



Constituency Committee - Wirral West

Date: Thursday, 3 July 2014

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Hilbre High School Humanities College,
Frankby Road, West Kirby CH48 6EQ

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AGENDA

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Committee is invited to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2014/2015

2. APPOINTMENT OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

The Committee is invited to appoint Community Representatives for the municipal year 2014/2015 and to give consideration also to their tenure of office.

The Community Representatives appointed on 12 December 2013 (minute 14 refers) are as follows –

- (a) Jackie Hall Hoylake and Meols Ward
- (b) John Smith Greasby Frankby and Irby Ward
- (c) Lynn Collier Pensby and Thingwall Ward
- (d) Elise Wong Upton Ward
- (e) David Wade West Kirby and Thurstaston Ward

3. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 12)

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2014

5. CONSTITUENCY MANAGER'S REPORT (Pages 13 - 18)

Update on progress in relation to the ongoing work programme being undertaken in support of the Wirral West Constituency Committee

6. YOUR WIRRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME (Pages 19 - 22)

Recommendations as to the proposed process for the allocation of Your Wirral Grants

7. WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE BUDGET 2014/2015 (Pages 23 - 32)

Recommendations as to the proposed process for allocating the Committee's Neighbourhood Working Budget and Road Safety Budget for 2014/2015

8. WIRRAL WEST PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public are invited to raise questions or issues, either at the meeting or in advance, to the Wirral West Constituency Manager, Jane Morgan (Tel: 0151 929 7706 or by email janemorgan@wirral.gov.uk)

9. UPDATE FROM COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

The Committee's Community Representatives will be invited to provide an update on local issues

10. INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (Pages 33 - 54)

A report on Individual Electoral Registration was presented to the Council's Coordinating Committee on 15 January 2014 and subsequently considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 13 March 2014. The Cabinet requested that the report be referred to the Constituency Committees as a topic for discussion.

11. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR

Public Document Pack **Agenda Item 4** **CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL WEST**

Thursday, 6 March 2014

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| <u>Present:</u> | Councillor | JE Green (Chair) | |
| | Councillors | J Hale E Boulton P Brightmore W Clements D Elderton G Ellis M Hornby | M Johnston M Patrick T Smith M Sullivan G Watt S Whittingham |
| | Community Representatives | Lynn Collier Jackie Hall John Smith Elise Wong | |

Apologies David Wade

Twenty eight members of the public were in attendance, with the percentage attendance by ward as follows:

- Greasby, Frankby and Irby 11%
- Hoylake and Meols 22%
- Pensby and Thingwall 14%
- Upton 25%
- West Kirby and Thurstaston 11%
- Other areas 14%
- Not stated 3%

20 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

All Members of the Committee declared their personal interest in agenda item 4 – Wirral West Constituency Funding 2013/2014 (see minute 23 post), by virtue of their involvement with various community groups within the Wirral West Constituency.

Councillors Jeff Green and Stuart Whittingham declared their personal interest in agenda item 5 – Wirral West Public Question Time (see minute 24 post), insofar as advanced notice had been received in relation to a question to be asked concerning a lease with Magenta Living, of which they were Board Members.

Councillors Jeff Green, Geoffrey Watt and John Hale declared their personal interest in agenda item 5 – Wirral West Public Question Time (see minute 24 post) insofar as a question was to be asked in relation to a request for funding from the Friends of Hilbre, of which they were Members.

21 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

22 **CONSTITUENCY MANAGER'S REPORT**

The Constituency Manager presented her report, which provided an update in relation to the ongoing work programme being undertaken in support of the Wirral West Constituency Committee.

With regard to the continued development of joined up mechanisms for community engagement, she commented that further consideration had been given specifically to the format and structure of meetings in relation to contributions from Merseyside Police. It was proposed that Merseyside Police should undertake separate 'Have Your Say' meetings across the constituency to ensure that members of the public were provided with a dedicated opportunity to inform policing priorities. The Committee would retain a Public Question Time, through which the public would continue to be able to raise questions about the work of the Committee and local issues. The Constituency Manager indicated that she would work closely with the Neighbourhood Inspector to ensure that any actions arising from the 'Have Your Say' meetings, which required joint working with the Council and other agencies, were taken forward as appropriate. The Constituency Committee would also be kept regularly informed of the outcomes of the 'Have Your Say' meetings and policing priorities.

She set out a provisional timetable with dates for Constituency Committee and 'Have Your Say' meetings, from April 2014 onwards, which would continue to be held on a rolling basis across the Constituency. Once the timetable was finalised, it would be publicised across the Constituency and published on the Council's and Police's websites.

She reported also on the development of the Constituency Plan, which would be presented for approval to the next meeting. To facilitate this, two workshops would be arranged in the coming months to explore the priorities and to finalise the draft Plan. A wider engagement strategy would also be put in place to support the development of the Plan, building on the events that had taken place with regard to the allocation of the Constituency Fund.

Resolved – That the report be noted and the approaches in relation to joining up consultation activities and the development of the Constituency Plan, be endorsed.

23 **WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY FUNDING 2013/2014**

Further to minutes 7 (30 October 2013) and 17 (12 December 2013), the Constituency Manager presented recommendations for the allocation of the Wirral West Constituency Budget for 2013/2014, on the basis of two grant programmes –

- **Wirral West Community Fund**

A Council allocation of £50,000, to be divided on the basis of £10,000 per ward, for projects which aimed to improve the quality of life in Wirral West and impact positively on local people and places. The criteria

allowed a maximum of £1,000 per project, voted on by the community to inform the decisions of the Committee as to which would receive funding.

Following an initial assessment, 10 projects had been considered to be ineligible and two were withdrawn, which left 44 projects that were taken forward to be voted upon by the public, either at a series of community events or by participating in the supplementary online or paper voting process. Approximately 1500 people voted, with over 300 outside Wirral West and the Constituency Manager set out the responses for each ward.

- **Wirral West Public Health Grants Programme**

An additional allocation of £50,000 of Public Health funding, which aimed to increase the healthy life expectancy of local residents and reduce deficiencies in healthy life expectancy between communities. A maximum grant of £3,000 per project would be allocated on the basis of recommendations that had been made by an officer panel. The public health criteria required £25,000 to be split equally between wards, with the remaining £25,000 to be allocated on the basis of need, as evidenced in the grant applications from groups and organisations.

The Committee was asked to consider and agree 18 projects (set out at appendix 1 to the Constituency Manager's report) that were recommended for funding, with four having been declined on the basis of the assessment and one being withdrawn.

The Constituency Manager commented that all projects to be funded as an outcome of the report were required to be completed by December 2014 and she assured Members that robust project monitoring was in place for both grant programmes. Over and above this, proactive support for the projects funded by the Committee would be undertaken by the Constituency team, with a focus on celebrating success and promoting sustainability.

Members were also advised that, subject to decisions of the Committee, most of the total budget allocation would be committed by the end of the financial year. However, it had subsequently been confirmed that any remaining budget could be carried over into 2014/2015 should it be necessary to do so.

With regard to the Community Fund, the Constituency Manager set out the projects for consideration on a ward by ward basis, ranked in relation to the level of support each had received following the community vote and recommendations were provided for the Committee's consideration.

The Chair noted that for West Kirby and Thurstaston Ward, although the majority of projects had received more 'yes' votes than 'no' votes, it had not been possible to fund all of them. However, there was the possibility that there would be some slippage and, if that was the case, funding could then be allocated to other projects on the list. Members referred to the high levels of community engagement and participation across the Constituency and highlighted the need to build on the achievements to ensure that all areas were fully represented.

Resolved –

(1) That the following allocation of the Wirral West Community Fund be approved:

(a) Greasby, Frankby and Irby

The following projects be funded and an underspend of £2405 be held in reserve to contribute to ward improvements, including an exploration of options for drainage/flood prevention at Coronation Park

- CF18 Tree Planting
(Volunteer Wirral Tree Wardens)
- CF05 Provision of disabled toilet
(St Bartholomew with St Chad, Irby)
- CF06 Improving Irby Village Copse
(Irby, Thurstaston and Pensby Amenity Society)
- CF39 Expansion of Activities
(Greasby Over Sixties Club)
- CF52 Installation of Bench at Greasby Centre Grounds
(Greasby Community Association/Blooming Greasby)
- CF50 Covering front cover costs of the Greasby Messenger
(Greasby Community Association)
- CF51 Contribution to erection, dismantling and storage of Greasby Christmas Lights Display
(Greasby Community Association)
- CF23 Creating Raised Beds at Greasby Allotment Site
(Greasby Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association)

(b) Hoylake and Meols

The following projects, all with a majority ‘yes’ vote, be funded on the basis of the community vote; and a further opportunity be given for local projects to access the underspend of £6984

- CF29 Festi-Velo Bike Parade
(Festival of Firsts)
- CF65 Community Noticeboards
(Hoylake Lifeboat Museum)
- CF16 Repair Storm damaged public shelter
(Hoylake Model Boat Club)
- CF07 Minor Refurbishment
(Hoylake Marine Bowling Club)

(c) Pensby and Thingwall

Taking into account the community benefit, the availability of funding and the low response to the community vote, each of the following projects be funded. The underspend of £3410 be kept in reserve to contribute to ward improvements, including road safety schemes, resurfacing the play area at Fisher’s Lane and supporting the annual Pensby Family Fair.

- CF56 To plant hedgerow and erecting a fence at Thingwall allotments site
(Thingwall Community Allotment Society)
- CF57 Establish and maintain WW1 Memorial garden within Thingwall allotment site
(Thingwall Community Allotment Society)

- CF04 Purchase of equipment to facilitate family classes
(local Tae Kwondo Club)
- CF31 Installation of Viking Information Board near site of the ancient Viking parliament
(Irby, Thurstaston and Pensby Amenity Society)
- CF42 Brownies 100th Birthday Event at Pensby High School
(Deeside Division Guides)
- CF61 Production of two short local history films involving local young people to be published online
(AJP Media Limited/The Radio Project)
- CF67 An outing for members of the luncheon club
(Kylemore Listening Centre)

(d) Upton and Woodchurch

The following projects be funded on the basis of the community vote and taking into account also the benefits to the community. The underspend of £3149.43 be held in reserve to contribute to ward improvements, including community clean ups and allocating a small budget to the young people who attend Fender Youth Club

- CF22 Creation of a stimulating visual and sensory garden space to enhance learning
(Parents and Friends of Upton Hall School)
- CF41 Older People's event
(Woodchurch Methodist Centre)
- CF32 Development of the Salacre Allotment Site by the introduction of wildlife and wildflowers
(Salacre Allotment Society)
- CF01 Bees, bees and more bees at Salacre allotment site
(Salacre Allotment Society)
- CF37 Development of Fender Primary School garden
(Friends of Fender Primary School)
- CF49 Developing the Community Centre's luncheon club
(Woodchurch Community Centre Joint Management Committee)
- CF38 Storage Facilities
(Upton Victory Hall)
- CF63 Equipment and training
(Woodchurch Villa FC)

(e) West Kirby and Thurstaston

The following projects, those with the highest levels of community support, be funded; and that, should slippage occur, the officers be authorised to allocate funding to other projects on the basis of their community support.

