Gap main sports hall refurbishment (estimated tender price £660,000) and West Kirby Concourse (£1.3 million). Work commenced at Guinea Gap in September and site enabling works have commenced at West Kirby.
- 3.25 The work on the 3G football pitches at Guinea Gap commenced on 30 July. Tender cost is £204,000 with a contract period of 16 weeks.

Environment and Regulation

- 3.26 The two major programmes relate to Highway Maintenance for which the annual programme has been drawn up, and previously reported to Cabinet, with schemes now progressing and no significant issues are anticipated.
- 3.27 The major scheme within the Bridges programme is the Bidston Bypass North refurbishment (£603,000 estimate) which is currently being tendered for. The emergency strengthening works at Cottage Lane (£245,000) have been completed. Most other schemes will be completed as anticipated with two possible exceptions. The Dell underpass is subject to possible adjudication and work on Network Rail bridges is subject to agreement of that organisation. There is therefore the possibility that these schemes may slip to 2015/16, in total £0.284 million.
- 3.28 A successful application was made for a £15,000 grant to undertake Flood Risk Management appraisals. This will enable the Council through its partnership with the other Flood Risk Authorities to better meet its responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority to reduce flood risk to properties.
- 3.29 Vehicles, plant and equipment have been ordered in respect of the two Parks schemes.

Housing & Community Safety

- 3.30 Disabled Facilities Grants continue to be approved and the spend committed but the incurring of this spend is determined by the grant applicants which means that there will invariably be works approved that will not be completed during the year and will therefore be a commitment into the following year.
- 3.31 Regarding the New House-building Programme, funding has been committed to 7 schemes with a value of £1.14 million. This will deliver the first 80 units of the 100 planned. It is envisaged that £262,000 will be secured and paid during 2014/15 with the balance having been re-profiled into 2015/16.

Regeneration

- 3.32 The Regional Growth Fund grant supports investment into the offshore renewable energy sector. Applications have been approved up to the grant allocation but companies are only paid upon defrayment of supported expenditure with this grant having to be paid by May 2015.
- 3.33 The Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has secured a total of £15 million from the Governments' Regional Growth Fund (RGF) for a Business Growth Grant programme. From this allocation Wirral has, to date, secured £3.0 million with grants payable upon defrayment and having to be paid by March 2015.
- 3.34 Subject to the tender price for New Brighton, primarily for infrastructure developments, the contract will start in September in order to be completed by March 2015.

Transformation & Resources

- 3.35 The substantial programme of investment into Information Technology is underway. This includes both hardware and software with the new equipment having been piloted and is being 'rolled-out' across the Council from September. Further developments include elements to support the delivery of the Future Council project.

4 FINANCING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 4.1 Table 2 summarises the financing sources for the original and latest programmes.

Table 2: Revised Capital Programme Financing 2014/15 £000's

Capital Programme Financing	Capital Strategy	Revised 2014/15 Programme
Unsupported Borrowing	20,717	19,423
Capital Receipts	3,000	10,900
Revenue and Reserves	290	710
Grants	24,168	29,484
Total Financing	48,175	60,517

- 4.2 A number of schemes with a value of £0.9 million originally to be funded from revenue are now funded from borrowing at a cost of £81,000 per year which as a result enables an overall saving of £0.8 million.

5 PROJECTED LONGER TERM CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 5.1 Funding for the forecast 2014/15 to 2016/17 capital programme is shown in Table 3 and reflects the 2014/17 capital programmes agreed by Budget Council and subsequent amendments.

Table 3: Capital Programme Financing 2014/15 to 2016/17 £000's

Capital Programme Financing	2014/15 Revised Estimate	2015/16 Revised Estimate	2016/17 Original Estimate	Total Programme
Unsupported Borrowing	19,423	8,313	4,376	32,112
Capital Receipts	10,900	3,000	0	13,900
Reserve Reserves	710	0	0	710
Grants	29,484	7,644	6,644	43,772
Total Financing	60,517	18,957	11,020	90,494

6 SUPPORTED AND UNSUPPORTED BORROWING AND THE REVENUE CONSEQUENCES OF UNSUPPORTED BORROWING

6.1 Based on the current cost of borrowing, £1 million of Prudential Borrowing would result in additional revenue financing costs of £90,000 per annum in the following year. As part of the Capital Strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17 the Council has included an element of prudential borrowing. At Period 5 there is a sum of £32.1 million of new unsupported borrowing included over the next three years, which will result in approximately £2.9 million of additional revenue costs detailed at Table 4, if there is no change in strategy.

Table 4: Unsupported Borrowing Forecasts & Revenue costs £000's

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
New Unsupported borrowing	19,423	8,313	4,376	-
Cumulative		27,736	32,112	32,112
Cumulative Annual Revenue repayment costs		1,753	2,502	2,895

However, the Unsupported Borrowing has to be divided into those schemes for which there is planned support i.e. spend to save schemes; and the truly unsupported schemes.

Table 5: Analysis of Unsupported Borrowing £000s

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
Spend to save	4,480	6,050	750	11,280
Other borrowing	14,943	2,263	3,626	20,832

7 CAPITAL RECEIPTS POSITION

- 7.1 The Council has worked with the Local Government Association to review the Council's Assets - a report was presented to Cabinet on 7 November 2013. This highlighted that the Council could realise £20 million from asset disposals including Acre Lane, former Rock Ferry High School and Manor Drive, Upton. The latest projections from Lambert, Smith, Hampton suggest a figure closer to £22 million, however the market is subject to fluctuations. It is now expected that the disposals for Acre Lane and Manor Drive will occur in 2015/16 and that for Rock Ferry in 2016/17. Table 6 reflects these latest projections.
- 7.2 The Capital Programme is reliant on the Council generating capital receipts to finance future schemes. The Capital Receipts Reserve at 1 April 2014 contained £8.8 million of receipts. The table assumes the proposed spend, set out at 4.1 is agreed. At this stage the receipts and funding assumptions are only estimates
- 7.3 At August 2014 the Council had banked receipts of £2.066 million during the current financial year (Annex 2).

Table 6 Projected capital receipts position £000's

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Capital Receipts Reserve	8,800	400	12,900
In - Receipts Assumption	2,500	15,500	8,000
Out - Funding assumption	-10,900	-3,000	TBA
Closing Balance	400	12,900	20,900

8 RELEVANT RISKS

- 8.1 The possible failure to deliver the Capital Programme will be mitigated by the fortnightly review by a senior group of officers, charged with improving performance.
- 8.2 The generation of capital receipts could well be influenced by factors outside the authority's control e.g. ecological issues.
- 8.3 Capacity shortfalls are being addressed through the development of closer working with the Local Government Association (LGA) and Local Partnerships.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 No other options have been considered.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report.

11. OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

11.1 There are no outstanding actions.

12 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

12.1 As yet, there are no implications for voluntary, community or faith groups.

13 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The whole report is about significant resource implications.

14 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

15 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

15.1 An Equality impact assessment is not attached as there are none..

16 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

16.1 There are no carbon reduction or environmental implications arising directly from this monitoring report.

17 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

17.1 There are no planning and community safety implications arising directly from this monitoring report.

18 RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 That Cabinet is asked to note:

- a) The spend to date at Month 4 of £9.8 million, with 42% of the financial year having elapsed;

18.2 That Cabinet is asked to:

- a) Agree the revised Capital Programme of £60.5 million (Table 1).
- b) Amend the Capital Programme to include the Flood Risk Management works funded by Grant (£15,000) referred to in paragraph 3.28.

19 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

19.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the Capital Programme enables decisions to be taken faster which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of the Programme.

19.2 Any variations to the Capital Programme are agreed by Cabinet but then referred to Council to formally approve the changes.

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SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Capital monitoring reports, from September 2012, are being submitted monthly. Capital programme submitted to Council	25 February 2014

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Revised Capital Programme and Funding
Annex 2 Capital Receipts

Annex 1

Revised Capital Programme and Funding

	Revised Programme £000	Actual £000	Council Resources	Grants	Revenue/ Reserves	Total
Universal and Infrastructure Services						
Building refurbishment to increase occupancy	1,172	152	1,172			1,172
Wallasey Town Hall	68		68			68
Strategic Asset Review	96	132	96			96
Fund to assist land assembly and re-sale	936	2	936			936
Cleveland St Transport Depot	1,000	43	1,000			1,000
Park depot rationalisation	1,310		1,310			1,310
Energy efficiency Initiatives	500		500			500
Energy schemes	497		497			497
Structural/Roofing works - West Kirby Concourse	344	183	344			344
Demolish Stanley Special	275	59	275			275
Demolish Bebington Town Hall and Liscard Municipal	378		378			378
Demolish former Rock Ferry High	400	5	400			400
Demolish Foxfield	120		120			120
	7,096	576	7,096	0	0	7,096
Families and Wellbeing - CYP						
Elleray Park Special School redevelopment	500		500			500
School remodelling and additional classrooms	1,336	26	800	536		1,336
Children's centres	206	7		206		206
Aiming Higher for Disabled Children	134	57		134		134
Youth Capital	149		98	51		149
Birkenhead High Girls Academy	472	127		403	69	472
Vehicle Procurement	140				140	140
Condition/Modernisation	3,590	1,111		3590		3,590
Basic Need	100			100		100
Family Support Scheme	155	1	155			155
Formula Capital Grant	2,881			2881		2,881
Private Finance Initiative	150				150	150
Wirral Youth Zone	2,085		2085			2,085
Funding for 2 year olds	130	39		130		130
Foxfield contribution to priority school	1,000	1000	500	500		1,000
Somerville primary school mobile replacement	1,350	441	600	750		1,350
	14,378	2,809	4,738	9,281	359	14,378

	Revised Programme £000	Actual £000	Council Resources	Grants	Revenue/ Reserves	Total
Families and Wellbeing - DASS						
Citizen and Provider Portal for Social & Health Services	617			617		617
Transformation of Day Service	1,250	112		1,250		1,250
Integrated I.T.	1,873	365	1,000	873		1,873
Extra Care Housing	500			500		500
LD Extra Care Housing	544		544			544
	4,784	477	1,544	3,240	0	4,784
Families and Wellbeing - Sports & Recreation						
West Kirby/Guinea Gap/Europa Pools	2,000	18	2,000			2,000
Guinea Gap 3G football pitches	245		245			245
West Kirby Concourse fitness suite	112		112			112
	2,357	18	2,357	0	0	2,357
Regeneration and Environment - Environment & Regulation						
Road Safety	755	256	117	638		755
Congestion	358	0	3	355		358
Active Travel	935	251	505	430		935
Transportation	321	56	91	230		321
Local Sustainable Transport Fund	486	0		486		486
Bridges	1,586	169	736	850		1,586
Highways Maintenance	3,531	1014	777	2,754		3,531
Street Lighting	288	131	88	200		288
Coast Protection	23	0		23		23
Flood Risk Management Appraisals	15	0		15		15
Asset Management	84	0		84		84
Parks Plant and Equipment	728	195	728			728
Parks vehicles replacement	988	231	988			988
Arrowe Park Changing pavilion	144	93	144			144
Landican Cemetery	71	40	71			71
Birkenhead Park Restoration	97	81	97			97
Hoylake Golf Course	30		30			30
Park Outdoor Gyms	2			2		2
Reeds Lane Play Area	60	31		60		60
Royden Park	23	11		23		23
Gautby Rd Play Area	16	16			16	16
Allotments	168		168			168
Start Active, Play Active, Stay active	230		230			230
Wirral Way - widening and safety improvements	130	38	130			130
	11,069	2,613	4,903	6,150	16	11,069

	Revised Programme £000	Actual £000	Council Resources	Grants	Revenue/ Reserves	Total
Regeneration and Environment - Housing & Community Safety						
Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants	3,557	730	1,868	1,689		3,557
Clearance	1,521	54	705	741	75	1,521
Home Improvement	1,435	159	1,014	421		1,435
Improvement for Sale Grants	200				200	200
Empty Property Interventions	230	36	170		60	230
New House Building Programme	262		262			262
	7,205	979	4,019	2,851	335	7,205
Regeneration and Environment - Regeneration						
Business Investment Grants	508	0	508			508
Other Regional Growth Fund Schemes	4,697	274		4,697		4,697
LEP Regional Growth Fund Schemes - Targetted Assistance	3,000	185		3,000		3,000
New Brighton	1,111	7	1,111			1,111
The Priory	275	54	10	265		275
Floral Pavilion Stage & Orchestra Pit	37		37			37
	9,628	520	1,666	7,962	0	9,628
Transformation & Resources						
I.T Development	4,000	1,711	4,000			4,000
	4,000	1,711	4,000	0	0	4,000
	60,517	9,703	30,323	29,484	710	60,517

Annex 2

Capital Receipts

Disposals for which cash has been received by 31 August 2014

	£000
Former day centre 78 Union Street	150
Land at St Mary's Gate	15
Overchurch Hall	10
Site of Lingham School	352
Land at Sandy Lane North	15
Sylvandale	450
Land at Hope Street	40
Land at Abbey Street	12
Tarran Industrial (Units 1,2,3 – Freehold reversion)	270
	1,314
Magenta Living – Right to Buy	752
Total Receipts	2,066

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

9 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT	STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013/14
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Council Constitution allocates responsibility for the approval of the Statement of Accounts to the Audit & Risk Management Committee. The draft Statement for 2013/14 published on 30 June 2014 was subject to audit by Grant Thornton, the Councils' External Auditors, and their findings presented to Audit & Risk Management Committee on 17 September 2014. The Statement of Accounts 2013/14 was published on 30 September 2014 – the statutory deadline for publication.
- 1.2 The Statement of Accounts includes the Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) accounts as Wirral Council is the Administering Authority for MPF. As the MPF receives a separate Audit Findings Report this was considered by Pensions Committee on 15 September 2014 and Audit & Risk Management Committee on 17 September 2014 as part of approving the Accounts.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The purpose of the Statement of Accounts is to present the overall financial position of the Council at 31 March 2014 in accordance with prescribed guidance – the Code of Practice on Local Authority accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). This is updated annually and specifies the accounting principles and practices required to prepare a Statement of Accounts which present a true and fair view of the financial position.
- 2.2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, as amended in 2011, state that the Statement of Accounts must be approved by an appropriate Committee no later than 30 September. The Chief Finance Officer was required to certify the Accounts by 30 June 2014. On 30 June 2014 the Accounts were certified and made publicly available with copies issued to all Members of the Audit & Risk Management Committee.

- 2.3 The Accounts published at 30 June 2014 were subject to audit. Under the Audit Commission Act 1998, and the Audit Commission Code of Audit Practice for Local Government, Grant Thornton report on the financial statements. As stipulated by the Regulations, these are to be reported and published by 30 September 2014.

AMENDMENTS TO THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 2.4 Grant Thornton reported that no adjustments affecting the Council's financial position had been identified at the date of the Audit & Risk Management Committee meeting and were expecting to issue an unqualified opinion. At that time the audit had still to be finalised and no material items have since been raised.
- 2.5 The financial position of the Council is therefore as reported to Cabinet on 7 July 2014 with the year-end balances of £17.2 million close to the target figure for General Fund balances of £17.3 million for 2014/15.

AUDITOR'S REPORT AND OPINION

- 2.6 Audit & Risk Management Committee on 17 September 2014 considered the Audit Findings Report issued by Grant Thornton. The report identified that all five areas of assessment under Accounting, Policies and estimates were rated as green. As work was on-going; authority was delegated to the Chair of the Committee and the Director of Resources to finalise the Statement of Accounts 2013/14. An update is to be presented to Committee in November.
- 2.7 The Audit Opinion was issued on 29 September 2014. This stated that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at 31 March 2014 and of its expenditure and income for the year and that they have been properly prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14.

AUDITOR'S REPORT ON VALUE FOR MONEY FOR WIRRAL COUNCIL

- 2.8 Besides commenting on the Financial Statements Grant Thornton also report on the Councils' arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2014. For 2013/14 Grant Thornton concluded that the Council had in place proper arrangements for the year ending 31 March 2014. In 2012/13 there was an adverse conclusion as arrangements were concluded as not being in place.
- 2.9 In 2012/13 the Financial Resilience Report expanded on the issues and whilst there was an adverse (red) rating Grant Thornton recognised the progress made by the Council during 2012/13 with the Direction of Travel being rated as 'amber'. It should be borne in mind that the conclusion is based on the arrangements that were in place throughout the full year.

- 2.10 The Report on Value for Money for the year ended 31 March 2014 provided further information to that included in the Opinion and was presented to Audit & Risk Management Committee on 17 September 2014. This referred to the 'Council has made significant progress and has appropriate arrangements in place to manage the financial risks and challenges that it faces' and that 'arrangements are in place to help ensure that the Council delivers Value for Money'.
- 2.11 The supporting information rated the seven areas of review as being 3 green and 4 amber compared to the red ratings allocated in 2012/13. An Action Plan was included with recommendations for further improvement covering Performance, Strategic Financial Planning, Financial Governance and Financial Control. It is recommended that monitoring of progress be by Audit & Risk Management Committee.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (AGS)

- 2.12 This Statement is the subject of a separate report on this agenda and, although not required to be included in the Statement of Accounts, is included as it shows how the Council has ensured the effectiveness of its systems for ensuring that it operates legally and that public money is properly used and accounted for. The agreed AGS was included within the Statement Of Accounts published on 30 September 2014.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 Grant Thornton identified a number of concerns in their report. If not addressed by the Council then there are potential risks that the Council will not be able to meet its statutory requirements in respect of the Statement of Accounts. There are also concerns relating to Value for Money and Financial Resilience of the Council.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Statement of Accounts has to be produced in accordance with statutory guidance and the Statement is then subject to review by the appointed Auditor.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 There has been no specific consultation in respect of this report.

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 As a result of the audit of the 2013/14 Statement of Accounts the financial position of the Council for 2013/14 remains as reported to Cabinet on 7 July 2014.

8.2 As in previous years the External Auditor has made reference to the adequacy of resources within Financial Services. Competing pressures, including Future Council work, further reductions in staffing and vacant posts meant the engagement of additional, temporary, support. The Accounts for 2013/14 were completed on time, and to an improved standard, but this proved particularly challenging and capacity continues to remain an issue.

8.3 There are no IT or asset implications arising from this report.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It is a legal requirement to publish the Statement of Accounts by 30 September 2014.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no equality implications arising directly from the production of the Statement of Accounts so an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required. If requested then arrangements can be made to provide the Accounts in both different languages and formats.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 That Cabinet note the Statement Of Accounts 2013/14 and the Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report and Value for Money Report.

13.2 That progress on delivering the actions identified in the Value for Money Report be monitored by Audit & Risk Management Committee.

14.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 Audit & Risk Management Committee has responsibility for approving the Statement of Accounts on behalf of the Council which is a requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, as amended in 2011.

REPORT AUTHOR: Tom Sault
 Designation Head of Financial Services
 Telephone 0151 666 3407
 Email tomsault@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Independent Auditor’s Report issued by Grant Thornton 29 September 2014 and included within the Statement of Accounts 2013/14.

Note : Statement of Accounts 2013/14 - as the document is 190 pages it has not been appended but can be accessed via the Council web-site - <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/council-and-democracy/budgets-and-spending/annual-accounts>

BACKGROUND PAPERS

These are the reports presented to Audit & Risk management Committee.

REFERENCE MATERIAL / SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Audit & Risk Management Committee Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report - Merseyside Pension Fund Merseyside Pension Fund Accounts 2012/13 Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report - Wirral Council Statement of Accounts 2012/13 Grant Thornton Financial Resilience Report	18 September 2013
Audit & Risk Management Committee Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report - Merseyside Pension Fund Merseyside Pension Fund Accounts 2013/14 Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report - Wirral Council Statement of Accounts 2013/14 Grant Thornton Report on Value for Money	17 September 2014

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF WIRRAL COUNCIL

(as contained in the Statement of Accounts 2013/14)

Opinion on the Authority financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Wirral Council for the year ended 31 March 2014 under the Audit Commission Act 1998. The financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and Collection Fund and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14.

This report is made solely to the members of Wirral Council in accordance with Part II of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 48 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by the Audit Commission in March 2010. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's Members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Director of Resources and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities, the Director of Resources is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Authority's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Director of Resources; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the explanatory foreword to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Wirral Council as at 31 March 2014 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14 and applicable law.

Opinion on other matters

In our opinion, the information given in the explanatory foreword for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which we report by exception

We report to you if:

- in our opinion the annual governance statement does not reflect compliance with 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: a Framework' published by CIPFA/SOLACE in June 2007;
- we issue a report in the public interest under section 8 of the Audit Commission Act 1998;
- we designate under section 11 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 any recommendation as one that requires the Authority to consider it at a public meeting and to decide what action to take in response; or
- we exercise any other special powers of the auditor under the Audit Commission Act 1998.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Conclusion on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

Respective responsibilities of the Authority and the auditor

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

We are required under Section 5 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Commission requires us to report to you our conclusion relating to proper arrangements, having regard to relevant criteria specified by the Audit Commission.

We report if significant matters have come to our attention which prevent us from concluding that the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to

consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

Scope of the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We have undertaken our audit in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria, published by the Audit Commission in October 2013, as to whether the Authority has proper arrangements for:

- securing financial resilience; and
- challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Audit Commission has determined these two criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether the Authority put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2014.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether, in all significant respects, the Authority had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Conclusion

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria published by the Audit Commission in October 2013, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, Wirral Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2014.

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of the financial statements of Wirral Council in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Commission.

Michael Thomas

Director

for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Appointed Auditor

Royal Liver Building

Liverpool

L3 1PS

29 September 2014

The signed version of this report is available from the Director of Resources for Wirral Council, PO Box no.2, Treasury Building, Cleveland Street, Birkenhead, Wirral CH41 6BU

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF WIRRAL COUNCIL

(as contained in the Statement of Accounts 2013/14)

Opinion on the Merseyside pension fund financial statements

We have audited the Merseyside pension fund financial statements of Wirral Council for the year ended 31 March 2014 under the Audit Commission Act 1998. The Merseyside pension fund financial statements comprise the Fund Account, the Net Assets Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14.

This report is made solely to the members of Wirral Council in accordance with Part II of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 48 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by the Audit Commission in March 2010. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's Members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Director of Resources and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities, the Director of Resources is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts, which includes the Merseyside pension fund financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the Merseyside pension fund financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the fund's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Director of Resources; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Foreword and Financial Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on the Merseyside pension fund financial statements

In our opinion the Merseyside pension fund's financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of the pension fund during the year ended 31 March 2014 and the amount and disposition of the fund's assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2014, other than liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits after the end of the scheme year; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14 and applicable law.

Opinion on other matters

In our opinion, the information given in the foreword and financial report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Mike Thomas

Director

for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Appointed Auditor

Grant Thornton UK LLP

Royal Liver Building

Liverpool

L3 1PS

25 September 2014

The signed version of this report is available from the Director of Resources for Wirral Council, PO Box no.2, Treasury Building, Cleveland Street, Birkenhead, Wirral CH41 6BU

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

09 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT:	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2013-14
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is necessary to meet the statutory requirement set out in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, Regulation 4(3).
- 1.2 This report presents Cabinet with the final Annual Governance Statement (appendix 1) for approval by Members.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 It is necessary for the Council: to have approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance that complies with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government; and to report publicly through the Annual Governance Statement the extent to which the governance processes outlined in the Code are operating effectively in practice.
- 2.2 The Framework identifies six core principles of good governance:
1. Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
 2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
 3. Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
 4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
 5. Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective.
 6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust accountability.

3.0 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2013-14

3.1 The approach

The production of the Council's Annual Governance Statement is based on relevant supporting evidence provided by Internal Audit, with the overall direction provided by the Chief Executive Strategy Group to ensure high level corporate engagement and ownership.

The Council's Internal Audit team has been responsible for undertaking the relevant assurance work; however it is important to note that the Annual Governance Statement is not owned by the audit function and is a Council statement on the effectiveness of its governance processes.

The review of the Annual Governance Statement and the accompanying assurances are also important roles for the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

3.2 Evidence

Internal Audit has provided the following sources of evidence and documentation to support the production of the Annual Governance Statement:

- a) A review of the key governance processes in place.
- b) Review of reports completed by external review agencies, e.g. External Audit, Local Government Association, OFSTED, and the Care Quality Commission; so as to highlight key findings and actions to address any issues.
- c) Collation and review of Chief Officers and Managers Assurance Statements (in which assurances are provided and weaknesses highlighted over a range of key governance processes within specific areas of responsibility).

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 Potential failure of the Council to comply with the statutory requirement set out in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, Regulation 4(3).

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Not applicable due to the statutory requirement.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with members of the Council's Chief Executive Strategy Group and External Audit regarding the production of the Annual Governance Statement.
- 6.2. A final draft of the 2013-14 Annual Governance Statement was presented to Audit & Risk Management Committee on 17th September 2014.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in the production of the Annual Governance Statement will be reported to the Chief Executive's Strategy Group, Cabinet and the Audit and Risk Management Committee to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

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

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in the production of the Annual Governance Statement will be reported to the Chief Executive's Strategy Group, Cabinet and the Audit and Risk Management Committee to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is necessary to meet the statutory requirement set out in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, Regulation 4(3).

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in the production of the Annual Governance Statement will be reported to the Chief Executive's Strategy Group, Cabinet and the Audit and Risk Management Committee to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in the production of the Annual Governance Statement will be reported to the Chief Executive's Strategy Group, Cabinet and the Audit and Risk Management Committee to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION

13.1 That the Annual Governance Statement for 2013-14 be approved.

14.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

14.1 The preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is necessary to meet the statutory requirement set out in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, Regulation 4(3).

APPENDICES

1. Annual Governance Statement 2013-14

REFERENCE MATERIAL

- CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Guidance Note and Framework (2012).
- CIPFA Annual Governance Statement: A Rough Guide for Practitioners 2007/08.
- Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2011.
- CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government 2006.
- CIPFA The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government 2010.
- CIPFA The Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations 2010.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Audit and Risk Management Committee - Annual Governance Statement 2013-14	18 th March 2014

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2013-14

1. Scope of Responsibility

Wirral Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Wirral Council also has a duty, under the Local Government Act 1999, to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, including as accountable body for the Merseyside Pension Fund, Wirral Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes activities for the management of risk.

Wirral Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. A copy of the authority's code is available on our website at www.wirral.gov.uk. This statement explains how Wirral Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, regulation 4 (3), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Authority is directed and controlled, together with the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It can not eliminate all risk of failure to meet the targets in our policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Wirral Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at Wirral Council for the year ended 31 March 2014 and up to the date of approval of the annual statement of accounts.

3. Progress made during 2013-14

The Council made significant progress during 2013-14 to address weaknesses in its governance arrangements. This progress is evidenced through the withdrawal of the Wirral Improvement Board in November 2013 based on the rapid progress the Council made to tackle some of its most significant challenges and implement the recommendations made by the Improvement Board.

The improvements were endorsed by the Improvement Board and are regarded as an example of best practice for sector led improvement. A case study published by the Local Government Association highlights that the Council has been transformed to one that is stable, well-led, open and far more inclusive.

The 2012-13 annual governance statement identified fifteen significant issues relating to the Council's governance arrangements. An action plan was developed to ensure implementation of key recommendations that is monitored on a regular basis by Internal Audit with a regular report provided to the Council's senior management team.

The monitoring of the action plan demonstrates that significant progress has been made during the year to address important governance issues. Eight governance issues have been completed or significant progress has been made during 2013-14; these include improvements to governance arrangements, information assets, procurement, debt, freedom of information requests, managing workforce costs and business planning.

Progress has been made on a further four issues which were identified as significant in the 2012-13 Annual Governance Statement, however further actions are required in relation to risk management, embedding policies for confidential reporting and grievances, responsibilities in relation to contract procedure rules and ensuring the Council maintains an up to date partnership register. Actions in relation to these issues will continue to be monitored however on the basis of the progress made they are no longer considered to be significant.

There are three governance issues which are considered to continue to be significant and have therefore been included in the 2013-14 statement to ensure that they are addressed. These are regularly reported to senior management and elected members. These issues relate to essential training for staff, asset management and absence management. An overview of the progress that has been made on these issues and future planned activity is provided at appendix 1.

4. The Governance Framework

The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' identifies six key principles of governance best practice.

Wirral Council's governance environment is consistent with these six core principles. Key areas of assurance of the systems and processes which comprise the Council's governance arrangements are as follows:

Principle 1: Focussing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.

The Council can demonstrate that it is focussing on outcomes for the community and on a longer-term vision for the area. The Council agreed a new three-year corporate plan setting out a clear vision and set of priorities to guide the allocation of the Council's resources.

"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.”

The Council’s vision is underpinned by the following priorities which were subject to extensive consultation with local residents:

- Protect the vulnerable in our borough
- Tackle health inequalities
- Drive growth in our economy

The Council has demonstrated strengthened financial management through its delivery of the challenging budget set for 2013/14 which included £48 million savings. £36 million savings have been agreed for 2014-15, with a balanced budget achieved. The early decisions made in December 2013 have placed the Council in the position of being able to implement and realise these savings during the 2014-15 financial year.

As part of the budget-setting process for the next two years, in January 2014 Wirral began on an ambitious programme of transformation designed to identify £45m of savings and completely remodel the authority in line with the organisation’s values. The Future Council programme is designed to review all services to ensure that they deliver the Corporate Plan vision and meet the needs and outcomes of Wirral’s community, whilst at the same time identifying the savings that the Council must make in future years. Challenge has been embedded at all stages of the Future Council programme through external expertise to ensure that the Council’s transformation plans are robust to identify the required savings the Council must deliver.

A business planning framework and performance management policy have been finalised and approved by Chief Executive’s Strategy Group. The Council’s directorate plans were reviewed and refreshed for 2013/14 to reflect the corporate plan priorities and the Council’s vision. The Chief Executive’s Strategy Group review performance of the Corporate Plan on a monthly basis with regular reports also provided to our Member led Policy and Performance committees.

A new performance appraisal process has been undertaken for senior managers and will be rolled out during 2014/15 to all staff with targets set for completion agreed by Chief Executive’s Strategy Group.

The Council is working closely with its partners to establish a long term vision for the borough through the Public Service Board. The Board meets regularly to discuss issues relevant to a wide range of public sector partners, including service redesign and improved integration.

The Council has a partnership register and toolkit in place and a comprehensive review of partnerships has been completed and reported to the Public Service Board in October 2013. This review will inform a revised partnership register to ensure that it remains up to date and fit for purpose.

In 2013, Wirral was selected as one of nine areas to participate in the Public Service Transformation Network to deliver a multi-agency approach to public service reform.

The Council is working closely with partners through the Health and Wellbeing Board to develop a Vision 2018 approach for health and social care integration.

On 1st April 2014 Wirral joined the five other Merseyside local authorities to form Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to promote the economic development of the region, draw down support from central government and European funding streams and work in a targeted and integrated fashion on transport-related initiatives. Wirral's Council Leader Phil Davies was elected as the first Chair of the Combined Authority.

Principle 2: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.

Ensuring that members are fully engaged in working together to deliver the transformation of the Council has been a key focus for the organisation. During 2013-14 the Council has held a series of improvement and transformation sessions designed to enable all elected members to take part in discussions to develop the Council's long term vision which is set out in the Corporate Plan.

The Council's Constitution has been reviewed and a revised version agreed and adopted by the Council in April 2013, ensuring that it remains lawful and fit for purpose and introduces a new scheme of delegation and member/officer protocols that clarify the boundaries between Member and Officer roles and responsibilities. The Council's Constitution sets out a Code of Conduct for Members and Officers to ensure there is clear accountability and clarity.

Three Policy and Performance Committees are in place aligned to the three strategic directorates, and supported by a team of dedicated Scrutiny officers. The Committees have clear responsibilities to inform policy development and to enable pre-scrutiny of decisions within the remit of the strategic directorate. A Co-ordinating Committee is responsible for overseeing arrangements and allocating cross cutting activities.

Member surveys carried out in early 2014 gave all councillors the opportunity to comment on changes to the Constitution and committee structures, as well as cultural issues related to individuals' responsibilities to treat each other with respect and promote high standards of political conduct. The survey attracted a strong two-thirds, cross-party return and all proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution were supported by the majority of respondents.

The findings of the surveys were discussed by the Standards Working Group and reported to the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee in February 2014 with all party support for the recommended amendments to the Constitution.

Subsequent work will focus on developing an agreement between officers and members in order to positively impact on joint working.

The Leader of the Council has reviewed his Cabinet portfolios to highlight the role of Cabinet in promoting and delivering the Council's new corporate plan and its budget, and to ensure that Cabinet Members champion and deliver activities which will result in transformed service areas and create a Council fit for the future. The portfolios now include a revised Governance, Commissioning

and Improvement portfolio which is held by the deputy leader and includes a strengthened focus on governance and compliance.

Portfolio briefings are working effectively to ensure that Cabinet Members and Strategic Directors meet on a regular basis to discuss items relevant to the portfolio area including performance of services, budget and risk management issues. Dedicated planning sessions take place with Cabinet and Chief Executive Strategy Group to develop the future direction of the Council.

Principle 3: Promoting the values of the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour.

During 2013/14, Wirral Council completed a process of sector-led improvement in partnership with representatives of the Local Government Association to address specific issues around corporate governance, including the need to agree a clear framework to deliver the Council's vision supported by strategic financial planning.

At its meeting of 29th November 2013, the Improvement Board considered a wide range of evidence including how the Council had addressed weaknesses in leadership, governance and decision-making and concluded that the Improvement Board was no longer required as the Council has the capability and capacity to manage its own improvement process. The Council invited the board back to a meeting in March 2014 to demonstrate the further progress that had been made to define the future shape of Council services, address significant financial challenges and strengthen decision making.

The Code of Corporate Governance together with evidence supporting compliance was considered by the Audit and Risk Management Committee and has been incorporated into the Council's Constitution and further work is now being undertaken to fully communicate the Code of Corporate Governance to Elected Members and the Council's workforce.

The Council's Constitution sets out a Code of Conduct for Members to ensure there is clear accountability and clarity.

The Council has refreshed its grievance and confidential reporting policies and the Council has launched a new intranet which gives prominence to these policies and others including information security.

Work has also been undertaken with staff across the organisation to develop the Council's new organisational values of integrity, efficiency, confidence and ambition. These will help inform and shape how staff across the Council delivers services to Wirral residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

Principle 4: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.

Cabinet has formally adopted a Corporate Risk Management policy setting out clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within the Council. The strategy gives a detailed analysis of the role every officer and member of Wirral Council has to play in managing risk, and aims to turn the authority from risk averse to risk aware, incorporating risk management considerations into Service

and Business Planning, Commissioning, Project Management, Partnerships, Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles & Procurement Processes.

The Council has developed new procedures for managing risk and ensuring effective scrutiny via its new constitutional working arrangements. Clear roles and responsibilities are set out in the Council's Corporate Risk Management policy and governance issues are routinely reported to Chief Executive's Strategy Group and regularly presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for their review of assurance requirements.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee also has responsibilities to oversee and agree appropriate robust arrangements for Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules. In September 2013, the Committee has agreed a revised set of contract procedure rules and financial regulations to ensure transparent and robust arrangements are in place.

Plans are also in place to strengthen the independent nature of the Audit and Risk Management Committee through the appointment of a majority of external members. Role and person descriptions have been developed for the co-opted members, describing their key roles and responsibilities, duties they will be expected to undertake and a detailed list of criteria including relevant experience, required education or training attainments, knowledge, skills and abilities.

During 2013-14 the Council also established a Commissioning and Procurement Board which includes representation from the three strategic directors to provide the strategic direction for ensuring that the Council is commissioning and procuring services that are delivered in accordance with the authority's objectives and represent the best use of resources and provide value for money. The deputy leader holds the portfolio for Governance, Commissioning and Improvement and reports to Cabinet and Council on a regular basis regarding matters within the portfolios responsibilities.