- CF08 Replacement benches in vicinity of the war memorial
(Friends of Grange Hill)
- CF09 Development of an all ability footpath at Grange Hill
(Friends of Grange Hill)
- CF10 Installation of sign to encourage use of Grange Hill
(Friends of Grange Hill)
- CF24 'Story of West Wirral' installation
(Charles Dawson Brown (West Kirby) Museum)
- CF19 Clean up project in conjunction with Wirral Eco Schools
(Friends of Hillbre Parents and Teachers Association)

- CF55 Provision of audio-visual equipment for the Beacon Room of the St Bridget's Centre
(St Bridget's Centre Management Committee)
 - CF54 Activities for support group for people living with dementia and their carer
(Marine Lake Patient Participation Group)
 - CF68 'Incredible Edible' planters at West Kirby Concourse
(Transition Town West Kirby)
 - CF33 Provision of bike rack
(Caldy Cricket Club)
 - CF69 Light Up West Kirby event
(Mellow Yellow)
 - CF73 Community Art Project to develop a welcoming feature at an entrance to Grange Park
(Friends of Grange Community Park)
- (2) That the allocation of Public Health Grants in respect of the 18 projects set out at appendix 1 to the report now submitted, be approved:
- (3) That the underspend of £5633.57 from the Public Health allocation be carried forward into 2014/2015 for the development of project activity for inclusion in the Constituency Plan, aimed at building on community assets to improve health and wellbeing and tackle social isolation in Wirral West.
- (4) That the allocation of the budget for the financial year 2014/2015 be considered at the next meeting of the Committee, alongside the draft Wirral West Constituency Plan.
- (5) That the thanks of the Committee be accorded to Jane Morgan, Constituency Manager, for the work undertaken to ensure the success of the various community events, which had been undertaken.

24 WIRRAL WEST PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions from members of the public upon matters that were relevant to the Wirral West Constituency and he indicated that a number of questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

- From Woodchurch TRUST – With regard to the **Asset Transfer of Woodchurch Community Centre** – Lease still not signed between Magenta and The Council. It will be interesting to see how quickly the asset transfer of The Pacific Road will take compared to ours, which from our understanding is still going to cost the Council money in the future. Whereas The Woodchurch Community Centre has money ring-fenced under the asset transfer scheme, and will save the Council money when the transfer finally goes through.
 - The Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment commented that the matter was delayed as Magenta had refused to accept a licence for use of the car park. An alternative agreement was reached, which he understood had now been agreed in the lease documentation. The draft funding agreement

was now with Magenta's solicitor and was virtually in its final form. He anticipated being in a position to complete the agreement for lease in the near future. For information, he commented also that Pacific Road was first identified for potential transfer as part of the Strategic Asset Review in 2008.

- From Woodchurch TRUST – With regard to **Tranmere Rovers Football Club** – Is there any feedback from the EU regarding their proposal? Has anyone spoken to TRFC regarding a further consultation?
 - The Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment indicated that nothing had yet been heard back from the EU and there had been no movement on the Woodchurch scheme. All comments from previous consultation had been shared with TRFC and he confirmed that there had been initial discussions about an alternative site.

In response to a question from the Chair as to why officers had made contact with the EU, the Strategic Director stated that there had been a suggestion made to the EU that the Council had breached State Aid legislation. Officers did not believe this to be the case but had sought opinion from the EU for clarification.

- From Woodchurch TRUST – With regard to **Traffic Calming in Woodchurch** – We have seen proposals for traffic calming in Houghton Road, and would question if this were necessary considering the amount of parked vehicles on that road. We suggest that Home Farm Road requires the traffic calming measures and a 20mph limit. When will the traffic review take place? Will the community be involved?
 - The Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment indicated that Wirral's Road Safety Team received comprehensive and confidential details of all injury related road crashes, which were analysed to see what measures were needed to improve road safety. The proposals for introducing traffic calming measures in Houghton Road were formed following an investigation into road crashes. There had been 7 injury crashes (with 13 casualties including serious injuries) over 5 years, of which the proposed speed reduction scheme could have prevented 5. The scheme had a good overall 'rate of return' and was to be funded from the Local Transport Plan programme. In comparison, analysis of Home Farm Road indicated that there had been 3 crashes involving personal injury, and would not be a priority at the present time.
- From Woodchurch TRUST – With regard to the **Youth Hub** – We have been told that the proposed Youth Hub will be sited in Birkenhead and would like to ask the following questions –
 - (i) Why will it be in Birkenhead when there are already youth facilities available there at the Birkenhead Boys Club? Duplication of services surely?
 - (ii) How would the youth from other areas get there?

- (iii) Has the Woodchurch Leisure Centre been considered? Or The Upton Fire Station, which is due for closure.
- (iv) Will other Council run youth clubs, such as the Fender youth club be closed?
 - In response to (i) above, the Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment commented, further to minute 141 (Cabinet – 29 November 2012), that the location was chosen, mainly due to the Fire Authority offering the land free of charge, it being on neutral land and in a prime location for transport links. Although more recently an extension to the Europa Pool had been considered, a major drawback was that the Onside model was to build on a neutral site to secure maximum private sector provider investment. None of the other Onside developments, both regionally and nationally, were adjacent to Council facilities and early indications suggested that it could deter private sector businesses, who would prefer to invest on neutral land.
 - With regard to (ii), officers were working with Merseytravel to ensure that public transport was accessible and affordable and outreach work would be undertaken with young people in other areas to support young people to access the facility.

Recent consultation carried out with young people in Woodchurch High School had concluded that young people were happy to travel if they wanted to do something enough, such as travelling to Birkenhead, New Brighton or Liverpool to the cinema.

- Neither Woodchurch Leisure Centre nor Upton Fire Station were considered and the Strategic Director confirmed that the Fire Authority had not offered Upton Fire Station.
- In respect of (iv) above, Councillor Tony Smith (Cabinet Member – Children and Family Services) indicated that the facility would not be Council owned. It would be operated by a charity 'Wirral Youth Zone', who would secure funding from public sources, the private sector and grants/trusts. The Council was an investor and provider of strategic guidance for the development and he confirmed that there were no plans to close existing youth provision to fund the Youth Zone.

At 8.00pm, the Chair agreed to a brief adjournment
The meeting reconvened at 8.10pm

- A member of the public asked for an update with regard to 'Love Wirral' grant applications
 - The Constituency Manager advised that following the closing date for grant applications on 6 December 2013, 28 applications received for Wirral West had been assessed and were then subject to an online vote. A paper based vote had also been undertaken and steps had been taken to avoid duplication. She indicated that full details were now available for Members and that applicants would be notified within the next few days.

The Constituency Manager paid particular thanks to the Committee's Community Representatives, who had been especially supportive during the funding process.

- A Member of the public questioned why the Parks Consultation Strategy had not been placed on the agenda for the meeting.
 - The Constituency Manager indicated that in terms of the agenda, it was essentially a formal document to enable the business of the Committee to be conducted, rather than being an information forum. However, she suggested, with the agreement of the Chair, that an item could be placed on future agendas to highlight ongoing local consultations.

In response to further comments from Members that nothing in relation to the Parks consultation had appeared on the Council's website and that active members of the community appeared not to be aware of it, the Strategic Director agreed to take the matter up with the appropriate Department and to give consideration as to whether it needed to be re-run.

The Chair thanked the public for their questions and requested officers take such action as was appropriate and report on progress where necessary.

25 **UPDATE FROM COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

The Chair invited the Community Representatives to provide a brief update in relation to local issues.

Hoylake and Meols Ward

Jackie Hall reported that members of the former West Wirral Area Forum remained active within the ward and continued to organise public meetings and publicise local issues. Current key issues related to the Golf Resort and to level crossings.

She was pleased that the local network remained active and indicated that she was happy to provide assistance to colleagues in other wards, if it was needed.

Greasby, Frankby and Irby Ward

John Smith sought information in relation Fire Stations locating to Greasby. In response, the Station Manager for Upton Fire Station indicated that although the merger of Upton and West Kirby Stations was being considered, there was no formal proposal at the present time. He asked for any further information in relation to the Redcap Car Park and also commented upon the use of the 'Messenger' to disseminate local information.

The Chair proposed to write to the Chief Fire Officer to ascertain the facts in relation to Station Mergers, in the light of conflicting reports.

With regard to the Redcap Car Park, the Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment advised that he had no further information at the present time.

Upton Ward

Elise Wong questioned the Council's policy in relation to lights being turned off on the By-pass. The Strategic Director indicated that the Leader of the Council had asked that some alternate lighting be switched on in certain areas and that he would provide more detailed information as required.

Pensby and Thingwall Ward

Lynn Collier expressed her concern that community groups in Pensby did not receive sufficient information from the Council, particularly in relation to the various web-based consultation exercises. She highlighted the high number of elderly residents who relied on paper communication. A Member asked that officers explore the possibility of liaison with Magenta Living to make contact with their residents on behalf of the Council

With regard to the various reports, the Chair commented that Community Representatives were key Members of the Committee and, as such, could be pro-active and directly approach officers, the Chair or other Members for information, without having to wait for each meeting of the Committee.

Resolved – That the reports be noted.

26 PAVEMENT AND GRASS VERGE PARKING UPDATE

The Head of Legal and Member Services presented the update report of the Head of Environment and Regulation on Parking on Pavements and Grass Verges, which had been referred by the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee (minute 34 (27 January 2014) refers) to each Constituency Committee for consideration.

Members of the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee commented that the high number of enquiries to Streetscene indicated the extent of the problem across Wirral, particularly in areas with narrow streets and no off road parking. However, the problem was also prevalent in areas with wide roads and pavements, with damage to pavements frequently caused by utility vehicles. In addition, it was noted that parking on pavements outside schools at peak times was also a major problem. Many motorists were either ignorant or unconcerned of the obstruction caused to pedestrians or the impact of their actions on the condition of the pavement surface, with maintenance and repairs estimated to be in excess of £40k annually.

The Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment commented that the matter had been discussed in detail by the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee. Although the Police could take action if a footway or carriageway was fully obstructed, it was difficult to define what constituted obstruction under the law. Pilot TRO schemes in a variety of locations had led to improved compliance and notices placed on cars had produced a positive response. The Cabinet was expected to allocate additional funding to Constituency Committees, who would soon have to

come to a view as to how it should be spent and whether any of it should be allocated to address parking on pavements and verges.

The Chair noted that the allocation had not yet been made and highlighted the need for clear criteria to be in place for the allocation of funding. Following the meeting of the Cabinet on 13 March 2014, he proposed to work with the officers to come forward with proposals to make best use of any additional resource.

Resolved – That the minute and report be noted.

27 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the Constituency Committee, scheduled for 17 July 2014 was likely to be re-arranged, because of its clash with The Open Golf Championship.

The date and venue would be published on the Council's website in due course.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

3RD JULY 2014

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| SUBJECT: | CONSTITUENCY MANAGER'S REPORT |
| WARD/S AFFECTED: | WARDS WITHIN THE WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GREASBY, FRANKBY AND IRBY ▪ HOYLAKE AND MEOLS ▪ PENSBY AND THINGWALL ▪ WEST KIRBY AND THURSTASTON ▪ UPTON AND WOODCHURCH |
| REPORT OF: | CONSTITUENCY MANAGER (WIRRAL WEST) |
| RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER: | CABINET MEMBER – NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT |
| KEY DECISION? | NO |

1.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

1.1 This report provides an update on progress in relation to the ongoing work programme being undertaken in support of the Wirral West Constituency Committee. This is set out in the 'action tracker' attached at **Appendix 1**. Particular items for noting are highlighted below in the main body of the report.

2.0 CONSTITUENCY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

2.1 The Constituency Manager has worked with partners to develop a joined up approach to engagement in the constituency. The first partner 'have your say' marketplace event took place on the 17th April in Hoylake and had representatives from a number of organisations who were on hand to answer questions from members of the public and give updates on services and activities in the area. Approximately 30 members of the public dropped in to the event and feedback was generally positive during the evening, with people welcoming the opportunity to have face to face informal conversations and discuss issues. Both Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have commented positively on the approach.

2.2 The approach to these events will be further developed and publicised to ensure that people are aware of the purpose of these events and how these link with the Constituency Committee as this is the major concern that has been fed back. The dates for future marketplace engagement events are as follows:

- Thursday 18th September 2014, 7 p.m., Upton Ward (venue to be confirmed);
- Thursday 11th December 2014, 7 p.m., Greasby, Frankby and Irby Ward (venue to be confirmed);
- Thursday 26th March 2015, 7 p.m., West Kirby and Thurstaston Ward (venue to be confirmed);
- Thursday 18th June 2015, 7 p.m., Pensby and Thingwall Ward (venue to be confirmed).