The Council has made considerable progress during 2013-14 in the implementation of External Audit recommendations outlined in the 2012-13 financial resilience report. It is anticipated that this progress will be reflected through a more positive VFM conclusion in the 2013-14 financial resilience report.

The Council is the administering authority for the Merseyside Pension Fund which received an unqualified audit opinion in 2012-13 for its accounts on the basis that the financial statements and supporting working papers were prepared to a good standard. This demonstrates that effective arrangements are in place.

Principle 5: Developing the capacity and capability of members to be effective and ensuring that officers, including statutory officers, also have the capability to deliver effectively.

Chief Executive Strategy Group continues to provide the strategic direction for the delivery of the long-term vision of the Council, working closely with the Council's administration. Appointments to permanent statutory posts are complete providing a stabilised management team for the Council.

The Authority offers members, including the newly elected, a programme of training covering the Code of Corporate Governance, Whistle-blowing, Safeguarding, Organisational Excellence and Risk Management, as well as Personal Development opportunities and Leadership. These sessions are

supported by North West Employers, the Centre for Public Scrutiny and the Local Government Association.

Work has also been undertaken with elected members to agree standards and behaviours and ensure engagement with changes to the Council's Constitution, oversight and scrutiny.

The Council has launched its Leadership Development Programme for senior managers from across the organisation which focuses on the Wirral vision, leadership in a changing context, and how to apply their learning in the leadership of the organisation.

Two cohorts of Change Agents have been trained to drive change across the organisation. The agents are helping to support change initiatives within their departments, attending and delivering key change messages at team meetings and supporting senior manager briefings.

The Council also has a 'Skills for Wirral' training and development programme for managers and employees with regular sessions held every month on subjects including demystifying stress, resilient leadership, coaching skills and Wellness and Recovery Action Planning.

An essential 'Wirral Management Development Programme' is in place to provide all managers with the learning, development and support they need. The Framework has nine essential modules which contain a mixture of workshops and e-learning modules. A calendar of upcoming training sessions is advertised prominently on the new intranet. Work is still required to ensure that essential training is carried out throughout the organisation.

Principle 6: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability.

As set out in the Corporate Plan 2013-16, the Council is committed to engaging and empowering individuals and communities in both the design and delivery of local services. The Council's major budget consultation initiative 'What Really Matters' provided the opportunity to ask local residents, staff and stakeholders for their views on the Council's future priorities and proposals for where the Council could deliver savings. Over 6,000 responses were received on a range of budget options during a 12-week consultation process and in December 2013, the results of the consultation were reported to Cabinet for recommendations to be approved at Council. The consultation achieved amongst the highest levels of participation in the UK compared to similar exercises and informed the decisions recommended for approval by Council.

The Council is moving forward with its plans for Neighbourhood Working via four constituency areas which are designed to bring communities closer to the decision-making process and to enable services to be offered in a targeted way. All elected members are represented on the four constituency committees which held their inaugural meetings in Autumn 2013. Constituency Managers have been appointed to work in partnership with the Police, Fire and Rescue, Health and social care sectors. Each constituency committee has been funded with an initial 'start up' grant and the Council is currently reviewing which services will be devolved to the constituency areas.

5. Review of Effectiveness

Wirral Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control.

The review of effectiveness is informed by: the work of Internal Audit and the Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report; findings and reports issued by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates; and feedback and comments provided by Chief Officers and managers within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment.

On the basis of the programme of work undertaken, the Chief Internal Auditor has concluded that there is a substantively sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives, and that controls are generally being applied consistently.

Corporate Management Assurance

The Council's Chief Executive Strategy Group has managed the development of the Annual Governance Statement to ensure a high level of corporate engagement and ownership. A quarterly review of performance management, audit and risk takes place to review and consider emerging governance issues and ensure that appropriate action is in place.

A Corporate Governance Group is also established and led by a Strategic Director with strategic leads for Performance, Risk, Internal Audit, Improvement and Strategy to ensure it has an appropriate profile within the organisation and significant governance issues are responded to in a timely manner.

Arrangements are in place to ensure the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer role and functions are discharged effectively and these functions are set out in the Council's Constitution. This ensures that there is compliance with relevant laws and regulations and internal policies and procedures.

The Council complies with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government 2010 and the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations 2010.

Council

Council sets the authority's overall policies and budget each year and holds the Cabinet to account. Annual Policy Council meets in November to discuss, debate and further shape the future purpose of the organisation and its response to key national and local drivers. Policy Council plays a direct role in informing the annual review of the Corporate Plan and future savings for the Council.

Cabinet

Cabinet has a leading role in ensuring good governance arrangements are in place to drive forward transformation and improvements across the Council. The deputy leader holds the Governance,

Commissioning and Improvement portfolio to ensure that there is a strong and robust leadership approach to governance and compliance across the organisation.

Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Council's Audit and Risk Management Committee provides independent assurance and scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance, including an assessment of the adequacy of the Council's risk management arrangements.

Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee

The Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee is responsible for keeping the Council's constitutional arrangements under review and making recommendations to the Council for ways in which the Constitution should be amended in order to better achieve its purposes. The Committee also oversees and agrees minor changes to the Council's constitutional arrangements as recommended by the Monitoring Officer.

Merseyside Pension Fund

Wirral Council is also the administering authority for the Merseyside Pension Fund which publishes its own statement of accounts on an annual basis and includes a "Governance Compliance Statement". The statement outlines compliance to industry specific governance principles.

6. Significant Governance Issues

The following governance issues have been identified as 'significant' during 2013/14 and will be addressed during 2014-15 through appropriate actions.

- ICT Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans
- Corporate Procurement Arrangements
- Absence Management (**carried forward from 2012/13**)
- Asset Management (**carried forward from 2012/13**)
- Essential Management Training (**carried forward from 2012/13**)

Issues identified in this statement are already being addressed through robust and planned activity. Over the coming year we will continue to ensure that these actions continue to be delivered to further enhance our governance arrangements, and ensure that we are satisfied that they will address the improvements required.

The Council will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chief Executive

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Leader of the Council

Appendix 1 – Significant Governance Issues 2013-14

Governance Issue identified	Progress and Planned Activity	Lead Officer
<p>Internal Audit identified during 2013-14 that the Council's overarching business continuity arrangements are not robust and that business resilience may be susceptible due to not having in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) up to date and effective ICT business continuity plans, and ii) ICT disaster recovery plans which reflect the business critical service requirements as documented in Corporate, Departmental and/or Service business continuity plans. 	<p>The Council has enhanced its capacity to address this governance issue and has taken action to resolve the immediate issues that have impacted on the Council's ICT business continuity arrangements.</p> <p>Significant IT infrastructural work has been undertaken to strengthen the robustness of the IT disaster recovery plan.</p> <p>Further work is planned to improve the underlying IT business continuity, and ensure that it supports business priorities</p>	<p>Head of IT Services / Director of Resources</p> <p>Assistant Chief Executive / Head of Universal Services & Infrastructure Services / Senior Manager – Health, Safety & Resilience</p>
<p>Internal Audit identified during 2013-14 that the Council has significant weaknesses in relation to its corporate procurement arrangements including the process required to ensure all formal tender exercises are promptly progressed to completion with a formal contract drawn up and signed / sealed accordingly</p>	<p>Arrangements, including training for key Legal staff members, are in place with regards to the use of the Council's CHEST system as the Council's Central Contracts Register. This will enable more robust arrangements to be established for the drafting, agreement and execution of contracts.</p> <p>The Council is taking the following actions to address this governance issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the contract procedure rules and ensure they are fully embedded across the organisation ▪ Fully implement a disciplined and corporate approach to procurement through category management, reducing manual invoicing and rationalising procurement activity ▪ Identify an effective approach to achieve maximum advantage from a centralised approach and move towards no purchase order no pay 	<p>Strategic Director – Transformation & Resources</p>

Significant Governance Issues carried forward from 2012-13

Governance Issue identified	Progress and Planned Activity	Lead Officer
<p>The Annual Governance Statement 2012-13 identified that absence monitoring statistics revealed a calculated year end figure of 10.28 days against a target of 9.5 days. This remained a high position in comparison with other Councils and additional short term resources have been added within Human Resources to review all long-term cases and to work with managers to ensure there is an action plan in place and that cases are managed appropriately in accordance with policy.</p>	<p>The introduction of a new performance report has improved the targeting of resources and management action and support.</p> <p>The target for 2014/15 is 10.5 days. The projected position is currently 9.49 days. This is an improvement, on previous year's performance of 10.3 days, however there remains further work to do to improve this position.</p>	<p>Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development</p>
<p>The Annual Governance Statement 2012-13 identified that Asset Management was in a position of constant change of policy and priorities during the 2012/2013 year. It is important in order to obtain maximum benefit from its property assets that the Council focuses on a clear policy and strategy, fees and charges are regularly reviewed, updated and income monitored, and a clear separation of duties and evidence trail exists regarding valuations.</p>	<p>A new, draft Asset Management Plan has been produced, consulted on within the council and will be presented to Cabinet in June 2014. Following approval of this document, work will progress on a suite of sub-documents in relation to specific asset issues and policies.</p> <p>A new form of consultation with the community and partners in relation to asset matters is being trialled in Moreton. The intention is to secure greater involvement and improve communications with regard to asset issues. The trial will be evaluated and a decision taken on whether to extend to other areas.</p> <p>Work is proceeding in terms of disposal of surplus assets and a total of £2.5m was raised through disposals in 13/14, ahead of the target figure. Work is proceeding on the disposal of the first of three major sites, the Acre Lane Centre, with staff re-location underway.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive / Head of Universal & Infrastructure Services</p>

Governance Issue identified	Progress and Planned Activity	Lead Officer
	<p>The office rationalisation project, which will continue over the next two years has begun with staff being re-located within Wallasey Town Hall, Cheshire Lines and Birkenhead Town Hall, starting a process of having more staff in fewer locations, to generate savings. Appropriate desking to support replacement IT and telephone equipment is being implemented on a phased basis</p> <p>A specialist company has been appointed to deal with the disposal of the large sites identified in a report to Cabinet in November 2013 which will provide the Council with substantial Capital receipts which will form part of the Council's Capital Programme.</p>	
<p>The Annual Governance Statement 2012-13 identified that mandatory training across the Council has proved difficult to monitor and control. It is important that any training requirements deemed to be mandatory, such as Equalities and Diversity, should be communicated to and undertaken by all employees, including officers who do not have computer access.</p>	<p>A reporting process is in place to monitor the completion of essential programmes. Steps have been taken to improve the ability to monitor and ensure training (essential and statutory) is undertaken.</p> <p>It is expected that completion of the key aspects of the training will have reached an acceptable level by Summer 2014.</p>	<p>Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development</p>

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

9 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT:	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION. THE BETTER CARE FUND 2014 RE-SUBMISSION
WARD/S AFFECTED:	'ALL'
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES CHIEF CLINICAL OFFICER CCG
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE JONES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update with regard to the Better Care Fund re-submission put together on behalf of Wirral Council and Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Better Care Fund (BCF) is explicitly intended to facilitate the integration of Health and social Care systems at a local level. The Health and Wellbeing Board has a critical role in influencing and monitoring progress in relation to integration, it has a key role in signing of submissions.

2.2 NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Wirral Council were required to re-submit a final 'Better Care Fund' plan for 2015 / 2016 to NHS England on 19 September 2014, following approval by the Wirral Health and Wellbeing Board on 17 September, explaining how they intend to improve local services.

2.3 Following original submissions in April 2014, NHS England advised they would be requesting further detailed work nationally, in response to feedback received from the LGA, Department of Health and Acute Trusts. On 11 July 2014, Andrew Ridley made clear his intentions regarding a 'pay for performance' framework.

2.4 Revised high level guidance was circulated on 25 July 2014, with revised full guidance and the documents being used on 18 August 2014.

2.5 The new guidance specifically required the following:

- **Finance:** Plans must balance to total settlement (Minimum £28,009,000 locally).
- **National Conditions:** Details requested on the implementation of the Care Act, including assurance funding comes from CCG allocation.

- **Non Elective Admissions:** National expectation of a minimum 3.5% reduction target. Nationally mandated payment by results attached.
- **Other Outcomes & Measures:** Revision of baseline data from 2012/13 to 2013/14. These outcomes are not linked to performance payment.
- **Scheme Specifications:** An individual annex to be submitted alongside BCF templates demonstrating impact of each scheme.
- **Provider Commentary:** An individual annex to be submitted to allow each local provider to comment on deliverability of plans.

2.6 NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Wirral Council (WBC) agreed through Vision 18, with key providers, a level of ambition of 15% reduction in emergency admissions over three years.

2.7 NHS Wirral CCG and WBC agreed with key partners that all operational plans would align to the level of ambition by April 2015.

2.8 In order to redesign services and achieve the 15% reduction in emergency admissions, NHS Wirral CCG and WBC have recommended 25 schemes, under four themed areas:

- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Keeping people in their local communities
- Step up / Step down services
- Mental Health, including drug and alcohol services.

2.9 Revised guidance clarifies the performance related element, focussing on delivery of the reduction in non-elective admissions, 5% for 2015 / 2016. Payment will be related to delivery of the target. Potential funding will be held to mitigate the impact of non delivery and acute pressure.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The Better Care Fund brings both opportunity and risk. There are opportunities for efficiency working across health and social care organisations, however there are newly shared risks in relation to performance and spend.

3.2 The risk share agreement between NHS Wirral CCG and WBC remains at 82% / 18% based upon the share for resource contributed. Based upon 5% reduction in non electives, the performance related fund equates to £3,362,260 if none of the 5% target were achieved, 82% risk share for CCG is £2,757,053, 18% for Wirral Council is £605,207.

- 3.3 Contingency funds identified in the Better Care Fund plan remain at 5% of total (£1.7 million).
- 3.4 A full risk log relating to the Better Care Fund is contained within the full narrative of the re-submission.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 A robust performance framework is being developed for November 2014, overseen by the Vision 18 governance framework. Progress and performance will be overseen quarterly at Health and wellbeing Board. Remedial action will be taken, should schemes not deliver in order to mitigate against risk of non delivery.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Public stakeholder event 12 February 2014 to commence a broader more in depth consultation process over time as part of the broader strategic development of Vision 2018. Further engagement with key providers, WUTH, CWP and Community Trust has taken place as part of the re-submission process.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 Voluntary, community and faith organisations are key stakeholders in the development of Vision 2018.

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

- 7.1 For 2014 / 2015 the total joint resource agreed is £15,635 million.

- 7.2 From 2015 / 2016 the total resource agreed is £33,368, 039.

- 7.3 National Pooling £3.8 billion
Local Pooling (April 2015) £33,368,039

Comprising:

Organisation	Holds the pooled budget? (Y/N)	Spending on BCF schemes in 14/15	Minimum contribution (15/16)	Actual contribution (15/16)
		£'000	£'000	£'000
NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group	TBC	£11.334	£24.933	£26.274
Wirral Council	TBC	£4.301	£3.076	£7.094
BCF Total		£ 15.635	£28.009	£ 33,368,039

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Section 256 for 2014 / 2015 is a formal legal agreement. A similar model will be required for 2015 / 2016 to set out formal agreements for pooled funding (Section 75 agreement) setting out specific risk share agreements.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None specified overview report only. Consideration of EIA will be given to specific service proposals.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

10.1 It is recommended that the Better Care Fund final re-submission approved at Health and Wellbeing Board is noted.

11.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

11.1 The submission is a critical driver in whole system redesign in Wirral.

11.2 System performance will be a critical element of the new Better Care Fund. This presents potential financial risk.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Better Care Fund executive summary document, outlining the intentions and anticipated outcomes

Appendix 2

Better Care Fund scheme summary - available online in the web library

Appendix 3

Better Care Fund full re-submission narrative - available online in the web library

Appendix 4

Better Care Fund individual scheme details and modelling - available online in the web library

Wirral's Better Care Fund Plans for Integrated Commissioning of Health and Social Care

Executive Summary September 2014

Introduction to our plans to transform health and social care in Wirral

Wirral's Vision 2018 Public Consultation Event told us that members of the public wanted to be supported to manage their own health with information which is easily accessible. People wanted to receive excellent, individualised care, closer to home. Integrated, joined-up care that brings together NHS, social care, and other forms of care and support provided in people's homes and communities is extremely important in improving people's health and wellbeing. This includes working more closely with community and voluntary organisations to support people to stay at home.

Partners on the Health and Wellbeing Board, including Wirral Borough Council and NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group, are working together to make changes to ensure we commission and deliver more integrated services for the people of Wirral.

We have been reviewing and developing our plans in a range of areas during 2014-15, ready for implementation and to support budget changes in 2015-16. Our plans include our priorities for establishing and spending a pooled budget between us, building on the national Better Care Fund arrangements.

Our vision

Through our engagement with members of the public, providers, commissioners and other practitioners, we have developed a shared vision for integrated care called Vision 2018:

We want to integrate health and social care:

"To ensure the residents of Wirral enjoy the best quality of life possible, being supported to make informed choices about their own care, and being assured of the highest quality services".

Over the next 5 years we will deliver a transformed service for the people of Wirral focusing on moving care from hospital to community based resources and supporting people in their own homes. There will be a focus on:

- Early intervention and prevention
- Health promotion
- Self-care and self help to enable individuals to identify their own personal outcomes
- Encouraging self-determination and responsibility for communities and neighbourhoods
- Information, advice, signposting and where necessary redirection to appropriate services
- Providing care that is well coordinated around individuals ensuring customers and carers have a positive experience
- Maximise opportunities for greater independence choice and control and avoid preventable admissions to hospital or care homes through joined up collaborative case management
- Developing integrated approaches across the community and the hospital including joint assessments, single point of access and care planning
- Facilitating a significant shift in culture and behaviours across professions and organisations

As part of the Vision 2018 discussions it has now been agreed with senior representatives of key partners a level of ambition which would achieve a minimum 15% reduction in non-elective admissions over a 3 year period from 2015/16 – 2017/18.

In addition to our formally stated target of 15%, we would also want to set an overall stretch ambition of 23% by 31st March 2018, recognising recent increases in non-elective admissions. This will be achieved by developing transformation programmes of work through vision 2018. This will be an iterative process following clinical and public engagement, building on the work that has been done to date.

Our priorities

We have agreed four overarching priority areas to start with, which have been developed for 2014-15 with further work planned in 2015-16. Our plans for integrating health and social care sit within the wider ambitions of Wirral's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Vision 2018.

1. Early intervention and prevention

Total Spend £1,610,710

as part of Vision 2018 Prevention, Self Care and Community Development Workstream

What might this look like? A new service focusing on early intervention and prevention to support people to remain independent in their own home for as long as possible. This includes assistive technology, telehealth, community equipment and adaptations, falls prevention and pick up, sensory services, information, advice and support.

What will be the benefits for Wirral people?

- Improved visibility and availability of self care and self management support
- Quick and practical access to the technology and the adaptations that people need.
- Improve independence and wellbeing so that people can live in their own homes and communities for longer.
- Crises prevented and need for long-term support reduced.
- Increased reassurance for carers

What happens next?

We will be developing a new specification for services and determining how best to procure those services. We will continue to work with providers and public as we develop our proposals.

2. Keeping people in their local communities

Total Spend £13,855,720

as part of Vision 2018 Integration Adults Workstream

What do we think this might look like? A new and coordinated network of services available 7 days a week of needing health and social care, to help them stay independent and well in their local communities. Our ambition is to increase investment in keeping people well in their local community, funded from savings from reduced hospital admissions. This will include: a multi professional response which supports care planning for those at most risk of needing urgent hospital care; a new model of identifying who is at risk, covering both health and social needs; a new specification for community teams who provide care; improved advice, information and low-level support; multidisciplinary team-working across a range of disciplines including housing; the involvement of local communities and community organisations in supporting people to keep well.

What will be the benefits for Wirral people?

- Improved access to health and social care providing a positive and integrated experience of care
- Increased independence, health and wellbeing and coordinated planning of care.
- Rapid support for people who are at risk of hospital admission, including support for carers.
- Reduced demand for formal health and social care by working to prevent people's need to access it, through risk stratification

What happens next?

We will be developing an outcome-based specification for services that support people to keep well at home, integrating services to provide a 7 day response across 4 neighborhood areas. We will also assess the clinical and economic benefits to investing further in these services to increase capacity and capability to support the movement of care from the hospital to the community.

3. Step Up Step Down Services as part of VISION 2018 Unplanned Care Programme

Total Spend £10,724,510

What do we think this might look like? We intend to review the existing step up step down services to establish required capacity and range of provision. We will support people after they have had a spell in hospital or social care and provide alternatives to going into hospital for people if they have a crisis, including supporting people at home. We will define step up step down based on outcomes, rather than care settings. Step up step down care is a continuum of care that includes domiciliary care, mobile nights services, reablement, intermediate care, transitional care and specialist bed based support outside hospital. The step up step down service will include simplified access to a multidisciplinary team, available 7 days a week providing a single point of access to respond to people's needs in a crisis and for planned care including hospital discharge. The new service will take account of people's mental health needs as well as their physical health.

What will be the benefits for Wirral people?

- Hospital admissions are prevented where possible, as people are more likely to stay healthy for longer if they can avoid hospital.
- People leave hospital earlier and are supported quickly and easily at home
- More people get back home after hospital rather than entering long-term care.
- People get back on their feet as soon as possible.
- Mental health needs are addressed as well as and alongside physical health needs.
- Money is spent more effectively to support people's needs.
- Better support for people with dementia to live well at home.
- Significant reduction in hospital readmissions

What happens next?

A service review is underway to ensure that the correct capacity and range of services are available to meet the current and future needs of the people of Wirral. We will then determine how best to commission those services. We will continue to work with providers and the public as we develop our proposals.

4. Mental health, including drug and alcohol services as part of Vision 2018 Long Term Conditions Programme

Total Spend £2,244,199

What might this look like? A single approach to assessment, funding and management of long term intensive support offered to people with long-term mental health needs. This includes the range of support in managing drug and alcohol dependency that is available in community settings. This will result in improved coordination of process, better focus on care, and more cost effective interventions. Mental health outreach services, including crisis response services will be developed, to prevent the need for attendances at places of safety, including A&E.

What will be the benefits for Wirral people?

- Improved accessibility to help, support and advice in people's local communities.
- Faster, coordinated assessment and decision-making about the support that people need.
- Providing and extending specialist community based support for people with drug and alcohol dependency
- Strong community organisations which work well together and with statutory organisations, supporting community activities that are better targeted at the needs of people at risk of declining health and wellbeing.

- Building on and supporting people's self-care abilities and enabling family carers, who so wish, to continue to actively contribute.
- Retaining and building people's links with their local communities and their opportunities to contribute.

What happens next?

We will be undertaking integrated service reviews to identify key developments and prioritise investment to maximise improved outcomes.

The Pooled Budget

We have agreed to establish a pooled budget in 2015/16 to fund the above areas of work. The total budget is likely to be around £33.368m, as set out in the table below.

Organisation	Holds the pooled budget? (Y/N)	Spending on BCF schemes in 14/15	Minimum contribution (15/16)	Actual contribution (15/16)
		£'000	£'000	£'000
NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group	TBC	£11.334	£24.933	£26.274
Wirral Borough Council	TBC	£4.301	£3.076	£7.094
BCF Total		£ 15.635	£28.009	£ 33.368

During 2014/15 we will develop the details of our pooled budget agreement, finalising which budgets will be included and setting out how we will make decisions and share benefit and risk from the pooled budget, whilst retaining our separate statutory responsibilities.

What our proposals might mean for our providers

As a result of the establishment of a pooled budget for the areas described in this document (with the ultimate aim of establishing a single budget for health and social care in Wirral) there will be a single fund and single decision-making on the commissioning of services covered. The implications of this for providers are likely to include:

- Changes to the way services are designed and delivered, with organisations needing to work together even more closely than they do now, to provide better and joined up care to service users. This may include possible changes to contractual arrangements to support the above.
- Changes to provider relationships with one another. We would expect our providers (acute and others) to have to work differently and potentially more collaboratively with one another.
- Stronger involvement of community-based organisations and people who use services and carers in the redesign of services, pathways and changing the service delivery culture.
- Changes for frontline workers and operational delivery, with much greater multidisciplinary working and communication between teams.

The establishment of a pooled budget and integrated commissioning strengthens commissioning of health and social care in Wirral. Our providers have a key role in working with us to design and deliver services. We hope to use our established partnership arrangements through Vision 2018 to continue to work with providers as we develop plans for the areas we have set out above. To be even more effective we need to involve primary care and voluntary sector providers in these partnerships.

How we will manage this programme of work

Our Health and Wellbeing Board is taking the lead in this integration work, and has set up a Joint Strategic Commissioning Group, with Directors from both the Council and the CCG, to oversee integrated commissioning work on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

How we will measure progress

The Joint Strategic Commissioning Group has agreed an overarching framework, a timetable and specific objectives for our work, which will demonstrate improvement in service user experience and outcomes. These will include:

- Permanent admissions to residential and nursing care.
- Proportion of older people who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital.
- Delayed transfers of care.
- Avoidable emergency admissions.
- Patient experience.
- Improved access to domiciliary care

The Health and Wellbeing Board will monitor progress against the targets in these areas through regular quarterly reporting including a performance dashboard.

What this means now and what it will mean for Wirral people in 2015-16

2014-15 will be an important year for us as we prepare our plans for 2015-16 and beyond. Our work in 2014-15 will involve the following elements:

- **Single decision-making:** Senior managers and clinicians from the local authority and CCG, Guided by the Health and Wellbeing Board, will make decisions together rather than as separate organisations.
- **Single commissioning:** Commissioners from both organisations will work together to produce single service specifications for the delivery of services funded where relevant to the pooled budget.
- **Work with providers, including voluntary sector organisations and GP Practices:** We need to work together to develop our providers and engage with GPs in Wirral's communities.
- **Engagement with Wirral people:** We want to involve Wirral people to shape services.
- **Investment in IT:** We know that to achieve some of our objectives we need to invest in systems that work and speak to each other across organisational boundaries.
- **Developing more meaningful measures of success:** We too often measure the success of organisations in the health and care system rather than whether we are working well together as a whole. We will work during 2014-15 on 'whole system' measures of success that will drive the integrated commissioning of services.

What does this mean for Wirral people?

- Local communities in Wirral are increasingly supported by strong links between GPs, social workers and community organisations, which helps people like them to stay independent for longer
- Older people are helped by to stay at home. Families and carer's will not have to chase professionals or ask them to talk to each other
- People with mental health needs or support with drug and alcohol problems can access services without have to rely on emergency care

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

Cabinet

9 October 2014

SUBJECT:	Child Sexual Exploitation
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All Wards
REPORT OF:	Director of Children’s Services
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Tony Smith
KEY DECISION	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is written following the enquiry into Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council by Professor Alexis Jay, published in August 2014. It is an outline of the issues arising from the Rotherham Enquiry. It provides details of work that is already taking place to address Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Wirral, and future work that is planned.
- 1.2 Child sexual exploitation is tackled effectively when there is clear and committed leadership and where safeguarding professionals cooperate together. In Wirral direction is provided through the Local Safeguarding Children Board and a regional approach to strategic partnership working. This report sets out a plan of action, delivered with key partner agencies, to identify and support young people at risk of CSE. It explains the range of responses and services that are provided and how greater engagement of the community will support early identification of the risks.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The report by Professor Alexis Jay estimates that 1,400 children were sexually exploited in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013. Professor Jay’s report describes the level of abuse as ‘appalling’ and says it included the rape of girls as young as 11 by large numbers of male perpetrators.

In response to the report Alan Wood, the president of the Association of Director’s of Children’s Services, has stated that:

“The publication of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham this week must serve as a call to action for all safeguarding partners to ensure that that the voices of children, young people and their families raising similar concerns in the future are both heard, believed and acted upon and that the necessary help and support is provided when they need it most”.

Professor Jay's report made 15 recommendations which included:

- Undertaking and reviewing risk assessments on vulnerable children.
- Protecting children who are looked after, particularly those placed out of borough and those likely to be exposed to CSE.
- Local Authorities to ensure outreach work is available to young people who might not access services.
- Ensuring responses to CSE are properly resourced and communicated.
- Agencies working together to respond to CSE including ensuring long term and therapeutic support is available to victims.
- Engagement between authorities and minority ethnic communities.

The full recommendations can be found in Professor Jay's report and all of which have been considered in developing an action plan for Wirral.

Within Professor Jay's Report, reference is made to the former Director of Public Prosecutions, Keir Starmer, who revised the Crown Prosecution Services guidance on child sexual exploitation in October 2013. The guidance was revised to include a list of stereotypical assumptions previously thought to undermine the credibility of young victims. These included:

- "The victim invited sex by the way they dressed or acted."
- "The victim used alcohol or drugs and was therefore sexually available."
- "The victim didn't scream, fight or protest so they must have been consenting."
- "The victim didn't complain immediately, so it cant have been a sexual assault."
- "The victim is in a relationship with the alleged offender and is therefore also a willing partner."
- "A victim should remember events consistently."
- "Children can consent to their own sexual exploitation."
- "CSE is only a problem in certain ethnic /cultural communities."
- "Only girls and young women are victims of child sexual abuse."
- "Children from BME backgrounds are not abused."
- "There will be physical evidence of abuse."

All of these assumptions have been referred to at some point in historic files read by the authors of the Rotherham report, and usually cited as reasons given by the Police or Crown Prosecution Service for not pursuing suspected perpetrators. This list of stereotypes will be used as a reference point to challenge perceptions of CSE, and responses and behaviours across the Council, partnerships and in the community. This will be done by using this checklist to underpin and inform training, supervision of professionals and case file auditing, to ensure cultural issues are addressed.

The Association of Independent LSCB Chairs have also issued a response to the Rotherham CSE report based on work undertaken by LSCB's across the country to respond to CSE. Their research points to a number of essential factors to enable an effective response to CSE. These include:

- Organisations being alert to the reality of the sexual exploitation of young people.

- Police and children's services having active strategies to disrupt criminal networks.
- Organisations being aware that challenging behaviour by young people shouldn't be discounted as bad behaviour, and may be a cry for help.
- Local leaders being aware and ready to hear the reality of life for vulnerable young people and to ensure professionals are free to voice their concerns – which will be heard and respected.
- Acknowledging that combating CSE requires the active involvement of the whole community and service agencies.
- All child safeguarding education and training should contain a comprehensive section on sexual exploitation, recognising that it has profound health consequences, so that health professionals are supported to respond appropriately to victims.

3.0 Key Strategic Partnerships

Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) are responsible for linking the NHS, public health and social care with a wide range of partners. HWBs provide the platform for ensuring commissioned services meet the needs of their local populations. The HWB's decision on whether to prioritise child sexual exploitation should be an informed one, based on a local understanding of the issue. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Safeguarding Adults Protection Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) have a draft protocol in place to describe how they work strategically together to address safeguarding priorities in the area. This protocol will be considered at the next meeting of the HWB when the joint approach to tackling CSE will be confirmed.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) play a key part in promoting a good response to child sexual exploitation through their co-ordination and monitoring of single and multi-agency safeguarding activity, convening a sub group as appropriate and having a child sexual exploitation strategy, which also links to safeguarding of children missing from care or home and trafficked children. This approach is adopted in Wirral.

Services are needed that provide a range of interventions to young people who have experienced child sexual exploitation, or to adults who later disclose their childhood experiences. These interventions should range from signposting for support, to long term therapeutic interventions. Current service provision will be reviewed in consultation with young people.

A good response to child sexual exploitation requires a multi-agency approach because each agency has specific responsibilities and expertise to offer. The Child Sexual Exploitation sub group of the LSCB provides leadership of this multi-agency approach and leads on the delivery of the CSE action plan.

4.0 The Current Position in Wirral Council

In Wirral the prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation is a priority action area for the WSCB, all activity is currently being reviewed in the light of the Jay Report and it's recommendations. This is enabling all partners to test their own responses to vulnerable children, young people and their families, and the effectiveness of our

multi agency systems to detect and respond quickly to each and every instance of child sexual exploitation.

In 2012 the Board established a multi-agency strategic CSE sub group including partners from social care, the local authority, police, health agencies, education, public health and the Response service. The sub group works to an action plan linked to an agreed Merseyside protocol for responding to CSE. An important part of the work undertaken is to raise awareness of the risks of CSE.

Prior to this sub group there was a partnership group, reporting to the Area Child Protection Committee and then the LSCB that met to respond to a local report written in 2004 in relation to young runaways and children at risk of sexual exploitation. There was an action plan from the report that the group was responsible for implementing.

In Wirral, there are at any one time between 15 and 30 children who are being considered as at risk of CSE. This does not mean they all require a social work assessment , but it does mean that there needs to be a Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) meeting to share relevant intelligence and information to determine how to respond to each child's circumstances. This approach is part of an agreed protocol between Liverpool, St. Helens, Sefton, Wirral and Knowsley and Merseyside Police. The protocol, launched in May 2014 supports the work to identify and provide an assured response to children at risk of CSE. There is a further action going forward to ensure the protocol is embedded fully in practice.

When children are identified as at risk of CSE, they are referred to the MACSE meeting. These meetings have representation from Children's Services, the Police, Health and Catch 22. Catch 22 provide 1:1 support and direct work with children referred. The meeting enables intelligence to be gathered about where there is a risk of CSE , who may be at risk and who they may be at risk from. The information helps inform the Police regarding action against potential or actual offenders as well as addressing local areas or groups who require a more coordinated strategy to reduce risks.

Children may be referred for preventive services and support or a social work assessment. Children would then be subject to a plan to address the presenting safeguarding concerns.

There is an action plan which sets out a range of interventions at a strategic multi agency level, a number of which have already been completed. The CSE sub group has reviewed this action plan and continues to work on evidencing the impact of each of the actions taken. It has also reviewed the referral pathway to ensure that it is clear to professionals how they refer children who they are concerned may be at risk of CSE.

There is a regional group for CSE led by an Independent Chair of a Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The group has met recently for the first time to agree terms of reference and begin a self assessment of readiness to deal with issues of CSE across the region, in the light of the Rotherham enquiry. It takes account of previous reports and research, and tools provided by the National Working Group who advise Government on the issue of CSE.

5.0 Actions developed in response to the Recommendations from the Rotherham Enquiry

An assessment of Wirral's partnership actions to date has been undertaken against the content and recommendations of the Jay Report. The actions detailed below have been or are being implemented to strengthen our strategies and approaches to further ensure our ability and capacity too respond to each and every instance of Child Sexual Exploitation.

- Practice guidance has been written to support the Regional CSE Protocol. Briefings will be given during October particularly on how CSE is recognised and responded to across agencies and professionals.
- "Chelsea's Choice", is a theatrical production which provides excellent awareness for, parents, professionals and young people on the issue of CSE. This will be presented at venues around Wirral everyday for a week during the autumn. Dates are being set and schools being approached to stage the play and workshop, which will follow.
- Meetings will take place this autumn with Head teachers of Primary and Secondary schools where they will be provided with the materials they need to raise awareness in their schools with staff and pupils.
- A group of key professionals will meet to look at what services we have and what we can do together to better identify and respond to these young people. The meetings will involve the Director and Strategic Director.
- A meeting of leaders of young people's involvement and participation services has been arranged to put in place a set of focus groups with young people to better understand their needs and what works to protect and safeguard them, particularly where there may be resource issues.
- A "problem profile" on CSE will be written, based on all the known intelligence/relevant data held across different agencies to inform strategic decision making and local practice development. It requires collective ownership across all partners to support its development and a committed/effective analyst to review and identify key findings and intelligence gaps. A meeting is in place to progress completing this work by the end of October this year.
- Thematic multi agency audits of cases will be undertaken in the coming weeks, where children have been harmed or at have been at risk of harm from CSE. Children's voices will be central to the audit and risk assessments will be reviewed on vulnerable children. The audits will include current cases and cases where there have previously been concerns in relation to CSE. There will also be a focus on children looked after who are placed out of borough.
- A meeting of the three party leaders is scheduled to take place at the end of October 2014 to discuss the findings of the Jay report and the response in Wirral. Following this, regular meetings of the Safeguarding Reference Group will be scheduled to ensure clear political oversight.

- Training for members on CSE is being delivered in November 2014.
- Wirral's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is now operational. The development of a MASH facilitates early information sharing; healthcare professionals are often in possession of key information, along with the Police and Social Care. It is vital that all representatives are involved to develop the most effective response.
- The promotion of services available to young people is being strengthened following focused work that is planned with young people.
- Partner agencies are undertaking an audit of the 'readiness' of their organisation to respond to CSE; this will be monitored through the CSE sub group and additional actions will be incorporated in the current plan.
- Engaging community groups such as taxi drivers and 'night time' economy workers to identify and offer support to vulnerable young people is already taking place, with further work scheduled.
- Improved engagement of minority ethnic communities through community leaders and the minority ethnic achievement service will be developed, and included more specifically in the action plan.

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 6.1 Without a coordinated multi agency strategy, children may not be appropriately safeguarded from CSE.
- 6.2 There are risks of claims against the Council if there are cases that emerge from the past where it is found the Council has not met its duties.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There is consultation planned with young people on the services currently in place and how they can be improved.

9.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

- 9.1 None.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 10.1 The sector could provide important links for young people to access support. The hidden nature of child sexual exploitation means that engaging with voluntary or specialist groups at a local level may be the key to developing intelligence and understanding of the problem.

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

11.1 There will be costs to funding some of the promotional work that is part of the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Board's Action Plan. £4000 from the LSCB budget is planned to be spent on training and awareness raising.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There could be a finding against the Council if there is a successful claim made that the council failed in its duties.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(a) Yes and impact review can be found via the following link:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-april-2014/eias-families-wellbeing>

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None.

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Consideration needs to be made as to how to address community safety needs, where the intelligence on CSE highlights particular areas where it is occurring

16.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

16.1 To consider the report and to endorse the action plan.

17.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

17.1 To ensure members are briefed on the Rotherham enquiry findings and their implications for work on CSE in Wirral

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APPENDICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

1. The Rotherham Enquiry. Professor Alexis Jay : August 2014

2. "If only someone had listened": Office of the Children's Commissioners enquiry into child sexual exploitation; November 2013

3. Health Working Group Report on Child Sexual Exploitation: An independent group chaired by the Department of Health focusing on:

Improving the outcomes for children by promoting effective engagement of health services and staff ; January 2014

BRIEFING NOTES HISTORY

Briefing Note	Date

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

9 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT:	Wirral Climate Change Strategy 2014-2019
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	David Armstrong
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cabinet Member – Environment and Sustainability Cabinet Member – Support Services
KEY DECISION?	Yes

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces a new climate change strategy for Wirral. The strategy sets a framework for action over the next five years to reduce green house pollution and to help ensure Wirral adapts to unavoidable changes in the climate. The strategy has been developed via the Wirral Climate Change Group in accordance with a previous council decision.
- 1.2 It is recommended that the strategy be endorsed as the agreed framework to encourage, develop and co-ordinate local climate-related action in Wirral.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Wirral Council has a long-held commitment to action on climate change. The Council was an early signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change (Council, 13 February 2006, Minute 91). It recently reaffirmed this commitment by signing up to the Local Government Association's 'Climate Local' initiative (Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 29 January 2013, Minute 63). This entails a public commitment to cutting emissions and adapting to unavoidable changes in the climate.
- 2.2 In support of its public commitment to action the Council adopted its first strategy on climate change in 2007 (Cabinet, June 2007, Minute 99.) Work to develop a replacement strategy was agreed in 2012 (Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, January 2012, Minute 67).
- 2.3 The creation of the new climate strategy has been overseen via the Wirral Climate Change Group. This partnership group was set up by Wirral Council to help coordinate climate action. The group includes officers and elected members as well as representatives from various public bodies, community, voluntary and faith interests.

- 2.4 The new strategy (see appendix) was shaped through various consultation stages. An initial 'working' draft was produced for summer 2013. This drew on the outcomes from an earlier programme of public consultation activities. The 'working' draft was refined through consultation within the Wirral Climate Change Group. A consultation draft was then published publicly in December 2013 with comments invited by February 2014. A final draft – taking on board comments made - was agreed in July 2014. The Wirral Climate Change Group's recommendation is that partner organisations endorse this as the framework to encourage, develop and co-ordinate local climate-related action and investment.
- 2.5 The strategy's goals are to substantially cut climate pollution associated with Wirral, and to adapt Wirral to unavoidable climate change. To cut pollution the strategy aims to:
- Reduce demand for energy and make Wirral more energy efficient
 - Generate and source more of our local energy needs from 'renewable' sources;
 - Use more sustainable modes of transport, more fuel-efficient vehicles and less polluting means of getting around; and
 - Reduce the indirect negative impacts that our decisions have for climate pollution in Wirral and elsewhere;
- To adapt to unavoidable change the aim is to:
- Identify the risks and vulnerabilities from expected changes and bring forward plans and actions to limit negative impacts and improve resilience
- In support of both goals the aim is to:
- Build capacity for action by strengthening local networks and partnerships and by developing wider awareness and education initiatives.
- For each of the aims, the strategy signals the 'direction of travel' needed, highlights the context for action and identifies a set of objectives to be met.
- 2.6 To reduce demand for energy the strategy promotes efforts to secure investment in energy efficiency improvements. It recognises the opportunities to link such investments with the development of local skills and to promote local businesses. It highlights the potential for investment in heat networks and flags up the opportunities presented by the Wirral Waters development. The strategy also advocates the sharing of existing resources and expertise about energy efficiency and related awareness campaigns.
- 2.7 To encourage renewable energy the strategy promotes the formation of a co-operative to pool local investment. It advocates identifying potential sites for solar investment and promoting other technologies. It recognises the importance for further investment to develop Wirral as a centre of excellence for wind energy. It also flags up opportunities to link investments with the development of local skills and the promotion of local business.
- 2.8 To encourage more sustainable transport the strategy advances measures to promote active transport - cycling and walking. It advocates improvements to public transport both integration and ticketing. It promotes the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the uptake of alternative fuelled vehicles.

- 2.9 To reduce indirect climate impacts the strategy advocates the promotion of green procurement and local supply chains. It envisages the further development of the embryonic Wirral food movement to encourage the cultivation and consumption of local and seasonal produce. It promotes initiatives to reduce waste and encourage the re-use of materials. It also advocates greater use of sustainability appraisal to encourage more climate sensitive decision making
- 2.10 To advance climate adaptation the strategy advocates engaging key stakeholders in a risk assessment process and the promotion of the Environment Agency's 'Climate Ready' programme. It encourages the creation of community-specific adaptation information and steps to build community capacity to respond to weather events. The strategy also highlights a need for health planning to take climate issues into account. It flags up the importance of the natural environment in ameliorating climate impacts and directs support for initiatives to increase green infrastructure. It advocates water saving practices and rainwater harvesting as well as promoting permeable surfaces to reduce rainwater run-off. The framework highlights the opportunity to promote local businesses who offer goods and services related to adaptation.
- 2.11 To build capacity for action the strategy promotes the creation of an independent partnership, network and campaign to encourage widespread action. It advocates the spread of low carbon community and 'transition town'-type groups to foster community action. It also promotes the development of exemplar eco-buildings and the sharing of existing good practice. Education is seen to have a key role with links made to eco schools work, lifelong learning and vocational training.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 Without an effective up-to-date framework in place, Wirral could be disadvantaged when trying to take advantage of the various opportunities associated with the transition to a low carbon economy. Wirral may also be ill-prepared to manage the risks associated with changes in the climate, for example, to cope with the consequences of more extreme weather.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Prior to producing the replacement strategy the Wirral Climate Change Group considered and rejected the option to disband. The group recognised the advantages of sharing resources and expertise. It also recognised the benefit of a common framework to help co-ordinate local action.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The strategy's production is based on:
- An online survey on cutting climate pollution (July – August 2012)
 - A public workshop on cutting climate pollution (November 2012)
 - An online survey on adapting to climate change (October - December 2012)
 - A public workshop on adapting to climate change (April 2013)
 - Consultation between partners within the climate change group on a working draft (summer 2013)

- Publication of a consultation draft for public comments via the Council's website (December 2013-February 2014)

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

6.1 N/A

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 Climate change poses challenges and creates opportunities for all sectors. The strategy highlights potential actions that groups from the community sector can take. The consultation draft was praised by Community Action Wirral for doing so.

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

8.1 The new strategy does not commit the Council to any additional expenditure, IT or staffing resources. Work to develop a supporting action plan is ongoing and will be submitted for approval in due course. It is anticipated that this action plan will form the basis of the Council's future submission made to the Climate Local programme.

8.2 The Council already has a corporate target compatible with the new strategy's goal to substantially reduce climate pollution. The target is to reduce corporate carbon emissions 60% by 2025. This target is supported by a carbon budget process that anticipates year-on-year reductions of 5% and associated investments in energy efficiency. A recent estimate of the financial impact of reducing emissions in line with the carbon budget indicated this could yield potential savings of £1,026,901 between 2013/14 and 2015/15 (Budget Cabinet, February 2014). The savings anticipated come from reduced gas and electricity consumption and a reduction in payments for allowances required under the government's mandatory Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRCEES).

8.3 The Council's asset strategy approved by Cabinet on 19 June 2014 already acknowledges the importance of the climate agenda for assets, noting:

The implications for the Council's land and buildings are considerable. There is a need to plan and manage our assets to reduce energy use – for heat, power and travel – and also for the potential to harness renewable energy from the estate. Both these steps to reduce our carbon footprint present opportunities to limit revenue expenditure. Crucially we must also adjust our approach to managing property to increase resilience to future climatic change. Here we will need to assess the risks and adapt the portfolio accordingly. Severe weather events can damage assets and disrupt service delivery. It will be important to adapt to the prospect of more extreme weather to ensure business continuity

The vision contained in the asset strategy looks to a future in which:

Assets are managed efficiently. They are well maintained, energy efficient, adapted to climate risks and exploit renewable energy wherever this is feasible.

- 8.4 Generally the adoption of the strategy is considered to present positive opportunities for Wirral in that it:
- Provides an up-to-date foundation for funding bids
 - Provides a platform to encourage investment in Wirral.
 - Promotes efficient resource use for both energy and water;
 - Helps limit vulnerability to extreme weather impacts

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no legal issues foreseen associated with recommendation to endorse the strategy beyond those set out in the body of this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – (*insert appropriate hyperlink*).

<http://bit.ly/CXEIA>

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The strategy accords with the Council's existing carbon reduction ambitions with a substantial part of the strategy focused on reducing green house gas emissions.
- 11.2 The draft strategy was subject to a sustainability appraisal in July 2014 and found to be broadly compatible with sustainability.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The strategy is compatible with the emerging planning framework for Wirral which supports the transition to a low carbon economy and anticipates the need to adapt to climate change. In particular it lends support to the draft plan's objective for sustainable development and its policies on:
- Sustainable energy in the Wirral Waters development;
 - The development of priority sectors including offshore wind and the low carbon economy;
 - Sustainable transport;
 - Green infrastructure;
 - Flood risk and coastal protection;
 - Drainage; and
 - Design, heritage and amenity.
- 12.2 The strategy supports several measures to improve pedestrian, cycle and driver safety. It advances the benefits of developing the cycle route network; promoting cycle skills, maintenance and cycle security measures; introducing 20MPH zones in residential areas; discouraging pavement parking; and promoting smarter driving techniques.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 That the strategy is endorsed by the Council as the agreed framework to encourage and co-ordinate local climate-related action in Wirral.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Wirral Council has long-held and public commitments to climate action. The strategy presents a framework to help advance these commitments. The Wirral Climate Change Group was tasked with developing a replacement climate change strategy. This has now been produced. The group recommends that it be endorsed by the partner organisations involved.

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APPENDICES

Cool: Wirral Climate Change Strategy - 2014 – 2019

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

[Report of Cutting Climate Pollution Workshop](#)

[Report of Adapting to Climate Change Workshop](#)

[Report cutting climate pollution survey](#)

[Report adapting to climate change survey](#)

Summary of comments on the Wirral Climate Change Strategy Consultation Draft, response and modifications proposed

Rapid Sustainability Appraisal of the Wirral Climate Change Strategy – July 2014

Carbon Budget 2013/14 - Budget Cabinet, 12 February 2014

Transforming our Assets and Asset Management - Strategic Asset Management Plan 2014 – 2017

BRIEFING NOTES HISTORY

Briefing Note	Date
-	-

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny	January 2013
Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny	January 2012

Cool

**Wirral Climate Change Strategy
2014 – 2019**

July 2014

Foreword

There are a growing number of people and organisations in Wirral taking action on climate change. *Cool* provides a common framework to encourage and co-ordinate such action and so boost its impact. We already know many of the things we need to do to tackle climate change; but we need to do them more widely and fast. Many of these actions will make Wirral a better place: healthier, less polluted, more accessible and self-reliant. They will present some exciting *and sustainable* economic opportunities too.

Global climate change can be a daunting issue. When faced with a frightening prospect it's natural to feel overwhelmed, to question the problem or simply ignore it in the hope that it goes away. By acknowledging the issue however, we can start to put things right. Climate change matters to Wirral; ignoring it won't help. The climate is changing as global temperatures rise. This temperature rise is associated with 'greenhouse gas' pollution from our activities – principally the burning of fossil fuels for heat, power and transport. We need to cut this pollution to limit the damage. We also need to adapt to unavoidable changes from pollution already in our atmosphere. 'Business as usual' is no longer an option *but better business is*.

Whilst climate change is a global problem, it is in local communities – our workplaces, our schools, our families - where the impacts are felt. It is here on the 'front-line' where many solutions lie. We urge you to join us on Wirral's front-line: not just to read this strategy but to help put it into practice. If we all do that that really would be *Cool*.

Wirral Climate Change Group

1. Introduction

This strategy's purpose is to encourage and co-ordinate climate change-related action and investment by people and organisations with an interest in Wirral (Box 1.1). To do this, the strategy charts the broad direction of travel needed over the next five years. It highlights:

- The main areas where we need change;
- The local course of action to create it; and,
- The opportunities for communities, organisations, households and individuals to help bring this change about.

It's important to remember that you - and other people who read this strategy - need to take action to help make these changes happen. Bear this in mind as you read on.

Box 1.1 Introducing Wirral

Wirral is a coastal Borough in northwest England. It lies on the peninsula between the Mersey and Dee estuaries strategically located between the economic centres of Liverpool and Chester. Its position and infrastructure ensure Wirral presents good opportunities for development.

Wirral is one of the largest metropolitan areas in England at 60 square miles. It is home to around 320,000 people and over 8,000 businesses. Just over half of Wirral is open countryside. Its coastline is an attractive destination for tourists and is also of international importance for migratory birds. Older urbanised areas lie to the east adjacent to docks, port and maritime facilities along the banks of the Mersey.

Many, though by no means all, Wirral residents enjoy a good quality of life with good housing, schools and a high quality environment. However, there is a strong contrast between the older, highly urbanised areas of Birkenhead and Wallasey which contain some of the poorest communities in England, and the wealthier commuter settlements in the west which include one of the most affluent. There are some serious quality of life and health inequalities between these communities. Tackling these inequalities is a key concern for the local council and partner agencies.

The strategy has two major goals, to:

1. *Substantially cut climate pollution associated with Wirral* (Box 1.2); and,
2. *Adapt Wirral to unavoidable climate change* (Box 1.3).

Box 1.2: Cutting climate pollution

The burning of oil, gas and coal for heat, electricity and transport results in carbon dioxide (CO₂) pollution. Cutting this and related climate pollution (CO₂e) is believed to be a key part in stopping major climate disruption. The UK already has a target to cut CO₂e pollution by at least 37% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 (from 1990 levels). Early action has started to reduce this pollution, but we need to do more. In Wirral, to play our part in achieving the national targets we need to cut emissions to 1289kt (CO₂e) by 2020 and down to 449kt (CO₂e) by 2050.

Box 1.3: Adapting to unavoidable climate change

Even if we substantially cut pollution from burning fossil fuels some impact will be inevitable from pollution previously released into the atmosphere. Weather events already impact on people's health and livelihoods in Wirral. In the future, Wirral is likely to experience:

- Higher summer temperatures with prolonged dry spells and increased frequency of heat waves;
- Warmer, wetter winters;
- More storms and floods; and,
- A rise in sea levels.

Wirral organisations and households will need to adapt to the likelihood of these changes to avoid disruption

To substantially cut climate pollution the *aims* are to:

1. Reduce demand for energy and make Wirral more energy efficient;
2. Generate and source more of our local energy needs from 'renewable' sources;
3. Use more sustainable modes of transport, more fuel-efficient vehicles and less polluting means of getting around; and
4. Reduce the indirect negative impacts that our decisions have for climate pollution in Wirral and elsewhere.

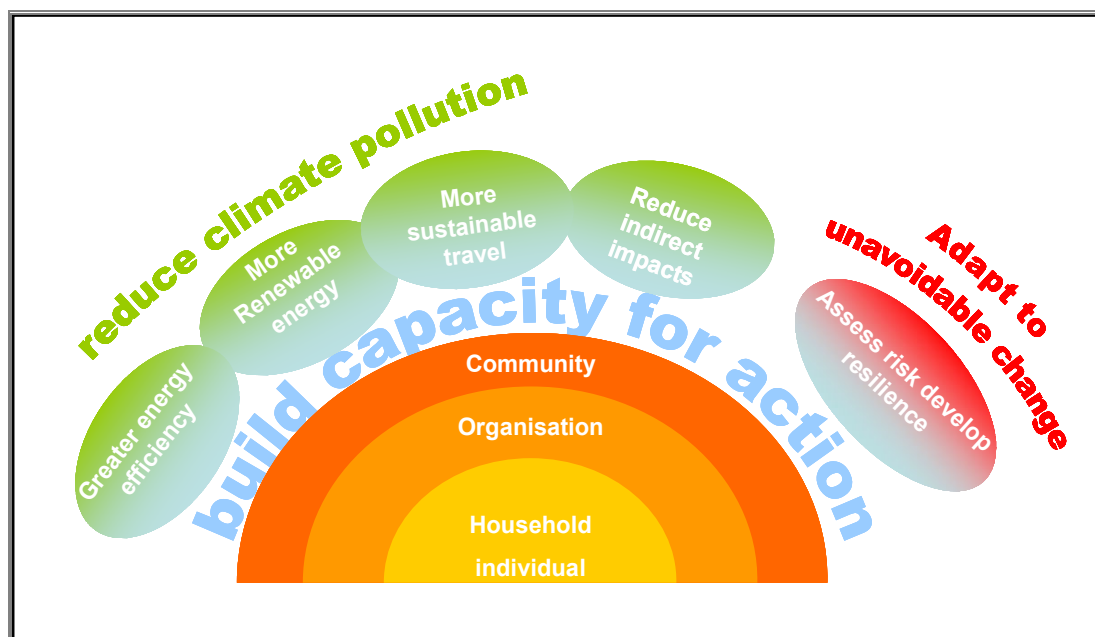
To adapt to unavoidable changes in Wirral's climate the *aim* is to:

5. Identify the risks and vulnerabilities from expected changes and bring forward plans and actions to limit negative impacts and improve resilience.

To support both goals the strategy also aims to:

6. Build capacity for action by strengthening local networks and partnerships and by developing wider awareness and education initiatives.

The key elements of the strategy are summarised below.



The remainder of this document introduces these six aims in turn. For each it indicates the:

- Direction of travel needed;
- Foundation for action and potential support; and,
- Objectives to be met.

A final part details the local mechanisms to co-ordinate action, report progress and develop the strategy going forward. Importantly this part also highlights some of the things you can do at home, at work and in the wider community. An appendix provides more detailed background information to illuminate the context for action for each aim. By taking action in support of these aims you'll be helping move towards our vision:

Our vision: In five years time...

Cosy Wirral: *Buildings are well insulated*

- Nearly every home with a cavity wall and roof space has been insulated properly.
- Older “solid walled” buildings and other properties that used to be considered “hard to treat” are being upgraded in volume. The techniques and skills needed to make them more energy efficient are widely available locally.
- Many new buildings far surpass minimum requirements and some set the highest standards.

Intelligent Wirral: *Less heat and power is wasted*

- Older, inefficient heating boilers are few and far between and decent controls mean people can keep buildings comfortable without wasting energy.
- Low energy lighting is the norm with LED lighting now commonplace.
- New combined heat and power systems are in use in several places.

Brighter Wirral: *Solar energy is a growing source of heat and power*

- We have a good understanding about the potential for local buildings to exploit solar energy and solar panels for both heat and power are commonly seen in Wirral.
- Local people and organisations have pooled resources to invest money co-operatively in local renewable energy installations.

Green for go Wirral: *Local transport is more civilised and less polluting*

- With good facilities for walking and cycling in place - and getting better - the ‘default’ choice for short journeys is no longer to reach for the car keys.
- Transport services and ticketing are well integrated with smart technologies widely used that make it easier to get around.
- Dedicated charging and alternative fuel filling points are in place to support the growing number of electric powered and alternative fuelled vehicles in the local fleet
- Drivers are aware of how to drive their vehicles in a fuel-efficient way.

Green shoots Wirral: *Investment in climate-related action is high*

- There is a strong and growing group of local businesses that produce products or deliver services that help in the transition to a low carbon, climate-ready world.
- The take-up of programmes designed to provide incentives for, or remove barriers to climate-related improvements, is high.
- Targeted help and support has reached households vulnerable to the cold or in “fuel poverty”. Most have now taken advantage of support available from utility companies and others to improve their homes.
- Wirral is a widely recognised centre for investment in the manufacture and servicing of off-shore wind turbines.
- The Wirral Waters development is beginning to take shape based on plans for a major district heating scheme with combined heat and power.
- Wirral is widely seen as a place that means business with respect to climate action

Switched on Wirral: *Awareness and action on climate change is widespread and growing*

- There is a flourishing network of people and organisations committed to take action on climate change.
- Education, awareness and behaviour change programmes are active and successful.
- A range of exemplar buildings exist to educate and inspire others in “low carbon” and “climate ready” building - both new build and retrofit.
- Awareness about the support available for carbon cutting improvements is high.
- **Waste reduction, re-use and recycling have reduced total waste significantly, a process which is continuing**
- Awareness about our vulnerability and the risks from climate change is growing.
- The links between climate change and health are well understood with action being taken to ensure a safe and healthy Wirral in the face of climate change
- Communities and organisations are taking actions that make them more resilient to current extreme weather events.
- ‘Future proof’ decisions are being taken that anticipate expected changes in the local climate later in the century.
- People routinely consider the knock-on effects of their decisions for climate pollution elsewhere.

- *Cool*, Wirral's climate change strategy developed back in 2013, made a difference. It has now been refreshed ready to steer the next phase of climate action.

2. Reducing demand for energy and making Wirral more energy efficient

With much of our energy coming from burning fossil fuels a key way to reduce our impact is to use less energy. Making Wirral more energy efficient means getting more from the energy that we use for heat and power. Doing this should not only limit climate disruption but also help keep bills down at a time when energy costs are rising.

Aim: Make Wirral more energy efficient

Direction of travel needed

- Improve the fabric of buildings to stop unnecessary heat loss
- Upgrade heating systems and controls and make better use of existing ones
- Adopt more energy efficient plant, processes, appliances and lighting
- Design/adapt buildings to make use of natural light, passive heating and cooling
- Introduce district heating networks and combined heat and power systems
- Raise awareness about energy use and promote 'good housekeeping'

Foundation for action/potential support

- The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)
- The Green Deal
- Cosy Loans scheme
- Cosy Homes programme
- Wirral Council Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 – Further Report 2013
- Higher standards to be phased in under the Building Regulations
- Liverpool City Region (LCR) Project Viridis partnership
- The Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC)
- Regulations to require energy certificates and minimum standards for rental property
- The roll out of smart meters by utility companies by 2019
- The LCR Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP)

Objectives to be met

- Contact the owners/occupiers of at least 95% of the remaining "easy to treat" homes to highlight the opportunities for improvement
 - Improve a minimum of 200 properties each year mainly in the east of Wirral using a range of funding streams including ECO investment
 - Identify and refer vulnerable and 'fuel poor' households to available support via social, health, housing and education services and community and faith groups
 - Lobby Government for support to improve take-up of energy efficiency measures including steps to make the Green Deal more attractive
 - Target high energy use households in the west of Wirral with information about the Green Deal and other energy efficiency opportunities
 - Create targeted locally relevant support to complement national energy efficiency opportunities taking into consideration existing barriers to local participation
 - Develop local capacity in the skills to design, build and refurbish buildings to the highest energy efficiency standards by promoting education and training opportunities and linking them with local building programmes
 - Bid to the LCR Local Enterprise Partnership or other sources of funding to work up the feasibility of potential heat networks in Wirral in support of the LCR SEAP
 - Promote investment in 'Wirral Waters' as an exemplar sustainable energy opportunity
 - Assemble the market evidence to identify areas where it is feasible to demand more than minimum energy efficiency standards through the planning system
 - Develop targeted energy efficiency campaigns for places of work, leisure, education and worship
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-
- Seek support for improving the energy efficiency of community buildings
 - Assemble a set of “good house-keeping” promotional resources to support energy awareness campaigns
 - Create a mechanism to promote voluntary peer review of energy efficiency efforts in different organisations and to encourage the sharing of resources to support the work of energy/eco champions
 - Create a directory of local suppliers of accredited energy efficient goods and services and promote these through an expo event
 - Upgrade outdoor lighting fixtures and controls including street lights
 - Create a Wirral-focussed energy efficiency campaign linked to the roll out of smart meters
 - Pilot a ‘smart grid’ in at least one Wirral community
-

Your actions: What could you do to help make Wirral more energy efficient?

3. Meeting more of our energy needs from renewable sources

Gradually weaning ourselves off fossil fuels, such as oil, gas and coal in favour of energy from more renewable sources should help promote greater self-reliance. It may also help limit our exposure to price volatility in world energy markets.

Aim: Generate and source more of our local energy needs from renewable sources

Direction of travel needed

- Exploit new renewable energy opportunities on and off-shore
 - Purchase more energy from renewable sources
-

Foundation for action/potential support

- The Feed-in-Tariff (FiT)
 - The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)
 - The LCR 'Project Viridis' partnership
 - Investments made in existing dock/maritime assets and skills to support off-shore wind energy
 - Collective energy supply 'switching' campaigns
 - The Green Deal
 - The Green Energy Training Centre on Wirral International Business Park.
 - LCR Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP)
 - The On-Farm Anaerobic Digestion Fund
-

Objectives to be met

- Create a renewable energy co-operative to pool local investment
 - Identify potential sites for solar energy investment
 - Establish a small-scale wind turbine trial
 - Identify the potential for the use of bio-mass heat and power in parks and countryside facilities
 - Promote the availability of support to establish the feasibility of on farm anaerobic digestion plant and explore other opportunities to produce biogas from wastes
 - Highlight the availability of incentives to support installation of micro-renewable energy including FiTs and RHI
 - Promote the use of biomass fuels in off-grid locations and raise awareness about the use of correct appliances in smoke control areas
 - Win further resources to develop Wirral as a centre of excellence for wind energy
 - Promote Wirral's value as a location for investment in emerging renewable energy technologies
 - Build local skills to assess, install and service renewable energy equipment by promoting education and training opportunities and linking them with local renewable energy investments
 - Create a directory of local suppliers and installers and promote them through an expo event
 - Highlight renewable energy tariffs in collective switching and related campaigns
-

Your actions: What could you do to help meet more of our local energy needs from renewable sources?

4 Making use of more sustainable means for transport

With better facilities, more integrated travel options, new technologies, novel fuels and new infrastructure to support walking and cycling it should be easier and cleaner to get around Wirral.

Aim: Use more sustainable modes of transport, more fuel efficient vehicles and less polluting means of getting around

Direction of travel needed

- Raise awareness of the advantages of sustainable travel for people and goods
- Safer and more convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians
- More secure cycle parking at public transport interchanges, workplaces, education establishments, retail and leisure facilities
- Increase the proportion of low-emission, fuel-efficient vehicles within the wider 'fleet' including electric and alternatively fuelled models
- Provide more electric vehicle charging points and fuelling points for 'alternative' fuelled vehicles to cater for the growing number of these vehicles
- Ensure there are regular public transport services and straightforward connections between them *and other modes of transport*
- Improve information about transport options and connections between them
- Create tickets which are convenient and affordable *for entire journeys*
- Make railway stations, bus stations and shelters easier to use, more comfortable and safer.
- Raise awareness of smarter fuel-efficient driving

Foundation for action/potential support

- The third Merseyside Local Transport Plan (LTP3)
- The Merseyside Transport Partnership
- Wirral Core Strategy Local Plan
- Wirral Council's Travel Solutions Team
- Wirral Council's Business Travel Support Team
- Merseyside Travelwise
- The planned introduction of smart card ticketing in Merseyside
- Bus Quality Partnerships
- Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV)
- The emerging LCR e-mobility strategy
- The development of an LCR active transport strategy
- The 'Bike and Go' railway station cycle hire initiative
- The Safer Routes to School programme

Objectives to be met

- Establish a Wirral cycle route network map and develop the network
 - Promote cycle skills training, cycle maintenance and cycle security measures
 - New 20 MPH zones in residential areas to improve pedestrian and cycle safety
 - Run an awareness campaign to discourage pavement parking and take enforcement action where necessary to improve the pedestrian environment
 - Ensure that the majority of households are aware of journey planning tools
 - Develop travel plans at key employment sites, leisure facilities and retail centres
 - Complete the introduction of secure cycle parking at all Wirral railway stations
 - Introduce local bus quality partnerships to extend the co-ordination of timetables and ticketing between operators
 - Promote the development and uptake of flexible ticketing options and ensure the introduction of new ticket systems include consideration of the opportunities for new flexible ticket products.
 - Establish a network of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points with at least one rapid charger to serve the strategic road network
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- Promote the availability of 'alternative' fuels at filling stations through online maps
 - Create a directory of local suppliers of alternative fuelled vehicles and vehicle converters and promote these through an expo event
 - Promote smarter driving tips and techniques
 - Promote car sharing for journeys when applicable
-

Your actions: What could you do to make use of more sustainable means of transport?

5 Reducing 'indirect' climate pollution

Decisions about where we live and work, what we buy and eat and what we throw away can all have indirect implications for climate pollution. By thinking about these wider implications we can often make better decisions that help cut pollution.

Aim: Reducing the indirect negative impacts that our decisions have for climate pollution in Wirral and elsewhere

Direction of travel needed

- Spread environmentally-informed procurement practice
 - Shorten supply chains to reduce unnecessary travel and promote the procurement of local goods and services
 - Reduce the energy intensity of the food we eat by promoting local and seasonal food where this makes sense and by reducing unnecessary meat consumption
 - Reduce waste, promote re-use and maximise recycling of materials that would otherwise be wasted
 - Consider the sustainability implications of strategic decisions
 - Promote land use patterns and technologies that reduce the need for motorised travel, support local food production and consumption, and limit waste to landfill
-

Foundation for action/potential support

- Good practice guides to sustainable procurement
 - The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012
 - Invest Wirral and its business networking services
 - Wirral's growing local food movement
 - The development of the local food programme
 - 'Resources Merseyside' – the Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy
 - The Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority's community project funding
 - Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton 2013
 - ReciproCity Wirral
 - Wirral's Core Strategy Local Plan
-

Objectives to be met

- Host a green procurement fair to promote the greening of local supply chains and encourage the spread of environmentally sensitive procurement practice
 - Promote local inter-trading to shorten supply chains through Invest Wirral and local trade associations
 - Reduce the need to travel through online working or online meetings
 - Create a recognisable brand to aid the development of Wirral's local food movement and promote the consumption of local and seasonal produce
 - Develop community cultivation on suitable vacant or underutilised land through: asset transfer to create allotments, land sharing and cultivation agreements
 - Create a directory of local food producers and promote these through an expo event
 - Ensure climate change issues are reflected in Wirral's local food programme
 - Highlight the benefits of reducing consumption of meat
 - Bring forward new initiatives - and strengthen existing ones - to reduce waste and encourage the re-use of materials
 - Encourage the use of sustainability appraisal to ensure climate sensitive decision making and utilise the skills of stakeholders in the Wirral Climate Change Group
 - Ensure the policies of Wirral's Core Strategy Local Plan (and related supporting documents) that help minimise climate pollution are implemented
-

Your actions: What could you do to help reduce 'indirect' climate pollution?

6 Adapting to unavoidable changes in Wirral's climate

Some climate impacts are unavoidable due to pollution already in the atmosphere. Wirral already experiences disruptive weather events. These are predicted to become more commonplace. By preparing for change we can ensure Wirral remains open for business whatever the weather.

Aim: Identify risks and vulnerabilities from expected changes and bring forward plans and actions to limit negative impacts and improve resilience

Direction of travel needed

- Raise awareness of the likely changes in the local climate– higher summer temperatures with prolonged dry spells and increased frequency of heat waves; warmer, wetter winters; and more storms and floods exacerbated by a rise in sea levels - and their impacts
- Promote the advantages of preparing for change and the tools to help
- Develop an understanding of the main risks, vulnerabilities and uncertainties and manage them in a balanced way
- Upgrade critical physical infrastructure to cope with expected changes
- Create awareness about the benefits of natural 'green and blue infrastructure' to limit negative impacts and take steps to harness these benefits
- Promote behaviour change to adapt to likely changes
- Build capacity in organisations to enable continuity of business and services
- Develop support networks in communities to improve responses to emergency situations and support vulnerable groups

Foundation for action/potential support

- The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) adaptation tools
- The Environment Agency's 'Climate Ready' programme
- CLASP – the climate change local authority support programme
- Wirral Core Strategy Local Plan
- Wirral Coastal Strategy
- The Wirral Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to identify local health needs
- Green Infrastructure to Combat Climate Change: A Framework for Action in Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, and Merseyside
- The Liverpool City Region Green Infrastructure Framework
- Wirral's planned green infrastructure strategy
- The Wirral Green Streets project
- Wirral's emerging Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- Wirral parks and countryside 'friends of' groups
- Local emergency planning and resilience programmes
- The Wirral Emergency Volunteers scheme
- Experiences gained setting up local flood groups

Objectives to be met

- Develop a co-ordinated adaptation response through Wirral's climate partnership
 - Engage key stakeholders in a risk assessment process using UKCIP's adaptation wizard to identify risks, vulnerabilities and priority actions
 - Produce community-specific adaptation information
 - Promote awareness of the links between climate change and health so that local health planning takes climate issues into account
 - Promote the use of porous materials in gardens, driveways and landscaping schemes and the use of green roofs and walls in buildings to limit run-off, provide shade and ameliorate temperatures
 - Promote water saving practices and the use of rainwater harvesting systems
 - Raise awareness of the role of the natural environment in combating adverse impacts in order to support investment in Wirral's green infrastructure and green
-

and open spaces strategies

- Seek funding to extend Wirral Green Streets-type projects in the east of Wirral
- Run a campaign to promote engagement with the Environment Agency's 'Climate Ready' programme
- Develop community capacity to respond to weather events
- Create a directory of local firms that provide goods and services that help with adapting to climate change and promote them at an expo event

Your actions: What could you do to adapt to unavoidable changes in Wirral's climate?

7 Building capacity for action

To help build capacity for action there is a need to strengthen local partnerships, build networks and expand awareness and education initiatives. With more people on board and better co-ordination we can make a bigger impact.