3.0 WIRRAL WEST COMMUNITY FUND / PUBLIC HEALTH PROJECTS

- 3.1 All projects funded as an outcome of this report need to be completed by December 2014 and the constituency team are working proactively with groups to support project activity. As part of this, an opportunity has been provided to groups to provide an update on their projects to feedback to the Committee. A number of groups have fed back that their projects are in the early stages of development and that there is therefore little to report at this stage. However, several projects have been able to provide a summary of progress and the highlights are as follows:

Woodchurch Methodist Centre was awarded £472 to hold a 'Making Connections' event. The purpose of the event, held in May, was to find ways to reduce isolation and loneliness by introducing older people to new possibilities and connections where they live and beyond. The planning included close working with a wide range of partner agencies. Activities at the event included painting, card making, hand massage, measuring up (focusing on weight management), introducing bread making, board games and knitting. All of these activities were designed to trigger ideas to encourage older people to either take up an activity at home, or attend and get involved in something new. Members of the church alongside professional workers were on hand to offer advice and guidance. Refreshments were available throughout the event, with emphasis on healthy eating. 'All our Yesterdays' helped people consider the positive stories from their memories as a healing process. 63 people participated on the day with a number of successful outcomes. One example is a lady who is wheelchair bound, who attended the card making session and has now been enrolled onto a regular course that meets on Monday evenings. She has also signed up for Chair Based Exercises and the IT course. A monthly bread making session is seeing increased numbers attending. All participants were invited to complete an evaluation and provide their telephone number so that further contact could be maintained. A number of encouraging comments were made about the event including, a suggestion by many to make it an annual event.

St Hildeburgh's Lunch Club was awarded just over £1,400 to expand their regular lunches for isolated older members of the community. The club is now well established and meets monthly. The project currently caters for a range of older members of the community, many who are socially isolated and/or living in care homes. Clients have a range of health needs including being wheelchair users and living with dementia. Between 40 and 50 clients attend each lunch. With improvements to our kitchen facilities the church may be able to increase the number attending and plans are in place to make this happen. Members of the church prepare the meal and talk/interact with the clients and support staff from care homes are also on hand.

The **Friends of Hilbre Parents and Teachers Association** was awarded £1,000 for their community Clean Up project being delivered in conjunction with Wirral Eco Schools. The project is on-going and is proving very enjoyable and successful for the people involved. The aim was to focus on litter and waste in the local area, the impact it has on local residents and the students of this school. The funding has been spent on litter picking equipment (pickers, bag rings, gloves etc) and work has involved a team of very enthusiastic pupils who have carried out litter picking sessions around the school site and the local area. Questionnaires have been issued to local residents and church groups to ask them what they think of litter issues. The project spent a morning at West Kirby beach with 50 pupils and collected bags and bags of litter and also recyclable products, drift wood, ropes,

netting, shells etc which are now being used to continue the project. A film is being made with additional funding from Eco Schools a local artist is helping to make a sculpture of the local beach bird life connected to the theme of golf and The Open. The sculpture will be displayed at the tournament and is being made entirely from recyclable products. The grant is being used to help fund the artist's time and for some arts equipment.

Happy Times was been awarded £3,000 to deliver fun 'musical movement' sessions for older people living in sheltered accommodation in Pensby and Woodchurch. Sessions are underway at Brackendale and Kylemore and progress is being measured through programme evaluations, but below are some of the regular comments that people have made about the sessions:

- "We love this, it makes us feel better"
- "A great way to start the day, it gives us energy and gets us going"
- "I love coming to this, I feel young again!"
- "I haven't been able to move my ankle much for ages but now it's much looser"
- "I feel steadier on my feet after practising our balance exercises"
- "My fingers are less stiff because I've been practising my exercises at home (We all do them in the adverts of Coronation St!)"

3.2 These project updates will be published on the Wirral West web pages at www.wirral.gov.uk/wirralwest, alongside the photographs that groups have sent. Groups will again be encouraged to provide updates in advance of the Committee meeting in October and the constituency team will continue to support projects as required and to ensure that groups have other opportunities to share their successes.

4.0 RISKS

4.1 A detailed risk assessment has been developed to support the constituency working approach.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 This report sets out activities undertaken in relation to actions agreed by the Committee, all of which have been progressed with due consideration to a range of options.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation is undertaken with the members of the Constituency Committee as to the development and operation of the Committee. Ongoing consultation with the local community as to issues for the area is an ongoing focus of the constituency working approach.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 The constituency working approach has positive implications for voluntary, community and faith groups in Wirral West.

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

8.1 The activities set out in this report will be delivered via existing resources.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no legal implications relating to the activities set out in this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 An impact review relating to neighbourhood working can be found at the link below:

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

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct carbon reduction implications relating to this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct planning and community safety implications relating to this report. The Wirral West Constituency Plan may however influence these areas of activity.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Members of the Wirral West Constituency Committee are requested to note progress in relation to the work being undertaken in support of the Committee and in respect of the constituency working approach.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 In order to ensure that actions requested by the Committee are being progressed as required.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Wirral West Constituency Committee – Areas of Activity / Action Tracker

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Meeting | Date |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Wirral West Constituency Committee – Constituency Manager’s Update | 12th December 2014 |
| Wirral West Constituency Committee – Constituency Manager’s Update | 6th March 2014 |

APPENDIX 1: WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE – AREAS OF ACTIVITY / ACTION TRACKER (JULY 2014)

| Activity | RAG Rating | Status | Consultation with Councillors and Community Representatives |
|---|------------|--|--|
| 1. Committee Handbook | Amber | Work on the Handbook is dependent on a number of decisions and considerations, including those of the Committee as to its budget and the development of key engagement principles. A draft will be circulated following the Committee meeting. | Comments from Councillors and Community Representatives will be consulted on the Handbook prior to publication. |
| 2. Community Asset Audit | Green | An organisation has now been commissioned by Public Health to stimulate asset based community development in Wirral across the four constituencies, which included mapping and auditing of assets. The Constituency Manager has also begun to undertake asset mapping with partners through the Public Service Board in line with key areas of work. | Councillors and Community Representatives will be kept updated on progress. |
| 3. Wirral West Constituency Plan | Amber | Previous reports to the Committee have set out the initial considerations which have been given to developing a Constituency Plan. It was proposed that workshops would be held in advance of this meeting initially to priorities based on the evidence and the feedback from local communities gathered through the Community Fund voting process and agreeing any additional targeted consultation and research required. | Planned workshops with councillors and community representatives to discuss the development of the Constituency Plan did not go ahead but will be rescheduled. |
| 4. Love Wirral Initiative | Green | Love Wirral projects are now underway and will be complete by 25 th July 2014. | A report on the outcomes of the Love Wirral initiative will be made widely available. |
| 5. Constituency Engagement | Green | An update on this activity is presented as part the main body of the report. | Councillors and Community Representatives are updated on engagement activities as these are developed and implemented. |
| 6. Wirral West Community Fund / Public Health | Green | An update on projects funded by the Committee is presented as part the main body of the report. | Councillors and Community Representatives will be updated on the progress of projects on an ongoing |

| Activity | RAG Rating | Status | Consultation with Councillors and Community Representatives |
|----------------------------|------------|--|---|
| Projects | | | basis. |
| 7. Other Activities | Green | <p>The constituency team is involved in a wide range of other activities. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Open 2014 – community engagement and general support; ▪ Supporting the implementation of the dog fouling campaign planned for Summer 2014; ▪ Responding to issues raised by ward councillors and community members and working with Council departments and partners to resolve issues; ▪ Supporting town centre action planning and other regeneration initiatives. | Councillors and Community Representatives are consulted on the work of the constituency team collectively or on a ward basis in respect of involvement in local issues. |

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

3RD JULY 2014

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | YOUR WIRRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME |
| WARD/S AFFECTED: | WARDS WITHIN THE WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GREASBY, FRANKBY AND IRBY ▪ HOYLAKE AND MEOLS ▪ PENSBY AND THINGWALL ▪ WEST KIRBY AND THURSTASTON ▪ UPTON |
| REPORT OF: | CONSTITUENCY MANAGER (WIRRAL WEST) |
| RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER: | COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING & ENGAGEMENT |
| KEY DECISION? | NO |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Your Wirral Fund is a small grants programme of £250,000 that has been in operation since 2007. Your Wirral is a strand of the Community Fund that came into being as a result of the Value Added Tax (VAT) return generated by the housing stock transfer from Wirral Council to Wirral Partnership Homes, now Magenta Living. Your Wirral has been dormant for the last financial year and rests with Magenta Living.
- 1.2 A Joint Working Group acts as the accountable body for Your Wirral and is comprised of representation from Wirral Council and Magenta Living, including Councillors and Board members. Wirral Council and Magenta Living have agreed that the Your Wirral Fund should now be administered via the Constituency Committees given their role. The purpose of this report is to give an overview of Your Wirral and to seek views as to the Committee's role in the decision making process.
- 1.3 Magenta Living has determined the constituency allocation of the Your Wirral Fund on the basis of the number of housing units in each area. On this basis, the Wirral West Constituency Committee will be responsible for allocating £40,000 Your Wirral funding in the coming financial year. £50,000 has been ringfenced for Wirral wide projects (i.e. projects that will be delivered in two or more of the constituency areas). A summary of the allocation by constituency is provided in Table 1 overleaf.

Table 1

| Area | Number of Units | Your Wirral Allocation |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Birkenhead | 4683 | £75,000 |
| Wallasey | 3214 | £50,000 |
| Wirral West | 2430 | £40,000 |
| Wirral South | 1888 | £35,000 |
| Wirral Wide | 12215 (Total) | £50,000 |

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Grants will be available to voluntary and community sector (not for profit) groups. To be eligible for funding, applications must fit within one or more of the seven themes which were agreed by the Joint Working Group in line with the charitable objectives of the Community Fund Deed. These themes are:
1. Creating an attractive and safe environment
 2. Contributing to community economic regeneration
 3. Preventing crime or reducing the fear of crime
 4. Providing employment and training for local people
 5. Benefiting local people who face discrimination
 6. Improving community facilities
 7. Engaging communities to improve quality of life
- 2.2 In respect of the grant programme being administered via the constituencies, a series of terms and conditions have been developed to ensure that the conditions of the Community Fund Deed are not compromised:
- All applications for funding must fit within the 7 themes but constituencies may prioritise a particular theme;
 - The same application form, as approved by Magenta Living, is to be used across all constituencies;
 - The same process for quality assuring and assessing applications, as approved by Magenta Living, is to be used across all four constituencies;
 - Recommendations as to which applications should receive funding in each constituency will be made by a Your Wirral constituency panel, with representation from Magenta Living;
 - Constituency Committees may determine the make up of the Your Wirral constituency panel;
 - Constituency staff will advertise arrange payments and monitor projects;
 - All materials must display the Your Wirral, Magenta Living and Wirral Council logos;
 - The funding allocation for each constituency is proportionate to the amount of housing units in the constituency;
 - Individual grants must not exceed £2,500;
 - The activity must take place within the boundaries of Wirral.
- 2.3 The Committee is asked to note that it has been proposed that Wirral wide applications will be assessed by a separate panel comprising the Chair or Vice Chair of each Constituency Committee and an officer from Magenta. This separate panel will make recommendations with regard to the £50,000 that has been ringfenced for Wirral wide projects (i.e. projects that will be delivered in two or more of the constituency areas). The recommendations of this panel with regards to Wirral wide applications will be referred to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Engagement for approval.
- 2.4 The Your Wirral Fund will be launched across the borough the week commencing 28th July 2014 (after the current cycle of Constituency Committees has taken place). The Fund will remain open throughout the year with 'cut off' dates advertised for each constituency by which applications need to be received to be considered by the Your Wirral Constituency Panel and referred for decision to the Constituency Committee. The Your Wirral Constituency Panel is therefore expected to meet up to

four times in this municipal year in advance of Constituency Committee meetings until the funding is spent.