Aim: Building capacity for action by strengthening local networks and partnerships and by developing wider awareness and education initiatives

Direction of travel needed

- A strong independent voice to champion action and win investment to support it
 - Involve stakeholders from all sectors
 - Raise awareness about how people and organisations can play their part
 - Showcase real-world examples of best practice to inspire wider action
 - Foster connections between groups active in different places – within and beyond Wirral
 - Create opportunities for people to connect with one another to share information and develop new projects
 - Develop local climate-related educational resources
 - Ensure climate education is part of life-long learning and vocational training
-

Foundation for action/potential support

- Wirral Climate Change Group
 - CRed Wirral carbon reduction pledge campaign
 - Super-homes network and Green Open Homes network
 - Eco Schools programme
 - Project Dirt social network
 - Low Carbon Communities Network and Transition Towns Network
 - Wirral Environment Network
 - Faiths for Change
 - Community Action Wirral
 - The Green Energy Training Centre on Wirral International Business Park
-

Objectives to be met

- Create an independent Cool Wirral Partnership from the Wirral Climate Change Group
 - Develop a Cool Wirral campaign to promote the desirability of climate actions and gather pledges in support of the strategy from individuals and from organisations in the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors
 - Develop a network in support of Cool (building on existing networks) and provide opportunities for interaction between participants through an e-bulletin, social media and public events
 - Encourage the formation of low carbon communities/transition towns-type groups to promote climate action at community level with at least one group in each constituency committee area
 - Develop a network of exemplar eco buildings including examples of different building types with at least one Superhome in each constituency committee area and promote 'open house'-type events
 - Expand the number of good practice case studies on-line and encourage connections between organisations in different parts of the borough to spread good practice and avoid 'reinventing the wheel'
 - Develop climate change-related resources to support local 'eco' work in schools
 - Develop leading schools and community buildings as hubs for wider community learning on climate change
 - Develop a programme of climate-related life-long learning opportunities
 - Ensure that vocational training is in place to ensure the skills needed for the transition to a low carbon economy can be found locally
-

Your action: What could you do to help build capacity for action?

8 Moving forward and staying on track

To ensure progress is made with the strategy across its six aims:

- The Cool Wirral Partnership will be the lead body to champion implementation, win investment, co-ordinate action, and monitor progress;
- An action plan will be put together and maintained on a rolling basis. This will include details of actions identified by partners in Cool Wirral and pledged action from the wider community;
- Leaders will be identified to encourage action and report progress, or barriers to it, via the Cool Wirral Partnership;
- Measures of success will be identified for each area of action and an annual 'score card' to report progress will be published online and shared with key partners;
- Relationships will be developed with the new constituency committees being developed by Wirral Council and LCR Local Enterprise Partnership
- Barriers to progress will be reported to the Public Services Board (the executive of Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership) where relevant
- The creation of a replacement strategy will begin in four years time to ensure a seamless transition to a new framework;
- You are asked to identify and pledge actions in support – Box 8.1 'Putting Cool into practice' may help you; and
- You are asked to implement your pledged actions and keep in touch via the Cool Wirral network.

Box 8.1: Putting Cool into practice

Reduce demand for energy. More energy efficient

As an individual/household

- Check home is insulated to modern standards – add top-up loft insulation, insulate cavities and draught-strip around windows, doors and letter boxes if needed
- Replace halogen and tungsten bulbs with lower energy CFLs and LEDs where possible
- If you have an older boiler look into replacing it with a more efficient model
- When appliances need replacing choose the most energy efficient models
- Ring the local energy efficiency advice line – 0800 043 0151- to get the latest information and details about support that may be available to help you.
- Check heating controls – learn how to use existing controls and/or upgrade them to give you more control over comfort
- Learn to use the new energy monitor when your energy provider installs a smart meter in your property

In your community

- Refer your relatives, neighbours and friends to available support via the local energy efficiency advice line - 0800 043 0151
- Make sure your school, faith group or club is actively promoting energy efficiency and takes part in planned awareness campaigns

At work

- Get your organisation to participate in energy efficiency programmes and campaigns
- Volunteer to be an energy/eco champion and participate in local initiatives to share best practice
- If your company provides energy efficiency-related goods and services make sure they are featured in the planned local directory and expo event/s

- If you work in the building sector make sure you can take advantage of new opportunities relating to energy efficiency by participating in relevant accredited training programmes for the Green Deal

More renewable energy

As an individual/household

- Switch to a renewable energy tariff
- Consider becoming part of the proposed renewable energy co-operative
- Find out whether you have a suitable site to install renewable energy – such as solar power, solar heating, wind, or biomass
- If you do, find out whether the feed-in tariff or renewable heat incentive could help you

In your community

- Get your school, club or faith group to switch to a renewable energy tariff.
- Find out whether your school, faith group or club has a suitable site for a renewable energy installation
- If they have, look into possible ways to support this, including the proposed renewable energy co-operative

At work

- Get your employer to switch to a renewable energy tariff
- Find out whether your workplace has a suitable site for a renewable energy installation
- If it does, look into possible ways to support this, including the proposed renewable energy co-operative
- If your company provides renewable energy-related goods and services make sure they feature in the planned local directory and expo event/s
- Explore whether your company's goods and services might contribute to establishing Wirral as a centre of excellence in off-shore wind power
- If you work in the building sector, make sure you can take advantage of new opportunities relating to renewable energy by participating in relevant accredited training programmes such as MCS and Green Deal

More sustainable transport

As an individual/household

- Consider the options to walk and cycle more – familiarise yourself with available routes and cycle parking
- If you haven't used your cycle for a while, get it checked out and book yourself onto some refresher training or a suitable guided bike ride
- If you are new to cycling book yourself onto a cycle training course
- Familiarise yourself with the public transport services and journey planning tools available to you
- Get a Walrus Smart Card when available to make it easier to use public transport
- If you drive, learn a smarter energy efficient driving style
- If you are driving and others are travelling to the same destination offer them a lift
- Consider getting your petrol vehicle converted to run on LPG
- If replacing your vehicle consider the switch to electric, or choose a low carbon vehicle that will cost you less in road tax

In your community

- Make sure your school, faith group or club has a sustainable travel plan in place – is information about local public transport on hand? Are there secure places to leave a cycle?

- Find out whether there are any local community facilities where publicly accessible electric charging points could be introduced
- Apply for OLEV funding to support the implementation of electric charging facilities

At work

- Make sure your workplace has a travel plan in place – if it doesn't contact Merseyside Travelwise or Wirral's Smarter Choices team
- Make sure your workplace provides information about access by public transport, cycling and walking – not just access by cars
- Make sure your workplace has adequate secure cycle parking in place
- If your workplace has a fleet of vehicles, explore the opportunities to use electric or alternative fuelled vehicles as part of the fleet
- Promote smarter driving tips generally and promote training for those who drive in the course of their work
- If your workplace supplies or converts alternative fuelled or electric vehicles in Wirral make sure that it is featured in the planned local directory and expo event/s
- Does your workplace have a suitable site for electric vehicle charging points?

Less indirect climate pollution

As an individual/household

- Consider the overall cost of the goods and services you buy not just the initial purchase price
- Favour energy efficient, environmentally sensitive products
- Choose local goods and services
- Choose local, seasonal and less energy intensive produce – support local farmers markets and shops
- Grow some of your own food or take part in a local food project
- Consider eating less meat as part of a balanced diet
- Avoid products with excessive packaging
- Support local waste reduction and reuse campaigns and projects such as Love Food Hate Waste, Recipro City and Community Repaint
- Recycle the waste you can't avoid or re-use

In your community

- Make sure your school, faith group or club has a sustainable procurement policy favouring the purchase of local and environmentally sensitive supplies
- Look into your school, faith group or club's approach to waste. Make sure it has a waste minimisation policy and actively seeks to reduce waste, promote re-use and maximise recycling. Make sure it considers using local projects Recipro City and Community Re-paint as a source of supplies
- Explore the possibility of bidding for funding from the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority to support a community waste minimisation project
- Look into whether your school, faith group or club has space for food growing, if so, link-up with a local food project, or start one

At work

- Make sure your workplace has a sustainable procurement policy favouring the purchase of local and environmentally sensitive supplies
- Ensure your workplace participates in Invest Wirral's business networks and makes links with local companies in an effort to shorten supply chains
- Look at your workplace's approach to waste. Make sure you have a waste minimisation policy and actively seek to reduce waste, promote re-use and maximise recycling

- If your work is in the construction sector, make sure that surplus materials are kept in use by using local services such as those provided by Recipro
- Look into whether your work site has space for food growing and, if so, explore the possibility of linking with a local food project
- If your workplace produces food locally make sure it signs up to Wirral's planned local food brand, is in the local directory and takes part in the expo event/s

Better adapted to unavoidable changes

As an individual/household

- Find out if your home is at risk from flood and if it is, take precautionary action to make it more resilient. You can view flood risk maps for your locality via: www.environment-agency.gov.uk
- Re-model your garden and driveway to increase vegetation and replace impervious materials with porous surfaces
- Be aware of your water use and adopt good housekeeping practices to save water
- Fit water saving devices in your home and use a water butt to water your garden

In your community

- If your home is in an area at risk from flooding, join or help set up a local flood group
- Consider joining the Wirral Emergency Volunteers
- Join/help set up a local park 'friends of' or a practical conservation group
- Look into ways your school, faith group, or club could increase natural vegetation cover in its grounds and make hard surfaces more permeable
- Make sure your school, faith group or club promotes water saving awareness and adopts water-saving practices

At work

- Find out if your business is in an area at risk from flood, and if it is, take precautionary action to make it more resilient
- Take part in the Climate Ready programme
- Use the UKCIP Business Area Climate Assessment Tool
- If your workplace offers goods or services that help adapt to climate change, e.g. water saving devices, make sure it is featured in the proposed directory and expo event
- Look into ways your workplace could increase natural vegetation cover in its grounds and make hard surfaces more permeable
- Make sure your workplace promotes water saving awareness and adopts water saving practices

More capacity for action

As an individual/household

- Take part in the Cool Wirral network and make pledges in support of the strategy
- Join the Cool Wirral project on the Project Dirt website
- Consider retrofitting your home to save at least 60% of the carbon emissions to make it part of the SuperHomes network to inspire others
- If you have already made eco improvements to your home, volunteer it to be part of a Green Open Homes event

In your community

- Join, or help set up, a local low carbon community or transition-type group.
- Form links with similar low carbon or transition groups in other parts of Wirral

- and elsewhere and share good practice
- Get your group to join the Wirral Environment Network
 - Get your group to join Cool Wirral project on the Project Dirt website
 - Make sure your school is on board with the eco schools programme and uses the new local climate-related education materials when available
 - Encourage your school to be a hub for wider community learning on climate change
 - Make sure your faith group connects with local initiatives such as Faiths4Change
 - Make sure your school, faith group or club make pledges in support of Cool Wirral, is part of the network, supports the Cool Wirral campaign and participates in planned events
 - Could your group's premises become an exemplar eco building to inspire others?
 - Could you group's premises be a hub for wider community learning on climate change?

At work

- Make sure your workplace joins the Cool Wirral network and Cool Wirral Project on the Project Dirt website
- Make sure your workplace makes pledges in support of Cool Wirral, is part of the network, supports the Cool Wirral campaign and participates in planned events
- Could your premises be an exemplar eco-building to inspire others?

Appendix: Background information and context for action

Part 2: Reducing demand for energy and making Wirral more energy efficient

The so called 'energy hierarchy' (Box 2.1) gives priority to using less energy. The cuts in pollution needed from reduced demand and improvements in energy efficiency are substantial but achievable. The Government have estimated that per capita demand for energy will need to reduce by between around a third and a half (from 2007 levels) in order to meet national carbon reduction targets¹. We'll all need to act to make these improvements.

Wirral's 140,000 households account for a large part of local energy consumption. The domestic sector used around 45% of the energy consumed locally in 2010². In the same year, the commercial and industrial sector accounted for around 30% of consumption and transport around a quarter (transport is discussed further in Part 4). What we do at home clearly matters.

Box 2.1: The energy hierarchy

1. Find ways to use less energy
2. What we do use, use it more efficiently
3. Get this energy from renewable sources
4. If we still need energy from non renewable resources get it in less polluting ways

Energy consumption across Wirral is not even. Residential areas with higher energy consumption tend to correspond with more affluent areas to the west and south. Areas with lower consumption tend to mirror those with lower income to the east. Many of the Borough's estimated 65,000 difficult-to-insulate solid walled properties, however, are found in the east³ where fuel poverty remains a problem.

Wirral has seen considerable progress with home energy efficiency improvements since the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995. We will need to maintain momentum, however, if we are to achieve climate targets. There has been substantial investment in social housing – which accounts for 15% of local housing stock – as providers have sought to meet the 'decent homes' standard. The latest data indicates social housing is currently the most energy efficient tenure in the borough - rated a 'C' on average⁴. Owner occupied and private rented accommodation - rated 'D' on average⁵ - have been targeted more recently through the Warmer Wirral programme (Box 2.2). This has helped narrow the 'gap' with social housing as previous to this private properties were rated 'E' on average⁶. There remain around 26,000 properties with un-insulated cavities and around 7,000 with less than

Box 2.2: Warmer Wirral Insulation

Wirral's free insulation programme ran between October 2010 and January 2013. During this time it supported the installation of over 24,000 insulation measures in around 20,000 Wirral homes. It was a three-way partnership between Wirral Council, local charity Energy Projects Plus and British Gas, who contributed around £5 million towards the cost of the insulation. The scheme's legacy includes around 350,000 tonnes of CO₂ saved over the lifetime of the insulation.

¹ DECC (2012) The Energy Efficiency Strategy: The Energy Efficiency Opportunity in the UK

² DECC - Sub-national total final energy consumption 2010

³ Wirral Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2008

⁴ Wirral Area Mapping Project 2013

⁵ Wirral Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2013

⁶ Wirral Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2008

100mm of loft insulation⁷. Amongst private housing stock it is estimated that 17,900 have boilers over 15 years old. This presents a good opportunity for energy efficiency improvement.

Nationally, mechanisms to support the installation of household energy efficiency measures have changed recently. The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is the latest obligation on major energy companies to fund improvements in home energy efficiency (Box 2.3). Its introduction should

Box 2.3: The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) consists of three different strands: (i) support for heating and insulation improvements for low-income and vulnerable households; (ii) support to insulate properties with solid-walls or 'hard-to-treat' cavities; and, (iii) support for insulation measures for people living in the UK's most deprived areas.

bring forward more finance for harder to treat properties. The Green Deal is a new mechanism to enable loan finance for installation of energy efficiency measures at no up-front cost (Box.2.4). There has

been some initial criticism about the attractiveness of Green Deal finance and it remains to be seen if the initiative will deliver the improvements needed.

In Wirral there remain some locally specific support programmes. These include the Cosy Loans scheme which helps with the installation of energy efficiency measures

Box 2.4: The Green Deal is a framework created by the Government designed to help encourage the uptake of energy efficiency measures in buildings. It enables improvements to be made without up front costs through a loan mechanism. Costs are recouped through charges added to a property's electricity bill paid back over time. The amount added to bills is offset by the savings from the improvements so that bills should not rise as a result. Unlike a conventional loan, finance is linked with the property's electricity meter, not directly to a person. Thus when the building's occupants change, the charge is picked up by the new bill payer who will benefit from the improvements.

To get Green Deal finance properties must first be assessed by an independent advisor. The occupier can then choose a Green Deal provider through which the identified improvements are made.

for around 70 households per year and the Cosy Homes heating upgrade programme which assists householders on benefits. Project Viridis is a partnership of local authorities and housing associations working together to pursue sustainable energy opportunities at the 'city region' level.

Some additional energy demand is anticipated through new residential development. If new-build targets are met there will be extra demand for up to 58,536 MWh of energy by 2025⁸. It is thus vital to ensure that new buildings are as energy efficient as possible. The Wirral Waters development in Birkenhead will be a major focus for such new build. It has already been identified⁹ as a key opportunity for sustainable energy infrastructure through the creation of district heating system. The tightening of energy efficiency standards under Part L of the Building Regulations will see the introduction of zero carbon standards in new residential buildings by 2016 and new non-domestic buildings by 2019. It is already a legal requirement that rented property should have an energy performance certificate. By 2018 it will become unlawful to rent out a residential or business premise that does not reach a minimum

⁷ Wirral Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2013

⁸ The Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study in 2009

⁹ Liverpool City Region Sustainable Energy Action Plan, adopted by the LCR Local Enterprise Partnership

energy efficiency standard. There needs to be investment if some local buildings are to meet the grade.

Information about energy efficiency in the industrial and commercial sector is less readily available than in the residential sector. There are currently no specific local business support programmes to assist with energy efficiency although a variety of regional and national programmes offer support and advice. Several local firms already offer products and services related to energy efficiency. The push to make Wirral more energy efficient should present some local economic opportunities. The poor state of energy efficiency in many community buildings was flagged up through the strategy consultation exercise. Wirral Council previously supported improvements in such buildings through a community energy efficiency grant programme. Unfortunately with funding constraints this is now closed to further applications.

A number of local organisations are actively trying to manage energy; some are required to do so by law¹⁰. Here the human factor remains a critical element with awareness campaigns and networks of workplace champions driving home the 'good housekeeping' message.

Part 3: Meeting more of our energy needs from renewable sources

'Renewable' energy comes from sources that can be used time and again (wind, sun, water, wave, tide) or replenished relatively quickly (wood fuels, bio-mass). The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) signalled the UK's intention to secure 15% of all its energy (30% of electricity, 12% of heat and 10% of transport) from renewables by 2020. We'll need to see a lot more energy generated from renewable sources to achieve this.

Wirral has good wind resources but local constraints currently limit prospects for large on-shore wind farms; there remains scope for smaller wind developments and micro-wind installations. Off-shore there is a growing renewable energy capacity with the development of the Burbo Bank Offshore Wind Farm. This currently comprises 25 wind turbines situated on the Burbo Flats in Liverpool Bay around 4.5 miles from Wirral. An application is currently lodged for the Burbo Bank wind farm extension. Wirral's existing dock and maritime industrial assets make it an obvious location for supporting the development of off-shore wind farms. There has already been public and private sector investment to make Wirral a centre of excellence in this growing industry.

Smaller scale renewably generated electricity has been given a boost since the introduction of the Feed-in-Tariff (FiT) - an incentive payment for electricity generated from renewable means. In Wirral the majority of installations supported through the FiT have been solar photovoltaic (PV) on residential properties. In 2010/11 there were 91 FiT supported domestic PV installations; by September 2013 this had grown to 1185¹¹. Thus far there have only been two FiT supported wind installations and one micro Combined Heat & Power (CHP) installation. The extension of the Renewable Heat Incentive - an incentive payment for heat created from renewable

¹⁰ The Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (often referred to as simply 'the CRC') is a mandatory scheme to cut emissions in large public and private sector organisations including supermarkets, water companies, banks, local authorities and all central government departments

¹¹ Sub-national Feed-in Tariff Statistics, DECC, October 2013

means – to include residential installations by spring 2014 will likely provide a boost for solar thermal and biomass installations. A centre to train installers to fit microgeneration equipment was established on the Wirral International Business Park in 2010 with investment from the Skills Funding Agency.

The use of wood fuels in a gasification boiler has been pioneered at Royden Park. Bio-fuel boilers using pellets are also found in Floral Pavilion, New Brighton and several local schools. Much of Wirral is designated a smoke control area where exempt appliances are needed if wood fuels are to be burned for heat and power. The Government have recently introduced The On-Farm Anaerobic Digestion Fund administered by WRAP to support the production of bio-gas and fertilisers from farm wastes.

Part 4: Making use of more sustainable means for transport

Transport presently accounts for around a quarter of local carbon pollution with most motor vehicles running on fossil fuels, chiefly petrol and diesel. Nationally the fuel efficiency of the vehicle 'fleet' is improving as newer efficient models replace older ones. Incentives such as cheaper road tax for low carbon vehicles are designed to encourage this shift. Variations in fuel taxes are also in place to encourage the adoption of 'alternative' lower polluting fuels. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is probably the most commonly available 'alternative' fuel in Wirral with pumps at five local filling stations. Electric vehicles presently play a minimal role nationally and locally although major investments by government and manufacturers aim to change this. The Government's Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) currently offers plug-in car and van grants to reduce the purchase price of electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. Several of the main car manufacturers have now developed electric and hybrid-electric vehicles and many of these are available via local dealerships. Thirty two diesel-electric hybrid buses have recently been introduced on cross river bus services between Wirral and Liverpool. OLEV also provides financial support towards the costs of installing electric vehicle charging points. A recent successful bid to OLEV will see the installation of charging points around the Liverpool City Region and neighbouring Cheshire West and Chester with 128 charging connections planned. It should be noted that the potential benefit of electric vehicles to climate change is tied to the 'carbon intensity' of the electricity used to charge them. We need to limit the amount of fossil fuels burned to produce the electricity needed to charge such vehicles.

The benefit of improving vehicle emission standards will be undermined if there is continued growth in vehicle use and traffic. Cars are presently the main mode of transport in Wirral¹² although access to them is actually relatively low and unequal.¹³ Public transport remains a vital means for many people to access work, services and leisure opportunities. There remains significant opportunity for a shift in travel towards active non-polluting means such as walking and cycling. Currently many short trips which could be walked or cycled are not.¹⁴

¹²

Travel in Merseyside 2012 shows that private vehicles accounted for 55% of the morning peak hour traffic in Birkenhead

¹³ More than a third of households in Merseyside are without access to a car compared with around a quarter of households in the North West and Britain as a whole (DfT National Travel Survey, 2008/09). In some parts of Merseyside this rises to well over a half.

¹⁴ Around a quarter of all trips in Merseyside are less than a kilometre long and over two-thirds are less than five kilometres.

Wirral has a wide-ranging network of bus and rail services including the Merseyrail Wirral Line that links West Kirby, New Brighton and Chester to Liverpool. That said fragmentation between the services of different operators - including connections between rail and bus and others modes of transport - can make door-to-door journeys more difficult than they could otherwise be. To counter fragmentation Wirral has recently benefited from two Bus Quality Partnerships - routes 1/2 between Liverpool and Chester and routes 471/472 between Liverpool and Heswall. Here the timetables of different operators are now co-ordinated and tickets made interchangeable between them. Merseyrail has recently introduced cycle hire facilities at several of its stations, including West Kirby and New Brighton, as part of the new national 'Bike and Go' initiative to enable onward travel by cycle. In addition, local park and ride facilities for cars have recently been improved with extra provision at Birkenhead North and Bidston rail stations. A project to develop secure cycle parking at Merseyrail stations is nearing completion. All Wirral Line railway stations currently have 'Secure Stations Scheme' accreditation. The scheme managed by the Department for Transport and British Transport Police sets railway station design and management safety standards for crime reduction. Unfortunately the plan to introduce a 'smart-card'-based ticketing system in Merseyside under the name of the Walrus Card has been delayed. Electronic ticketing of this nature may help create more flexible ticketing opportunities in the future.

Merseyside's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) sets out the transport strategy for Merseyside and as such provides the main context for investment in sustainable travel. Goal 2 in LTP3 specifically aims to address climate change. The goal is to "provide and promote a clean, low emission transport system which is resilient to changes in climate and oil availability". Several sub-regional strategies are in development to shape action in more specific areas including the LCR e-mobility strategy and LCR active transport strategy. Wirral Council sets an annual programme of works in support of LTP3 to improve conditions for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. The Wirral Core Strategy Local Plan contains policies which support the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure and development patterns which reduce the need to travel. Part 5 says more on making decisions that help reduce the need to travel.

Beyond improvements in the physical environment to favour sustainable travel, Travelwise is Merseyside's travel awareness campaign. It promotes the benefits of walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing and supports the development of school and workplace travel plans. Wirral Council have a 'Travel Solutions' team to provide bespoke advice and information on travel from and within the east of Wirral. This work is funded following a successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) application which seeks to help the public access employment destinations from a number of disadvantaged areas across Merseyside. Help is available for employers to offer sustainable transport options for current and prospective members of staff. It is also available to support prospective and current employees who are restricted in their ability to access employment through transport barriers. Motor traffic itself is often a deterrent to walking and cycling. Road safety campaigns exist to promote responsible driving (and awareness of legal requirements in this regard) including awareness of more vulnerable road users. Several residential areas now benefit from 20 mph speed limits. Wirral Council also supports a safer routes to school programme.

Part 5: Reducing 'indirect' pollution

Purchasing decisions have many impacts including those on climate pollution. For example a conventional light bulb may be cheaper to buy but uses more energy and

needs replacing sooner than a low energy equivalent. Wasted energy and materials mean more pollution and cost. To limit indirect impacts, several local organisations have developed environmentally sensitive procurement policies and practices. For example, Wirral Council was a partner in *dCarbonNW* in which suppliers were encouraged to assess and reduce their carbon footprint.

Shortening supply chains can limit climate pollution by reducing unnecessary transportation. Locally, Invest Wirral promotes inter-trading between businesses through its networks. Competition regulations make it difficult for public sector organisations to favour local businesses, although the new Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 may provide some scope to secure local benefits.

The way our food is produced can be particularly energy intensive, leading many to question its long term sustainability. Wirral has seen the recent development of a 'local food' movement with a variety of initiatives aimed at encouraging and celebrating local and seasonal food. Regular farmers markets now operate in New Ferry and West Kirby. Growing demand for allotments has seen new sites brought into use - although Wirral still has below average allotment provision¹⁵. Several projects inspired by the Incredible Edible Todmorden have been developed. These make use of publicly accessible land to grow fruit, salads and vegetables which can be freely harvested.

Whilst local and seasonal food has some potential to help reduce climate impacts, it should not obscure the need to consider the overall energy intensity of food production. Here the importance of shifting food culture away from diets based on an excessive consumption of red meat needs greater recognition. Livestock production for meat can be particularly energy intensive with emissions associated with the production and processing of feeds, digestion by cows and the decomposition of manure. There have been some local efforts to promote the 'Meat Free Monday' message and encourage people to pledge to eat less meat. The development of a local food programme presents an opportunity to introduce climate-related issues.

Waste presents a potentially double blow for climate change. Not only are raw materials – and the associated energy to extract them – wasted, but land-filled materials can break down to release methane a potent greenhouse gas. There has been a sea-change in the way that waste is managed to avoid the rising costs of landfill which is now taxed and regulated to reduce its prevalence. Locally, the introduction of new domestic recycling collection services alongside public information campaigns have led to a rapid rise in recycling rates. Efforts to reduce waste have been less high profile but are of rising importance. The future direction for waste management is set out in *Resources Merseyside* - the Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside. This promotes action at all steps of the waste hierarchy. It gives greater priority to avoiding waste and to promoting re-use of material. Wirral Council is a part of the Love Food Hate Waste campaign to limit food waste. There have also been efforts to promote re-use with the 'swap days' hosted by Wirral Environment Network. The Community Repaint scheme which encourages the re-use of surplus paint has recently moved to the ReciproCity facility in Wallasey. ReciproCity encourages the re-use of surplus building materials. The Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority has a community project fund to support local waste minimisation projects.

¹⁵ Wirral Council Allotment Strategy 2007-12

A criticism levelled during the strategy consultation process was that strategic decisions – locally and nationally - often conflict with one another. In this context, the wider use of sustainability appraisal and similar tools could help to ensure more climate sensitive decision making and avoid the emergence of contradictory policies. Sustainability appraisal has been used to inform various statutory documents locally, but its use could be extended.

Land use planning has a key role in influencing indirect emissions. For example, the layout and density of our built environment influences travel decisions. Wirral's emerging Core Strategy Local Plan aims to limit these climate impacts.

Part 6: Adapting to unavoidable changes in Wirral's climate

It is no longer sound to make long-term decisions on the basis of existing weather conditions. We need to adapt to the unavoidable changes expected in order to avoid the costs of disruption. By 2015, Government envisages that all priority sectors will incorporate climate risk management into their business decision-making to protect critical infrastructure. Wirral organisations need to be prepared too! A variety of tools are available to assist with such preparations including those from UKCIP and The Environment Agency.

Some weather events in Wirral already cause disruption¹⁶. The frequency of disruptive events is expected to increase. In the future, Wirral is likely to experience:

- Higher summer temperatures with prolonged dry spells and increased frequency of heat waves;
- Warmer, wetter winters; and
- More storms and floods exacerbated by a rise in sea levels.

The prospect of higher summer temperatures may seem appealing but there will be a down-side if we don't adapt our activities and environment to cope with the heat. Previous heat waves have resulted in heat-related deaths and illness– with some groups in the population particularly vulnerable. A long-term shift to higher temperatures will likely herald new patterns of disease.

As longer dry spells and drought become more common we will need to adjust to a greater scarcity of water and use what we have more wisely. A recent water cycle study¹⁷ highlighted a number of areas where water supply, sewer and wastewater treatment capacity may hinder development opportunities.

Heat and drought combined, will impact on food production and wildlife and habitats in addition to posing constraints on development. Wild fires already pose a threat at some countryside sites and these fires are likely to increase.

Ironically, although we will need to cope with greater water scarcity, we will also need to get used to more flooding from more intense rainfall events. Flooding already causes disruption to businesses and communities and impacts on people's health. As flood conditions become more common, we will need to find ways to be more resilient. Flooding is one area where there has been co-ordinated adaptive action driven by legislation¹⁸. Wirral Council was made the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and has since prepared a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) to help provide a better understanding of flood risk. The Council's duties include

¹⁶ Wirral Local Climate Impact Profile Media Trawl

¹⁷ Wirral Water Cycle Study

¹⁸ Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

responsibility for putting in place strategies for managing flood risk; sharing information and investigating flooding. A Local Flood Risk Management Plan is currently in development. At present, around 11% of Wirral's land area is at risk from flooding. Parts of Wirral's coastline and the river valleys associated with the Fender, Birket, Arrowe Brook and Dibbin are identified as being at a high probability of flooding from the sea or from watercourses. There are also localised incidences of sewer and surface water flooding across the Borough. Much of north and west Wirral could be susceptible to groundwater flooding but in practice only isolated locations are actually likely to suffer. Planning policies aim to ensure new development does not place additional people or property at risk. A new coastal strategy has been drafted. Its preparation has involved an assessment of the works that may be needed to make existing coastal defences 'future proof'. It has been developed in the context of the wider North Wales and North West England Shoreline Management Plan. Some parts of the Wirral coast - from Gayton to Thurstaston Cliffs, between West Kirby and Hoylake and at Eastham, have a policy of no active intervention. In other parts, defences will need strengthening to cope with rising sea levels and storm events.

Resilience to climate impacts can be improved through 'green and blue infrastructure' (see Box 6.1).¹⁹ Wirral's Core Strategy Local Plan includes a policy to encourage the provision of such infrastructure. A new green infrastructure strategy for Wirral is expected to encourage more widespread action – a new framework was recently adopted for the Liverpool City Region. The Council's emerging parks and open space strategy recognises the adaptive function of such local green assets. There is generally less 'green infrastructure' in the more densely developed east of Wirral. Some programmes such as the Wirral Green Streets, which aims to plant more than a thousand trees in communities around the Wirral Waters development site - are helping to improve this provision.

Box 6.1: Green and blue 'infrastructure' includes gardens, parks, verges, hedges, trees, productive landscape, green corridors, ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, floodplains and sustainable drainage systems. This infrastructure provides a range of climate related 'services' that can play an important role in climate adaptation. These services include: managing surface water and river and coastal flooding by reducing surface runoff, providing natural storage and slowing water movement; managing temperatures through evaporative cooling and shade; species adaptation – providing networks through which species can move; and reducing soil erosion.

Part 7: Building capacity for action

The importance of raising awareness, education and sharing good practice was raised repeatedly during the strategy consultation process. Local partnership work was also praised.

Several national networks exist to share and support community action on climate change including the Low Carbon Communities Network, Transition Towns Network and Project Dirt on-line social network for environmental projects. Locally Wirral has had a long-standing carbon reduction campaign to raise awareness and encourage action²⁰. The 'CRed Wirral' pledge campaign ran for four years. The campaign attracted over 2200 participants who have made over 6200 pledges. These equate to a reduction of over 1100 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Wirral Council has recently

¹⁹ Green Infrastructure to Combat Climate Change A Framework for Action in Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, and Merseyside

²⁰ Council and NHS backed

signed a commitment under the Local Government Association's Climate Local initiative. This gives it access to learning from a wider network of local authorities committed to take climate action.

There are a variety of local initiatives to support sustainability education both in schools and beyond. Wirral Council, for example, currently support local schools to participate in the national Eco Schools programme. The Council also offers a specifically designed support service to assist schools with energy awareness and energy management. Some local charities such as Wirral Environment Network and Faiths4Change deliver climate-related educational interventions for schools children, community groups and adult learners.

The desirability of having exemplar eco buildings was a common suggestion made at the strategy consultation workshops to help raise awareness and inspire action. Whilst there are eco-innovations in many Wirral buildings few are openly illustrated. One current exception is the eco-building at Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm which includes interpretive panels that highlight its eco-features. There are currently no Wirral examples in the national Superhomes network. This is an expanding network of energy aware households who have refurbished their homes to be at least 60% less reliant on fossil fuels. Members of this network periodically open their homes to inspire others to do low carbon renovations. The recently formed Green Open Homes network provides advice on running open homes-style events to show case ecological features in houses.

Co-ordinated action on climate change in Wirral has evolved overtime. A climate change strategy for Wirral Council was first approved by the Council's cabinet in June 2007. This strategy was developed by a group of council officers in response to a Wirral Council commitment²¹. Over time this group has grown into wider gathering of stakeholders. It now includes councillors, representatives from the NHS, the emergency services, waste, travel, and community and voluntary sector interests. The creation of *Cool* as a new strategy for Wirral, not just Wirral Council, is the product of this wider partnership effort. The Strategy's production and delivery provides an opportunity to develop and strengthen the partnership further.

²¹ This strategy was produced after Wirral Council's commitment to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

9 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT:	STREET LIGHTING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2014
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	KEVIN ADDERLEY, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR STUART WHITTINGHAM, HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out a comprehensive review of the Council's approach to managing and maintaining street lighting and includes a street lighting strategy and action plan, and replaces the earlier budget savings option of switching off street lights.
- 1.2 The development of the approach proposed will result in a reduction in energy consumption and subsequent reduction in the carbon levy; future maintenance costs will be reduced resulting in greater savings to the authority.
- 1.3 The maintenance of highways, including street lighting, is a statutory duty imposed on the Council as the Highway Authority for Wirral.
- 1.4 Cabinet is asked to approve the new strategy and action plan, and to approve the necessary capital funding to enable the strategy to be delivered.
- 1.5 This is a Key Decision in the Council's Forward Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The proposed Strategy document outlines the basic principles and standards applying to street lighting and illuminated signage in Wirral. The term "street lighting" encompasses lighting and all other items of illuminated street furniture provided on the public highway (and unadopted highway), except traffic signals and electrically operated vehicle information signs.
- 2.2 In the current economic climate, the Council needs to reassess the way street lighting performs and the options available to improve the efficiency and expenditure associated with providing the service. A reduction of the Council carbon footprint is also a necessary consideration that must be complied with.

- 2.3 The proposed Strategy also considers the progression of street lighting schemes and the options available to the Council to procure a new scheme with the aim of reducing future on-going costs.
- 2.4 The aim of the Strategy is to minimise future energy usage and carbon emissions from street lighting through the implementation of economically viable programmes of work to achieve energy savings and by ensuring that new street lighting is provided only where necessary. Through this process the Council will continue to maintain a fit for purpose street lighting asset by managing the service in accordance with sound asset management principles and nationally accepted good practice.
- 2.5 The existing, approved, budget option for 2014/15 to switch off lights on certain routes will affect the same lighting units as the strategy proposes for conversion to LED, and it is proposed that the lighting is not switched off as planned and that the budget saving required will be incorporated within the savings planned for the new strategy.
- 2.6 The proposed Street Lighting Strategy and Action Plan is attached as **Appendix 1** to the Report

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 No reportable risks have been identified in changing from the current form of street lighting to LED street lighting. Lighting will continue to be provided in accordance with British Standards.
- 3.2 There is a financial risk to the Council if a different approach to street lighting is not adopted as energy prices are expected to rise significantly, which is entirely out of the Council's control, and current sodium lights utilise far greater amounts of electricity than LED lights. In addition, in 2014/15 a new carbon levy was introduced on electricity used for street lighting; reducing electricity consumption will reduce the liability for this charge.

LED lighting will also reduce maintenance expenditure as the lifecycle of an LED system is considerably longer than that for the current sodium lighting stock.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 A practice of switching off street lighting has been considered in order to reduce energy costs and Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) charges, however this is a relatively short term solution and will not provide significant savings or a reduction in maintenance costs unless the columns are actually removed.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Council's proposed strategy for street lighting has been included in the Future Council public consultation which is currently underway.

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

- 6.1 There are no outstanding previously approved actions.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 There are no direct implications arising out of this proposal.

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

8.1 The proposal to retrofit LED lighting units, including Central Management System (CMS) capability, to 6943 existing street lighting columns is estimated to cost £4.3 million in capital investment, including all procurement costs.

8.2 Subject to Members approval, it is proposed to procure a lighting specialist to prepare the necessary technical specifications for the LED units together with a complete evaluation of the suppliers for quality and cost purposes and the preparation of the tender documentation.

This work will also include the complete assessment of the 6943 lanterns to determine which require new LED lanterns and which are suitable for retro-fitting. The outcome will identify the most cost effective LED product for the Council together with recommendations for the level of dimming in selected locations.

8.3 A preliminary programme for the procurement and delivery of this project is outlined in Appendix 2 to this report.

8.4 The revenue savings which result from the proposed works described in 8.1 are already included in the Future Council proposals, and comprise energy and maintenance savings of £100,000 in 2015/16 and £390,000 in 2016/17, as well as the £85,000 saving already taken in 2014/15.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Local Government Act 1966, means that Wirral Council is a Highway Authority in its own right with a duty to ensure the safety of the public highway. The Act does not confer a legal duty on a Highway Authority to provide and maintain road lighting, however, a highway Authority does have a duty of care to maintain the lighting stock it has installed in a safe condition and to ensure that the equipment is fit for purpose.

9.2 The maintenance of highways, including street lighting, is a statutory duty for the Council under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(a) Yes and impact review is attached –

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-april-2014/eias-regeneration-envir>

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC Scheme) will include calculations for street lighting energy usage for the first time this financial year, 2014/2015. By ensuring that future street lighting is provided only where necessary the Council will minimise future energy usage and carbon emissions.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no implications under this heading.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) Approve the proposed Street Lighting Strategy and Action Plan.
- (ii) Endorse the £4.3 Million Capital funding required and refer to Council for Approval and inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme.
- (iii) Approve the superceding of the 2014/15 budget savings option for switching off street lights so that the lighting is not switched off as planned and that the budget saving required will be incorporated within the savings planned for the new strategy.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 By implementing economically viable programmes of work the Council will minimise future maintenance, energy usage, cost and carbon emissions from street lighting .

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Street Lighting Strategy 2014 and Action Plan

Appendix 2 – Preliminary Programme

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reducing-demand-for-energy-from-industry-businesses-and-the-public-sector--2/supporting-pages/crc-energy-efficiency-scheme>

BRIEFING NOTES HISTORY

Briefing Note	Date
None	

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	



APPENDIX 1

STREET LIGHTING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2014



WIRRAL

Wirral Council – Street Lighting Strategy the proposed way forward

Executive Summary

Wirral Council as a Highway Authority has a duty to ensure the safety of the public highway. There is not a legal duty on the Council to provide and maintain road lighting, however, the Council does have a duty of care to maintain the lighting stock it has installed in a safe condition and to ensure that the equipment is fit for purpose.

In the current economic climate, the Council must reassess the way street lighting currently performs and the options available to improve the efficiency and expenditure associated with providing the service. The overall aim of this strategy is that energy usage and carbon emissions will have been minimised as far as practically possible within appropriate and relevant political, environmental, legal and technological limits.

These aims are represented within the Council Vision, and the strategy further supports the refreshed Corporate Plan as it is proposed that funding for improvements will be provided by a sustainable budget.

The strategy recommends combining Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting with a Central Management System (CMS). The conversion of existing light sources from conventional sodium discharge lighting to LED lighting is a way to reduce long-term energy costs; the savings can be substantial in both energy and maintenance costs. It would also help towards the Councils carbon reduction targets and reduce overall carbon footprint. This combined with a reduction in lighting levels (dimming) controlled by a CMS system programmed to provide variable lighting across the borough to meet the various different demands, would have an increased beneficial effect.

The intention of the proposed strategy is not to repeat the current policies, practices and procedures that form the framework for the current street lighting service. Much of what the service does currently reflects good practice and the service has a good reputation. The approach taken has been to focus on those areas where changes and/or improvements would lead to increased benefits, efficiency and value for money to the service.

Through the identified aims and objectives, the Council's street lighting stock will continue to be modern, well designed, installed and maintained, providing clear benefits to residents, visitors and road users.

The street lighting service will continue to provide a significant contribution to the achievement of the Council's priorities.

1.0 Introduction

This document outlines the basic principles and standards applying to street lighting and illuminated signage in Wirral. The term "street lighting" encompasses lighting and all other items of illuminated street furniture provided on the public highway (and unadopted highway), except traffic signals and electrically operated vehicle information signs.

In the current economic climate, the Council needs to reassess the way street lighting performs and the options available to improve the efficiency and expenditure associated with providing the service. A reduction of the Council carbon footprint is also a necessary consideration that must be complied with.

This document will consider the progression of street lighting schemes and the options available to the Council to procure a new scheme with the aim of reducing future on-going costs.

2.0 Local Lighting Authorities

The Local Government Act 1966, means that Wirral Council is a Highway Authority in its own right with a duty to ensure the safety of the public highway. The Act does not confer a legal duty on a Highway Authority to provide and maintain road lighting, however, a highway Authority does have a duty of care to maintain the lighting stock it has installed in a safe condition and to ensure that the equipment is fit for purpose.

2.1 British Standard for the Lighting of Highways

Where Wirral Council does provide street lighting, consideration will be given to national guidelines such as the recommendations contained in the Well-lit Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Lighting Management.

To achieve a structured and coherent approach to the provision of lighting on the public highway the correct levels and associated parameters for the lighting for each specific class of road, street, footpath, cycle track etc. must be determined. Such determination should take account of the following:

- Road hierarchy;
- The use of the road, for vehicular, cycle and pedestrian traffic;
- Local amenities such as leisure centres, schools, churches, village halls, shops, public houses, doctors surgeries etc. which may affect the night-time use of the road;
- The location of the road, rural, urban etc.;
- The environmental aspects.

A new and comprehensively updated BS 5489-1:2013 Code of practice for the design of road lighting - Lighting of roads and public amenity areas, was published on 31 December 2012. This new British Standard provides minimum specification guidance on all aspects of the design of road and public amenity lighting, including passive safety, sustainability, variable lighting, and risk assessments. There are also draft proposals contained in the European Norm of Road Lighting, EN13201 that deal with lighting quality.

3.0 Council Vision

The refreshed Corporate Plan 2014-2016 continues to support the vision:

“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”

The Council needs to reassess the practice of street lighting borough wide and the aims of this street lighting strategy are represented within this vision. The strategy further supports the Plan as it is proposed that funding for improvements will be provided by a sustainable budget.

In delivering a new street lighting approach the Council will aim to:

- Act in the best interests of the customer and the Council at all times;
- Have consideration for the natural and built environments;
- Continually seek to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions;
- Give full consideration to the impact of its actions on safety and street lighting related crime;
- Strive to reduce the cost of the service to the Council and residents of Wirral whilst still maintaining an effective and efficient service;
- Wherever practicable, adopt best practice in the equipment, design and maintenance of the street lighting asset including where appropriate the use of emerging and innovative technologies.

4.0 Background to the Strategy

4.1 Condition

The condition of street lighting assets varies across the borough. In rural areas approximately 50 percent of the asset is in a good condition however, this decreases to approximately 25 percent in urban areas.

Wirral's current street lighting column stock has been predominantly fabricated from concrete, cast iron, aluminium and steel, but a few wooden columns also exist.

Lanterns in residential areas and side roads are mostly 35 watt and 55 watt SOX (low pressure sodium) although some have been replaced with 50 watt and 70 watt SON (high pressure sodium) lanterns; these are very energy hungry.

The condition of underground electrical loops and cabling is generally fit-for-purpose however, due to the age of some of the apparatus, it may not conform to current electrical recommendations. Repairs to the supply cables of the electrical network are undertaken by Scottish Power with the Council being responsible for repair and maintenance of approximately 500,000 linear metres of underground service loops and cables

4.2 Inspection

Lanterns; fault detection in the past was determined by a series of fortnightly night-time visual scouting surveys that covered all of the borough's lighting stock, this ceased in February 2013 as part of the budget saving reductions. Scouting staff not only identified failed lanterns they were also able to identify obvious structural concerns, missing column access doors and damage to items such as lantern covers, bollards and illuminated street furniture.

The visual scouting defect sheets generated from each survey also provided monitoring evidence of the performance of both Scottish Power and the term maintenance contractor in relation to ordered and completed defect repairs.

Since February 2013, the Council has relied upon members of the public to report defective street lights and illuminated street furniture to Streetscene, however, this has been less than successful as it is currently estimated that 10 percent of the boroughs street lighting asset is unlit or defective. In the unlikely event that the vast majority of these outages were reported to Streetscene over a short period of time, based on recent volumes of reported defects and to comply with the contractor performance indicators, the contractor would have insufficient labour resources to repair them. Unless these defects were prioritised, for example on a road hierarchy basis, the annual street lighting maintenance budget would be spent well before the end of the financial year.

Structural and electrical testing of all street lighting columns is currently undertaken over a 6 year period, with a percentage of columns being inspected on an annual cyclical basis. Orders are issued to the contractor to replace where necessary however, the contractor will remove any column considered structurally unsound without requiring prior consent from the Council.

4.3 Bulk change lantern replacement programme

Presently, the lanterns that burn to extinction are replaced accordingly, otherwise they are changed as part of the annual bulk change programme regardless of whether the lanterns are extinguished; the bulk change programme currently involves replacing 5,000 to 5,500 lanterns each year.

A bulk change programme was widely recognised by local authorities as best practice prior to current advances in technology. It has now become a costly exercise; in 2010/11 the annual spend on the bulk change was £125,317 and in 2011/12 it was £128,234.

4.4 Switch-off

Some roads in the borough have already seen street lighting switched off except around significant road junctions etc. as part of the budget savings options 2013/14 (Phase 1). Ward Councillors and local residents viewed this as an unwelcome move and there has been a part reversal of the first phase of this exercise, immediately negating potential savings intended as part of the initiative. The initial switch-off and subsequent switching back on has been costly in financial terms as damage has been caused to electrical elements due to moisture ingress whilst the lanterns have been unlit.

To avoid un-necessary pressures on the Council's revenue budget as part of the budget savings options, there is a need to reduce all costs associated with the street lighting service and in particular energy charges. Reducing energy usage will also have a positive impact on the Council's carbon footprint.

It was intended to introduce alternate street light switch-off in certain locations for Phase 2 of the Switch-off proposals (Budget Savings Option 2014/15). However, following consideration on the decommissioning of the switched off lighting columns and then restoring the same lighting units with Light Emitting Diode (LED) lanterns and Central Management System (CMS) capability would confuse the public and likely result in additional maintenance costs arising from the re-energising of cold/damp circuitry. The approved budget savings would be met from savings elsewhere in the street lighting budget for the current year, and met from the overall savings from the LED/CMS conversion project in future years.

5.0 Drivers for Change

Street lighting is high on the agenda of many local authorities as a potential area for change. The main drivers are issues of energy saving, environmental awareness, economic and financial pressures and changes in technology.

It is widely acknowledged that the current leading technology in street lighting is Light Emitting Diode's (LED's). LED street lights have been installed or announced for installation in several large cities as well as smaller cities throughout the world and many local authorities in the UK have already started to roll out LED lighting schemes across their stock.

Liverpool City Council have announced plans to replace the total network of 57,000 sodium street lights across the city with LED lighting. The programme will be completed in phases over the next two years as part of a £7m investment into the project. Phase one will begin in June 2014 and will see 12,000 street lights fitted with the new LED lights.

5.1 Light Emitting Diode (LED) technology

The key advantages of LEDs are:

- **Reduced energy consumption and consequent CO2 emissions**
New LED units consume around half the energy that some existing traditional lanterns do. The reduced consumption is derived principally from the lumen output and the ability to readily control lighting levels without deterioration of the lamps and hence the need to 'over-rate' lamps on installation to meet performance standards later.
- **Reduced Lamp Renewal Costs**
Manufacturers are claiming service life expectancy of LEDs of up to 20 years, with these claims, in some cases, supported by guarantees. When compared to conventional lamps, which may have service life expectancies of around 3-6 years, this represents a substantial reduction in cost of renewals as well as in the costs to manage and administer this work. This negates the need for the frequent expensive bulk change lantern replacement programmes. Due to the long life expectancy of LEDs, the number of outages will be significantly reduced as will the need for Scouting or public reporting of failures.
- **Better Quality of Light**

LEDs have good colour rendering particularly compared to both low and high-pressure sodium light sources and will increase the visibility of pedestrians to road users as well as provide more uniform light levels across the lit area. It is possible to reduce a lighting class and get a better quality of lighting with fewer lumens. The increased controllability of light dispersal means that the light can be focused upon the areas intended to be lit and, back and up-light pollution is reduced, as is that of overspill and obtrusive light.

Summary of benefits of LED lighting are:

- LEDs use up to 60 percent less energy than current light sources and more if dimmed;
- The lifetime of LED street lights is considered to be a minimum of 10 to 15 years, three times the life of current technologies adopted. The much less frequent need to service or replace LEDs means a greatly reduced maintenance cost and in turn, a more rapid payback on investment;
- LEDs can easily be dimmed when less street lighting is needed, such as late at night, and at dusk or early dawn, again offering more saving opportunities;
- LEDs provide a white light that is closer to daylight and allows colours to be seen easily. White light also offers further advantages in that pedestrians feel more secure in their environment and driver reaction time is improved due to improved vision in low lighting situations (mesopic vision);
- LEDs switch on instantaneously, unlike other commonly used street lighting. LEDs do not have a problem restarting immediately following a brief power failure or if inadvertently switched off;
- LEDs do not contain mercury or lead making disposal of 'blown' lamps less problematic and expensive.

LED lighting is unquestionably the way forward if the Council is to achieve its strategic aims however, there are a number of different options available to the Council to support the introduction of this technology.

5.2 Column Light Emitting Diode (LED) retrofit and replacement

The core component of a viable 'Invest-to-Save' street lighting renewal model is the replacement of lanterns, lamps and possibly control systems with modern equipment that achieves energy savings sufficient to fund the investment. However, columns, cabling and feeder pillars are all part of street lighting systems that need maintaining and periodically replacing. These factors will need to be considered in any future investment programme.

If a lantern renewal programme is undertaken, decisions need to be made on whether to replace ageing columns and cabling or possibly just retrofit lanterns to existing columns. A clear understanding of the condition of each column and the associated cabling is needed in order to make this assessment.

To replace deteriorating columns at the same time as retrofitting lanterns will have implications on the project budget however, to leave them in if replacement is not essential may mean that they will need replacing in the near future.

In Wirral, an accurate asset database is held regarding the condition of street lighting and it is anticipated that many columns, and associated equipment, will be suitable for retrofitting. Matching lantern design with column spacing will be important in order to meet required lighting performance standards in a way that realises the energy saving potential of LEDs.

5.3 Central Management System (CMS) and Photocell Technology

CMS can provide a wide range of remote monitoring functionality that has the following benefits for maintaining the assets:

- Improved fault identification and location of fault prior to leaving the depot;
- Lamp failure prediction based on out of tolerance monitoring of electrical characteristics. Under-performing lanterns can be worked into future maintenance programmes;
- Interface with asset management database for sharing and analysing data;
- Reduced need for visual inspections or public reporting of defects.

A CMS provides a wide area control system that communicates with individual lanterns.

The system provides a flexible solution unlike conventional control strategies; individual luminaries can be switched or dimmed at any time (assuming a dimming module is installed) and settings can be changed remotely. It provides the ability to produce the right amount of light at the right time at the right location. Using CMS will enable the Council to accurately control the brightness of each lamp thereby leading to energy savings.

One of the benefits of CMS is that the system enables two-way communication of information on the lamp life of individual lanterns informing of faults and providing notification of lighting failures and day-burning lamps.

CMS will be able to serve the growing demands of our street lighting aiming to reduce energy and operating costs through automated management of the outdoor lighting inventory.

There are two ways to monitor and to control street light infrastructure using CMS:

- Using the underground power lines beneath street poles as fixed lines to monitor, to communicate with and to control individual streetlights – CMS;
- Using a wireless photocell fitted to each street light which monitors, communicates and controls each street light individually - wireless CMS.

Utilising the under ground power cables relies on these cables being of a suitable condition and fully networked. Utilising photocell technology is lighting column specific and does not require the support of a cable network.

Installation costs and on-going service costs are favourable with the photocell, wireless CMS option however, this still does not provide information on the structural condition of the lighting column. Visual inspection provides this information and so a combined wireless CMS and inspection approach would provide the optimum condition survey of the lighting assets.

Capital funding of £350,000 was provided in 2010/11 and 2011/12, to fund the installation of wireless CMS to 1,024 lanterns in the Wallasey and Birkenhead areas of the Borough. Road signage and bollards were not included in this work.

5.4 Combined LED street lighting and CMS

CMS can also monitor the usage and energy consumption of each lantern; by investing in new LED and CMS technology. This investment will ensure that the Council's carbon footprint will be dramatically reduced as will the cost of street lighting. At the same time, the borough's road network will stay well lit around the clock.

For example, by installing new photocells combined with LED lighting a more efficient light activation regime can be introduced. Lights can be switched on later and off earlier; reducing the lamp burn time by eight minutes each day which equates to 47 hours annually.

Electronic dimming ballasts can also provide a variable lighting regime of a reduction to 60 percent power from 22:00 to 06:00 hours and also obtain Constant Light Output (CLO) savings through these dimming ballasts providing significant energy savings. Experience from authorities that have introduced a dimming regime would suggest that dimming schemes are more acceptable to local communities than a complete night switch off and in fact, most residents did not notice the dimming of lights during these core hours (reference: Campaign to Protect Rural England; A survey of local authority approaches to lighting in England).

The reduced maintenance burden of LEDs and CMS would provide significant budget savings through reduced management and administration costs. It would also lower Scouting needs and fault diagnostics by predictive maintenance warnings allowing asset work to be programmed more efficiently.

These potential savings strengthen the business case for a renewal programme however, they require a change in the way we currently manage street lighting activities, and the perception residents have towards street lighting will require education.

The extent of the achievable savings will depend on the willingness to change significantly from current working practices and procedures and will need to be considered in the context of wider aspects of maintenance and resource management.

To introduce LED lighting to those street lights that are currently high energy consumers will reduce energy consumption and thus energy costs based on today's energy prices.

6.0 The Strategy

In producing this document, it has not been the intention to repeat the current policies, practices and procedures that form the framework for the current street lighting service. Much of what the service does currently reflects good practice and the service has a good reputation. The approach taken has been to focus on those areas where changes and/or improvements would lead to increased benefits, efficiency and value for money to the service.

6.1 Energy usage and carbon emissions

The Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC Scheme) is a UK government scheme. It is designed to improve energy efficiency and cut carbon dioxide emissions in private and public sector organisations where energy consumption is high. Calculations for street lighting energy usage have been included for the first time this financial year, 2014/2015.

The conversion of existing light sources from conventional sodium discharge lighting to LED lighting is a way to reduce long-term energy costs; the savings can be substantial in both energy and maintenance costs. It would also help towards the Councils carbon reduction targets and reduce overall carbon footprint. This combined with a reduction in lighting levels (dimming) controlled by a CMS system programmed to provide variable lighting across the borough to meet the various different demands, would have an increased beneficial effect.

Aim - To minimise future energy usage and carbon emissions from street lighting through the implementation of economically viable programmes of work using LED and CMS technology to achieve energy savings and by ensuring that new street lighting is provided only where necessary.

6.2 Street lighting design

When considering a street lighting scheme it is important to take into account both the natural and built environments. Light pollution is a problem that is becoming increasingly serious. During the 1990s, the area with pure dark skies in England reduced by some 27% (CPRE 2011). This reduction in dark skies can affect heavily on areas that are of ecological interest, with effects on mammals, birds, insects and trees. Lighting can also affect the appearance of the built environment where listed buildings and conservation areas are involved.

Aim - To take full account of both the natural and built environments in the design of new street lighting schemes and ensure that designs and selection of equipment match the needs of the specific location for which they are intended.

6.3 Equipment specification

Standardising street lighting equipment will ease future maintenance liabilities and keep replacement stocks to a minimum. However, roads across the borough are not of a uniform width and therefore, different equipment will be needed to ensure lighting classes can be met and a maximum return made on an Invest-to-Save project.

Aim - To take account of whole life costs and lifecycle planning in the selection and provision of new and replacement street lighting equipment by using standardised equipment wherever practicable.

6.4 Maintenance and asset management

It is important that street lighting equipment is maintained to the highest possible standard so that it performs at its optimum, does not waste money and generate unnecessary carbon. It is also important that the street lighting inventory, which is used to calculate the borough's annual energy charge, be updated as soon as possible after any on site change, to ensure that the correct payment is made to the energy provider. In addition, it is important where residents, developers, public utilities or other bodies require lighting columns to be relocated to facilitate their works, or where damage or vandalism occurs, full costs are recovered by the Council.

Aim - To continue to maintain a fit for purpose street lighting asset by managing the service in accordance with sound asset management principles and nationally accepted good practice.

6.5 New developments

The number of new housing developments across the borough is continuing to rise. These developments will result in future energy and maintenance costs for such lighting installations being passed on to the Council through the highway adoption process.

Aim - To ensure that new developments do not place an unnecessary burden on the street lighting service by the implementation of appropriate and up to date control processes.

6.6 Illuminated traffic signs and bollards

Reducing the number of illuminated signs and bollards on the highway network can have a positive impact on street clutter and can have cost benefits in terms of reduced energy consumption (thus reducing CO₂), lower traffic sign and bollard installation costs, lower maintenance costs and would also produce less light pollution.

On some new traffic safety schemes, there has been a complete replacement of the existing electronically illuminated signs and bollards with new street furniture illuminated by solar powered lighting or micro prismatic lighting sources. Changes in highway law have allowed for traditionally illuminated traffic signs to be replaced with reflective signs.

Aim - To ensure that illuminated signs and bollards are used only where essential for the purposes of road safety and minimising congestion.

6.7 Working with customers and partner organisations

Customers, residents and the travelling public are central to the Council's vision for the borough. The Council is committed to delivering maximum value and to be open, honest and approachable in its dealing with the public. Street lighting is regarded by the public as a particularly important service because of the potential impact it can have on convenience and safety. The service involves working with a number of partner organisations and third parties. It is important that interfaces with these organisations and the public work as efficiently and effectively as possible. Central to this is the way in which the Council communicates its actions and the reasons for them.

The Council also deals with a number of requests for attachments and connections to its street lighting columns from external organisations. It is important for the Council to control this process well so that the integrity of the asset is not compromised.

Aim - To work effectively with customers, partner organisations, third parties and other service providers for the overall benefit of the service.

6.8 Procurement and delivery

The Council has two options to consider in order to introduce LED lighting schemes across the borough. Option one would include retrofitting or replacing the 7,000 high energy consuming lanterns in the borough with LED lanterns. Option two would include the remainder of the 30,000 lanterns. However, as these 30,000 lanterns consume a lesser amount of energy the savings achieved would be over a significantly longer period therefore, conversion of these is not considered to be cost effective at this time.

Funding for a Phase 1 improvement scheme would be via an Invest-to-Save bid and following an initial payback period, future energy savings based on current costings would be considerable.

The Council's current annual energy costs for street lighting are in excess of £1.6m. The introduction of LED lighting as a replacement for the existing highway lanterns on current terms could reduce the annual energy costs by as much as £288,000 with a further additional saving of £80,000 with dimming technology.

However, the advantages and financial savings generated by introducing LED lights will be significantly reduced if energy suppliers choose to increase their

energy tariffs as demand and installation of LED lights and CMS systems increases nationally.

6.8.1 Delivery

Advice from the industry would suggest that to replace the 7,000 high energy consuming lanterns with LED lanterns is achievable in a one year period with a mobilisation time of 8 to 12 weeks.

Resources within the Highway Management Division are unable to deliver a project of this scale and the Council will need to procure an external contract to design and deliver new LED and CMS combined schemes as part of an Invest-to-Save replacement programme.

Aim - To maximise value for money when purchasing street lighting equipment, services and energy, by ensuring compliance with the corporate procurement process.

(See Appendix A for full Action Plan)

7.0 Conclusion

This strategy for the Council provides a clear vision for the future of the street lighting service.

The overall aim is that energy usage and carbon emissions will have been minimised as far as practically possible within appropriate and relevant political, environmental, legal and technological limits.

Lighting will only be provided where necessary and subjected to appropriate control and, as the street lighting asset increases due to new developments, this will not place an unnecessary burden on the street lighting service.

New street lighting schemes, whether built by the Council or developers, will have taken into account both the natural and built environments and value for money will have been obtained for the purchase of street lighting equipment, services and energy.

Through the identified aims and objectives, the Council's street lighting stock will continue to be modern, well designed, installed and maintained, providing clear benefits to residents, visitors and road users.

The street lighting service will continue to provide a significant contribution to the achievement of the Council's priorities.

Wirral Council – Street Lighting Strategy: Action Plan

6.1 Energy Usage and Carbon Emissions

Aim - To minimise future energy usage and carbon emissions from street lighting through the implementation of economically viable programmes of

work to achieve energy savings and by ensuring that new street lighting is provided only where necessary.

Action Plan

- Combine retrofit and replacement LED lanterns with a wireless CMS system, initially to the 7,000 high energy consuming street lights across the borough through an Invest-to-Save programme to mitigate current high energy costs and increased carbon emissions;
- Seek to design dimming for new schemes to ensure that roads and areas are not over lit;
- Ensure that white light is adopted in town centres and areas of high pedestrian activity as new lighting schemes are developed;
- Ensure that the impact on known personal injury collision locations and areas of anti-social behaviour be carefully considered should the Borough change its lighting regime, for example the adoption of dimming protocols.

In terms of only lighting where necessary:

- Adopt a general presumption that new street lighting will not normally be provided in areas considered rural in nature
- Adopt the concept of environmental zones as set out in the Institution of Lighting Engineers advice -Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light; and use this when assessing requirements for new and existing lighting installations

6.2 Street Lighting Design

Aim - To take full account of both the natural and built environments in the design of new street lighting schemes and ensure that designs and selection of equipment match the needs of the specific location for which they are intended.

Action Plan

- To procure an external contract to design and deliver new LED and CMS combined schemes as part of an Invest-to-Save replacement programme;
- New locations for lighting columns permit a lighting scheme to meet the requirements of BS5489-1:2013;
- Minimum desirable clearances from the edge of the carriageway are achieved where possible with new or replacement lighting schemes;
- Where new streets are proposed, lighting should be designed first and the planting sites fixed afterwards;
- Schemes to introduce new lighting within existing areas consider existing trees and that column positions are sited so as to not require serious vegetation works.

6.3 Equipment Specification

Aim - To take account of whole life costs and lifecycle planning in the selection and provision of new and replacement street lighting equipment by using standardised equipment wherever practicable.

Action Plan

- Specify a list of suitable future lanterns, with consideration given to both lighting performance and environmental concerns;
- Select new or replacement apparatus taking into account whole life cost, including repair, vandal resistance, energy consumption, other lighting styles in the vicinity and on-going maintenance;
- Give special consideration to variation from standard equipment where environmental or conservation requirements dictate otherwise or where improved value for money can be achieved by taking an alternative approach.

6.4 Maintenance and Asset Management

Aim - To continue to maintain a fit for purpose street lighting asset by managing the service in accordance with sound asset management principles and nationally accepted good practice.

Action Plan

- Restore the street lighting affected by the switch-off scheme and replace with later switch-on, earlier switch-off and dimming through the wider application of the CMS.
- Where lanterns have not been converted to LED lanterns but require replacing, they will be retrofitted with an LED lantern according to the accepted specification negating the need for the current bulk change strategy;
- Continue to undertake maintenance in accordance with the requirements set out in Well Lit Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Lighting Management and good industry practice;
- Ensure a lifecycle planning regime in respect of structural and electrical testing of lighting columns and the cleaning of and replacement of lanterns;
- Maintain an up to date and accurate inventory of all highway electrical equipment (including Council cable networks) as part of the asset management system.

6.5 New Developments

Aim - To ensure that new developments do not place an unnecessary burden on the Street Lighting service by the implementation of appropriate and up to date control processes.

Action Plan

- All new developments will be required to install LED street lighting with wireless CMS technology;
- Existing lighting levels are evaluated if an area changes use or character;

- The full costs associated with changes to the Council's asset inventory are recovered from developers where new columns are installed or existing arrangements altered.

6.6 Illuminated Traffic Signs and Bollards

Aim - To ensure that illuminated signs and bollards are used only where essential for the purposes of road safety and minimising congestion

Action Plan

- Undertake an audit of existing traffic signs and remove any unnecessary sign lighting;
- Seek to use LED or other low voltage/energy lighting, solar powered lighting or micro prismatic items.

6.7 Working with Customers and Partner Organisations

Aim - To work effectively with customers, partner organisations, third party's and other service providers for the overall benefit of the service.

Action Plan

- Enter into consultation with internal and external partners regarding reduced lighting schemes;
- Via the Council website, consult with Members and the public about proposed changes to current lighting schemes;
- Communicate planned works to all those potentially affected in a timely way and ensure that appropriate channels are available for the reporting of issues relating to street lighting;
- Monitor the performance of the Distribution Network Operator on the repair of faults which are its responsibility and new connections;
- Discourage third-party connections and attachments to the Council's street lighting apparatus and prohibit the use of linking into the lighting column energy supply;
- Ensure that where third part connections are permitted, with the written consent of the Council, that evidence of £5m Public Liability Insurance is presented;
- Ensure that traffic signs that are attached to lighting columns do not exceed the lighting column manufacturers recommended criteria for wind loading;
- Promptly remove signs and attachments to lighting columns that have not been approved by the Council, recovering the costs of removal, storage and disposal from those responsible where possible;
- Work with third parties to enable their works to progress whilst still maintaining the integrity of the lighting system by the installation of temporary lighting if required;
- Recharge to third parties any costs incurred by the Council, its contractors, sub-contractors and agents for the works undertaken for the third party.

6.8 Procurement and delivery

Aim - To maximise value for money when purchasing street lighting equipment, services and energy, by ensuring compliance with the corporate procurement process.

Action Plan

- Investigate the potential for funding future upgrade projects through external sources;
- Ensure that appropriate time is built into future project programmes to fully examine options for procurement and complete an appropriate procurement exercise prior to implementation;

Give consideration to externally resourcing the delivery of major projects, from a design and management as well as a works implementation

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Appendix 2

STREET LIGHTING LED/CMS PROJECT - PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Task	Start	Finish	Duration	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	May 2015 - Feb 2016
Expression of interest from prospective Technical Advisor/Project Manager		10-Sep-14	1 day	█								
Approval of Strategy and Capital Funding by Cabinet		09-Oct-14	1 day		█							
Procurement to appoint Technical Advisor/Project Manager	16-Oct-14	31-Oct-14	14 days		█							
Approval of interest free loan element of funding	16-Oct-14	31-Dec-14	77 days		█	█	█					
Technical Advisor/Project Manager commencement	31-Oct-14		1 day									
Completion of procurement documentation	01-Nov-14	19-Dec-14	49 days			█	█					
Tenders invited		05-Jan-15	1 day					█				
Tenders Returned	05-Jan-14	02-Feb-15	28 days					█	█			
Tender evaluation	03-Feb-15	17-Feb-15	14 days						█			
Appointment of contractor by Cabinet		12-Mar-14	1 day								█	
Contract Commencement	01-Apr-14		1 day									█
Installation Contract based on 750 lanterns fitted per month	31-May-15	28-Feb-16	274 days									█
Contract Completion		28-Feb-16	1 day									█
Part loan repayment (8 quarterly payments)	01-Jun-16	31-May-18	2 years									



WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

9 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT:	WIRRAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE STRATEGY 2014-2024
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	KEVIN ADDERLEY, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR CHRIS MEADEN, LEISURE SPORT AND CULTURE
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Members with a Strategy to guide future parks and open space service planning and delivery and partnership working over the period 2014-2024.
- 1.2 The Wirral Parks and Open Space Strategy contains policies and actions to support the local economy and population's health, provide a network of good quality parks and open spaces, increase volunteer input and partnership working, support biodiversity, improve environmental sustainability, increase innovation and achieve a sustainable business model. Key policies include a Wirral Quality Standard and increasing involvement of Friends Groups.
- 1.3 Cabinet is requested to approve the proposed Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. This is a key Decision included in the Council's Forward Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Strategy has been informed by findings of the Wirral Parks User Survey, Visitor Research Study and consultation with a wide range of partners and stakeholders.
- 2.2 The aim of the Parks and Open Space Strategy is to provide direction during an anticipated period of financial challenge and change and provide support for appropriate funding bids, investment and partnership agreements.
- 2.3 Key issues which this engagement has identified are as follows: green and open spaces are important infrastructure to support local economic growth; there is a need for an accessible network of safe green and open spaces; parks and open spaces are important for health, education, biodiversity and engaging different generations.

3.0 PROPOSED STRATEGY

3.1 Vision

Based on feedback from partners, communities and Friends groups, the strategy provides a 10 year vision for Wirral's parks and open spaces:

While recognising and responding to financial pressures, Wirral is proud of its diverse range of historic parks, open spaces, coast and countryside sites which provide an accessible network of good quality parks and open spaces. With input from staff, volunteers, Friends groups and other partners, Wirral's parks and open spaces will be well managed and provide a wide range of positive activities, supporting good health, improved life changes and an excellent quality of life, within reach of everyone who lives in or visits Wirral.

3.2 Aims

The strategy also includes key aims to achieve the vision:

1. Attract and retain investment in the borough through provision of attractive, well managed parks and open spaces;
2. Be accessible, safe and well-used places for local people, communities and visitors to enjoy;
3. Help to bring different generations together through providing positive healthy activities for local people and communities;
4. Contribute to the environmental sustainability and biodiversity of Wirral, achieving a good balance by protecting habitats while supporting economic growth;
5. Be funded, delivered and managed through a new, viable business model.

3.3 Actions

Actions to achieve the five aims are set out including:

- a) Wirral Standard
Introduce and deliver a Wirral Standard for all parks and open spaces.
- b) Green Flag Awards for Parks
Retain existing Green Flag awards and increase the number of new Green Flag award parks by at least one per year whenever reasonably practicable, in consultation with the Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board.
- c) Park Management Plans
Annually review and update site management plans for a) all candidate Green Flag sites plus b) 4 other sites (e.g. 1 per constituency area per year in addition to Green Flag candidate sites).
- d) Blue Flag Awards for Beaches
Achieve Blue Flag status for one beach by December 2016 and a second beach by December 2019.