2.5 The views of the Committee are therefore sought as to:

- Nominations for the Wirral West Your Wirral Constituency Panel which will make recommendations to the Constituency Committee with regard to the allocation of Your Wirral grants in Wirral West. Both councillors and community representatives can be nominated to sit on this panel;
- Whether the Wirral West Your Wirral Constituency Panel should give priority to one or more of the 7 themes listed in 2.1 above when they are considering their recommendations to the Committee.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 There is a risk of duplication with other grant programmes being delivered in the constituency dependent on the view of the Committee as to its budget allocation and this might have capacity issues for groups making applications. The Constituency Manager will seek to mitigate this risk by developing a timetable which gives due regard to avoiding such duplication.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The administration of the Your Wirral Fund will be reviewed throughout the year to identify any areas that need revising or additional support needed.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 The changes to the administration of Your Wirral have been undertaken following discussions between Magenta Living and Wirral Council via the Joint Working Group. This report seeks to consult with the Constituency Committee as to its role in the process.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 The administration of the Your Wirral Fund via the Constituency Committees should have no negative implications for voluntary, community and faith groups. There is the potential for more groups to be made aware of the fund. The use of an online form with accompanying support available has the potential to increase the digital inclusion of small neighbourhood based groups.

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

7.1 The administration of the fund will be undertaken by the constituency teams. To reduce the amount of administration of Your Wirral an online application form is being developed by Wirral Council. Paper forms will also be available. Neighbourhood Engagement Officers will be responsible for making payments, monitoring spend and ensuring the projects/activities have met the desired outcomes.

7.2 Wirral Council will pay successful groups and claim back the money quarterly from Magenta Living. An evaluation report will be presented to the Joint Working Group at the end of the funding. Currently there is no confirmation that the fund will be available in the forthcoming financial year (2015/16).

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The process has been reviewed by Internal Audit and there are no legal implications.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An impact review relating to neighbourhood working can be found at the link below:

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

9.2 Support will be provided for residents that do not have internet facilities or have difficulty completing the application form (with hard copies available).

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The allocation of Your Wirral grants may create opportunities to encourage the sharing of community assets, therefore supporting carbon reduction.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The allocation of the Your Wirral grants may have a positive impact upon community safety.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee agrees:

12.1 Nominations for the Wirral West Your Wirral Constituency Panel which will make recommendations to the Constituency Committee with regard to the allocation of Your Wirral grants in the area. Both councillors and community representatives can be nominated to sit on the panel;

12.2 Whether the Wirral West Your Wirral Constituency Panel should give priority to one or more of the 7 themes listed in 2.1 above when they are considering their recommendations to the Committee;

12.3 That the Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee should represent the Wirral West Constituency Committee on the separate panel which will make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Housing and Engagement with regard to the allocation of Wirral wide Your Wirral grants.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 To consult on the Wirral West Constituency Committee's role in administering the Your Wirral Fund.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

3RD JULY 2014

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE BUDGET 2014-15 |
| WARD/S AFFECTED: | WARDS WITHIN THE WIRRAL WEST CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GREASBY, FRANKBY AND IRBY ▪ HOYLAKE AND MEOLS ▪ PENSBY AND THINGWALL ▪ WEST KIRBY AND THURSTASTON ▪ UPTON |
| REPORT OF: | CONSTITUENCY MANAGER (WIRRAL WEST) |
| RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER: | COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING & ENGAGEMENT |
| KEY DECISION? | NO |

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Committee as to the process for taking forward expenditure in relation to the Constituency Committee's budget allocation for 2014/15, i.e.:

- 2013-14 budget underspend (section 2 of this report);
- 2014-15 neighbourhood working allocation (section 3 of this report);
- 2014-15 Integrated Transport Block (road safety) allocation (section 4 of this report).

2.0 2013-14 BUDGET UNDERSPEND

2.1 The Committee's total budget allocation for 2013-14 amounted to £100,000:

- £50,000 core Council budget to 'kickstart' neighbourhood working; and
- £50,000 Public Health Outcomes Fund budget to improve health and well-being, with a focus on supporting voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.

2.2 The Committee's core Council budget of £50,000 to 'kickstart' neighbourhood working was allocated on the basis on £10,000 per ward via the Wirral West Community Fund. Voluntary, community, faith and not for profit groups and organisations based in Wirral West could apply for a minimum of £100 and a maximum of £1,000 from the Fund. The community was asked to vote on these projects and the outcomes of the vote considered by councillors in their decision-making on the 6th March.

2.3 The subsequent allocation of grants by ward was follows:

| Ward | Total Community Fund Grants Allocated | Underspend |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Hoylake and Meols | £3,090.00 | £5,740.00 |
| Greasby, Frankby and Irby | £7,595.00 | £2,405.00 |
| Pensby and Thingwall | £6,590.00 | £3,410.00 |
| Upton | £6,850.57 | £3,149.43 |
| West Kirby and Thurstaston | £9,923.00 | £0,077.00 |

2.3 As agreed by the Committee in March, the budget underspend for each ward following the allocation of Community Fund grants was to be held in reserve (i.e. carried over into 2014-15) for ward improvements and/or to extend a further opportunity for local projects to access grants and add value to existing community activities. The Constituency Manager has been working closely with the relevant ward councillors to allocate this expenditure broadly in line with the initial ideas put forward following consultation with members, and which were presented to the Committee at the meeting on the 6th March. The criterion for expenditure is to improve the quality of life for people who live in the ward, in line with the objectives of the Community Fund and the outcomes will be monitored accordingly.

2.4 The Committee's Public Health Outcomes Fund budget of £50,000 was allocated via the Wirral West Public Health grants programme based on the evidence of need set out in applications and taking into account the view of the Committee in relation to at least £25,000 of this budget being split equitably across the five wards. The resulting allocation by ward was as follows:

| Ward | Greasby, Frankby & Irby | Hoylake & Meols | Pensby & Thingwall | Upton | West Kirby & Thurstaston | Total | Underspend |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| Public Health Grants Allocated | £3,767.00 | £12,773.25 | £9,141.23 | £11,421.95 | £7,263.00 | £44,366.43 | £5,633.57 |

2.5 The Constituency Manager has been working with partners in recent months to develop a project proposal in response to a Cabinet Office funding opportunity aimed at supporting older people and reducing hospital admissions during the winter months. Should the bid be successful, the project would fund a voluntary or community sector organisation in each of the four constituencies to act as a 'winter champion' by increasing social action and improving the support networks available for older people where they live. It is proposed that the Constituency Manager is given delegated authority to use the Public Health underspend of £5,633.57 to further develop this partnership working with the voluntary, community and faith sector in respect of support for older people in Wirral West.

3.0 2014-15 NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING ALLOCATION - £50,000

3.1 The Council's budget for 2014/2015 includes a further allocation of £200,000 to be devolved to the Constituency Committees to enable neighbourhood working to be further developed (£50,000 per constituency area). The Committee is asked to consider and agree whether the broad approach set out in 2.2 above (i.e. an equitable split between the five wards, with project applications voted on by the community) should continue in 2014-15. Subject to agreement by the Committee, there is a significant amount of feedback from the community which can be used to develop and improve the approach. This feedback is in two parts:

- The views of groups who participated in the Wirral West Community Fund about the application and voting process;
- The views of residents on what they value in the area, and how budgets should be spent.

3.2 Initial feedback from the groups involved in the application and voting process suggested that it would be helpful to undertake a full evaluation to inform future activities, and to make recommendations about how we can best build on our experience of community voting initiatives in Wirral West. A survey was completed by over 50% of the groups involved in the process.

3.3 The survey asked for views on the Community Fund application form. 75% of those who responded thought the Community Fund application form was very easy to complete, with the remainder though it was fairly to complete. No respondents thought it was difficult to complete.

3.4 The survey also asked for views on the community vote, i.e. was this:

- a) An effective and fun way of involving local people in decision-making;
- b) A good way to involve local people in decision-making which could be further developed and improved;
- c) Not an effective way of involving local people in decision-making.

The majority of respondents selected the second option, i.e. that this is good way to involve people but that it could be improved. A small number of respondents thought that it was not effective.

3.5 The survey asked for ideas about how the voting process could be improved or alternative ways of involving people. A number of issues and concerns are apparent from the responses provided:

- Groups feel that they might be disadvantaged by having fewer networks or communications mechanisms to encourage support for their projects from the wider community - without this participation from the wider community, i.e. if it is only members of groups voting, the results can potentially be 'weighted' unfairly;
- Groups feel uncomfortable about competing with other projects;
- Groups and communities might get voting 'fatigue' if the approach is over-used;

The responses also highlighted areas for improvement:

- Review the online voting system to ensure that information about the projects and the options for voting are clear;

- Allow more time for preparation and better, more effective publicity to increase the level of awareness and support that the wider community;
 - Ensure locations for voting events are easily accessible and give careful consideration to dates and times, as well as the use of 'A' boards to draw people in;
 - Think again about whether groups should give an informal presentation about their project as part of a more structured event.
- 3.6 Finally, the survey asked for views on the voting events which took place in each ward to encourage the community to vote and to provide an opportunity for groups and organisations to network with one another. 50% of the respondents said they had made new connections at their funding event and almost 70% said they would welcome similar opportunities in the future. One respondent said that it was *“good to meet other groups applying for funding to explore joint ways of working together for the benefit of our local community”* and another commented that they *“hope to exchange visits with another group”*. A third of the groups who responded said they would be happy to contribute to organising future events.
- 3.7 Through undertaking the community vote, the Wirral West Constituency Committee was uniquely positioned gather the views of residents who participated about wider issues for the area. Over 1,100 people took part in the community vote and well over 50% of these responded to the questions about what they most value about Wirral West and their views as to allocating budgets. The level of responses compares well with other exercises of this nature, especially given that there was a relatively short timescale for people to respond, and suggests that local people welcomed the opportunity to inform local decision-making.
- 3.8 Of the 1,126 Wirral West residents who completed a voting form, 660 provided a response to the question ‘what do you value most about where you live?’ 23% of the Wirral West residents who responded mentioned the word ‘community’ to describe what they value most about the area. The responses highlight the strong sense of community spirit and strong sense of place in all parts of the constituency. Overwhelmingly, Wirral West residents value local parks and open spaces. 37% of all respondents used words and phrases including ‘open spaces’, ‘parks’, ‘green spaces’ and ‘countryside’ to describe what they value most.
- 3.9 Local beaches and Wirral West’s coastline are also highly valued, particularly in the west of the constituency – ‘beach’ and ‘sea’ appear in over 20% of the responses from West Kirby and Thurstaston and Hoylake and Meols residents. Other characteristics valued by local people in Wirral West include local facilities and shops and good public transport. Many people who are not residents of Wirral West also took part in the survey and commented on local community spirit and access to spectacular scenery and open spaces.
- 3.10 Of the 1,126 Wirral West residents who completed a voting form, 612 provided a response to the question ‘if you were given a budget to spend on improvements that would benefit the local community, what would you spend it on?’ Whilst people were not specifically asked to identify their priorities, analysis of the responses provides a useful indication of how Wirral West residents would direct budget expenditure if they were able to influence this. This analysis has been done by assessing the number of times words and phrases appear in the responses, and exploring how this compares or differs across wards.