- e) Friends Groups
Achieve one new Friends Group per year through a 'Buddy' scheme whereby existing groups mentor and help establish new groups.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 Adequate people resources will be needed to achieve the necessary service transition while achieving quality. If officer resources are reduced this would put at risk capacity to put in place necessary agreements and engage with partners and the community.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Not having a Strategy would reduce opportunities to improve people's health, increase volunteer input and partnership working, support biodiversity and improve environmental sustainability

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The following consultation and engagement has informed the development of the Wirral Parks and Open Space Strategy:

- a workshop on key issues in April 2013, attended by more than 100 partners, user group representatives, Friends groups, Parks and Countryside staff and other Council officers;
- dialogue with a range of partner, user group and key stakeholder representatives through Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board meetings in 2013 and 2014;
- public consultation on the draft Strategy from 3rd February to 14th March 2014. 845 people responded, the majority completing the online questionnaire with some paper questionnaires also returned. 3/4 of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the objectives and policies and 2/3 agreed with the Action Plan. In addition respondents provided more than 400 additional comments. Detailed responses were also received from the Environment Agency and Wirral Wildlife Trust;
- discussion about the emerging Strategy at meetings of Wirral Parks Friends Forum, Wirral Older Peoples Parliament Executive Committee, Advocacy in Wirral and Wirral Mental Health Forum.
- the Strategy also draws on the findings of the Wirral Parks Survey 2012 which was responded to by 1,269 people. The Survey provided comprehensive evidence of what local people think about their parks and beaches, how they use these places and what they feel works well and could be improved.

7.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 The Parks and Open Space Strategy will mean increased partnership working opportunities with voluntary and community groups, for example Parks Friends groups, nature conservation volunteers and health partners.

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

9.1 Adequate Council Officer and partner input will be required to deliver the Strategy - for example to develop partnership working, improve parks and generate additional income.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Adoption and delivery of the Strategy will assist the Council and partners to meet obligations in respect of the statutory Biodiversity Duty as set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act and other relevant environmental legislation.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(a) Yes and impact review is attached –

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

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Strategy includes policy to increase the environmental friendliness of Wirral's parks and open spaces.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Strategy complements and supports the Local Plan. The Strategy includes policies to achieve safe parks and open spaces.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the Wirral Parks and Open Space Strategy 2014-2024.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 To provide strategic direction for future parks and open space service planning and partnership working.

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APPENDICES

Wirral Parks and Open Space Strategy 2014-2024

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

Wirral Council Parks and Countryside User Survey 2012

BRIEFING NOTES HISTORY

Briefing Note	Date
-	

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
-	

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Wirral Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2014-2024

Introduction

Wirral Council is facing significant budgetary pressures. The aim of this parks and open spaces strategy is to provide direction throughout the next 10 years - to keep in sight the key priorities and principles needed for success during the anticipated period of financial challenge and necessary change. The strategy seeks to address issues related to parks and open space sites in Wirral that are over half an acre (0.2 hectares) in size.

Wirral's parks and open spaces provide access to a wide range of positive activities for people of all ages throughout the borough. They are a treasure trove of history, from Viking to Victorian times and beyond. They are home to many kinds of wildlife and plants. Birkenhead Park opened in 1847, inspiring the creation of urban parks around the world, including the world famous Central Park in New York. From beaches to historic parks, nature reserves and country parks to playgrounds: parks and open spaces help make Wirral a special place, loved and appreciated by residents and visitors alike.

As we go forward in the 21st century, there is a need for a Wirral parks and open spaces strategy that inspires and one that is also strong enough to meet the challenges and opportunities of the next decade.

Purpose of the Strategy

- To provide direction for service planning and targeting of resources.
- To create an agreed, targeted action plan.
- To provide support for appropriate funding bids, investment and partnership agreements.

Vision

Based on feedback from partners, communities and Friends groups a 10 year vision has been created for Wirral's parks and open spaces:

While recognising and responding to financial pressures, Wirral is proud of its diverse range of historic parks, open spaces, coast and countryside sites which provide an accessible network of good quality parks and open spaces. With input from staff, volunteers, Friends groups and other partners, Wirral's parks and open spaces will be well managed and provide a wide range of positive activities, supporting good health, improved life chances and an excellent quality of life, within reach of everyone who lives in or visits the Wirral.

There is compelling evidence from the Parks User Survey and Visitor Research Study of how highly local people and visitors value Wirral's parks and open spaces. As a peninsular with a strong regeneration agenda, well connected to the rest of the North West region and with a good public transport network, Wirral is well placed to have an effective, good quality parks and open spaces network.

Aims

To achieve the Vision Wirral's parks and open spaces will:

1. Attract and retain investment in the borough through provision of attractive, well managed parks and open spaces;
2. be accessible, safe and well-used places for local people, communities and visitors to enjoy;
3. help bring different generations together through providing positive healthy activities for local people and communities;
4. contribute to the environmental sustainability and biodiversity of Wirral, achieving a good balance by protecting habitats while supporting economic growth;
5. be funded, delivered and managed through a new, viable business model.

Context

The Wirral peninsula is widely known for its attractive parks, coast and countryside sites. Wirral's parks and open spaces provide many positive benefits for both local people and visitors from the UK and further a field. This is in no small part a testament to the extensive network of volunteers, Friends Groups, and diverse partner organisations who work with Wirral Council to help care for, improve and promote parks and open space sites and related activities throughout the borough.

The distribution, character and design of Wirral's parks and open spaces reflects the history of Wirral's development over the centuries. There are currently over 210 park and open space sites owned by the council, 19 of which achieved a green flag award in 2014:

Birkenhead:

Bidston Hill, Birkenhead Park, Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm, The Arno, Victoria Park,

South Wirral:

Brotherton Park and Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve, Eastham Country Park, Thornton Hough Village Green,

Wallasey

North Wirral Coastal Park, Vale Park, Central Park.

West Wirral:

Ashton Park, Coronation Gardens, Hilbre Islands Local Nature Reserve, Meols Park, Royden Park, Wirral Country Park, Victoria Gardens.

Key Principles that underpin this strategy

1. Wirral's parks and open spaces are one of the main reasons why visitors and residents come to, or stay in, the borough. It is important that Wirral has a network of accessible, good quality parks and open spaces in order to support a vibrant local economy and the health and wellbeing of local people.
2. To contribute positively to the economic prosperity of the borough, Wirral's parks and open spaces need to be safe, welcoming, well maintained and have an appropriate range of facilities and activities.
3. Although most of the borough has good or satisfactory access to parks and open spaces, there are some areas where there is a lack of publicly accessible open space. This deficit will be remedied - where possible - to help optimise the health and well being of people living nearby.
4. A significant number of Wirral's parks and open spaces have an international, national or local biodiversity designation. Wirral Council has a statutory biodiversity duty, and will work with partners to conserve and promote the ecological interest and importance of these sites.
5. Wirral's parks and open spaces have a role to play in educating people about the importance of the environment and how people can enjoy and help care for their local areas. Wirral's parks and open spaces also have an important role to play in providing lifelong learning and skills for local people, improving life chances.
6. There are important public health issues and health 'hotspots' throughout the borough which parks and open space sites will help overcome, in partnership with the Public Health Team, voluntary groups and other organisations. The issues include coronary heart disease, diabetes, obesity and mental health as well as encouraging regular exercise to help provide physical and mental health benefits for all ages.
7. Climate forecasts indicate more changeable weather patterns, including drought in summer and more rainfall and flooding in winter. The maintenance of Wirral's parks and open spaces will take this into account, rather than always treating sites as they have been managed in the past.
8. There is a pressing need for new business models to be implemented for parks and open spaces throughout the Wirral. Identifying land that is surplus to requirements, as well as increasing income and funding generation and enhancing roles and opportunities for partner organisations and community groups are economic necessities. Technological improvements and innovation are also necessary to optimise the use of reduced budgets and resources.
9. Wirral Council, Friends groups, volunteers and partner organisations will work together to deliver the strategy through attention to the following aims, objectives, policies and actions.

AIM 1: Attract and retain investment in the borough through provision of attractive, well managed parks and open spaces.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Wirral's parks and open space support the local economy.

Summary of key issues

Wirral has a strong regeneration agenda, as set out in its emerging Local Plan. To cater for population growth and change it is important that the Wirral has accessible, high quality parks and open space which help support a happy, healthy, motivated population and skilled workforce with good opportunities for recreation and exercise. Parks and open space need to contribute positively to Wirral's reputation as an attractive place to live and work. As well as parks, coastal management is important both locally and within the context of the City Region aim for the region to be a centre of excellence for integrated coastal management.

Wirral's parks, beaches and countryside play an important role in the visitor economy. The Wirral Visitor Research Study (2011) showed that annually six million visitors come for the day and 753,000 stay over. 68% highlighted the Borough's natural assets as the reason they viewed Wirral as a better than average location. Initiatives such as the Wirral Year of Coast and Countryside and the Wirral Circular Trail attract visitors and many come to visit its beaches, parks and countryside. Events play an important part, with key events including Mersey Pirate Muster in New Brighton, the Birkenhead Park Festival of Transport and the Wirral Golf Classic. Coast, Countryside and Quality Food are the most important considerations for planning short breaks. People are typically prepared to travel up to around an hour to visit the Wirral. 57% of visitors are 55 plus and socio-economically ABC1s account for 65% of visitors compared with 51% of the national population profile of ABC1s.

POLICY 1.1a: Wirral's parks and open space are an important part of Wirral's quality of life and 'brand' and attract investment in parks, jobs and the wider economy.

ACTIONS

- Produce and deliver a Management and Development Plan for Key Parks and open spaces including physical infrastructure, business development and promotion. Include within this a schedule of key strategic parks and open spaces infrastructure projects eligible for funding including Community Infrastructure Levy, to support development in line with Wirral's Local Plan while protecting and relieving pressure on environmentally sensitive sites. The Management and Development Plan for Key Parks and open space will also take account of local and sub-regional Strategic Green Infrastructure Plans (*See also Action under Policy 2.1a regarding green infrastructure*). Include within this a review of the management plans for key parks and open spaces.
- Deliver the Wirral Quality Standard for parks and open space - *see Action under Policy 2.2a.*

- Produce and wherever reasonably practicable implement recommendations arising from a Wirral Parks and open spaces Strategy Annual Performance Report - see *Action under Policy 2.2a*.

POLICY 1.1b: Develop the role of parks and open space in the local, visitor and ‘staycation’ economy, while protecting the essential environmental qualities that make these spaces special.

ACTIONS

- Work with the borough’s tourism team to deliver a parks and open spaces visitor attraction plan which includes:
 - Optimizing appropriate café facilities at key sites as income generators;
 - linking Wirral’s parks and open space to: (a) good value ‘staycation’ packages for the North West region; (b) the Liverpool visitor experience including the growing ‘super ferry’ onshore tours market; and (c) the ‘Golf Coast’ marketplace, subject to the outcome of the review of Council golf provision; (d) the ‘3 C’s’ market for Coast, Countryside and Cuisine based activities; (e) facilities for sports/activity breaks including parks and open space;
 - public access to toilet provision at key locations, subject to their operation and maintenance being demonstrably affordable and viable.
- Produce and implement an Events Development Plan for parks and open spaces.
- Review beach management policies and licences and implement its recommendations. *See also Action under Policy 2.2a regarding Blue Flag standard.*

POLICY 1.1c: Parks and open space improve Wirral’s skills base.

ACTIONS

- Include Skills, Training and Apprenticeship Project Opportunities in the Management and Development Plan for key parks and open spaces.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Wirral’s parks and open spaces contribute to the good health of its population.

Summary of key issues

The Wirral Parks User Survey 2012 shows that walking, informal exercise, access to nature and relaxation are important - and parks, beaches and open spaces have an important social health function. Activities in parks such as volunteering, dog walking and pram walks have a role to play in tackling depression and isolation including post-natal depression for

example. Changing trends need to be understood, for example the growth in girls and women's football, and new facilities considered - for example new fitness equipment is proving popular. There is scope to build on partnership working and initiatives like the Adult Social Services projects in parks such as Royden Park. There is also potential to explore using appropriate areas of parks and open spaces for growing healthy food, for example in areas with allotment waiting lists.

Public health is a key priority in the Wirral. Parks and open spaces can be beneficial for a range of physical and mental health condition priorities as part of a preventative 'natural health service'. Linking deprived communities and people with health related issues to parks and open spaces is more important than ever. Wirral Council has a public health leadership role, working with valued partners, drawing on evidence such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Sport England's Strategy highlights the importance of encouraging young people to play for a minimum of 30 minutes each week. Providing places for exercise for other age groups is important too, including older people.

POLICY 1.2a Wirral's parks and open space help provide preventative physical and mental health services for people of different ages.

ACTIONS

Support health improvement projects - including physical infrastructure and community outreach and engagement - for inclusion in the Management and Development Plan for key parks and open spaces.

POLICY 1.2b Wirral's parks and open spaces will help people aged under 17 develop a lifelong exercise habit through taking part in 30 minutes vigorous sports or other exercise each week.

ACTIONS

- Work with health, school, sport and community partners to increase exercise activities for people under 17 in parks and open spaces.

POLICY 1.2c Provide sustainable healthy living opportunities in parks and open space for a growing number of older people in the population.

ACTIONS

- Encourage appropriate health-focused facilities and activities for older people in Wirral's parks and open spaces, taking into account evidence of need, economic viability and affordability for users and the council.

POLICY 1.2d Parks and open spaces help reduce Wirral health deficits through increasing participation rates in exercise and sport.

ACTIONS

- Encourage and enable increased sports and exercise participation by vulnerable people (including those at risk of social isolation) in parks and open spaces.
- Provide and maintain accessible fitness circuits comprising surfaced routes and fitness equipment and active play facilities where sufficient funding is available.

POLICY 1.2e Use parks and open space to deliver mental health and therapeutic benefits.

ACTIONS

- Encourage appropriate mental wellbeing related events and projects in parks and open spaces, including those run by Social Services and other partners.

POLICY 1.2f Provide sustainable places, facilities and opportunities for both organised sports and informal recreation and exercise in parks and open space.

ACTIONS

- Commission and implement an updated Wirral Playing Pitch Strategy.
- Work with partners to develop and implement a Sports Coaching Volunteering Plan for Parks and open spaces.
- Liaise with local sports clubs to increase training in appropriate parks.
- Review playground and skate park provision as part of the Management and Development Plan for key parks and open spaces.

POLICY 1.2g Provide sustainable opportunities for growing healthy food.

ACTIONS

- Produce and implement an updated Wirral Allotment Strategy.
- Work with partners and local communities to identify and implement suitable locations for exemplar healthy food growing projects.

AIM 2: Wirral's parks and open space are accessible, safe and well-used places which its communities and visitors enjoy.

Objective 2.1: Provide access to a network of good quality parks and open spaces for Wirral's communities.

Summary of key issues

Accessibility standards are important to inform service planning and assessment of green space needs arising from major new developments. Local Plan Core Strategy policies on Green Infrastructure, Quantity and Quality, New Open Space and Settlement Area policies also need to be taken into account, to match provision with future growth areas, and balance pressure on sites. Planning for parks and open space also needs to take account of the Public Rights of Way Plan and local and sub-regional Green Infrastructure and Green Travel strategies and projects - so that any strategic missing links in Green Infrastructure network, for example from parks sites into the 'interior' of mid Wirral, can be remedied.

The Wirral Open Space Assessment and Green Space Audit provides data about the quantity and accessibility of parks and open spaces. While the Wirral generally has a comparatively good or satisfactory provision of public parks and open spaces there are some localised deficiencies in more built up areas, such as lack of access to natural/semi-natural green space in parts of East Wallasey and Birkenhead. The Open Space Assessment also identified a 126 hectare deficiency in access to nature/Local Nature Reserves.

POLICY 2.1a: Provide an accessible network of parks and open spaces that meets the current and future needs of Wirral's communities, as part of its green infrastructure network.

ACTIONS

- Support planning policy in Wirral 's Local Plan for quantity and accessibility standards based on a target minimum distance of 400m from people's homes to parks and open spaces, wherever reasonably practicable.
- Remedy localised deficiencies in parks and open spaces through planning applications and other processes.
- Protect and enhance existing green links through Local Plan policy and allocations.
- Work with the Public Rights of Way team and Green Infrastructure partners to identify and remedy strategic 'missing links' for people and wildlife in the Green Infrastructure and Green Travel network between settlements and key parks and countryside locations.
- Review bye-laws and/or user codes for cycling, walking and horse riding and implement recommendations.

POLICY 2.1b Consider alternative uses for low amenity value green spaces in areas with plentiful supply of parks and open spaces.

ACTIONS

- Identify potential sites for disposal or alternative uses through undertaking a Land Use Reallocation Project.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Deliver safe, welcoming, inclusive and well functioning parks and open spaces that are well used and suitably maintained all year round.

Summary of key issues

The rich heritage within Wirral's parks and open spaces should be recognised and where practicable protected, enhanced, promoted and interpreted. The needs of people with disabilities and the needs of 'hard to reach' groups should be taken into account, including provision of accessible paths and equipment as well as provision of mental health outreach programmes. There is a need for activities, events and facilities to engage different generations of people. It is also important to use the right information and communication channels to let different groups know what parks and open spaces have to offer.

Findings from the Wirral Parks User Survey 2012 and the parks and open spaces Stakeholder Workshop (April 2013) showed that the feeling of being safe in parks and open spaces remains an important priority. Performance management was also highlighted as being vital, building on existing Green Flag awards and through work with Friends groups, volunteers and partner organisations to help monitor, maintain and improve standards. It is important for local people, site users, partner organisations and staff to have pride in the sites. As evidenced by the Wirral Parks User Survey 2012, reducing dog fouling, providing suitable visitor facilities where viable and providing seats, bins and play areas makes for positive perceptions of parks and open spaces in Wirral. Feedback from users shows that drainage on some sites still causes difficulties and needs to be improved if possible.

POLICY 2.2a: Deliver good quality parks and open spaces, achieving a suitable balance of facilities for different user groups. Deploy staff and resources effectively by working with and local people and volunteers, informed by site management plans, operational knowledge and feedback from the Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board.

ACTIONS

Introduce and deliver the Wirral quality standard for parks and open spaces. The Standard is to achieve a 'Fair' or Good rating for all parks and open space using Green Flag scoring system for all parks, based on the following minimum key site performance principles:

1. Welcoming, with entrance(s) easy to find;
2. Safe for people to use;
3. Generally cared for appearance with evidence of 'TLC' through:
 - 3.1 Tidy and generally litter-free;
 - 3.2 Adequate levels of hard landscape infrastructure, in sound condition;
 - 3.3 Well maintained and designed horticulture, appropriate for the site: e.g. grass and/or plants and/or trees;
 - 3.4 Facilities are well maintained and open as advertised;
4. Appropriate site character and sense of place ('genius loci'); e.g. appropriate types of planting, hard landscape; protection of key landscape and heritage features or vistas;
5. Appropriate balance of amenity and wildlife interest;
6. Any staff are identifiable and approachable;
7. Appropriate involvement of local people and community groups.

Sites will be scored against the following Green Flag criteria, with additional criteria for play and health added:

1. A welcoming place

- Good safe access
- Effective signage to and in park
- Something for everyone

2. Healthy, Safe and Secure

- Equipment and facilities safe to use
- Secure place for all members of community to use or traverse
- Dog fouling dealt with
- Health and Safety policies in place and reviewed
- Access to toilets, drinking water, emergency equipment

3. Well maintained and clean

- Litter and waste management
- Grounds, buildings, equipment well maintained
- Policy on litter, vandalism, maintenance reviewed

4. Sustainability

Environment Policy: energy conservation
 Pesticide use, pollution reduction, horticultural, resource conservation
 Horticultural and arboricultural standards

5. Conservation & Heritage

Natural features - wildlife flora
 Landscape features
 Buildings and structures

6. Community Involvement

Knowledge of user community and level and patterns of use
 Community involvement
 Appropriate provision of recreational facilities

7. Marketing

Strategy
Information to users
Promotion

8. Management

Management plan - reflects what on the ground
Financially sound management

Plus additional criteria:

9. Health Facilities and Activities & 10. Play Value

- Review and deliver park and open space site management and development plans in conjunction with Parks Friends, user groups, partner organisations and staff, to an agreed programme and informed by evidence of user needs and site conditions.
- Produce and implement a review of key strategic parks and open spaces heritage sites and assets. Include viable key heritage projects within the Management and Development Plan for Key Parks and open spaces.
- Report on performance to the Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board. Implement recommendations arising from the Report and Board wherever reasonably practicable.
- Publish a Wirral parks and open spaces strategy Annual Performance Report, including: core sections on Wirral Council Parks and Countryside performance and on delivery of the Parks and open spaces Strategy Action Plan; and a summary of achievements for parks and open space.
- Retain existing Green Flag awards and increase the number of new Green Flag award parks by at least one per year whenever reasonably practicable, in consultation with the Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board.
- Achieve Blue Flag status for two beaches, subject to meeting criteria including water quality and agreeing a viable seasonal dog exclusion zone on an appropriate part of the beach for part of the year.

POLICY 2.2b: Wirral's Parks and Countryside workforce is well-motivated, appropriately skilled and focused on delivering the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, Business Plan and the requirements set out in the specific Site Management and Development Plans.

ACTIONS

- Undertake and implement a review of Wirral Council's Parks and Countryside staff structure, informed by the move to constituency based working, along with customer and partner organisations' feedback, to ensure effective targeting of resources.

- Improve Wirral’s fleet of parks and open spaces equipment and machinery.
- Develop and implement a Staff Training and Recognition Action Plan.

POLICY 2.2c: Address anti-social behaviour issues in parks and open space.

ACTIONS

- Produce and implement a review of appropriate bye-laws and control orders in parks and open spaces, including those for dog control to encourage responsible behaviour by dog owners.
- Produce and implement a user engagement plan to break down inter-generational barriers, for example through outreach work with schools. Include within this a Wirral Green Space Code for socially responsible use which can be used in educational projects.

POLICY 2.2d: Maximise positive use of parks and open space, in particular addressing under-used sites in built up areas, facilities within sites or times of lower usage. Provide welcoming and vibrant places with the right facilities that can be realistically maintained to a good standard to draw people in.

ACTIONS

- Where viable in terms of maintenance, include ways to increase or improve facilities and activities known to increase footfall in parks, in the Management and Development Plan for key parks and open space.

POLICY 2.2e Ensure parks and open space are places where people can easily ‘connect’ to activities, user groups and facilities in their area.

ACTIONS

- Deliver training/briefings for staff and Friends groups on how to ‘connect’ local people and parks and open spaces users to positive activities, user groups and facilities in their area. For example through being accessible, knowing customers’ needs and what information and services are available in their area.
- Develop a Green Spaces Marketing Plan based on survey evidence. Include in this parks and open spaces information ‘hubs’ such as park visitor centres, online information, use of notice boards and inclusion of Friends groups and partner organisations’ parks activities.

AIM 3: Wirral's parks and open spaces will help engage local communities and bring different generations together.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Engage and empower communities in the design and delivery of parks and open space related events services through working with Friends groups, partner organisations and volunteers.

Summary of key issues

Wirral has a well established, active Parks Friends network, comprising 47 constituted groups in 2014. These are represented by the Parks Steering Group which meets regularly with the Council's Parks and Countryside team. In addition, the Wirral Parks Friends Forum meets twice a year. The Council's Parks and Countryside staff liaise on an ongoing basis with Friends groups over a wide range of projects and issues.

Key messages from the parks and open spaces Stakeholder Workshop (April 2013) were as follows: Friends groups help develop projects, secure funding and generate income. Friends groups have a key role to play in performance monitoring as a 'critical friend'. It is expected that the role of partners, Friends and volunteers will increase over time, both due to budgets and need. While some groups are active in landscaping and horticultural volunteering, many do not feel they currently have the capacity or desire to take on core ownership and maintenance of parks sites. The type, size and capacity of groups varies - some get involved in 'hands on' tasks and events, some focus more on fundraising. Many sites still do not have Friends groups and some existing groups are interested in helping new ones to get set up or to possibly extend their remit to include nearby sites. There is more scope for groups to network with, advise and support each other. Key questions include how to sustain and build capacity of groups and how to ensure they are as representative as possible of their communities. There is need to balance aspiration with realism and manage expectations, given the future local authority budgetary picture; as well as service delivery and performance management. Wirral Council has a key role in facilitating and communicating with Friends groups. The Council has a key role in preparing site management plans in conjunction with the local community. Some allotment groups expressed an interest in joining Friends Forum. In terms of volunteering, there is demand to develop a broad 'menu' of volunteering opportunities in conjunction with Friends and other partners including Wirral Conservation Volunteers and Community Action Wirral (CAW).

Key messages regarding partner organisations were as follows. Partners can: lever in funding; help provide an evidence base to support investment; provide technical expertise; play a 'critical friend' role in performance monitoring and provide input into service planning; possibly taking on more future management of some sites. This might involve mechanisms like Community Asset Transfer, Community Interest Companies, Social Enterprises and Trusts or a mixture of these. With Wirral Council moving to a constituency based model there is also scope to develop more constituency area-based working.

POLICY 3.1a Support and strengthen the work of Wirral Parks Friends Groups.

ACTIONS

- Hold regular Wirral Parks Steering Group, Friends Forum and Partnership and Performance Board meetings.
- With partners develop deliver a training programme for Friends groups e.g. task days, events, assessing parks quality, managing volunteers, recruiting and retaining members, funding bids and fundraising and/or other courses to meet identified needs, including networking and skills/information exchange.
- Establish a Friends Group Buddy Plan through which established Friends groups can provide advice and support to new groups to help them set up or expand their remit to sites in their area which do not have Friends groups. At least one additional site per year to be supported by a Friends group.
- Support Friends groups to sustain and refresh their capacity and membership levels through annual Wirral Friends activities and volunteering promotion, linked for example to Love Parks Week or equivalent.

POLICY 3.1b Maintain and promote partnership working at strategic and neighbourhood level.

ACTIONS

- Engage with relevant environmental bodies and other partners including in the fields of health, education, community safety and sports.
- Engage with relevant neighbourhood bodies, for example Wirral Council Constituency Committees or equivalent.

POLICY 3.1c Provide a menu of volunteering opportunities in parks and open space.

ACTIONS

- Develop and implement a menu of volunteering opportunities with partners including Friends Groups and Voluntary and Community Action Wirral. Opportunities may include a range of activities from, for example, administration and publicity to fundraising, events organisation and practical conservation tasks.

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Education and aspiration

Summary of key issues

In terms of education, key messages from the Parks and open spaces Stakeholder

Workshop (April 2013) were as follows. Parks and open spaces have an important role to play in lifelong learning 'outside the classroom' and skills acquisition for local people, users and staff. Parks can provide opportunities for horticultural, ecological, historical and sporting education. There is scope to modernise the environmental education offer and link to schools' curriculum requirements through initiatives such as Forest Schools and Beach Schools.

Parks and Countryside Rangers have an important role to play in environmental education. In addition, the Council and partners can provide work experience opportunities in parks and open space to help increase local people's skills and life chances.

POLICY 3.2a Encourage environmental, horticultural and sports education programme in parks and open space in partnership with local schools and other partners.

ACTIONS

- Encourage the development and delivery of a programme of cost effective environmental education projects using parks and open spaces. The programme will be developed in partnership with local schools and or colleges and link to their curricula. As part of this programme a 'Wirral Schools Adopt a Park' scheme will be piloted and developed where appropriate, including opportunities for education, activities and conservation tasks.

AIM 4: Wirral's parks and open spaces contribute to the environmental sustainability and biodiversity of Wirral, achieving a good balance of use by protecting sensitive habitats while supporting economic growth.

OBJECTIVE 4.1: Fulfil the Biodiversity Duty in Wirral's parks and open spaces.

Summary of key issues

Biodiversity provides important economic and health benefits to people in Wirral. More than two thirds of visitors highlight the Borough's natural assets as the reason they view Wirral as a better than average location (Wirral Visitor Research Study, 2011). Wirral Parks User Survey 2012 showed that seeing wildlife is an important reason why many people visit local parks and open spaces. More than two thirds of people rated nature and wildlife protection as good or very good in Wirral's parks and open spaces.

From Natterjack Toads at Red Rocks to bee-friendly meadows, many of Wirral's parks, countryside and coastal sites are rich in biodiversity, providing habitats for plants, birds and animals and opportunities for access to nature for people, with the associated therapeutic and educational benefits. Wirral Wildlife (the Wirral branch of Cheshire Wildlife Trust) surveys local Sites of Biological Interest (SBI's) on a 10 year rolling programme, which informs the site review process undertaken by the Local Sites Partnership. Biological

Records are fed into the Cheshire Local Record Centre by the Wirral branch of Cheshire Wildlife Trust. When the Trust monitors a site owned by the Council, copies of the reports are given to site managers.

Parks and open spaces of note for nature conservation include Thurstaston, Dibbinsdale and Heswall Dales Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which are managed under Higher Level Stewardship, agreed with Natural England. Wirral's internationally designated sites around the coast are also SSSIs and are subject to Natural England's monitoring, management and reporting requirements.

Local authorities, including Wirral Council, have a statutory Biodiversity Duty which requires the following: incorporating biodiversity conservation into strategies; participating in local biodiversity partnerships to deliver Local Biodiversity Action Plans; promoting beneficial land management for biodiversity; ensuring up to date biodiversity data is available to the local authority through the Local Record Centre for example; identifying Local Sites of importance for biodiversity; and supporting access to nature and biodiversity education.

With anticipated pressures on future local authority budgets the ten year strategy needs to look realistically at opportunities to 'green up' existing assets through less intensive maintenance of appropriate sites or parts of sites. This will mean finding solutions which strike a suitable balance between enhancing biodiversity and also maintaining amenity value and leisure uses for local people, through working with Friends groups, Councillors and partner organisations. Priorities include conservation and enhancement of key habitat types such as heathland, grassland, woodland, ponds and wetland.

It is important to have regard to local and sub-regional green infrastructure strategies and opportunities, including possible biodiversity offsetting opportunities. Nature in parks and open spaces also offers a myriad of opportunities for Rangers, Friends and partners to engage with and provide educational opportunities for local communities.

POLICY 4.1a Fulfil statutory duties including the Wirral Council's Biodiversity Duty and requirements for management Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and European designated sites. Use the Local Wildlife Site System to inform site management and land use policy.

ACTIONS

- Develop and implement a 'Wild About Wirral' project to deliver more nature friendly site management where appropriate, balanced with protecting core site amenity and recreational use.
- Implement site management plans including those for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), European designated sites and Local Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs).
- Include within the Management and Development Plan for Key Parks and open space a programme of habitat protection, enhancement and creation projects for priority habitats and geologically important sites including coast, heathland,

wetlands, meadow and woodland for bees, birds, amphibians and other species, in line with the local Biodiversity Action Plan.

- Deliver sub-regionally significant area nature projects, in line with Local Nature Partnership endorsed strategies, where appropriate and viable.

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Wirral's parks and open spaces address climate change issues and deliver environmental sustainability.

Summary of key issues

The parks and open spaces strategy needs to take account of Borough wide strategies and policies including the Climate Change Strategy, Environmental Management System (EMS), Shoreline Management Plan, Coastal Strategy and Floods and Water Management Act.

Long term climate forecasts (Climate UK), indicate a likelihood of higher average temperatures and more seasonal extremes. This might include a decrease in summer rainfall and an increase in heat waves, and/or an increase in 'flash' rainfall resulting in more flooding, higher sea levels and waterlogged soils. There is therefore a need to build climate adaptability into the maintenance of Wirral's parks, open spaces and coastal facing sites. This will in turn impact on the selection of species for planting, choosing specimens that are resilient to unpredictable weather conditions. Sustainable drainage capacity in parks and open spaces will be increased and there will be a need to improve drainage of sports pitches and a potential need for more irrigation in summer months where funding is available. The strategy also needs to take account of the North West River Basin Management Plan in order to help optimise water quality and ecological status of rivers and streams in parks as well as in Wirral's estuaries. Site management and development will need to accommodate wetter winter conditions and drier/hotter summer conditions, for example better provision of shading. There will also be a need for flexible deployment of staff and resources in response to greater and more unpredictable seasonal variations.

There is potential to improve and promote the environmental sustainability of parks and open spaces and associated buildings and operations, for example, using low emission machinery/vehicles where possible. Wirral's parks and open spaces can play an important role in reducing the borough's carbon and environmental footprint through for example recycling and composting of parks waste, encouraging local food growing; exploring biomass planting and micro-generation of energy if viable and appropriate to sites. In addition, encouraging cycling, walking and public transport use where appropriate.

POLICY 4.2a Parks and open space help alleviate flood risk while protecting their core amenity and recreational uses.

ACTIONS

- Seek funding for a Programme of Sustainable Drainage Projects at suitable parks and open spaces and implement where appropriate as part of specific site management and development plans.

POLICY 4.2b Increase the environmental friendliness of parks maintenance operations

ACTIONS

- Increase composting and recycling in parks and open space operations.
- Favour use of fuel efficient, low emission vehicles and machinery.

POLICY 4.2c Deliver low carbon exemplar parks sites and buildings.

ACTIONS

- Develop at least four low carbon, low emission projects, subject to funding.

e.g. energy efficient retrofitting, new building/s, changes to parks and open spaces site management.

AIM 5:

Wirral's parks and open space will be funded, delivered and managed through an innovative and viable business model, based on a sound understanding of customer needs, site and service capacity, trends and technology.

OBJECTIVE 5.1 Have a sustainable, strategic, efficient and accountable business model. Make best use of Council and partner roles and resources.

Summary of key issues

The parks and open spaces Stakeholder Workshop (April 2013) identified the need for realism and a new, stable business model based on the ten year budgetary outlook.

In terms of business model key questions include:

- i) what is the likely future funding level and what can be realistically achieved
- ii) how to get the best out of parks and open spaces in austerity conditions
- iii) how to realistically achieve most effective deployment and targeting of resources

The possibility of an expanded future role for partner organisations, self management of some facilities by user groups, Community Asset Transfer, Community Interest Companies, Social Enterprise and Trust are also pertinent issues to explore.

Income generation and increasing fees and charges to cover the full cost of the services provided are likely to play an increasingly important part of the future business model for

Wirral's parks and open spaces.

POLICY 5.1a Achieve a viable funding model for Wirral's parks and open spaces.

ACTIONS

- Produce and implement medium term Parks and Countryside Operations and Budget Plans for the periods 2015-2018 and 2019-2023 including financial savings to be made and introduction of new income streams arising from the Land Use Reallocation Project.
- Within this planning include consideration of alternative delivery options such as: self management by clubs of football pitches and bowling greens; introduction of social enterprises, community interest companies or moving the operation of the borough's parks and open spaces to one or more Trusts.
- Develop and implement a parks and open space Foundation Fund (or site specific funds) to enable people and organisations to donate money for the promotion, care and improvement of parks and open spaces, for example as legacies through their wills.

POLICY 5.1b Optimise the appropriate use of parks and countryside buildings.

ACTIONS

- Reduce the number of depots and buildings in use by the parks and countryside service by working with the community asset transfer team to find suitable uses for empty or underused parks and countryside buildings, without jeopardising the operational effectiveness of the team.

Policy 5.1c Maintain an effective evidence base about parks and open space use, customer needs and quantitative needs assessment to inform service planning.

ACTIONS

- Obtain and analyse information about Green Space users and non-users through a borough wide public Parks and Open Spaces User Survey every three years, supplemented by other Council, Friends group and partner organisations user survey data.

Policy 5.1d Achieve fair fees, charges and income generation which are reasonably affordable for both service user and service provider.

ACTIONS

- Develop and implement a programme of income generation opportunities for parks. Include within this a review of Fees and Charges and Policies for Events to achieve full cost funding for all activities in parks and open spaces.

- Review Parking Charges in appropriate parks and implement recommendations.

Policy 5.1e Any potential disposal of surplus sites or parts of sites will be subject to assessment against the following criteria and will be subject to community consultation.

Criteria

- An acceptable supply of parks and open spaces is maintained in line with the (400m) access standard. Disposal of a site or part of a site will not create a local deficiency measured against this standard.
- An acceptable level of essential amenity and function is preserved in the locality overall - for example for access, play and sport.
- Efficient targeting of resources is achieved within the locality to deliver the Wirral Quality Standard.
- Local biodiversity and landscape character is taken into account, with particular reference to local landscape or townscape character assessment and biodiversity targets and duties.