3.11 Perhaps not surprisingly, the assets most valued in Wirral West – parks and open spaces and the strong sense of local community – strongly featured in terms of people’s ideas about the right way to allocate financial resources, along with a strong focus on the importance of the Streetscene. Analysis of the questionnaire responses suggests that if respondents to the questionnaire were given a budget to spend on improvements, they would prioritise spending on:

- **The streetscene** – over 28% of the Wirral West residents who answered this question mentioned words and phrases relating to maintaining the Streetscene. Particular issues included maintaining grass verges and flower beds, general cleanliness, dog fouling, road surfaces and potholes and parking. There were some variations across wards, e.g. in Hoylake and Meols a significant number of people also said that they would allocate budget to improve the promenade and local beaches (over 27% of Hoylake and Meols residents who responded to the question). Many residents also mentioned that there should be more outdoor seating areas and benches for people so that they can enjoy outdoor communal spaces.
- **Community facilities and activities** – nearly 26% of Wirral West residents mentioned words and phrases relating to community facilities and activities in their responses to this question. Many of the responses from local residents were concerned with to making sure that the use of other local facilities is promoted – from community centres to libraries to church halls. A large number of responses were concerned with ensuring that local projects and activities are supported. The responses also highlighted that people recognise the particular value of activities for vulnerable people within the local community. Activities for young people were also mentioned a significant number of times.
- **Parks and open spaces** – nearly 18% of Wirral West residents mentioned parks and open spaces in their responses to the question. This level of response was fairly consistent across Greasby, Frankby and Irby, Hoylake and Meols, Pensby and Thingwall and Upton and Woodchurch. Whilst residents in West Kirby and Thurstaston made many references to making improvements to parks and open spaces, respondents from this ward had a much higher tendency to mention road maintenance and parking issues as their priority for expenditure. Ideas from local residents in relation to parks and open spaces included more community events, planting trees and encouraging wildlife, promoting responsible dog ownership amongst users of parks and open spaces in the area and increasing the sporting facilities available. Supporting the development of allotments was also mentioned.

3.12 As referred to in 3.1, it is suggested that the feedback from groups about the process and the feedback from those who participated in the vote about what’s important in Wirral West should be taken into account in the further development of the Community Fund should the Committee agree to take forward the same broad approach in 2014-15.

4.0 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK FUNDING ALLOCATION

4.1 The Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme for 2014/15 agreed by Cabinet on 13th March 2014 provides an allocation of £77,750 for each Constituency Committee to be distributed in relation to 2 objectives:

- Improving Road Safety (£38,875);
- Promoting Active Travel and Health (£38,875).

4.2 The Council has a statutory duty to improve road safety and bases investment on value for money schemes where a 'rate of return' can be demonstrated from measures which will reduce the number and/or severity of the road casualty record provided by Merseyside Police. Active forms of transport such as walking and cycling can have significant positive impacts on an individual's health and wellbeing, they have the potential to make an important contribution to quality of life, providing a generally accessible, clean, healthy and enjoyable way to travel short distances and to enjoy urban and rural public spaces. Also, by enabling access to employment, education and other life opportunities improvements for active modes of transport can make significant improvements to people's economic, physical and social wellbeing.

4.3 The funding is to be used for capital expenditure schemes which will address the as opposed to revenue expenditure, i.e. the budget can be spent on the creation of a fixed asset rather than on operating costs or providing a day to day service. The types of schemes which can be funded with this budget are listed in Appendix 1, many of which meet both of the objectives outlined in 4.1 above.

4.4 It is proposed that:

- Recommendations for the allocation of the budget for road safety to fund schemes across the five wards are identified through consultation with members of the Committee;
- To facilitate this consultation, a lead member is nominated for each ward to work with the Constituency Manager and the Road Safety team to identify possible road safety schemes.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 Any risks relating to the allocation of the Constituency Committee's budget will be mitigated by open and transparent decision-making and processes and effective monitoring which demonstrates the outcomes being achieved.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 This report is intended to initiate discussion about the options for the approach to allocating constituency funding.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Constituency Manager consults with Wirral West Constituency Committee members on an ongoing basis with regard to the work of the Committee. The community has been consulted in respect of the previous approach to allocating the neighbourhood working budget and also as to their views as to how budgets should be spent in the local area.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 This report will have positive implications in that it is the proposed funding programmes will result in financial and project management support being received by voluntary, community and faith groups and organisations in Wirral West.

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

9.1 This report has implications for the expenditure of the budget allocated to the Wirral West Constituency Committee.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no legal implications.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 An impact review for neighbourhood working can be found at the link below (Progressing Neighbourhood Working):

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

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The allocation of the Constituency Committee budget may create opportunities to encourage the sharing of community assets, therefore supporting carbon reduction.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The allocation of the Constituency Committee budget may have a positive impact upon community safety.

14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

14.1 In relation to the 2013-14 Community Fund underspend carried over for each ward, the Committee agrees that this should continue to be allocated by the Constituency Manager through ongoing consultation with the relevant ward councillors in line with the resolution of the Committee in March;

14.2 In relation to the 2013-14 Public Health Outcomes Fund underspend of £5,633.77, the Committee agrees that the Constituency Manager be given delegated authority to utilise this funding to support partnership working with the voluntary, community and faith sector to support older people;

14.3 In relation to the 2014-15 Council allocation, the Committee delegates authority to the Constituency Manager to develop the Community Fund programme taking into account the feedback from local people as to their priorities for expenditure and the feedback from groups as to improving the community voting process;

- 14.4 In noting the priorities identified by local people, the Committee requests that these should be taken into account in respect of the work being undertaken by the Council and Executive to develop proposals for the further devolution of budgets, functions and responsibilities to the Constituency Committees. The Committee further requests that the Constituency Manager prepares a report for the next meeting of the Committee on how these proposals are progressing with a view to producing a business case thereafter;
- 14.5 In relation to the 2014-15 road safety allocation, the Committee agrees that a lead member for each ward should be nominated to work with the Constituency Manager to identify possible schemes for funding.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 15.1 To seek agreement from the Committee as to the approach for allocating the various elements of Committee's budget.

REPORT AUTHOR: Jane Morgan
 Constituency Manager (Wirral West)
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SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Cabinet – Neighbourhood Working – Proposed Operating Model | 23 rd May 2013 |
| Cabinet – Public Health Outcomes Funding | 10 th October 2013 |
| Wirral West Constituency Committee | 30 th October 2013 |
| Cabinet – Public Health Outcomes Fund | 19 th December 2013 |
| Wirral West Constituency Committee | 12 th December 2013 |
| Council – Council Budget 2014-15 | 25 th February 2014 |
| Wirral West Constituency Committee | 6 th March 2014 |
| Cabinet – Local Transport Capital Funding and the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) Programme 2014/15 | 13 th March 2014 |

APPENDIX 1 – ESTIMATED COSTS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR ROAD SAFETY / ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES

| Road Safety / Active Travel Schemes | Estimated Costs (for guidance purposes only) | Considerations |
|--|---|---|
| Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) – generally used to prohibit parking (including verge or pavement parking) | Approx £1,000 to £4,000 depending on extend of scheme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May assist with regulation of areas of concern ▪ Will need formal advertisement ▪ Can have significant effect on businesses or residents ▪ If too onerous, drivers may not willingly comply leading to enforcement burden |
| Pedestrian refuge islands | Approx £13,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a staging area enabling pedestrians to cross roads in two 'bites' ▪ Can contribute to speed management acting as a form of calming device. ▪ Require a minimum road width (depending on traffic route e.g. buses) ▪ Can restrict parking nearby and may need an additional TRO |
| Traffic Calming (Physical Measures) | Dependent on scheme area covered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Variety of types can be used including road humps; cushions; chicanes; build outs ▪ Self enforcing measure working 24/7 ▪ Effectively guarantees speed reduction and unlikely to need further (police) enforcement action in scheme area ▪ Will need formal advertisement |
| 20mph Speed Limit Orders | Dependent on scheme area covered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will need formal advertisement ▪ Generally not self enforcing and may need police presence to enforce ▪ Generally not as effective at reducing speeds as physical measures ▪ Ideally need to be considered as part of an area approach to speed reduction ▪ Can reduce traffic speeds ▪ Not as costly as physical measures |
| Traffic Signs and Road Markings | £200 - £3,000 but varies on scheme extent and type of signs/markings required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comparatively inexpensive ▪ Some measures may need TROs ▪ Must comply with DfT regulations and need to be |

| Road Safety / Active Travel Schemes | Estimated Costs (for guidance purposes <u>only</u>) | Considerations |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| | | consistent with national policy/application |
| Cycle Lane Marking | Dependent on scheme area covered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comparatively inexpensive ▪ Requires a minimum road width (depending on traffic route e.g. buses) and may need an additional TRO |
| Vehicle Activated Signs | £7,000 – £9,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visually prominent ▪ Impactive on those drivers triggering the unit ▪ Need good location for solar power ▪ Need to comply with DfT regulations for type and settings ▪ Over provision dilutes impact of message |
| Cycle Parking Provision | £250 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comparatively inexpensive ▪ May be difficult to site in some circumstances |
| Bitumen cyclepath | £110 per metre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assists/encourages off road cycle use ▪ May be difficult to obtain a contiguous route |
| Puffin/Toucan Crossings | £67,000 - £80,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assists pedestrians to cross ▪ Will need formal advertisement ▪ Can restrict parking due to controlled area |
| Pedestrian dropped kerbs | £1,600 per pair | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assists mobility for people with mobility issues, the elderly and people with prams etc ▪ Some locations may not be practicable and may need additional work |

WIRRAL COUNCIL

Policy and Performance Coordinating Committee

15 January 2014

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| SUBJECT: | Individual Electoral Registration Scrutiny Review Report |
| WARD/S AFFECTED: | ALL |
| REPORT OF: | Director of Public Health/Head of Policy & Performance |
| RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER: | Cllr Ann McLachlan (Governance and Improvement) |
| KEY DECISION? | NO |

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report (included as Appendix 1) provides a detailed account of a Scrutiny Review which considered Wirral's preparations for the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in 2014. The introduction of IER is a government initiative to transfer the existing property-based electoral register to a new register which will rely on individuals registering themselves.
- 1.2 Members of the Coordinating Committee are requested to consider the contents of this report and note the recommendations arising from this review.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 At its last regular meeting on 3 September 2013, the Coordinating Committee agreed a work programme which included a review of the Council's preparations for IER. Four Members of the Committee volunteered to undertake this work including Cllr Jean Stapleton, Cllr Moira McLaughlin, Cllr Denise Roberts and Cllr Steve Williams.
- 2.2 At the first meeting of the Review Panel, it was agreed Cllr Jean Stapleton would be the Chair of the Panel. The review was conducted over a series of meetings in October/November with appropriate officers providing information as requested by the panel and taking part in a detailed question and answer session.

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 The formal process for transferring to IER will commence in summer 2014. The Council's preparation's to date have included:
- The procurement and implementation of a new Electoral Management System which is compatible with IER requirements

- Working in a partnership with other Cheshire and Merseyside authorities to project plan the transfer to IER and meet a set of milestones as set by Cabinet Office.
- The completion of a test run of the data transfer process in August 2013 in which the Council's success rate exceeded the national average.

3.2 The introduction of IER does present some risk to some the Council in terms of all voters on the register being successfully transferred to the new register. However, the review provided an opportunity for Members to gain a good understanding of the work being undertaken to mitigate that risk.

3.3 The Panel's assessment was that overall Wirral is in a strong position and is likely to have a relatively smooth transfer to IER in 2014. However, Panel Members were concerned that in some wards, notably those with higher levels of known deprivation, there will be higher proportions of voters not automatically transferred. Additional work will have to be undertaken to ensure these voters are successfully transferred.

3.4 The Panel was also concerned that these same locations tend to have higher numbers of people not on the electoral register. As such, Members were keen for the IER process to be used as a vehicle to promote electoral registration more generally to encourage those not registered to register.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 There are none directly relating to this report.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 N/A

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 N/A

7.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

7.1 N/A

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 N/A

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

9.1 The implementation of IER will require additional resources to manage the process of transferring from the existing to the new electoral register. The Cabinet Office is committed to meeting these additional costs and allocations of funding are being awarded to local authorities based upon population size and the results of the test data-matching exercise. A financial assessment is included in the full report in Appendix 1 section 5.4.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 N/A

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

~~(a) Yes. The impact review has been sent to the Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator and is located at~~

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

(c) No because of another reason which is

The report is for information to Members and there are no direct equalities implications at this stage.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 N/A

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 N/A

14.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 Members of the Committee are requested to note the contents and consider the recommendations arising from this report.