ACTIONS

- Appropriately assess and publicly consult on any potential site disposals prior to implementation.

OBJECTIVE 5.2 Provide versatile, appropriate, innovative and cost effective parks and open spaces for the benefit of local people.

Summary of key issues and needs

To provide cost effective, well managed parks and open spaces in ways which help maintain and increase local pride and resident satisfaction, active lifestyles and associated economic benefits, there is an ongoing need to review and where appropriate adopt new working methods and technology.

Policies and actions

Policy 5.2a Deliver services which are fit for purpose.

ACTIONS

- Deliver policy-responsive working that identifies and responds effectively to changing needs, for example introducing new types of activities and new facilities and equipment - such as fitness trails.

- Use, and share, efficient and effective technology for site inspections, mapping, logging of repairs, fleet management, taking payment and bookings and providing information about facilities, activities and events in parks and open spaces.

ACTION PLAN WIRRAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY 2014-2024

Wirral Council, Friends groups and partner organisations will work together to deliver the following actions.

Action	Target/Indicator	Target Date	Lead body/ies/(Officer) Key resources needed/comments
Policy 1.1a Wirral's parks and open space are an important part of Wirral's quality of life and 'brand' and attract investment in parks, jobs and the wider economy.			
Produce and deliver a Management and Development Plan for Key parks and open spaces	Deliver the projects in the Plan	Produce CIL Schedule: 2014 Produce the Plan: 2015 Deliver the Plan: 2016-2023	Council Parks and Countryside Team /Various Partners
Deliver the Wirral Quality Standard for parks and open spaces	See Action under Policy 2.2a.		
Produce and implement Wirral Parks and open spaces Strategy Annual Performance Report	See Action under Policy 2.2a.		
Policy 1.1b Develop the role of parks and open space in the local, visitor and 'staycation' economy, while protecting the essential environmental qualities that make these spaces special.			
Produce and deliver a Visitor Attraction Plan for Parks and open space	Deliver the actions in the Plan	Produce the Plan: 2016 Deliver the Plan: 2016-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team /Destination Marketing
Produce and implement a Major Events Development Plan for Parks and open space	Deliver the actions in the Plan	Produce the Plan: 2015 Deliver the Plan: 2015-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team /Destination Marketing
Complete a Review of Council Golf Provision on the Wirral and implement its recommendations	Deliver the recommendations	Complete the Review: 2014 Deliver the Review recommendations: 2014	Wirral Council
Review beach management policies and licences and	Deliver the recommendations	Complete Review: 2014	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Coastal Partners

implement its recommendations		Deliver recommendations: as per Review milestones	
Policy 1.1c Parks and open space improve Wirral's skills base.			
Include skills, training and apprenticeship project opportunities in the management and development plans for key parks and open spaces.	Deliver the management and development plans for key parks and open spaces	Produce the Programme: 2015 Deliver the Programme: 2016-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Friends Groups/Training and Education Partners
Policy 1.2a Wirral's parks and open space help provide preventative physical and mental health services for people of different ages.			
Support health improvement projects for inclusion in the management and development plan for key parks and open spaces.	Deliver the Programme	Produce the Programme: 2015 Deliver the Programme: 2016-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Health Partners/Friends Groups
Policy 1.2b Wirral's parks and open space help get people aged under 17 into the lifelong exercise habit through undertaking at least one 30 minute vigorous exercise session per week.			
Work with health, school, sport and community partners to increase exercise activities for people under 17 in parks and open space	Develop and deliver activities in partnership	Develop and deliver activities in line with partner programme timescales 2014-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team /Children and Young Peoples Services/Sports Development/Sports and Health Partners
Policy 1.2c Provide sustainable healthy living opportunities in parks and open space for a growing number of older people in the population.			
Encourage appropriate health-focused facilities and activities for older people in Wirral's parks and open spaces, taking into account evidence of need, economic viability and affordability for users and the council.	Develop and deliver activities in partnership	Develop and deliver activities in line with partner programme timescales 2014-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team /Friends Groups/Social Services/Sport and Health Partners
Policy 1.2d Parks and open space help reduce the health inequalities gap on the Wirral through increasing participation rates in exercise and sport.			
Encourage and enable increased sports and	Develop and deliver activities in	Develop and deliver activities in line with	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Social

exercise participation by vulnerable people (including those at risk of social isolation) in parks and open spaces.	partnership	partner programme timescales 2014-2024	Services/Sport and Health Partners
Policy 1.2e Use parks and open space to deliver mental health and therapeutic benefits.			
Encourage appropriate mental wellbeing related events and projects in parks and open spaces including those run by Social Services and other partners.	Deliver and deliver activities in partnership	Produce the Review: 2016 Deliver recommendations: 2017-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team)/Social Services/Health Partners
Policy 1.2f Provide sustainable places, facilities and opportunities for both organised sports and informal recreation and exercise in parks and open space.			
Commission and implement an updated Wirral Playing Pitch Strategy	Produce and implement the strategy	Produce the strategy 2014-15 Implement the strategy: 2016-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Sports Development/ Sport Partners
Work with partners to develop and implement a Sports Coaching Volunteering Plan for Parks and open space	Develop and Deliver Activities in partnership	Develop and deliver activities in line with partner programme timescales 2014-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Sports Development
Liaise with local sports clubs to increase training in appropriate parks	Develop and deliver activities in partnership	Develop and deliver activities in line with partner programme timescales 2015-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Sports Development/ Sport Partners
Review playground and skate park provision as part of the management and development plans for key parks and open spaces	Deliver management and development plans for key sites	Produce the plan 2015 Deliver the plan 2015-2024	Wirral Parks & Countryside Team/Friends Groups/Childrens and Young Peoples Services
Policy 1.2g Provide sustainable opportunities for growing healthy food.			
Produce and implement an updated Wirral Allotment Strategy	Deliver the Strategy	Produce the Strategy: 2014 Deliver the Strategy: 2015-2023	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Identify and implement suitable locations for exemplar healthy food	Implement new sites	Identify new sites: 2015	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Local Food and Health

growing projects		Implement new sites: 2016-2024	Partners/Friends Groups/Allotment Groups and-or Societies
Policy 2.1a Provide an accessible network of parks and open space that meets the current and future needs of Wirral's communities, as part of its green infrastructure network.			
Support planning policy in Wirral's Local Plan for quantity and accessibility standards based on a target distance of 400m from people's homes to parks and green spaces wherever reasonably practicable.	Produce Planning Policy	In line with Local Plan timetable	Forward Planning Team
Remedy localised deficiencies in parks and open spaces through response to planning applications and other processes	Remedy localised deficiencies	By 2024, through planning application processes, working with partners	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Forward Planning team/Biodiversity Partners
Protect and enhance existing green links through Local Plan policy and allocations	Enhance green links	Target and monitor through Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Forward Planning team/Public Rights of Way/Biodiversity Partners
Identify and remedy strategic 'missing links' to parks and countryside sites in the Green Infrastructure and Green Travel network	Deliver 'missing link' projects	Identify projects, possibly as part of CIL Schedule: 2014 Deliver the projects as funding becomes available between 2015 and 2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Forward Planning team/Public Rights of Way/Highways/Travel Partners/Developers
Review bye-laws and/or user codes for cycling and horse riding and implement recommendations	Deliver Review recommendations	Produce Review: 2015 Deliver recommendations: 2016-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Public Rights of Way/Friends and User Groups
Policy 2.1b Consider alternative use of low amenity value green spaces in areas with a plentiful supply of green space.			
Identify and implement potential sites for alternative use through a Land Use Reallocation	Identify sites	Assess sites 2014 Implement agreed alternative uses: 2015-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Biodiversity and Sustainability Partners

Project.			
Policy 2.2a Deliver the highest possible quality standards for Wirral's parks and open space to achieve a good balance of facilities for different user groups. Effectively deploy staff, resources and volunteers, informed by site management plans, operational knowledge and feedback from Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board.			
Deliver the Wirral Standard for parks and open space quality	Deliver the standard	2015-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Friends Groups/Partners
Review and deliver park and open space site management plans in conjunction with Parks Friends and user groups and maintenance staff	Annually update: All candidate Green Flag site management plans plus 4 other Parks and Countryside site management plans (e.g. 1 per each Constituency Area per year, different sites each year)	Review target number of management Plans annually: by 31st January each year prior to Green Flag submission deadline for Green Flag candidate sites; and by June 30th for non-Green Flag candidate sites	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Friends Groups
Produce and implement a Review of key strategic parks and open spaces heritage sites and assets	Implement the Review	Produce the Review: 2017 Implement the Review: 2017-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Heritage Partners/Friends Groups
Publish a Wirral Parks and open spaces Strategy Annual Performance Report to the Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board. Implement recommendations where practicable	Publish Annual Performance Report	Report annually each Autumn to Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Partnership and Performance Board
Retain existing Green Flag awards and increase the number of new Green Flag award parks by at least one per year whenever reasonably practicable, unless otherwise agreed with the Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board	Achieve target number of Green Flag awards	Annually by July (subject to Green Flag judging timetable)	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Friends Groups

Achieve Blue Flag status for two beaches, subject to meeting criteria including water quality and agreeing a viable seasonal dog exclusion zone on an appropriate part of the beach for part of the year	Achieve Blue Flag status for two beaches	Achieve Blue Flag status for one beach by December 2016 and Blue Flag status for a second beach by December 2019.	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Coastal Partners
Policy 2.2b Wirral's Parks and Countryside workforce is well-motivated, skilled and focused on delivering the Strategy and Service Plan.			
Undertake and implement a Review of Wirral Council's Parks and Countryside staff structure	Implement the Review	Produce the Review: 2014 Implement the Review: 2014-2015	Wirral Council
Improve Wirral's fleet of parks and open spaces equipment and machinery	Procure equipment and machinery	2014	Wirral Council
Develop and implement a Staff Training and Recognition Action Plan	Implement the Plan	Produce the Plan: 2015 Implement the Plan: 2016-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Policy 2.2c Address anti-social behaviour issues in parks and open space.			
Produce and implement a review of appropriate bye-laws and control orders in parks and open space, including for dog control	Implement Review	Produce Review: 2015 Deliver recommendations: 2016-2017	Wirral Council
Produce and implement a user engagement plan to break down inter-generational barriers, including a Wirral Green Space Code	Implement the Plan	Produce Plan: 2016 Implement the Plan: 2017-2024	Wirral Council/Community and Education Partners

Policy 2.2d Maximise positive usage of parks and open space, in particular addressing under-utilised sites, facilities within sites or times of lower usage. Provide welcoming and vibrant places with the right facilities that can be realistically maintained to a high standard to draw people in.			
Undertake and implement a Review of Council-run and partner-run events and activities programme and policies	Implement the Review	Produce the Review: 2015 Implement the Review: 2016-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Where viable in terms of maintenance, include targeted provision, maintenance or increase in facilities known to increase footfall in parks, where viable in terms of maintenance in the management and development plan for key parks and open spaces	Deliver the management and development plans	Produce the Plan: 2014 Deliver the Plan: 2015-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Policy 2.2e Ensure parks and open space are places where people can easily 'connect' to activities, user groups and facilities in their area.			
Deliver training for staff and Friends on how to connect parks and open spaces users to activities, user groups and facilities in their area	Deliver training	2016	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team /Health and Volunteering Partners
Develop a Green Spaces Marketing Plan	Deliver the Plan	Produce the Plan: 2016 Implement the Plan: 2017-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team /Destination Marketing/Communications
Policy 3.1a Support and strengthen the work of Wirral Parks Friends Groups.			
Hold regular Wirral Parks Steering Group, Friends Forum and Partnership and Performance Board meetings	Hold the meetings	As per groups' terms of reference	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Friends
Develop and deliver a	Deliver the training	2014-2023, dates to	Parks Steering Group/Parks

training programme for Friends groups		be agreed by Parks Steering Group/Parks Friends Forum	Friends Forum/ Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Develop and implement a Friends Group Buddy Plan	One site per year with a new Friends group	Annually	Parks Steering Group/Parks Friends Forum
Have an annual Wirral Friends promotional week	One week per year	Annually	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Parks Steering Group/Parks Friends Forum
Policy 3.1b Maintain and promote partnership working at strategic and neighbourhood level.			
Engage with relevant environmental partnership bodies and other partners including in the fields of health, education, community safety and sports	Hold Partnership and Performance Board meetings	Ongoing, frequency as per groups' terms of reference	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Various partners
Engage with relevant neighbourhood bodies, for example Wirral Council Constituency Committees or equivalent	Appropriate partners to attend Council Constituency Committee meetings	Ongoing, frequency as per groups' terms of reference	Wirral Council /Various partners
Policy 3.1c Provide a menu of volunteering opportunities in parks and open space.			
Develop and implement a 'menu' of volunteering opportunities in parks and open spaces	Implement a 'menu'	Produce a menu: 2016 Implement a menu: 2017-2024	Community Action Wirral/ Friends Groups/Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Policy 3.2a Provide an environmental, horticultural and sports education programme in parks and open space in partnership with local schools and other partners.			
Encourage the development and delivery of a programme of cost effective environmental education projects using parks and open spaces, including a 'Wirral schools adopt a park' .	Deliver the Programme	Produce a Programme: 2015 Implement a programme 2014-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Education partners

Policy 4.1a Fulfil statutory duties including the Wirral Council's Biodiversity Duty and requirements for management Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and European designated sites. Use the Local Wildlife Site System to inform site management and land use policy.			
Develop and implement the 'Wild About Wirral' project to deliver more nature friendly site management	Deliver projects	Identify projects: 2014 Deliver projects: 2015-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Friends Groups/Biodiversity Partners
Implement site management plans including for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), European designated sites and Local Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs)	Implement management and development plans for SBI/SSSI sites	Milestones to be confirmed with partners	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team//Biodiversity Partners
Include within the Management and Development Plan for Key Parks and open space a programme of habitat protection, enhancement and creation projects for priority habitats	Deliver projects	Identify projects: 2015 Deliver projects: 2016-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Friends Groups/Biodiversity Partners
Deliver sub-regionally significant area nature projects, in line with Local Nature Partnership endorsed strategies, where viable	Deliver projects	Timescales to be confirmed with Local Nature Partnership	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Biodiversity Partners
Policy 4.2a Parks and open space help alleviate flood risk while protecting their core amenity and usage.			
Seek funding for a Programme of 4 Sustainable Drainage Projects at key strategic parks and open spaces locations (as part of site specific management and development plans)	Deliver projects	Identify projects: 2015 Deliver projects: 2016-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Sustainable Environment Partners

Policy 4.2b Increase the environmental friendliness of parks maintenance operations.			
Increase composting and recycling in parks maintenance operations	Target(s) as agreed for Wirral Council's Environmental Management System	Milestones as agreed for Wirral Council's Environmental Management System	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team /Sustainable Environment Partners
Use more fuel efficient machinery	Machinery to be brought into operation	2014	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Policy 4.2c Deliver low carbon exemplar parks sites and buildings.			
Develop and deliver a minimum of four major low carbon parks site or building projects. These could include energy efficient retrofitting, new build or parks site management	Three major low carbon parks site or building projects Council's Environmental Management System targets	By 2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team /Sustainable Environment Partners
Policy 5.1a Achieve a viable funding model for Wirral's parks and open space.			
Produce and implement medium term Parks and Countryside Budget Plans for the periods 2015-2018 and 2019-2023	Produce and Implement budgets	Produce budgets: 2015 and 2019 Implement budgets: 2018 and 2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Develop and implement a parks and open space Foundation Fund (or site specific funds) to enable people to leave money through their wills for the care/enhancements of specific parks.	Implement Foundation Fund	Implement Fund/s: 2014-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Policy 5.1b Optimise the appropriate use of parks and countryside buildings.			
Reduce the number of depots and buildings in use by the Parks and Countryside Team through a buildings optimisation programme	Deliver programme	2014-2024	Wirral Council's Community Asset Transfer Team and Parks & Countryside Team

Policy 5.1c Maintain an effective evidence base about parks usage, customer needs and quantitative needs assessment to inform service planning.			
Undertake Parks User Survey	Undertake the Survey	2015, 2018, 2021	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Policy 5.1d Achieve fair fees, charges and income generation which are reasonable and affordable for both service user and service provider.			
Develop and implement a programme of income generation opportunities for parks and open spaces.	Deliver Programme	Produce Programme: 2014 Implement Programme: 2015-2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team
Policy 5.1e Any potential disposal of surplus sites or parts of sites will be subject to assessment against the following criteria and will be subject to community consultation.			
Appropriately assess and publicly consult on any potential site disposals prior to implementation	Assess any proposals against criteria and consult on them	Timescales to be confirmed	Wirral Council
Policy 5.2a Deliver a service which is fit for purpose.			
Deliver policy-responsive maintenance that adapts to changing demands and needs, for example new types of facility or equipments such as fitness trails	Deliver appropriate maintenance	Ongoing to 2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team/Appropriate partners
Use and share efficient and effective technology for site inspections, mapping, logging of repairs, taking payment and bookings and providing information on facilities, activities and events in parks and open spaces	Use relevant technology	Ongoing to 2024	Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Team

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

9 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT:	ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME & POLICING ACT 2014 UPDATE AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL WARDS
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING & ENGAGEMENT
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides a summary of the key implications of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (“the Act”) and details proposed amendments to the Scheme of Non-Executive Delegation of Functions to Officers within the Council’s Constitution to enable enforcement powers under the Act to be exercised.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 received Royal Assent on 13 March 2014. It aims to put victims at the heart of the response to anti-social behaviour and give practitioners greater flexibility to deal with issues as they arise. Other measures in the Act relate to dangerous dogs, forced marriages and firearms and policing standards in England and Wales. Statutory Guidance was provided by the Home Office in late July 2014.

2.2 The Act seeks to rationalise the existing suite of tools and powers to tackle anti-social behaviour, reducing nineteen existing remedies to six; this transition is set out in Appendix 1. The provisions in relation to anti-social behaviour come into force on 20 October 2014. The effect of these changes is to focus on the impact of the behaviour on the victim rather than on the nature of the behaviour e.g. Litter Clearing Notices and Graffiti/Defacement Removal Notices are being replaced by Community Protection Notices which do not relate to specific types of behaviour but are focussed on the impact on the local community’s quality of life.

2.3 Whilst the government has sought to reduce bureaucracy by minimising the requirements for consultation, there is a need at a local level to ensure that action is co-ordinated across services and agencies and information and intelligence

shared; to reduce duplication, ensure the most effective action is taken at a time of decreasing resources and see that victims receive a swift and effective response. As such, consultation is taking place with a range of relevant Council services and partner agencies and organisations in relation to the local implementation and operation of this legislation. Through this consultation process a multi-agency operational handbook (protocol) for practitioners is being developed, which will seek to set out agreed standards for local liaison in relation to the use of the six new powers, levels of authorisation and the sharing of information. This includes the identification of Council officers that require authorisation/designation by the Council to execute these powers.

- 2.4 The Scheme of Non-Executive Delegation of Functions to Officers within the Council's Constitution therefore requires amendment to ensure that Wirral Council can properly seek to utilise all of the powers and duties conferred by the Act.
- 2.5 The proposed amendments to the Scheme of Non-Executive Delegation of Functions to Officers are set out below and in detail at Appendix 2. The proposed amendments to the current Scheme are both italicised and in bold within Appendix 2.
 - 2.5.1 The words "issue and" to be inserted between "...the" and "service..." in clause (1) of Schedule 4A Part 2 at page 99.
 - 2.5.2 The words "and orders" to be inserted between "...notices" and ", the appointment off..." in clause (1) of Schedule 4A Part 2 at page 99.
 - 2.5.3 Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to be included within the list of legislation in clause (1) of Schedule 4A Part 2 at page 99.
 - 2.5.4 Add the words "or for breaching any notice or order" to clause (6) of Schedule 4A Part 2 at page 103.
 - 2.5.5 Insert a new clause (15) of Schedule 4A Part 2 at page 103 to read "(15) Authorise relevant officers throughout the Council to issue Community Protection Notices for leaving litter and other related matters affecting the quality of life of persons in Wirral"
 - 2.5.6 Renumber the existing clause (15) of Schedule 4A Part 2 at page 103 to "(16)".
 - 2.5.7 Insert a new sub clause (xxv) under the existing clause (15) (see 2.5.6 above) of Schedule 4A Part 2 at page 105 to read "(xxv) Authorise relevant officers throughout the Council to issue and enforce Community Protection Notices and to enforce Public Spaces Protection Orders"
 - 2.5.8 Renumber the existing clause (16) of Schedule 4A Part 2 at page 105 to "(17)" and change the post name from 'Director of Technical Services' to "Head of Environment and Regulation (or his nominee)".
 - 2.5.9 In the section entitled "in respect of Planning and related matters" of Schedule 4A Part 2 at page 110 there will be inserted a new sub clause (16)

under clause (b) to read “(16) To exercise all the powers and duties under Parts 1-6 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 save for the issue or extension of a Closure Notice to 48 hours where such power(s) shall be exercised by the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration (or his authorised nominee).”

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 Failure to implement these amendments will result in delays in implementation locally of a number of provisions within the Act related to anti-social behaviour. This could have negative implications for quality of life and community safety.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Council is a duty to address anti-social behaviour and utilise legal powers available to it.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 No consultation is required in relation to the proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There are no such implications arising.

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

- 7.1 It is envisaged that the discharge of powers and duties that the Act will be met by exiting staff (and any proposed future restructures, if any) and currently approved budgets. For example, additional costs of Fixed Penalty Notice books.

- 7.2 This cost may be offset through the payment of Fixed Penalty Notices issued by employees and/or agents of the Council and by Merseyside Police, which are processed by the Council as the only permissible recipient of payment set out within the Act.

- 7.3 In order to maximise the Council’s ability to tackle anti-social behaviour more effectively across the borough, officers of other local agencies may be designated by the Council to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. In doing so it may be that in respect of any Fixed Penalty Notice payments received as a result of Notices issued by such officers, there may need to be a transfer of such payments (less any administrative expenses incurred by the Council) to these agencies.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The legal implications are set out in the main body of the report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

The impact was reviewed by the Government as it passed through the legislative process. The EIA can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/anti-social-behaviour-crime-and-policing-bill-overarching-documents--2>

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report has no carbon reduction implications.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The execution of this legislation will help to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve community safety.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

That Cabinet:

12.1 Notes the update on the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 as set out in this report; and

12.2 Recommends that Council approves the proposed changes to the Council's Scheme of Non-Executive Delegation of Functions to Officers within the Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To ensure the effective implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Caroline Laing**
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REFERENCE MATERIAL

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014: Reform of anti-social behaviour powers.

Statutory guidance for frontline professionals. Home Office. July 2014.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014: The new toolkit

Anti-Social Behaviour Order
Anti-Social Behaviour Order on conviction
Drink Banning Order
Drink Banning Order on conviction
Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction
Individual Support Order
Intervention Order



Civil Injunction
Criminal Behaviour Order

Litter Clearing Notice
Street Litter Clearing Notice
Graffiti/Defacement Removal Notice
Designated Public Place Order
Gating Order
Dog Control Order
ASB Premises Closure Order
Crack House Closure Order
Noise Premises Closure Order
Section 161 Closure Order



Community Protection Notice
Public Spaces Protection Order
New Closure Power

Section 30 Dispersal Order
Section 27 Direction to Leave



Dispersal Powers

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PART 3

SCHEDULE 4A PART 2

The councils regulatory functions in relation to planning, licensing and other regulatory matters will be exercised in accordance with express delegations below.

The Head of Environment and Regulation is authorised to

In respect of trading standards, environmental health and related functions and responsibilities:

- (1) Subject to paragraph (2) below, take any action under any relevant legislation (and related statutory instruments) including, where relevant (but not limited to), the **issue and service of notices and orders**, the appointment of persons, the issue of licences and authorisations and the approval of registrations, prior consents and grants; acceptance of statutory notifications; to apply for warrants, to seize and detain goods and documents and carry out test purchases of goods and services relating to trading standards, environmental health, environmental protection, food safety, licensing and health and safety matters.

Relevant legislation under this paragraph shall include but is not limited to:

Accommodation Agencies Act 1953
Administration of Justice Act 1970
Agriculture Act 1970
Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968
Agriculture Produce (Grading and Marking) Acts 1928 and 1931
Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963
Animal Health Act 1981
Animal Health Act 2002
Animal Health (Amendment) Act 1998
Animal Health and Welfare Act 1984
Animal Welfare Act 2006.
Animals Act 1971
Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
Breeding of Dogs Acts 1973 and 1991
Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999
Building Act 1984
Business Names Act 1985
Business Protection from Misleading Marketing Regulations 2008
Caravan Sites Act, 1968
Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960
Charities Act 1992
Children and Young Persons Act 1933
Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, 1970
Clean Air Act 1993
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
Companies Act 2006
Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986
Competition Act 1980
Consumer Credit Act 1974, 2006 and 2009
Consumer Protection Act 1987
Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008
Consumer Protection (distance selling) Regulations 2000
Control of Pollution Act 1974
Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988
Copyright etc and Trade Marks Offences and Enforcement Act 2002
County of Merseyside Act 1980
Courts and Legal Services Act 1990
Criminal Attempts Act 1981
Criminal Damage Act 1971
Criminal Justice Act 1988
Criminal Law Act 1977
Dangerous Dogs Acts 1989 and 1991
Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
Defective Premises Act 1972
Development of Tourism Act 1969
Dogs Act 1871 and 1906
Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996
Education Reform Act 1988
Employment Agencies Act 1973
Energy Act 1976
Energy Conservation Act 1981
Enterprise Act 2002
Environment Act 1995
Environmental Protection Act 1990
Estate Agents Act 1979
European Communities Act 1972
Explosives Act 1875
Factories Act 1961
Fair Trading Act 1973
Farm and Garden Chemicals Act 1967
Food Act 1984
Food and Environment Protection Act 1985
Food Safety Act 1990
Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981
Fraud Act 2006
Gambling Act 2005
Guard Dogs Act 1975
Hallmarking Act 1973
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Health and Social Care Act 2012
Health Act 2006
Home Energy Conservation Act 1995
Housing Acts 1980, 1985, 1988, 1996 and 2004
Housing and Building Control Act 1984
Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985
Land Compensation Act 1973
Landlord and Tenant Acts 1954, 1985 and 1987
Licensing Act 2003
Litter Act 1983
Local Government Act 1972
Local Government Act 1988
Local Government and Housing Act 1989
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Acts 1976 and 1982
Medicines Act 1968
Merchant Shipping Acts 1979/1995
Mobile Homes Act, 2010
Mock Auctions Act 1961
Motor Cycle Noise Act 1987
Motor Vehicles (Safety Equipment for Children) Act 1991
Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993
Noise Act 1996
Nursing Agencies Act 1957
Offensive Weapons Act 1996
Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963
Olympic Symbol Act 1995
Opticians Act 1989
Performing Animals (Regulation) Act, 1925
Pet Animals Act 1951
Poisons Act 1972
Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
Police Reform Act 2000
Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999
Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000
Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
Prices Acts 1974 and 1975
Protection of Animals (Amendment) Acts 1988 and 2000
Protection from Eviction Act, 1977
Protection of Birds Acts 1954 to 1976
Public Health Acts 1875, 1936, 1961 and 1969
Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984
Radioactive Substances Act 1993
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, 2000
Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
Rent Act, 1977
Riding Establishments Acts 1964 and 1970

Road Traffic Acts 1988 and 1991
Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988
Road Traffic (Foreign Vehicles) Act 1972
Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988
Solicitors Act 1974
Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010
Sunday Trading Act 1994
Telecommunications Act 1984
Theft Acts 1968 and 1978
The Cancellation of Contracts made in a Consumer's Home or place of work etc, Regulations 2008
Timeshare Act 1992
Town Police Clauses Acts 1847 and 1889
Trade Marks Act 1994
Trading Representations (Disabled Persons) Acts 1958 and 1972
Trading Stamps Act 1964
Unsolicited Goods and Services Acts 1971 and 1975
Vehicles (Crime) Act 2001
Video Recordings Act 1984/1993
Water Act, 1989
Water Industry Act 1991
Weights and Measures Acts 1976 and 1985
Zoo Licensing Act 1981

and any legislation amending or replacing the above (including Statutory Instruments)

(6) Issue fixed penalty notices for leaving litter *or for breaching any notice or order.*

(15) ***Authorise relevant officers throughout the Council to issue Community Protection Notices for leaving litter and other related matters affecting the quality of life of persons in Wirral***

In respect of licensing and registration functions:

(16) Determine and otherwise deal with the following matters, provided that controversial matters must be submitted to the Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee or Licensing Panel or Licensing Act 2003 Committee:

(i) Premises Licenses;

- (ii) Scrap Metal Dealers Registration;
- (iii) Street Collection Licences and House to House collection permits;
- (iv) Club Premises Certificates;
- (v) Temporary Event Notices;
- (vi) License premises for gambling activities;
- (vii) Notices given for temporary use of premises for gambling;
- (viii) Grant permits for gaming and gaming machines in clubs and miner's welfare institutions;
- (ix) Regulate gaming and gaming machines in alcohol licensed premises;
- (x) Grant permits to family entertainment centres;
- (xi) Grant permits for prize gaming;
- (xii) Consider occasional use notices for betting at tracks;
- (xiii) Register small societies' lotteries;
- (xiv) The enforcement of the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005;
- (xv) Personal Licenses;
- (xvi) Registration of second-hand dealers;
- (xvii) Certificates of Consent for all public exhibitions, demonstrations or performances of hypnotism;
- (xviii) Licences to hold civil marriage ceremonies on approved premises;
- (xix) Application for new (and renewal applications) for hackney carriage and private hire driver's licences, vehicle licences and operator's licences in accordance with guidelines, approved by the Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee;
- (xx) The enforcement of conditions relating to the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire drivers licences, vehicle licences and operator's licences, as allowed in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976, including the suspension or revocation of driving licences, vehicle licences and operator's licences. (Any actions to be reported to the next meeting of the Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee;

- (xxi) The enforcement of the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003
 - (xxii) The enforcement of all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire matters under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847.
 - (xxiii) Authorise members of staff in the Licensing Division to carry out enforcement functions as authorised officers under licensing legislation.
 - (xxiv) Personally, or through the Head of Law, Commence legal proceedings on behalf of the Council under licensing legislation.
 - (xxv) **Authorise relevant officers throughout the Council to issue and enforce Community Protection Notices and to enforce Public Spaces Protection Orders.**
- (17) In consultation with the **Head of Environment and Regulation (or his nominee)** and the three party spokespersons, to consider and determine applications for street trading consents or renewals thereof (including the imposition of such conditions as is considered reasonably necessary)

In respect of Planning and related matters:

- (b) **The Head of Regeneration & Planning is authorised to undertake the following functions and powers:**
- (16) **To exercise all the powers and duties under Parts 1-6 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 save for the issue or extension of a Closure Notice to 48 hours where such power(s) shall be exercised by the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration (or his authorised nominee).**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 9 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT:	REVISION OF CONSTITUTION ARRANGEMENT FOR WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP HOMES TRADING AS MAGENTA LIVING TO ENABLE A PROPOSED GROUP STRUCTURE
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING & PLANNING
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES
KEY DECISION? <i>(Defined in paragraph 13.3 of Article 13 'Decision Making' in the Council's Constitution.)</i>	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Wirral Council, as the Council Member of Magenta Living, of proposals to develop a group structure for the organisation and to seek support at a General Meeting of the Company for the changes.
- 1.2 Magenta Living's Board have agreed to establish a group structure in order to be able to provide a wider range of services to its customers. Magenta Living will become a member of a new group which will have a new Registered Provider at its head, allowing Magenta Living to continue providing social and affordable housing as it currently does.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 In 2005 the Council's housing stock transferred to Magenta Living (Wirral Partnership Homes at that time). Since then they have met the 89 promises made to tenants at transfer and continued to work in partnership with the Council both on a formal constitutional basis and via informal relationships with many departments across the authority.
- 2.2 In 2013, Magenta Living carried out a governance review to comply with their regulator's, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) latest good practice. This involved reducing the number of Board Directors from 15 to 12 (each constituency group – Tenant, Independent and Council, reduced their number from five to four members) and to change Board Directors' terms of office from three terms of three years to two terms of four years. At this time it was also agreed that Magenta Living

would commence trading as 'Magenta Living' from July 2013, however the company's registered name is still Wirral Partnership Homes.

- 2.3 The Council have continued to have a presence on the Board of Magenta Living with four elected members taking up one-third of the seats (previously five prior to the governance changes referred to above). The Council is also corporately a 'Company Member' of Magenta Living in its registered company capacity with a one-third share of the votes at any General Meeting.
- 2.4 This is important to note as changes to the Constitution of Magenta Living require the Council to consider what they wish to do and how to exercise their vote. A General Meeting of Magenta Living would not be quorate without the Council's representative present and he/she must therefore be instructed how the Council would wish them to vote in any particular instance.
- 2.5 Magenta Living is subject to regulation by the HCA. The HCA's focus is very much on governance and viability and therefore boards need to have the skills, competencies and diversity to ensure the success of the company. To this end Magenta Living has adopted the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code 'Excellence in Governance'. This is a code for members of the NHF and contains good practice guidance in governance and regulation for the social housing sector. The NHF is the trade body for Registered Providers (RP) like Magenta Living.
- 2.6 In the future, Magenta Living will face a number of upcoming challenges to its revenue streams. These challenges include the need to replace and build more properties, the continued provision of existing services with pressures on public funding, and lack of grant funding. The proposal is to create a group structure to diversify into wider markets to deliver a range of different services to generate alternative sources of income to help fund new housing and social housing services.
- 2.7 As part of considering strategically its future direction and identifying potential business, revenue and funding streams, Magenta Living is keen to ensure that its corporate structure is flexible enough to enable it to develop and implement these strategies, should they prove viable, and to respond to other opportunities that may arise in the future.

3.0 PROPOSED NEW GROUP STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Magenta Living has developed a Heads of Terms document which is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. The Heads of Terms is a document which is signed by two parties agreeing how a legal contract would be structured and records the future intentions of the parties. The remainder of this report sets out the broad principles of Magenta Living's proposals.
- 3.2 New Group Structure
Magenta Living proposes to establish a new group structure in order to be able to provide a wider range of services. Magenta Living will become a member of a new group which will have a new Registered Provider (RP) at its head. This will allow Magenta Living to continue to provide social and affordable housing as it does now – a diagram of the proposed structure is set out in the Head of Terms appended to this report.

- 3.3 It is proposed that the new group will be registered with the HCA providing a number of benefits for the Group and Magenta Living including;
- Allowing Magenta Living to focus on its core business which is the excellent delivery of its social and affordable housing portfolio and associated services to customers;
 - Ensuring the whole group operates within a regulated environment which would provide assurance to all stakeholders;
 - Allowing Magenta Living to access new funds on competitive terms;
 - It would be more attractive to other RPs looking for a group to join than one headed by a non-registered organisation.
- 3.4 If the group did not have an RP at its head the HCA would not have an overview of any of the Group's activities carried out outside Magenta Living. These activities would not, therefore, be subject to the same rigorous risk management expectations as they would if the new group was registered. The HCA would impose stringent restrictions on Magenta Living funding non-social housing activities carried out by the Group which would remove some of Magenta Living's freedom to use its own resources. Within the group, this could reduce Magenta Living's status and influence, arising out of its position as the principal asset-holder and could impact on the Group's ability to meet its ambitions to grow and prosper for the benefit of residents in the Wirral. If the Group is an RP, it may make it easier for other members of the Group to raise their own funding over time to carry out the diversification and growth which Magenta Living would not be able to carry out itself.
- 3.5 The HCA will only register stock holding RPs therefore the new Group will require some units of stock. It is proposed that Magenta Living would transfer one or two of its properties and manage them on the Group's behalf.
- 3.6 The Group structure will allow other subsidiaries to be put in place sitting alongside Magenta Living to deliver diversified, non-social housing activities. These are likely to include a company building homes for sale and a company managing and building homes for market rent. Any surpluses generated by these subsidiary companies would be used for the benefit of the group including building further social housing or provide wider services for tenants and residents. The idea being to use the surpluses to replace public subsidy which would be required for social housing.
- 3.7 Given the wider diverse activities the HCA would require the Group Board to be recruited solely on the basis of skill and experience to oversee the Group's strategy, direction and regulatory compliance. The Group Board will have wider commercial, charitable and social enterprise experience to manage all initial and potential future activities. Magenta Living will continue to have its own Board as it does now and the Magenta Living Board will appoint its own Chair as currently. The Council will continue to have a presence on Magenta's Board with four elected members taking up one third of the seats.
- 3.8 Management Arrangements
The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive will be employed by the new Group. The Group Board will oversee and line manage the two positions. The HCA will expect the Group Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive to act in the best interests of both organisations to enable them to continue to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Framework.