14.2 Members of the Committee are requested to consider whether they wish to refer the report to Cabinet.

15.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 To ensure Members have an understanding of the implications of IER for Wirral.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Wirral Council's Preparations for Individual Electoral Registration Scrutiny Review

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**Wirral Council's preparations for
Individual Electoral Registration**

Scrutiny Review

A report produced by
The Policy & Performance Coordinating Committee

FINAL REPORT
December 2013

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL

***Wirral Council's Preparations for
Individual Electoral Registration
Scrutiny Review***

FINAL REPORT

| | | |
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Individual Electoral Registration is due to be introduced in 2014 and will transform the way Local Authorities' are required to compile their Electoral Registers. A national timetable is being coordinated by the Cabinet Office which requires Councils to meet a range of key preparation milestones. This scrutiny review has been conducted to ensure Wirral's preparations are robust and that any potential issues or problems are understood and are being addressed.

The success of the transfer from the existing property-based register to the IER register is dependent on a combination of national and local data-matching exercises. Initial testing of the data-matching process suggests Wirral's results will be above the national average putting us in a strong position to establish the new register in summer 2014. However, the full potential of local data-matching is yet to be fully realised and will be dependent on the availability of local data sources.

Recommendation 1: Where access to Council held data is required for the purpose of data-matching to support the transfer to IER, this is made available (in line with legal requirements) to the Elections Team in a timely manner.

The Review Panel acknowledged the crucial role all Council Members will have in terms of communicating the changes and encouraging constituents to take action if they are not automatically transferred to the new IER register. The Panel also recognised the value that Members' local knowledge will have in supporting implementation. Therefore, keeping Members informed during preparation and implementation will be essential.

Recommendation 2: The Head of Legal and Member Services to coordinate periodic briefings with all Members as a means of maintaining two-way communication to support the implementation of IER.

Recommendation 3: Chairs of constituency committees are requested to include IER as a topic for discussion as part of their forward planning in the New Year.

The Cabinet Office is committed to supporting the costs of implementing IER. The Review Panel considered the financial implications for Wirral in the light of the funding allocation provided. Whilst the budget forecast will need to be worked up in more detail as further information becomes available in 2014, the initial forecast indicates there will be sufficient resource available including a reasonable contingency.

The Review Panel sees the transfer to IER as a major opportunity to highlight the importance of electoral registration and use the additional resources available to maintain existing levels of registration and concentrate on those areas where levels of registration are lower.

Recommendation 4: The Head of Legal and Member Services should ensure that funds are used in accordance with Cabinet office requirements/conditions and where possible used to support additional targeted engagement and canvassing activities, using the IER process as a vehicle to maximise electoral registration, and for contingency purposes.

Overall, the Panel found this review to be very informative. In particular, the results and analysis of the Confirmation Dry Run data-match exercise with Census 2011 data were considered to be very useful and provided a level of detail that Members have never seen before. The Panel agreed that this information should be available to all Members and through the Council's website.

Recommendation 5: The Head of Legal and Member Service to make Ward data on IER and non-registered eligible voters available to all Elected Members and via the Council's website.

This review is a good example of horizon-scanning scrutiny in that IER is a national initiative being launched in 2014. The review has provided an opportunity to consider the potential issues in relation to implementing IER locally. In this sense the review has been an assessment of the Council's readiness at a particular point in time. It was recognised by the Panel that a further update is reported to the Policy and Performance Committee closer to the transition going live in June 2014.

Recommendation 6: The Head of Legal and Members Services should prepare a report to the Policy and Performance Committee providing an update on preparations for IER closer to the launch in June 2014.

2. INTRODUCTION

At the meeting of the Policy and Performance Coordinating Committee on 3rd September 2013, Members approved a work programme which included a review of the Council's preparations for Individual Electoral Registration (IER). A Scrutiny Review Panel of four Members of the Committee was established and a series of meetings were held in Autumn 2013. The purpose of the review was for the Panel to gain an understanding of the implications of IER for Wirral. This would enable the Panel to test the Council's readiness for this new approach to compiling the electoral register and seek assurance that preparations are in hand. This reports sets out the background, methodology, findings and recommendations arising from this work.

3. BACKGROUND

In 2014 the Government is changing the way people register to vote. Under the current system one person can register all occupants in the same household. Under the new system, called Individual Electoral Registration (IER), everyone will be individually responsible for their own registration. This approach sees the UK following practice in other countries and will pave the way for on-line registration (currently scheduled from June 2014).

Most people on the register before June 2014 should be automatically transferred to IER and should not need to do anything else. However, some people will need to provide additional information in order to stay on the register and will be sent letters inviting them to register under the new system. The process to register will involve residents providing their name, national insurance number and date of birth. This information will be checked to verify they are eligible to vote. In the case of those whose details cannot be verified, they will not be removed from the register until after the next General Election.

The shift to the new electoral register is being centrally managed by the Cabinet Office. A national timetable has been published with local authorities being individually responsible for meeting a series of milestones in order to prepare for the new system. The logistics of shifting from the current property-based register to the new IER register involves a major data-matching exercise. This will involve councils sending their existing registers to Cabinet Office for these to be data-matched with personal data held by the Department of Work and Pensions. This is scheduled for July 2014, with the IER register to be compiled from then and published on 1st December 2014.

A Confirmation Dry Run (CDR) run of the data-match process was completed during summer 2013. This also acted as a test for local authorities to demonstrate the compatibility of their IT software with that being used nationally. The result of this exercise was better than expected with a match rate of 78% across the country leading to confirmation by the Electoral Commission that preparations are sufficiently ready for IER to go ahead as planned in 2014.

In terms of the cost implications, Cabinet Office has stated its commitment to meeting the full cost, with £108M being allocated nationally. Allocations are being made to local authorities for the years 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16.

4. ORIGINAL SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Scope

This review is a good example of horizon scanning scrutiny. At the time the review was conducted, planning for IER had commenced, but preparations were still in their early stages. This was acknowledged by the Panel and informed the scope of the review. The agreed scoping document is included at Appendix 1 and focussed around four key objectives as follows:

1. For the Panel to be satisfied there are robust arrangements in place for the implementation of IER.
2. To have a good understanding of the potential issues and problems in implementing this new system.
3. That Wirral is not financially disadvantaged by implementing IER.
4. That all opportunities are taken to use IER as a vehicle to maximise registration.

4.2 Methodology

A combination of information sources were provided to the Panel. This included a number of documents to provide the national context and overall picture i.e. an IER Policy Briefing from the Local Government Information Unit and a summary report of the national results of the Confirmation Dry Run produced by the Cabinet Office. However, the main emphasis of the Panel was to develop an understanding of the local implications both at a borough-wide level and on a ward by ward basis. This was achieved by the Panel requesting a series of reports to cover the following:

- A detailed analysis of the results of the data-match Confirmation Dry Run (CDR) as well as those communities (geographical and thematic) where registration is lower
- The proposed strategy for maximising engagement and registration (with particular reference to those communities)
- A forecast of the financial impact of IER and whether this can be achieved from within existing resources assisted by the additional allocations from Cabinet Office for 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16.

(These reports are available on request).

The reports were followed up by a detailed question and answer session with key officers from the Council. This included the Head of Legal and Member Services and the Principal Electoral Services Officer. The review was carried out over three Panel meetings. A short review was adopted as a means of carrying out an assessment of the Council's preparations for IER at a point in time. It was acknowledged that a further update on progress should be considered by the relevant Policy and Performance Committee later on in the preparation process.

5. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Early Preparations

The Chief Executive as the Borough's Electoral Registration Officer has responsibility for implementing IER. In terms of delivery, the Head of Legal and Member Services oversees the Elections Team and the IER Project Team. It is recognised IER requires a corporate approach and the project team has had input from the Improvement Team, IT Services, Marketing & Communications and Corporate Policy. The Council's early preparations for IER has focussed on three key areas:

- 1. The procurement and installation of a new Electoral Management System** – The Council's existing system was over ten years old and in need of replacement. A new, IER compatible system was procured through a joint tender with the Cheshire and Merseyside Authorities. This was implemented with considerable support from IT Services to a tight deadline in July/August 2013 in advance of the CDR data-matching exercise.
- 2. The successful completion of the CDR and local data-matching** – Wirral's CDR was completed on 19 August. Wirral's test result 83%, exceeded the national average of 78%. A further data-matching exercise with locally held Council Tax data resulted in the success rate being increased to 89%. This indicates that Wirral should have a strong foundation for transferring the current register to the IER register in July 2014.
- 3. Developing a partnership approach with the Cheshire and Merseyside authorities** – This ensures a consistency of planning and preparation as well as providing an opportunity to share ideas and good practice. The Cabinet Office expects Council's to develop a range of project, risk and engagement plans and the partnership ensures Wirral's preparations are consistent with those of other authorities in the sub-region.

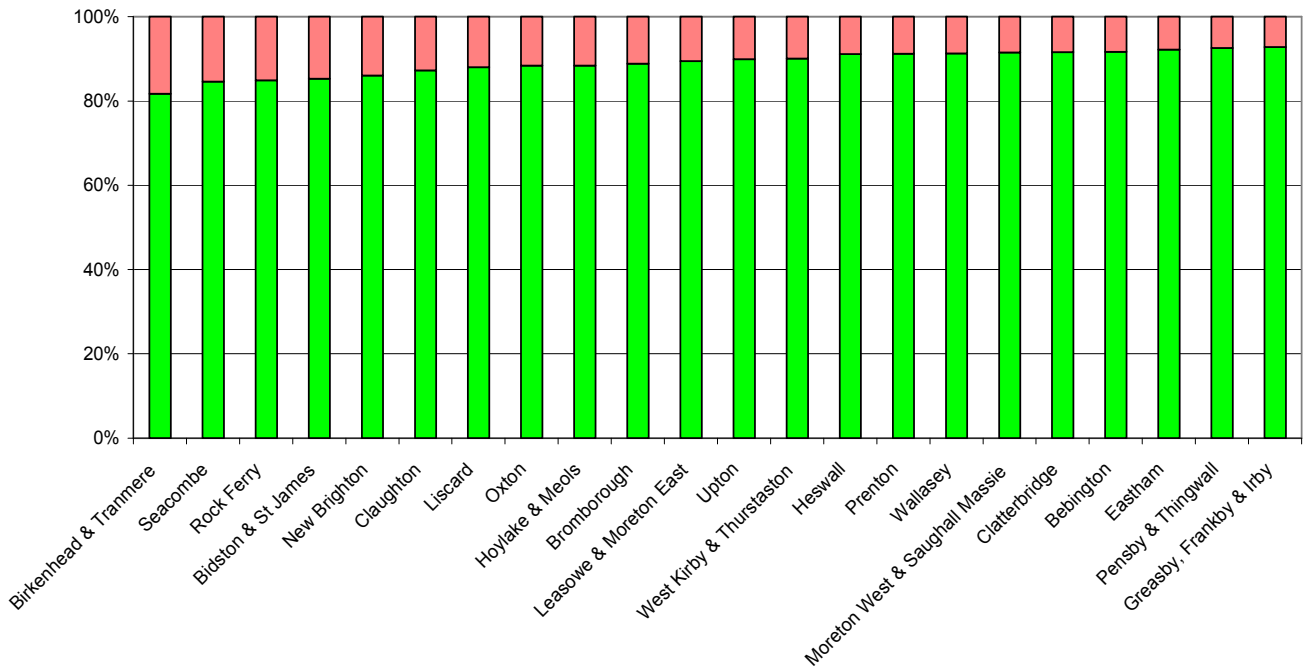
5.2 Analysis of Data-Matching Results and Census 2011

Overall, the results of the CDR and local data-matching indicate that out of the 239,814 people on the Electoral Roll, 213,792 would be confirmed under IER, a rate of 89%. Further local data-matching will be undertaken to reduce the number of red non-matches further.

Given the amount of information held by the Council in different departments, a hierarchy of data sources has been identified including housing benefit and schools data that will assist this work. Given issues around the Data Protection Act, it was highlighted that some departments may be less inclined to readily share data. However, the Council's Electoral Registration Officer does have the power to access all Council held data and Members of the Panel were keen to ensure there are no obstructions to the Elections Team accessing data in order to maximize the level of matching to the new IER register.

Recommendation 1: Where access to Council held data is required for the purpose of data-matching to support the transfer to IER, this is made available (in line with legal requirements) to the Elections Team in a timely manner.