3.9 Group Governance Arrangements

Governance arrangements of the Group will comprise;

- New Group Board – consisting of up to nine members (as per NHF good practice) with housing, commercial, finance, governance, charity and risk management skills / experience.
- Chairs' Group – the forum through which Magenta Living is engaged directly with and influences Group-wide issues overseen by the Group Board. The Chairs' Group will be consulted on strategic and Group-wide issues and its support on a particular decision would be seen as crucial for the implementation of that decision by the Group Board.
- Governance and Membership Committee – will include three representatives from the Group Board, one representative from the Council, a Tenant representative and a representative from the Magenta Living Board. The Governance and membership Board will oversee appointments to the Group Board and will support Group Members in the recruitment of their Boards if required.
- Magenta Living Board – will remain as a Board of 12 comprising four Tenants, four Independents and four Councillors with social housing, asset management, human resources and customer service skills / experience. It is proposed that Magenta Living will retain its existing committee structure, alternatively Magenta Living may choose to participate in Group committees.

3.10 Safeguarding the Group

The HCA will regulate the new Group and will expect the head of the Group to ensure that other RPs in the Group comply with the HCA's expectations.

3.11 The HCA will intervene where an RP's actions or inactions threaten the ongoing compliance or viability of itself or its' Group with the Regulatory Framework. An example could include where there is a breach of the Regulatory Framework, its charitable status, company law or of its funding documents or where an RP's solvency is in jeopardy.

3.12 To reflect the requirements of the HCA, the Group will have 'step-in rights' which will be included in Magenta Living's Articles of Association to ensure that the Group has adequate control of Magenta Living and any other subsidiaries to enable it to step in if any serious issues were to arise, as required by the HCA's proposed revised Governance and Financial Viability Standard. Company law requires a group parent to be able to control its subsidiaries via step-in rights in order for a group to function as a group for accounting and tax purposes.

3.13 The circumstances in which the step-in rights will be exercised will be set out in a Group Membership Agreement. The inclusion of these provisions will give Magenta Living and the Council comfort that the Group will not exercise its step-in rights in bad faith or capriciously, and the Group and the HCA comfort that the Group has appropriate control over the Group.

3.14 Future Decisions on Joining Another Group

Any decision as to whether to take the structure into a wider group in the future would sit with the Group Board however there will be an obligation for the Group Board to consult the subsidiary RPs in the Group and the Council and HCA consent would be required.

3.15 The HCA needs to ensure it has the ability to 'rescue' the Group if necessary, for example by directing the Group to take it into a larger group structure – the HCA already has the power to direct Magenta Living to enter a group structure should it choose to do so. However, Magenta Living would have a right of veto over such a decision if it could be demonstrated that this was not in the best interest to join a wider group based on financial / business related criteria.

3.16 Dispute Resolution

Any disagreements between members of the Group will be resolved;

- Locally, wherever possible, by agreement between the parties to the disagreement
- Via the Chairs or by reference to the boards of the two organisations
- Via an agreed independent external mediator

This will be reflected in the intra-group agreement between the Group and Magenta Living.

3.17 Magenta Living's Assets

It is proposed that all of Magenta Living's current social housing assets (other than the two properties to be transferred to the new Group) will remain in the ownership of Magenta Living. The HCA expect that the Magenta Living Board will retain control over those assets and will control how those assets are used subject to Magenta Living's Business Plan.

3.18 As a charity and a RP, Magenta Living's ability to use its funds for non-charitable / non-social housing purposes is strictly limited, it can only do so where there is a very strong business case and Magenta Living's charitable assets would not be put at risk of any on-lending. Magenta Living would therefore never be in a position where it was expected to fund risky activities or those that may not be in accordance with the investment criteria for charities prescribed by the Charity Commission and the HCA.

3.19 Heads of Terms

The key principles of the new Group structure and governance arrangements are;

- Changes will be required to Magenta Living's Articles of Association to make it a subsidiary of the new Group.
- The Group's Governance and Membership Committee will recommend candidates to the Group Board and can also recommend candidates to other Board's within the Group. The Council will have the right to appoint one member to the GMC and can nominate candidates for consideration for the Group Board, subject to skills and experience. The nomination to the Governance and Membership Committee can be any sitting councillor, officer or Council Board Director from the Magenta Living Board.

3.20 Further details on all of the information outlined above can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

4.0 **TIMETABLE**

4.1 Officers from Magenta Living have met with officers from the Council to discuss the proposals as outlined in this report. Following these discussions Magenta Living have incorporated Council officer comments in the Heads of Terms document.

4.2 The proposed target date for implementation of the new Group structure is April 2015. In order to achieve this target date, Council's Cabinet are therefore requested to consider and recommend approval of the Heads of Terms to Full Council at its meeting on 13 October. Magenta Living would then call a General Meeting of all Company Members to consider resolutions to form the Group structure in early 2015.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 The Council is a Company Member of Magenta Living holding one-third of the membership therefore it is essential that the Board of Magenta Living is fit for purpose, in order to ensure effective decision making mitigating any risk to the Council's reputation and interests in the Company.

5.2 If Magenta Living were to remain as they are now they could be at risk of being directed to a merger with another larger group structure that already exists.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 Representatives or individuals from voluntary, community and faith groups may apply for independent positions on the Magenta Living Board, or tenant positions if they qualify as tenants or leaseholders of Magenta Living.

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

7.1 This relates to the structure of 'Magenta Living' so there are no financial implications for the Council.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This relates to the structure of 'Magenta Living' so there are no legal implications for the Council.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Magenta Living's Constitution is a fundamental part of its approach to equality and diversity.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Cabinet is recommended to;

- Agree the proposal for Magenta Living to enter into a group structure and proposed Heads of Terms;
- Cabinet is requested to note that these changes will also require changes in the drafting of the rules of Magenta Living, its constitution.

- Authorise the relevant Council officer to vote on the changes (and associated matters) proposed and referred to in this report at the forthcoming Magenta Living General Meeting.
- Refer this report to 13th October Full Council for approval.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 That Wirral Council, as the Council Member of Magenta Living, indicate their agreement to the proposed group structure and Heads of Terms prior to presentation at Magenta Living's General Meeting early in 2015.

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APPENDICES

Heads of Terms

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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Magenta Living – Proposed New Group Structure

Heads of Terms

This Agreement is dated

2014

Between:

- (1) **Wirral Partnership Homes Limited trading as Magenta Living**, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with registered number 04912562 whose registered office is at Partnership Building, Hamilton Street, Birkenhead, Wirral CH41 5AA (“**Magenta Living**”); and
- (2) **Wirral Borough Council** of the Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey CH44 8ED (“**the Council**”).

1. Background

Magenta Living has been reviewing its existing governance arrangements and structure.

The operating environment for Magenta Living has changed dramatically from when it was first formed in 2005. Magenta Living secured a loan facility with the Royal Bank of Scotland and has spent around £170m since transfer to bring its homes up to decent homes standard and delivering the 89 promises made at transfer to make its estates more sustainable places to live. Its existing loans will be paid for over the thirty year life of the current business plan.

(a) Future Challenges

Whilst Magenta Living’s current business plan is strong, there are a number of upcoming challenges to its revenue streams in the future including:

- with the continued ‘right to buy’ and selective demolition of non-sustainable homes the organisation needs to be able to build more replacement homes to ensure it continues to have the economies of scale to continue to deliver high quality services. Magenta Living had 13,087 homes at transfer and this has reduced to 12,133 homes as at 31 March 2014.
- reduced public subsidy to build new affordable housing will require housing associations to look at raising funding in other ways to provide the ‘subsidy’ for social and affordable rent schemes
- with continuing reforms to welfare spending there will be reduced support to rent payers and potentially reduced income which will need to be offset with income from other sources in order for Magenta Living to carry on providing the services presently being delivered

- working in more deprived neighbourhoods at a time when competing pressures have resulted in publicly funded services being withdrawn Magenta Living will have to identify new sources of funding in order to provide wider services to support its communities.

(b) Developing a Group structure

The solution being proposed will be for Magenta Living to carry out a wider range of activities some of which will be commercial ventures in order to create revenue surpluses to provide the subsidies required for Magenta Living to continue to manage and build social rented homes for the future. This will require changes to our current governance structure.

Should Magenta Living fail to adapt it will reduce in size and be less relevant. The size of the organisation will reduce given its lessened circumstances and potentially be a takeover target for other organisations.

As it stands Magenta Living is a charitable stock-holding RP company through which the majority of the Group's activities are routed. In the existing structure there are two existing non-charitable commercial trading company subsidiaries. A development subsidiary, WPH (Developments) Ltd, a tax-efficient procurement vehicle to secure design and build services for Magenta Living's development programme. The second is WPH (Building Services) Ltd, a general commercial trading company that carries out non-charitable commercial building maintenance works too risky for Magenta Living to carry out itself, or where there are tax implications if it does so directly. This trading company is currently dormant following the Building Services business, which had at transfer been externally trading, being brought into the main company (Magenta Living).

In order to be able to respond to the new operating environment it will be necessary for Magenta Living to set up a new group structure which will allow a wider range of activities to be undertaken, which will produce revenue to help fund new housing and social housing services. This will allow the creation of other trading ventures 'ring fenced' from the social housing business.

As part of considering strategically its future direction and identifying potential business, revenue and funding streams, Magenta Living is keen to ensure that its corporate structure is flexible enough to enable it to develop and implement these strategies, should they prove viable, and to respond to other opportunities that may arise in the future.

This Agreement sets out the heads of terms for the proposed new Group structure and governance arrangements.

For illustration purposes we have used the name 'New Magenta Housing Group' for the new registered RP which will head the group. This is not the chosen name for the new group it is a working title for this document; a new name will be considered by the board in due course.

2. Philosophy

The philosophy of the 'New Magenta Housing Group' will be to uphold the values and approach that Magenta Living has developed since transfer in 2005. The 'New Magenta Housing Group' will be formed to allow Magenta Living to carry on as it does now as a social landlord with other companies /partners in the new group able to undertake many more diverse activities. This will strengthen and make both Magenta Living and the new group stronger and more resilient at a time of great change.

The 'New Magenta Housing Group' values will be based on consensus, trust, respect for stakeholders, an approach to working in partnership and resolving issues together for the greater good.

The 'New Magenta Housing Group' will be a registered provider with the HCA and as such it will adopt and reinforce the values of Magenta Living as an organisation with a strong social purpose.

It will recognise and value the existing relationship with stakeholders in particular its tenants and Wirral Council and will continue to strive to maintain a strong working relationship based on agreement and co-operation.

3. Proposals

(i) New Group structure

Magenta Living proposes to establish a new group structure, in order to be able to provide a wider range of services. Magenta Living will become a member of a new group which will have a newly registered RP (working name: 'New Magenta Housing Group') at its head. This will allow Magenta Living to continue to provide social and affordable housing as it does now – a diagram of the proposed structure is set out in Appendix 1 attached to this Heads of Terms document.

We want the 'New Magenta Housing Group' to be registered with the Homes and Communities Agency (the "Regulator"), as Magenta Living currently is. Having a Registered Provider at the head of the Group will have a number of significant benefits for the Group and for Magenta Living including:

- Releasing the Magenta Living Board from being directly accountable to the Regulator for its compliance with the Regulatory Framework, and instead putting this responsibility on to the Group Board. This would free up the Magenta Living Board from much of the administration associated with regulatory compliance and enable it to focus on delivering excellent services to customers.

- Ensuring the whole of the Group operates within the “regulated” environment, which would give comfort to other organisations dealing with the Group, especially funders. This may make it easier for the other members of the Group to raise their own funding over time.
- It may also have a positive effect on Magenta Living’s own funding situation. This would include access to new funds on competitive terms, particularly where the Group structure facilitates other Group Members to deliver diversified activities that either funders or the Regulator may prefer to see delivered outside Magenta Living itself. This would reduce Magenta Living’s risk profile, improving its “covenant” and therefore making it more attractive to funders.
- It would also be more attractive to other Registered Providers looking for a group to join rather than one headed by a non-registered organisation.

The alternative of having a non-registered organisation at the head of the Group would mean that the Regulator has no overview of any of the Group’s activities carried out outside Magenta Living. These activities would not, therefore, be subject to the same rigorous risk management expectations as they would if “New Magenta Housing Group” was registered. Amongst other things, the Regulator would impose stringent restrictions on Magenta Living funding non-social housing activities carried on by the Group, including requiring Magenta Living to get the HCA’s consent to apply any of its funds outside its own organisation, even where these are furthering Magenta Living’s own charitable objects. In effect, this removes some of Magenta Living’s Board’s freedom to use its own money as it sees fit, and instead gives this power to the Regulator. Within the Group, this could reduce Magenta Living’s status and influence, arising out of its position as the principal asset-holder (and, therefore, de facto controller of the Group’s purse strings). It could also impact on the Group’s ability to meet its ambitions to grow and prosper for the benefit of residents in the Wirral. However, if the “New Magenta Housing Group” is a Registered Provider, it will be simpler for Magenta Living to fund other members of the Group to carry out the diversification and growth aims, where Magenta Living either cannot or does not want to carry them out itself.

As the Regulator will only register stock holding RPs, the ‘New Magenta Housing Group’ will require some units of stock. It is proposed that it would own only one or two social housing properties, transferred up to it from Magenta Living, and managed on its behalf by Magenta Living.

Going forward, the Group wishes to put in place other subsidiaries alongside Magenta Living, to deliver diversified, non-social housing, activities. Future subsidiaries could include:

- A company building homes for sale
- A company managing and building homes for market rent

The aim of these companies would be to generate surpluses to be used for the benefit of the group including building further social rented homes or provide wider services for tenants and residents.

Further subsidiaries may be added which provide a wider range of services which would be outside the scope of a social housing landlord. These could include care services, supporting social enterprise or community and environmental services. The social landlord's day to day operations would be ring fenced from these new business activities.

The key advantage of the proposed new Group arrangement is that it will allow the Magenta Living board to focus on the excellent delivery of its social and affordable housing portfolio and remove the burden of responsibility of overseeing and managing the non-social housing aspects of the Group's activities.

(ii) Ensuring the Group has the right skills to manage more diverse activities

The Regulator has recently issued consultation on a new Regulatory Framework for registered providers (May 2014). It is keen to learn lessons from recent high profile failures in the sector. The consultation document states a revised Governance and Viability Standard will be introduced and that *"Registered providers need to ensure that they have suitable skills to reflect the range of activities they undertake..."* (para 3.18)

The 'New Magenta Housing Group' board will be recruited solely on the basis of skill and experience, to oversee the Group's strategy, direction and regulatory compliance. The 'New Magenta Housing Group' board will not need to have the same level of detailed technical and operational knowledge as Magenta Living's board about the management of the social housing (although it will be advantageous for some of 'New Magenta Housing Group's' board members to have this). The Group board will recruit board members with wider commercial, charitable and social enterprise experience to manage all aspects of the Group's current (and potential future) activities as successfully as possible.

(iii) Management arrangements

Initially any staff working for the 'New Magenta Housing Group' will have a dual role. Specifically the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive will work to the "New Magenta Housing Group" Board. Their performance will be overseen by – and they will be line managed by – the Group Board. However, their duties and responsibilities will continue to be owed to Magenta Living and any future members of the group. Because both the "New Magenta Housing Group" and Magenta Living are Registered Providers, the Regulator will expect the Group Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive to act in the best interests of both organisations to enable them to continue to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Framework. This will include dedicating

an appropriate proportion of their respective time to meeting the needs of Magenta Living (as the “core” of the Group’s assets and activities).

The Regulator will expect that the Group Chief Executive will have the appropriate skills and expertise to act as the Chief Executive of a group comprising the diverse businesses that it includes. The group board will carry out an assessment of the suitability of the current chief executive of Magenta Living to fulfil this post.

(iv) Group governance arrangements

The ‘New Magenta Housing Group’ and Magenta Living boards will need to comprise individual board members with skills and expertise appropriate to the activities that that organisation will be carrying out. It is proposed that the boards should comprise:

- **‘New Magenta Housing Group’ board** – The current National Housing Federation good practice guidance states that boards should ideally be 9 and the group board will therefore be a self-appointing board of up to 9, consisting of members with the following skills/experience: housing, commercial, business, finance, governance, charity and risk management. The Group board members will be appointed on the recommendation of the Governance & Membership Committee.
- The **Chair’s Group** is intended to be the forum through which Magenta Living is engaged directly with and influences Group-wide issues overseen by the Group Board. It will be chaired by the ‘New Magenta Housing Group’ chair. It is intended to be a small and focussed Group populated solely by the Chairs of the various companies in the ‘New Magenta Housing Group’, who will continue to be appointed in accordance with the constitutions of their respective Group members. This means that, in Magenta Living’s case, the Chair of Magenta Living will continue to be appointed by the Magenta Living Board as it currently is. The Chair’s Group will be consulted on strategic and Group-wide issues and its support on a particular decision would be seen as crucial for the implementation of that decision by the Group Board.

The **Governance and Membership Committee (GMC)** will include three representatives from the ‘New Magenta Housing Group’ board, one representative from the Council, a tenant representative and a representative from the Magenta Living board. The nomination from the Council may be any sitting councillor, officer or council nominated board director from the Magenta Living board. A mechanism for the selection of the tenant representative will be agreed with the company’s tenant company members.

Appointments to the ‘New Magenta Housing Group’ board will be overseen by the GMC.

On the set up of the ‘New Magenta Housing Group’, Magenta Living together with a representative from the Council and a representative from the tenant company

membership will oversee the appointments to the shadow board of the 'New Magenta Housing Group'.

The GMC's role is also to support Group Members in the recruitment of their boards. The detail of its remit will involve it working closely with boards of any Group Members (which choose to avail themselves of its support) to identify in conjunction with them what skills they need and how these could be resourced. For Magenta Living, responsibility for recruitment continues to rest with the Board itself (and the Council for council nominations). The Magenta Living Board will identify the skills needed and then to ensure that people appointed to the Board have those skills. It will be a decision for the Magenta Living Board as to whether it wants to draw on the support of the GMC, which could help the Magenta Living Board to identify and recruit potential candidates, drawing on the benefits of doing this across the Group rather than on a board-by-board basis. The GMC will not appoint people to the Boards; the Boards themselves will continue to have the power to appoint their own board members as they do now. Boards will have discretion to reject any candidates recommended by the GMC but the aim would be that the GMC will have worked closely with the Boards to identify their needs and what they want from their Board Members, and therefore it will only propose candidates for appointment who it is confident will be acceptable to the Boards. If Magenta Living decides not to work with the GMC to recruit its board members, Magenta Living's board will continue to do so as it currently does.

- Magenta Living board will continue as at present – board of 12, consisting of 4 Independent Board Directors, 4 Tenant Board Directors and 4 Council Board Directors, appointed by the Council or elected, in the case of Independents and Tenants. The Magenta Living board members will comprise people with the following skills/experiences: social housing, asset management, human resources, customer service.
- it is proposed that, subject to compliance with company law and the requirements of the Regulator of social housing, Magenta Living will retain its existing committees (for example, its internal audit committee) and will have the power to continue to appoint committees of its own in the future. Alternatively, Magenta Living may instead choose to participate in Group committees, in which case these will be constituted in such a way as to ensure Magenta Living (and its interests) are appropriately and adequately represented.

(v) Future Governance changes

(a) Safeguarding the Group

The circumstances in which the Regulator will use its regulatory powers to directly intervene in a Registered Provider include where a Registered Provider's actions or

inactions threaten the ongoing compliance (of itself or its' Group) with the Regulatory Framework, or its own (or its' Group's) viability. In practice, this may occur where there has been – or is likely to be – a material breach by a Registered Provider or a member of its Group of the Regulatory Framework, of its charitable status, company law or of its funding documents, or where a Registered Provider's solvency is in jeopardy.

Within a group structure, the Regulator agrees that it is pragmatic for it not to regulate directly any Registered Providers within the group other than the organisation at the head of the group (the 'New Magenta Housing Group'). Instead, it expects the Registered Provider organisation at the head of the group (the 'New Magenta Housing Group'). to ensure that the other Registered Providers comply with the Regulator's expectation. The HCA's current consultation on revised regulation states: *"The Regulator expects that, where the Parent company of a group is a registered provider it should look to maintain not only its own but also the on-going viability and compliance with Regulatory Standards of all the registered providers within the group. This requirement (to support and assist their subsidiaries) does not change that, instead it enhances it, giving additional protection to the social housing, making clear that if appropriate the Parent must step in to help ensure compliance of all registered providers in the group."* (para 3.52)

On this basis, to reflect the requirements of the Regulator as part of the new Group structure arrangements, 'New Magenta Housing Group' will have "step-in" rights, which in exceptional cases could be used to remove and appoint the board members of Magenta Living. The Regulator will expect these rights to be included within Magenta Living's Articles of Association to ensure that the 'New Magenta Housing Group' will have adequate control of Magenta Living to enable it to step in and "steady the ship" if any serious issues were to arise with Magenta Living, as required by the proposed revised Governance and Financial Viability Standard (as set out above). This will allow the Regulator to step back and only regulate the Group via the 'New Magenta Housing Group'.

As well as fulfilling the requirements of the regulator, company law requires the group parent to be able to control the Magenta Living board via the step-in rights, in order for the group to function as a group for accounting and tax purposes. The test that company law will apply to confirm whether Magenta Living and the "New Magenta Housing Group" are in a group structure or not is whether the "New Magenta Housing Group" is a member of Magenta Living and either controls all of the votes at member level (which will not be the case here) or it has the ability to appoint and remove Magenta Living's board, if necessary (which will be the case here, via the step-in rights). Unless this test is met, the "New Magenta Housing Group" and Magenta Living will not be considered a "group" for company law purposes and may not achieve the tax and other benefits that will flow from being part of the same Group.

Whilst the step-in rights have to be unrestricted constitutionally to satisfy company law and the Regulator, it is usual in group structures for the head of the group to agree (in the Group Membership Agreement) that it will only exercise these step-in rights in certain, extreme, circumstances (for example,, in the face of financial or

regulatory default by Magenta Living, giving rise to any of the circumstances in which the Regulator would have the ability to intervene directly into the Registered Provider, as summarised above), or at the invitation of the Magenta Living board. The inclusion of these provisions will give Magenta Living (and the Council) comfort that the the 'New Magenta Housing Group' will not exercise its step-in rights in bad faith or capriciously, and the Group and the Regulator comfort that the 'New Magenta Housing Group' has appropriate control over the Group. Furthermore, it is proposed in the present case that, if the "New Magenta Housing Group" does have cause to exercise its step-in rights at any time:

- It will give Magenta Living as much notice of its proposal to do so as it can, to give Magenta Living's board the ability to take any action needed to rectify the situation and mean that the "New Magenta Housing Group" does not need to exercise its step-in rights; and
- If the "New Magenta Housing Group" does have to exercise its step-in powers at any time, as soon as the situation has been rectified (and "normality" resumed), "New Magenta Housing Group" will "step out" of Magenta Living to enable its board to resume control;

Except where the "New Magenta Housing Group" has had to exercise its step-in rights as above, Magenta Living's board would continue to manage and oversee the organisation's activities and the delivery of its business plan, as it currently does, including:

- The ownership and management of Magenta Living's stock
- Implementation of its agreed business plans and budgets
- Housing and estate management, strategies, policy and execution, including:
 - Maintenance modernisation and improvement contracts
 - Day-to-day responsive repairs
 - Resident involvement
 - Rent collection including arrears
 - Tenancy conditions including enforcement
- Commissioning programmes of works, improvements, acquisitions and developments.

(b) Future decisions on joining another group

Within a normal group structure, the decision as to whether to take that structure into a wider group at some future date would sit with the 'New Magenta Housing Group' Board (because it is that company that would become a subsidiary of the new larger Group). As part of any approach the 'New Magenta Housing Group' Board will have an obligation to consult the subsidiary RPs in the Group. The Regulator's consent

would be needed to take the 'New Magenta Housing Group' into a larger Group, and part of the Regulator's consideration would involve looking at whether the wider Group – particularly the RPs such as Magenta Living – would be in favour of the proposals, as well as the Council's views on the proposals.

The Regulator will not accept an arrangement by which Magenta Living has an absolute right of veto over any proposal to take the 'New Magenta Housing Group' into another Group in the future, because the Regulator needs to ensure that it has the ability to "rescue" the Group, should this be necessary, for example by directing the 'New Magenta Housing Group' to take it into a larger group structure (NB it is already the case that the Regulator has the power to direct Magenta Living to enter a group structure, should it choose to do so). However, Magenta Living will have a right of veto over such a decision in certain circumstances, where Magenta Living can demonstrate that it is not in its or the Group's best interests to join a wider group, based on objective criteria that are financial/business related.

(vi) Dispute resolution

The Group will have at its heart a commitment between all of its members to co-operation and consensus. Inevitably, however, from time to time there may be disagreement between group members, and the Group Membership Agreement will contain mechanisms to enable these to be resolved constructively before they escalate into formal disputes.

In relation to services provided by the 'New Magenta Housing Group' or other group members to Magenta Living, there will be a suite of safeguards giving Magenta Living the ability to terminate services provided by the 'New Magenta Housing Group' where these do not meet the relevant service standards, or where Magenta Living can demonstrate it can achieve greater value for money by purchasing them from another service provider.

Within many group structures, any formal disputes that may arise between the group members or with their holding company will be resolved by the Group Board (in effect, denying the group members a genuine right of recourse). However, recognising that the ethos of the 'New Magenta Housing Group', it is proposed that any disagreements between members of the 'New Magenta Housing Group' will be resolved:

- Locally, wherever possible, by agreement between the parties to the disagreement, in which case their decisions will be final;
- If this is not possible, via the Chairs (again, with any decision they reach between them being final), and if this is not possible, by reference to the boards of the two organisations (again, with any decision they reach between them being final); and
- If the disagreement still can't be resolved, either party to the dispute can refer it to an agreed independent external mediator, whose decision will be binding on the relevant Group Members.

And this will be reflected in the intra-group agreement between the Group and Magenta Living. Allowing for a party to a dispute to refer it to external mediation, and for any decision made by a mediator to be final and binding, is unusual in the sector, where it is standard practice for the “parent” board to have the final say on disputes. It is evidence of the ‘New Magenta Housing Group’s’ intended commitment to strong relationships between members founded on mutual respect, consensus and collaboration.

(vii) Magenta Living’s assets

It is proposed that all of Magenta Living’s current social housing assets (other than the two properties to be transferred up to the ‘New Magenta Housing Group’ set out in 3(i) above) will remain in Magenta Living. The Magenta Living board will retain control over those assets and will control how those assets are used (subject to Magenta Living’s business plan, which will be set by Magenta Living in consultation with the ‘New Magenta Housing Group’), which will be expected by the HCA as Regulator as it will not allow Magenta Living to fetter its discretion over how its assets are used.

The market rent subsidiary company may lease some homes from Magenta Living to let at market rent. Such arrangements would require agreement by the Magenta Living board.

As a charity and an RP, Magenta Living’s ability to use its funds for non-charitable / non-social housing purposes is strictly limited. It can only do so where there is a very strong business case and Magenta Living’s charitable assets (principally its money or its housing stock) would not be put at risk as a result of any on-lending. Magenta Living would therefore never be in a position where it was expected to fund risky activities or ones that it was not confident would be in accordance with the stringent investment criteria for charities laid down by the Charity Commission and the Regulator. In cases where Magenta Living is raising “borrowed money” secured against its social housing, and wants to invest this money in other group members’ commercial activities, this would also require the consent of the Regulator, which would require to see a strong business case in support of the proposals, that has been stress-tested extensively, to reduce any risks to the social housing assets

(viii) Timetable

The proposed target date for implementation of the new Group structure is in April 2015. In order to achieve this target date, a report to the Council’s Cabinet will be presented in the Autumn of 2014 and resolutions to amend the Articles of Association of Magenta Living will be put to Magenta Living company members in early 2015.

4. Heads of terms

This section sets out the key principles of the new Group structure and governance arrangements, to which the Council’s agreement is sought, both as a member of Magenta Living and under the Transfer Agreement for the transfer of the Council’s housing stock to Magenta Living.

(a) Changes to Magenta Living's Articles of Association to make it a subsidiary in the new 'New Magenta Housing Group'

The following changes will be made to Magenta Living's Articles of Association in order to make it a subsidiary of the new 'New Magenta Housing Group':

- the 'New Magenta Housing Group' will be a member of Magenta Living, and as a requirement of both the Regulator and of company law is not be capable of being removed as such by Magenta Living, its board or its members;
- a representative of the 'New Magenta Housing Group' will need to be present in order for a general meeting to be quorate (in the same way as a representative of the Council must be present, which would be unaltered);
- the 'New Magenta Housing Group' will be able to call a general meeting of Magenta Living (and the Council will continue to have this right);
- as set out above, the 'New Magenta Housing Group' will have the right to appoint and remove the Board Directors of Magenta Living ("step in rights");
- on a poll, the rights of the current members of Magenta Living will be slightly reduced from 33 1/3 % each for the Council, the Independent Members and the Tenant Members to 33% each, with the 'New Magenta Housing Group' having 1% of the total vote on a poll. These small changes ultimately have little consequence under company law, as voting rights of 25.1% are all that are needed to block a special resolution (and therefore, for example) changes to the Articles; and
- in addition to getting the requisite majority of the votes of the Council and the other members of Magenta Living, any resolutions to amend Magenta Living's Articles of Association, remove Board Directors (other than by the Council removing its nominees and replacing them from time to time) or wind up Magenta Living will require the 'New Magenta Housing Group's' prior consent before being validly passed in line with the requirements of company law.

(b) Appointment of the Group board

The Council will have input into the Group's governance arrangements, under the new Group structure arrangements the Council will:

- have the right to appoint one member to the Group's Governance & Membership Committee, which will have delegated responsibility for, amongst other matters, recommending candidates for appointment to the 'New Magenta Housing Group' board (and to other boards within the Group, should they choose to work with the GMC on their own board recruitment); and

- be notified of any vacancies arising on the 'New Magenta Housing Group' board, to enable it to nominate candidates for consideration by the Governance & Membership Committee for appointment to the Group board, subject to that candidate possessing suitable skills and experience for the vacancy.
- The nomination from the Council may be any sitting councillor, officer or council nominated board director from the Magenta Living board

(c) Other changes to Magenta Living's Articles of Association

Finally, some other minor changes may be required to Magenta Living's current Articles of Association in order to obtain the Social Housing Regulator, the HCA's consent. These changes will be kept to a minimum, but are likely to include, for example, the inclusion of the provision of social housing (as defined in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008) within Magenta Living's Articles of Association.

5. Agreement

By signing this Agreement, the Council and Magenta Living both confirm that the principles set out in this Agreement are acceptable, and that they will act in good faith to effect the new Group structure arrangements and amendments to Magenta Living's Articles of Association.

The Council confirms that it will enter into a Deed of Variation to the Deed of Covenant which was entered into by the Company at the same time as the Transfer Agreement, varying its rights of appointment to the Magenta Living board in accordance with the principles set out in this Agreement.

The Council agrees that it will not exercise its rights as a member of Magenta Living to vote against changes to Magenta Living's Articles of Association which are in accordance with the principles set out in this Agreement.

Signed on behalf of Magenta Living

by an authorised signatory

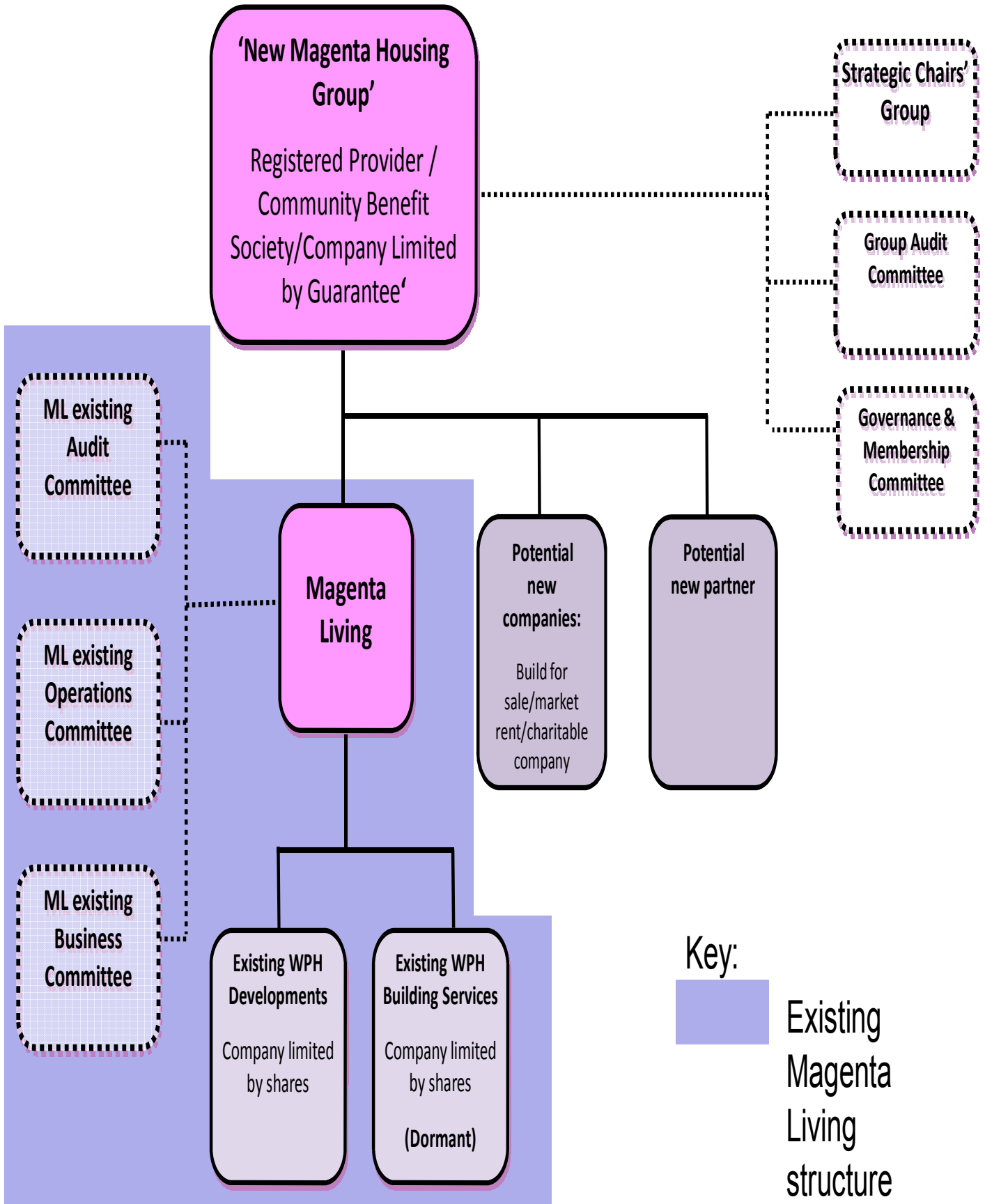
Name:

Signed on behalf of the Council

by an authorised signatory

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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