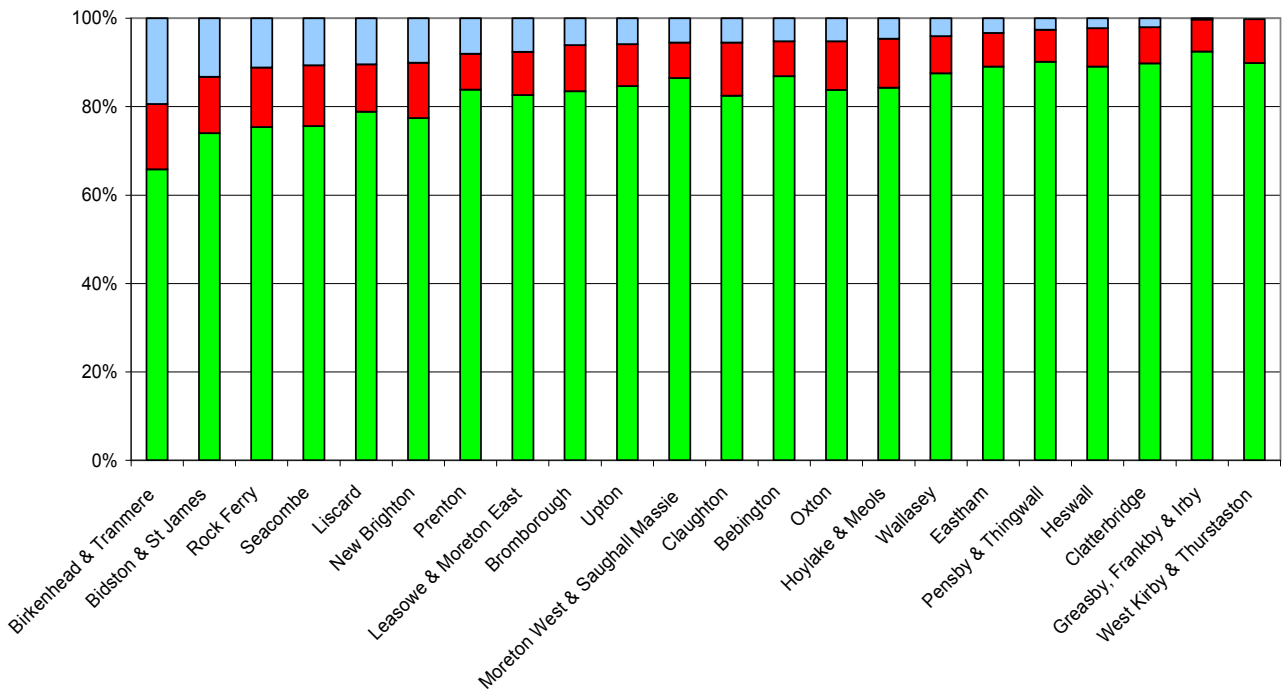
A detailed analysis of the results of the CDR and local data-match was provided to the Panel (see chart below). This provides a ward breakdown showing the number of positive (green) matches and non-matches (red).



This shows a fairly consistent picture of voters being successfully transferred across all wards, although it is interesting to note that the success rate is lower in those wards which have higher levels of known deprivation.

Further analysis was undertaken to explore levels of voter registration more generally using Census 2011 data to estimate the number of people over the age of 17 in each ward that do not appear on the register.

The chart below combines the results of the data-match exercise with the estimated percentages of non-registered voters. As in the previous chart, green indicates positive matches with red showing the negatives. Blue indicates the estimated proportion of the electorate who are not on the electoral register. The order of wards has the highest proportion of non-registered voters (Birkenhead and Tranmere) to the left.



This analysis shows a strong correlation between areas with higher levels of known deprivation and negative matches from the CDR exercise as well as levels of non-registration

more generally. The Panel noted that whilst the overall picture for Wirral at a borough-wide level is positive, the analysis shows there are some wards which are a cause for concern, including Birkenhead & Tranmere, Bidston & St James, Rock Ferry, Seacombe, Liscard and New Brighton.

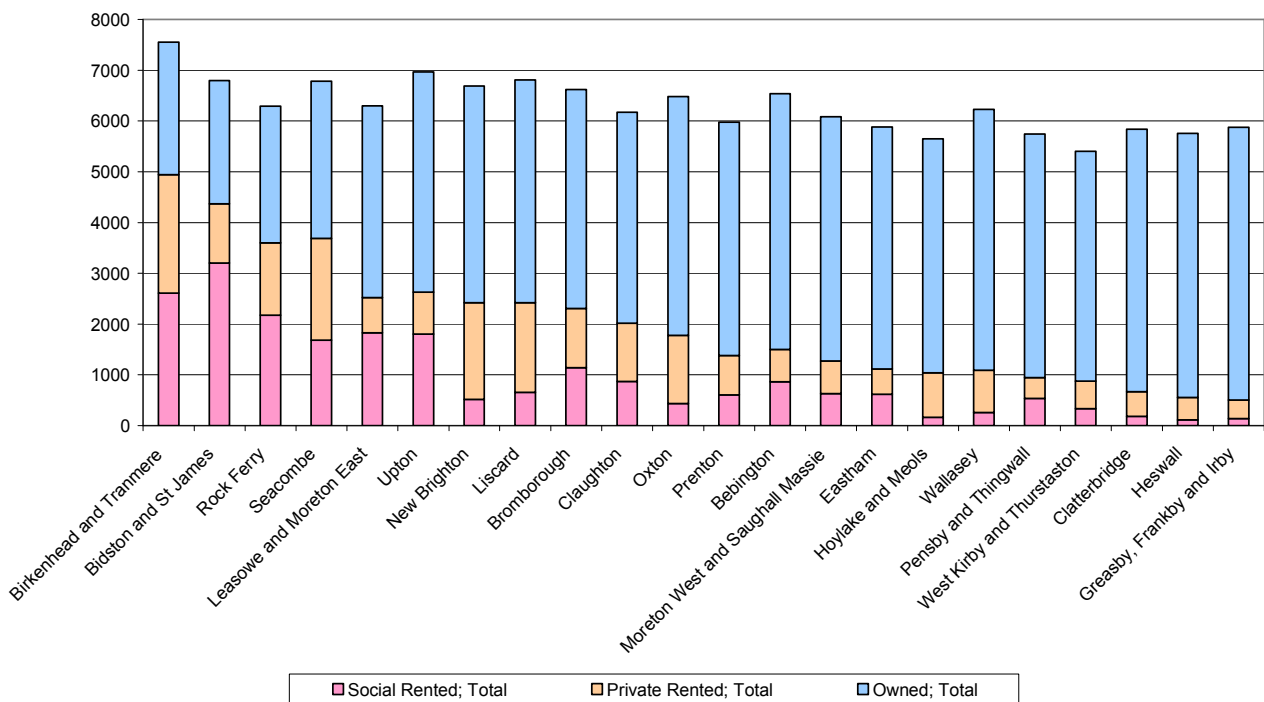
Members were interested in Wirral’s track record in getting new people on the register and what the challenges are to this. The current estimate of voters registered in Wirral is 92% which is above the national average of 90%. The challenge in getting this figure higher is resources, as there comes a tipping point in the cost-effectiveness of this given there will always be a residual number of people that do not want to or refuse to register.

One of the best incentives for encouraging registration is to make people aware of the negative impact it has on their credit rating. Members of the Panel highlighted concerns that currently many voters are reliant on other people registering them and with the introduction of IER the responsibility will fall on individuals to register themselves.

Additional analysis provided, highlighted those factors which are likely to impact on lower levels of voter registration amongst certain sections of community. These include:

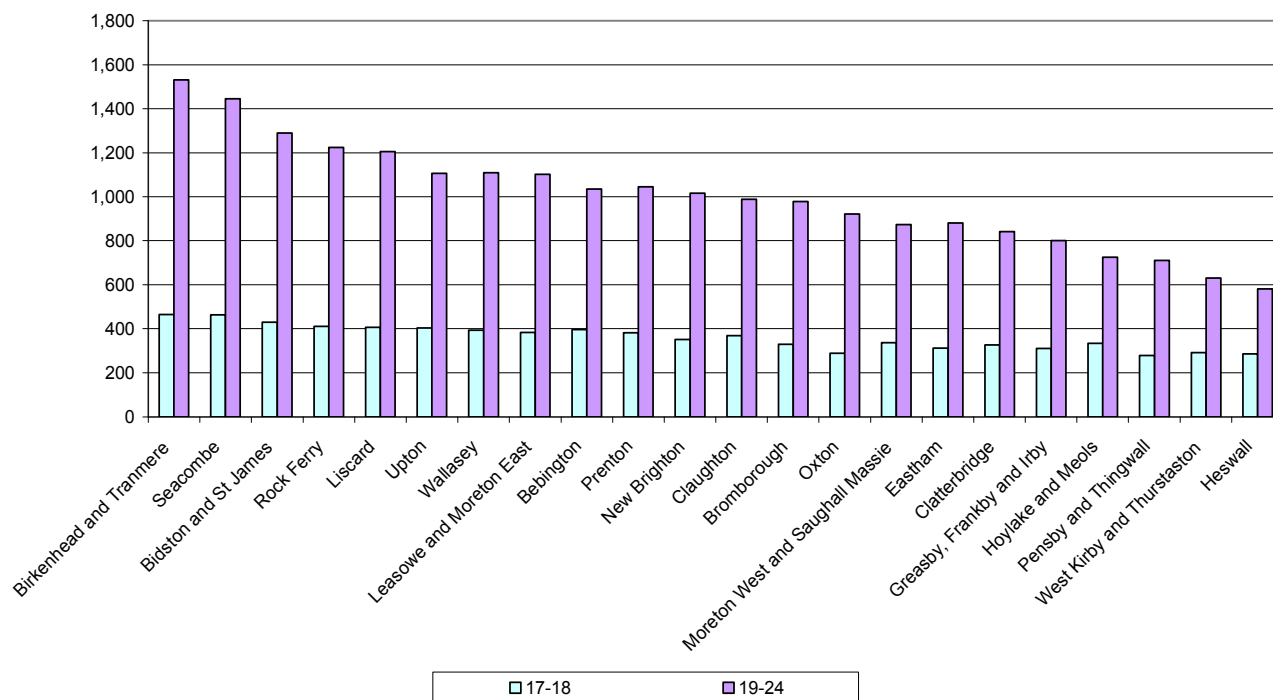
- People in rented accommodation (private and social)
- Young people
- Home movers

Apart from home movers which are randomly dispersed, geographical analysis of the proportions of people living in rented accommodation (see below) shows a strong correlation with those areas that have lower data-match results and higher numbers of non-registered voters.



In terms of the geographical dispersal of young people aged 17 – 24 (see chart below), this tends to follow the same pattern of distribution as rented accommodation again showing the correlation with areas that have lower data-match results and higher numbers of non-registered voters.

Numbers of Young People by Ward



National analysis by the Cabinet Office explores BME communities as being at risk of under-registration. However, findings did not suggest that BME groups were statistically less likely to be registered than their white peers who otherwise share the same characteristics.

Using the Census 2011, local analysis was undertaken regarding the distribution of non-UK born residents. This indicates that apart from Birkenhead and Tranmere, the distribution of non-UK born residents is fairly evenly dispersed. Members were concerned that there is insufficient data held on BME and non-UK born communities such as the emerging Polish community. It was suggested the Council’s engagement with minority communities would need to be coordinated through second-tier representative organisations such as Wirral Change and Wirral Multicultural Organisation.

5.3 Draft communications and engagement strategy

The communications campaign supporting the role out of IER will be managed centrally through Cabinet Office / Electoral Commission and is scheduled to launch nationally in June 2014. It is essential the local campaign aligns with the timetable and messaging nationally to ensure consistency. As part of planning milestones, local authorities have been required to submit early draft communication and engagement strategies to Cabinet Office. A copy of the draft strategy was provided to the Panel. The strategy was drafted prior to the results of the CDR data-match analysis and will need to be further developed in due course.

Officers highlighted that local communications and engagement activity would operate on two levels. There is a need for a general awareness-raising campaign targeting all voters with generic messaging about the shift to IER and promoting electoral registration. This work will dovetail with national and sub-regional campaigns when they go live in 2014. Alongside this, a more targeted approach will be needed involving communications with key partner organisations in line with the under-represented groups set out above in section 5.2. Specifically schools, landlords / tenant groups and membership organisations that support

hard to reach communities. Members highlighted the opportunity to work with landlords through the network of Registered Social Landlords and the Council's Private Landlord's Association.

A further level of more detailed targeting will need to be coordinated through a new approach to delivering the annual canvas which reflects the ward by ward analysis non-matches and non-registered voters. The annual canvas is the means for compiling the electoral register, although work updating the register continues throughout the year. Currently there are 103 Polling Districts in Wirral and 80-90 canvassers. Usually a Polling District is allocated to one canvasser with some picking up a couple of districts. The CDR result provides a rationale for allocating resources in a much more targeted way. This will not be developed until 2014, as we are currently in the middle of the canvass for the local and European Elections next May.

The Panel was also advised that the type of work canvassers do will need to change, with more information being requested at the doorstep and the need for a strategy to respond to emerging issues depending on how people react. This approach will provide canvassers with the opportunity to highlight the legal requirements of registration and the wider benefits i.e. the positive effect on an individual's credit rating. Next year, the canvass period commences in July and continues through till 1st December when the IER register will be published. The process of IER effectively changes the whole approach to canvassing, but this process is yet to be finalised.

Members acknowledged that the draft communications and engagement strategy contains a range of different communication channels as some forms of communication i.e. the local free press are restricted in their coverage. Members were keen that all opportunities to engage with partners and share communication costs with other local authorities through cross-border initiatives should be explored.

It should be remembered that the process of shifting to IER will involve large amounts of direct mail going to individuals and households from July 2014. Confirmation letters will be sent to those people who have been matched and transferred to the IER register. Household Enquiry Forms (HEF) and Invitations to Register (ITR) will be sent to properties and people that have not been successfully matched. All of this will provide opportunities to include additional leaflets and messages.

Members were concerned about the clarity and accessibility of IER literature and application forms so they are not a barrier to some sections of the community. However, documentation is still in the process of being developed nationally and has not yet been shared or published.

Given the number of staff with frontline roles dealing with residents enquiries i.e. one stop shop and call centre staff, there will be opportunities to inform residents about IER on the back of contact for other matters. As part of its preparations, the Council has allocated a lead trainer to deliver a programme of briefings and trainings to ensure that frontline staff have a good understanding of IER in order to answer enquiries and promote registration.

Panel Members also acknowledged the role that all Council Members will have in terms of communicating the changes and encouraging constituents to take action if they have not been automatically matched and transferred to the new IER register. It was also recognised that Members have local knowledge and would have ideas about how best to engage and communicate with certain communities. Panel Members were keen to highlight the need for on-going briefing of all Elected Members and for good ideas for engaging with constituents to be shared.

Recommendation 2: The Head of Legal and Member Services to coordinate periodic briefings with all Members as a means of maintaining two-way communication to support the implementation of IER.

Recommendation 3: Chairs of constituency committees are requested to include IER as a topic for discussion as part of their forward planning in the New Year.

5.4 Initial costs estimates for implementing IER in 2014

The Panel was advised that in line with Cabinet Office's commitment to supporting the costs of implementing IER, allocations are being awarded to Council's in 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15. These have been based on a formula including population size and the results of the CDR exercise. Wirral's allocation for 2012/13 has been £12,086. In terms of the allocation for 2013/14, the Council had just been informed that this would be £100,403. This figure was calculated using the results of the CDR exercise to determine the volume of correspondence and activity to address the non-matches to the IER register.

An initial forecast of the costs for 2014/15 has been developed based on the CDR and local data-matching results and a series of assumptions about the likely response rates to mail shots and canvassing activity. This figure was calculated at £240,518. The cost for delivering the annual canvas in 2012 was £187,534. Therefore, the allocation of £100,403 is considered to be sufficient with a satisfactory surplus of £47,000 to cover the cost of communications and engagement activity as well as any other potential resilience and/or contingency costs.

It was explained to the Panel that this forecast was an initial assessment, although it did err on the side of caution had been based on detailed work and assumptions. The assessment will be reviewed over the coming months as more details emerge from the Cabinet Office to ensure there is sufficient resource in place. The Panel was also advised that in advance of the announcement of the 2014/15 allocation and to mitigate the risk of insufficient resources to cover the costs of IER, the Head of Legal and Member Services had included some contingency in the Elections Team budget for 2014/15.

A further allocation from Cabinet Office is anticipated in 2014/15. However, this is not known at this time but will be expected to taper given the bulk of the work will be undertaken in the coming financial year.

Recommendation 4: The Head of Legal and Member Services should ensure that funds are used in accordance with Cabinet office requirements/conditions and where possible used to support additional targeted engagement and canvassing activities, using the IER process as a vehicle to maximise electoral registration, and for contingency purposes.

6. CONCLUSION

Overall, the Panel were assured the Council's preparations for IER are in hand. The Panel were also assured that officers have a good understanding of the IER project, including what needs to be done and what the likely problems and issues are likely to be going forward.

The results of the CDR and local data-matching indicate that our position is above average in terms of our readiness to transfer to the IER register, which is very encouraging. Whilst the picture at the Borough-wide level is very positive, Panel Members were concerned that at a local level there are some wards which are a cause for concern in terms of people being transferred to the new register and levels of registration more generally. This highlights the need for engagement and canvassing activities to be effectively targeted and resourced.

In terms of the data analysis, the Panel was impressed with the quality of the information and analysis provided. Members also highlighted this was the first time they had seen this level of analysis of the electorate and that this would be of interest to all Elected Members and residents and should be made publicly available.

Recommendation 5: The Head of Legal and Member Service to make Ward data on IER and non-registered eligible voters available to all Elected Members and via the Council's website.

The Panel highlighted the need for a corporate approach to IER with front-line staff being effectively briefed so the message about this change is widely communicated to members of the public. All Members of the Council should also receive regular written and verbal briefings to ensure they are able to provide the latest information to their constituents.

The Panel acknowledged this review had been undertaken early on in the process, and that it would be useful for officers to bring an updated position to the Policy and Performance Committee further down the line and at an appropriate point i.e. June/July 2014.

Recommendation 6: The Head of Legal and Members Services should prepare a report to the Policy and Performance Committee providing an update on preparations for IER closer to the launch in June 2014.

Finally, the Panel were keen to consider that once the IER register is published in December 2014, there would be a need consider how the on-going register is effectively maintained. This will be particularly important beyond the 2015 general election after which old records will be deleted and the register is mostly likely to experience a reduction.

7. MEMBERS OF THE REVIEW PANEL

Chair's Statement:

The review provided a good opportunity for Members of the Coordinating Committee to understand the changes coming in next year. The Panel were impressed with the level of preparation already undertaken by Council Officers and are confident Wirral's transfer to the new register should go well in 2014. This is an issue that all Members need to be aware of so that they can answer questions from constituents as the transfer to IER draws nearer.

It is clear over 90% of people will be automatically transferred to the new register. Whilst the overall picture for Wirral is positive, the Panel is concerned that in areas with higher levels of deprivation and people living in rented accommodation, the transfer to IER will require significantly more work. This review also shows that these areas also have more people that do not registered to vote. This emphasises the need for the Council to take a targeted approach with the additional resources available.

Whilst the accuracy of Wirral's electoral register has traditionally been above the national average, the IER process provides us with a unique opportunity to encourage those not on the register, particularly young people, to get themselves registered so they can vote at future elections.

Panel Membership

Councillor Jean Stapleton (Chair)



Councillor Moira McLaughlin



Councillor Denise Roberts



Councillor Steve Williams



This Report was produced by the IER Scrutiny Review Panel
(which reports to the Policy & Performance Coordinating Committee)

Appendix 1:

Scope Document

Date: 14th October 2013

Review Title: Individual Electoral Registration

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| <p>Scrutiny Panel Chair:</p> <p>Cllr Jean Stapleton (Chair), 0151 201 5057, jeanstapleton@wirral.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Panel members:</p> <p>Cllr Moira McLaughlin, 0151 644 8234, moiramclaughlin@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Denise Roberts, 0151 652 3309, deniseroberts@wirral.gov.uk Cllr Steve Williams, 0151 677 8848, stevewilliams@wirral.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Scrutiny Officer(s):</p> <p>Mike Callon, 0151 691 8379, michaelcallon@wirral.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Departmental Link Officers:</p> <p>Surjit Tour, 0151 691 8569, surjittour@wirral.gov.uk Kate Robinson, 0151 691 8511, katerobinson@wirral.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Other Key Officer contacts:</p> <p>Gareth Latham (Research and Information Officer), 0151 691 8030, garethlatham@wirral.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>2. What are the main issues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wirral's progress in terms of IER preparation has been good in terms of implementing a new electoral management system, the results of the test data match with DWP and local data matching.• Members of the Panel were concerned about the introduction of IER having a negative impact on voter registration.• There are concerns about low registration among certain communities both geographically and in terms of specific sections of the community, particularly young people and people living in rented accommodation.• At a time of austerity, there was concern about the cost of implementing IER and whether this can be met from existing resources assisted by modest allocations from the Cabinet Office.• The government's increasingly strict stance on ICT security presents a risk to the implementation of on line registration. |
| <p>3. The Committee's overall aim/objective in doing this work is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the Panel to be satisfied there are robust arrangements in place for the implementation of IER.• To have a good understanding of the potential issues and problems in implementing this new system.• That Wirral is not financially disadvantaged by implementing IER.• That all opportunities are taken to use IER as a vehicle to maximise registration. |

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| <p>4. The possible outputs/outcomes are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wirral benefits from a smooth transition to IER. 2. That voter registration levels are not adversely affected by the shift to IER | |
| <p>5. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scrutiny can provide assurance to the Council that preparations for the shift to IER and the implementation of this new approach are being effectively managed. 2. Scrutiny can support effective communications to Members regarding the implementation of IER and the issues Members need to be aware of. 3. Scrutiny can provide support in helping to promote electoral registration. | |
| <p>6. Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected Member • The General Public • Specific groups that might be able to support the Council's engagement strategy | |
| <p>7. Duration of enquiry?</p> <p>This is considered to be a short review to assess the Council's readiness for implementation. It has been suggested that a further review of implementation is scheduled at a suitable milestone in the implementation plan.</p> | |
| <p>8. What category does the review fall into?</p> <p>Horizon scanning – this review is intended to inform and add value to the local implementation of a nationally delivered government policy.</p> | |
| <p>9. Extra resources needed? Would the investigation benefit from the co-operation of an expert witness?</p> <p>None identified at this stage.</p> | |
| <p>10. What information do we need?</p> | |
| <p>10.1 Secondary information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project plans & briefing papers distributed by Cabinet Office • Results of national pilot • Local census data to understand local population profiles. | <p>10.2 Primary/new evidence/information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of dry run data match results against local population profiles • The Council's Strategy for targeted engagement to address under-registration amongst specific communities. |
| <p>10.3 Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet portfolio holder, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc). council officers to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Head of Legal & Member Services | <p>10.4 What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers to provide a more detailed analysis of those communities (geographical and |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers from Electoral Services and the Policy Unit. | <p>thematic) were registration is lower.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers to set out the proposed strategy for maximising engagement and registration (with particular reference to those communities). Officers to provide a budget forecast of the financial impact of IER and whether this can be achieved from within existing resources assisted by the additional allocations from Cabinet Office for 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16. |
| <p>11. What processes can we use to feed into the review? (site visits/observations, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, written questionnaire, etc).</p> <p>None identified at this stage.</p> | |
| <p>12. In what ways can we involve the public and at what stages? (consider whole range of consultative mechanisms, local committees and local ward mechanisms).</p> <p>None identified at this stage.</p> | |

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